

NLP Modelling project
How to become a powerful speaker?

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Introduction

At work few months back, I attended a Toast Master meeting, in which select individuals delivered a speech before an assembled audience. As is always the case, some speakers were very good, some were average, and some were trembling like a leaf. For person who suffers from low confidence during public speaking, the general advice is that if they want to improve public speaking skills they should practice repeatedly in front of a mirror in order to feel confident. This advice however would be incomplete if the person is not told 'How' to feel confident, and 'What' needs to be done in order to feel confident.

As a diehard fan of NLP, I immediately felt that 'If one person can be a spontaneous powerful speaker, so can others'. At that point, I decided that my NLP modelling project will be, 'How to become a powerful speaker'. The choice of this NLP modelling topic was also in sync with the 'Outcome' I hold for myself, which is to become a great NLP Trainer. An important trait of any trainer is to be a powerful speaker, and I am very sure that this modelling project is going to create an everlasting learning for me, and also for the reader who is going to benefit from this project.

David Gordon and Graham Dawes say that:

Modelling is a doorway into the vast storehouse of human experience and abilities, providing access to anyone willing to turn the key. For the individual who pursues modeling, this means:

- *Access to an ever-widening range of new experiences and abilities.*
- *An increasing ability to bring those same experiences and abilities to others.*
- *A finer understanding of the structure underlying unwanted experiences and behaviors so that you know precisely what to change in those experiences and behaviors.*
- *Ever-increasing flexibility in your experience and responses.*
- *A growing appreciation of the beauty to be found in the patterns of human experience.*

Overall Outcome

The overall outcome of this modelling project was to have a model in place for me and the readers to be able to get into a state to speak powerfully in front of a target audience.

Scope

The scope of this project was to model the confident speakers, and come up with a model with documented strategies; these strategies when applied by anyone at any point will help them to speak confidently in front of an audience.

Success criteria

The results that I have noticed other people achieve in the world that I would also like to achieve

There are certain speakers who are very confident, and by this modelling project, I will decode the strategies of getting into a state to be a powerful speaker.

Sensory specific evidence of completion of this project

In sensory specific evidence: I like to see myself very confident, while speaking in front of the audience, I like to see myself speak effortlessly, I like to hear myself be very articulate, very specific before the audience, and I like to feel very calm and composed while delivering a presentation in front of a group. Having said that I would like to be the person following my model to see, hear, and feel the same way after going through this model.

How will I know I have got these results?

I will get to know whether I got these results by being very articulate and specific in front of the audience, speak effortlessly in front of the audience, and feel very calm and composed in front of an audience, by applying the strategies documented in the model again and again. I will get to know from the exemplars and most importantly the positive feedback by the people listening to me.

How will others know I have got these results?

The others will get to know that I have got these results, by being able to see, hear, and feel my confidence. The people should be able to notice my confident body language, my confident state, and my ability to impress them time and again while delivering a speech or training.

Definition of terms

<i>Result</i>	The reproducible outcome, which can be described in sensory specific terms.
<i>The model</i>	An abstract formulation constructed from the information gathered from modelling the exemplar(s), which when applied by an acquirer produces similar results.
<i>Exemplar</i>	The person (or group or organisation) that consistently achieves the results the modeller is seeking to reproduce.
<i>Modeller</i>	The person who gathers information from the exemplar, constructs the model, and tests its effectiveness at reproducing similar results
<i>Acquirer</i>	The person (usually including the modeller) who 'takes on' the model and attempts to reproduce results similar to those obtained by the exemplar.
<i>Modelling</i>	The process of gathering information from an exemplar, constructing a model, and testing its effectiveness at reproducing similar results
<i>Modelling project</i>	Both the plan for accomplishing the production and acquisition of a model, and the implementation of that plan.

Value

As an NLP trainer I need to be a powerful speaker. A model with easy to follow strategies is going to come handy in becoming one.

