



Communication **SUCCESS**

BEGINNINGS

VIDEO 2: DETERMINE YOUR TOPIC

KENNEDY:

Welcome back.

You just thought about your reasons for taking the Communication Success: Beginnings Course. Now let's get to work by determining your topic.

Having a well-defined topic is the first step in developing your talk. It's the "what" you want to share with your audience.

Victor Hugo, the French author, wrote that "All the armies in the world are powerless against an idea whose time has come."

A little dramatic, but it makes the point that it is the idea that matters. It's your idea that matters.

And, if it's an idea whose time has come--even presented in a 5-minute talk--amazing things can happen.

As the lead speech coach for TEDxPaloAlto, I've worked with over 30 different speakers to develop their talks

In working with this diverse group, along with other great speakers, I've concluded that there are 5 core properties of a successful topic:

The first is Purpose. Your purpose is why you're speaking.

Why you are sharing your ideas and vision with your audience.

Our last tool helped you figure out why you are here, and we'll dive deeper into the whole concept of purpose in our next video.

The second property is authenticity.

To me, authenticity comes from sharing who you really are. Your values, perceptions, experiences--this is where your credibility lies.

Why you? Why are you, versus anyone else, uniquely qualified to talk about this topic?

Why are you the expert?

Why do you care?

And why should your audience care?

Next is relevance.

Relevance means your topic is applicable to the world today or, more importantly, to your specific audience.

Believe me, if your topic is not relevant, they won't listen.

Vision is the fourth property.

When it comes to topics, you want to give your audience something to aspire to... A future state that is better--in some way--than today.

Your vision is what unites your audience.

The final property is novelty. Novelty is something new, unique, and special.

Novelty makes people go, "wow! I never thought about it that way!"

So, to summarize, the 5 properties are Purpose, Authenticity, Relevance, Vision, and Novelty.

However, it is important to remember that you don't need to have equal parts of these properties. In fact, you really don't want that. It's perfectly fine if only one or two properties dominate.

Whether you're starting with your own topic, or developing a new one, The Topic Tool will help you develop the best topic for your talk.

If you're stuck, you can use one of the starter prompts provided.

Have fun... The world awaits your idea.