Speaking Effectively Professor Anjali Gera Roy Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur Lecture 32 How to Speak Effectively in Meetings

Hello. In this unit of module 7 on meeting skills, we will move on to how to speak effectively in meetings. Irrespective of whether you are leading a meeting or you are just contributing to a meeting as a participant, you need to speak up. I am going to talk about three things in this lecture. I am going to begin with addressing the problem of speaking at all. Some of first do not speak up in meetings, that is the first issue.

In the second part, I would looked at how to make an executive presence in a meeting and in the third part we will look at how to use your voice, delivery and certain kind of phrases, certain kind of languages which is appropriate in a meeting. So let us begin with finding out what kind of meeting participants are you. Are you one of those people who never speaks up in meetings?

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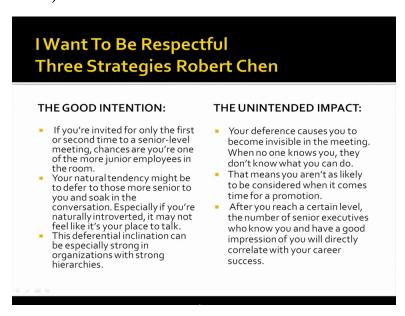
Do not worry I am one of them because I rarely speak in meetings. well you cannot speak in meetings if you do not want to speak and lot of introverted people do not speak up in meetings. But you have to be prepared for the impression you create among others if you do not speak. So we have somebody (giv) (tel) giving us three strategies for introverts for speaking up in

meetings. Let us look at these three strategies. The first strategy is why do not you speak up? What is the problem? We need to find out that. What is the reason that some of us do not speak up?

The most common reason is that if you are in a (ss) not so senior position. If you are the new entrant and if you have been called to meeting for the first time, you are probably not senior enough. Now why do you think you should not contribute? Why do not you speak up? Because you feel, I want to be respectful. And this is very true in Asian countries where we think we tend to be in differential towards our seniors. We leave them to do all the speaking and we keep quiet ourselves.

So if you do not speak up because you think you need to be respectful towards others, to be respectful towards your seniors. you have to be prepared that what your intention and the effect might miss-match. If your intention when you think like this is, that your natural tendency is to differ to someone who is more senior to you and to soak in the conversation.

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Especially if you are naturally introverted, it may feel it is not my place to talk. Now this differential inclination can be especially strong in organizations with strong hierarchies. Or in cultures where we differ to our seniors. But what is the unintended impact of this? Your deference causes you to become invisible in the meetings and believe me it happens to me very

often because I am hesitant to speak up in meetings and I find that no one if has even noticed that I am around.

So when no one knows you, they do not know what you can do. I was and many of us have very we are very capable, we are competent people, but it is all there on our CVs. So we assume that since it is on our CV, since people who know us know about our abilities are also aware of what we are or we are not capable of doing.

But believe me it is not as simple. Because people go by what they observe, what they see and I have been shock to find, I have been quite pleasantly or an pleasantly surprised to find that somebody who is not quite as competent as me has been given a certain responsibility or a job, it might happen to you also because that person comes across as very knowledgeable even if that person is not knowledgeable, that person I say this because people have told me later that so and so comes across has a very comes across as a very knowledgeable person.

And I have been told again that until, 'oh! We did not know you had done all these things.' Because you do not talk about it. So you need to talk about it, you do not need to tom-tom your achievements but you need to say what you are capable of doing. And some people who have mastered this and you will find that even if they are introverted. I am giving real life examples to you. I know people who are really introverted and who normally do not speak. But I find that the same people when they know, they observe or when they think that a lot is at stake.

I find the same people, whenever there is a person in authority who is going to take notice of them, the same people muster their courage to speak up at such meetings. So we need to learn from such peoples and to speak up. Because unless you speak up, how are people who are strangers do know what you are capable of?

