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So I'm Vipasha i'm delighted to be here today part of our workshop about how to become a confident public speaker in the public service.

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We're going to be discussing tips and techniques to improve your confidence, so that you can convey your ideas with ease and impact.

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So, as we're joining just you know settling put your introductions in the chat, and we'll start with just a few housekeeping things before we dive into our discussion with our speakers.

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So for those that you may be that for those of you who may be joining us for the first time. And if you are, let us know in the chat, if you're a first-time workshop joiner apolitical is

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a network and learning platform used by over a 160,000 public servants and policymakers from 170 countries around the world.

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Our mission is to build 20 first century governments that work for people and the planet by putting the best knowledge and skills at the fingertips of public servants around the world.

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We do this through events like this one courses and our knowledge sharing platform and network.

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So I can see we've got some people in the Chat who are saying it's their first a political event.

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Valerie a welcome to your first a political event hopefully this is the first of many.

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And now there's so many introductions in the chat so do scroll through, and have a look there.

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So a few housekeeping things to note a few technical things before we get started.

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You would have heard when you joined this workshop that we it's being recorded.

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So we are recording this session and we'll host it online on the A political website, Vimeo. the we're doing this so that the participants and a political members can review the content on demand to further their learning it also enables

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us to share the content with any participants who might not be able to make it live to the session.

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Please be aware that viewers of the recording may be able to see your zoom username.

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If you come off, meet, so please try to stay on mute throughout the workshop.

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If you have your camera on, they may be out to your face.

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In addition to any information contained in your background. Please let me or my colleague, Helen, know if you have any questions or concerns about a political making the recording available in the manner that I have just described.

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If you have any further questions you can find the contact details of our data protection officer at the footer of our home page on our website, you can.

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You might also be able to see that we have live transcription available to on the call that you should be able to see at the bottom of your screens.

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If you'd like to turn this off then you can locate the settings again in the bottom of your screen, click on the live transcription option and select hide. So today we're fortunate to have heather

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Temple Williams and Nina brant join us for our conversation. But before I introduce our wonderful speakers, it will be really lovely to see who else we've got in the room today, So what i'm going to request you

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to do is go on to Gallery View in zoom and if you're comfortable doing so.

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Switch your camera on and give everyone a nice big grin and wave, and we'll start off our workshop with a lovely personal touch personal note.

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So everyone's smiling faces. and waving hands lovely Thank you so much for indulging me in that cheesy moment.

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But lovely, nonetheless. Thank you okay fantastic so what I'm going to do is just run a few poll questions.

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So as we've got more people just joining the room and settling in.

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We're going to start off with a few poll questions just to see where everyone is sort of joining this workshop.

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What level everyone's at and just to get some insights. So if you've joined zoom using your web browser, you might not be able to see the questions so i'll read them out and you can respond in

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the chat, and my colleague, Helen, is also going to be posting the questions in the chat, too.

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So the first poll question you should see on your screen now, and take a moment to read the options.

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How often do you currently speak in public all the time? multiple times a day, often a few times a week.

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So sometimes a few times a month, rarely a few times a year basically never.

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Or perhaps it's something else, and if it is something else.

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Then again, the chat is there for all of us to use.

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So do let's know in the chat if it's something else.

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So we'll just give it a few moments for everyone to respond to those polls, and just a reminder to stay on mute if possible.

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We've got over 200 people in this workshop so it would be great if we could all just down mute and enjoy the workshop.

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So I can see we've got quite a few responses coming in.

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We'll just give it a few more moments just to see how often you speak in public.

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Okay, brilliant. I'm gonna just end that Poll and let's have a look at the results. Ok.

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Interesting. So we have 3% of people saying multiple times a day, and the majority of our of our distribution is around the sometimes a few times months, and rarely a few times a year.

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And we've got a few 14% saying often and we've got 8% saying, basically never that's really interesting.

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Hopefully, that will be helpful to our speakers as well.

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In order to understand sort of how we want to go about this conversation. Okay, brilliant.

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That was really, really interesting. Poll, we're gonna just do our second one.

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Now and again i'm just going to launch that so this next question is is about different types of public speaking.

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So what kind of public speaking do you typically do? Is it presenting at meetings, moderating meetings, speaking to external stakeholders, giving talks to large groups of people?

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Or is it something else? And again, if it is something else, do share that in the chat with us.

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And again we will just let everyone respond to that, poll, and then we can share.

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We can share the answers. Roy is saying all of the above the which is a great point.

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I think public speaking takes lots of different shapes and forms and it's great to see that some of us are doing all of the all of the options in the ball.

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Melissa. Melissa agrees with that. Okay, brilliant.

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So it is Dave. cool. Okay, great. i'm just gonna give it a few more seconds, and then we'll see what everyone has to say for this, Poll, and we've got to win a bit of everything at times.

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Yep definitely. Okay, So let me end this Poll for let's have a look at the results.

