

**SECOND**  
EDITION

# THE POWER PRESENTER

*Techniques, Style, and  
Strategy to Be Suasive*



**JERRY WEISSMAN**

Author of *Presenting to Win*

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## Praise for the First Edition of *The Power Presenter*

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“Jerry is a coach like no other. If you need to give an important presentation, buy this book. Now. The only thing at stake is your income, your influence, and the success of your cause.”

—**Scott Cook**

**Founder and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Intuit, Inc.**

“Jerry Weissman’s genius is getting successful leaders like me to realize we are imbeciles when it comes to effective communication that is not email. In particular, Jerry broadens one’s perspective on how to use the visual well, how to focus on the audience’s perspective, and on how to keep the narrative strong and compelling. I benefited from Jerry’s work way back in 1995 for my first IPO, and then went back again in 2002 for my second IPO—in both cases his teaching added tremendous clarity to our investor presentations. Not only should IPO-bound CEOs read this book, but everyone who does presentations should absorb its messages.”

—**Reed Hastings**

**Founder, Chairman, and CEO, Netflix, Inc.**

“This book will help you bring out your natural charisma. It’s like a bottle of turbo-charged personality. Take a swig, and you’ll kick butt.”

—**Guy Kawasaki**

**Co-founder, Alltop.com; Author of *Reality Check* and  
*Wise Guy*; *Remarkable People* Podcast**

“I watched with my own eyes as Jerry Weissman created billions in stock market value by teaching CEOs his speaking styles and strategies. Now it’s all in a 250 page book—how cool is that.”

—**Andy Kessler**

**“Inside View” columnist, *The Wall Street Journal***

achieve both benefits by arranging all your Roman Columns into an overarching roadmap. Give the individual components of your story a meaningful, orderly flow. Professional writers, particularly novelists, playwrights, and screenwriters, call this the “story arc.” You can create an arc for your presentation by encompassing your Roman Columns within a rhetorical template known as a Flow Structure. *Presenting to Win* lists 12 different Flow Structures. Choose only 1 or 2 of them for your entire presentation. Three of the most common are:

- **Chronological.** Track your story along a timeline: past, present, and future; yesterday, today, and tomorrow; year by year.
- **Numerical.** Combine all your Roman Columns and assign each one a defined number, as Stephen Covey did in his *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* or, as many print and digital publishers do with their “Top Ten” or “Seven Best” lists. Then count up or down for your audience as you discuss each Column.
- **Problem/Solution.** Describe a problem and then the solution your company offers to solve it.

This chapter is a composite of the first two Flow Structures: *Chronological* (the temporal progression of the story development process) and *Numerical* (five steps). This entire book is structured as *Problem* (adrenaline)/*Solution* (all the techniques are designed to diminish the negative effects of adrenaline).

In Chapter Two, you read about Steve Jobs and his memorable iPhone launch presentation. For your convenience, I’ve repeated the text:

*Today, we’re introducing three revolutionary products of this class.*

*The first one is a widescreen iPod with touch controls.*

*The second is a revolutionary mobile phone.*

*And the third is a breakthrough Internet communications device.*

*So, three things: a widescreen iPod with touch controls, a revolutionary mobile phone, and a breakthrough Internet communications device.*

*An iPod, a phone, and an Internet communicator. An iPod, a phone...  
Are you getting it?*

*These are not three separate devices, this is one device, and we are calling it iPhone.*

*Today...Apple is going to reinvent the phone, and here it is.*<sup>10</sup>

His Flow Structure is *Numerical* (three products in one).

And just for good measure, Jobs stated his Point B clearly: “Apple is going to reinvent the phone.”<sup>11</sup>

## 5. Verbalize: The Correct Way to Practice

Establishing the context, brainstorming, distilling, and structuring will bring you clarity of mind as it did for Jeff Raikes at Microsoft. But that is only the foundation. You can generate even more ease of mind through a practice technique known as *Verbalization*. This useful method simply means that, in your rehearsals, you speak the actual words of your presentation aloud, just the way you will when you are in front of your intended audience.

