



Putting Mistakes Into Perspective

Business Presentation Mastery Module 1

There will be times when you are less than thrilled with presentation you gave. But that adage about being our own worst critic is usually true; we're *way* harder on ourselves than our audience would be. Our brains zero in on every little mistake, slip-up, oversight, or audience yawn, and then we wrap ourselves snugly in a scratchy blanket of self-admonition.

Guess what: beating yourself up for perceived "mistakes" won't help you do better next time. In fact, you're probably ignoring all the really *great* things that your audience saw during your presentation. But it can be hard to get yourself out of your funk and look at your performance with fresh, objective eyes.

Here's a useful activity I personally do whenever I find myself in this same situation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) On the next page, there's a table with two columns. In the first column, "Stuff I did wrong", brain dump every little mistake you made before or during your presentation.**

For example: didn't practice enough, forgot a chunk of my presentation, didn't pronounce the host's name right, slide deck didn't work, tripped on the cords running across the stage, couldn't answer a question...you get the picture.

- 2) In the second column, "What the audience did", list every little thing the audience did that could be interpreted as a positive response (ignore the yawns, the yawner could have simply been tired).**

For example: made eye contact with me the whole time, laughed at my joke, asked good questions, took lots of notes, asked for my business card, spoke to me afterwards, took part in the activities, asked me to sign their book, followed me on Facebook, posted a picture of my talk on Twitter, etc.

- 3) Then, ask yourself this crucial question: *If I screwed up as badly as I did in column one, would the audience have responded the way they did in column two?***

The answer is...probably not. They probably wouldn't have asked questions, picked up your business card, watched you eagerly through the whole presentation, or any of the other positive responses they gave you.

- 4) Finally, ask yourself what you can learn from this experience.**

You'll probably still be dissatisfied with your presentation, but this activity will help you put your slip-ups into perspective. Think over your presentation again and identify what you aren't happy with and what you can do differently in your next presentation (e.g.: more practice time, double-check the slide deck animations, arrive earlier at the venue, do more audience interaction, etc.)

This activity may seem simplistic and even a bit fluffy, but it's a powerful tool to give that negative voice in your head a good slap and focus instead on the audience's experience. Then, you can comfortably stop dwelling on your mistakes, and start preparing for your *next* presentation!

STUFF I DID WRONG

WHAT THE AUDIENCE DID

