



# Presenters for a New Attitude – 2008

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## Presentation Tips

### Preparation

#### **Ahead of Time (will help reduce your anxiety):**

1. Things to ask when contacted for presentation:
  - a) Directions – very, very important. Map quest if necessary.
  - b) Ask how long it will take to get there and add 30 minutes for unexpected traffic situations
  - c) Parking information?
  - d) Who can you send copies of handouts (so they can copy them)?
  - e) Who is the audience?
  - f) What do they already know about TS?
    1. Is there a specific area of concern that can be addressed
  - g) Approximate number of attendees?
  - h) Contact Person, Phone # in case of an emergency?
  - i) How long will you have?
  - j) Ask about room size, if mike will be necessary (hand-held or lavalier?)
2. Practice, practice and practice; particularly the beginning and ending. Middle section usually flows.
3. Practice out loud – hearing yourself can be very important hearing ‘anger’; ‘weak’; harsh; attacking; etc. I frequently practice my introduction & beginning as I’m driving to event. The beginning of your presentation is a time that you want to plan well, try different approaches at home, in front of a mirror, with friends, family, etc. If something works – stick with it and likewise, if it doesn’t work – change it.
4. Determine who to contact for technology support regarding computer/projector set-up? Will that person be available when you arrive? How is this person contacted?
5. Bring a long extension cord, if bringing technology equipment.

## **Presentation Day:**

1. Dress as well as the best-dressed person in your audience. Dressing in layers is a good idea. 'Casual-professional' is ok if you know audience will be casual.
2. Exude self-confidence.
  - a) Stand up straight, smile.
  - b) Be confident, excited about your presentation and to be there.
  - c) Speak with confidence – remember that it is almost a certainty that you know more about TS than anyone else.
3. Bring bottle of water. Avoid “dry-mouth”; also use as a strategy that allows “thinking time” during Q&A
4. Everyone gets nervous. See this as a positive. Extra adrenaline can bring ‘zing’ and extra energy to presentation. Recognize it as being EXCITED – not NERVOUS
5. Be prepared for equipment failure. Bring extra copy of power point. Don’t waste a great deal of time if equipment fails; move on by using paper copy.
6. Leave yourself plenty of time for travel, setting up equipment. Set-up time – approximately 30 minutes if using technology
7. Good idea to visit the bathroom immediately prior to presenting.
  - ✓ Check zipper, slip, hair, teeth, smudge, etc.
8. If it helps you, chat with audience member prior to beginning
9. Determine ahead of time if there are questions which you are not comfortable answering. Your response can be ‘matter-of-fact as if you are saying you don’t want a tuna fish sandwiches – no big deal, just the way it is.
10. Know music that will pump you up as well as music that will bring you down. Use the first and avoid the second as you travel to the presentation.
11. Determine a way to keep track of the time. Bring a watch that is easy to read; windup travel clock --- you don’t want to depend on a clock being available --

## **Style:**

1. **Very Important – Remember that audience wants you to be successful**
2. Do Not apologize – it reduced your credibility immediately

3. Locate a person to your left, right and in the middle that appears to be receptive – present to them to ensure that you include all sections of the audience.
4. If you feel comfortable and have time to share stories, keep them short and positive demonstrating that children with TS are just like other children; they have same needs, dreams and feelings.
5. Role model people 1st language – “Child/Student with Tourette Syndrome” not Touretter; “Tourette child”; “disabled student”; etc.
6. Avoid using laser pointer – it only emphasizes a shaking hand
7. Stand when presenting if possible and when not an ‘informal’ discussion. Rule of thumb, If more than 10 people, they will expect a “performance”.
8. Darkening the room can result in people being less alert.
9. You may get questions or comments that are of a negative nature. Try not to have a knee-jerk reaction of becoming defensive. Remember, teachers, (even special ed. teachers), counselors, etc. are not taught about TS in college. We are there to educate them – not to put them down.
10. Remember that people generally only retain 10% of what they hear. It jumps to 40% if they hear and see it, and jumps to almost 80% if they experience it. Know the importance of the exercise that involves ‘writing pledge of allegiance’.
11. If asked a question, remember that this is not an opportunity for you to get on your soapbox. Educate! – Information is the best tool we have to change attitudes regarding disabilities.
12. When presenting to parents, avoid encouraging a mob mentality or anger as a unifying factor. Role model acceptance, positive relationships with school and moving forward.
13. Confidentiality – Do not refer to any person or school by their real name (unless you have permission).
14. Do not blame any profession (not even in humor). It’s not helpful and there may be a person in attendance who is in the field you are putting down.
15. Be prepared for interruptions. Answer as quickly as you can or say that you will be addressing that later during the presentation, you would be happy to return to address that topic or that you would be willing to speak privately after the presentation is complete.
16. Emotions during presentation are ok and can be effective, however – you want to be careful to not set yourself up for losing control. Staring at a distant object can assist in holding off tears.

17. Use your voice to keep people's attention. Modulating volume can be effective.
18. Be careful of using "jargon".
19. Don't get flustered if you forget a word. It makes you human – ask the audience for assistance and accept it graciously – don't apologize for being human. It actually can help you 'bond' with the audience and have them be more involved.
20. You will not be at the "top of your game" every time you present. Being a person with TS or a parent of a child with TS and willing to share your story will have a huge impact on the audience regardless.
21. Don't worry about "tough" questions; they almost never come. If you don't have an answer – admit it. Refer them to the website.
22. Try not to focus on the one person that may not have been receptive and wrote a negative consumer input. If there is something to learn from it, do that, use it in the future and move on. Also accept "thank you" graciously – there will be many.
23. Have fun, it's contagious. Celebrate and share your successes with others.