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Okay, so interesting. we've got a large majority 57% saying that it's presenting at team meetings, which is what they do.

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Most of. And then, after that, we've got speaking to external stakeholders at 18%, and then moderating meetings, 13%, and giving talks to large groups of people at 9% brilliant.

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And of course a few of us have said in the chat that they do all of the above, which is also also great.

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Okay, Brilliant, Thank you for taking part in those polls hopefully.

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That's sort of a nice way to see where everyone else is at as well in the room. and that always sort of be nice context as we move into our our session today.

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Okay, So i'm not gonna introduce to fantastic speakers who will be leading our discussion today.

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So first we have Heather Temple Williams Heather is a speechwriter for the Welsh Government.

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She's worked in Welsh government and its predecessor bodies for 20 years.

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For the last 4 years Heather has been a senior speeches manager in the Education and Public Services Department within Welsh Government speech.

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And she writes speech, the ministers and trains, and advises other members of staff on writing skills.

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She has extensive experience in public, speaking both professionally as a civil servant and as a lay preacher and ordinance. welcome heather, brilliant to have you here with us today, and our second Speaker is Nina

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brunt. So Nina is a public information officer at the Un Dsa.

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Nina has been with the United Nations for over 15 years, and currently leads a digital change agenda at Unessa by advocating for more data driven and digital capacity building to support governments, passionate about driving change

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and connecting things and people. She also led a global outreach program called Un Development business that connects the private sector to business opportunities in developing countries.

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She built it to a global platform and brand with strong partners and more than 2,000 subscribers. Brilliant Nina.

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Great to have you here with us as Well, today, so we're going to just jump straight in.

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I'm going to ask heather to open for us and give her reflections.

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Give your reflections on on this question, so could you reflect on your experience with public speaking, and perhaps share an example of something that went particularly well or particularly poorly.

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What was it that you learned from that? And what would you do differently in the future?

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Heather over to you thanks for pasha and I think as a public speaker, i'm learning all the time every time I speak in public, whether that's in a conference or or to a team meeting I learn something

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new, but i'm going to reflect on the very first time I spoke in public, which was about 10 years ago, and I was pitched in at the last minute.

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My boss was taken ill, and I had to pick up this speech and sort of the day before, and and effectively be him.

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At this conference. I was really nervous but the speaker before me gave me an absolute gift, because he said he got up, and he said, Oh, this is the first time I've actually spoken in cardiff and it's, the first,

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time i've ever spoken. in such a grand room with crystal chandeliers and thick thick wall carpets and fancy curtains.

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And I thought, okay. So when it came to my turn to speak, I got up very, very nervous, and said, Well, this is my first time to speak In Cardiff as well.

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My first time to speak in such a fancy room, with crystal chandeliers and thick wall carpets.

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In fact, it's my first time speaking ever so be kind they all laughed

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And they were kind, and it was a bit of an icebreaker for me, and it just just calmed my nerves a little bit.

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I was able to engage directly with them, and I felt that they were on side, certainly for that bit where it started to go wrong.

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I think, as very inexperienced speaker. I put too much in my speech.

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I had far too many facts. I was trying to tell them too much, because I wanted to tell them everything that we were doing, and I lost them a little bit.

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Towards the end. and so for me there's 2 things from that is one.

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If you are nervous, look for stuff around the room.

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Look for what other people are doing and think. Actually, I can do that.

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And I know that it will connect me with the audience and also as general point. Really, really think about what it is you want to say, and don't try and tell people everything, cause then you won't lose them. So that's that's my

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reflection brilliant thanks. heather, I think I can definitely relate to that.

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I'm sure a lot of people here can relate that as well.

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But I really like what you said at the beginning about you know we're learning all the time. all of us every single experience when we're talking to people is a learning experience.

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So thank you for sharing your first experience of speaking in public Nina.

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I'm going to ask you the same question again. so please reflect on your experience with public speaking.

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Maybe an example of something that went poorly, something that went well.

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And what is it that you've learned from that experience great Fasha?

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Thank you so much, and hi! everyone i'm really excited to be here today.

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Let me think, you know, I think i'm gonna share an example that was quite an embarrassing moment for me, because it always helps to share something really embarrassing to feel better afterwards had done quite a bit of public speaking in

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my role as head of development business. I would travel quite a bit and also receive company.

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Delegations on present, and hold presentations on how to do business with the Un.

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So. so I was quite confident in that role. And so for one of my presentations, I traveled to China, and I was going to speak in a lot in front of a large audience of Chinese contractors in Macau, and I remember getting up

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on that stage, and I was quite excited. You know. I was a bit jet lagged, but really excited.

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To start my presentation which I had previously shared with the organizers, and so know, started my usual kind of engaging, you know, giving a bit of context and cracking a joke here, and there.

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I started to realize that there was simultaneous translation happening around me, and everybody just looked at me a bit confused.

