



# Improving Your Presentation

## BREATHING

- Breathing through the diaphragm allows you to sustain your breath longer. This results in vocal control and projection.
- How to breathe through your diaphragm:
  1. Stand and breathe normally. Watch your posture. Stand with your back straight, your shoulders back, and your legs shoulder-width apart.
  2. Where is your body moving? If your shoulders are moving up and down, you are breathing through your chest. This will feel normal, but it is not the most effective method of breathing for public speaking.
  3. Place your hand on your stomach. Try to use your breathing to move your hand in and out. Your shoulders should not be moving at this point. Here are some suggestions to help you:
    - a. Imagine that you need to push the air you breathe in as far down your body as it can go. Pretend that you are breathing through your toes.
    - b. Push your stomach out without curving your back. Let it come back in. Repeat the process. Breathing through the diaphragm should follow.

## PROJECTION

Breathing correctly is essential for projection. Once you have mastered breathing through the diaphragm, try this trick to improve your projection:

- Stand at one end of a room. Imagine that your dream car is parked at the other end. Now, imagine that someone is approaching that car with a baseball bat. If you scream at her, you will make her angry, and she will destroy the car. There is no time to physically restrain her. You must use your voice forcefully to tell her, without yelling, to leave the car. Say, “Hey! Get away from my car!” Mean it. If you are not forceful enough, the car is gone. Say it again. Continue to repeat it until you feel that it is forceful enough to do the job.

- Now, remember the feeling of intensity that accompanied your statement. Use this intensity in your speeches. It will help you to be heard without forcing you to yell. The key to projection is intensity, not volume. Be careful not to confuse this with overly emphatic speaking. Ask someone else to listen to your speech while sitting across a large room. If she can hear you, and if she feels that you sound normal, you are doing fine.

## **ENUNCIATION**

Vocal warm-ups are crucial to good speaking. You should prepare your vocal chords and facial muscles for the strain of the presentation. Remember, you would not run a marathon without warming up first.

- To prepare your face, try the following:
  1. Stretch your face as much as you can. Pretend to yawn, and then stretch your face further. Open your mouth and your eyes as far as you can.
  2. Contract your face as much as you can. Think about eating something sour. Squish together your mouth, your eyes, and your cheeks as much as possible.
  3. Gently slap and then massage your cheeks.
  4. Repeat the process.
- To prepare your mouth, try these tongue twisters. Say each word precisely.
  1. The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue.
  2. Cool school shoes.
  3. Red leather, yellow leather.
  4. She sat upon the balcony, mimicking his hiccupping, and amicably welcoming him in.
  5. To sit in solemn silence, in a pestilential prison, with a lifelong lock, awaiting the arrival of a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block.