



## Speech Opens and Closes

### Opens

Opens need to capture your listeners' attention. You are persuading them to pay attention. To do this, your open must include novelty and emotion. This can come in a variety of ways. Here are some options:

- A story. Well-crafted and well-told stories reach into the hearts and minds of your listener, connecting him or her to you and your message. This story needs to serve a purpose of introducing your main point and/or communicating why the listener should be listening to you about this.
- A striking statistic or relevant fact. This is something that the listener wouldn't necessarily know and would "throw him or her for a loop." It is important that this is not something that is already well known, however you can take something well known and put a spin on it.
- A provocative statement or question. Again, this is something the listener will pay attention to because it will pique his or her curiosity, and depending on what it is, perhaps funny bone or ire, and encourage further listening.
- A stimulating quote by someone most people know and who carries weight, that introduces your main point or gets the listener wondering what your main point could be.
- A few sentences that create connection and address the listeners' primary concerns – something you've determined through your research. This also could be an example. This would tell them, I understand you.

Immediately after your open, create relevance. Tell them what's in this for them – why you are taking their time.

## Closes

People will most remember the last 60 seconds of your speech so make sure it's powerful. Leave them laughing, crying, thinking, and very glad they came to hear you. Here are some examples of powerful closes:

- Bookend close. This close circles back to your open. It completes your thought and/or answers the question, but this time, in more depth. It creates satisfaction and emotional closure.
- Challenge close. This is your call to action – what do you want your listener to do? Challenge them.
- Echo close. Using some word or phrase, share what you want the listener to know, feel, think or do by using that phrase or word to describe a series of actions.
- Repetitive close. Choose a word or phrase and repeat it using a rhythm and cadence, and build to the end.
- Title close. Use the title of your speech at the end and go into more detail. Make sure it is memorable and compelling.
- Sing song close. Select one phrase that the audience repeats with you. Then, at the end, you create greater meaning by using the phrase again and including everyone.
- Callback close. Use this when you tell a story in your speech that you do not complete. You then complete the story and it contains your main point – what you want them to walk away with.
- Movie close. You refer to a well-known movie that summarizes your point.
- Quotation close. Use a quote from someone who is well known that captures both the emotional and intellectual tone you wish to share.
- Third party close. Recall the wisdom of someone you admire and who speaks eloquently and quote that person.