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So I it doomed on me that the presentation that I had previously shared with the organizers had been used, and my comments in that presentation had been used for the translation wrote by word.

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And so the interpreters were actually using my comments that I had previously submitted, and it was the first time. Usually I do not stick to my comments.

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The comments are there for me to just you know know they are there? and and then I improvise, and that's my way of engaging with the audience.

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And it really did not work in that setting, and I realized it halfway through, and I was embarrassed for a moment, and then tried to stick to the comments again.

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And in the end I did go through the whole presentation.

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I wonder if they really got out of it what they were supposed to get out of it?

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Probably those that listen to the translation only got the translation of my comments, and not what I was actually saying.

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In that moment. But what I learned from that are 2 things: so one the importance when you are speaking in front of a large audience, the importance to have a deep breath with the organizers about the technicalities.

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You know how long you're supposed to speak where you're gonna speak All these details, I think, would have really helped me in understanding that the the audience would rely on the translation of my comments.

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And then also to really understand that different cultures and different audiences.

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Have you different expectations, and I think the you know I after what I spoke to Chinese companies about the presentation, and they thought it was excellent.

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They they looked while I was doing the presentation that as if they were falling asleep, but but they told me that they were.

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They thought it was interesting, and they, you know, pat me on the shoulder, and in the end I realized that you know the way of me reading the audience and wanting to engage with the audience in that circumstance.

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The was not the best way of really understanding what was happening, because there were some cultural differences in how they were reacting to me that I was not prepared for.

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So that was my second takeaway to really understand a little bit where your audience is coming from and the cultural differences that may be there as well. Thanks.

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Yeahina, I think again really brave of both of you to share your one of your first experiences of public speaking.

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And yeah, I think that's a very practical tip of. know the details of your public speaking engagement, because I guess that can really help calm your your nerves and help you know what's happening.

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More so. thank you both for sharing your thoughts on that sort of opening, framing question. We're now going to move on a bit into a more general Q.

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And A. So just just letting everyone know on the on the meeting, that if you have any questions for our speakers, do just put them through the Zoom chat, and we'll try and cover as many questions as we can so keep keep that

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in mind. Do submit your questions. We do. have a few that have been submitted ahead of time as people are registered. So we're gonna maybe start with some of those first.

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So so i'm going to ask heather this question it's in 2 parts, so i'll ask the first part first.

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How do you manage your nerves before you get up to speak?

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One of the the really important things I think about managing nerves is is to be really confident in what you're saying.

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So you know what you're saying so one of the things I do, and I preach most sundays.

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Actually practice what i'm going to say so that I Know what I else happens around me, and sometimes things go wrong tech doesn't work, or you know you end up standing in the wrong place.

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You know occasionally i've almost fallen out of a pulpit. but i'm not familiar with but at least I know what I'm saying and that's that's really important is to practice practice practice what you're going

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to say the other thing for me is about being organized and it's sort of following on from what Nina was saying in her opening remarks.

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Know the practical stuff that's going on you know where you're going to stand number your pages if you've got a handwritten script you don't get all that sort of stuff that might cause you problems

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when you get up there. and then you know you're not going to get tripped up by something you're not going to be put off your stride because something's unfamiliar.

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But the most important thing always is is just practice what you're going to say so.

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A lot of it is memorized up here. Yeah, absolutely.

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And the second part to that question is, how do you manage stage fright?

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Once you've begun speaking. it's really difficult because sometimes you know, you might be faced with an audience that you weren't expecting. and then you say, Oh, gosh you know I didn't know they were going to be 5

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100 people here. I thought it was going to be maybe 200, or whatever some of the things that I do are I practice my breathing techniques.

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So that I pause, and that just gives me time to reflect on what i'm saying gives me a bit of time to look around.

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The audience. Is there a friendly face? but I can look at and maybe get some encouragement from and sometimes I will actually write in my script pools, because I think a lot of people if you're

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nervous. Then you tend to talk more quickly and that's when you're messaging starts get a bit lost because people aren't hearing what you're saying Very well, and I do actually just put in there polls take breath look

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around you, and that way you can just stop yourself sort of running away with whatever it is you're trying to say because that's when you miss things you miss things out.

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So it is really just about learning how to breathe, learning how to find that sort of still place within you.

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And there are lots of apps out there that you can use for that sort of thing.

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Whatever works for you, that actually you makes you feel calm, Nina.

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Anything to add on that totally agree with breathing and trying to be calm.

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I think there is something also positive about restlessness, about a little bit of nerves that you can actually use to be focused.

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I would say, I get restless and it's like this you kind of excitement that i'm feeling right now that actually gives me energy.

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And then, at that same time, when it gets a little too much, I personally need to move.

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I can really use movement to channel this energy and to let it out, or to just like use gestures like i'm doing.

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Now, even though i'm you know in a two-dimensional environment, it really helps me.

