

Chalk Talks, Dissertation Defenses, Grand Rounds, Conference Talks: Audience Management: *How to handle Q&A and audience interactions during your talk*

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Our Agenda

1. **A (new?) way to frame your experience** managing your role as a presenter
2. **Containment strategies** for managing audience engagement in each section of your presentation:
1) introduction, 2) the presentation itself, 3) Q&A, 4) post-presentation
3. **Strategies to respond to everyone – including challenging audience members:** How to **ACE** (**A**ssess, **C**enter and **E**ngage) your talk, playing your 8 great audience cards
4. **How to be an ally** for professional civility without jeopardizing your own professional wellbeing



Two Roles

When you present, you have two roles. **Expert and Shepherd.**

1. **As the Expert**, you research, organize and share your knowledge
2. **As the Shepherd**, you manage participant engagement, with the goal of bringing them from point A to B (a defined learning outcome)

Three Purposes

There are 3 sincere (in scope) purposes of Q&A or any audience engagement

1. To improve their thinking on your work
2. To improve your thinking on your work
3. To support or elevate you

Everything else is a waste of your time

Four Containers

The Introduction

The Presentation

Q & A

Post Presentation

Set expectations

Tell your story

Clarify your story

Build relationships

One Strategy

- A**ssess the situation
- C**enter yourself
- E**ngage

In the right container, at the right time, with your 8 great cards



A (new) way to think about your role as a presenter

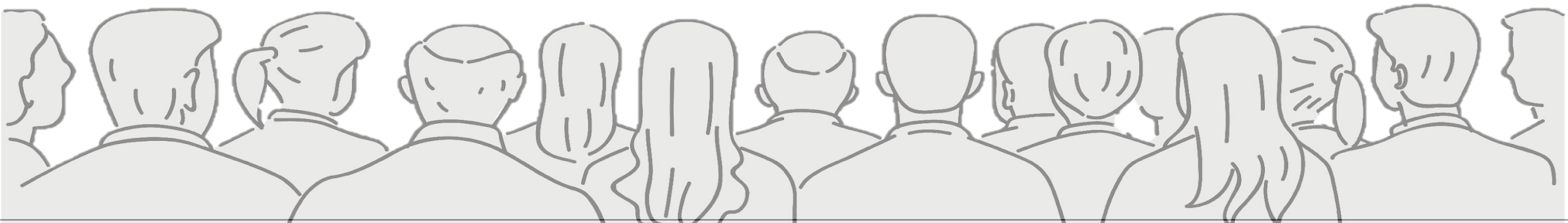
What are some of a presenter's concerns about the audience?

- I am going to be asked something I don't know the answer to and I will be embarrassed
- Someone in a senior position is going to aggressively ask me questions



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Containment Strategies During Your Introduction

Your Containers

The Introduction

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Set expectations

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Containment Strategies During Your Introduction

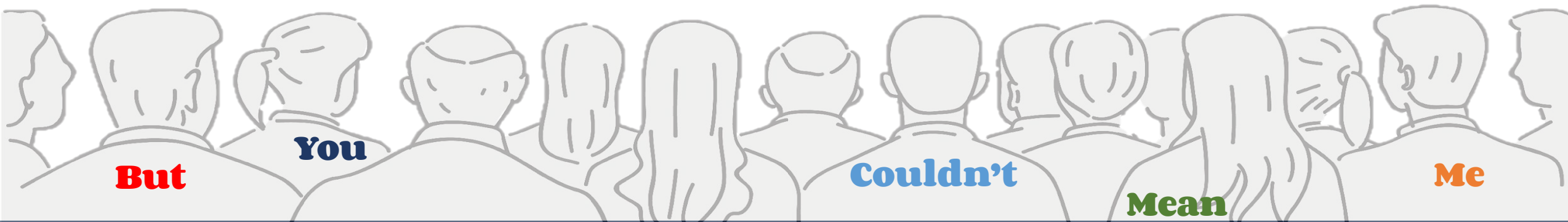
Introductions are a time to set an expectation container around your time together: You articulate boundaries on your topic, its scope, and even behavioral expectations

- ❖ “I’m thrilled to talk about X, and I ask that you hold questions until the end of my presentation. I promise there will be at least ten minutes for Q&A.”
- ❖ “Feel free to ask me questions during my presentation.”
- ❖ **Lab talk/practice:** “I ask that people drill down on feedback regarding on my figures and how I’m illustrating the data. Is it clear and compelling, or cluttered? Feel free to skip comments the slide design. I’m still working on that.”

Imagine 3 archetypes in your audience

- intend to behave appropriately
- intend to behave appropriately and transgress
- Intend to behave inappropriately

Probably, about 2/3rds will comply. Expect the other third to think....



Containment Strategies During Your Introduction

Hello, my name is Tony Hyman. I'm a director of Max Planck Institute in Dresden in Germany, and [I appreciate the opportunity] to talk to you today about organization of Cytoplasm.*

- Before we begin, I would like to share 2 things:
 - First, X (_____).
 - Second, Y (_____).

You can usually make 1-2 “expectation setting/behavioral asks” at the beginning of your talk.

- I ask that everyone hold questions until the end, and I promise to leave at least 15 minutes for Q&A.
- I realize there is a fair amount of visual data in my talk. Please note that I have numbered my slides to facilitate returning to correct place to discuss your question.
- I welcome questions throughout my presentation.
- I should share that that English is my 3rd language, and I might make a few grammatical errors. If these mistakes don't affect your understanding of the science, feel free to skip any language correction. If they do, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. I will take no offence. *(Try to include this one with another expectation – it can be awkward standing alone)*
- **If you have to leave before my presentation ends, please note that I have included my email at the bottom of my slides. Please reach out with comments or questions if you would like to connect. *(You pretty much always include this one)***

So one of the key questions in biology that we are all interested in is the following: How does complexity arise from molecular interactions?*

*Excerpted text from Anthony Hyman (Max Planck Institute) Part 1: How does complexity arise from molecular interactions?. iBiology <https://www.ibiology.org/cell-biology/cellular-organization/>

Presentation Feedback Form

Excellent ← 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 → Poor/Absent

Introduction

Broad introduction: All information presented is required for listener's understanding of the research

Main research question: Clearly explained

Background: Clearly explains what others have done to set the stage for their research

Significance: Makes clear what motivates them to explore this question and potential impact

Data

Logical flow: Logically follows the data and each interpretation is clearly justified

Methods: Clearly explains methods and how experiments allow an answer to question(s)

Results: Presents only necessary data

Clarity: Clearly explains all results figures

Repetition: Main ideas repeated throughout

Conclusion/Future

Inferences: Explains what the work infers/means, competing explanations well-addressed

Impact of work for the field: Clearly explained

Future research directions: Suggests what should be done next, points out new questions raised by work

Q&A

Active listening: Pays attention to and lets questioners finish their questions

Repeating and Clarifying: Repeats the question or rephrases and clarifies it as necessary

Flaws: Gracefully acknowledges flaws or defects pointed out by questioner

Brevity: Answers are short but clear and complete

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Interaction with audience

Eye contact: Faces audience nearly all of the time, frequent eye contact

Body language: Open body language, appropriately animated (i.e. gestures)

Clarity of delivery: Speaks clearly and loudly enough, does not read from slides/notes, no noticeable disfluencies (ahm/uhm)

Pace: Pace is easy to understand (not too fast)

Jargon: All unfamiliar terms are defined and re-defined throughout presentation

Organization

Slide purpose: Purpose of each slide is clear to the listener (Important: Title of slide contains premise)

Continuity: Effective transitions between slides create a continuous sequence of connected ideas

Figures: Every figure and image is clearly labeled and all figures are fully explained by the presenter

Visuals: Majority of presentation is figures/visual aids instead of text

Summary Evaluation

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know/Can't assess

I can repeat the main question the presenter is addressing with their research talk to someone else.

What is the main question? _____

I am convinced that the work is significant in the field.

I am convinced that the presenter used the appropriately methodology to answer their question(s).

I agree with the presenter's conclusions.

I was excited by the potential impact of this work.

The speaker convinced me that they can think critically about their work.

Practicing your talk?

You can also contain people's comments with a presentation feedback form.

This feedback form is to help me get comprehensive feedback on my presentation.

Ed, since you the most familiar with my research – please ask the questions on my data and conclusion as if you are an aggressive listener.

