

**Excerpt #4  
The Journey**

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## The Journey

### STARTING THE JOURNEY

We refer to the process of becoming a **Presentation Master** as a journey, not a destination.

For the *Presentation Master*, being Presentation Ready is more like being in the state of readiness that a master kayaker is in while making a run through a turbulent set of rapids. Each set of maneuvers gets the paddler through the next turbulence or eddy, but the water is fluid and keeps coming and changing. The presentation landscape for a Presentation Master is much like that waterscape. The venue may be the same but the audience is different. Audience expectations and circumstances like the racing water do not stand still. So, like the kayaker we must continue to take measure of our situation and adjust accordingly.



### ON BECOMING A PRESENTATION MASTER

Someone who wants to achieve the success and results of a *Presentation Master* might find the challenge of becoming a master daunting. A master, after all, almost always achieves his or her objectives and therefore must be ready virtually all of the time.

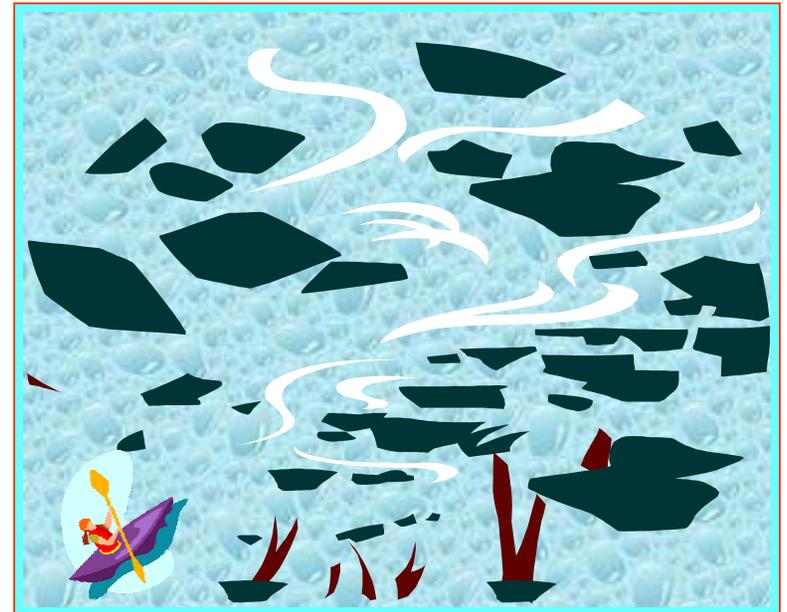
What set of presentation practices or skills could possibly give someone such a degree of Presentation Readiness – especially given the universe of potential presentation topics?

## The Journey

Fortunately, like our kayaker above we do have some controls over the environment we wish to master.

While we have only rudimentary knowledge of kayaking, we nonetheless believe that even today's master kayaker surely started off in slower and more forgiving rapids. Starting in a more controlled environment limits the required repertoire of skills needed by the kayaker for successful river navigation.

Over time and with more experience, the kayaker begins to address new challenges; steeper drops, faster rapids and more turbulence.



Like our kayaker, the **Presentation Mastery** journey starts with modest goals and increases in goal intensity over time corresponding to similar increases in presentation effectiveness.

# ***The Journey***

## **Conditions for Undertaking the Journey**

Like the general conditioning disciplines that athletes (and our kayaker) use to prep for their sport-specific exercises, Presentation Mastery has some basic “conditioning” disciplines needed to get you ready for the journey. These include:

- Setting authenticity and candor standards to establish & maintain credibility & trust. As mentioned in the Introduction section, you can get people to help you reach your goals if you provide them with a reason to believe and trust you and a reason to respect, like or identify with you. Accordingly, a commitment to being forthright is a fundamental to success.
- Taking consistent & rigorous actions before, during & after each presentation opportunity – never “winging it”. In the athletic example, a pro would never attempt an event without planning, a warm-up and a cool down. Presentation Masters approach their “events” the same way.
- Adopting and maintaining a “continuous improvement” philosophy. The “racer’s edge” is always temporary and tentative, as is the Presentation Master’s. Without growth, the advantage (and Master status) goes away.

# ***The Journey***

## **Three Absolutes**

To be successful in this Journey you absolutely must:

1. Reframe and prioritize the importance of presentations in your belief system
2. Choose to “see” the opportunities to use presentations to significantly and positively impact your success
3. Commit to a disciplined approach.

Our experience is that without these conditions present, attempts to move toward presentation mastery will fail.

