



ESL Podcast 644 – Giving a Successful Presentation

GLOSSARY

packed house – a very large audience that fills every seat in an auditorium or stadium; an event with very high attendance where every ticket has been sold or every seat has been taken

* Musicians enjoy playing for a packed house because they can feel the energy of the large audience.

hit – something that is very successful and popular; something that did exactly what it was supposed to and is well-liked by everyone or almost everyone

* The singer had a major hit back in 1997, but she hasn't recorded any good songs since then.

to clamor – to ask for something in a very loud way; to make a lot of noise while demanding something or insisting on having something

* All the kids were clamoring for more ice cream.

reception – the way something or someone is received; the way people react to someone or something

* As the host, it's my responsibility to give my guests a warm, inviting reception.

on the edge of (one's) seat – very interested and eager to hear or see something; filled with anticipation to know what will happen or what will be said next

* That movie was so exciting! We were on the edge of our seats for the entire two hours.

to gain traction – to have more success; to get better or faster; to begin to receive greater acceptance

* After writing several journal articles, their ideas are finally beginning to gain traction among other researchers.

hooked – addicted; liking something and needing and wanting more of it

* Which TV shows are you hooked on?

could have heard a pin drop – a phrase used to describe a situation where everyone is very quiet, usually because everyone is very interested in something and wants to hear what will happen next

* In the moment before the award recipient was announced, everyone became very quiet and you could have heard a pin drop.



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main point – one of the most important things in a speech or written text

* His essay was so disorganized that it was hard to identify the main points.

undoubtedly – without a doubt; clearly; obviously

* Helen undoubtedly remembers that moment as the most embarrassing day of her life.

highlight – the best part of something; the most interesting, beautiful or important part of something

* Philippe didn't have time to read the book for class, so he asked his classmates to tell him about the highlights.

in shock – very surprised by something, often unable to fully understand or accept it

* After the president's unexpected death, many people were in shock for days.

to tweak (something) – to make minor revisions; to make small changes to something while leaving most of it the same

* I have a few ideas for how we can tweak this design to make it even better.

Q&A – question and answer; the part of a presentation where the audience members are allowed to ask questions and the speaker tries to answer them

* The speaker allotted 20 minutes for Q&A after her presentation, but it wasn't enough time to answer everyone's questions.

adoring public – an audience that likes and admires someone or something very much

* Do you ever wonder what it would feel like to be famous and have an adoring public?



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the event organizer mean when she says, “It’s a packed house”?
 - a) There aren’t enough seats in the room.
 - b) The organizers are packing up to move.
 - c) The audience is very large.

2. Why were the audience members on the edge of their seats?
 - a) Because they were very interested in what the speaker was saying.
 - b) Because they wanted to leave as quickly as possible.
 - c) Because their seats were very uncomfortable.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

hit

The word “hit,” in this podcast, describes something that is very successful, popular, and well-liked by almost everyone: “Is it unusual for an author’s first book to be an international hit?” When talking about computers and the Internet, a “hit” happens whenever someone visits a website: “On average, how many hits does your website get each week?” A “hit list” is a list of the names of people whom a person or organization wants to harm or kill: “What would you do if you found your name on a violent organization’s hit list?” Finally, a “hit man” is a person who is hired to kill someone: “Nobody could believe that she had hired a hit man to murder her own husband.”

hooked

In this podcast, the word “hooked” means addicted, or liking something and needing and wanting more of it: “Hermann is hooked on diet soda and barbeque potato chips.” Or, “Their research found that kids who grow up hooked on TV are more likely to be overweight as adults.” A “hooked nose” is a nose that curves up and comes to a sharp point: “Most drawings of witches include a hooked nose and several warts.” The phrase “to ring off the hook” is used to describe the situation when one is receiving many phone calls: “After the news story was published, the company’s phones were ringing off the hook.” Finally, the phrase “to let (someone) off the hook” means to let someone get out of trouble and not suffer the consequences for his or her actions: “I can’t believe your parents let you off the hook that easily and didn’t punish you at all!”



