



Craig Valentine's  
**52**  
**Speaking**  
**Tips**

Keep your audience on the Edge of their Seats!

## 3 Physical Keys to Building your Connection with your Audience

So often speakers worry about what they're going to say and how they're going to say it. However, much of what happens onstage has more to do with your staging than it does with your actual content and delivery.

Here are three staging ideas you can use to deepen your connection with your audience.

### **1. Have nothing between you and your audience.**

That means, don't have a table between you, don't have a lectern between you, don't have a projector between you – don't have anything between you and your audience.

When somebody crosses his arms when you're talking to him, what kind of posture is he in? That's called a closed posture, and most of the time it's uninviting. Well, guess what? Having something between you and your audience is the equivalent of a closed posture. It's like you're hiding something, and you're immediately damaging your trust level with your audience. So you want to be wide open and stand and deliver, with nothing between you.

### **2. Group your audience members together, and move them up front.**

This is especially important when you have a speaking room that has many more seats than it has people to fill them.



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For example, once I spoke in Virginia to 400 educators, but the auditorium had 1,000 seats. So when the attendees came in, they scattered all around the place. That's not good. I had the meeting planner make an announcement, getting everyone to move forward and fill in the front center seats. In other words, move front and center.

I hesitate to describe it like this, but it's a good memorable analogy, so I will. Think of gathering wood to keep a fire burning. If the wood is piled up together, there's a better chance it will keep burning and it will burn bright and it will burn high.

Gathering people together creates a spark too. See, when audience members are isolated, they won't laugh as loud as they will when they're in the midst of a group. That's just a fact. They can lose themselves in the group and not feel so self-conscious, because after all, everyone around them is laughing, too. It makes the energy much more contagious – in a good way. A great way.

Here's a key, though. Get the announcer or the meeting planner or someone else to move the people around. When they hear from you, the first thing they hear should be your message, not an order for them to move. Don't give them orders, give them the message. Don't make yourself the bad person.

You don't want the first thing you hear from your audience to be, "Who is he to tell me to move? We just met!" before you even get into your message. That's not good energy to walk into.

So Step #1 is have nothing between you and your audience. Step #2 is making sure you group your audience together.



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### **3. Go out into your audience during your speech.**

I'm not quite sure why it is, but so many speakers are afraid to break that wall where their audience starts. Perhaps it's because they're afraid to be too far away from their notes. Or perhaps there's some other kind of comfort in just standing in front of the room.

From experience, I know you can build a great connection by actually breaking through that wall and going out into your audience and becoming one of them. It works well because it allows you to call on individuals from all sides of the room, and to have a conversation with them.

Instead of always bringing volunteers up on the stage with you – which you should do at times – try going out to them. Audiences love this, and they love feeling good, knowing that you're comfortable enough to be that close to them.

Just be careful who you stand too close to. I have been grabbed and pinched a few times, but I'll leave that alone for now.

So the three steps are:

1. Have nothing between you and your audience.
2. Group your audience members together.
3. Go out into your audience during your speech.

There are lots of other things you can do too. Keep the room a little bit cooler than normal, because when people gather together they automatically start to generate some heat, so you want to keep the room a little bit cooler.



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The list is inexhaustible. Just make sure you're aware and you do at least these three things.

That's it for this week. Until next week, remember – 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 life."*Kevin D. Gross, MBA, President, Alumni Connection.com  
[www.AlumniConnection.com](http://www.AlumniConnection.com)



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- *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*