

Chatterbox #62 – Public speaking

Transcript

- Maura: Welcome to our Chatterbox episode. It's Maura!
- Harp: And Harp!
- Maura: And we're here at Culips English Podcast.
- Harp: That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: Don't forget to check that out if you haven't, because on our website, you have the opportunity to become a Culips member for a very small price.
- Harp: Go check it out.
- Maura: And when you're a member, you can have our transcripts, you can have more detailed explanations of the expressions we've talked about, and even a little quiz at the end.
- Harp: Also, you can like us on Facebook.
- Maura: Yeah, we like talking to people on Facebook. I love it.
- Harp: Love it. I love hearing from all of you and sharing a little bit about myself and about the fun stuff we do in Montreal.
- Maura: Yup, it's just like a little warm, fuzzy over the Internet.
- Harp: Yes, exactly.
- Maura: OK, now, today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode and that's where we chat about some topic of interest related to English language learning.
- Harp: And today's topic is actually a suggestion from Greta, who asked us on our Facebook page to do an episode about public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah. It was really kind of fun, because Greta said that she learned the expression ***fishy***, *when something is **fishy***, in one of our episodes and then she was at a conference and someone used it. So she could understand, which is pretty cool.
- Harp: Yeah. And then because she was at a conference, she was asking us to do an episode about public speaking.

- Maura: Yeah, which is pretty interesting. It's something that I'm interested in and something that I think I still need to work on. There's so much to learn about it and it's so important.
- Harp: Definitely. So today, we're going to talk about public speaking.
- Maura: So first we're gonna talk about different verbs, different ways you can talk about public speaking
- Harp: Yes. And then we're going to talk about public speaking courses.
- Maura: Right. And things that we've learned when we were learning about public speaking.
- Harp: And in the end, we'll go through some **tips** for preparing **to speak** in public.
- Maura: Yeah. Because there's all kinds of ways that people practice and **warm up** and all that kind of stuff, so we'll go over that too.
- Harp: All right. Let's get started, Maura.
- Maura: OK. So first, the general topic is public speaking, but there's all different kinds of ways that you could **speak** in public. The first one, you could say, is **to give a talk**.
- Harp: Yes. **To give a talk**. This is usually more casual, still in front of an audience, but a little bit more casual.
- Maura: Yeah. So, someone would say I have **to give a talk** tomorrow about some subject. In this case, if you're **giving a talk**, you're probably some kind of expert on the subject, you have a lot of information that you're going to share.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: This actually makes me think about **TED Talks**.
- Harp: Oh, I love **TED Talks**.
- Maura: Yeah, **TED Talks** is an organization that has different conferences and at these conferences, they have people who **give a talk**, somewhere between 5 to 10 or even 20 minutes about their specialty. And they're so interesting. You can go to their website, **TED Talks**, or you can just search that online and you should find some of their really interesting **talks**.

- Harp: Yup. I actually listen to **TED Talks** when I'm at the gym. And I have YouTube on my phone, so I can watch all these different **speeches**. And such interesting **speeches**.
- Maura: Yeah. I just watched a couple yesterday, actually, about wisdom and about education. There's so many different topics.
- Harp: I watched one yesterday about education too.
- Maura: Oh, really?
- Harp: Interesting.
- Maura: So, you can say that you're going **to give a talk**. That's one way of talking about public speaking. Another verb that you could use, another expression, is **to make a speech**.
- Harp: Yes. **To make a speech**. **To give a speech** and **to make a speech**—it's the exact same thing; it means that you're gonna go in front of people and you're going to do some public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah. **To make a speech** is really when you're speaking. If you're preparing for **the speech** that would be you're writing **the speech** or you're practicing **the speech**. But if you **make a speech**, you're actually speaking in front of people.
- Maura: So you could say **to make a speech** or **to give a speech**. And this is much more formal. When you talk about **a speech**, I imagine someone standing in front of an audience, maybe behind a podium, very formal and they have very specific things they want to say.
- Harp: Definitely. When I think of **to make a speech**, I think of cameras and even something, maybe like the president is going **to give a speech**.
- Maura: Exactly. I think of something like politics, where there's one person standing very seriously in front of a group of people.
- Harp: Yeah. **To give a speech** or **to make a speech** is definitely more formal.
- Maura: So, you could also say **to speak**, which we can use just like *to talk*, but if you say I'm going **to speak** at a conference tomorrow, it doesn't just mean you're gonna talk to people, it means you're gonna **speak** in front of people.
- Harp: Yes. **To speak** at a conference means that you're gonna be doing some sort of public speaking.