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CULTURE NOTE

Most presentations only “attract” (interest and bring) a small group of people, such as the people who are “affiliated with” (connected to) a particular university, or the people who work in a particular organization or industry. However, people in the professional “speakers circuit” (all the people who travel around the country and the world making presentations to earn money) can attract hundreds or thousands of listeners each time they speak, earning thousands of dollars for their presentations.

One of the most popular “seminar” (workshop; presentation) presenters is Tony Robbins. He is a “self-help author” (someone who writes books to teach people how they can help themselves) and a “coach” (someone who provides advice and guidance) for individuals and businesses that want to be more successful. In his books, he tries to teach people how to find and use their own ability to become successful in whatever area of their life is most important to them.

Some of his presentations are just short speeches, but others are four-day seminars. In one of the seminars, he asks participants to walk “barefoot” (without socks or shoes) over “hot coals” (a black mineral that glows red when burning) to prove that people can do anything they “set their mind to” (are determined to do).

Robbins has met with many famous people, giving advice to well-known politicians, such as former President Bill Clinton, Mikhail Gorbachev, Princess Diana, and Nelson Mandela. He has also coached many athletes, including tennis star Andre Agassi and Serena Williams, among others. However, almost anyone can participate in his seminars if they have enough money to pay for them.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – a



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 644: Giving a Successful Presentation.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 644. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. You know what to do – go there and download a Learning Guide for this episode.

This episode is called “Giving a Successful Presentation.” It contains lots of vocabulary related to giving a speech or presentation, so let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Event organizer: Do you hear that? It's a packed house and your presentation was a hit. People are clamoring for more.

Herman: I can't believe it. I wasn't expecting that kind of reception. The audience really seemed to like it.

Event organizer: Like it? They were on the edge of their seats.

Herman: The presentation actually started slowly, but it seemed to gain traction in the middle.

Event organizer: You had the audience hooked from the start. You could have heard a pin drop in there when you were going over your main points. Your presentation is undoubtedly the highlight of the conference.

Herman: Thanks. I'm still in shock. Maybe if I tweaked it a little, I could give this presentation at the national conference.

Event organizer: You'll have time later to think about that. Right now, you need to get out there for the Q&A. They're waiting for you.

Herman: But I don't have anything else to say.

Event organizer: Just get out there. Your adoring public is waiting for you!



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[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with the event organizer, the person who is in charge of or who is running this particular event where the presentation is going to be made, she says to Herman, the person who is going to give the presentation – the presenter, “Did you hear that? It’s a packed house and your presentation was a hit.” A “packed (packed) house” is when you have a very large audience, lots of people who come and they take up every seat in the place where the event is being held. Sometimes we say there’s “standing room only,” meaning there are no more places to sit because there are so many people there. That’s a packed house. It doesn’t mean that it’s a house that you live in. The word “house” here just refers to the place – the auditorium or stadium where the event is taking place.

The event organizer says that Herman’s presentation was a hit. To say something is “a hit” means that it is very successful; it was very popular. We talk about hit songs or hit movies; these are songs and movies that are very popular. “Hit” has a number of other definitions; take a look at our Learning Guide for those. Finally the event organizer says, “People are clamoring for more.” “To clamor” (clamor) means to ask for something but in a very loud way, to make a lot of noise demanding or insisting that something happen. The people are clamoring for more, they’re wanting Herman to do more of his presentation or to make the presentation longer – to continue it.

Herman says, “I can’t believe it. I wasn’t expecting that kind (or that type) of reception.” “Reception” comes from the verb “to receive.” It’s a noun meaning the way or the manner in which something is received, the way people react to something or react to someone. The presentation got a good reception; it was “well received” we might also say.