My Exemplars

There were many exemplars that came to my mind, but the one's mentioned below had the most profound influence on me at various stages of my life. I selected my exemplars from different backgrounds; so that the modeling project brings out more strategies/options, which was formalized into a model, and be available to me and others who want to become powerful speakers and the strategies available whenever they want them to have.

- Dr Tej Nath Dhar (my super dad)
- Ravi K Singh (Wipro, Service Delivery Leader)
- Ashlesh Rao (Master Trainer NLP, the person who introduced me to NLP)

Dr. Tej Nath Dhar: My early memory of my dad's superior public speaking skills goes back more than 25 years, when I first saw him delivering a lecture in University of Kashmir. Back then, he was a professor of English in the University. Even though, I was a kid, I still remember the faces of the students, who were mesmerized by his charm and eloquence. There is something about his style, that even now whenever he delivers a lecture as a guest speaker, the audience listens to him with great attention, and there is always that 'WOW' factor attached. I remember how I became an instant hit with my teachers in my engineering college, when my dad came to deliver a lecture to the teachers.

Ravi K Singh: Ravi K Singh is an IT professional and works in Wipro as a Service Delivery Leader. He has excellent leadership skills, team management skills, and he is also an outstanding speaker. Ravi is very poised when he speaks, and a person cannot stop admiring his communication skills and the way he keeps the audience focused.

Ashlesh Rao: Ashlesh Rao is a Master Trainer of NLP. He introduced me to NLP, and recommended me to take the advanced NLP program with Sue Knight. I attended his program last year, and was impressed by his delivery style, and how he engaged all the participants. He was able to connect with the participants, and ensured that they open up and share individual experiences, and take the learning to a different level.

Modelling Techniques/methods used:

Modelling techniques and methods used in this modelling project are:

Observation: The starting point of this modelling project was to observe the exemplars demonstrating their excellence in natural environment.

Questioning Technique: Clean questioning technique was used to explore the strategies of the exemplars during relived descriptions of the excellence demonstrated in the past.

Exemplar explanation: Conscious explanation provided by the exemplars of what they do.

Strategies used by Exemplars:

Dr Tej Nath Dhar:

Modeller Observation:

As an NLPian I have learnt to be conscious about things in my environment, and this awareness gives me opportunities to observe excellence in people around me. Few days back I went with my parents to a friend's house for lunch, and there were other families too. The friend's house was full of books, and being a connoisseur of books, my dad was attracted towards the book shelf. There were others too who went near the book shelf and after few minutes the discussion

was around several authors, and their expertise, etc. I could see that my dad was completely in the groove while he was speaking about some of the authors; he could easily go back in time, and recall the memories that he had about them. I could see that the people around him were very interested in what he was describing. I observed that the eye movement was predominantly upwards, and sometimes it was down towards right/left as well.

I observed that he was very much communicating with his entire body while he was talking: he was very expressive with his hands, his facial muscles, and his eyes. He was moving around the book shelf, as if the place was a stage, and he was addressing the audience around him. He maintained eye contact with all the people around him, during the whole time. I also noticed that he was breathing slowly and deep, and looked very much in a comfortable state.

Questioning Technique:

Modeller: Dad, I am doing an NLP Modelling project, and my project is: How to become a powerful speaker; a speaker who makes a lasting impression on the audience. I have observed that you are a very powerful speaker and I would like to model your excellence. Is it all right with you, if I explore this by asking questions, and formulate a model, which will be learnable and will be helpful to me and to others who want to acquire this model?

Exemplar: Yes

Modeller: The technique that I will use is the clean questioning technique. By using this technique I will get to the conscious and sub-conscious structure about your excellence. Are you ready to start?

Exemplar: Yes

Modeller: When and where do you speak powerfully?

Exemplar: I speak to several kinds of people – students, teachers, and general audiences.

Modeller: How are you able to speak powerfully in front of these groups?

Exemplar: Right before I start, I can visualize that I am well connected with the group, which really raises my comfort level.

Modeller: When you say, ‘I visualize that I am well connected with the group’, in what way?

