

Speak Powerfully

Learning to speak powerfully about an issue is one of the most important tools in an activists' toolkit. There's a simple acronym to use when planning a short, focused, powerful presentation about your issue: **EPIC**. The letters in **EPIC** stand for: **E**ngage your audience, **S**tate the **P**roblem, **I**nform about the solution and **C**all to action.

Engage Your Audience

Get your listener's attention with a dramatic fact or short statement. Keep this opening statement to one sentence, if possible. For example, you could say:

"Many people think of tuberculosis as a disease of the past, but in fact it kills some 1.6 million people per year — that's one person every 20 seconds."

State the Problem

Present the cause or causes of the problem you introduced in the first section. How widespread or serious is it? For example, you could say:

"Treated properly, TB is usually curable. But inadequate diagnosis and treatment of TB around the world has resulted in the emergence of drug resistant strains that are difficult and expensive to cure."

Inform about the Solution

Inform the listener about a solution to the problem you just presented. Develop your solution by examples of how and where it has worked in the past. You could cite a recent study or report or tell a first-person account of how the solution has been effective. For example, you start out by saying:

"Demonizing and isolating TB patients will not protect us from the disease. A plan exists to eliminate the disease, and we must act now to provide critical funding to treat and prevent TB both at home and abroad."

Call to Action

Now that you've engaged your listener and presented the problem and solution, what do you want them to do? Make the action something specific so that you will be able to follow up with them and find out whether or not they have taken it. Present the action in the form of a yes or no question. For example, you could say:

"I would like to meet with you discuss the role you can play in ensuring this funding is secured. When would you have time to meet for a few minutes?"

There are three things to remember: Delivery. Delivery. Delivery.

Any good musician or actor knows you would never go on stage without rehearsing first, and it's no different with public speaking. Taking the time to educate ourselves about the issues, preparing a brief talk and then practicing our speaking skills is the first and most important thing any advocate needs to do. As you practice, you'll discover where you need more practice or things you may want to change. Be flexible and always stay on the lookout for interesting facts to update your talks.

Source: RESULTS Educational Fund's Activist Milestones