Hey! You can find this presentation resource on the Manage Up page, under the Handling Q&A workshop! <https://career.ucsf.edu/QandA>

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Chalk Talk Feedback Form

Oct. 30, 2017

Excellent Needs improvement Poor Absent

Introduction

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Broad introduction | General explanation of overall program and importance of research | | | | |
| Past accomplishments | Clearly and succinctly summarized | | | | |
| Research vision | Overall plan summary/aims for the next 5-10 years | | | | |
| Timeline and staffing | Clearly describes timing and staffing requirements for first 2-3 major projects | | | | |

1st major project (ex: R01)

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Aims | Reviews 3-5 specific aims | | | | |
| Fundability | Plan is feasible and could get funding through proposed granting agency (ex: NIH) | | | | |
| Scientific vision | Demonstrates independent thinking and planning | | | | |
| Discovery | Demonstrates excitement for science and research plan | | | | |
| Future collaboration | Describes research vision that provides opportunities for collaboration with current faculty | | | | |
| Evidence of teaching potential | Ideas communicated at a level understandable by both experts and non-experts in field | | | | |
| Challenging questions | Keeps cool and does not get defensive when asked challenging questions | | | | |
| Improvisation | Demonstrates ability to think on their feet when asked challenging questions | | | | |

Chalk Talk Feedback Form

Oct. 30, 2017

Excellent Needs improvement Poor Absent

2nd major project (or major theme)

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Aims | Reviews 3-5 specific aims | | | | |
| Fundability | Plan is feasible and could get funding through proposed granting agency (ex: NIH) | | | | |
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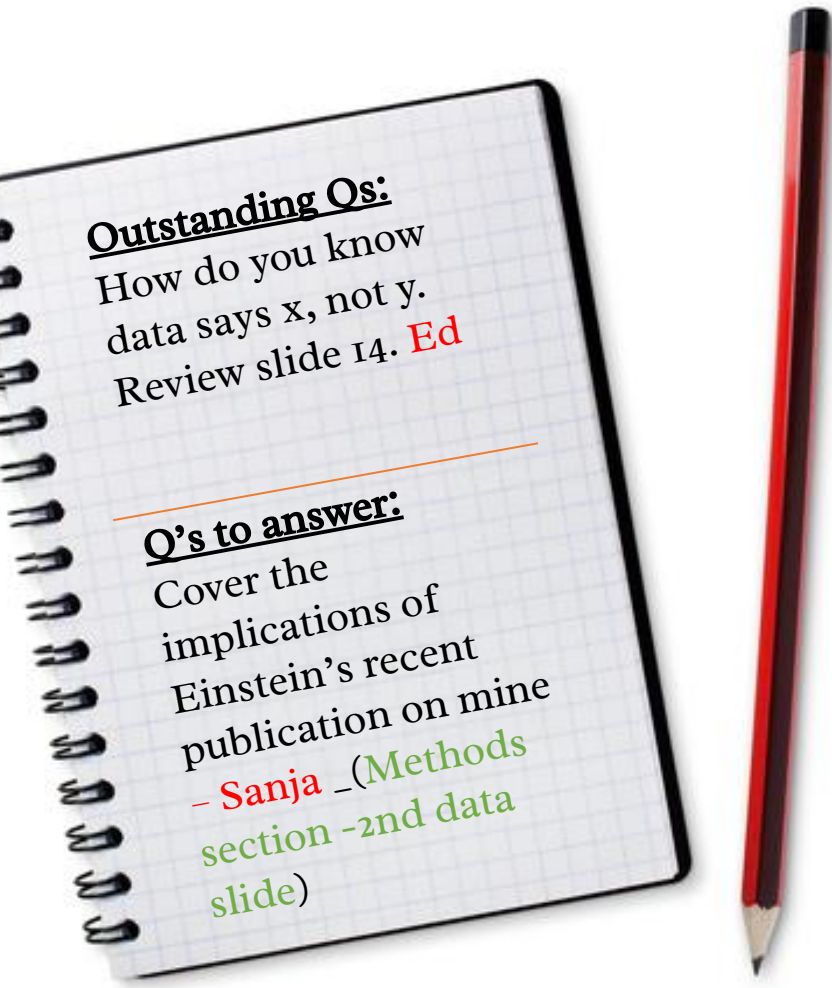
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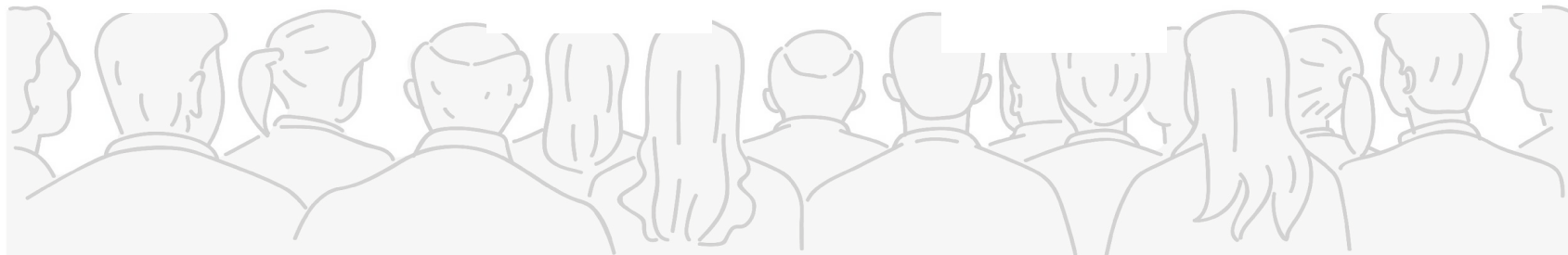
What is the main question? _____

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| I am convinced that the work is significant in the field. | | | | | |
| I am able to answer the question: why should anyone/the scientific community care about this work? | | | | | |
| I was excited by the possibility of this presenter as a colleague. | | | | | |
| I was excited by the potential impact of this work. | | | | | |
| The distinction between the presenter's vision and their advisor's was clear. | | | | | |
| I am convinced of the potential fundability of this work. | | | | | |



Signaling!

Consider what materials will help you during your presentation. Reveal them during your introduction.



Containment Strategies During Your Introduction

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- **If you have to leave before my presentation ends, please note that I have included my email at the bottom of my slides. Please reach out with comments or questions if you would like to connect. *(You pretty much always include this one)***

Your Turn!

Consider your last – or next – presentation.

- A. Is there an expectation you would consider setting? How do you want people to engage you?
- B. How will you verbalize that in your introduction?

*Excerpted text from Anthony Hyman (Max Planck Institute) Part 1: How does complexity arise from molecular interactions?. iBiology <https://www.ibiology.org/cell-biology/cellular-organization/>

Containment Strategies During Your Presentation

Your Containers

The Introduction

Set expectations

The Presentation

Tell your story

Q & A

Clarify your story

Post Presentation

Build relationships

1. Decide what expectations you might want to establish (and be able to depending on the forum) in your introduction.
2. Consider what materials – notebooks, etc. will help you manage your presentation and reveal them during your intro.



Containment Strategies During Your Presentation

❖ Your Turn: Practice containing with DRE

Whenever someone asks a question
DURING YOUR PRESENTATION
 there are only **3 options...**



**Dr.
DRE**

They
hold onto the question

You
hold onto the question

You
answer

DELA

RETAI

ENGAGE

- 1**
- Acknowledge them,
 - Remind them of your hold request, and
 - Ask them to hold their question until Q&A

- 2**
- Let them ask their question now,
 - But hold onto it and answer it later

- 3**
- Have them ask their question now,
 - And answer it now

PUNT: “I see there are already questions, which is fantastic. Out of respect for the audience, and my goal of getting through my presentation, I am going to ask if you can hold your question until the end of the session. I promise to call on your first.”

I see we’re are a little ahead of time, so I can allow a question.

← **signal your thinking**

PUNT: “Your question is a good one, and fortunately, I happen to be covering that during my methods section.”
(later) “This is what the person in front was asking earlier.”

SPECIALIZED Q PUNT: “That is a very specific and intriguing question - that would take 20 minutes to answer. Out of respect for the larger audience who might be here for the entire presentation, I invite you to follow up right after the presentation. I would love to talk.”

MULTI Qs PUNT: “Your questions are excellent. I will answer the first during the results section of my talk, and the other at the end. I have captured them in my notebook and will start Q&A with them.”

CONTAIN: “I’ve covered a lot – I’m not surprised there are questions. I will try to answer your question briefly now, but if you need more information, I may need to ask you to hold your follow up questions to Q&A. Please, go ahead.”

