World Champion Roadmap

21 Power Prep Tips

By Pres Vasilev,

2013 Toastmasters International

World Champion of Public Speaking

Meet Your Coach

Pres Vasilev is the 2013 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking.

When he was a small boy in Bulgaria, Pres read a book that sparked his dream to come to America.

In 2002, his dream came true. Pres came alone, but he brought big goals, bold dreams, and a sexy accent.

Yes, he struggled with English, but sharing his story helped him win friends fast and quickly cope with the culture shock.

Three years later, Pres took the job that changed his life – selling children's books door to door. When people asked him, "Where're you from?" Pres told them his story.

Swayed by the power of books to spark dreams, many became his customers, turning him into a top producer.

For more than two decades, he has studied, researched, written, and spoken on self-improvement, speechwriting, speaking, storytelling, and selling.

After many speech contests, Pres rose above 30,000 competitive speakers from 122 countries to become the 2013 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking.

Since then, he has coached hundreds of people from around the world to craft compelling stories, deliver powerful presentations and win speech contests. Pres customizes each coaching session to your specific needs and equips you with the tools, tactics, and techniques you need to become a winning speaker – QUICKER!

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Power Prep Tip #1: Have the Will to Prepare

"It's not the will to win that matters – everyone has that.
It's the will to prepare to win that matters."

– Paul "Bear" Bryant

World champions are products of winning preparation.

Your journey to winning the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking® starts with a burning desire and a firm decision to commit to regular practice.

In the three months leading up to the 2013 Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking, I followed a regular practice schedule. I committed to practice my speech multiple times each day.

Now, the way you approach your practice is key. Approach it not as a chore, but as a chance to invest in yourself. See every moment of practice as a deposit in your personal development. Time invested in your growth is never time wasted.

Below, describe three things you will do regularly to achieve a winning performance:

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Power Prep Tip #2: Create Your Practice Place

"Your sacred place is where you can find yourself again and again."

– Joseph Campbell

A key part of a winning preparation is having a good practice place.

During my journey, my practice place was my living room. And I emptied the whole room! That's right, I took out all the furniture – the sofa, the coffee table, the TV…. everything out!

That way, I had plenty of space to practice with movement.

So what place can you turn into your practice place? What place will make you feel in the zone? What place will set you free to explore and experiment with different ways to deliver your speech? Where will you practice your speech again and again and again?

Below, describe what you will do to create your perfect practice place:

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Power Prep Tip #3: Practice Like You Play

"I'm a strong believer that you practice like you play, little things make big things happen."

– Tony Dorsett

Here's another secret to winning preparation – practice your speech as if you're delivering it for real. Treat every rehearsal as a live performance.

Ideally, you want to practice at your speaking venue so you can get comfortable with the setting. But that's not always possible. But you can tap in the power of your imagination. As you rehearse, imagine that you're actually in the speaking venue.

Practice on your feet with movement, with gestures, with eye contact. As you do so, imagine that you are facing an audience.

And here's a secret – practice with distractions. I would often turn on loud music on my laptop and simultaneously turn on the news. Why? To train myself to stay focused despite distractions. Distracting sounds and situations can and often will happen during your live performance. Train yourself to tackle these challenges with poise.

Below, describe what you can do during your practice to simulate real performance:

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Power Prep Tip #4: See What the Mirror Says

"Tear off the mask. Your face is glorious."

– Rumi

Your most powerful tool to express emotion is your face. And since a winning speech passes the audience through a variety of emotions, having variety in your facial expressions is key.

The best way to work on your facial expressions and descriptive gestures, is to practice in front of a mirror. That let's you adjust your expressions and gestures in real time.

And here's another secret – the size of your audience determines the size of your expressions and gestures. The bigger the audience, the bigger your gestures, the more pronounced your facial expressions.

Below, describe the three key expressions in your speech and practice showing them:

Facial Expression #1: .....

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Facial Expression #2: .....

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Facial Expression #3: .....

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Power Prep Tip #5: Desensitize to Eyes

"Look the world straight in the eye."

– Helen Keller

Developing good eye contact is key to building a strong emotional bond with your audience. As the saying goes, the eyes are the windows to the soul. The audience trusts more a speaker who looks them in the eye compared to one who avoids eye contact.

