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### Take the anecdote antidote

*Great Beginnings*

By Tad Simons

Personal anecdotes and stories often make the most effective beginnings, and not just because everyone likes a good story.

A well-chosen personal anecdote communicates to audience members that you know something about their world, have learned from your experiences, are a credible speaker on the subject at hand, and probably have more interesting things to say. Such openings help connect speakers to their audience in ways that trotting out a famous quotation or telling a joke, however funny, can't. That's why most professional speakers are in the habit of recording applicable stories and anecdotes from their lives either in a journal or on their computer.

It is interesting to note, however, that most professional speakers do not just walk up onstage and launch into a deeply personal story. They establish a rapport first, guide the audience's expectations, then tell their tale.

Originally published in the May 2005 issue of *Presentations* magazine.

#### Also see:

[Great Beginnings](#) (main story)

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