ALWAYS REFRAME/REPEAT THE QUESTION USING YOUR OWN WORDS. IF YOU CAN’T – YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION YET:

- “So, what I am hearing from your question is... Is that accurate?”
- “So, to make sure everyone heard your question... Is that right?”
- **(NOT GETTING IT?)** “Hmm, I regret I’m not getting your question. I’m going to need to move on but ask that you follow up afterwards so we can talk further. Thank you for asking your question.”

WHEN PEOPLE INSIST THEY CAN’T STAY AND NEED AN ANSWER NOW: “It’s unfortunate that you can’t stay until Q&A. But I have included my email at the bottom of each slide, and I would welcome hearing from you if you’re still interested in discussing your point further. Thank you for coming today. I appreciate it,

(turn towards your larger audience)
 So, as I was saying...”

Containment Strategies During Q & A

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Be Dr. DRE

1. **Delay:** They hold their question
2. **Retain:** You hold their question
3. **Engage:** You answer now

Our Agenda

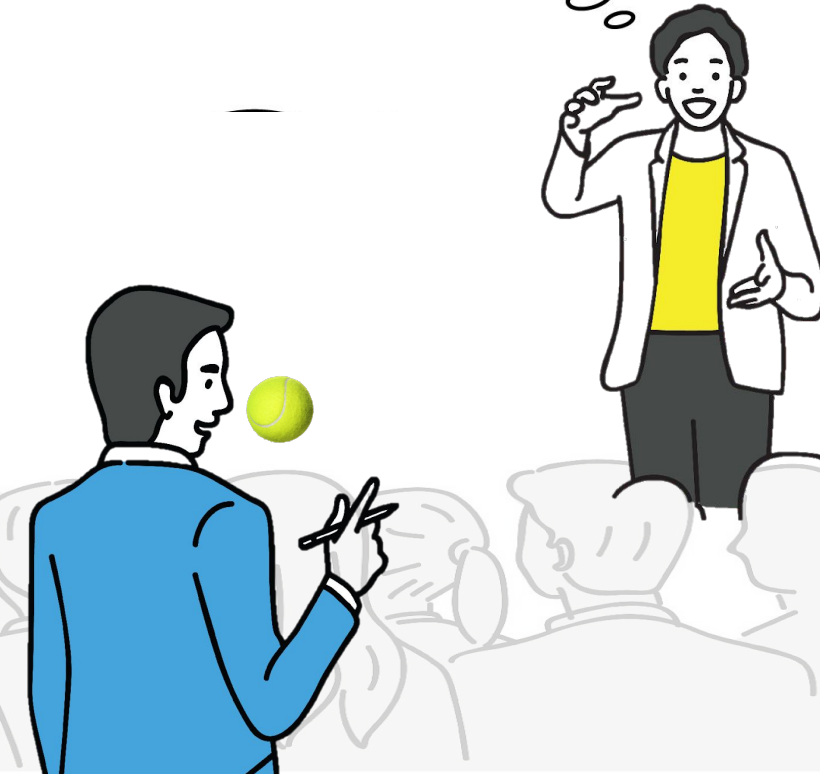
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1. **A**ssess the situation
2. **C**enter yourself
3. **E**ngage



ACE this!
Assess, Center,
Engage



“ACE” every engagement

1. **Assess** the situation
2. Center yourself
3. Engage

Three Purposes

There are 3 ‘sincere’ purposes of Q&A or any audience engagement

1. To improve their thinking on your work
2. To improve your thinking on your work
3. To support or elevate you

Everything else is a waste of your time

Well crafted

Skillful

Poorly crafted

Unskillful

Sincere

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |

Insincere



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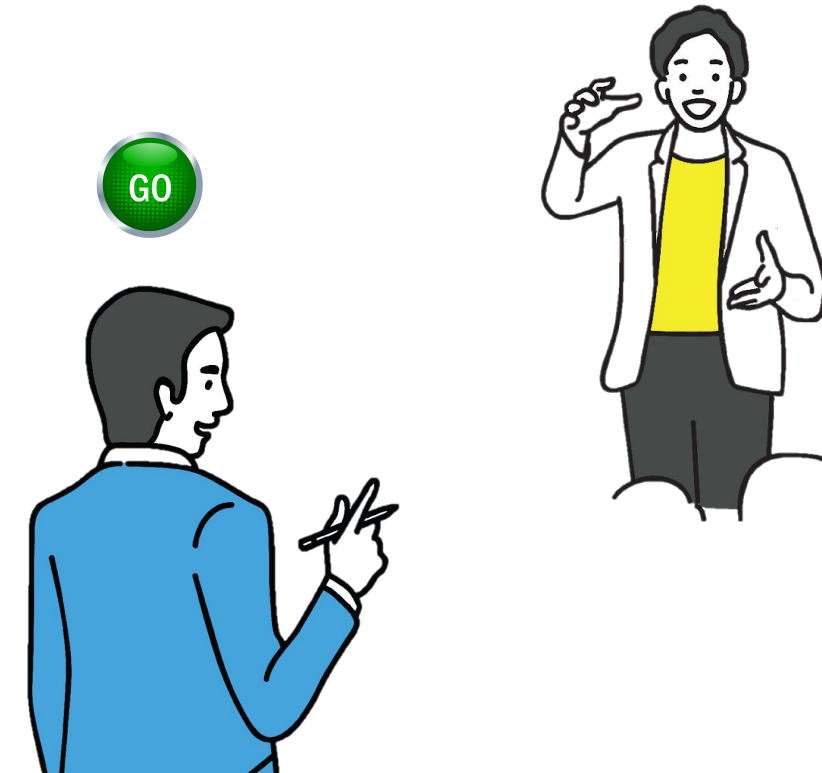
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**ACKNOWLEDGE
it to your audience**

Unicorns!

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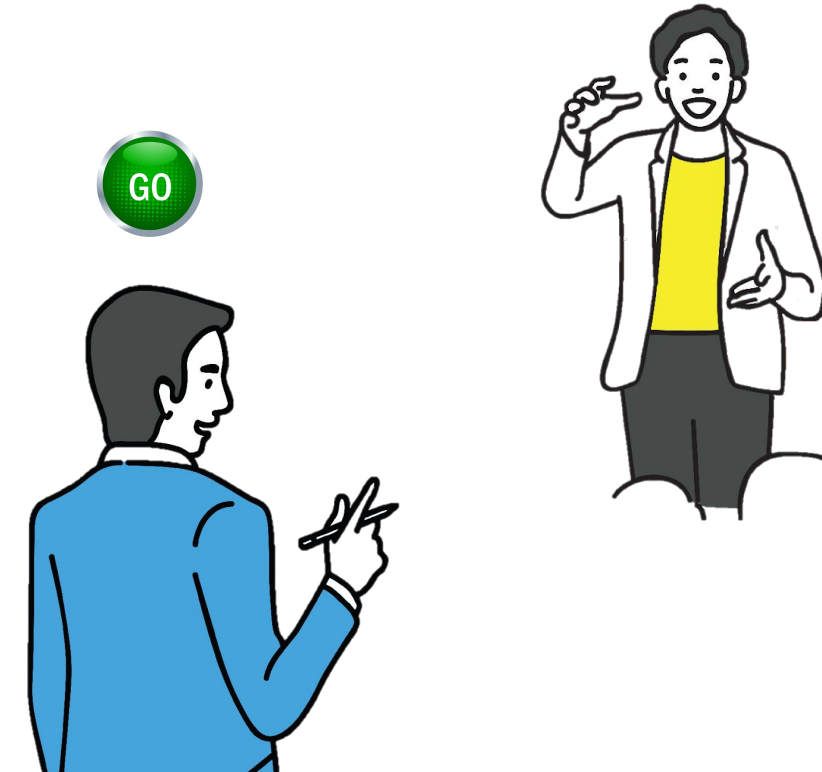
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**INQUIRE &
REFRAME**
it for your audience

Unicorns!

