

## DAILY REPORT

## LAW INC

Every time you make a decision about your speech, ask yourself how you would feel if you were in the audience.



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## The Golden Rule of presenting

'PRESENT UNTO OTHERS as you would have others present unto you'

WORKING WITH A LAWYER recently, I sat in silence as he rehearsed a presentation on "Recent Developments in Corporate Law." He worked his way through 35 slides, many of which detailed entire paragraphs copied from statute books.

It was painful. I'm not sure what inspired me to say what I said. Perhaps I had just had enough. Heck. Someone needs to stand up for the listeners of the world.

"Tell me the truth," I said, when he finished. "Would you want to listen to this presentation?"

He seemed taken aback. But then his shoulders sagged. "I guess not," he confessed.

That incident led me to posit what I call "The Golden Rule of Presenting:"

"Present unto others as you would have others present unto you."

If you want to be a good presenter, put yourself in the shoes of your listeners. Every time you make a decision about your speech, ask yourself how you would feel if you were in the audience.

How would you feel if the presenter started with an irrelevant, marginally funny joke?

Or would you prefer an opening where the speaker showed that she understood a key problem that you face every day in your practice?

How would you like it if someone delivered a presentation to you with 15 major points?

Or would you prefer she kept it simple with three key takeaways?

And how would you feel if you were sentenced to endure a speaker that constantly cited and read from the Code of Federal Regulations? Or even worse, quoted long passages from opinions written by dead judges?

Or would you prefer the speaker to just tell interesting and relevant stories?

Do like those CLE presentations where

the speaker thinks he's suddenly become a law professor and goes into the history of how the law evolved?

Or do you prefer practical advice on how you can be successful?

How do you like it when the presenter turns off the lights and begins laboring through 45 PowerPoint slides?

Or are eight slides better? Or no slides at all?

What do you think of speakers who won't take a stand on an issue?

Do you think that there is a single human on Earth (and I'm including your mother) that wants to hear you speak non-stop for an hour?

Or would it be more fun if the audience had plenty of chances to interrupt and ask questions? Or perhaps could even weigh in on interesting hypotheticals?

What do you think of those presenters that drone on like they're reading the telephone book? And how do you like it when someone reads their speech verbatim like they've been chosen to deliver a high school term paper to the weekly student assembly?

Or do you like it better when someone speaks extemporaneously with passion, eye contact, and a sense of intensity?

What do you think of those speakers who appear to have finished their presentation the night before and never had a chance to rehearse?

And has any lawyer in history ever gotten excited about a presentation entitled "Recent Developments in Corporate Law?"

Here's a secret for great presenting. Consider what you'd like if you were in the audience. Then give the audience that. **DR**