- Maura: Yeah. And just like **to give a talk**, it could be a little bit more casual, and you're some kind of expert, so you have to have some kind of knowledge that you're going **to speak** about.
- Maura: OK. So let's look at the next part, which is public speaking courses and what we've learned about public speaking.
- Harp: Yeah. I've never taken a very specific public speaking course, but I remember when I was young, in different classes, we would have a small section or a small portion where we talked about public speaking. Like, I remember in my social studies class, I think I was in grade 5 or grade 6, I had **to make a speech** about a country and I had to talk about the population and the culture and the religion and the language and I had to go in front of my class and **give this speech**. But I never took an actual class on how to do public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah. I have those memories from when I was young too. Every year, when I was in elementary school, at a certain age, we had to do **a speech** every year then and it was actually a competition and a couple people would be chosen and then they would go and perform their **speech** with people from other schools and then there would be a winner. It was very **stressful**.
- Harp: That sounds very **stressful**. I was very shy when I was young, so I think that would really have **stressed me out**.
- Maura: It's funny, because I wasn't really shy, but I was still **stressed** because for most people it's not something they get excited about doing.
- Harp: I would say most people are very nervous about any sort of public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure. A few years ago, I took another public speaking course and that was really a great experience because I think we had to **give four different kinds of talks** in front of the class and...so that's a lot.
- Harp: Yeah, that is a lot. Was this in university that you did this?
- Maura: Yeah, it was at university. And I really think that **practice makes perfect**, so the more you have **to speak** in front of people, the better you get at it, so it was really good practice.
- Harp: That's interesting. Do you remember any of your **speeches**?
- Maura: I did some of kind of **rant** about the Academy Award that year and the film that won didn't really deserve to win.
- Harp: OK, that's interesting.

- Maura: I also did one about Canada actually, something about being Canadian. I don't remember any more.
- Harp: OK. Did you get to choose the topics?
- Maura: Yeah, we got to choose the topics.
- Harp: OK, interesting. Do you feel you're a better public speaker after this course?
- Maura: Yes. Yeah, but I still think that there's a lot to work on still.
- Harp: You know, it's funny because at Culips, it is like we're kind of doing public speaking because so many people listen but because no one's here listening in person, I don't feel nervous.
- Maura: It's true. And that's why Facebook is good, because when people send us comments and talk to us, then we know people are listening because right now, there's only three of us here in the room.
- Harp: Yeah, and a blank wall staring at us.
- Maura: One thing that I learned in the course I took, which was really interesting, is one piece of advice, which is when you're writing **a speech**, any kind of **talk** you're gonna give in front of people, you start by telling them what you're gonna tell them.
- Harp: OK.
- Maura: And then number two, you tell them.
- Harp: OK.
- Maura: And then number three, you tell them what you just told them.
- Harp: That's interesting, like an essay, where you do an introduction, you do the body, and then you do the conclusion.
- Maura: Right. So, it's really interesting in terms of people's attention spans because you have to introduce the topic so they know what they're going to hear about. Then you tell them, kind of, again, and then for the conclusion or at the end, you again repeat the idea so that it's extra clear and people can remember the message you're trying to give.
- Harp: Very interesting.

- Maura: Yeah. It's a good one. And it's also good to start off with some kind of attention-grabbing line. Many people use maybe a joke to start or something that everyone can relate to, but you really want **to hook** people in and get their attention.
- Harp: Yeah. Maura, have you ever heard of Toastmasters?
- Maura: I have. And actually, for years I've wanted to do it.
- Harp: Yeah, it's very interesting. So what I understand is that it's an organization, it's free, and you basically practice **speeches** in front of other people.
- Maura: Yeah. It's an organization that offers training, for free, for public speaking and also it has to do with leadership a little bit, because public speaking and leadership are connected; if you're a leader, you usually **speak** in public. And this organization I believe started in the US and now has spread all over the world. We have branches in Montreal. And yeah, you can go, you can practice public speaking and get better and better.
- Harp: Yeah. I actually had a language exchange partner and he was a Francophone and he was doing Toastmasters in English because he had **to give speeches** in English and he said it really helped him.
- Maura: Yeah. I heard that it changes people's lives.
- Harp: Yeah, because you become more confident, because when you're nervous about public speaking, it's very complicated.
- Maura: Yup. So, let's move on to our last topic, which focuses on different things that people do to prepare for **giving a speech**, so kind of **tips** to help you feel more confident, more relaxed and help you feel prepared.
- Harp: Yes. My biggest **tip** is that I have to practice.
- Maura: Oh, yeah. You have to go over it, over and over again, and you have to say it out loud.
- Harp: Yes. I try to practice in front of a mirror.
- Maura: I always find that hard 'cause I wanna laugh.
- Harp: I know, but once you **get past** the laughing, then it's a good way to practice.
- Maura: Yeah. Practicing in front of a mirror is one way that people do practice. They might also practice in front of friends or family to see what they think of it.

