



SIX NEEDS OF YOUR UPCOMING AUDIENCE

Tony Robbins is an American motivational speaker, personal finance instructor, and self-help author. In a LinkedIn post he published in November of 2014, titled “The 6 Human Needs: Why We Do What We Do,” he wrote, “While each human being is unique, we also share nervous systems that function in the same way. There are also six fundamental needs that everyone has in common, and all behavior is simply an attempt to meet those six needs.”

According to Robbins, those six fundamental needs are:

1. **Certainty:** assurance you can avoid pain and gain pleasure
2. **Significance:** feeling unique, important, or special
3. **Connection/Love:** a strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something
4. **Growth:** an expansion of capacity, capability, or understanding
5. **Contribution:** a sense of service and focus on helping, giving to, and supporting others
6. **Variety:** the need for the unknown, change, and new stimuli

In your quest to move an audience closer to your cause, how many of these elements do you consider when preparing a speech? When listening to other presentations, can you identify these forces at work? Do you formulate your speeches and presentations with these essential ingredients in mind? Think about how you might improve your next presentation by addressing each of these areas. For example:

1. **Certainty:** How can you make your audience more comfortable with you? How can you establish a sense of trust so that all involved are comfortable and able to enjoy your presentation?
2. **Significance:** Are you presenting your material in a way that causes participants to feel involved and like this information is pertinent to them individually?
3. **Connection/Love:** How can you strip away the any barriers between you and those you're presenting to? How can you encourage connection through content, participation, or subject matter?
4. **Growth:** Are you introducing concepts that will make your audience's life better/different/more interesting? There's a way to make even the most mundane topics more interesting and applicable—it's all in the presentation of that information. Make sure your message leaves participants feeling inspired, motivated, and ready to act.
5. **Contribution:** Give your audience an opportunity to feel involved. Whether throughout your actual presentation, or with strategic call-to-actions that give them goals or tasks to focus on after the presentation—help them feel like they can leverage your message to contribute to something larger than themselves.
6. **Variety:** Do the unexpected. We change our clothes, eat different foods, and watch different television shows, all in the pursuit of variety. We strive to avoid monotony, recognizing

just how punishing it can be. Yet, we reduce much of our speech communication to buzz words and bullet points.

DELIVER ON THOSE NEEDS BY REMOVING YOUR MASK.

Far too often speakers forget to infuse their speeches with a human element—what Tony Robbins notes in his six fundamental needs. To address this and ensure a connection, there's a certain amount of vulnerability or emotion that is required. The great Maya Angelou once said, "People will forget what you say, people will forget what you do, but they will never forget how you make them feel." Emotion is one of the greatest tools a public speaker can use to captivate his or her audience. In fact, it could be argued that without emotion your message will likely fail.

Perhaps then, the next time you're up on a podium, consider the spirit of Angelou's statement. Remember that people won't be able to recall the precise words you deliver, or the exact way you present your ideas, but they will reflect on the way you make them feel.

How do you do meet your audience's needs and accomplish this vulnerability in a professional setting? Give your audience some part of yourself that is authentic and real. Peel away your mask, especially if you want to make your mark in the corporate world where everyone is expected to wear a facade of some kind. And then show them who is behind the veil. Offer your audience authentic emotion and vulnerability.

The most successful communicators in the corporate world are those who can remove their masks. They show who they really are, and relate to their audience by revealing their humanity. One way of doing this is to share your failures. Revealing vulnerabilities is an effective way to strip away your mask and help people understand that you're just like them. You've had challenges. You've tried things. You've failed.

In other words, it's not always a straight line to the top. On a climb in the Andes, my team and I were on our ninth day of climbing. Less than four hours from the summit I fell through a crevasse. While everyone on the team was safe, this eliminated our opportunity to reach the summit, and caused us to adjust our methods to continue climbing safely. Not unlike careers, we sometimes fail to reach the goal despite our best efforts. We are vulnerable to events we can't always control. It's the great leaders of the world that can show some vulnerability and say, "It hasn't always been easy." Don't be afraid to remove your corporate mask. If you can help an audience member see you as just another regular person who's faced challenges, overcame them, and found success, then you increase the chances to make a personal and lasting connection.

As you seek to address these six needs through increased vulnerability on your part, you'll find greater success in accomplishing the goals set for your presentation.