

CRAIG GROESCHEL

LEADERSHIP PODCAST



141: THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING | LIZ BOHANNON

EPISODE NOTES

Thank you for joining the *Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast*! To lead well, practice communicating well. In this episode, Liz Bohannon—a Forbes top-20 speaker—is sharing all things public speaking. She shares brilliant insights on preparation, emotional mapping, and how to read an audience.

Aim to create movement when you speak.

Many communicators speak because they “like doing it.”

This shouldn’t be your primary motivation for speaking. Whenever you speak, aim to serve your audience by moving them toward a desired action.

Whether it’s to take a next step, have a conversation, or apply a principle, give your audience a way to apply what they’re hearing.

Focus on universal principles.

Liz’ content has impacted audiences at leadership conferences, industry conventions, and even on Shark Tank. How is she able to communicate to such broad, diverse audiences?

She focuses on universal principles that apply to everyone.

Example: Rather than talking about how she made her way in the fashion industry, she focuses on the problems facing women all over the world and how we all can be part of the solution.

Surprise your audience.

If you can introduce an element of surprise into your talk, your audience will be more likely to listen to what you say next.

As a communicator, you have to interrupt people’s distractions and assumptions. One of the best ways to do that is by saying something new, different, or surprising.

When you speak, read the audience.

Whenever Liz speaks, she is constantly watching and responding to the audience. If they’re leaning in, she’ll stay on that point longer. If they’re disengaged, she’ll move on.

It’s important to watch and respond to individual faces in the audience, but it can take years of practice to get good at it. Liz looks for two specific people in every audience:

- **Her “yes” person.** (Your yes person is already on your side, and they’re cheering you on.)

- **The person she needs to convince.** (This is a person who looks like they don't agree with you.)

Early on in your speaking career, you need to watch “yes” people. But as you grow, focus on engaging the person who disagrees with you.

Outline the “emotional map” of your talk.

For many of her talks, Liz cuts it into paragraphs and then labels each paragraph by the emotion it's leading the audience to.

This gives her awareness if she's too negative or too positive for too long, and allows her to move points around to make sure she's taking her audience on the emotional journey she wants them to go on.

Remember: No matter how good your content is, if you aren't delivering it in a way that engages people's emotions, it won't matter.

“Without emotion, there's no action.” —*Craig Groeschel*

How long should you spend preparing a talk?

Liz spent hundreds of hours preparing her talk for the Global Leadership Summit.

In her process she...

- Does an initial “brain dump” where she writes down every idea that's related to the talk.
- Pulls out the three most important principles she wants to share with the audience.
- Reverse-engineers the narrative and picks the stories and illustrations that support those three principles.

You might not have time to spend hundreds of hours on a talk, and that's okay! Spend as much time as you can on it, and make sure you're following the process that works best for you. Try to discern if you've spent *too much* time on a particular talk, too. Sometimes, overworking it can be detrimental to the effectiveness.

Prepare the space you're speaking in.

Whenever you can, you should see and prepare the space you're going to speak in. Test the mic, arrange the audience in the direction you want, and make sure you're positioned to make eye contact with the whole room. Whenever possible, set yourself up for success.

“The feel of the room matters so much.” —*Craig Groeschel*

Talk about your own story, not someone else's.

Liz encourages you to authentically talk about your personal story, not someone else's.

If you start to talk about any topic you think will get you on stage, you're not being authentic. Your story and message won't be for everybody, and that's okay.

“It's okay if you aren't for everybody.” —*Liz Bohannon*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are exercises you can do to grow as a leader—ask yourself and your team these questions:

1. **When is the next time you'll speak to a group of people? Which of Liz's principles will you apply when you speak?**

2. **What part of your story has a powerful lesson other people need to hear? Where could you share that part of your story next?**

3. **What is a topic you've spent a lot of time thinking about, but haven't shared with other people? Make some time to do a "brain dump" on that subject, and start writing a talk from that topic.**

8 HABITS OF GREAT LEADERS

What sets great leaders apart? **Great leaders are fanatically consistent with a *few strategic habits*.**

Get Craig's easy-to-reference guide outlining eight of the habits great leaders have in common here: <https://www.life.church/greathabits/>

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