“The audience,” Herman says, the people who were listening, “seemed to like it.” The event organizer says, “Like it? They were on the edge of their seats.” She says “like it” meaning they didn’t just like it, they loved it. “They were on the edge (edge) of their seats.” The “seat” is where you sit in an auditorium or a stadium. The “edge” is at the very end or border, if you will, of the seat. It’s where your body is just barely on the seat. The expression “to be on the edge of your seat” means that you are so interested, you’re so eager to hear or see something that you may be sitting up in your seat, almost like you’re about to stand up. That’s to be on the edge of one’s seat. Herman says, “The presentation actually started slowly, but it seemed to gain traction in the middle.” The expression “to gain traction” (traction) means to have more success, to get better. To begin to be more well received, that’s to gain traction.



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The event organizer says, “You had the audience hooked from the start.” “To be hooked” (hooked) means to like something and need something, you want more of it; you like it and you want even more. This could be true in, for example, someone who is using certain drugs. They may be hooked on – notice the preposition we use, “on” – hooked on a certain drug. The other words here would be “addicted,” especially if you are talking about drugs. However, to be “hooked” or “hooked on (something)” is an expression we can use for just about anything. In this case, Herman had the audience hooked; in other words, the audience was very interested. They needed and wanted more from the start – from the very beginning of his presentation. She says, “You could have heard a pin drop in there.” The expression “you could have heard a pin drop” means that it is a situation where everyone is quiet because they are interested in something; they want to hear what will happen next. When someone makes an announcement in front of a group of people that is very important, everyone will be quiet and listen. That’s where you could hear a pin drop. Well, this is the past tense, so the event organizer says, “You could have heard a pin drop,” it was that quiet. It was so quiet you could hear a pin dropping on the floor. A “pin,” I should mention is a small piece of usually metal that you put into something – you stick into something, usually to keep something in place. For example, you may have an announcement – a piece of paper, and you take a kind of pin called a “push pin,” and you put into the wood or you put it into the board so that the announcement – the piece of paper stays. Well that’s a pin; it’s a small, sharp piece of metal that goes into something.

You could have heard a pin drop when Herman was “going over,” or talking about, his “main points,” the main or most important things in the speech. She says to Herman, “Your presentation is undoubtedly the highlight of the conference.” “Undoubtedly” means clearly, without a doubt, obviously. A “highlight” is the best part of something, the most interesting or beautiful or important part of something. You could say, “I went to Rome, and the highlight of my trip was to see Michelangelo’s Pietà,” that’s the highlight, that was the best part.

Herman says, “Thanks. I’m still in shock.” “To be in shock” means to be very surprised by something, unable to fully understand it and sometimes accept it. You can be in shock over a good thing; you can be in shock over a bad thing. This is definitely a good thing. Herman says, “Maybe if I tweaked it a little, I could give this presentation at the national conference.” This may be a conference or a meeting for a given city or state, but Herman thinks if he “tweaked” his presentation, meaning if he improved it, if he made some small



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changes while leaving most of it the same, but making small changes to improve it, then he could go on to a bigger conference.

The organizer says, “You’ll have time later to think about that. Right now, you need to get out there for the Q&A.” “Q” stands for question; “A” stands for answer. The “Q&A” is something that happens at the end of many presentations, where the people who are listening to you – your audience – gets a chance to ask you questions about your topic.

Herman says, “But I don’t have anything else to say.” The event organizer says, “Just get out there (meaning go out back in front of the people). Your adoring public is waiting for you!” “To adore” means to like or admire someone or something. Here, it’s used modify “public,” which are the people – the people who listen to you or who watch you. So, your “adoring public” are the people who adore you, who love you, who want to see more of you.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Event organizer: Do you hear that? It’s a packed house and your presentation was a hit. People are clamoring for more.

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Herman: Thanks. I’m still in shock. Maybe if I tweaked it a little, I could give this presentation at the national conference.

Event organizer: You’ll have time later to think about that. Right now, you need to get out there for the Q&A. They’re waiting for you.

Herman: But I don’t have anything else to say.



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Event organizer: Just get out there. Your adoring public is waiting for you!

[end of dialogue]

The highlight of all our podcasts is the script written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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