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So if i'm on a stage, I will walk around I will acknowledge also that i'm woof i'm a little nervous. How are you feeling and I will engage the audience in this so that helps me and what I you

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know. noticed recently, I had a digital presentation in front of quite high-level people, and that was very well prepared and not very nervous.

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But once I started clicking my Powerpoint slides I noticed that my finger was like going like this.

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It was, you know, moving so fast that I was clicking through the Powerpoint far too fast, and I really had to focus on the breathing.

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What Heather was saying right, and I really had to try to just breathe and calm my nervous system down that way to this level, and it helped a couple of long breath, and it started calming down against I would definitely recommend that like the

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physicality of things if you can move your body and try to take deep breath.

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Yeah, absolutely, I think breathing the power of breathing is very important, especially when you're feeling those jitters.

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And You're feeling restless and you know you're you're a bit You're shaking a bit brain.

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So next question is from Michelle. as just come in on the chat, and they're asking how do you keep the interest under detention of your audience.

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So, Nina, perhaps you could speak to that. Yeah, great question, Michelle.

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I must say, you know, for me going on stage is a little bit like doing improv.

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You go up, and you know you know your you know your stuff. But you you want to see where the audience is, and how they react to What you. say?

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So I actually think it's fun. to engage with the audience to read the audience. See if there are some people you know looking like they have a big question mark in their face.

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Then I will actually maybe point that out and be like. Oh, I see a couple of faces that you use.

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You seem like you're wondering about what I just said Are there any, you know?

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Are there any questions, or I say, Oh, I see smiles.

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I think you agree with me, so I reflect back what I see in the audience, and I think that's a way of engaging.

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I think, especially in improv you know you do see what's happening around you, even though you're focused on your delivery on your presentation or your speech.

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And I think it's important to acknowledge that if there's a loud allowed noise, or if there a cell phone goes off, just acknowledge it and have a little fun with it.

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I think it goes a long way because everybody heard it right it's like the elephant in the room.

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So use it to build it in, and to Get the audience engaged that's what I would say.

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Try to have fun with the audience, and remember that the audience is usually there to support you, and it's that they are actually interested in what you have to say.

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They're not there to criticize you you're not in an exam.

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Situation where somebody is trying to You know to point out what you don't know they actually want to support you and their interest in what you have to say.

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So have fun with it. Yeah, I think we forget that sometimes. you know when we go on stage, or we're speaking in front of an audience that they're there to hear from from us that'd like to hear from you they're there.

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To support you you know they they don't want they don't wish you ill.

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I think that's really quite important to remember so thank you for bringing that up.

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Nina, heather i'm gonna come to you now with another question that we've had from the Chat.

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And actually I think you'd be quite brilliant to Answer this with your experience in speech writing, do you usually read from a script?

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Or do you just follow bullet points? and I guess maybe even broader.

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How do you use those notes that you've created to help you in the speech Depends.

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It makes a really good question. It depends how long i'm going to be up there for and how familiar I am with the subject matter.

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So if it's you know 10 min then I will just use bullet points.

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But I will know in my head exactly what I want to say to those bullets.

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So it's a subject that i'm really really familiar with I won't read it, verbatim.

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But then I think you have to be very disciplined to keep to those bullet points and to keep to your time.

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So it's something that I would say once you're more experienced at public speaking to use those wallet points when I started.

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There was no way I could have just stuck to bullet points.

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I had the script written out, because then I knew how many words, I know how fast I speak and how many words it would take to use the time that I had

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Having said that I try not make it sound like a script.

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So this is when I practice, and I will I love a fact that that we have smartphones and laptops and things where you can actually record yourself. and that's something that I do.

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If I have a verbatim, then I will record myself, I think.

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Oh, yeah, actually, no, that just sounds like i'm reading reading off a script, and it doesn't sound very engaging.

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And so that's when I you know I can learn how I can change it slightly to make it sound more fresh.

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And because I know it then so well I can if necessary, as Nina suggested it in the previous question. I can start to engage with the audience a bit, and it won't take me off script too much.

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Yeah. brilliant thanks. Thanks. Heather another Question We've Had Come in.

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Is is really interesting and linked to a second question that i'll ask, too.

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So the first one is what's the best strategy when you don't know the answer.

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So, Nina, perhaps you've been in a situation where like this we're in a Q.

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And a session, and you've been asked a question and you don't know the answer.

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How would you deal with that in the moment? Yeah, great question.

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It depends, of course, on a setting I think it's all Okay, to not know an answer.

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I think it is good to have a little bit of a disruptive moment, and maybe we it back to the audience depends on right how formula setting is, and who your audience is.

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But if there's really a question you cannot answer but you think somebody in the audience may have an answer for the audience.

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You know you can also, when it's a very technical question you something really related to your presentation that you just don't know.