Pontificators & Poor Framers

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REFRAME & EXIT
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Bullies



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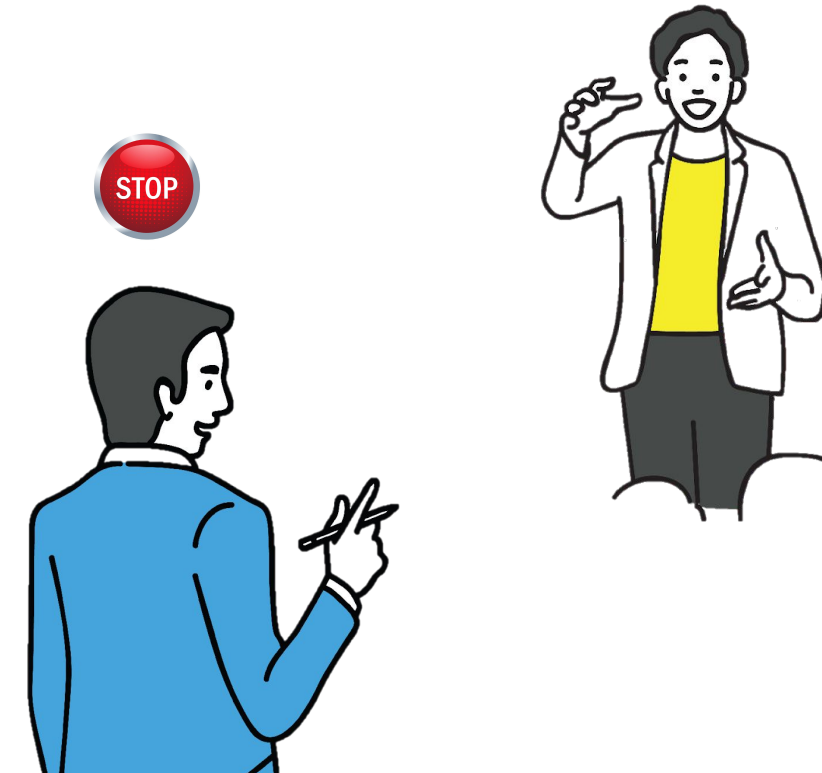
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REFRAME & EXIT
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Bullies with Skills

Bullies



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Bullies with Skills

Bullies

Think back on an audience interaction – tell the person what happened, and assess: was it sincere, skillful? Did you/they have a green light or a red one?



“ACE” every engagement

Q1. I just don’t understand how this is relevant or why I should be interested

1. Assess the situation
2. Center yourself
3. Engage



When you have assessed that the person is sincere, but unskillful, it’s a GO – you INQUIRE and REFRAME

When you have concerns from their tone, phrasing or question that the person is insincere, it’s a STOP – you REFRAME and EXIT

- ❖ One way I hear your question is, what’s the impact on this research on my field? Or in the world? Here’s how I answer that.
- ❖ Right now we can do X (grow liver stem cells and liver-like mini-organs or organoids, [but] neither of these can substitute for a liver transplant. And with limited organ donations, we get troubling statistics like the fact that 25% of patients in the U.S. die while on a liver transplant waitlist).*
- ❖ My goal is to do Y (combine bioengineered scaffolds with patient stem cells to generate compatible functional livers. No more patients dying on waiting lists – that’s the goal. In fact, no more waiting lists at all. Not for the 100,000 patients who receive organs worldwide annually. Not for the hundreds of thousands of people who need them – that’s the dream).*

- ❖ One way I hear your question is, what’s the impact on this research on my field? Or in the world? Here’s how I answer that.
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If the person is still near the mic/able to ask

- ❖ But beyond that, was something unclear about my overall approach or specific techniques, or which potential funders/collaborators would find my work relevant and exciting? I’m happy to respond after the session as well.

- ❖ Thank you for your question.

Here, your goal is to clarify their thinking to get them to a better question – that you can actually answer. So you throw out a brief overview and then give them question options at the end.

Here, your goal is to exit the conversation. Note the speaker answers a question, but doesn’t invite further exchange with a question of their own. If the person is sincere, (or insincere!) it will become clearer in how they frame subsequent interactions.

| | Skillful | Unskillful |
|-----------|--|--|
| Sincere | ACKNOWLEDGE it to your audience | INQUIRE & REFRAME it for your audience |
| Insincere | REFRAME & EXIT it for your own wellbeing | REFRAME & EXIT it for your own wellbeing |

*Excerpted text from: <https://blog.addgene.org/designing-your-chalk-talk-for-the-academic-job-interview>

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Assess the person.
Is it red light or
a green light?

Not sure? Start in a RED
LIGHT quadrant and
confirm assessment with
further engagement

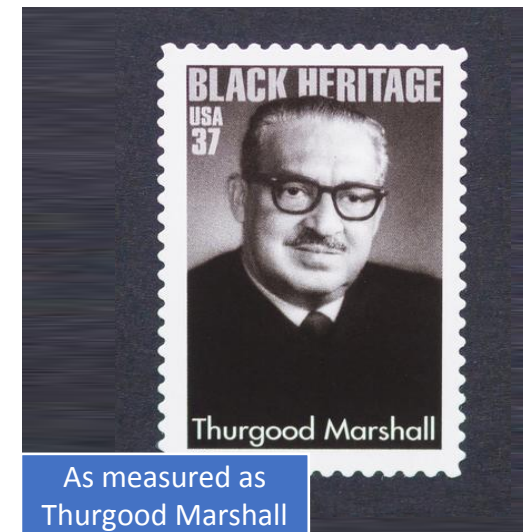


“ACE” every engagement

1. **A**ssess the situation
2. **C**enter yourself
3. Engage

What will help you center?

What do you want to embody as the speaker?



“ACE” every engagement

1. **A**ssess the situation
2. **C**enter yourself
3. **E**ngage



Engage: In general, there are 8 cards you can play in any audience engagement

Your Cards

Let them be

HEARD

Let them be

RIGHT

Let them be

SPECIAL

Let them be

GREAT

IDENTIFY

Allies in the Audience

INVOLVE

the Audience

INVOKE

the Audience

ILLUMINATE

Everything for the Audience

The anatomy of a deconstructed response



Engage: In general, there are 8 cards you can play in any audience engagement

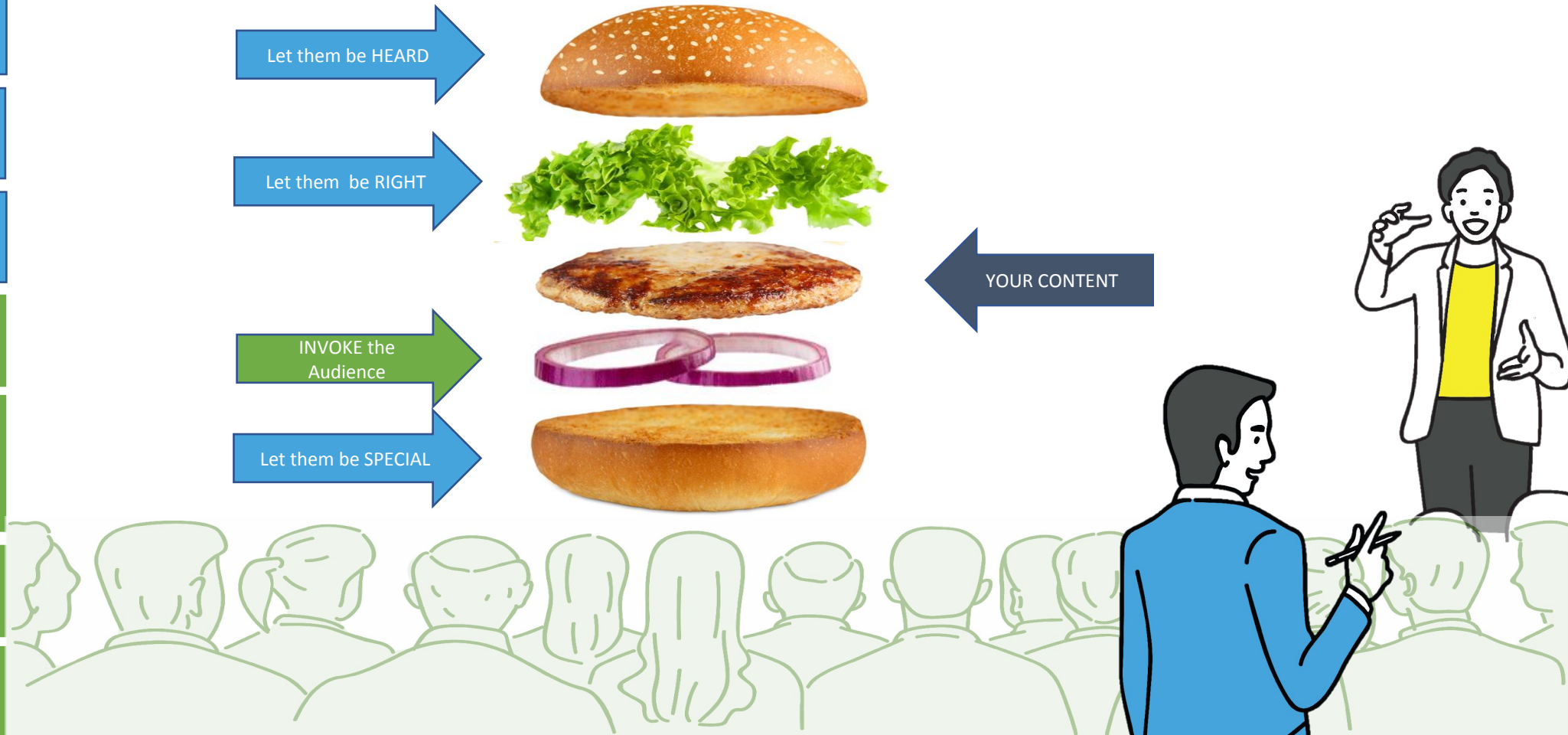
Your Cards

- Let them be **HEARD**
- Let them be **RIGHT**
- Let them be **SPECIAL**
- Let them be **GREAT**
- IDENTIFY**
Allies in the Audience
- INVOLVE**
the Audience
- INVOKE**
the Audience
- ILLUMINATE**
Everything for the Audience

The anatomy of a deconstructed response

The Extras – or ‘Fixins’
(Your Cards)

The Meat - or Veggie Burger
(Your Work)



Why didn't you use technique Y?