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I Want To Be Respectful Three Strategies Robert Chen

THE GOOD INTENTION:

- If you're invited for only the first or second time to a senior-level meeting, chances are you're one of the more junior employees in the room.
- Your natural tendency might be to defer to those more senior to you and soak in the conversation. Especially if you're naturally introverted, it may not feel like it's your place to talk.

 This deferential inclination can
- This deferential inclination car be especially strong in organizations with strong hierarchies.

THE UNINTENDED IMPACT:

- Your deference causes you to become invisible in the meeting. When no one knows you, they don't know what you can do.
- That means you aren't as likely to be considered when it comes time for a promotion.
- After you reach a certain level, the number of senior executives who know you and have a good impression of you will directly correlate with your career success.

That means you are not as likely to be considered when it comes time for a promotion. And if you speak up in meetings, after you reach a certain level, the number of senior executives who know you and have a good impression of you will directly co-relate with your career success. Because they heard you and I have heard people say 'Oh! I have heard so and so speak up at meetings and so and so comes across as very knowledgeable.' Now we move on to the second reason why people do not speak up.

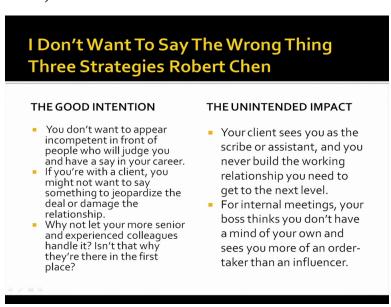
The second reason why people do not speak up, and you are not alone, is they do, 'I do not want to say the wrong thing.' Because you are afraid, you feel like you might say something which is wrong and it might have a negative impact on how people perceive you. You do not want to appear incompetent. You open your mouth and you find that maybe you said the wrong thing or you are afraid you said the wrong thing.

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I Don't Want To Say The Wrong Thing **Three Strategies Robert Chen** THE GOOD INTENTION THE UNINTENDED IMPACT You don't want to appear Your client sees you as the incompetent in front of scribe or assistant, and you people who will judge you and have a say in your career. never build the working If you're with a client, you relationship you need to might not want to say get to the next level. something to jeopardize the deal or damage the For internal meetings, your relationship. boss thinks you don't have Why not let your more senior a mind of your own and and experienced colleagues handle it? Isn't that why sees you more of an orderthey're there in the first taker than an influencer. place?

You do not want to appear incompetent in front of other people. Particularly in front of people who are going to judge you and have a say in your career.

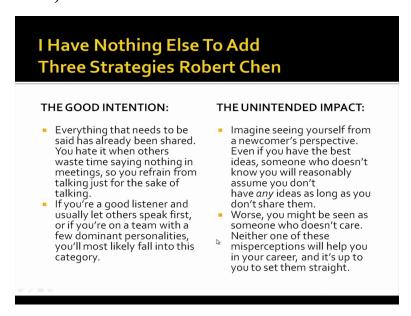
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If you are with a client, you might not want to jeopardize that deal or damage the relationship. And you think, 'Oh! Why do not most senior people speak after all?' and they are there for the first place. But what happens? What is the unintended effect? Your client sees you as a scribe or an assistant. And you never build a working relationship. You need to go to the next level. So you

always seen as someone who is just around to take notes. For internal meetings your boss thinks you do not have a mind of your own and sees you more of an order taker than an influencer.

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The third reason why people do not speak up is, they feel, 'I have nothing to add. Everyone else has said what they needed to say.' Now everything that (ne) needs to be said has already been shared. You hate it when others waste time repeating the same thing. So you do not want to be the same kind of person.

So if you are good listener and usually let others speak first or if you are with the team with dominant personalities, you will most likely fall into this category. Now what is the unintentional effect of this? The unintentional effect is, imagine you try to see yourself and believe me I tried doing this because you assume that everyone in the room or everyone in the meeting knows you and you already have a reputation in your organization. People know you who you are. But then I realize, 'Oh! Most of the people are around me, they are newcomers, they have no idea what I know or what I have done.'

