

ADDING HUMOUR AND LAUGHTER – PITFALLS, PRIORITIES & PRACTICES

Laughter is considered the best medicine for your body, your mind and even your social life.

As a speaker, **humour is actually a serious subject** but a **persuasive** technique. **Appropriate humour connects you with and energises your audience – e.g.** the **observational** humour of a Jimeoin or a Kitty Flanagan is based on pointing out an **everyday phenomenon** that is **rarely noticed or discussed**.

Other well-known types of humour include **puns, stories, quotes, sayings and limericks**. **Ironically**, you'll become **more spontaneous** with **preparation, observation, courage and practice**.

However, humour isn't always a laughing matter. **Humour can easily offend and alienate**. To get humour right requires a great deal of thought and consideration and fits your personality:

Don't start with a Joke – too risky.

Most of us are **not natural comedians**, so it's unlikely you're good at telling jokes in public. Besides, **if the joke bombs, or worse the joke offends**, you've started on a **very bad note, damaged your credibility - making it almost impossible to recover**.

- It's better--**much better**--to start with a **relevant and brief humorous story from your personal experience** – easier for your audience to relate to you.

You can build in more laughter if you learn how to

- **embellish** your stories or talk with **slight exaggerations** of facial expressions, **gestures, vocal variety and pauses**
- say the **opposite** to what your “out of sync” body language is saying.
- **stop rushing** – perfect your pauses, especially before and after the punchline.
- use **self-deprecating humour** - but don't overdose on it !
The key is to choose examples of **mistakes or embarrassing stories** that aren't directly tied to your expertise or credibility.
- **practice the Comic Rule of 3: set-up topic, build –up pattern, then deviate with the third element** - which should be an **unusual or unexpected twist**.

Next month: **BE MEMORABLE**