Verbalization crystallizes ideas. In daily human communication, we often seek face-to-face meetings with both personal and business connections to “talk things over.” Businesspeople and diplomats negotiate back and forth until they achieve win-win agreements. Websites offer chat. Professional writers often read their work aloud to themselves to hear how it sounds. Verbalization works.

Yet, for some inexplicable reason, many presenters are reluctant to Verbalize. They find it either boring or tedious or time-consuming, and they relegate one of the most powerful techniques to one of the most underutilized. In doing so, they lose a golden opportunity to gain control of their content. Most people are willing to endure repetitive physical training to build their muscles and skills as athletes. Verbalization is the mental equivalent: building your intellectual muscles and narrative skills.

This is not to say that you should Verbalize to the point of memorization. Memorization is fitting for the timeless words of William Shakespeare and other professional writers, but it is unnecessary for presentations. In fact, memorization can be counterproductive. If you commit specific word strings to memory and then lose just one word during your presentation, you will lose track of your story. Never memorize. Verbalize only until you have a strong sense of your flow.

I practice what I preach. As a professional coach, every time I present, I use content that I have developed and have been delivering for over 30 years. I don’t Verbalize the material for my usual sessions, but when I introduce new

material or create new content for special events, I often Verbalize it as many as two dozen times.

In response to an invitation to deliver a keynote speech at an investment banking conference, I went through the entire process above and Verbalized it multiple times. It worked, and the speech went flawlessly. However, immediately after the speech, I had to record excerpts for a promotional video. There were only about a dozen very short excerpts, drawn from the body of quite familiar material, but I hadn't Verbalized the excerpts. Because the material was out of context, I stumbled frequently during the recording. Fortunately, the video editor was merciful and saved only the good takes. I learned my lesson and since then have never presented in any new situation without first Verbalizing multiple times.

Turning to football coach Vince Lombardi for advice again, "Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect."<sup>12</sup> Your presentation will be much stronger if you spend enough time to develop, organize, *and* Verbalize your content.

### Story Development Summary

1. Establish the context with the Suasive FrameForm
2. Brainstorm to consider all ideas
3. Distill into a maximum of six key ideas or Roman Columns
4. Sequence the Roman Columns into a logical Flow Structure
5. Verbalize to refine and polish

These five steps are the right tools to help you fulfill your quest for content. They work far better than slides (which, as you'll see in Chapter Eleven, should serve only to prompt your discussion), scripted text, teleprompters, comfort monitors, and (maybe someday) contact lenses. They address what is in your mind rather than what is on the external elements. They worked for Jeff Raikes, they work for me, they can work for you. They will enable you to step up to the front of the room with a lighter load.

Now you are ready to face your audience. As you approach the platform, you must do so with the proper mindset. Athletic coaches call this Positive Mental Attitude, or PMA: "I can do it!" In the next chapter, you'll learn how to focus your mind when you present.

# The Mental Method

**Case Studies:** The Actors Studio • Dr. Bob Rotella • W. Timothy Gallwey • Steve Jobs, Apple • John Chambers, Cisco • Mike Tuchen, Talend • Carly Simon • Marya McCabe, Microsoft • Mark Twain • Lawrence Steinman, M.D. • The Squinting Woman

*Sound mind, sound body.*  
*Satire X*

Juvenal (c. 60–130 AD)

## ■ Concentration ■

Control of the mind is essential in every activity in the human experience. Even relaxation requires you to clear your mind of multiple extraneous thoughts and to focus on one tranquil image.

The mind also plays an important role in physical performances such as sports, dance, and theater. In fact, during the twentieth century, a form of acting known as “The Method” revolutionized the theatrical profession by breaking ranks with the theretofore traditional emphasis on vocal projection and body movement, focusing instead on thinking. It was this very revolution that inspired me to break ranks with the traditional presentation training emphasis on voice and body language and focus instead on the mind.