Engage: In general, there are 8 cards you can play in any audience engagement

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Everything for the Audience

6 Common Questions & 6 Common Situations

A. IS YOUR (RESEARCH) GOAL WORTHY?

1. Why is this interesting? I just don't understand why your work is relevant.
2. This sounds like a hot new technique and all, but why is this level of interrogation necessary? What do we learn after 5 years of investment of you exploring this random enzyme/toxin/mechanism?

B. IS YOUR (RESEARCH) APPROACH/METHODOLOGY/DATA/ETC. SOUND?

3. Why didn't you do X [*use this technique/use that approach/gather those data points*]?
4. Why would you (bother) do Y [*use this technique/use that approach/gather those data points*] Did it yield anything of use?
5. Couldn't the data be interpreted as Z?

C. ARE YOU WORTHY ENOUGH TO DO THIS WORK?

6. How are you separating yourself from the current lab and others who are prominent in the field? What is unique about your approach? Who are major competitors in your field?

D. COMMON INTERACTIONS WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

- A. What to do when someone interrupts during your presentation with questions.
- B. What to do if no one asks questions/if you think your audience is lost.
- C. What to do when there is no question but someone just pontificates. They end with, "And what do you think of that?"
- D. What to do when someone makes suggestions that you don't agree with, and you want to be agreeable.
- E. What to do when someone corrects your English.
- F. What to do when you don't know the answer to a question.



Engage: In general, there are 8 cards you can play in any audience engagement

Your Card

Let them be

HEARD

Let them be

RIGHT

Let them be

SPECIAL

Let them be

GREAT

IDENTIFY

Allies in the Audience

INVOLVE

the Audience

INVOKE

the Audience

ILLUMINATE

Everything for the Audience

Q1. I just don't understand how this is relevant or why I should be interested.

*Pause for a moment, and look around the room, as if you are considering your answer. See if any allies step in (e.g., a chair who reframes the question, by narrowing the parameters, e.g. "One question we have for every candidate is to what funders, collaborators and types of students would be excited by your work. How would you answer that?") (**IDENTIFY ALLIES**)*

- ❖ **One way I hear your question is**, what's the impact on this research on my field? Or in the world? Here's how I answer that. (**HEARD**)
- ❖ **Right now we can do X** (grow liver stem cells and liver-like mini-organs or organoids, [but] neither of these can substitute for a liver transplant. And with limited organ donations, we get troubling statistics like the fact that 25% of patients in the U.S. die while on a liver transplant waitlist).*
- ❖ **My goal is to do Y** (combine bioengineered scaffolds with patient stem cells to generate compatible functional livers. No more patients dying on waiting lists – that's the goal. In fact, no more waiting lists at all. Not for the 100,000 patients who receive organs worldwide annually. Not for the hundreds of thousands of people who need them – that's the dream).*
- ❖ *If the person is still near the mic/able to ask*
But beyond that, I wonder if something unclear about my overall approach or specific techniques, or which potential funders/collaborators would find my work relevant and exciting? I'm happy to respond after the session as well.

Always
redefine
the
question



*Excerpted text from: <https://blog.addgene.org/designing-your-chalk-talk-for-the-academic-job-interview>

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Q2. This sounds like a hot new approach and all, but why is this level of interrogation necessary?
What do we learn after 5 years of investment in you exploring this enzyme/toxin/mechanism?

- ❖ **I see what you're saying. That's an important question. (HEARD, GREAT)**
- ❖ Look – the fact is that right now we know very little about X (*how glaucoma kills neurons*).
- ❖ But if we can unpack that, we can do Y (*we can both figure out what makes these cells susceptible and also what the neurotoxic factor is*).
- ❖ And this in turn will allow us to design A/engineer B/look more broadly at C (*design better predictors for disease severity and therapies that are designed to spare neurons rather than treating secondary symptoms of the disease*).
- ❖ In short - we do D (*we get in front of the disease, and we get earlier interventions for the estimated 64 million people living with glaucoma worldwide. We improve the quality of life for the 112 million people who are expected to be living with glaucoma by 2040*).
- ❖ That's the prize. And that's what I will be asking NIH and NSF to invest in.



**Excerpt from Dr. Seemay Chou: OCPD Chalk Talk Demonstration. 10.16.19*

So you're going to try it!

Q3. Why didn't you approach Y way, or why didn't you use Z technique?

Q4. Why did you (bother to) do X?

Q5. I interpret your data differently – how do you know that the data isn't saying Z?



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Q3. Why didn't you approach Y way, or why didn't you use Z technique?

- ❖ *You're right.* There were a lot of different ways that we could do this. And I can see that using Y technique definitely would have yielded some interesting results as well. **(RIGHT)**
- ❖ Honestly, we started with NMR because that was my expertise - and it's working. We've already collected data, some exciting and unexpected results taking us into new directions. And for now, since it's working, I'll continue to run with this.
- ❖ *That said, I would welcome the chance to get your advice on other approaches. I think it would be a topic of conversation in our 1:1 interview. It would be great to hear your thoughts. (SPECIAL)*
- ❖ So...as I was saying, I...

*which is like the best way to deflect – that your way is working**



*Excerpt from Dr. Seemay Chou: OCPD Chalk Talk Demonstration. 10.16.19

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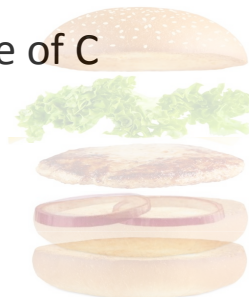
INVOLVE
the Audience

INVOKE
the Audience

ILLUMINATE
Everything for the Audience

Q4. Why did you (bother to) do X?

- ❖ Thank you so much for asking that question, Bill. Let me go into that a little bit. I want to tell you a few things that we found by doing X that have already given us some insight into some interesting biology. (**GREAT**)
- ❖ Let me start by unpacking exactly what we did with X. We _____
- ❖ What we found was Y _____, which we expected.
- ❖ But we also found Z _____, which was a really cool result that fell out of this because what it suggests to us is that A _____ is different from what we originally assumed.
- ❖ Another thing that was particularly striking was B _____
- ❖ So we realize this work is only part of the puzzle, but we think it's promising because of C _____.
- ❖ Thank you for that question. (**GREAT**)



**Excerpt from Dr. Seemay Chou: OCPD Chalk Talk Demonstration. 10.16.19*

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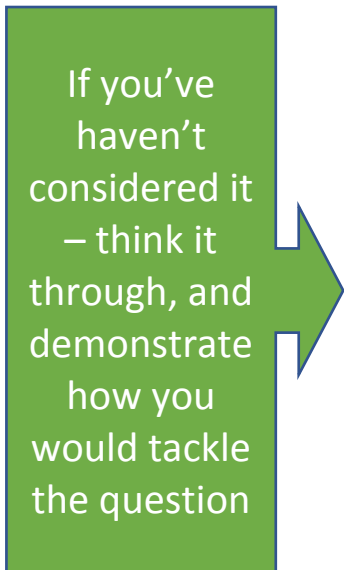
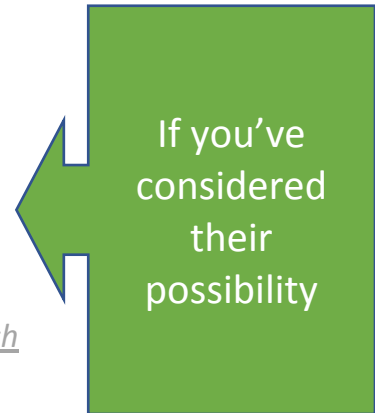
the Audience

ILLUMINATE

Everything for the Audience

Q5. Couldn't the data be interpreted as Z?