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Say, Oh, that's a very good question actually I don't know the answer right now.

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But I will get back to you let's make sure we exchange our you know.

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Information business cuts whatever it is, So that I can get back on that question, I think it's totally legitimate to not know every answer, and just an opportunity for further engagement.

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If nobody else knows it. Yeah, absolutely. and a linked question that's come in.

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Heather is is from Emory, and it sort of goes back to what you were saying earlier about rambling.

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Sometimes when you when you've not really prepared something or maybe you've not practiced, so they're asking when faced with an unanticipated question, or we're needing to speak without preparing they find it, hard to organize their

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thoughts in that moment. Do you have any strategies for helping to quickly organize or structure your thoughts to avoid rambling when speaking in public?

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I do exactly what I did just now. I take a moment and I say, you know, if i'm faced with the question, I will say, okay about that from a minute, and that's absolutely fine, because there is you know we feel as speakers that we have

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to respond immediately, but we don't always and if people genuinely want an answer from us.

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Then they will give us that moment to to organize our thoughts. and you can even say that I i'm just gonna take a moment to to organize my thoughts around this, or or to think about it.

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One of the things I do, though, to try and not be in that position. And this is something I do, particularly when i'm writing speeches for other people, particularly for our government ministers actually do a bit of a Q.

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And a for them, because often people will ask questions. and so I will go.

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And the the policy team and my own team, and say, What do you think?

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Questions might come up here and i'll look at the audience and think Ok, there's some organizations here, and they've they've been platforming these issues lately.

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You know i'll go to their websites i'll look what they're saying on on twitter or instagram, and say what what are their areas?

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That that they are campaigning on and I think you know they're likely to ask questions on those issues.

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So I will just have a few thoughts jotted down about that, and that really helps you.

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Then? you know, if you do get questions fired at you you think? Okay, I've made me got some answers here.

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Yeah, brilliant and thank you heather so We've got a really interesting question.

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That's come in from yasmin and nina i'm going to throw it over to you.

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So they've asked if public speaking seems to quite universally elicit, significant fear, and discover discomfort in people.

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Do you still think it's one of the best ways to convey information?

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Wow! that's a big question I mean first of all What's public speaking right like the definition of public speaking. used to be kind of addressing larger audiences at least.

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That's how it's currently defined and now we have to one of the things that i'm working on as well is using digital media.

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So for delivering our work. Whether it is public, you know public engagement, whether it is webinars, meetings, workshops, etc.

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And so that for me is interesting aspect of the public speaking experience because I've actually, for example, i've read an article that introverts who had quite a bit of a challenge in public speaking settings, feel more confident in

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the digital setting, because they don't have to see all the faces necessarily.

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And you know right now I can most of you have the camera, or at least my view doesn't allow me right now to see any any people I would like.

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I would find it helpful to see faces. but I can talk if I just look at the camera.

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So now it looks like i'm looking at you I'm: kind of just looking at this start on my computer, and I feel like i'm alone in my room, and that helps me gain confidence because I can pretend that i'm actually

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not speaking to, you know, 200 plus people. And so I think the digital experience can be at advantageous for those that have like stage fried, and we can use it to our advantage.

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But again, I think it needs to be a mix right. We need to have some good in-person engagements and opportunities to interact as well as some good digital events.

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And I think the mix hopefully makes the best results Thanks Nina and thank you to those of you who came off your camera and switched your camera on very helpfully when Nina made her comment about seeing faces.

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That's very sweet i'm gonna ask that same question to heather as well.

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Do you have any thoughts on that on that topic Well, i'm gonna reframe the question a little bit in that.

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I think lot of public speaking shouldn't actually be about conveying information, but it should be about engaging with people.

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It should be about building relationships. and if all you're doing in set in a typical speech at a conference.

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If all you're doing is giving information to people they're going to get bored, they're going to switch off not going to be able to take in that level of information and I think one of the things we we really need to

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be trying to do with public speaking. is actually changing hearts and minds, or at least engage in hearts and minds.

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It's not about telling people stuff it's about if you're a political speaker.

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It's about trying to motivate them to vote for you if you're working for a charity it's about trying to get support for your charity and you know that's what you're trying to do with public

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speaking. you're trying to inspire people or encourage in them in some way, rather than conveying information.

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I don't think public speaking is the best way of conveying information.

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There's lots of other ways we can do that you know we have to Twitter and Instagram and Facebook and web pages and webinars, you know, and and all sorts of things where we can provide information but that's

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not what you should be doing in a public public speaking situation that's a really, really interesting answer.

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Heather, and I like that. You said that public speaking is about winning hearts and minds.

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And I think that probably, if you know, we keep that at the center when we're developing whatever it is that we're going to be speaking about that can prop that can probably help us focus a lot more with our content So Yeah, a really

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lovely answer There! i'm gonna stick with you for our next question, which I think is is related.

