

HOW TO DO A GREAT PITCH

By Josefina Lopez

If you are afraid of public speaking, **take an acting class or go to Toastmasters**. You must be eloquent and be able to express your ideas clearly, as simply as possible, with as few words as possible.

Memorize your pitch - You can not read from your notes when you pitch. You may use your notes to keep you on track but you must never read your treatment.

Practice in front of a mirror and in front of your camera so you can record yourself doing your pitch. Look at all the ways that your body and nervousness upstages you. Work on making any movement deliberate and be completely committed to your pitch with you body and tone and facial reactions. **Commit 100% to your pitch**. Even if there is no chance they'll buy it, commit completely. It's a performance that has to look natural. Just imagine yourself at a campfire telling a ghost story to a captive audience who really wants to hear a great story.

If you are pitching with a Writing Partner, practice the pitch together and make sure you know exactly who says what. It must look spontaneous, but you must be absolutely clear who pitches what part of the story. Always discuss how if you can or can't interrupt each other and how do you strategically correct something if someone forgets a detail or screws up a part of the pitch.

Come in with the attitude that everyone in the room wants you to win because how wonderful it would be if they love your story and pay you to write it and it makes tons of money and has major success. You are coming into a possibility not a trial.

When they offer you water, accept the water. Always use the bathroom before your meeting starts, so you can make sure your hair

is brushed and you look presentable and you can cool yourself with water on your face if you feel frazzled or nervous. Ground yourself by telling yourself, “I am here and I am so happy to be right here right now.” This will help get you in your body.

Be present and authentic and completely passionate about your story. Don't pretend to be anyone else, or to know more, or be more. Who you are is enough. You are a story teller and that's more than most people can do - especially executives who - if they could - would be writers too. When you are passionate it lifts the energy in the room and people get happy and excited. They will remember you.

Come in with an attitude of gratitude. When you are coming from gratitude for the opportunity to share a story and create community with your story you come across as charming and people enjoy being around you. Gratitude brings you to a higher frequency. When you are in gratitude you pull people towards you who are in a lower frequency.

If you're nervous just say, “I'm so nervous because I'm so excited to share my story with you and I want to do my best.” This disarms people and makes people connect with you. If they're not kind people they won't care, but if they are a potential ally they will appreciate your honesty and authenticity.

Try to **act out the dialogue** if you can do it dramatically and engage the an audience. If you have comedic timing then use humor as much as possible to keep the story and flow moving.

If your pitch is a comedy - make sure to make people laugh right at the beginning of your pitch - especially with the longline - or at least the very beginning, but **your pitch must contain humor.**

Before your pitch starts make sure they know what inspired the idea and why you're the perfect person to tell this story.

Keep your pitch to 15 minutes maximum unless they tell you otherwise, so make sure you streamline it so that you hit all the important points to the story. Turning points, cliff hangers, climaxes, etc.

If someone is being rude or disrespectful - and it's obvious they are not interested - perhaps they did the pitch only as a favor - then don't be afraid to call them on it. If they persist, then stop the pitch, thank them for their time and leave. You are not a monkey there to entertain them - you are a human being with a dream who deserves the basic respect of their attention for at least 15 minutes. If you don't speak up and you get to work with that person, unknowingly, you've given that person permission to disrespect you later on. No job is worth being disrespected.

Be prepared to answer questions and if you are stumped by a questions say, "That's a fascinating question, I hadn't thought of that. Wow, that really inspires me to consider all these other possibilities."

Thank everyone for their time, don't "kiss ass", just be gracious no matter what happens.

Congratulate yourself for having pitched no matter the outcome, "declare yourself a winner" for having told your story with passion and authenticity.

You do not need to send a "Thank you" note or gift to people who heard your pitch, but if they give you their card, do take it and in the future you can follow up with them for another opportunity to pitch another show if they pass on your idea.