Conversely if you **believe** that presentations do have the potential to significantly impact your success, this will enable and motivate you to **see** the wealth of opportunities available.

**Seeing** and recognizing these opportunities in turn will provide a target-rich environment which warrants, and is worthy of, a **disciplined** approach.

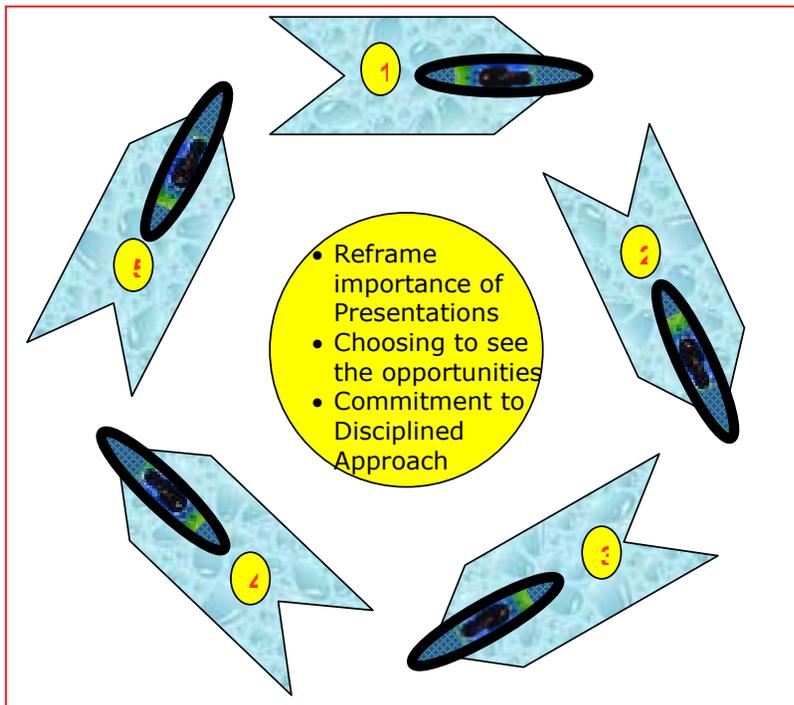
Your **discipline** will be rewarded when your presentation readiness practices turn into habits; setting the stage for making a habit of success.

# The Journey

## Mapping the Journey

After committing to the general disciplines, there are five recurring steps on the **Presentation Mastery** journey:

1. Define Your Presentation Universe
2. Learn and apply Presentation Mastery Practices and Techniques
  - i. Elevated Preparedness
  - ii. Professional Delivery
3. Evaluate Your Presentation Effectiveness
4. Incorporate Feedback
5. Redefine your Goals to Increase Impact



# The Journey

## Step One - Define Your Presentation Universe

The Presentation Mastery Cycle, depicted on the facing page, starts with limiting our terrain. This is accomplished by defining a **Presentation Universe** that is challenging but not so broad as to be overwhelming. Here, you will be setting high level parameters that will define limits for your mastery path, including a:

- Limited set of objectives & desired results
- Limited range of audiences
- Limited range of topics
- Core Image & Style
- Key message

You'll also define "contexts." These are specific sub-sets within your universe that you'll want to address with specific, tailored approaches.

## Step Two - Learn and apply Presentation Mastery Practices and Techniques

In this step, you identify the practices we that will allow you to be ready for presentation opportunities within your defined universe.

**Delivery Practices** – these are the practices that are more generally addressed in the literature on presentation improvement. Examples of more common or basic delivery practices would include:

- Language, Voice & Diction
- Body Language & Eye Contact
- Basic visual aids and properties

## The Journey

In addition to these common practices, we'll highlight a few *advanced* delivery practices that are *not* in general use. A few examples include:

- Standard openings
- Host Introductions
- Targeted Polling
- Breathing Spaces
- Advanced voice and pacing techniques (Power of Pause, voice modulation, etc.)
- Develop & Refine facilitation skills
- Establish unique style or technique elements to build your personal brand

**Preparedness Practices** – like Delivery Practices have both Basic and Advanced dimensions. At the basic level they are predominantly event-driven. This would include:

- Determining your objectives
- Researching your audiences
- Understanding the subject matter
- Knowing and controlling the physicals: venues, layouts, equipment
- Managing Image & style 101 (wardrobe & grooming; language)

At the Advanced or “Master’s Level” these practices gain persistence. This means that information gathered, instead of being used and lost, is systematically recorded and organized for future use and reference.