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We were speaking about it's difficult to engage in audience often times in audiences don't want to just be overloaded with information.

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So the question is, when delivering a subject to an audience, How do you keep the message succinct?

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The message is the really important thing, and I spend a lot of time thinking about what is my message here?

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And I try and have one theme which might be you know if i'm the education minister, you know this is my curriculum, I believe it's going to change the lives of the children in our classrooms

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if if i'm preaching a sermon it might be you know you need to go and feed the hungry or or whatever and that will be my one theme, and you can build on that theme, But don't try and overload

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what you're saying, so I I will use stories to convey the theme I will use if need to be.

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I can use some statistics sometimes. it's a great way to open a speech with the really shocking statistic that builds on your theme.

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But I try and just stick to that one message and reiterate it throughout.

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So you know if i've started with a story part way through. I'll go back to that story and say so you can see what I've tried to do here.

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What we, as a government, are trying to do, change that story and then come back to it at the end and say, Okay, So that story I told you at the beginning.

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If we do the things that i've been talking about then it will have a different ending.

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So that's sort of how I try and keep the audience you know, with me throughout the speech.

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Great and I think that's answered quite nicely one of our questions that that has come in about storytelling using storytelling to engage with audiences.

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So, Nina, I just want to ask you as well. Do you ever use storytelling in your speeches, or to engage in audience?

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And how? how is it that you tell a good story? Yeah.

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First of all, I think I want to emphasize the importance of understanding your audience or knowing something about your audience, because obviously, you you know, if you have a public speaking arrangement, you know your story, and what you want to

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deliver, but depending on the context you're in depending on the audience.

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There are different ways to that story and and I always you know whenever I I would, for instance, when I would travel different countries, I would make sure I know exactly that country's perspective on the subject that I was talking to them and the

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statistics that were, you know, meaningful for that country, and then I would always start with their perspective.

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And what I know about where there come from and then tied in with what I had to say about you know the un's point of view, and or the un's offering and I think it's very important to understand the mindset of

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your audience to the extent you can and I also think it's very powerful to have examples or quotes of colleagues or audience members that people can relate to.

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So that it doesn't all seem so far off and so former I think we all like to engage on things that we care about.

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And so coming up with with examples that are relatable for the audience, I think, is very powerful.

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Yep, and being relatable, comes back to what Heather was saying about winning hearts and minds.

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So yeah, I think that's a really great thing to keep in mind.

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We've had a few questions. come in that are about sort of the challenges when it comes to public speaking, and some situations that you might find yourself in.

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So i'm going to just throw those out at you and we can see how many of these tough situations we can tackle together.

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So we have one question from Matura which is asking do you have any tips for presenting on a topic that people aren't particularly open to.

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For example, Let's say you're presenting on a project that's opposed by the people you're presenting it to how would you?

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How would you tackle that situation, Heather? Would you like to kick us off?

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I think in it happens quite a lot when i'm writing speeches for other people.

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It's important to establish some common ground first of all and to you know, if you have an organization, say typically, I would be writing a speech for a government minister.

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They might be speaking to organizations that are hostiles of government.

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And one of the things that we try to do at the beginning is to to find that common ground to find those values that we both share.

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And so actually, you know, we might be coming at this from a different way.

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But what we both really want to see is good education for our children, or good public services, or good health care.

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And I think, you know, by working together in this area, right rather than working against each other.

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You know we can. We can make it better and and find in examples where and that's Actually, happened.

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You know where we've had joint projects or been in the same space, and good things have happened.

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I think it's, important that you establish some sort of rapport to be begin with, and to say actually we don't have to be hostile, and it hasn't always been hostile.

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We can make it work. So I think that's where I would start Nina anything to add on to that?

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Yeah, definitely, I there is this golden rule that I honestly apply to answering emails as well as negotiating with my kids or husband.

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It's to first acknowledge like what heather was saying, and it's so powerful.

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Let's say you even you get an email that is controversial, or that is against your standpoint.

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When you respond to that email, the first thing you do is acknowledge that perspective, and thank the person for raising that.

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You know that point, or for sharing her perspective, and really acknowledging that that, and being kind of thankful for this perspective before then.

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Maybe explaining, You know your point of view I think it's incredibly powerful in anything.

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Try to respond to your partner or your friend with an acknowledgment before you lay out your arguments, and you will see that it works wonders.

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So I would definitely always do that in a public setting as well.

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And I think to add just one final thing there's it's really a gift to be able to discuss controversial topics in public, I mean, and have a dialogue about these things because the worst thing that can happen

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is not to have a dialogue when you know how parties disagree, and they don't want to talk anymore.

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So I think acknowledging that that you are grateful for this dialogue for this opportunity to discuss something that's maybe not difficult, is the the beginning of getting somewhere.

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And and then, you know, I think beautiful things can happen from there.

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But I think it is definitely being grateful about the dialogue that I was always strengthened.

