



Presenter's Personal Upgrade Program Your Steps to Success

How do we know our presentations (and ourselves) are improving? Once we know how we learn, it's fairly easy then, to understand what stage we have achieved. So, let's review how we humans (you and me) do our best learning - best. When we see something we would like to be able to do well, whether it's golf, business presentations, driving, singing – whatever – we take ourselves through three stages. Those stages are Clarity, Competence and Confidence. In a sense, they're distinct – since we have to do one before we can properly do the next and so on – but, in another sense, they're seamless. We glide from one to the next if you like. What's important though is that, if we **really do** want to become successful, then we need to have the courage to be both tenacious and patient – in the pursuit of our goal.

Let's have a look at those stages and see how they work in together to bring us success. Just loosely align this with something you already do well – and then transfer that understanding to how you can learn to present yourself better.

The first stage – Clarity – is when our thinking is dominated by the left side of our brain. Those parts of our brain responsible for logic and process investigate the task ahead and ensure that we understand what's required – even if, at this stage, we can't actually do it! Just align this thought with the way you learned to play some particular sport, for example. We need those first few lessons perhaps – or, certainly we watch and listen to other people so we can sort out what's required – that's gaining clarity.

Once we have sorted it through – sometimes even by numbers – we allow the right side of our brain to (as it were) place our new knowledge of the task against our present Competencies – eye/hand co-ordination for instance; strategic thinking capability would be another. So, we spend some time with the right creative side of our brain dominant in linking our abilities with the task required – and applying ourselves to it.

Once we have done that for some time, then we step up – or rather glide up to the Confidence level. We know we can do it – to some extent – but, now, we begin to finesse our capability towards the level of success we want to achieve; we begin to gain real confidence in our ability to do the task.

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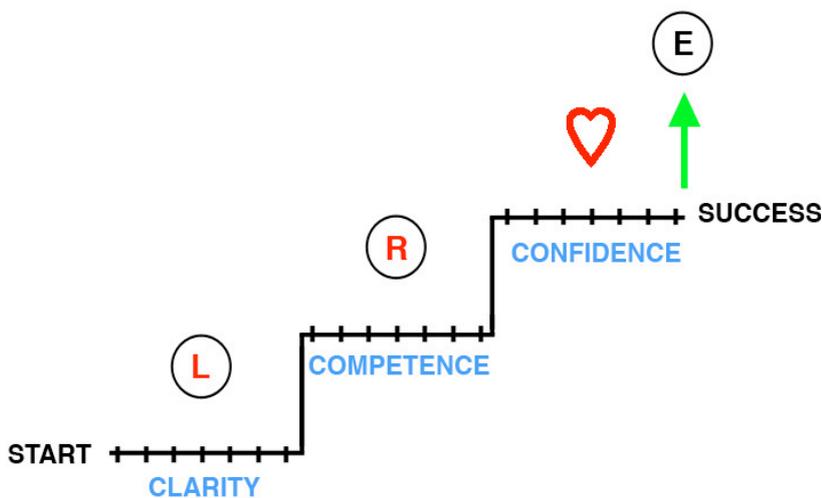
Clarity • Competence • Confidence

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But, let's just pause here to recognize something very important. Just imagine for a moment that you're (say) Tiger Woods the superb golfer. He spends his life well up on that Confidence level and mostly right over towards success. Who is he playing against here? He's so good at his game that he's actually playing against himself. His direct competitor – the person a few shots behind him – and catching up – may be some fairways away – or, even yet to start. So, Tiger's success depends on his own state of mind. His success depends largely on his own attitude. But, sometimes things go wrong. Not often – but, sometimes. So, this tells us that Confidence is a 'perishable commodity' – it can disappear. Sometimes you're not as good as you would like to be.

The important thing here is – once you get good at something – keep practicing – trying to go beyond mere 'success'. If you stop practicing – then your confidence level may well simply slip backwards and you finish up back in the confusing quagmire such that each time you go to (in our case) make a business presentation, you're less than confident – worrying about your competence – or, even, your clarity of purpose and capability.

So, the message from this is – no matter how good you are – keep practising. That may require some courage – which means tenacity and patience. Most of all – take heart! It's achievable – provided you apply yourself to it! Clarity, Competence, Confidence – clear planning, easy delivery and understanding your important role in motivating others through a display of your commitment to the subject. That will give confidence to everyone.

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