

OSGOOD OFFERS SUCCINCT TIPS ON PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking is an interactive activity among the speaker, the message, and the audience with the needs of the audience as the center of attention. A speaker needs to "listen" to the audience before, during and even after the speech. "If you don't consider the people you'll be speaking to, how are you going to connect with them?" says Charles Osgood, in his new book, "Osgood on Speaking."

"You're not," he continues.

"By noticing and responding to them, you are giving yourself the opportunity to involve them in what you'll be doing."

Osgood is a well-known news correspondent for CBS, former anchor of "Sunday Night News" and writer-anchor of CBS radio's "Newsbreak" and "The Osgood File." As might be expected, he reinforces the fact that a speech is a speech and not an essay on legs: ". . . if you're speaking to an audience, speak to them, don't read to them. If you're giving a talk talk!"

No other form of public communication exposes the soul of the communicator as much as public speaking. So there's a sense in

which the speaker and the speech must be one. To the degree that they are, winning communication is likely to take place.

"If you try to be what you are not up there on the speaker's rostrum," comments Osgood, "you will not get away with it in all probability. The situation magnifies you."

"Osgood on Speaking" offers all kinds of helpful staccato information. For example, on putting a speech together, Osgood says:

"Although I'm dead set against scripted speeches, I do think it's a good idea for you to use some notes . . . I list the key points I want to cover in the order I want to use them. However, I do not write down the actual words. . . . The filing card is the speaker's best friend."

Osgood is right on target, too, about not loading speeches with too much secondary and tertiary testimony. If a speaker has been well chosen, what he says about his own life will almost always be more convincing and engaging than what he says about another's.

Speech coaches are often asked two questions: When do I tell my joke? And, is it a good idea to rehearse in front of a mirror? Osgood gives succinct advice: "Don't tell jokes." And, "It isn't going to do you any good to practice your speech by delivering it to yourself in the mirror."