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Thanks, Nina. I think that's a helpful tip generally in life, of acknowledging what the other person is saying before going in to respond.

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So the next question is sticking with the theme of difficult situations is from Melanie, who's asking, How do you deal with a disruptive audience?

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Member heather, maybe you can talk to that one that's that's tough one.

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And but I think it builds on what on the previous question Actually, is getting you don't you don't necessarily want to shut that person down.

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You know this isn't a stand-up comedian with a heckler, and you know that or that disruptive audience Member way may well have a good point to make. what I would.

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What I tend to do is say, okay, this isn't necessarily the place for you know A. Q.

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And A. there might be opportunities for Q. and A. At another time.

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What I would say is, I hear you I know you've got an issue.

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Perhaps we can talk about this afterwards, Perhaps we can exchange email addresses, you know. but we have a program to get through, and you know, to be fair to the to the rest of the audience.

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You know who've come here to hear me? Can can I carry on?

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And can we talk about this afterwards? You know that sort of approach?

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Yeah, tackling it with a compassion and and reason, I think, is a really good approach.

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The final question within that theme of questions is how do you handle difficult questions where you're limited in what you can reveal.

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But you still want to maintain trust with your audience, Nina.

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Perhaps you can give your insights on that it's a great question.

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I find it very difficult. So, for instance, in my role as a civil servant at the Un.

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I sometimes find it difficult to reconcile it with my.

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You know my private interests or my private opinions especially you know as I cannot Always I have to always be mindful that i'm i'm going to be seen as somebody who works at the un when I post something on social media or when I

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talk about something. so I think it's a very good question I would always say it's important. Keep in mind why you are there.

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If you are there in a professional capacity, or behalf of your organization or your company, then it's important to to maintain that profile narrative, and and you can say, you know I I relate to what you just say I

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can emphasize I empathize with what you said but you know, and then take again the the role of your company or entity, and say, Well you know that you un's point of view, or my company's point of view is

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this and that, and here I am here to share this point of view.

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So I think it's okay to acknowledge that you relate to certain things from a you know human to human perspective.

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But but I would. but I would recommend for people to Do if you can see that there's a potential conflict.

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Just think about it before you go and speak at a large engagement or event.

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Think about whether potential conflict could be and try to agree with yourself how you will.

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You know what you will say when some questions arise so to prepare yourself from these potential moments where you may have a conflict.

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I think that's very important. Yeah, definitely thanks nina so one question that's come in which is similar or along similar lines to what we were discussing before, and is a reality.

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For everyone right now is the digital world virtual world. So how do we adapt our public speaking skills to the virtual world as opposed to in person?

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So I guess maybe it would be great if we could hear, first from heather, then from Nina, about just tips that you might have picked up over the last few years about how to how to be confident in your public.

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Speaking virtually. I think one of the things that I have changed about the way I speak.

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When I'm on a on a digital when i'm online on a zoom call, or something is I I try to be much less physical.

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I'm often waving my hands around or I like to walk, you know, and you can't walk when you're on a on a zoom.

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Call and I think also in the digital world it feels less formal It's not It doesn't feel like the big platform, whether you're up on the stage and you're looking at a sea of faces in a big

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room, and I try and be less formal. Not not chatty so much, but just just sort of bring it down.

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So I feel like i'm literally up like what i'm doing most of the time is talking to somebody in their front room.

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So. and it just that those sort of big set pieces I normally write just don't feel quite right for for a digital environment.

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I feel like it should be less for world that I should be trying to engage these people who quite frankly can turn their cameras off and go and make a cup of tea, and I would be none the wiser so yeah, it's just trying to

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make sure that i'm really talking to people rather than platforming, which I would normally do in a big hall.

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Absolutely. Nina, You're your take on that question yeah I think there are a lot of opportunities in the digital world.

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It's very different to presenting in person. one of the things I love, for example, now is that I can read the chat, and I can get a sense of what your questions are, and I think I could have never done that in a in an

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in-person setting, because I would have not had the chance to hear you out.

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And here I see honestly so many interesting questions, So that gives me an idea of what you care about, which I think is fantastic, and I think the the other thing as a speaker.

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Allow yourself to like. Set yourself up as if you were going on a stage.

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For instance, make sure you have good lighting make yourself a nice I don't know even if it's you know I'm surrounded by my desk, and I was just cleaning up some kids toys behind me to make sure

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that it's it's different right then going on a stage but at the same time make it nice for you and prepare as if you were going on a stage.

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I think it's you deserve this you know moment of cleaning up and and setting yourself up for a great engagement, and I think the last thing but I know that culturally that can differ in what P.

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For people's preferences are but I try at least at times to look at the camera.

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So, even though now i'm not looking at your you know your pictures, it it can engage the audience when you try to look at the camera at times, and you try to position yourself and project your energy through the screen.

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Even though you're not on stage I think there are these advantages that you can also use in a digital environment.

