



Craig Valentine's  
**52**  
Speaking  
Tips

Keep your audience on the Edge of their Seats!

## 5 Ways to Ignite your Audience with your Introduction

Here's a traditional introduction for a speaker:

*Our next speaker is the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking. With more than 175,000 Toastmasters and 68 countries and over 25,000 contestants, he came home with the first prize trophy and a significant amount of national and international recognition.*

*In addition, our speaker is absolutely oblivious to the fact that we could care less what he has done, and that we are much more interested in what we will be able to do after hearing him.*

*Moreover, our speaker seems to have no idea that we're simply hoping for his autobiographical introduction to end, so we can start clapping as if we are interested.*

*Finally, he doesn't realize we are beginning to say to ourselves, "Wow, this entire introduction is about him. Therefore, I bet his entire speech is about him also. Why did I even come here today?"*

*So with that said, please help me welcome the person who would have the least effective introduction in history, were it not for the thousands of other presenters who have introductions just like his.*

*Help me welcome the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking, Craig Valentine."*



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Now what's wrong with that introduction? I'm sure you get the point, but how similar is your introduction to that old one? Is it about you or is about your audience and what they'll get out of your speech? Everything you do should be about the audience, including your introduction.

See, your introduction flavors your entire speech. You can either use it to get the audience fired up and excited about what they're going to hear, or you can use it to boost yourself up in their eyes.

You can use it to whet their appetites with the valuable tools they're sure to get in your presentation, or again you can use it to boost yourself up in their eyes.

Here's one thing I know for sure. Once I changed my introduction from me-focused to you-focused, I gave myself an extreme advantage before I even said one word, and the same thing will happen to you too.

So here are five ways to fire up your audience with your introduction:

1. Start it off about them.

Make your very first sentence about them. So instead of starting off with, "Our next speaker today is the 1999 World Champion," start with something like this: "There's a definite process for keeping your audience on the edge of their seats. It's not easy to come by, it's not easy to use. However, once you master it, you'll find doors opening for you that you never even knew existed."

Now I don't know if you noticed this, but there were five "you" or "your" words used in those two sentences, so you've got to make it you-focused first. Start with them, not with yourself.



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How many you-related words are in your introduction? Count them and make sure there are many more you-related words than there are I-related words.

2. Make a promise.

Don't be bashful. Let them know exactly what they'll get, but also let them know what those tools will empower them to do and to receive. In the example above, I tell them they'll get a process that empowers them to keep their audience on the edge of their seats, and rewards them with more open doors and opportunities. That's a pretty compelling promise. So what compelling promise do you make with your introduction?

3. You want to build your credibility, but only with your relevant credentials.

For example, I have a specific introduction for my team-building workshops, and this introduction includes a piece that mentions how I was part of a team that won three consecutive East Coast Conference championships, and I played in two NCAA March Madness tournaments as a college basketball player.

Now because this part of my history relates to teams, it belongs in the introduction on team building. However, as proud as I am about those basketball accomplishments, do you think they belong in an introduction if the speech is about presentation skills? No.

Look, if I was sitting in the audience and I heard the introducer say, "Our presentation coach today was also a college basketball player," I know I'd be thinking, "Well, while he was dribbling up and down the court, was he giving a speech? Because if not, why do I care?"



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Only use relevant information, no matter how well-rounded you are. Even if you're extremely proud of something, look, if it doesn't fit, don't force it. Leave it out.

So is all the information in your introduction relevant to the subject at hand? That's what you want to ask yourself.

4. Use the introduction to set up something in your speech.

For example, when I begin speaking I often call back to my introduction by saying something like this: "Do you know that even with all those accolades, people still don't like me? You know why they don't like me?" and then I go into a humorous story about why they don't like me, but it's all set up by the accolades – the relevant ones – in my introduction.

So find ways to make your introduction seamlessly feed into your speech. How do you currently do that? How do you currently tie your speech back into your introduction?

5. Take everything about you and turn it into everything for them.

Now if you do this, your audience will be ready and excited to receive your message. For example, instead of stating, "Craig Valentine is the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking," I could make that actually matter to them by saying, "The process you'll pick up today helped our speaker become the 1999 World Champion, and you can use it to become a speaker in high demand."

