

# **The Hook & Reel Intro**

*How to Quickly Grab Attention &  
Connect with the Audience*

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# Intro

We have just a few seconds to grab the audience's attention. Most speakers make a deadly mistake when opening their talk. Ever heard a talk start like this:

- “Thank you for being here.”
- “I would like to thank...”
- “The weather was nice today.”
- “Mr. ToastMaster...”
- “I'm Sorry I'm not more prepared.”

Open this way and you may lose the audience. For the first 30 seconds or so, the audience is expectantly waiting for you to convince them you have something interesting to say. Don't wast this important window or we may never fully engage the audience.

I say never, because I have given speeches where I did not *reel* them in the first 30 seconds and their was disconnect throughout the presentation.

A good speech intro follows the **GPS** formula.

**G**rab Attention

**P**review the speech

**S**hare good reasons why they should listen.

In this report, you'll learn how to grab attention. This is the most important part of the intro and also the most difficult.

There are many great ways to open a speech. However, few are more powerful, easy, and effective as *The Hooke and Reel Intro*.

# The Hook & Reel Intro

Recently, I gave a presentation and started off like this:

*Have you ever felt so disappointed you were ready to quit? (Pause) Come with me to the summer of...*

Simple, but very effective. The question and story pulled the audience into the speech and I made a connection. This is called the Hook & Reel Intro.

**The question hooks the audience and helps you connect. The story reels the audience into your speech.**

This concept of using stories and questions in the intro is taught and practiced by two World Champions of public speaking: Craig Valentine and Darren Lacroix. Why? It works.

## The 4 Elements of the Hook & Reel Intro

**Element #1:** The 10 second pause before you start

Pausing settles the audience and creates anticipation of what you are going to say. Often I will mentally count to 10. *1 and 2 and 3 and...* Make eye contact with 2-3 people as you do this. I usually look at one person near the back, the middle, and the side.

**Element #2:** The “You” focused question to an audience member in the back of the room.

What's wrong with this question?

*Has anyone felt like quitting?*

It's speaking to everyone. We want the audience to feel like we are speaking to them. Using "you" makes this happen.

Craig Valentine, the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking, suggests checking to see if the question will pass the "Hallway Test". Would you ask someone this question if you were talking to them in the hallway?

The question will depend on what your topic is. It should also relate to the story that is about to be told. Here are some samples:

**Topic:** Changes in the Tax Laws.

*Have you ever had a client who received bad tax advice?*

**Topic:** Reaching Goals

*Do you have a list of goals on paper or imprinted in your mind?*

**Topic:** Financial Freedom

*If you had an extra \$1000 a week, how would you spend it?*

An alternative is to follow up with a second question.

*Do you remember a time when you were so discouraged you were ready to quit? What did you do?*

If it is a yes and no question, craft it so the entire audience will all answer the same. By using two questions you could get some to nod yes on the first and others who would have said no on the first, to agree on the second.

**Bonus tip:** If you want more audience interaction, encourage people to raise their hands. Don't ask them to raise their hand, just raise your hand after the question and pause.

When you ask the question, select one person at the back of the room and deliver the question right to them. This will include the back row and the entire

audience.

### **Element #3:** The pause after the question.

Imagine if someone asked you, “Where did you spend your last vacation?”

However, before you had a chance to answer, they interpreted and said, “My last vacation was...”

You'd likely feel miffed and irritated. If we don't pause for the audience to process the answer to the question, it will lose its effect and possibly irritate the audience. Pausing is the answer.

**Bonus tip:** After asking a yes or no question, mentally count 1 and 2 and 3. . Increase the count to 6 or 7 if it is a thought provoking question.

Does it feel awkward to pause for this long? To you maybe, but not to the audience. Video tape yourself and you'll see the difference.

### **Element #4:** The story

The audience was bored. For 15 minutes the speaker droned on about a boring subject and tossed dozens of facts at us. Instead of soaking them in, the content evaporated in the air. Suddenly, the speaker said, “Three years ago I was at the airport standing in line...”

Immediately, the audience's attention was back and interest peaked. Why? Stories are powerful.

Starting with a short story no matter how short will help *reel* the audience in. Jump right into your story. Don't say, “I have a story.” or “Something Interesting Happened to me.”

Launch into your story. Here are some examples:

- *In 1979...*
- *Come with me to the summer of...*

- *Imagine standing in-line...*
- *I wish you were there...*
- *On a Tuesday afternoon...*
- *Julie was a student...*

Finish your story and then you'll be ready to follow the rest of the GPS formula

Grab attention

Preview the Speech

Share why they should listen.

## Conclusion

The Hook & Reel Intro works. It takes time to craft a good intro, but you'll experience amazing audience connection and impact.

For your next presentation, use the Hook & Reel.

**Pause. Hook the audience with a you focused question. Pause. Reel them in with a short story.**

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