

How Man Communicated Before He Had Words

Jacqui Murray, a sagacious Grad Student in Artificial Intelligence says, “There is much debate over when early man began to speak with words, that is. Paleoanthropologists discuss the development of the brain and the throat—when was it evolved enough to support the formation of words and the thought that goes into meaning.”

Jacqui Murray goes on to say “I think when man was clever enough to live in groups, he had to come up with a way to communicate with each other. This isn’t a leap. Chimpanzees do it, pretty much communicating all of their basic needs. The difference is, we presume Man the Thinker must have had deep thoughts, plans, ideas, symbolic representations for his world. This, we will never know. What we do know is that there was no reason that Early Man couldn’t communicate to his group about what was important to his life,” much in the way we do here at Toastmasters.

There is much to remember and adapt from chimpanzees when standing at the lectern. You are invited to apply some or all of these techniques during your future speeches.

- If you have strong body odor this could communicate excitement, fear and anger.
- If you give your audience an intense stare this could be perceived as a mild threat. Consider giving a ‘loving’ or ‘pained look’.
- If your audience isn’t responding the way you desire try giving a quick yawn to expose your canines which could telegraph listen up or else!
- If you really want to drive your point home use body language and like a chimp bob your head back and forth in a crouched position. Ready to attack... the next point.
- Props are helpful such as a branch to shake at your listener. A chimpanzee may say ‘I’m a danger to you’ while you may say ‘my ideas and stories will rock your world’.

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- If you feel like your presentation is suffering your audience will feel your vulnerability. A greater connection is possible as they may take pity on you if you get down in a crouched position of submission. Seasoned Toastmasters may frown on this.
- Then again a play face—may be all you need to jump back into your speech and have some fun with your audience.
- Here at Toastmasters we practice to eliminate the fear grin. Fear shows on our face before we ever get a word out and can really broadcast your nervousness.
- Waving your arms in anger - is much like a Chimpanzee shaking the branch above, but without a prop It's less threatening, but the communication of intense emotion is clear.
- How often during the middle of your speech do you wish you could bark like a dog. Sometimes words aren't enough to convey your core message.
- A loud, long, savage-sounding wraaaa call is made when a chimpanzee comes across something unusual or dangerous. Imagine weaving this into your speech if you talk about government, rising health care costs or people's bizarre behavior.
- Touching, kissing, or embracing the subordinate in this case your audience. Use tact when working this into your speech. I advise scanning your audience first.

Fellow Toastmasters, if you do any of these forms of communication during your speeches you are reaching your audience in much deeper, primal way, saying more than words ever could. Consider weaving any of these Chimpanzee communication and early man devices in your next speech. Madame Toastmaster?