

## **Performance of a Presenter**

When a presenter comes across as comfortable, confident and natural, they're easy to watch. This is because we have the ability to empathise. If someone appears awkward and unsure, we feel awkward for them. As we mentioned in previous module, sentiment, underlying meaning or 'sub-text' cannot be conveyed as easily by words alone. These elements are picked up on a subconscious level through tonality, facial expressions, and body language.

In this module we're going to look about the different *performance* techniques and how best to build a bond with our audience.

### **Rapport**

One reason we like to know how people feel about what's being said is because it helps us to determine whether they are a similar type of person to ourselves. Do they have similar morals or a sense of humour similar to our own? Relationships are built on trust and rapport. We like people who we feel are similar to us or people we would strive to be more like. The most sought-after presenters are often those that the viewer does not see as a 'personality' but as a 'friend,'. This is because the presenter, by communicating openly and honestly, has enabled the viewer to put their trust in them and build a rapport. If we are putting on an act, too nervous to show any emotions, or just not very expressive it's hard for the viewer to make that connection. Directors like to work with Presenters that are open and have a quality that is known as 'Vulnerability'. This doesn't refer to someone who is physically weak or at risk nor does it imply that they are mentally susceptible, it simply means that they are not afraid to let their guard down and be themselves.

### **Be Yourself**

In truth, it is not as easy to be yourself in front of a camera as you might think. Very often, people who are warm, easy-going, and even the life and soul of the party, change the moment they look into the lens. They become formal and stiff. This often happens to new Presenters because they are holding back from being their true

selves. But to be a good presenter, you need to be brave and confident enough to reveal the real person inside.

### **Charm & Charisma**

These two personality traits tend to go together because when someone comes across as charismatic, the charm shines through.

Charismatic people are comfortable in their own skin and confident in their own opinions and ideas. Your beliefs, judgement, and approach to different circumstances are what set you apart and you should celebrate these as they're your biggest selling points as a Presenter. Your opinions and beliefs are all subjective and depend on your personal experiences. Not everyone will agree with you, but they don't have to, so long as you are genuine, fair and, considerate and you have nothing to hide.

A charming and charismatic person most importantly does not try to make you like them. They're not trying too hard. It's trying too hard that makes us look a bit desperate and desperation is not an attractive quality especially on camera.

A professional presenter has prepared thoroughly and done all their hard work before going on set. All their scripts will have been read, understood and learnt. This means you can relax and be comfortable Infront of the camera, this will also come across to the viewer.

A charismatic person makes just as many mistakes, but it is the human way in which they deal with them that sets them apart.

### **Don't Fake It**

One of the mistakes that a new presenter entering the industry can make is trying to be someone they're not. They see a presenter they and think, they think they can act and be just like them. But what the industry is missing right now is a you. It has never met you before and there is no one else like you. This is because the real you, is totally different from anyone else. This is what makes you, you and your unique selling point (USP).

It is important to know what some presenter jobs like commercials, corporate or training videos don't always require an individual's personal opinions and thoughts to shine through. These roles very often just require a competent presenter who can clearly and professionally deliver a message.

If you are confident and sure of yourself and the message that you are delivering, you will exude charisma and charm and the audience will naturally gravitate towards you.

### **Energy & Enthusiasm**

The only aspect of 'being yourself', which requires any kind of performance is when it comes to energy and enthusiasm, these are crucial for a presenter.

Sometimes you might just not be feeling particularly enthusiastic or passionate if you're having a bad day or not excited about the product you're speaking about or what you're reporting on, but the viewer should not know this.

To start getting yourself into the right presenting 'mood' just try to remember a time that you were having a really great day, vividly imagine the events, and try to recall how you felt, before too long some of that feeling will 'rub off' on your current mood and you will have started to put yourself in the right frame of mind. The longer and more vividly you can remember or imagine the event the more impact it will have on your current mood and after some practice. This is the performance of a presenter when you are creating a genuine mood or feeling in much the same way as an actor might, and for this reason, presenters are very often referred to as 'Talent' whilst on set.

This doesn't mean that you have to be constantly at the same energy level. If the subject matter is more serious or calls for a delicate approach then you adapt your delivery, just as you would in the real world. Use your energy wisely and don't just try to be over-enthusiastic about everything, vary your approach with intrigue, curiosity, or humour. If you use your energy to put yourself in the right mood it will naturally enhance your expressions and intonation, and this is the subtle lift in enthusiasm that the camera wants to see.

Energy levels are what can transform a presenter from good to great. The more subtly and wisely you use your energy, the more likely you are to excite, enlighten, and entertain the viewer. Attempting to energize your presenting by shouting, throwing your arms about, and using words like 'amazing' all the time is a prime example of trying too hard and is unlikely to work.