So these newcomers are going to assume quiet reasonably that you do not have any idea so long as you do not share them. Worse, you might be seen as someone who does not care neither one of these (perceptions) misperceptions will help you in your career. And it is up to use to set them

right. So, remember this is the impression you create if you do not speak up in the meetings. And what must you do.

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Preparation is the Key

- If you know what's going to be covered, you can prepare what you need to say, or get the necessary information for the other participants.
- Will there be questions for you? Can you deliver the answers? Is there "Any Other Business" that you want to raise? It often helps to make some notes for what you want to say in the meeting. (Don't forget to take notes too!)
- When you know the points you want to raise, or the comments you want to make from the agenda, you can prepare in advance what you're going to say, so that you say it in the clearest, most concise way possible. Then when the chair asks for your comments, you'll feel more confident.

If you are afraid of speaking up at meetings, remember there is nothing like preparation. Preparation is the key. If you know what is going to be covered you can prepare what you need to say or get the necessary information from the other participants. Will there be questions for you? Can you deliver the answers? Is there any other business that you want to raise? It often helps to make some notes for what you want to say in a meeting. So if you are prepared you can have a say.

When you know the points you want to raise or the comments you want to make from the agenda, you can prepare in advance for what you are going to say, so that you say in it in the clearest, most concise way possible. Then when the chair asks for your comments, you will feel more confident.

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What else can you do? Prepare what you need, practice a lot, observe your appearance and posture. And we are going to show you some role plays. We are going to show you some short videos on how to prepare for a meeting, how do you dress for a meeting, how do you observe your appearance and posture. Arrive early at the meeting place.

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Meet other people. Speak with other meeting attendees. Speak louder, clearly and make eye contact. Make hand gestures.

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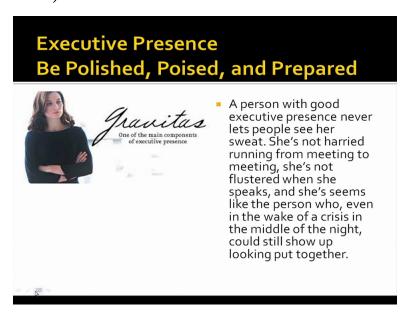
Now we come to the positioning. Remember meetings and also all about power. It begins with where you sit? Who you sit with? Which is the most important position? Now it is important for you to position yourself well. Particularly if you are not very fluent with English, make sure you sit in a position where you can see and be seen by the chair and other participants. When others speaks, look at them. Understanding is far harder if you cannot see the person while they speak. And I notice this happening in the meetings and it goes together with arriving early.

People who understand the importance of positioning oneself, they always come early and occupy the most advantage the best position, the best vantage point. It is all got to do with align yourself with people who are in authority or align yourself with your friends. Depending on where you sit. If you sit closest to the person who is in authority, you will have his ear or her ear and also they will be able to notice you. You might have your friend sitting next to you.

If you want to make yourself invisible, many of us find ourselves taking a corner seat or sit in a position where you will not be noticed. So we are putting ourselves at a disadvantage because no one is going to notice us, that means we are not going to speak up and our presence is like an absence. Now I move on to the next important point which is how to appear poised, how to make an executive presence and this is an advice given by Ashley Cobert, who is a PR person in an article called 'the "IT" factor'.

The making an executive presence in a meeting. So what is the advice? The first advice is, be polished, poised and prepared. Have you ever come across people like who I have come across such an (indi) (inb) individuals even if they are harried, they are rushing from meetings to meetings. They never let other people see them sweat.

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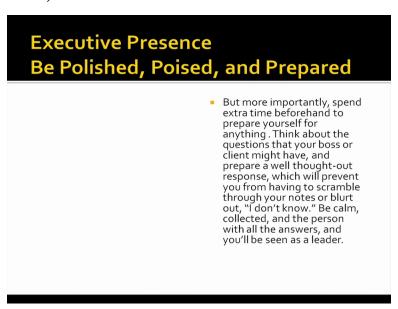
So a person with an executive presence is not harried running from meeting to meeting, she is not flustered when she speaks, she is seems like the person who even in the wake of a crisis in the middle of the night could still show up looking put together. So be polished, be poised. That is the next part.