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And I love what Header said about the informality of things.

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I think there is a huge advantage in digital because everybody is at the same level, and we're all here together, and we are here to engage, and there's not this one person at the podium and the rest in the audience I think

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That's a very, very nice like breaking down this barrier of Speaker versus audience.

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We all together, and we're engaging so really like that yeah absolutely.

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I think the virtual world has been somewhat of an equalizer in that sense, and I think both.

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You know what both of you have said has been really, really helpful.

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We are fast approaching the end of our workshop.

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It has absolutely flown by. so i'm gonna ask one final question to both of you, which is sort of a wrap-up question, and it's it has come in previously. before.

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The the chat. but I think it's a nice way to end the workshop.

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So how can you evaluate your strengths and weaknesses as a public speaker?

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And what do you do once you know that? So perhaps Heather, you can start us off, and then, you know, you can close this out.

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Okay, I think this is one of the hardest things actually is to to evaluate yourself.

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It's a bit like being examined and i'm currently training to be a priest, and so one of the things that happens with me every time I preach is that I have to hand out feedback forms to people in the

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congregation and ask them for feedback on my sermon, and on how I delivered it.

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And it's a horrible moment, they don't like doing it. I don't particularly like reading it, and then I have to hand it to my tutor, but it is actually a really really great way of understanding how i'm

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doing, understanding what my strengths are, what I need to improve on.

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So I would always say, if you are speaking in public you know whether that's digitally or you're in actually at an in-person event.

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Don't necessarily hand that feedback forms but ask a colleague to watch you and and ask them, for you know, How did I do?

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Did that point come across? You know what irritated you about it, you know, and just get some really honest feedback.

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And most organizations will do feedback anyway. after events.

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So ask the organizers. Can I see the feedback? You know.

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What did people think it's Not great But it is really important to help you improve that as a speaker?

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Nina: Yeah, and maybe 2 go back to also the digital environment.

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Obviously we all have recordings about our speaking engagements these days. and it's so uncomfortable to watch these recordings. i'm sure for all of you when you see yourselves I always realize how much I say you know like all

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these fillers and it's very uncomfortable to watch these recordings, but at the same time they give us a chance to review a little bit how how we speak, and how our posture is and all these things.

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So I think the mantra should be not to be afraid of criticism.

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But to look for learning opportunities. it's really all about improving yourselves, and and trying to learn from what you see in the feedback you get, and in that sense I think we're all on a journey of improvement and all of us still

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have you know long way to go. but I think it's nice to have the opportunity to look at yourself and be like, Okay?

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Well, maybe next time I make a conscious effort. not to say you know all the time, which, by the way, I have done today so hope I I didn't say it too many times, but I think that's it's really all about learning and

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doing doing it better the next time. Yeah. seeing everything as a learning opportunity is, is a really lovely way to look at the world and look at challenges and see everything as a chance to improve and to learn.

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The so thank you so much, heather nina we have as I was saying, come to the end of our workshop.

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It's been really really interesting to hear your insights and you're really practical tips for how to become a confident public speaker, which is what we all want to strive to become Now, If there's any questions that haven't been

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answered And if you actually have questions, maybe following the workshop, we have our Q.

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And a page on our website. So please do visit that.

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My colleague Helen is just gonna post the link in the chat now, so you can visit that. Q.

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And a link, and just pop in any questions you might have.

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And then our whole community of public servants can be there on hand to help answer those questions.

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So thank you to all of you for joining us today.

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For taking time out of your busy days to to take part in this workshop.

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A massive, massive Thank you to our speakers for leading such a thought-provoking and practical discussion, and sharing so many stories and insights with us just before we finish.

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We are going to do our one word takeaways and before we do that.

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I love to get a sense of how you felt about the workshop.

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So i'm just going to pull up a quick survey we won't share the results of this survey.

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This is just for us to know where we can improve in the future.

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The feedback that Nina and Heather were talking about. So if you could just take a moment to fill that out on a scale of one to 10 rank your agreement with the statement, one being that you completely disagree 10 meaning you

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completely agree that this workshop was a valuable use of my time.

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So yes, just take some moments to fill that poll out and once you've done that.

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If you could share your one word takeaway in the chat. that would be great.

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So one word that you would use to describe how you're feeling right Now maybe describe what you've learnt describe what you're going to take away back to your work back to your team.

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I'll be really good to see what we've got so we've got breathe engaged connection journey hearts in mind.

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I love that heather, and Nina do you have a one word that you'd like to to take away.

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Heather may be fussed. practice practice great anina and i'd say, engage great practice engage brilliant.

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Thank you so much for for giving us your oneward takeaways. and for joining today's workshop.

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We hope you've enjoyed it. We hope you've taken something away, and have a wonderful rest of your day.

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Thank you very much. Everyone, bye-bye. Aye, thanks, everyone.