- Harp: Yeah. Because once you practice in front of people, then you feel less nervous, because you know what you're gonna say and you can get some feedback from the people who are listening.
- Maura: Mmhmm. Some people, when they're preparing for **speeches** and even when they're **making a speech**, use **cue cards** or **index cards**. So they don't have the whole **speech** written out word for word, but they have key ideas or different points in their **speech** that will help lead them through **the speech**. And these are just small, little cards that someone holds. They're a little bit stiff and harder than paper and they have your notes on them.
- Harp: Yeah. I remember that from when I was young, because the first time I had **to give a speech**, I had written my **speech** out completely on the **index card** and my teacher made me re-do it and put just notes so that I actually looked at the audience and not at my notes.
- Maura: It's so hard, isn't it?
- Harp: I was so shy and nervous.
- Maura: It's funny that people are so freaked out and upset about this.
- Harp: Yeah. That's why a **tip** that I've heard before is to **imagine that your audience is naked**.
- Maura: I've heard that too. So, the theory is that when you look out and you **imagine everybody naked**, it makes you laugh and so it distracts you from feeling nervous and maybe relaxes you.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. You don't focus on yourself up there being nervous, you're laughing at them.
- Maura: It is important to make good eye contact with the audience and look around the room. All of that's important.
- Harp: I can't do that. I have to focus on just one person and look at them the whole **speech**.
- Maura: That might work for some people too.
- Harp: It works for me.
- Maura: Yeah. It's also important to not have any strange movements, so either you're standing completely still or any movement that you do during **a speech** should be completely part of **the speech**, so you know where you're going, not just wandering around or shaking your foot or playing with your hands. Gotta keep still.

- Harp: OK. So those are some good **tips** for public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah. And if you have a Toastmasters in your area, and you're interested in public speaking, it would be probably a pretty cool thing to do, to check out.
- Harp: Definitely. I've really heard it's fantastic.
- Maura: Yeah, I wanna go. Do you wanna start?
- Harp: Yeah, let's go. Let's find out where it is and let's join a meeting.
- Maura: OK, cool. Now, let's go over one more time what we told you. We started with different expressions, different verbs that we use to talk about **giving speeches**.
- Harp: And then we talked about different public speaking courses.
- Maura: And the last thing that we told you was different techniques that people use to practice. And Harp, I just noticed something.
- Harp: What? Tell me.
- Maura: What I said before as good advice, which is to tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. We do that at Culips. We start by telling you what our episode's about and what we're gonna talk about, then we give you all the expressions, and then at the end we tell you what the expressions were and we recap.
- Harp: Maura, you're so smart. I never realized that you did this before, but there's method, **there's a method to your madness!**
- Maura: To be honest, I didn't realize it before either.
- Harp: Fantastic.
- Maura: OK. So, remember to go to our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And don't forget to say hi on Facebook.
- Harp: Yeah. And let us know if you have any other special **tips** for when you're doing public speaking.
- Maura: Yeah. Thanks a lot Greta, and I really liked hearing that you heard one of our expressions in real life. I love that.
- Harp: Me too.
- Maura: We'll talk to you all soon.

Harp: Bye!

Maura: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

To be fishy

This is the expression that helped inspire this episode: **to be fishy**. One of our listeners, Greta, heard this expression at a conference she attended, and she knew what it meant because we had done an episode on it at Culips!

If someone or something is **fishy**, it means that there is something suspicious or not right about them. If someone or something is **fishy**, they don't sound right or don't make sense. To learn more about this expression, check out our episode about it! Just type in "**fishy**" in the search bar at Culips.com.

A tip

A **tip** is a piece of advice. To give someone a **tip** is to share some knowledge that might help them. In this episode, we share some **tips** that we've heard about public speaking.

A **tip** can also be a small amount of money that you give someone, a person you don't know, who has helped or served you. The most common place to give a **tip** is at a restaurant. In Canada, it is the custom to leave a **tip** for your server at the end of your meal every time you visit a restaurant.

To warm up

A person may want **to warm up** before a speech or big presentation. **To warm up** is to prepare yourself just moments before you begin something. When someone is **warming up** for a speech, they might want to do exercises with their voice, practice their speech one more time, or just get excited and pumped for giving the speech.