- ❖ Absolutely, that is a great point. **(GREAT)**
- ❖ You're correct. From this study alone, we can't tell X. (*where in the circuit the effect we measure is generated. It could be in the first synapse or the second synapse*). **(RIGHT)**
- ❖ To distinguish between those two possibilities, we've done Y (*we've gathered some preliminary data using technique Z. So far, these recordings show that the activity at the first synapse is unchanged, which suggests that the effect we see is generated in the second synapse*).
- ❖ Which is why my next step is will be to flesh out this dataset in order to further test both interpretations.



- ❖ That's an intriguing interpretation...definitely a different way of looking at the data. **(GREAT)**
- ❖ You're right. From this study alone, we can't tell X. (*where in the circuit the effect we measure is generated. It could be in the first synapse or the second synapse*). **(RIGHT)**
- ❖ Let me think this through with you. To distinguish between those two possibilities, I would probably first do Y (*gather some preliminary Z data using A technique*).
- ❖ If we designed the experiment B way, we could to determine C (*test if the recordings of the activity at the first synapse remain unchanged, which would suggest that the effect we see is generated in the second synapse*).
- ❖ That would be worth doing. Thank you for that insight on my work.**(GREAT)**



It's your turn! Think of your research, pick a question and try to answer using these frameworks

Your Cards

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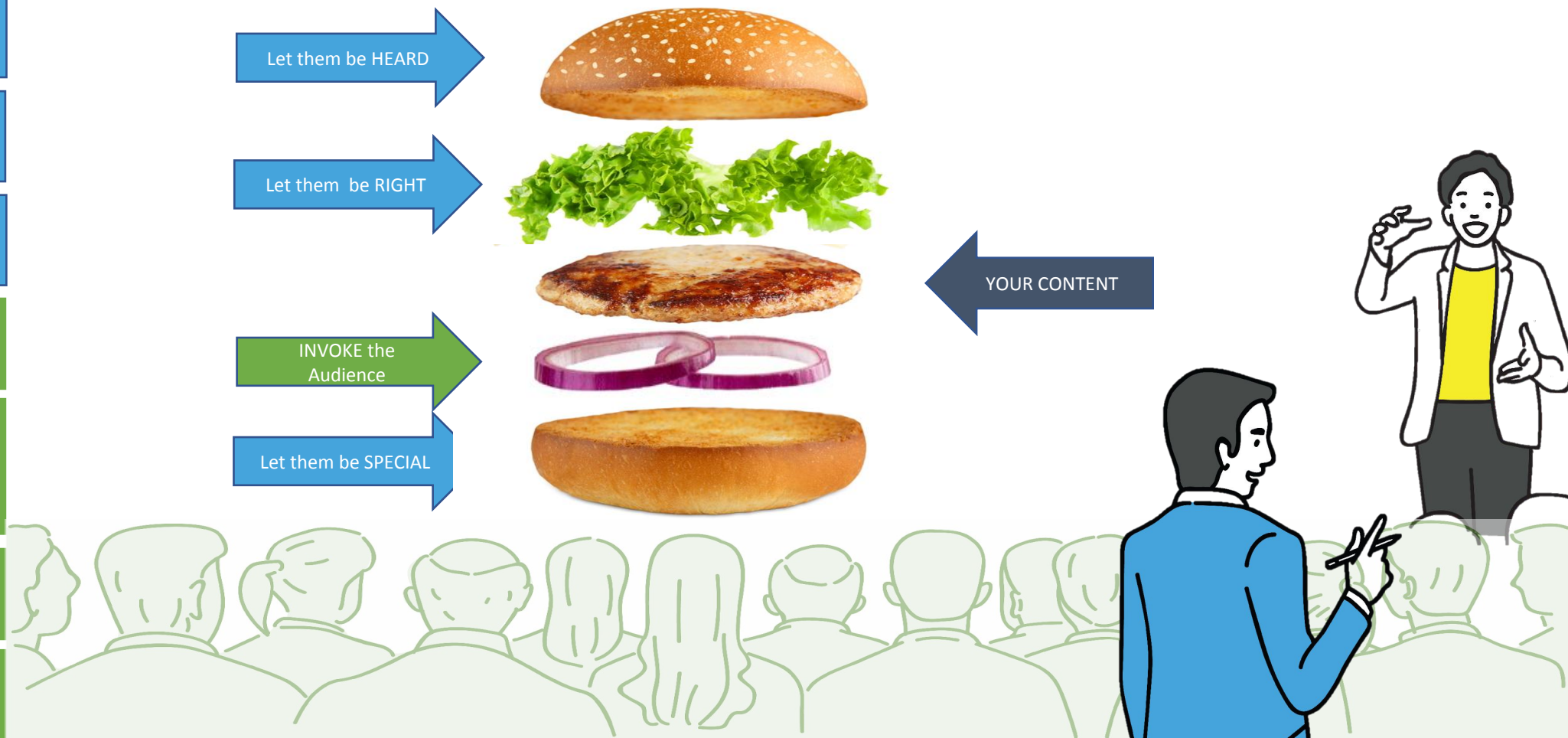
INVOKE
the Audience

ILLUMINATE
Everything for the Audience

The anatomy of a deconstructed response

The Extras
(Your Cards)

The Meat (or Boca Burger)
(Your Work)



Q3. Why didn't you approach Y way, or why didn't you use Z technique?

- ❖ You're right. There were a lot of different ways that we would do this. And I can see that using Y (*NMR*) definitely would have yielded some interesting results as well. **(RIGHT)**
- ❖ Honestly, we started with X technique _____ because that was my expertise - and it's working. We've already collected some exciting and unexpected results taking us into new directions. And for now, since it's working, I'll continue to run with this.
- ❖ That said, I would welcome the chance to get your advice on other approaches. I think it would be a topic of conversation in our 1:1 interview. It would be great to hear your thoughts. **(SPECIAL)**
- ❖ So...as I was saying, I...

Q4. Why did you (bother to) do X?

- ❖ Thank you so much for asking that question, Bill. Let me go into that a little bit. I want to tell you a few things that we found by doing X that have already given us some insight into some interesting biology. **(Let them be GREAT)**
- ❖ Let me start by unpacking exactly what we did with X. We _____
- ❖ What we found was Y _____, which we expected.
- ❖ But we also found Z _____, which was a really cool result that fell out of this because what it suggests to us is that A _____ is different from what we originally assumed
- ❖ And one thing that was particularly striking was B _____.
- ❖ So we realize this work is only part of the puzzle, but we think it's promising because of C _____.
- ❖ Thank you for that question. **(Let them be GREAT)**

Q5. I interpret your data differently – how do you know that the data isn't saying Z?

- ❖ That's an intriguing interpretation...definitely a different way of looking at the data. **(GREAT)**
- ❖ You're right. From this study alone, we can't tell X. (*where in the circuit the effect we measure is generated. It could be in the first synapse or the second synapse*). **(RIGHT)**
- ❖ Let me think this through with you. To distinguish between those two possibilities, I would probably first to do Y (*gather some preliminary Z data using A technique*).
- ❖ If we designed the experiment B way, we could to determine C (*test if the recordings of the activity at the first synapse remain unchanged, which would suggest that the effect we see is generated in the second synapse*).
- ❖ That would be worth doing. Thank you for that insight on my work. **(GREAT)**



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Q6. How are you separating yourself from the current lab and others who are prominent in the field. What is unique about your approach?

“I think what this field is missing is a little more intersection with biochemists and structural biology. Historically, people in microbiology have been asking questions in pathogenesis or microbial physiology and I think the time is really ripe now to start getting into some of the molecular details.”

“And the reason why I decided to jump into this field is that thought I could bring that, and I think I have demonstrated that I can do that successfully and it’s been very fun. And I know there is more to come.”

“In terms of separating from my current advisor: That is definitely a question that we discussed explicitly, and they are very supportive. These are directions that I am taking on my own and I foresee no issues there.”