What gets in the way of good eye contact is the discomfort that comes when you have all these eyes starting at you. That can be intimidating. But here's the secret – you can deliberately desensitize to eyes looking at you

One way is to put a photo of a big audience looking at you as a desktop on your laptop. Subconsciously, this helps you get used to be the center of attention. It works its magic to get you comfortable in front of audience and to substantially decrease your stage fright.

Another way is to put photos of people or print faces and tape them on the wall in front of you when you rehearse so you can deliver lines into eyes. Imagine they are real people.

Below, describe your insights from using these two confidence-building strategies:

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Power Prep Tip #6: Practice with Live Audiences

"Practice is the price of mastery. Whatever you practice over and over again becomes a new habit of thought and performance."

– Brian Tracy

The secret to crafting a winning speech is this: *let your audience help you shape it*. That's the most important lesson I learned during my journey to becoming the 2013 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking.

And the best way to do so is to deliver it in front of different audiences. That's what I did. I practiced my speeches in front of more than 50 audiences. In the three months leading to the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking®, I spoke 4-5 times a week.

So practice in front of family and friends. Practice in front of different audiences. And here's the key – never judge an audience by it's size or location. Even when you speak in front of one or two people, you may get some of the greatest suggestions during your journey. You never know where a great idea will come from.

Get up in front of every audience with positive expectations and, above all, be proactive about getting their feedback.

Below, list five places where you will deliver your speech in the next month:

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Power Prep Tip #7: Seek Feedback

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions."

– Ken Blanchard

Stay hungry for feedback. Constantly seek new ideas, new suggestions to improve your speeches. Seek feedback from your family, from your friends, from everyone who hears your speech or reads your script.

Now, when you rehearse in front of an audience, you get two types of feedback:

1. **Direct feedback** – you get this feedback from your audience directly, in spoken or written form. They *tell* you what they think about your speech.

2. **Indirect feedback** – you get this feedback from your audience indirectly, by observing their reactions. They *show* you what they think about your speech – through nodding, smiling, laughing.

Below, list the most important feedback you got and apply it to your speech:

Direct Feedback:

Indirect Feedback:

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Power Prep Tip #8: Get Focused Feedback

"Practice must be focused, determined, and in an environment where there's feedback."

– Malcolm Gladwell

During every rehearsal in front of a live audience, your goal is to get *focused feedback* – feedback focused on what matters most. How do you get it? With a feedback form.

Make arrangements to have a few minutes of silence immediately after your speech. You want to get feedback while your speech is still fresh in the minds of your audience members. That way, no great idea gets lost, no great suggestions gets forgotten.

That's exactly what I did after each rehearsal. As soon as I was done, I would pass my feedback form to the audience and ask for their feedback. Now, notice I passed the form AFTER my speech.

Why not before? Well, I learned that the hard way. You see, if you pass your feedback form before your speech, during your speech they look at it, they write on it…. It steals their attention. It distracts them. So always pass your feedback form AFTER your speech.

Below, describe the most important aspects of your speech that you need to improve and design your feedback form accordingly:

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Power Prep Tip #9: Ask Five Magic Questions

"Without questions, there's no learning."

– W. Edwards Deming

The quality of the feedback you get depends on the quality of the questions you ask. Here are the five magic questions that helped me shape my speech:

1. **What's my message?** When I start working on your speech, you will most likely get different answers here. As you improve your speech, you will start getting the same answer from different people. That's a sign you've made your message clear.

2. **What did you like?** If your audience likes something, keep it in your speech. Often, you can expand or repeat what they like to give them greater satisfaction.

3. **What did you dislike?** When you know the weak spots in your speech, you can improve them.

4. **Were there any unanswered questions?** Tie up all loose ends.

5. **How did you feel after my speech was over?** Finish your speech with a strong emotional impact. Leave them uplifted and inspired.

Below, list five people you will email your speech video to and ask the five magic questions:

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Power Prep Tip #10: Find Patterns in the Feedback

"It takes humility to seek feedback. It takes wisdom to understand it, analyze it and properly act on it."

– Stephen Covey

How do you decide which suggestion to use and which one to discard?

What helped me tremendously was to look for patterns in the feedback. When you collect your feedback forms and carefully review them, you will notice patterns – different audience members telling you the same thing.

It's also important to listen to your heart. What does your gut tell you? A few people told me, "Your flat tire story is not deep enough to win. You need something more profound." But I ignored these comments and went with my gut.

