

Variations in Directness

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how and when to effectively use directness in your speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. What Is Directness?
2. When to Use It
3. How to Use It
 - a. Ideas
 - b. Your Feelings
 - c. Wording
 - d. Delivery

1. What Is Directness?

"Omit the thunder of delivery, if you will, but put 'silent lightning' into your speech. Make your thoughts breathe and your words burn." —J. Berg. Esenwein, *The Art of Public Speaking*

Directness is a state of being straight, constant, and without interruption. With regards to public speaking, directness refers not only to how you address your audience in both style and tone, but the force behind that style and tone. A better way to think about force and directness is to consider what they are not.

Force and directness are not:

- Speaking loudly (but force and directness may cause you to raise your voice)
- Using wild, violent gestures (but force and directness may cause you to gesture more emphatically)

As you can see, force and directness can be both cause and effect. Essentially, directness adds emphasis to your words, showing earnest conviction in your beliefs and arguments, thereby making your speech more evocative and persuasive to your audience. From a stylistic perspective, force and directness add moments of dynamic contrast to your speech.



TERM TO KNOW

Direct

Straight, constant, without interruption.

2. When to Use It

Directness and force are not always appropriate in every speech and should be used with care. You don't want to come across as overbearing, pushy, or threatening to your audience.

That said, if you are giving a speech where you must convey a persuasive argument, directness and force may be appropriate.

Any time you are speaking about your own personal beliefs, values, or principles, you may find that force and directness naturally occur as you speak, since you are already so deeply invested in your own beliefs, values, and principles.

3. How to Use It

Force and directness can be controlled by four factors:

- Ideas
- Your feelings about the subject
- Wording
- Delivery

3a. Ideas

Certain ideas in your speech may lend themselves to force and directness.

As you craft your speech, see which ideas rise to the top with regard to force and directness, and adjust your style accordingly.

3b. Your Feelings

What are your gut feelings on your subject? Are you inspired, humbled, enraged?

Capitalize on your own emotional response to determine if a section of your speech could be more forceful or direct than others.

3c. Wording

Vivid words, phrases, and imagery are essential in crafting a forceful section of your speech.

Use evocative language, powerful imagery, and compelling anecdotes to get your point across.

3d. Delivery

Don't be shy about using force or directness with your audience. Feel the conviction of your own words.

Be authentic, genuine, and consistent.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that force and **directness** are both cause and effect. They are not solely the use of loudness, strong words, or emphatic gestures, but may cause them. **Use directness** and force when you have particularly emphatic points to make. Be authentic and genuine. Use **ideas, your feelings** on your subject, **wording**, and **delivery** to convey force, directness, and conviction. Avoid being pushy, overbearing, or intimidating.

Source: Boundless. "Variations in Directness." Boundless Communications Boundless, 23 Apr. 2017. Retrieved 21 May. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/wording-the-speech-11/variations-in-language-58/variations-in-directness-226-8334/>



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