

***WINNING BUSINESS
PRESENTATIONS™***

MINI-COURSE

PART THREE

by

CATH DALEY

<http://www.cathdaley.com>

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Winning Business Presentations™ 7 Part Mini-Course

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info@cathdaley.com

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Cath Daley

Cath Daley Ltd

171 Liverpool Road,

Crosby,

Liverpool,

L23 0QN

Merseyside,

England

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Welcome to **Part Three** of your **Winning Business Presentations™** Mini-course.

In **Part Three** we talk about the **essential** ingredient for thinking on your feet (and you may be surprised by what it is!)

Let's start with the one about the funeral

"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy."
Jerry Seinfeld

And did you know that up to 75% of people experience glossophobia on a regular basis? (that's a fear of public speaking by the way).

So what is it about standing up and speaking to a group that makes people so uncomfortable?



When I ask participants on my training days what it is about public speaking that they are fearful about it's not the actual *speaking* that most people are afraid of, because most of us do it all the time every day (even when sleeping in some cases!). The fear comes from being afraid of usually one or more of the following.....

- Feeling stupid
- Looking foolish
- Being embarrassed
- Drying up
- Sweating profusely
- Being boring
- Not being able to deal with hecklers
- Mind going blank
- Being the centre of attention
- Making a mess of it
- Not being able to think quickly enough

..... and there are many other reasons too and all of them can be overcome when you learn to manage the **three elements** that are the basis of the **Winning Business Presentations™** approach.

What are these three elements?

The three elements are

1. Managing the **Message**
2. Managing the **Delivery**
3. Managing the **State** (the part that most presentation skills trainings miss)

and if you want to be outstanding then you have to **master all of them.**

So what do I mean by “managing the state”?

It’s about being able to manage your own state and the state of your audience. And we’ll start with managing your own state.

Here’s the theory bit.....

All of our behaviours are state dependent.

In other words what we do (our behaviours) depends upon how we feel (our internal state) – as you know if you’ve ever seen someone throw something across the room, or hit the table in anger, or grit their teeth or scream out in frustration. These reactions are a result of the internal feelings of anger or frustration.



In the same way people often do things like punch the air when they’ve scored a goal, or won a race or watched their team win. This reaction is due to feelings of joy, excitement or success.

And we don’t necessarily consciously think before we do them. They just click in when we **feel** a certain way.

What has this got to do with presenting?

The behaviours many people are afraid of, e.g. the sweating palms, the shaking hands, the dry mouth, not being able to think quickly enough etc., all depend upon your **internal** state.

The brain and body are often treated separately but they are one system and your internal state is made up of your physiological state as well as your emotional state. It’s when **you learn to manage both** effectively that you become more resilient and resourceful and able to deal with whatever comes up.



If you want to be able to give a great presentation every time, then you have to be in the **optimum physiological state** as well as feeling good emotionally and most trainings don't even consider this aspect of peak performance.

Are you “in the zone”?

Have you ever had a day when everything seemed to go exactly the way you wanted it to? It seemed that you were on a roll? that everything was effortless?

In sport it's often described as “being in the zone” and this state of optimum performance is described in the book “*FLOW- the psychology of optimal experience*” by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced Me – high Chick-sent-me-high). It's that feeling of complete engagement in an activity so that you don't even notice the time passing – like doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself?

(If you want to find out more about *FLOW* a good place to start is the You Tube links below:

a brief PowerPoint overview of *FLOW* - <http://tinyurl.com/5u8emho>

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explains *FLOW* - <http://tinyurl.com/5vloo4>

And you can find out more about the book at Amazon : <http://tinyurl.com/2u662q>

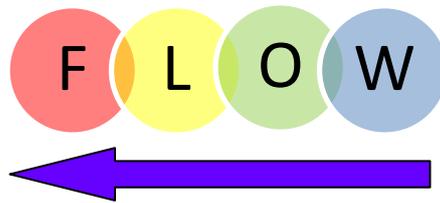
You may need to copy and paste the links into your browser).

FLOW is the state where we perform at our best and we can facilitate that happening by being in the optimum **physiological** state when we are involved in presenting.

There are four building blocks of this high performing physiological state that help to get your brain in the optimum state to present.

Many years ago I put together a simple four step F.L.O.W. process that takes about 5 minutes to do, that I still use every day. It gets you into this optimum state really quickly. I originally developed it for my students to help them get rid of the nerves before exams and improve their performance (it increased

their grades by 19% on average) and I now teach it to all of my clients and on all of my trainings because it works **whatever** you are doing.



People are surprised by just how quick and easy it is to do these 4 steps and they often tell me that it's one of the most useful things they have ever learned because when they use it every day, not just when presenting, they find that it reduces their stress at work, they feel less frustrated, more energised and focused and it has a knock on effect at home as well.

The first step of the F.L.O.W process and the one that you have to begin with because it is the **essential** ingredient for thinking quickly is



What? Yes, believe it or not, it's actually water.

Water is crucial to mental and physical performance because it is needed for almost every biological process, mechanical action and chemical reaction that takes place in the body. When we are dehydrated the transmission speed of signals in the brain slows down and your ability to process information is impaired (to what extent depends upon the level of dehydration). Yes, ***you actually think more slowly when you are dehydrated.***

Most people wait until they feel thirsty before drinking water, but thirst lags behind the body's needs.

Levels of dehydration are increased by sugar, salt, caffeine and alcohol. I see people eating biscuits, bacon sandwiches, crisps, and drinking coffee, coke, and even alcohol before getting up to present and this just means that you are not putting yourself in the best physiological state which means that you are more likely to feel nervous, lose track when you're speaking, lack concentration when listening, feel uncomfortable and get stressed out.

So if you want to be able to think quickly on your feet then you need to ensure that you are properly hydrated.

You can read more about the effects of water on thinking and learning in :
"Smart Moves" by Carla Hannaford (p138-145) (ISBN 0-915556-27-8)

Your Third Action Challenge:

You may find this more challenging than the previous ones because it involves making changes in your drinking and eating habits! But if you give it a go I guarantee that you will notice a difference in your performance.

- ✓ Have good quality water available all through the day to sip at 20 min intervals (that's all you need generally speaking).
- ✓ If you have a salty or sugary lunch, follow up with water to counteract the dehydrating effects of these foods.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of tea and coffee you drink each day and replace it with water.
- ✓ Before going in to a meeting or giving a presentation have a drink of water.
- ✓ Have water during the meeting rather than the tea or coffee offered and resist having the biscuits!
- ✓ Go for water at a networking event rather than wine or beer.

I know that these may seem to be trivial things to do but they really do make a difference to your ability to think on your feet.....

Until next time,

Kind regards,

Cath

In Part Four we'll cover **the** biggest mistake that presenters make (even some professional speakers) and how **you** can avoid it.