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Follow your heart.

One of our key pieces of advice we give our delegates is to speak from the heart.

It doesn't matter how intelligent or knowledgeable you are, if you don't engage your audience from your heart felt opinion you will fail to connect and persuade.

So we were very interested to read about how important this is when you want to be creative. In a Fast Company Compass blog - <https://www.fastcompany.com/90356441/the-30-second-trick-that-can-make-anyone-more-creative?> we read about a new study published by The Universities of Connecticut and Illinois in the Journal of Consumer asking the question: "If you're charged with designing a new product or marketing campaign, what's the better source of creativity: your brain or your heart?"

Their conclusion? Your heart.

They found it's more important to think about how your audience or users *feel* than how they might *act*. And once you know that, you can actually change your own thinking to be more creative.

They concluded that when you have more empathy your cognitive flexibility improves - and when that happens - **you become a better creative thinker.**

Silence speaks volumes

We were asked a question by a young delegate who was attending an agency European get together in London.

She asked: "How do I get their attention when I stand up to speak when most of them are chatting amongst themselves?"

We told her not to attempt to speak until the room was quiet and the delegates were looking at her. In order to achieve that she needed to stay silent until the room was quiet.

We explained that **silence is a powerful hook and attention getter.** If the delegates don't hear you speak, after 15 seconds or less they will wonder why and look at you.

We told her there was a formula to fill these seconds so she was building up confidence and presence. It goes as follows:

STOP

BREATHE IN - to your diaphragm

LOOK - around the whole group

LISTEN - let the noise settle.

FEEL - you're an orchestra conductor and you choose the moment to start.

AND - don't forget to SMILE!

Next time we saw her she said with a wonderful big grin:

“It worked! It worked!”

Re-finding your inner drive

Have you noticed how many tennis players between points will turn to look at the back of the court to pause and re-focus particularly after losing a point. The British player Johanna Konta does it regularly and is now in the semi-finals of the French Open.

Can we learn something from this?

Well Barry has a story of speaking from a printed script where inexplicably he had the pages in the wrong order.

When he turned from Page 3 he found Page 5. He knew he was on his own.

He says: “Your mind moves very quickly in moments like that. After the immediate moment of panic and if you are well prepared you pause and you re-focus.”

Barry finished his speech very relieved. One delegate came up to him afterwards and said: “Barry that was a wonderful 18 seconds pause you used. It made me really think about what you were saying.”

So if a speech or presentation is going wrong pause and re-focus. Trust in yourself.

What did you say?

A vicar friend was asked to speak at the Rotary Club about marital sex. When asked by his wife what he spoke about he mumbled the first thing that came into his head – yachting.

Afterwards on the street, a neighbour came up to his wife and said how much they all liked the speech.

“Really?” She said. “I’m a bit surprised. There are only three times he tried it. Once he got sick and the other times his hat blew off.”

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2019.

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