The Method was based on ideas pioneered by Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938), the director of the prestigious Moscow Art Theater. Stanislavski’s seminal book, *An Actor Prepares*, influenced an artists’ collective in New York called the

Group Theatre and its offshoot, the Actors Studio. The Studio, as it came to be known, went on to develop The Method and to propagate its theories throughout the acting community. In the process, the Studio became the spawning ground for legions of luminaries, among them Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, and Robert De Niro.

Simply stated, The Method rejected the long-established theater practice in which actions are staged to depict emotions and reversed field to have emotions drive actions. To achieve this, Method actors use concentration to recall sense memories of feelings and events in their own lives to help them create realistic performances of the characters they portray.

However, you are not reading this book to learn about being anyone other than yourself, and it is unlikely that you will pursue a career in acting (other than in your community theater), so let's turn to the role concentration plays in the more universally familiar world of sports. Think about how important concentration is in your own participatory sport of choice. The mind is used to control the body.

It happens to be the very same mind and the very same body that you use when you stand in front of an audience to present. Therefore, use your mind to control the physical delivery system. Use concentration to manage your adrenaline rush—and convey your message successfully.

## ■ The Mind–Body Connection ■

In the two millennia since Juvenal, we have been aware of the power of the mind to influence the body. In sports, concentration ranks higher in importance than conditioning, muscle mass, nutrition, hydration, or stamina.

Concentration is key in golf, tennis, swimming, basketball, biking, soccer, skiing, running, you name it. In marathon races, runners encounter what is known as “the wall,” a distant point in a race where runners feel completely spent and unable to take another step. This phenomenon occurs somewhere around the 23rd mile of the 26.3-mile course. Successful runners do take that next step: they go through the wall and finish the race. They do it by sheer mental will alone. Electrolyte drinks, energy bars, or packets of honey will not propel them forward. Only their minds will.

## THE MENTAL METHOD

Consider skiing. To be effective, a skier must constantly focus on the proper positioning of body weight in relation to the slope of the hill. That factor became indelibly clear to me many years ago on a cold, clear January day in Vermont. I had been skiing vigorously all day and then took that one last run down the mountain. Exhilarated but fatigued, I got to the bottom of the hill and relaxed into my final turn. With my concentration off my skis, my weight shifted backward. One ski caught on a mound, but I was moving too slowly to release the boot bindings. In that single instant, I tore the medial collateral ligament in my left knee and ended my skiing days forever.

The mind controls skis, racquets, clubs, balls, bats, oars, skates, sabers, weights, surfboards, bicycles—and the bodies that use them. Competitive athletes fully understand and appreciate this mind–body relationship. They strive for what is known as the “quiet mind,” or what athletic coaches call “Zone,” a heightened state of mental and physical efficiency that produces peak performance. Professional and even amateur players spend a substantial amount of time and effort searching for methods to produce this elevated state, and there are many:

- **Raise the bar.** To sharpen their concentration, some baseball players take batting practice with a bat half the diameter of a regulation bat. Some football players practice by trying to throw a ball through a rubber tire—as it swings suspended in midair. Raising the bar of difficulty forces these athletes to concentrate on the central factor: the ball.
- **Visualization.** Many athletes try to conjure a mental image of succeeding at their endeavor: crossing the finish or goal line, envisioning the ball going where they want it to go, or seeing their arrow hitting the bull’s-eye.
- **Neurofeedback.** This medical technique, often used to treat epilepsy and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, is now being tried by athletes. Electrodes that measure brainwaves are strapped onto the athletes’ heads. They can then see their brainwave patterns on a screen and try to control the spikes with their concentration.<sup>1</sup>
- **Meditation.** A web search for “meditation in sports” produces about 244 million results. And in these turbulent and ever-changing times of the twenty-first century, meditation has become an industry unto itself. A *Wall Street Journal* article on the sector reported that it “is worth