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How do you achieve this type of poise even if you are running from meeting the meeting? First before entering the meeting, entering a room, always take a quick second to compose yourself. Take a deep breath, smooth your hair and slow down.

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How to be prepared? More importantly, as I said right at the beginning, that is more than being poised and polished it is more important to be prepared. If you spend some extra time beforehand to prepare yourself for anything. Think of the questions the boss might ask you. Think and

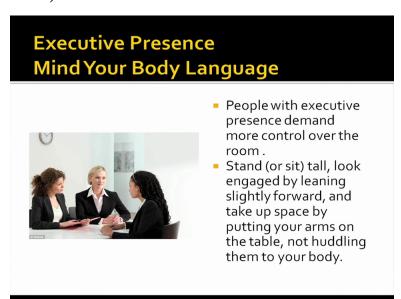
prepare a well thought out response which will prevent you from having to scramble through your notes or to blurt out, "I do not know". Be calm, collected and the person with all the answers and you will be seen as a leader.

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Now the next thing in order to have an executive presence in a meeting is to mind your body language. And we will show you how to do this later in a video. In your next meeting, look around and note how everyone is sitting. You would find that typically shy or unconfident people will close off and make themselves small by crossing their legs and arms. Imagine a hunched over Steve Jobs avoiding looking at you. Would that seem impressive? Not so much.

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And people with Executive presence demand more control over the room. So stand or sit tall, look engaged by leaning slightly forward and take up space by putting your arms on the table, not huddling them to your body.

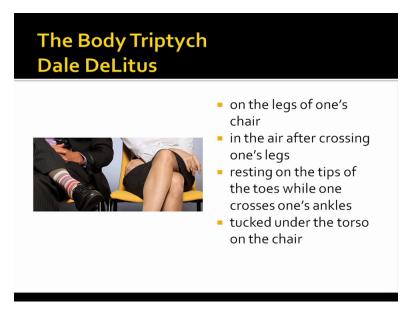
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Also make sure to make eye contact with everyone around you. Everyone in the room which is not only personable, it portrays confidence. Though do not overdo it, you still need to blink. And

do not be like me, do not blink all the time but, beg your pardon, I am blinking because I have a problem with the light and I keep blinking.

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The body now Professor Dale DeLitus has spoken about the body triptych. When he talks about body language of meetings and he addresses three (asp) parts of the body. One is the feet, the lower body. And he talks about different positions people take up when they are at a meeting. Notice your own position. Some people tend to put it on the legs of one's chair. another group of people puts it in the air after crossing one's legs. The third, (rest) resting on the tips of the toes while one crosses one's ankles or tucked under the torso on the chair. So which position do you take up?

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What about your torso? These are the various position people take up during the meeting. Leaning back in one's chair, hunched over with hands under the desk, hunched over scribbling notes, slouching, crossing arms, shifting around. So each of these say something (fa) about you. If you lean back in your chair, it shows I am very relaxed and not engaged. If you are hunched, I am secretly text messaging. If you are hunched over scribbling notes, I am not paying attention to what I am saying.

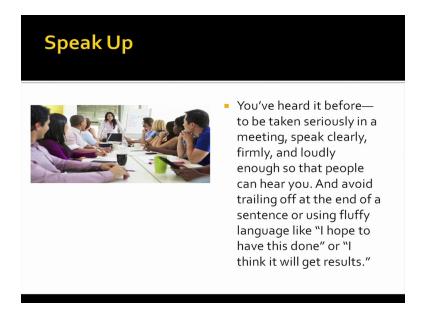
Slouching, I have nothing to contribute and I am wasting my time by being here. Crossed arms, I hate this meeting and all of you making me attend. Shifting around, I am unable to sit and I had too much caffeine today. So this is your second part of the triptych, your torso.