You see, they didn't know that the message of reaching out to others was dear to my heart. They didn't know that I had came to America as a teenager by myself. They didn't know that reaching out to others had played a key role in my life as an immigrant. That's why I believed in my message with every fiber of my being.

Below, describe the patterns you see in your feedback:

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Power Prep Tip #11: Keep an Open Mind

"An open mind leaves a chance for someone to drop a worthwhile thought in it."

– Mark Twain

Watch my winning speech at the 2013 Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking® and you will see that I took my jacket off.

Now how did that come up? Well, here's how. After one rehearsal, a man came to me and said, "If you're changing a tire, why don't you take your jacket off?"

I thought, "That's crazy. I had watched 30 years of Toastmasters International World Champions of Public Speaking, and no one, no one took the jacket off. So I wasn't fully sold on that idea until a week later. I saw Barack Obama deliver a speech in Berlin. On that hot, humid summer day, he took his jacket off, rolled his sleeves up, and said, "We can be a little more informal among friends." And the crowd went wild.

I went with that idea and it made a big difference in my speech. So here's the key – keep an open mind. No matter how crazy an idea may seem at first, it may turn out to be a winner!

Below, describe a crazy idea you've got about your speech. How can you make it work?

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Power Prep Tip #12: Record, Record, Record

"Without proper self-evaluation, failure is inevitable."
– John Wooden

What will really speed up your growth as a speaker is the habit of recording every speech you give. This is the key that opens the door to self-evaluation.

You will learn a lot about your performance when you use two types of recording:

1. **Audio recording** your speech – use a digital recorder or the voice notes on your phone to audiotape your speeches. The key is to put your recorder as *close* to you as you can so later you can hear yourself well.

2. **Video recording** your speech – use a camera or have someone videotape you with your phone. The key is to put your camera as *far* from you as you so you can catch most of the audience. That way, later you can study not only your delivery but also their reactions. Work to intensify them by adjusting your words and your delivery.

Below, describe what you've learned from your recordings:

Audio Insight: .....

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Video Insights: .....

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Power Prep Tip #13: Study Your Speech Video

"You can observe a lot by just watching."

– Yogi Berra

Here are three powerful ways to study your speech video:

1. **Watch it by paying careful attention to the details**. Each time you watch your speech you will find new areas of improvement.

2. **Watch it with the sound off**. Does your body tell a story consistent with your words? Your face, gestures, movements must support the meaning of your words.

3. **Watch it at fast speed**. When you do so, you catch repetitive gestures. If not strategic, these gestures are distracting and steal power from your speech.

Below, describe your findings in each of the three scenarios?

Details:

Sound Off:

Fast Speed:

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Power Prep Tip #14: Study Your Speech Audio

"Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning."

– Maya Angelou

When you focus only on the audio, you don't let the visual aspect of your speech distract you from your voice. So here are three important vocal aspects to work to improve:

1. **Volume**. Do you vary loud voice with soft voice? Does your volume match the meaning of your lines?

2. **Pace**. Do you vary fast pace with slow pace? Does your pace match the meaning of your lines?

3. **Tone**. Do you vary the emotions behind your words? Does your tone match the meaning of your lines?

Below, describe your findings for each of these three vocal aspects?

Volume: .....

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Pace: .....

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Tone: .....

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Power Prep Tip #15: Record, Relax, Replay

"Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality."

– Earl Nightingale

A powerful method to internalize your speech is to plant it into your subconscious mind by using the 3Rs:

1. **Record**: Audiotape every speech rehearsal you do and select the best recording.

2. **Relax**: Find a quiet place where you can be alone. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then play the recording. As you listen in this relaxed state, visualize the scenes in your story. See the sights. Feel the feelings. If this is your personal story, relive the experience. If it is a borrowed story, imagine yourself in the hero's shoes.

3. **Replay**: Listen to your speech several times. Later, listen to your speech recording as you drive, as you work out, as you take a walk. The more you listen to your speech, the more it becomes a part of your so you can deliver it with confidence, with conviction.

Below, describe your findings from using the 3Rs:

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Power Prep Tip #16: Speak the Language of Success

"People who tell themselves loser stories tend to lose.
People who tell themselves winner stories tend to win."
– Annette Simmons

One powerful tactic to build confidence is to pump yourself up with positive affirmations. Repeat to yourself, "I'm the best, I'm the best, I'm the best."