Exemplar: Well, I picture the group in terms of its requirement, the level at which I have to operate, and I imagine the speech is going to go the way I would like it to go.

Modeller: What do you mean when you say that you, ‘Picture the group in terms of its requirement, the level at which I have to operate, and I imagine the speech is going to go the way I would like it to go?’

Exemplar: I see what the group needs, the manner in which this need has to be met, and accordingly, I imagine the content, the flow, the pitch, the direction of the speech as I would like it to be.

Modeller: What do you mean when you say, “That you imagine the flow, the pitch, the direction of the speech as I would like it to be?”

Exemplar: I mean I picture the overall impact of the speech. I see that it is moving smoothly, the audience is involved in what is happening, which is reflected in the gleam and curiosity in their eyes.

Modeller: It is indeed a pleasing picture. What exactly do you mean when you say, ‘That the speech is moving smoothly, the audience is involved in what is happening, which is reflected in the gleam and curiosity in their eyes?’

Exemplar: I mean that the speech is going the way I had planned it producing the desired result on the audience, and that I feel confident that my visualization technique has worked.

Modeller: What else do you have to say about this visualization of yours?

Exemplar: Only this much that the success of my delivery depends largely on my ability to gauge correctly the nature of the audience.

Modeller: What about the confidence that you mention?

Exemplar: The confidence is reflected in the language of my body, my posture, and my eagerness to connect with the audience. I feel that I have to make an impact.

Modeller: That sounds great. What is the feeling like?

Exemplar: It is the real engine of success. I feel that I am perfectly ready to deliver and I can be real time with the audience the way I want.

Modeller: and what else related to this feeling?

Exemplar: It connects me with my previous experience of engaging audiences and thus builds a series of successful continuities of memories.

Modeller: That is quite interesting: linking it with previous successful speeches that you have made.

Exemplar: Yes, it is like the memorable experiences of an actor, who has played different roles by getting into their skin and is ready for another one.

Modeller: That is really wonderful, being reminded of previous attempts at speech making.

Exemplar: Indeed.

Modeller: 'Memorable experiences of an actor', what's that like?

Exemplar: Ah that, visualizations about the response of the audience, their clapping at the end of the speech & hearing their response like, 'It was great,' 'thanks for an engaging presentation,' and so on.

Modeller: That is truly memorable.

Exemplar: It sure is. It is very reassuring, of a constant reminder that everything is going to be fine. It pushes my self-belief to new heights.

Modeller: 'Pushes my self-belief to new heights', in what way?

Exemplar: Well, this is the crux of the matter. It just reminds me that I have done it before quite successfully, so many times. And I will be able to do it again any time.

Modeller: Thank you for sharing your experiences of successful speech-making with me. It has been quite a learning experience and useful one too. I am sure these will be of help in making me a successful speaker.

Ravi K Singh:

Observation:

I scheduled a lunch meeting with Ravi for a clean questioning session for my Modelling project. Even before, I could talk about NLP Modelling project; he received a text message on his Blackberry about a potential real estate project in Bangalore, as an investment. Ravi is a very good investor, and has good knowledge about the subject. He generally likes to discuss with friends about investing, traps set my insurance agents to lure people into buying insurance in the name of retirement planning etc. I was getting jittery about my scheduled meeting for the clean questioning session, but I just couldn't stop him from talking about investments. I decided in my head that let me take this opportunity to observe him while he is speaking about the subject, which he is so passionate about. He started talking about initial days, when he had just started and how using a methodical investing approach he has built a large corpus, which will help him take an early retirement from work and enjoy life. He was talking passionately about the subject, and boy he was very eloquent. Even though, he was sitting, but he was communicating so much with his body that it seemed that the words he was using were being energized to make an impact on the listener, as his words were hitting me like balls of fire. I could sense the energy around him and myself while we were having that conversation. I observed that he was completely into the discussion, and was not paying any attention to the people walking around, and to the road which we could see from the window where we were seated. His focus was completely on the topic, and on me. He was speaking in a very energetic tone, and was mostly looking up and then at me. He had totally forgotten about the environment: people in the restaurant, food on the table, busy road which was visibly from our table etc. Finally, after 20 minutes, his phone rang and he stopped to answer that phone call. I used that phone break as an opportunity to start my clean questioning session.

