1. **Know your material.** If you’re not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, you are likely to become nervous.
   - Practice your talk over and over and revise it if necessary.
   - Mark places where you will pause and breathe with ‘//’.
   - Talk in front of a mirror or practice in front of your family or friends.

2. **Do creative visualization.** Close your eyes and visualize your own brilliance in front of the audience. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured.

3. **Get to know your audience.** Say hello to people as they arrive. It’s easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

4. **Introduce yourself.** Before beginning, tell people your name and your school. Most audience members will not know this information.

5. **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Believe it or not, audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining.

6. **Don’t say you’re sorry.** (You may be surprised at this one.)
   - If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your talk, you’re probably calling the audience’s attention to something they hadn’t noticed.
   - If you lose your place, just breathe and smile.

7. **Make eye contact.** Try to make eye contact with as many people in the room as possible. Don’t focus only on people in the front rows.

8. **Power Point Slides**
   - Don’t read your PowerPoint slides. Most audience members can read the entire contents of a PowerPoint slide in about eight seconds – much faster than you can say the words aloud.
   - Instead, add some important information that isn’t on the slide.
   - Frame the slides, i.e. ‘As you can see, the next slide shows us the three things that we...’
   - Breathe a little life into your bullets. When talking about a bullet list say, ‘First, we did this...and...Finally, we did that...’

Deliver the Message: Develop the Presentation

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9. Repeat the question. When someone in the audience asks a question, always repeat the question. Not everyone in the audience will be able to hear what other audience members say.

- Say, ‘The question is…’ (and repeat verbatim), or ‘The question is about…’ (specific topic). You can also check back with the person who asked the question to make sure that you answered it fully.

10. Smile. Smiles are your most potent defense.

- In communicating a relaxed, confident, self-assured manner, you always look your best wearing a smile.
- However, DON’T tell jokes; they’re not appropriate at a public presentation and you want the adults in the room to take you seriously.