You can also warm up before other things, especially physical exercise. When you **warm up** for physical exercise, you're actually trying to get your body warm before you start. People often stretch because this prepares your body and gets your muscles warm.

Here are a couple of examples:

Kayla: I've gotta go backstage now. I think we're starting to **warm up**.

Orson: OK. I better go find my seat before the play starts.

Henry: All right. Let's start running now.

Jenna: Don't you want to **warm up** first? I think it's a good idea and helps prevent injury.

There are a few different meanings and uses for **to warm up**. It can also be used to talk about making food hot, especially in a microwave. It can also be used to talk about people beginning to like each other, as in they **warmed up** to each other.

To give a talk

This is one way that we can talk about public speaking: **to give a talk**. If someone says they are **giving a talk**, it sounds like a casual event. **To give a talk** means to give an informal speech in front of an audience. The person may or may not have to wear formal clothes. A person **giving a talk** is likely to use gestures and walk around the stage a little bit. A person **giving a talk** is also probably very knowledgeable about the subject.

TED Talks

You can go to ted.com to find out more about these inspiring talks on a variety of subjects. You can also check out the translations to see if the talks have been translated into your language.

To make a speech/To give a speech

To make or **to give a speech** is a more formal way to talk about public speaking. If someone is **giving a speech**, it means the person will be talking from one fixed place in front of a group of people. Like we say in this episode, **a speech is often given** by a president or some other person of significance or power.

Speeches are also made at weddings. Friends and family of the married couple come to the front, often behind a podium with a microphone, and speak about the newly married couple.

Remember that **to make a speech** does not mean that you are creating or writing a speech, it means that you are saying the speech in front of people.

Here are a couple of examples with **to make a speech**:

Jasmine: I'm exhausted. I had **to make a speech** yesterday at work.

Vincent: I'm sure it went well. You're a great public speaker.

Ben: What are you doing tonight?

Paul: I'm working on a speech that I have **to make** next week.

To speak

To speak means *to talk*. Sometimes, it can also be used to mean to talk to a group of people, as in to give a speech. It is almost always clear whether someone is speaking to another person in conversation or **speaking** to an audience. When *to speak* just means to talk to someone, it's usually also clear who they are talking to.

Here are a couple of examples to help show the difference between these two uses:

Julian: I'm going to speak to Jon about all his absences.

Helen: That's a good idea.

Jared: This Monday I'll be **speaking** about The Green Initiative at work.

Katie: It will be good to get informed about that.

A talk vs. a speech

In general, **a talk** is more casual and **a speech** is more formal. There is a difference between the words, but people still often use these words interchangeably. One person might call it **a speech** and another person might call the same event **a talk**.

Practice makes perfect

This is an English expression that is also a proverb because it gives advice. **Practice makes perfect** means exactly what it says: If you practice something a lot, you become better and better.

You can say it in a sentence, as Maura does in this episode, or you can say it on its own. People usually say it to give advice to someone who is practicing something.

A rant

A rant is a speech that people give about something they are angry or upset about. A speech that is **a rant** is presented in a passionate and extravagant way. **A rant** can also be a piece of writing, not given as a speech.

In this episode, Maura says that in her public speaking course, one of her speeches was **a rant**. This means she gave a speech about something that angered her and spoke about it in a passionate way.

Here is an example of **a rant** and of using the word **rant**:

Julie: I'm so frustrated with school! I have too many projects due at one time and none of my professors will give me any extra time to complete them. On top of that, I also have a couple of exams next week and I don't know when I'm going to find the time to study for them. I am so stressed out! Sorry about my **rant** there.

Kyle: That's OK. Sometimes you just need to talk about what's bothering you.

There is also the verb **to rant**, which means that something is said or written in a very passionate way when someone is upset.

Stressful, stressed, stressed out

These three words: **stressful**, **stressed**, and **stressed out** are often confused by people learning English as a second language. **Stressed** and **stressed out** have the same meaning, to describe someone who feels a lot of pressure, and can be used to talk about a person only. **Stressful** is used to describe a thing that causes stress and cannot be used to describe the way a person feels.

Here's an example to show the different uses:

Nicole: How have you been lately? Are you still feeling **stressed out**?

Derek: Yes! The situation at work is just so **stressful**. I think I am going to take a day off tomorrow.