Questioning Technique:

Modeller: Ravi, I am doing an NLP Modelling project, and my project is: How to become a powerful speaker; a speaker who makes a lasting impression on the audience. I have observed that you are a very powerful speaker and I would like to model your excellence. Is it all right with you, if I explore this by asking questions, and formulate a model, which will be learnable and will be helpful to me and to others who want to acquire this model?

Exemplar: Yes

Modeller: The technique that I will use is the clean questioning technique. By using this technique I will get to the conscious and sub-conscious structure about your excellence. Are you ready to start?

Exemplar: Yes

Modeller: When and where do you speak powerfully? – *Context Question*

Exemplar: In front of any group, I can speak powerfully?

Modeller: How are you able to speak powerfully in front of any group?

Exemplar: Before I start, I imagine that I have a good connection with the group, and that makes me feel comfortable to start.

Modeller: 'I imagine that I have a good connection', in what way?

Exemplar: Hmm, well I picture myself in front of the audience, and I imagine that the speech is going as I would like it to go.

Modeller: 'When you say, 'I imagine that the speech is going as I would like it to go', in what way?

Exemplar: I picture that the speech is going smoothly; the audience is listening attentively, and are curious about what is being said

Modeller: 'And when you picture that the speech is going smoothly, the audience is listening attentively, and are curious about what is being said', what is that like?

Exemplar: Ahh, well it is a picture perfect and a delightful sight where everything is going as per the plan, the way I envisioned it, and I really feel confident about it.

Modeller: And is there anything else about this 'picture perfect'?

Exemplar: No

Modeller: And this confidence, where is that?

Exemplar: I feel it in my whole body, and as a result my shoulders automatically straighten, I take deep breaths, and I am ready to go.

Modeller: What is this feeling of confidence like?

Exemplar: It feels good. I am ready to go, and I feel I can handle the audience with ease.

Modeller: And when you have this feeling, what happens just before that?

Exemplar: This feeling connects me with my inner self, and reminds me of the time when I used to speak on the stage during my childhood and in college.

Modeller: 'Reminds you of the time when you used to speak on the stage during your childhood', in what way?

Exemplar: Well, I remember the confidence state of speaking in front of kids in school, and I run that visual in my mind, and hear the clapping of the audience at the end of the speech, and I feel the confidence that makes me go.

Modeller: And you run the visual in your mind, and hear the clapping of the audience at the end of the speech, and you feel confident. This is a picture perfect, and a delightful sight and you feel confident, and then what happens?

Exemplar: Well, in this confident state, I feel powerful and have this belief that everything is going to be fine.

Modeller: 'This Belief of yours', what's that like?

Exemplar: I have this strong belief that I have done this several times, and can do it any time. I talk to myself with this belief in mind, and this propels me.

Modeller: Thank you very much; appreciate your time. You have provided me lot of insights about various strategies about how to become a powerful speaker.

Ashlesh Rao:

Observation:

Last year I had attended an NLP practitioner program with Ashlesh Rao, he was able to effectively calibrate the participants and grab everybody's attention, as he is a big guy and makes his presence felt in the room by really occupying the speaker's space. Ashlesh was able to communicate with each and every participant in the room, and engage everybody making the session interactive right from the start. I noticed that his 'big' eyes were supporting him in doing part of the talking, as he maintained just the right amount of eye contact with everybody, and made everybody feel attended. He was very methodical in his approach to addressing the topic, engaging people in meaningful discussions, and ensuring all the participants experienced the topic in the form of an activity or a game. This made me feel as if the training was personally designed for me, and I was taken through the journey of NLP in an interactive manner. A die hard NLPian, Ashlesh was very particular about the choice of words he used to communicate with the participants; a lot of predicates to cater to the participants with different styles of processing information. He used lot of visual words, auditory words, and words for those whose processing style was kinesthetic. Ashlesh was humorous, and ensured that each topic was encapsulated in the form of a story, joke or a real life experience. The memory of the training is still fresh in my mind, and while writing about this in the observation section, I am reliving the thrill of being in that training.