When the **Always On** mindset is adopted, the presenter acknowledges that he must be ready for both planned and unplanned presentation opportunities. This in turn requires the instant accessibility of key presentation elements.

The Preparedness Practices that permit you to be “Always On” – things that we’ll discuss in detail later include:

## The Journey

- Using detailed planning tools, such as the 3-D Outline™ to frame approach to each context
- Building “arsenals” of key data, illustrations, stories, jokes, skits & references
  - Mental
  - Physical
  - Computer
- Establishing an ongoing Audience Inquiry and Dialogue process,
- Planning for “What if?” Scenarios
- Refining and personalizing Image & Style elements to establish and build your personal brand.
- Establishing a clear connection between the audience’s objectives and your personal objectives

### Step Three - Evaluating Effectiveness

Evaluating your presentation effectiveness means finding ways to get an accurate assessment of your presentation effectiveness.

This begins with knowing yourself and being open to criticism -- feedback is the breakfast of champions!

Evaluations need to be *designed* to get the information you need:

- Results: were objectives achieved?
- Process: was it pleasant & efficient for presenter and audience?
- Image: Does image established match target?

Measurement techniques must be effective, reflecting knowledge of:

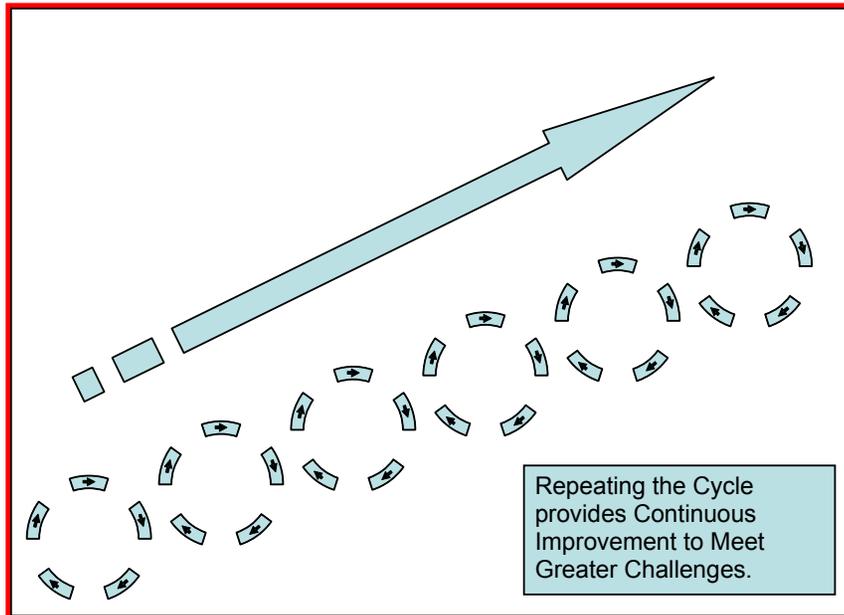
- Who to ask
- How and when to ask
- How to spot feedback that isn’t genuine (everyone gets a “good job!” coming off stage)

# The Journey

## Step Four - Real Continuous Improvement

Maintaining a sense of **positive discontent** is the hallmark of a **Presentation Master**. This means recognizing achievements, feeling good and projecting a positive disposition, but at the same time aggressively seeking better ways; being confident that there always will be opportunities to improve – and expand

### Continuous Improvement Model



Some of the ways to go about this that we'll detail later include:

- Mapping issues/opportunities to improve to Presentation Mastery elements:
  - Process & Discipline (e.g. advance prep issues)
  - Preparedness (e.g. audience or topic knowledge issues)
  - Delivery (e.g. technique faults or rehearsal issues)
- Applying lessons-learned to appropriate areas

# The Journey

## Step Five – Redefine Goals to Increase Impact

This step is the successful recognition of advancement. Like the kayaker who advances to the next degree of river difficulty, this step is a milestone that sets up the cycle to repeat but with a higher degree of difficulty and a greater impact potential.

Here, you have at least three ways to go with your new capabilities – you can:

- Increase impact within existing universe
  - Increased results vs. present objectives
  - New or more aggressive goals
  - Update key messages
- Redefine & Broaden Existing Universe(s)
  - New Goals
  - Additional contexts
  - Broader audiences
  - Broader topics
- Apply Presentation Mastery disciplines to different universes
  - Personal
  - Family
  - Community
  - Professional...

In the next section we will explore each of these in depth