



MAGNETIC INTROS

We form first impressions in five seconds. Most presenters squander this time at the start of their presentation by talking about themselves or their message. This lacks focus on what's important – the audience. Powerful presenters focus on the audience with their first words. These words are called *power words* because they have a lopsided impact on influencing others. Forego self-centric statements or quotes. Add SPICE to your presentation by starting with one or more of the following approaches.

Surprise: One powerful attention-grabber is surprise. To surprise your audience persuasively, open with a shocking statistic. When TED prize-winner Jamie Oliver introduced his talk on teaching children about food, he opened with the statistic that four Americans will perish across the country during his short presentation due to the food they ate. A shocking statistic not only creates surprise that captures attention, it introduces persuasive data that immediately influences your audience.

Problem: Over 90% of successful startups begin their pitch with a problem, and then position their product as the solution. Audiences don't care about your presentation message per se, they care about the value of your message to them. Begin with a problem your audience cares about to create a context of value, and then position your message as the solution.

Involvement: Great conversations are mutually engaging, but most presenters wax loquacious about themselves. When Amy Cuddy began her famous TED talk on body language, she immediately involved her audience by inviting them to do an audit of their sitting position. When you involve your audience into your talk, your words become mutually engaging. Ask the audience a question, invite them to reflect on their lives, or place them in a hypothetical situation with the word *imagine*.

Curiosity: Begin with a mystery to create curiosity. Newspaper headlines often drive readership not by stating the message of the article, but by hinting at a new or unique fact readers will discover when they read the article. Propose the existence of something new and previously unknown to your audience that impacts them. When you present a mystery, you hook their curiosity to listen and learn.

Emotion: We are drawn to words that make us feel. When Michael Pritchard pitched his lifesaving water filter at TED, he first displayed the picture of a girl in rags drinking muddy water from the soil of the savanna plains. This photo hit everyone's heartstrings. Begin with a story or appeal to meaningful associations to elicit emotion and capture your audience's attention.

"Magnetic Intros" written by Chris Lipp,
author of *Magnetic: How Great Leaders
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