



Your Magic Meeting Message



COMMUNICATION SKILL BUILDER



Your Magic Meeting Message

by Gloria Thomas



Use this guide to develop a message you can deliver with ease and impact whenever you're asked to introduce yourself. You'll also learn how to instantly adapt your message to answer the questions often asked by meeting facilitators.

We've all been there. At a meeting, class or any sort of gathering, someone says, *Let's go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.*

Your heart rate speeds up. You feel like a litter of puppies is bouncing around inside your chest. You're anxious and may even tremble a bit. You'll notice you're breathing a little faster. You worry that you might hyperventilate.

That was me. I dreaded those situations. As my turn drew closer my fear would climb. It's an awful feeling even if you're an extrovert. Yet it can be especially uncomfortable for a shy introvert like I once was.



And we've all endured — or found ourselves making — introductions that meander off course or ramble on too long.

Introductions are a core element of communication. They set the stage for first impressions and, when done effectively, provide relevant insights about you. Therefore, they should never be left to chance. That's why I created **The Magic Meeting Message**.



In *The Wizard of Oz*, when Dorothy steps out of her house into the land of Oz, the residents introduce themselves to her — perfectly. Each one speaks confidently, clearly, personally, concisely and memorably.

That's the same skill you will learn here.

With a bit of preparation and strategic planning, you'll be ready — and eager — to deliver a warm, crisp, engaging introduction that will make you as memorable as the beloved characters in Oz. These moments will become opportunities to be heard, respected and welcomed by your colleagues.

There are three steps to creating your own Magic Meeting Message. They're simple. And with practice they become automatic.

STEP
ONE

Establish a Confident Mindset

Trust yourself. You talk regularly. You often communicate. Those skills are already there for you. This is what I call Communication Confidence.

Don't rely on self-esteem. I spent far too many years trying to build self-esteem, yet I still felt unsure of myself in new situations and with people I hadn't met before. Self-esteem can be unreliable and is often dependent upon external factors, some of which lie beyond your control.

Communication Confidence is a skill that is recognized through self-awareness, then reinforced through life-long learning and practice. Once you acknowledge its existence and give yourself credit for a lifetime of being a talker and communicator, it will begin to take hold and provide a constant source of strength. Communication Confidence is reliable, solid and unshakeable.



EXERCISE 1:

Reflect on a few of your most successful communication moments. Jot them down here or in a journal. If you can't recall any, just skip this for now. You will begin to recognize them after completing these exercises and practicing your Magic Meeting Message.

**STEP
TWO**

Create a Communication Confidence Ritual

Establish a clear, focused mindset by practicing thoughts and behaviors that will become your Communication Confidence ritual.

When you prepare for any high-stakes communication moment, even one as seemingly simple as an introduction, know you'll be flooded with a rush of adrenaline. This can make you feel unsteady. Knowing what's happening will help you to manage it. Then you can channel the adrenaline so it won't overwhelm you. Instead this surge will fuel a sharp, energetic delivery.

Over time you'll develop a ritual that specifically works for you. It will be one that you can use before any high stakes communication event. If you're about to make a speech, this ritual will help you remain calm and steady.



Shift your inner dialogue. Self-talk will happen whether you control it or not. Therefore tell yourself, *I'm excited* (excitement and anxiety feel quite similar), *I've got this* and *I'm the best person to introduce myself*.

Minimize (or right-size) the importance of the moment. Tell yourself: *This is no big deal*, or *This is not that important*. *I introduce myself to people all the time and I'm unstoppable!*

Next remind yourself: *I've got my guide and I'm ready to say every word with warmth and authority.*



Align your body language, gestures and facial expression.

Stand up straight, tall and proud.

Develop a simple behavior or action that will help calm you and focus your energy. This can be a breathing exercise or movement. It can be something as simple as squeezing your hands tightly, releasing them slowly and imagining energy flowing out of your fingertips.

Create your own presentation persona or alter-ego.

Even Beyoncé has Sasha Fierce!