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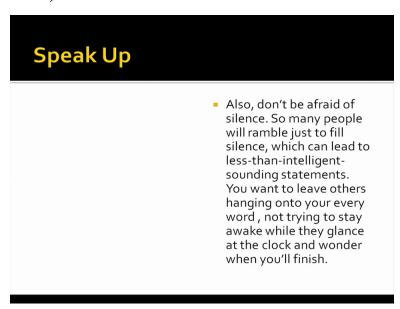
And the third is your hands. Where do you place your hands? hands should rest on the desk, empty of any utensils. If one must take notes, pick up a writing implement and note the thought quietly, then set the paper, pen or pencil down again. It is quiet usual for one to pick up a pen and chew you on it after taking a brief note which (cra) creates a very bad impression or to hold the click pen which I tend to do and I suddenly noticed myself doing it if it is particularly are very boring meeting. The urge to click the nib, in and out of the barrel can be irresistible to many. Do everyone a favor and avoid these annoying traits.

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Now let us come to speaking proper. Speak up, you heard it before. To be taken seriously in a meeting, speak clearly, loudly enough so that people can hear you. And avoid trailing off at the end of a sentence or using fluffy language like "I hope to have this done" or "I think it will get results".

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Speak up and also do not (afr) be afraid of silence. So many people will ramble just to fill silence, which can lead to less than intelligent sounding statements. You want to leave others

hanging onto every word, not trying to stay awake while they glance at the clock and wonder when you will finish.

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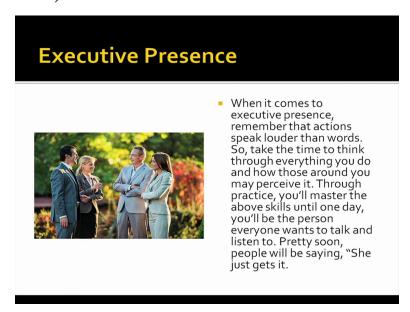
Make Others Feel Special



- As Maya Angelou said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Overall, one of the best ways to achieve executive presence is to make everyone around you feel like he or she is the only person in the room. It may seem counterinitive, but often the best way to do this is by really listening to others. Don't hog the conversation, and don't speak over others or interrupt. When someone is talking, maintain eye contact, lean toward her, and nod at what she's saying. Then, thoughtfully respond to what you heard, asking good questions to show that you were paying attention. The more youl listen to other people, the more they will want to listen to you.

The third aspect is to make other people feel special. As Maya Angelou, writer, said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." So one of the best ways to make an executive presence is to make everyone feel special. Make everyone around you feel that he or she is the only person in the room. So do not hog the conversation, respond to what you heard, ask questions to show that you are paying attention. The more you listen to people the more they will listen to you.

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When it comes to executive presence, remember, action speaks louder. So take the time to think through what you said and through practice you will master the skills and people will want to listen to you.

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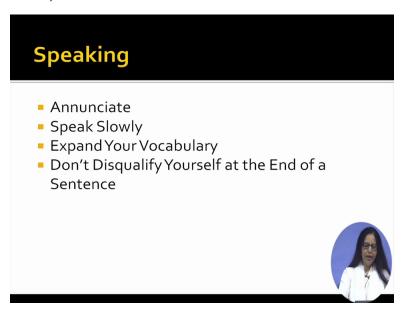
The third aspect is now to address the entire group, be concise and summarizing, use your space wisely and be positive in order to make an executive presence. Now we come to the final part which is how to speak the delivery part proper and the kind of language you use in a meeting.

Now remember the rules that we shared with you about how to use your voice or how to use delivery. In general, they apply to meetings as well. You find yourself whenever you attend a meeting and I have had this happened to me, that suddenly I find that someone speaks up in a meeting.

It is not what they are saying but some of us have a very powerful voice or some of us have a very (wa) good way of delivery, which makes people sit up and notice. And I have had people tell me that, 'so and so, this colleague of yours, whenever he speaks in a senate meeting, he makes an impact because of the way he delivers.' Now this colleague of mine was a person who was taught speaking skills and who has himself had a very good way, very powerful way of delivering not just the speech, but even in ordinary conversations.