### **Smile**

Warmth, the ability to genuinely smile or display some affection is one mood or feeling that a presenter needs to master. Many TV Shows, Radio programmes and videos begin with the words 'Hello and Welcome' and if this line is delivered with an insincere, false smile the viewer already has a reason not to trust the Presenter.

### **Presenting V's Acting**

Acting and presenting are different, although it's possible for a person to have both careers. When we act, we take on the persona, of someone or something different to ourselves

While Presenting, is all about being ourselves. We do not adopt other people's characteristics. There are always exceptions and occasionally the role of actor and presenter does cross over but these are usually comedy roles and are typically played by actors.

### **The best Presenters don't present**

The best Presenters are not pretending they are just being themselves but on a good day.

### **Coping with nerves**

It is normal to feel nervous and anxious when you first start out. You're in a new environment and it may seem like people are watching and judging you, you're not alone, everyone gets nervous when they first start out, it does fade as you become more experienced, but an overly nervous Presenter can lose an audience quickly.

### **Empathy**

As humans we have the built-in ability to empathise and mirror the emotions, we both portray. It is our ability to 'feel' what other humans feel. When people smile at

us, we usually smile back. Have you ever caught the eye of someone who is desperately trying not to giggle, or maybe you've been with someone who is inconsolable after a pet has died? In these situations, we often find ourselves laughing or crying too, those genuine emotions 'rub off' on us. If a Presenter is overly nervous the audience can feel that something isn't quite right.

### **Warm-Up**

Don't waste minutes leading up to going on air hunched in a corner making yourself tiny with head in your script. Instead, go somewhere spacious and spread your arms out wide, opening yourself up and say your script out loud and be over the top, it's much easier to settle your energy down for the camera than trying to pull it up.

### *Breathe*

Breathe slowly and deeply, in from your abdomen through your nose then pause and then out through your mouth, pause and then breathe in again. Counting to four whilst breathing in, during the pauses and while breathing out will set a rhythm that helps control the heartbeat and relieve stress. To warm up your mouth and vocal cords you can practice tongue twisters and humming to loosen up your focal folds and increase your range.

### **Be Prepared**

One of the main reasons for being nervous (along with being new to presenting), is being unprepared. Never stand up in front of an audience or a camera and wing it, as it's the main reason a presenter will lose confidence in their ability. There are times when a presenter will have to think on their feet and ad-lib, but this is very different. Spend as much time preparing as you can, read through your scripts and check the pronunciation of names and places. Fully research guests and ensure you understand agendas

### **Visualise success**

When new to presenting, one way to overcome anxiety is to imagine the result you want, as opposed to concentrating solely on what could go wrong.

This outcome may be positive feedback from viewers, the producer's praise, or more future work. Take a few seconds to relax, close your eyes, and then imagine feeling secure in great detail while presenting, seeing yourself not in the eye of your mind.

### **Posture**

Standing up straight with good posture not only gives you authority but according to DR Amy Cuddy, it changes your body's chemistry. Standing in what Cuddy refers to as a 'power pose' for two minutes or longer lowers cortisol and raises testosterone, giving an increased feeling of power. Presenters with good posture tend to have confidence whereas droopy hunched shoulders come across as weak.

### **Dress the part**

Viewers make assumptions about presenters based on their physical appearance. Good grooming and dressing neatly while 'dressing the part,' is essential; kids show presenters for example will have a completely different dress code to news broadcasters.

There are certain patterns that are best avoided when filming on camera due to coming across as 'too busy' such as tight dots, tight stripes and some chequered patterns can cause an interference and clash or cause 'noise' with the camera. If you're filming on greenscreen it goes without saying don't wear anything green, even a small logo or pattern on your clothing will disappear in the edit. Also be aware that silver or white gold jewellery can reflect on screen and metal wrist bangles are best avoided as they may make a lot of noise when you're filming.

### **Make-up**

Depending on the kind of presenting you are involved in will depend on whether or not you do your own make-up or have a make-up artist. It's important to make sure your skin isn't shiny under studio lights so using a matt powder can avoid this and you might want to look into a good concealer for any blemishes or dark circles.

### **Grooming**

Other parts of your appearance to think about include your hands. Make sure your nails are clean and manicured and that any rings are within keeping with the style of the show. Men need to ensure that they are clean or neatly shaven-with no

protruding nasal hair or overly bushy eyebrows. Hair needs to be neat. Also make sure your teeth are clean and if they're yellow, you may consider getting them whitened.