

DR. LOIS FRANKEL

Get and keep the job you want.

To improve your public speaking skills, you can be your own diagnostic center by checking if any of the following problems are “under your hood”, then follow the “repairs” recommended by Corporate Coaching International’s presentation specialist, John Gregory:

1. **Earth Calling Mars:** You and your audience are on different planets. Either you know little about your listeners or they don’t know your expertise. **Repair work:** Long before speaking, get to know their characteristics and expectations when listening to you. Make sure the person introducing you has a short bio that you’ve specifically designed for the audience.
2. **Messages are DOA (dead on arrival):** Your information is what they need to hear, but they don’t get the point. **Repairs:** When preparing your talk, stand in your listeners’ shoes and construct messages that spell out bottom-line benefits to them. Focus on “you” (the audience), not “me” (the speaker or your company).
3. **Message monotony:** You can see the audience disengaging because you’re boring. **Three repair jobs:** Use more body language (hand gestures, eye contact) when you speak, remove the monotone in your voice by varying the speed and pitch, and craft messages that deploy metaphors, personal stories or famous quotes to drive the points home.
4. **Information overload:** You talk too long. This happens more often during a free-flow Q&A after your talk, rather than during your prepared remarks. Learn to answer questions by stating the key point first, then follow it with a couple supporting points. Remember, the Q&A is probably more important to your listeners than your formal speech because they get to ask what’s on their minds.
5. **Runaway butterflies:** You’re so nervous that it shows. We all get butterflies before a speech—you can teach them to fly in formation by thoroughly preparing your talk, arriving early, taking a deep breath before you begin, smiling, and using body language to reduce your stiffness.

Until next month, stay well.

Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.