

## **Your Message**

1. Focus on three key messages. No more.
2. If you try to communicate more than three points, people will remember nothing.
3. If you have more than three points, then write an article or book, but leave the extra points out of your verbal presentation.
4. If you doubt this first point, then take out a piece of paper and write down everything you remember from the last speech you watched on C-SPAN.
5. State your most important message first - don't bury your main message.
6. A good speaker/media communicator is also a good editor.
7. If you don't edit your story down to the three most important points, then some editor or audience member will edit your story down to the three least important points.
8. If you could write the headline and the first three sentences to your story in the newspaper, what would they be?
9. If you can't answer this, you aren't ready for your interview or speech.
10. Messages that come out of your mouth need to be shorter, simpler, and less complex than messages you put in press releases, columns, brochures, manuals and books.
11. Try to state your main messages in positive terms.
12. Try to sum up your messages in 30 seconds.
13. All additional time, whether it is 2 minutes or one hour should be used to flesh out your three main points via more examples and case studies.
14. When preparing your messages, avoid the temptation of gathering more and more information and facts. You likely know 100 times more information already than your audience or a reporter does. Instead, focus on narrowing and refining your message.
15. Repeat your message often using different examples, phrases, and ordering.
16. Repeat your message often using different phrases, examples, and ordering.
17. Repeat your message often using different ordering, examples, and phrases.
18. Brainstorm every possible message point you could make on your subject. Then go back and cross off all of them until you are down to three.
19. Once you have eliminated possible message points, resist the temptation of going back to that point, unless it helps flesh out one of your main message points.
20. Avoid big words when speaking. You won't look smart; you'll just seem like a pompous individual.

21. Abstraction is your enemy. If you are communicating abstract concepts, give extra preparation to vivid analogies and word pictures that can be visualized by your audience.
22. Don't "dumb" your message down. It takes more intellectual rigor and discipline to communicate in one minute than it does to blab on and on for 10 minutes.
23. Questions don't matter. The subject matters. You could waste 100 hours brainstorming on possible questions reporters could ask, of which you have zero control. Instead, focus on your key messages and answers.
24. It doesn't matter if a reporter is smart, well prepared, or stupid and/or lazy. In fact, if you prepare properly for your interviews, the dumber the reporter the better, because you will have a greater chance of getting your quotes used.
25. A speech that READS well will sound HORRIBLE.
26. Be conversational.
27. In writing, it is OK to write sentence after sentence that starts with subjects, then links to verbs, and then objects. You will sound very dull if you talk this way.
28. Don't dodge questions! Answer the question in eight seconds or less and then bridge back to your main message for the next 25 seconds or so.
29. If a reporter asks you a complex, detailed, five-part question, focus on answering the one question that leads you back to talking about your message points.
30. When listening to a reporter's question (and you must listen very carefully), don't think about how your vast database of knowledge can provide 10,000 new facts to answer every nuance of the reporter's question.
31. Instead, focus on how you can honestly answer the question in a way that allows you to talk about one, two or three of your message points.
32. Don't just react to the message; always initiate your own message.
33. Focus, focus, and focus on YOUR message.
34. It's not good enough to appear interesting, witty or good looking. You must deliver a memorable message or you have failed.
35. The beauty of focusing on only three message points is that now you don't have the pressure of trying to remember an entire cabinet file full of facts.
36. It is not important that you repeat your message word for word.
37. It is not important that you use the same examples each time you present your message.
38. It is important that you stick to the same message points over and over again.
39. When appropriate, call members of your audience in advance to get their viewpoints on issues you wish to address.
40. Incorporate these views into your message.

41. Don't guess.

42. If you are unsure, don't say it.