

7 GESTURES FOR BETTER SPEAKING



PowerSpeaking, Inc. coach, author and public speaker Rachel Rodriguez shares her inside advice on how to gesture for more impactful speaking – in any situation.

1 ESTABLISH A HOME BASE

While conveying energy is important, you don't want to overwhelm your audience with an abundance of movement that distracts from your message. Practice a neutral stance: Keep a tall spine, arms relaxed at sides, and weight evenly spaced. It might not feel comfortable, but this stance is effective for conveying a clean, professional look.



2 TAKE UP MORE SPACE

More often than not we encourage clients to gesture larger and more frequently. Arms should float away from the body while keeping chest high and proud. Leave a visible amount of space between the armpits and sides, but don't extend arms into a full locked-out reach.



3 TAKE YOUR TIME

Many speakers don't gesture as a way to avoid their own anxiety or outside judgement, when in reality movement and taking time to communicate can support you overall! Speakers who speak slowly and use gestures demonstrate a thoughtful, confident presence that is more likely to be taken seriously by their audience.



4 GIVE AUDIO AND 'VIDEO'

Using words alone without gestures is like only getting the audio input from your TV: it's ok, but it's not as engaging and it might lose your attention. By adding *descriptive* gestures you plug the audience into picturing your content and staying with the story.



5 AVOID CROSSING YOUR ARMS

Many speakers fidget with their hands or their cross arms (in front or behind) to manage nerves. However, these gestures make you seem closed and shutdown from your audience. These movements become 'noise in the system' that undercut your leadership presence.



6 PRACTICE AND REPEAT

As Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage" for you to practice! Throughout your everyday, pay attention to your rest positions and use gestures in all conversations. Over time it will cause less anxiety and become second nature to gesture in formal and casual settings.



7 DEMONSTRATE KEY INSIGHTS

Listen to your own concepts and consider how to strategically bring them to life. Numbers can easily be given significance through expression. When referencing a list, gesture from high to low or side to side. Contrasting points are opportunities to draw your audience to attention.



Gestures should be deliberate, strategic and big! They engage the audience, create a dynamic message and convey a confident, competent speaker.