



Yikes! The Client Presentation

by Leo Bottary
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Now that you have the skills necessary to develop and write all your creative ideas and strategic thinking, it's time to deliver a formal presentation to the client. Yikes!

The good news is you're far more experienced at this than you realize. Just think about your elementary school days. Remember show and tell? You stood in front of the class and described the attributes of your favorite stuffed animal. You passed it around so that its softness was not simply a matter of description but demonstration. Or think about the "what I did over my summer vacation" presentations where you told entertaining stories of your shenanigans at summer camp. Turning to more recent times, you've probably told a funny story or relayed an interesting anecdote to two or more colleagues standing in the hallway.

Still nervous? Then think about this. Toni Louw, who for my money is the world's best presentation coach, told me a story about a time when he was a young man. After delivering a speech in South Africa where Toni was dripping with sweat from nervousness, he was approached by a man as he was walking off the stage. The man looked at him and said, "Nice speech, just don't be so selfish next time." Toni understood exactly what he meant. Most of us are nervous because we care more about how we're going to be perceived than we do about our audience. To this day, whenever I feel nervous before a presentation, I think of the experience Toni was so generous enough to share with me.

I've always thought of presentations as "conversing with passion" - enough passion to have an impact on a group larger than two or three, but a conversation nonetheless. I would make two recommendations. 1) Contact Louws Management to schedule some presentation training for you and your team. And as it's often said, if you don't get help from Louws Management, then get help somewhere. 2) Create your own opportunities to make presentations. For example, at each staff meeting, have your team members take turns standing up and presenting their reports to the group. Presenting to your peers can actually be tougher in some ways than presenting to clients. It's a great way to practice. And just like being a great writer, becoming a great presenter takes practice, practice, practice!