Conscious explanation of Modeller

Modeller: Ashlesh, I am doing an NLP Modelling project, and my project is: How to become a powerful speaker; a speaker who makes a lasting impression on the audience. I have observed that you are a very powerful speaker and I would like to model your excellence. Is it all right with you, if you share and provide a conscious explanation of what you do to speak powerfully - This will help me in formulating a model, which will be learnable and will be helpful to me and to others who want to acquire this model?

I met Ashlesh during one of the graduate meets, which he conducts every month. He is mostly hard pressed for time, so he agreed to keep it short and provide a conscious explanation of what he does to speak powerfully in front of the audience.

Exemplar: Yes. All right, let's get started. I am a slow starter, and a nervous speaker to start off with. Before delivering any training, I am anxious as well. I ensure the nervousness provides me with motivation and energy to do well. I am conscious about the attributes (butterflies in my stomach, negative/dark images of things not going the way I planned) of the anxiety buildup, and have mastered the art of reversing the attributes, so that I reverse the signal of being anxious to that of being in a confident state. I think about my values and my mission to serve the participants in every which way, and this ignites the confidence, and I take off from being a nervous speaker to a speaker who is on a mission to provide the ultimate experience to all the participants. I prepare the script in my mind, and watch it like a movie till the very end. Even before I start a topic, I plan everything in my mind - in terms of stories, jokes, prior experiences that will add value and make it interesting for the participants. I remember the prior confident state, and the associated feelings and other attributes and make sure that I am up and running in

quick time. I move from one side of the room to the other, and this gives me a feeling of getting charged on the go. I remember that I have been able to do this successfully for so many years, and god will ensure that this time also it is going to be fine. I hope this helps.

Modeller: Thank you very much, this is very helpful.

Strategies/Models:

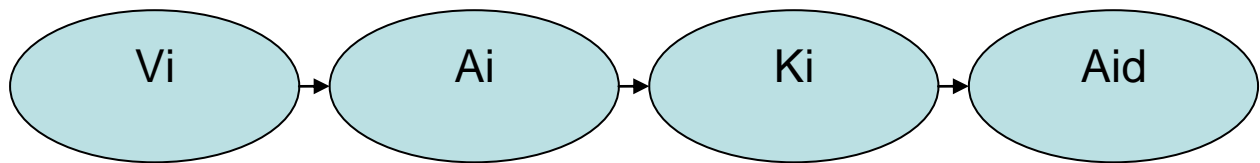
Individual Strategies/Models

Dr Tej Nath Dhar:

- Communicating with the entire body - use of hands, facial muscles and eyes
- Use of space while delivering a speech
- Constant eye contact with the participants
- Slow and deep breathing to be in a calm state
- Effective visualization to imagine connection with the participants
- Preparation of content in terms of the need of the group
- Paying attention to the participants, and taking constant real time feedback from their body language while presenting, and making real time changes
- Rapport with the participants
- Getting into a confident state by remembering successful prior memorable experiences
- Self belief that it has worked in the past, and will work in the future as well

Ravi K Singh:

- Being passionate about the topic
- Effective use of the body
- Being focused about the participants, and not being affected by distractions in the surrounding environment
- Imagining successful delivery
- Being conscious about body posture (stright) and breathing (deep) during delivery



Visual Internal -> Auditory Internal -> Kinesthetic Internal -> Auditory digital

Ashlesh Rao:

- Calibration of the participants
- Rapport with the audience
- Eye contact
- Designing the experience for the audience
- Effective use of story telling and humor
- Use of predicates to cater to participants with different styles of processing information
- Being connected with values and mission
- Effective planning and preparation
- Effective use of circle of confidence
- Spatial anchoring for getting confident

Generic Model:

After evaluating the different strategies used by exemplars, I noticed that some of the strategies were unique to a person, and there were also some certain common threads in getting the results. Based on the strategies used by exemplars, I came up with a model, which I have explored for improving my results. The model is in a learnable format and will be helpful to others who want to acquire this model.

