

A Winning Motto: No APOLOGIES, No EXCUSES, No CONFESSIONS

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By Debbie Bailey

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Presenters say the darndest things...

- "I'm sorry but I have a cold today so my voice may sound a little funny."
- "I just found out about this presentation yesterday, so I didn't have as much time to prepare as I would have liked."
- "I wanted to get copies of our reports, but couldn't..."
- "I meant to bring..."
- "Oh, I should have told you about it earlier..."

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

I call these APOLOGIES, EXCUSES, and CONFESSIONS. It is always surprising how often and how easily presenters use these kinds of NEGATIVE phrases in their presentations.

Up until now, that is.

If you want to WOW your audience, you have to adopt and live by the motto:
NO APOLOGIES, NO EXCUSES, NO CONFESSIONS.

I can tell you from experience, it isn't easy to do—but it will serve you well in your business career.

Here's why you should avoid these kinds of negative comments. When you APOLOGIZE, MAKE AN EXCUSE, or CONFESS at any time during your presentation, you are in essence saying to the audience, "Don't expect a lot from me today because I'll probably disappoint you." It never fails to amaze me how many presenters do this before, and often many times throughout, their presentations.

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DOING YOUR BEST MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY "I'M SORRY"

The kinds of APOLOGIES I often hear in presentations go something like this: "I apologize if you can't hear me too well, but I have a cold today." OR "I'm sorry I didn't bring in a sample, but I couldn't arrange it on such short notice." OR EVEN "I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you that earlier in my presentation."

The truth is, if you have a cold or don't feel well, sooner or later the audience will figure it out and because you didn't use it as an EXCUSE for why you might not perform well, they will respect you for your effort. I have given some of my best presentations when I wasn't feeling 100%. I attribute it to the fact that I overcompensated by really being "on." It is possible to perform well despite feeling poorly. And, at minimum, you owe it to your audience to try!

Instead of the statement "I'm sorry I didn't bring in a sample, but I couldn't arrange it on such short notice," try framing it in the positive, "I am working on getting you a sample and I can deliver it next week." Isn't it just as easy to PROMISE, rather than APOLOGIZE?

As for the statement, "I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you that earlier," my question is, why would you APOLOGIZE to the audience for forgetting something they had no idea you'd forgotten? If they think you've done it exactly as you were "supposed" to, what possible benefit do you receive from clueing them into your error? I advise you never to APOLOGIZE for making a mistake that the audience didn't notice first.

In the presentation context, APOLOGIES are almost always unnecessary. NEVER APOLOGIZE for anything, except perhaps if you step on an audience member's foot or if you have so much energy that your booming voice blasts in their ear. Even then, your APOLOGY should be framed positively... "I am sorry. I am so excited to be here, I nearly broke the microphone!"

"PARDON ME," AND OTHER LAME EXCUSES YOU HATE TO HEAR

EXCUSES are things we say to eliminate the responsibility we have for our success (or lack there of it). Like APOLOGIES, EXCUSES tell your audience not to expect a lot from your presentation because you have very good reasons (i.e. the EXCUSE) for not being able to deliver.

"I just found out about this presentation yesterday so I didn't have much time to prepare," is a common and frankly, over used, EXCUSE. Other than telling the audience NOT to expect a lot from you because you aren't prepared to deliver, what positive purpose does this EXCUSE serve?

Before you make another EXCUSE, remember what it feels like to be on the receiving end of someone else's excuses. If that doesn't stop you, I don't know what will!

"FORGIVE ME FOR I HAVE SINNED" AND OTHER CONFESSIONS TO AVOID

The CONFESSION is what happens when the presenter tells the audience something they have no business knowing. My favorite confession goes something like this...

"I'm really nervous today."

The CONFESSION "I'm really nervous today" lets the audience know right off the bat that you will probably be a disappointment because you aren't a very good presenter. It's our strange attempt to set the bar really low.

So why do we make the CONFESSION? CONFESSING your nervousness to your audience lets you off the hook for performing well! While the audience may chuckle politely at your CONFESSION, many audience members stop listening carefully because they know that you are probably too "nervous" to meet their needs.

NEVER CONFESS to the audience your nervousness and chances are, they will not know. Remember that while anxiety feels bad, the truth is, it rarely shows. In fact, while you are worrying about your anxiety, the audience is concentrating on your message and whether or not you are meeting their needs.

I challenge you to live by the vow, NO APOLOGIES, NO EXCUSSES, NO CONFESSIONS. Your audience will thank you!

For much more about this and other Presentation Secrets, check out the book "15 Presentation Secrets: How to WOW Even the Toughest Audience," by Debbie Bailey available at trainer2go.com/ebooks.html.

Debbie Bailey is author of the book "15 Presentation Secrets – How to WOW Even the Toughest Audience." She is well known for her life changing presentation skills classes. In addition to training at some of the most successful companies in Corporate America, Debbie has also taught Presentation Skills for United States Marines, San Diego State University, and UCLA Extension.

Make Up Excuses Why You Can

By Rachelle Disbennett–Lee

We all have excuses as to why we can't do something. Ask anyone and they can give you a million excuses why it can't be done, why they haven't moved forward on their goals, and on and on. Making up excuses takes a lot of energy and time. So since, as humans, we seem to enjoy making up excuses, I have a great idea. Lets make up excuses why we can.

Since we all are experts in making up excuses, we won't need much training in this area, just a shift of focus. Instead of focusing on what we can't do, lets focus on what we can do. Instead of coming up with all kinds of excuses why it won't work, lets focus on why it can work. Get the idea?

Instead of focusing energy on excuses that don't serve you in moving forward, make up excuses that inspire and enthuse you to do what you want to do. Excuses like "there is no time like the present, I am old enough, I am just the person to do the job, I know all the ways it can work." Actually, there are an

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unlimited number of excuses as to why you can. Be creative and think of as many as you like.

Coach Lee is a Certified Master Coach specializing in working with business owners and professionals in being more profitable and productive while staying sane and balanced. Coach Lee is the publisher of the award winning e-zine, 365 Days of Coaching, because life happens every day. Visit Coach Lee at her websites

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Make Up Excuses Why You Can
Developing a Championship Attitude
Making Excuses
I'm Sorry! Blame-Game or Accountability?
5 Presentation Secrets That Will Change Your Life

Competition Commando
How To FINALLY Stop Smoking...Once and For All!
Blog Biz For Beginners
Travel Cheap! Travel Well!
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