

# ETIQUETTE & COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR NURSES

BY KATHLEEN D. PAGANA

## PRESENTATION FAQs

### ? What is the best way to find stories for my presentation?

Collect stories. When you experience something or hear about something that might make a good anecdote in a future presentation, write it down. You can get ideas from watching TV, listening to the radio, reading, talking to people, and being more observant of things happening in your daily life. It is also a good idea to think back in your life to meaningful events or situations that would provide a good story or example. Keep a file of stories.

### ? How can I avoid offending people with jokes?

Be careful. Many people are looking for a possible offense. There is a minefield of political correctness. It is sometimes difficult to know in advance if a joke is safe. If you have any question about offending someone in the audience or someone they know, avoid the joke. There are other ways to be funny without telling jokes.

### ? How do I avoid being perceived as self-centered when I tell stories?

Don't make yourself the hero or heroine of your stories or anecdotes. Tell something amusing, strange, or enlightening that happened to a friend, neighbor, family member, coworker, or acquaintance.

### ? Suppose I am getting near the end of my presentation and I don't think I'll have time for a great story—what should I do?

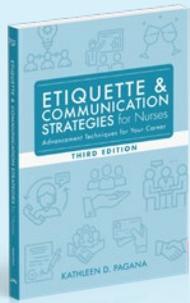
Skip the story to avoid going overtime. The audience doesn't need to know that you are skipping something. They would rather end early than end late. Who hasn't appreciated getting out early from a presentation? It is better to end five minutes early than five minutes late.

### ? Can you recommend any organizations to help me improve my speaking skills?

Yes, join Toastmasters. It is an international organization made up of thousands of local clubs. You can practice speaking and receive peer review. Find out more by visiting [www.Toastmasters.org](http://www.Toastmasters.org). For more advanced speakers, I would recommend the National Speakers Association at [www.nsaspeaker.org](http://www.nsaspeaker.org).



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## PRESENTATION TAKE-AWAY TIPS

- Each time you speak, you have the potential to stand out and make a good impression.
- When planning your presentation, ask yourself, “What would make this memorable?”
- It is not how smart you are as a speaker that counts but how smart you make your audience.
- Effective speaking is about effective communication. The audience’s outcome is more important than the speaker’s output.
- Start strong and end strong. People tend to remember first and last impressions.
- If a presentation is worth giving, it’s worth giving it well.
- Practice out loud and “alter where you falter.”
- Practice your introduction the most. You will begin more confidently.
- Show respect for people’s time by ending on time.
- Speak often. The more you speak, the better you will become.



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