We've all heard the saying, *fake it 'til you make it* and it's a solid, reliable focus that really works to dial down anxiety. This idea is grounded in a principle of psychology known as the "as-if" principle, described by William James, the father of modern psychology.

Every time your mind turns towards self-conscious worry — focusing on yourself and your adrenaline-induced symptoms — pause, ground yourself, regroup and turn your focus towards your message and those with whom you'll share it.

EXERCISE 2:

List components in Step Two that might become part of your ritual. What will you say to yourself? Will you create an alter-ego or superhero image to bolster your power? Can you stand tall, visualize yourself grounded and powerful, then proclaim to your reflection in a mirror that you're the BEST to share this message about yourself and your work? Do you want to include a breathing exercise or movement?



**STEP
THREE**

Write Down Your Talking Points

Much of your core message can be crafted ahead of time! Even though the request is spontaneous, you know to expect it. Why not keep it on an index card in your wallet?

The talking points I recommend will fit most self-introductions. If the meeting leader asks for an additional bit of information, you can easily plug that in.

Begin with a greeting.

First, you'll simply say *Hi!* or *Hello everyone!* You might even want to greet them by the group's or team's name, if that's appropriate.

Next say your name.

I'm ____ . If you have a name that others find confusing or struggle to pronounce, you might provide a tip or clue that will help them.

List some specifics — with a twist!

This will likely include where you work, the department, if needed, what you do and the years you've been there: *I've worked at ____ for ____ years in the ____ department.*

Here's where I suggest a twist on what might be expected. Instead of listing the nuts and bolts of what you do: *I've worked for the city tax office for ten years. We collect tax payments from citizens.* I recommend that you mention a big picture, positive outcome of your work. You might say, *I've worked for the city tax office for ten years. We collect tax payments from citizens to maintain our beautiful parks, safe roads and to fund fire and other emergency services.*

Answer additional questions, if requested.

A group leader might request that you answer a specific question. To prepare for this, you can jot down ideas related to:

- Your goal for a class.
- A tip on the topic for the class.
- The best advice you've ever heard.
- Your favorite quote.
- Your best vacation getaway.
- Something surprising or funny that people don't know about you.



The final two may at first seem scary. Yet my clients always find, after some reflection, that they can recall a memorable trip, volunteer work, a unique family tradition or hobby that will be interesting for others to hear about in a couple of brief sentences.

EXERCISE 3:

Jot down a few notes to help you answer these commonly added requests for introductions. You know by now that preparation is the key to shining in these moments.

Write your closing.

Most people don't know when or how to end their introduction. Instead they'll just stop after sharing their information or say something like, *Okay, well I guess that's all.*

Even though this is most often a botched part of self-introductions, it's actually the easiest to plan and to deliver with engaging impact.

Think about how you can end your message with poise, warmth and courtesy. Here are some options you can consider. Select one or write down your own that best fits the setting and your personality:

- Thank you and I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you today.
- I'm excited to meet each of you.
- It's great to be with you today.
- I'm looking forward to working with you on ...



Create Your Magic Meeting Message

Fill in the blanks below to create your own Magic Meeting Message. Remember, it will be a work in process. You'll refine it further as you practice. You'll tighten it even more after delivering it a few times. This is your first version, a good starting point.

Your name: _____

Your job, department, organization:

Describe a BEST OUTCOME of the work you do and the impact it has on individuals, communities or whatever your work eventually achieves:

Optional information: (Pick two or three from Exercise 3 and list them here.)

Your closing:



On an index card, copy these key points neatly, clearly and large enough to read when your adrenaline surges. Keep it handy to use until this becomes second nature for you. Still, try to not look at your card unless you blank on a point, which is NOT a big deal when you have your notes in hand.



Some final words from Gloria ...

Once you've practiced your Magic Meeting Message a few times, introducing yourself will be easy. As you speak with confidence, clarity and connection this will become an opportunity for you to shine.

Trust that you can communicate your way through whatever you face. Begin work to advance all of your communication skills including focus, internal dialogue, preparation, prompts, tactics and strategies.

There's Magic in You!

—Gloria, The Communication Wizard