So you get it? Turn everything about you into everything for them. Doing this will get them fired up to hear your message.



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It tickles me today, because now when the introducer gets to the end of my introduction, she usually says, “Are you ready for the process?” and at that point people actually being to yell out, “Yes!”

Let me tell you, that’s some great energy to walk into for a speech. So are you turning everything about you into everything for them?

Follow those five guideposts and watch as your audience members lean forward in their seat and anxiously await your presentation. That’s how you ignite your audience with your introduction.

Until next week, keep speaking up.



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## Craig's Top 10 Recommended Resources

1. <http://www.edgeoftheirseats.com/>
2. <http://www.createyourkeynote.com/>
3. <http://www.dynamicdeliverydevices.com/>
4. <http://www.learntoownthestage.com/>
5. <http://www.wcspeaking.com/>
6. <http://www.askcraigvalentine.com/>
7. <http://www.audioforspeakers.com>
8. <http://www.resourcesforspeakers.com>
9. <http://www.thebookonspeaking.com>
10. <http://www.automateyourspeaking.com>

## Craig Valentine's Background & Results

**Craig Valentine, MBA**, an award-winning speaker, management trainer, and speech coach, has traveled the world helping speakers breathe life into their presentations. He has spoken in the United States, Taiwan, Canada, Jamaica, Qatar (Doha), England, Bahamas, Hong Kong, and China. In 1999 he won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters International after competing with more than 25,000 contestants from 14 countries.

- *The conference was this past weekend and with your "virtual coaching" I was able to give my own "Killer Keynote". I stood on that stage and gave the speech I had always dreamed of giving-- they laughed where I wanted them to laugh -- they teared up where I wanted to touch them the most -- they came into the scene of my stories -- they heard my message and believed. It was a wonderful moment for me and I will always consider it a gift. Now I would be lying if I said I didn't enjoy the standing ovation at the end...*Susan Lamb-Robinson, Speaker; Toronto, Canada
- *"I now deliver better presentations in 20 minutes than I did in 60 minutes; moreover, my closing ratio has increased 350% thanks to the lessons learned in The Edge of Their Seats Storytelling Home-Study Course. Craig's 9 Step Formula has changed my*



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*life.* "Kevin D. Gross, MBA, President, Alumni Connection.com  
[www.AlumniConnection.com](http://www.AlumniConnection.com)

- *I learned more from you in one hour than I have in years of giving speeches. You are a master of your game. Thank you for inspiring me to find my own voice and greatness as a speaker!! Thank you! Pele Raymond Ugboajah; Author, Speaker, Business Coach; DreamBanc, L.L.C.*
- *Craig Valentine is one of America's finest speakers, 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking and author of what I consider to be the bible of public speaking, "Nuts and Bolts of Public Speaking". He's also got several audio and DVD's on the subject. Craig was the driving force and the biggest reason I made it to the World Championships last year in Calgary. The two days I spent with him, in his living room, in Baltimore, completely changed the way approach public speaking...Martin Presse, 2008 Finalist for World Champion of Public Speaking*
- *Hey man I know you are busy but I wanted to bring you up to speed on us. We just returned from San Francisco where we spoke at the national convention of NAMI. It was great. No notes, we both spoke for about an hour. Based on all the comments they liked it. There were a number of people there who had heard us before and they were amazed at the changes we made. Thanks! Bill Neely; [www.billandtena.com](http://www.billandtena.com); Courage in Crisis*
- *Thank you 1000 times over. I just came home from Niagara, what a fantastic time I had. All of your techniques worked. I offered 7 free, 1 hour consultations if booked today offered only in January. I not only booked those I had a line up afterward. Sarah Hilton; Speaker on Mental Health, Toronto*
- *Thanks for your changes...I gave the speech last Monday and everyone raved about it. Thank you so much for your help. I went in very confident, knowing it was a very good speech thanks to your advice and changes. In fact, they hope to get me back again and several said they want to find out where else I am speaking so they can come hear me again. Christine Duvivier; Managing Director, Impact Partners*