

### 4.9.3: Audience Attention and Rapport

#### Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques to gain and keep an audience's attention

The key to capturing and maintaining an audience's attention is, to riff on the TED Talk tagline, having an idea worth sharing and sharing it with emotion. As expressed in one of author and cartoonist Hugh MacLeod's business card art creations: "a story without love is not worth sharing."

The following techniques are adaptations from author and communication expert Mike Parkinson's "Spark a Fire: 5 Tips to Grab and Hold Audience Attention" article on [presentationexpert.com](http://presentationexpert.com):

1. Surprise: Saying, showing, or doing something unexpected reengages the audience's brains.
2. Suspense: Use drama, slowly building your idea like a verbal puzzle.
3. Storytelling: Share a unique and compelling story to illustrate your point.
4. Senses: Engage the senses—hearing, sight, taste, touch, and smell. The greater the sensory engagement, the stronger the interest.
5. Involve: Invite participation, a point we will address in the next section.

In addition to these five techniques, consider the the six techniques mentioned on the Starting Your Speech page. These techniques, including using quotes, "what if" questions, silence, and statistics can be used to check in with and engage your audience throughout a speech. Give your audience something they can use—give them a reason to care!

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