

Amanda Smith You're listening to *The Body Sphere* with Amanda Smith on air and online at RN.

So what methods and techniques are on offer nowadays for public speaking? Gary Wohlman coaches people to give presentations at work, to make speeches at weddings, anytime really that you're called on to get up in front of a crowd. Gary, we call it public *speaking* but you reckon that 55% of communication is *non-verbal*...?

Gary Wohlman: So much more about what the audience actually remembers is from the visual delivery. Even the choreography of taking different stances and positions on stage, people remember these far more than the actual sounds in the voice which is, from the same statistic, 38% of what people remember. Which leaves only 7% for those really important words we want to get right the first time.

Amanda Smith: So 7% is content...?

Gary Wohlman: It's much less that any of us have any idea.

Amanda Smith: Well all that means, as you say, is that the way you stand and move, your posture, your gestures - which are precisely the things we tend not to pay much attention to: you know, when you're preparing a speech or a presentation you don't think about those things - but you're saying they are terribly important to your success or otherwise. Now as you're speaking you are of course doing lots of hand gestures.

Gary Wohlman: I do that.

Amanda Smith: It is curious to be talking about this on the radio because actually all we have apparently are our voices, the verbal. But, how do you get people thinking about their physical selves when they're preparing to do some kind of talk?

Gary Wohlman: By setting the stage like an archaeologist for others to do the same, to free the physical tensions, the emotional stored energy that's one layer underneath and underneath that are these tremendous gifts of creative expression we all have. We're all buried in the landscape of our body, the chief instrument of communication. So I've created dozens of tools to help people match their inner intentions with their outer expressions. One is called the nine squares grid. If you can picture a noughts and crosses game with three squares across and three squares down, these nine squares are different zones. And to imagine yourself on any stage of life, whether it's talking in front of one or hundreds of people, and to move this holographic grid wherever you go, there are certain consistent features about the grid. For example, 'this is what I stand for' - that expression often has more meaning when taking centre stage, taking the stand of command. Whenever I come back to that same square, the audience then becomes trained subliminally to know, 'Oh, he's going to talk about what he believes in again, and he's coming back to that central square'. And, sooner or later we always talk about time, past, present and future. Isn't it clearer then to have the past be on one side, let's say to the left. If you see me moving that way you, the audience, know subliminally what I'm going to refer to even before I open my mouth.

Amanda Smith: I get what you're saying but it sounds kind of facile. Does it really work?

Gary Wohlman: It works really well.

Amanda Smith: How do you make it look real?

Gary Wohlman: It's not a fixed system. So I often like to speak about the past on the left, where we're headed to the future on the right. So I have someone who is inexperienced practice one or two sentences like that. Then I'll ask them to do the opposite. Or, if we look at it in even another way, in our bodies given that we have knees that bend as we walk forward towards our future, why not put the past in the back of us and move forward. So I have the person practice it in these three different ways and at the end of that they are going to say, 'Well it felt much more natural to me in my own choreography, without being told what to do, to do it this way'. So if I am watching anybody, there's something that comes to life in moving in a particular direction - whether it's with the hand, the arm, the face, the body - and everybody feels it.

Amanda Smith: Gary Wohlman is a presentation coach.