

CONFIDENT PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

MODULE 17

How to think on your feet, part A

TRANSCRIPTION

Consider this. When you're delivering a presentation, how well you think on your feet in the Q&A section of the presentation – will determine how successful the presentation will be.

The Key messages of this Module are:

- a. Always use the 'Engagement nod'*
- b. If needed, ask for a moment of thinking time*
- c. Use that thinking time to choose a response*

Here's how it could work in a presentation environment.

Michael, what separates excellent from mediocre presenters?

Sure, just give me a moment to think about that . . . Top of mind, this is what I'd say. What separates mediocre excellent presenters is this. Excellent presenters are focused on the audience. Mediocre presenters are just concerned about themselves.

In that example I used an engagement nod. It's called an engagement nod because it demonstrates to the audience that you are engaged and listening to the question.

The engagement not counters the possibility of having a stunned expression, like this, when a tough question is asked.

Then I asked for a moment of thinking time, then 'parked' metaphorically the audience, went into my mind, chose a response and then prefaced my response with, top of mind.

When you say top of mind the audience realises that your response is not a definitive one, and will judge it less harshly.

KEY MESSAGE

- a. Always use the 'Engagement nod'*
- b. If needed, ask for a moment of thinking time*
- c. Use that thinking time to choose a response*

Please practice this first in safe interactions first until you're able to perform it competently.

TASK

To do right now, or to complete within the next 30 minutes.

Take one minute to think of and write down a tough question that a customer or colleague might ask you. Remember that question.

Now pick up your phone and take a walk outside of your building for four minutes. When outside, put your phone to your ear like you're having a phone conversation.

Speak aloud the question. Then answer it with the techniques of this Module. That is, One: say 'tough question' Two: 'give me a moment to think about that. Three: 'top of mind I'd say . . . (and speak your message).

You may find this a bit awkward, and think that people on the street will know you are talking to yourself, but clients that do this practice find that no one gives them a second look.

Speaking aloud practice is important as you need to hear your voice speaking the recommended phrases, so that they'll become more available for you to retrieve in a live situation.

What else could you do to put into practice ideas from this Module? Take 13 seconds to see if an idea pops up. Maybe watch the Module again if you have time.

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