

The importance of making them laugh

Ed Balls in his new book [“Speaking Out”](#) tells about the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown employing a comedy duo to write jokes and punch lines for his speeches.

In over 20 years of speaking to political and business audiences, Gordon had learnt that a good sense of humour makes a connection with an audience. The better the joke, the better the connection and impact.

Ed says the first joke he heard Gordon use was in 1994. He delivered the old stalwart of the speaking circuit:

“Mr Chairman, thank you for your kind remarks. What a pleasant change to the remarks made last week by a chairman who said “Would you like to speak now or shall we let them enjoy themselves for a little bit longer””

Pedestrian maybe, but it raises a smile and a laugh and you’ve broken the ice.

There are books of jokes you can buy, but we would also urge you to become more observant of the world around you. Write jokes down and catalogue stories you hear. Become more aware of the things which happen to you which make you smile, because these are often the tales that resonate most with your audience

Why the Presidential Debates are ‘must-watch’ TV

The US presidential debates are always essential viewing and the first debate between [Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton](#) did not disappoint.

Two Presidential candidates under the spotlights speaking off the cuff in response to direct questions from a convenor. In addition, both candidates faced fierce personal attacks from their opponent.

It’s democracy in action and there’s nothing like it – the intensity and drama – in any other countries’ elections. As we expected, it was detailed, combative and compelling viewing.

So who won and why?

As the polls confirmed, Hillary Clinton won because she was more concise, credible and on most issues more convincing. Moreover, she talked directly to the American electorate about “your education, your skills, your future”.

Donald Trump however, seemed more interested in point scoring off old issues.

They say preparation is 90% of a good speech, Hillary was better prepared and understood the importance of being presidential in her style and delivery.

There are two more debates to go on 9th and 19th October. If you get a chance to watch them take time to observe how they deliver their message whilst constantly under attack from their opponent.

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2016

Barry Graham & Sally Clare

