

False Humility and Public Speaking

Are you failing in rapport due to false humility? You might wonder what does humility have to do with public speaking?

Humility is considered a virtue. It attracts like minded people. It also makes a person more approachable. As a public speaker, this increases your ability to gain rapport with the audience.

Humility is defined as an unassuming or moderate estimation of ones abilities or achievements in relationship to one's own importance. It is the one quality that as soon as you think you have it, you lost it.

Who would enjoy a speech where a person lists off all of their accomplishments and then says how great they are.

To a humble person, the only time you put your best feats forward is in your resume and on a job interview. Outside the rare occasion, this person would be more interested in others.

Yet there is a challenge that faces many speakers related to humility.

False Humility

The problem could very possibly be a mistaken kind of humility.

This would be wanting to appear as though you had a modest estimation of your abilities. Regardless of the motivation, by expressing humility this way you can sabotage your speech.

Humility is not a matter of what you want to look like. It is what you are within yourself.

At least once a month I hear a speaker some how indicate they are running out of time for their presentation. One recently even announced he would have to exclude part of the material because he was late.

In the worse case scenario (this really happened) the speaker kept saying that since he was behind he had to keep moving. He did this about 15 times. Multiply that by three to five seconds and he could have had an extra 1 to 1 1/2 minutes.

What are the problems with announcing to the audience your behind in your time?

It is off topic. Everything you say should support your theme. Everything else should be left out.

It announces your failings. We all fail in some way. Yet announcing that you failing will not improve rapport. It could have the exact opposite response.

It could upset the audience. Some will be empathetic. They will be more worried about you finishing on time than what your saying.

It wastes valuable time.

It communicates that the audience is missing something. Would they know they were missing anything unless you announced it? Probably not.

So avoid false humility. Recognizing your limitations and having a modest estimation of yourself is a good quality to have. Yet once you start saying you have a modest estimation of yourself or abilities, you just lost your humility.