The way he would choose his words, the way he would (en) enunciate each and every phrase, it would make an impact. But I would observe him do it, how in a meeting, how he would modulate his voice, raise his voice appropriately. When he was angry, he would raise his voice or his voice would reduce to a whisper if he was angry. So how he would play around with his voice to add an impact to the message or to the statement he was making.

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So you can do that, enunciate, speak slowly, expand your vocabulary, do not disqualify yourself at the end of a sentence.

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Learn "emergency" phrases

- These are the phrases you can use if you don't understand someone or need clarification.
- "Sorry, could you repeat that / your point about... please?"
 - "Sorry, but could you outline the main points again?"
 - "I'm not sure I understood / follow your point about..."
 - "Just to make sure I understand. When you say you're talking about ... Is that right?"

Now, what are the things you can do to improve your vocabulary. Use some emergency phrases. There are certain phrases one needs to one uses in meetings. And if one is familiar with these phrases, one can speak up, one can contradict others, one can wait for an opening, one can button only if one is able to use appropriate phrase for making an intervention. So let us look at some of these phrases before we close.

If you do not understand someone or need clarification, you could ask, "Sorry, could you repeat that point about please?", "Sorry, but could you outline the main points again?" If you really want to clarify what someone has said and you do not want to miss understand what they are saying, then you are asked to say, "I am not sure I understood", "I follow your point about", "Just to make sure I understand. When you say you are talking about is that right?" So these are emergency phrases you can use to speak in a meeting.

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Use some of these phrases to make sure you aren't interrupted half-way through: • "Actually, if you could just let me finish..." "Actually, I've nearly finished..."

Now use some of these phrases to make sure you are (inter) interrupted halfway through. I am sure this happened to you. It has happened to all of us where we are speaking and someone else who cannot wait for us to finish, either they want to cut us off, either because they have more exciting idea or because they feel that (mi) you have an idea which everyone will listen to. They do not allow you to have a say. So you can politely tell them, "Actually, if you could just let me finish", "Actually, I have nearly finished." This is one way of making sure that you are not interrupted.

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Learn some phrases for contributing

- If you've got something to say, you can introduce it with one of these phrases:
- "I'd like to come in here, if I may."
 "There's something I'd like to add to the discussion."
 - "Can I raise a point here?"
 - "Actually, while we're on the subject..."

What are the phases you can use for contributing? If you got something to say, you can introduce one of these phrases, "I would like to come in here, if I may." So you can seek permission, "if I may?", "I would like to come in here, if I may say something.", "There is something I'd like to add to the discussion.", "Can I raise a point here?", "Actually, while we are on the subject." So these are some of the phrases you can use for contributing. And finally you can ask for a summary.

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Ask for a summary

- If the meeting gets involved in off-topic matters, or the participants spend a lot of time joking or in very technical discussions, make sure the chair is managing the discussion by asking for a summary.
- You can use a phrase like:
 - "Can you summarise the main points for me please?"
 - "So what would you say are the main / actionable points here?"

If the meeting gets involved in off topic matters or the participants spend a lot of time joking or in a very technical discussions, make sure the chair is managing the discussion by asking for a summary. You can use a phrase like, "Can you summarize the main points for me please?" "So what did you say are the main actionable points here?" So with this we look at how you can speak effectively in meetings.

What are the level in the hierarchy or in the corporate ladder or wherever you work, in the organization you are, you can speak effectively irrespective of whether you are leading a meeting or you are mainly one of the speakers at a meeting. To summarize what we have discussed today, first we looked at, how to get over your fears and speak up in a meeting particularly if you are an introvert. The second aspect that we looked at was, how to make an executive presence in the meeting so that people notice you and make a good impression.

And the third part, we looked that was, what kind of expressions, how do you use language voice and delivery to make an impact at a meeting. We will share some videos with you in which you actually see people using their body language to make their presence felt and to have an executive presence in a meeting.