(And if they push you for specifics)

“My PI’s expertise is in X (*microbial genetics*), and I’m running with the more mechanistic work. So I’m moving in a new direction.”*

There usually aren’t wrappers here – you just answer it straight



*Excerpt from Dr. Seemay Chou: OCPD Chalk Talk Demonstration. 10.16.19

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SITUATION A. What to do when someone interrupts during your presentation with questions

Dr. DRE! Delay/Retain/Engage: RETAINING STRATEGIES

Version 1

- ❖ “Your question is a good one, and fortunately, I happen to be covering that during my methods section.”
- ❖ *(later, when you do answer their question)...*this is what the person in this section *(wave hand in the general area the person was sitting in)* was asking **(GREAT)**

Version 2

- ❖ “That is a very specific and thought provoking question, and one that would take 20 minutes sufficiently delve into. **(SPECIAL)**
- ❖ **Out of respect for the larger audience** who might be here for the entire presentation, I invite you to follow up right after the presentation. I would love to talk.” **(INVOKE THE AUDIENCE)**



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Situation B. What do you do if you've lost people!

“If people aren't asking questions, or if I am seeing blank faces or sleepy eyes, or it's not clicking...I re-summarize my main points so far, going one level more basic, rather than moving on to the next part. Zooming out by one step and going back to some basic understanding of biology that everyone in the room has, in case you've lost them, should stir the pot a little bit. Something like: “Just to re-emphasize, here's why I think this is really interesting problem, and these are the approaches and this is what I'm going to figure out over the next few years and here's why this is important.”

- ❖ “So to summarize where we're at before I start on my second aim...” (ILLUMINATE)
- ❖ This question of X _____ is an interesting problem because of Y _____.
- ❖ In my first aim, my goal is to explore/examine/unpack Z _____.
- ❖ Which brings me to my second aim, A _____

**Excerpt from Dr. Joe Bondy-Denomy, Panelist at Dr. Seemay Chou: OCPD Chalk Talk Demonstration. 10.16.19*

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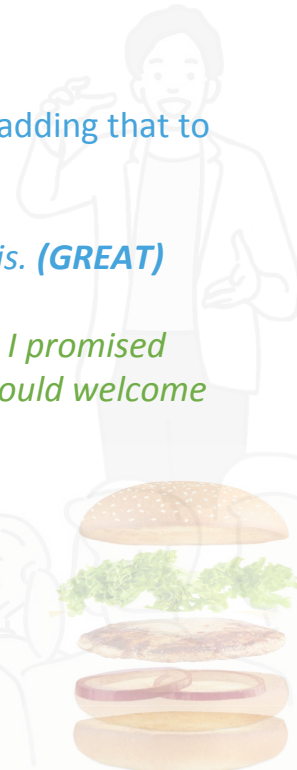
Situation C. Someone pontificates, perhaps even using language that is dismissive. They end with, “So what do you think of that?”

Options:

- ❖ I thought I heard you say X (_____), and I would say Y (_____) * **(HEARD)**
- ❖ The most intriguing point out of your comments is Z/that you are pointing out A (_____) **(SPECIAL)**
- ❖ *Thank you for adding that to the conversation **(GREAT)***
- ❖ It sounds like you’ve thought a great deal about this/clearly have expertise in this area. Thank you for adding that to our conversation **(GREAT...particularly if they hold some type of power)**
- ❖ *Thank you – you’ve given me a lot to think about. I will follow up on X’s work. Thank you for sharing this. **(GREAT)***
- ❖ *Your comments are thought provoking. I am going to need to move on to make sure I get though what I promised today, but thank you for including that information in today’s talk. If you have additional thoughts, I would welcome speaking more after my presentation. **(INVOKE the audience)***

Shift your gaze away from the person and towards the larger audience

- ❖ *Are there any other questions or comments before we end/I discuss my next point/slide?*



* Dr. Valerie Balester of Texas A&M University. *The Perfect Defense: The Oral Defense of a Dissertation.* youtu.be/edQv9OKvfdU

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Situation D. What to do when someone makes a suggestion you don't agree with, but you want to be agreeable.

- ❖ *[When someone makes a suggestion you don't agree with]* There are two ways to go about this. One is to argue with the person and say, "That would be a dumb experiment. The other way is to say: **That's a good idea. I ought to try that.* (GREAT)**
- ❖ I see what you're saying and there are some intriguing possibilities there. **(HEARD, GREAT).****
- ❖ I need to move forward with my talk - but I do think that this (your chosen approach) will be feasible approach as I move forward. Thank you for suggesting it** **(GREAT/SPECIAL)**



* Excerpted from <https://edgeforscholars.org/qa-how-to-give-a-chalk-talk/>

** Excerpted from 12/5/2013 "Dr. William Shrader. How To Give a Job Talk, and Why It's Not the Same as a Research Talk". youtu.be/IFW4hHBVvKk

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Situation E. Someone corrects your English grammar or pronunciation.

❖ *Thank you. (GREAT)*

Shift your gaze away from the person and towards the larger audience

❖ *Are there any other questions or comments before we end/I discuss my next point/slide?*



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Situation F. What to do when you are asked a question that you don't know the answer to.

- ❖ I don't know, but that question has interesting implications. **(GREAT)**
- ❖ For example, if I knew the X (_____), I could ascertain/do Y (_____).
- ❖ Given the (time/resource/etc.) constraints that I was working with in the lab, I wasn't able to address it before, but it definitely is something that merits further exploration. **(GREAT)**



* Excerpt from Dr. Valerie Balester of Texas A&M University. *The Perfect Defense: The Oral Defense of a Dissertation.* youtu.be/edQv9OKvfdU

Descriptions of each card

Your Card

| | |
|--|--|
| Let them be HEARD | Acknowledge the person's question/statement, usually by summarizing it for the audience: <i>Let them know you hear them</i> |
| Let them be RIGHT | Acknowledge that they are right – explicitly recognize when you are agreement: <i>Let them know you agree with them</i> |
| Let them be SPECIAL | Acknowledge their specific expertise or status: <i>Let them know you venerate them</i> |
| Let them be GREAT | Acknowledge their effort or contribution with recognition: <i>Let them know you appreciate them</i> |
| IDENTIFY Allies in the Audience | Identify individuals in the audience who seem positively inclined towards you |
| INVOLVE the Audience | To help engage your audience, or to put distance between you and an aggressive questioner, involve other audience members in some way - usually 'crowd sourcing' a question or asking for feedback |
| INVOKE the Audience | Suggest that you need to move on out of respect for the audience – but invite later follow up |
| ILLUMINATE Everything for the Audience | If you sense your audience is lost - summarize your talk thus far for the audience |

Examples

- ❖ Uh huh. Yes. I hear you. I hear what you're saying. Are you're asking why I used NMR? It sounds like your saying/asking.....
- ❖ Yes. You're right. You are correct. I agree. The evidence backs up your statement. We thought the same thing. I read that paper as well.
- ❖ I'd like to hear (more of) your thoughts after the talk/on our 1:1s later. As this is your technique/area of expertise, I would welcome your insight. Your advice would be appreciated. We should talk!
- ❖ You bring up a salient point. That's an intriguing idea. That's a good question; thank you for asking it. Fantastic suggestion. Thank you for adding those excellent points to our conversation (*for pontificators*).
- ❖ *Scan the audience for individuals who seem to understand and agree with your points – nodding, etc. making eye contact, or involving them in some way may encourage them to speak up on your behalf.*
- ❖ *I see...are there others who have a similar question? How are others using this technique/tool, etc. Did others have similar concerns/perspectives? (*look around the room, and point to a nodding person*).....would you care to elaborate on this point?*
- ❖ *Regrettably, I seem to be missing your point. I out of respect for the audience/I see there are other questions so...I need to move on, but please feel free to follow up with me afterwards. I'd like to talk.*
- ❖ *Before I move onto my next section, let me summarize the main points so far. In my effort to do X, I first did Y. That led to some interesting and unexpected results, particularly Z. And with that, now we turn my next point, which is A.*



Your Containers

The Introduction

Set expectations

1. Decide what expectations you might want to establish (and be able to depending on the forum) in your introduction.
2. Consider what materials – notebooks, etc. will help you manage your presentation and reveal them during your intro.

The Presentation

Tell your story

Be Dr. DRE

1. **Delay:** They hold their question
2. **Retain:** You hold their question
3. **Engage:** You answer now

Q & A

Clarify your story

ACE Your Talk!