Public speaking tips

Here's a short list of the tips on public speaking offered in this episode:

- Start with a joke or interesting little story to get the audience's attention
- Begin by telling them what you're going to tell them, tell them in detail, and then summarize what you just told them
- Practice out loud in front of a mirror or with family or friends
- Use cue cards, but don't read the entire speech
- Warm up just before you speak
- Picture the audience naked to help you relax

A hook

At the beginning of a speech, you want to get everyone interested in what you're saying right away. When you want to get people interested in something, we can say that you want **to hook** them. A line or activity to get people interested can even be called **a hook**.

A hook is a thin piece of curled metal that is used to attach or connect to items together. In the same way, **a hook** in a speech connects to the audience and keeps them listening.

To get past something

To get past something means to accept it and continue doing what you were doing. In this episode, Harp says that it's a good idea to practice your speech in front of a mirror, and then Maura says that she always laughs when she tries that. Harp then says if you **get past** the laughing, it's a good way to practice. Harp means that if you accept that it is funny and eventually stop laughing, then it is a good way to practice.

You can also **get past** something if you are walking and something is in your way. You can actually **get past** it by walking around it or over it and continuing to walk in the direction you need to go.

Here's an example with the expression **to get past**:

Anne: How's the new job going?

Claire: It's going pretty well. I have **to get past** all the new software I have to learn to use, but then I'm sure I'll love it.

Cue cards/Index cards

Index cards, also called **cue cards**, are small cards with a variety of uses, including writing speech prompts on.

They are called **cue cards** because they give you a cue for what you need to say. A cue is a line or action that shows you what you need to do, especially as part of a performance or a speech. On live television, people off stage may hold very large **cue cards** so that the people being recorded know what to say.

Cue cards are also called **index cards** because these cards are small, approximately 3 inches by 5 inches, and have also been used for creating card files. These card files are also called indexes.

The naked audience theory

This is a piece of advice given to people nervous about public speaking: **Imagine the audience naked**. The origin of this advice is unknown. This advice is not scientifically proven to help relax a public speaker, but it often at least gets a laugh before someone goes in front of a large audience.

You might also hear people say that it can help a speaker to imagine their audience in their underwear. You might feel nervous and exposed up on stage, but if you imagine that your audience is exposed and vulnerable too, you might feel more at ease.

There's a method to your madness

Sometimes people do crazy things that we don't understand! This expression means that there is a reason for someone acting crazy, because it is part of their plan or necessary in some way. In this expression, madness means craziness, not anger.

This expression comes from Shakespeare, the English language's most celebrated author. The line is from his play *Hamlet*: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it."

Harp says this to Maura. She is just joking because Maura does not really do anything crazy. She means that Maura has a reason for having an introduction and recap in each episode.

Here's another example with *there's a method to your madness*:

Greg: I don't understand how Kevin works. When he's planning an event, he seems so disorganized.

Pamela: I know! I used to think that too, but it always works out. There's a method to his madness.

Quiz

1. Which is the expression that Greta heard at a conference that she had also learned about in a Culips episode?
 - a) garden variety
 - b) tightwad
 - c) fishy
 - d) to bite the dust

2. If someone warms up before they begin physical exercise, what do they do?
 - a) put on a warm winter coat
 - b) stretch the body
 - c) do vocal exercises
 - d) heat up their food in a microwave

3. What is NOT true about the meaning of *to make a speech*?
 - a) It is usually formal.
 - b) It means that you give the speech.
 - c) It means that you write the speech.
 - d) It is done in front of a group of people.

4. What is the English proverb we learned about practice?
 - a) Practice makes perfect.
 - b) Practice gets better.
 - c) Perfect comes from practice.
 - d) Practice helps improve.

5. Which of the following statements is probably most likely to be part of a rant?
 - a) I'm going to go out dancing tonight.
 - b) I'm so stressed out at work.
 - c) She bought me a present for my birthday.
 - d) There are eight people in my family.

6. Carlo: School has been really _____ lately. I'm even having trouble sleeping.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) stressful
- b) stressed
- c) stressed out
- d) stressing

7. As part of a speech, what is a hook?

- a) an exciting ending that people will remember
- b) an interesting beginning that will get the audience interested
- c) a joke that you tell during the speech
- d) a sad memorable personal story

8. Dean: How's your project at school going?

Matt: It's going all right. I just need to _____ the research and then things should get easier.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) go out
- b) go past
- c) get in
- d) get past

9. Which was the expression that has its origin in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*?

- a) There's a method to your madness.
- b) There's a madness to your method.
- c) Madness is method.
- d) I'm mad at your method.

Answers:

1.c 2.b 3.c 4.a 5.b 6.a 7.b 8.d 9.a