Speaking powerfully is a fourfold process: Using one's body to get into a confident state, stopping anxiety build-up, being real time and running the movie in your mind that You.Are.Confident.

Use of Body: Our Body and mind work together. In short, the human body is the hardware and the brain is the software. For a person to feel confident and become a powerful speaker, the first aspect to master is the 'Conscious use of body'. The body needs to send positive signals to the brain in terms of its well being- A strong stance: head straight, erect shoulders, equal weight on both feet; slow and deep breathing (also known as 'Abdominal Breathing') gives a strong signal to the mind about the comfort level. It sets up the brain for confident thinking mode, as the body has provided its go-ahead. When was the last time you saw a person with droopy shoulders, head down, and shallow breathing delivering a powerful speech?

Removing anxiety associated with public speaking: The fear associated with public speaking is generally because of Anxiety. To understand how a person creates anxiety is very important. Each individual is different, and will have a different experience while experiencing anxiety. For example: A person might imagine having butterflies in his/her stomach, probably an image of him/her with people laughing in that scene, which he/her can even hear. To remove anxiety, try analyzing the sub-modalities (in short attributes) of the root cause: Direction of spin of butterflies in the stomach, quality of the image (mostly negative in this case - dark, without borders etc). A simple solution like reversing the direction of butterflies, and making the dark image with people laughing a colored one with borders, and distorting the sound of people laughing into a duck quacking can change the mind pattern and help removing the anxiety.

Being Real time: A powerful speaker not only pays attention to the participants, and takes constant real time feedback from the participants' body language, but also needs to be flexible enough to make real time changes to set up the rapport with the audience.

Confident belief: To generate confidence, all that is required is to close your eyes and go back in your past and get associated with the memory when you were super confident in a given situation. Notice the sub-modalities of the senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory): You may be able to see colored bright images, hear loud noise of people clapping, feel warmth in your body, etc. Be aware of these sub-modalities and increase the intensity of these attributes in your mind in order to increase your confidence generating attributes. Take the

sub-modalities of confidence of that particular situation and apply it to public speaking, and maintain the belief that, 'I have done this several time, and will do it again'.

Along with this fourfold approach prior planning and preparation of content, some rough sketch about the flow, and knowledge about how to designing the experience for participants will go a long way in ensuring that the speaker is able to speak powerfully.

Testing the model:

I have had the opportunity to speak in front of large groups (at work and at public forums) several times while I was working on this modeling project, and to test the strategies employed by the exemplars while fine-tuning my model. I was astonished to see that there was a marked improvement in how I approached the whole thing after implementing the strategies learnt during the modeling project. Last month, I presented in front of 500+ people, and there was a sudden blood rush when my name was called, even though I knew that I was the next person who was going to speak. I applied the strategies and I felt like Tony Robbins addressing the crowd, unleashing the bundle of energy that was stored within my body. During the entire presentation I was able to keep everybody engaged with my stories, and with the right amount of humor I kept it lively as well.

Last month, at the Toast Master meeting, my selected topic was, 'How to become a powerful speaker', and the content of the speech was to run my model through the participants, and encourage them to use the strategies and feel the difference during their presentation. I was pleasantly surprised to see how confident those very participants were once they employed my model in their presentation, in fact came to me after their presentation to say Thank You!

Overall the experience of presenting in front of large groups has been very good after keeping in mind the strategies to excel during the presentations. Even at work my presentations garnered positive feedback from the participants and this has further reinforced my belief that NLP is all about modeling Excellence, and it works!