For best results, keep your affirmations positive, personal and present tense. Deliver them with strong conviction. Say them out loud.

When you constantly pump yourself up with positive affirmations, you will program your subconscious mind for success and will perform accordingly.

Below, list three positive affirmations you can use to pump yourself up before your speech?

Affirmation #1: .....

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Affirmation #2: .....

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Affirmation #3: .....

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Power Prep Tip #17: Use Mental Rehearsal

"The mind is everything. What you think, you become."

– Buddha

Use mental rehearsal and play positive movies in your mind with two types of visualization:

1. **Internal visualization** – imagine delivering a winning speech and see everything through your own eyes. See your audience nodding, smiling, laughing. See them giving you a standing ovation.

2. **External visualization** – imagine sitting in the audience watching yourself delivering a winning speech. I imagined myself on the stage of the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking® a year before I stepped on it for real. I saw myself speaking confidently in front of the flags of the world. I played that mental movie again and again.

When you tap into the power of mental rehearsal, you will build tremendous confidence and you will program your subconscious mind for success.

Below, list two positive mental movies you will deliberately visualize before your speech:

Internal Visualization: .....

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External Visualization: .....

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Power Prep Tip #18: Visualize Your Victory

"Proper visualization by the exercise of concentration and willpower enables us to materialize thoughts, not only as dreams or visions in the mental realm, but also as experiences in the material realm."

– Paramahansa Yogananda

I remember it as if it was yesterday – the sleepless night before the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking®. I lay in bed, eyes closed, yet fully awake and I imagined…. I imagined the introductory remarks of the emcee, his introduction of my speech, the way I walked on stage with a spring in my step and a smile on my face. I imagined myself waving at the audience and shaking the emcee's hand. Then I mentally went through all the motions – from the speech opening to my final bow. I imagined the winning announcements. I imagined the emcee saying, "And now, drum roll please. The 2013 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking is Pres Vasilev." I imagined myself stepping back on that big stage to take that big trophy. I imagined my award acceptance speech. I imagined the audience lining up to congratulate me and take photos with me. I imagined it all….

Below, describe your winning performance step by step in vivid detail:

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Power Prep Tip #19: Feel Winning Feelings

"Feeling is the secret."

– Neville Goddard

One powerful idea that I found incredibly helpful during my journey came from Neville Goddard, who said, "Assume the feeling of a wish fulfilled."

When you imagine that you've achieved your goal and you feel these winning feelings, you magnetize yourself and attract people and situations that quickly move you towards you goal.

That's exactly what happened when I got in the habit of feeling winning feelings every single day. I started to attract ideas, situations, and people who played a key role in my success.

So how would you feel when you win the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking®? Feel these winning feelings every single day and watch what happens....

Below, describe in detail your winning feelings:

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Power Prep Tip #20: Find Mentors

"When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

– Proverb

During my journey, I was lucky to have as my mentor Old Bill. As an English teacher, he invited me to his class to deliver both my semifinal and my final speech. And I learned a lot not only from him but also from his students.

In fact, practicing in schools is a great idea to sharpen your speech and is a win-win-win: you gain great feedback to polish a speech, you create a great educational experience for the students, and you help the teacher. So contact an English teacher in your area and ask them if you can deliver your speech to their classes as an educational experience.

Your mentor can be from any walk of life and you can have more than one mentors. The key is to show sincere desire to learn and sincere gratitude for their help.

Below, describe the best insights you get from your mentors:

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Power Prep Tip #21: Work with a Coach and Win

"Everyone needs a coach."

– Bill Gates

The best and fastest way to achieve your goal is to work one on one with someone who has already achieved that goal. That's why I'd like to invite you to join my inner circle and work one on one with me. Over the years, I've shortened the learning curve of hundreds of speakers from around the world, making their journey to speaking success easy and fun. Here's what one of them has to say:

"**Extraordinary!**

Pres is incredibly methodical in the way he approaches a speech and has a wealth of tips and tricks you can use to improve both your writing and delivery.

I was blown away by all the advice and tweaks he helped me with.

A game changer!"

Verity Price,
2021 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking

When you are ready to take your speeches, stories and skills to the next level, I will be delighted to coach you, so reach out: pres@pressays.com

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