



Sharing the experience of speaking in the TEDxSaoPaulo

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I had the pleasure of participating as a "speaker" in the TEDxSãoPaulo "Connections", at the beautiful [Sala São Paulo](#), on November 16, 2015, and would like to share with you some tips that emerged from this experience.

One of the good things about being a TEDx speaker is the support we receive from the team of volunteers helping to organize the event. This support includes very constructive tips that help to enhance the content, as well as directions on how to improve public posture and the visual presentation. Those learnings remain with us and are very useful at other times of our lives.

I believe the tips bellow, from my personal experience, may serve for people who want to speak at a TEDx event, or any other similar public presentation:

Exchanging personal experiences

At first, my motivation was to share my knowledge of network theory and how people influence each other and, from there, to draw attention to individual responsibility in combating the culture of hate, especially strong in social media environments. But soon I understood that the most interesting was actually sharing my personal experience with the subject. No doubt, the connection is much stronger when we share our emotions and discoveries. I believe my presentation gained much without neglecting to present some technical elements that supported my view.





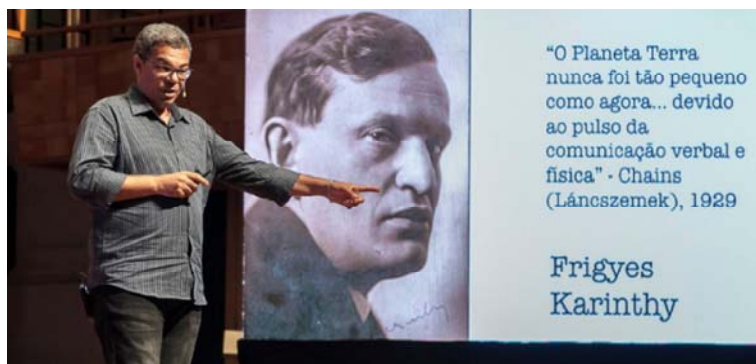
"Dad, did you know that words have power?" - Photo: (c) Agenzia Riguardare

Writing my speech

From the beginning, TEDxSaoPaulo crew asked me to write down my talk - and this was really important! I managed to prepare an initial text that captured all my ideas in the sequence that seemed better. This helped me to have a more realistic idea of the size of my speech. It helped me, either, to refine the text, taking out what was in excess, finding key phrases and defining an appealing closure for the talk. After the text was very clear, I left it aside. Because the intention was not to decorate it and then recite it in public. On the contrary, I was able to internalize it so that my talk flowed more free and safe.

Speaking of me, but thinking about the audience

The experience that I wanted to share was very personal. On the other hand, I was aware that every person who was at Sala São Paulo to listen to the speakers would give their own meaning to the words they heard from me, adding to it the experience of listening also all the other lines. Therefore, I tried to follow the TEDxSaoPaulo team advice and thought about what I would like people to know, feel and do from my talk. So, I focused on connecting my individual experience more effectively with the audience. I finished my speech with a direct invitation to each person to stop, breathe, think about the content they share in networks and ask her/himself: "Is it okay? I'm sure I'm not feeding the culture of hate?"



Images should strengthen its history - Photo: (c) Agencia Riguardare

Speaking less

I tried to keep my presentation in around 8 minutes length. I think it's a good amount of time to get the message out. In general, TEDx organizers recommend that presentations do not exceed 18 minutes, but I personally think that many times this is a bit too long. Obviously, if your content needs more time to be exposed, then go ahead. But I decided to use the "onion strategy": I reviewed my content and removed the outer layers to get to the core of my talk. Hence it was easier to make a decision on what to cut to get to the essential.

Using images smartly

I think that not all public talks need to be accompanied by a presentation or video. But in general, some slides may be helpful to strengthen or help to retain key points of the story being told. TEDxSaoPaulo team offered a voluntary support to help set up my presentation. The images I used, obtained thanks to a partnership between TEDx and the amazing image bank Shutterstock, only served the purpose of helping to call the attention to some key points of the presentation. I also used some phrases to reinforce the exposed concepts, such as the idea that "We are the others of the others."



One of the images used in the presentation, thanks to (c) Shutterstock

Training hard

A very cool thing TEDxSaoPaulo experience brought to me was the need to train in front of a group of volunteers dedicated to help the speakers to improve the talks. I also trained at home locked in the room simulating the presentation alone, eyes closed, imagining myself in front of the audience in a full Sala São Paulo. But even more fundamental was to present my talk to my family, including my two children, of 7 and 14 yo. Actually it was my elder boy that remembered an episode between the both of us when he was a child that gave the highest point to my talk.

"We are the others of the others", my TEDx presentation. It's originally in Portuguese. Transcription into English is being provided. Meanwhile, go to the

settings, at bottom right of the video, to get an automatic translation to your language.

Relaxing and enjoying

On the talk day, I arrived early at the Sala São Paulo to acclimate myself to the place and to interact with the team of volunteers and with the other speakers. I relaxed and let things flow, and also took the opportunity to give a final review to my presentation. Then I let it alone and enjoyed the other presentations, which helped me to go relaxing even more. I was privileged to participate in a block in which there was a close connection amongst all the talks. That is, when my turn came I was really comfortable and safe.

It was a great moment and a great opportunity!



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Barbara Luria Leopold
Associate Director at Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, The Graduate Center, CUNY

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I was recently told how much more goes into a good Ted talk than listeners might imagine. Your thoughts and tips provide a clear idea of what some of the preparation involves and what can help make a presentation a success. Thanks for sharing this.

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