1. **Assess the Situation:**
 - Skillful/Unskillful? Sincere/Insincere?
 - Do you have a green light or a red light?
2. **Center Yourself**
 - Who do you admire?
 - What do you want to embody as a presenter?
3. **Engage**
 - Which combination of your **8 Cards** will you play today – to make your sandwich?
 - **The Person:** Will you let them be **Heard, Right, Special, Great?**
 - **The Audience:** Will you:
 - Identify** allies
 - Involve** your audience
 - Invoke** your audience
 - Illuminate** everything for your audience

Post Presentation

Build relationships

Containment Strategies Post Presentation

Post presentation, you're relationship building

- ❖ Have your notebook handy to take names and notes
- ❖ Consider handing out a bit.ly where people can see your slides on google docs
- ❖ Is someone aggressive? Someone interesting? **Invoke the Audience (others waiting in line or have someone waiting for you)**
 - *"I see other people are waiting, so I am going to have to end this here. But thank you for taking the time to speak with me."*
 - *"Regrettably, I have to go and meet someone. But thank you for your comments."*
 - *"I want to respect the time of the other people waiting to speak with me – could I have your contact information to follow up? It would be great to keep in touch."*





Your Containers

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Set expectations

The Presentation

Tell your story

Q & A

Clarify your story

Post Presentation

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 - Invoke** your audience
 - Illuminate** everything for your audience

1. You're relationship building
2. Have your notebook handy to take names and notes
3. Consider handing out a bit.ly where people can see your slides on google docs
4. Is someone aggressive?
Invoke the Audience
("I see other people are waiting, so I am going to have to end this here. But thank you for taking the time to speak with me." Or, "I have to go and meet someone. But thank you for your comments.")

Our Agenda

1. **A (new?) way to frame your experience** managing your role as a presenter
2. **Containment strategies** for managing audience engagement in each section of your presentation:
1) introduction, 2) the presentation itself, 3) Q&A, 4) post-presentation
3. **Strategies to respond to everyone – including challenging audience members:** How to **ACE** (**A**ssess, **C**enter and **E**ngage) your talk, playing your 8 great audience cards
4. **How to be an ally** for professional civility without jeopardizing your own professional wellbeing



More Power

Person in charge: You can set civility expectations in the intro: "I ask the audience for lively and respectful engagement w/ our speaker..."

Set limits: "Can we please focus on the speaker's research and skip the ad hominem attacks?"

Person in the most power/in charge: "I think we're clear on the point, so in the interest of time, we should move on w/ presentation/to the next question. Matt, I please follow up with our speaker post presentation on your points."

How to be an ally for civility during Q&A... and stay safe

Equal Power

You can directly disagree the audience member: "I disagree with Matt's suggestion that the speaker should have looked at X/designed Y/illustrated the data Z way. Here's why..."

You can back up the person who was brave enough to stand up to the bully 1st: "I concur w/ Athena's point..."

You can reframe the point if the speaker is flustered: "I think that's an ungenerous representation of what X was saying. What I heard was..."

If the bully is incorrect, you can say, "If I may interrupt, it might be useful to know..."

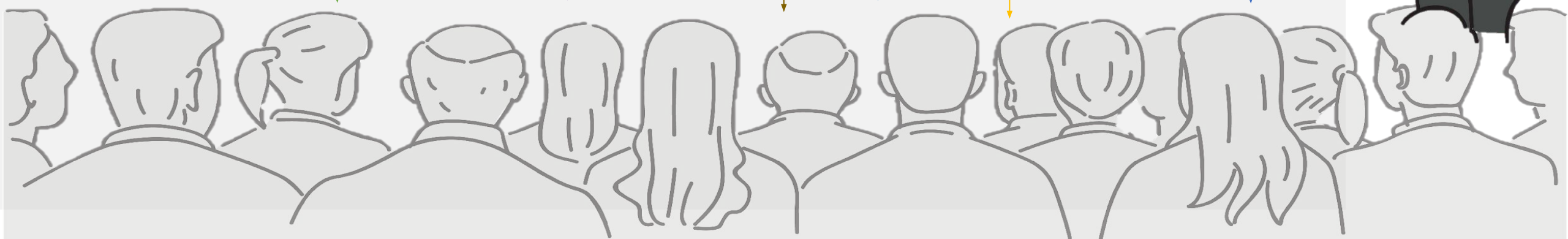


Less Power

You can raise your hand to ask another Q to give the speaker an excuse to move on

You can ask a Q on a different topic to give the speaker a 'palate cleanser'.

Afterwards - you can share with the speaker that they handled it well/ that you didn't agree with the difficult person



THE POINT? If multiple people engage, 'the will of the crowd' can push the bully to back down/make the speaker feel supported

Bonus Topic!

- ❖ **It's cultural/they are joking/you're being too sensitive:** If they would treat Dr. Collins the same way, then okay - they are living their truth consistently. Carry on!

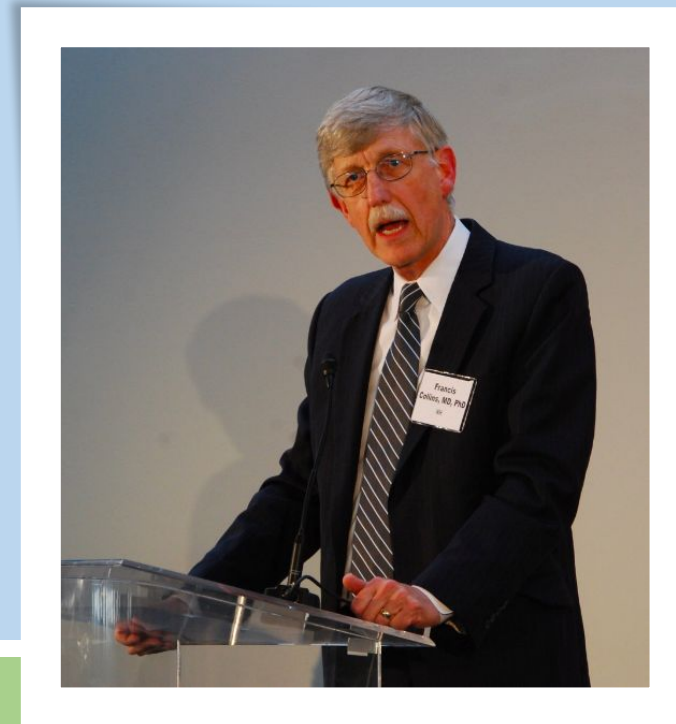
But if it's no – if they would not engage in eye rolling, or repeated interruptions, while you're trying to answer their question, or rapid fire questions, or ad hominem attacks, etc. if they were speaking to Dr. Collins, then they have situational awareness. They have the power and ability to treat someone in a way that meets **that person's definition of respect**.

- ❖ **But it's for the good of the field. I don't have time to 'coddle' someone!** If they really are concerned 'about the field', then they should attack that person's ideas in a way that the speakers/someone in the audience can't dismiss their cogent arguments about the science with a redirect to their person's poor behavior. In life, as in science, what you are trying to do is as important as how you do it.
- ❖ **My field has always been this way:** If there is one thing that all scientists believe, it's in evolution. The idea that their work would evolve but their workplace wouldn't is irrational, because (A) All things in nature evolve. (B) their field/conference is in nature. Therefore, (C) their field or conference will evolve.

But what about the people who say it's cultural, they're just being "honest" and I'm being 'too sensitive' or "I can't take feedback", or who say they are behaving normally for the field/conference?



Try the "Collins Test": Would they speak or behave the same way towards Dr. Francis Collins...



The head of NIH?

Their Why

- They justify their rudeness because they feel it's their job to 'protect the field'
- They might feel your work threatens theirs, and want to check you in public
- They might want to embarrass you/ your PI
- Hurting others feels good

Chalk Talks, Dissertation Defenses, Grand Rounds, Conference Talks: Audience Management: *How to handle Q&A and audience interactions during your talk*

Naledi Saul, Director, OCPD

Find the slides! career.ucsf.edu/QandA

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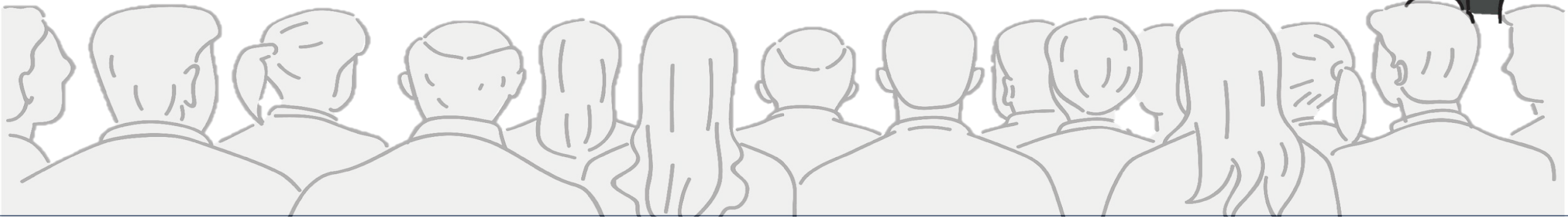


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Think of someone who might benefit from this knowledge, skill or resource, and share. SHARE. SHARE!



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