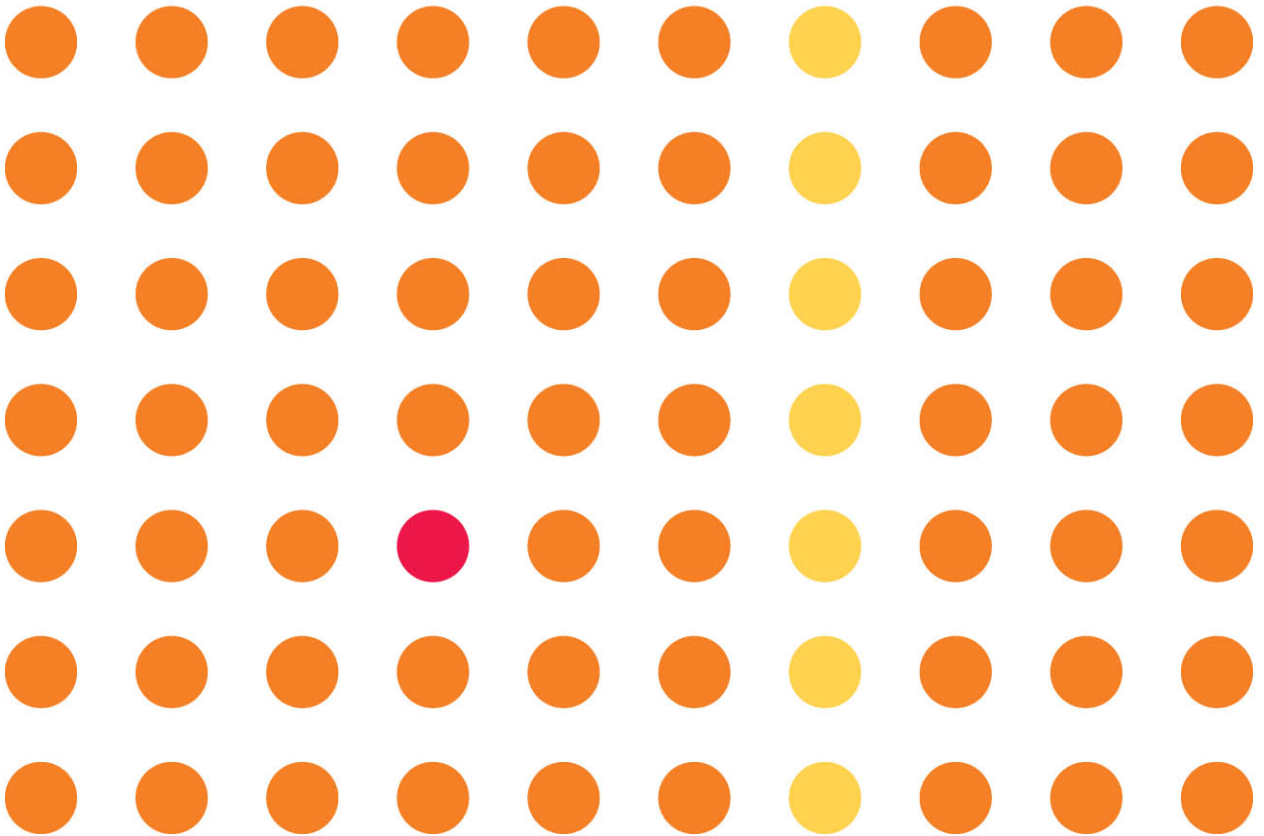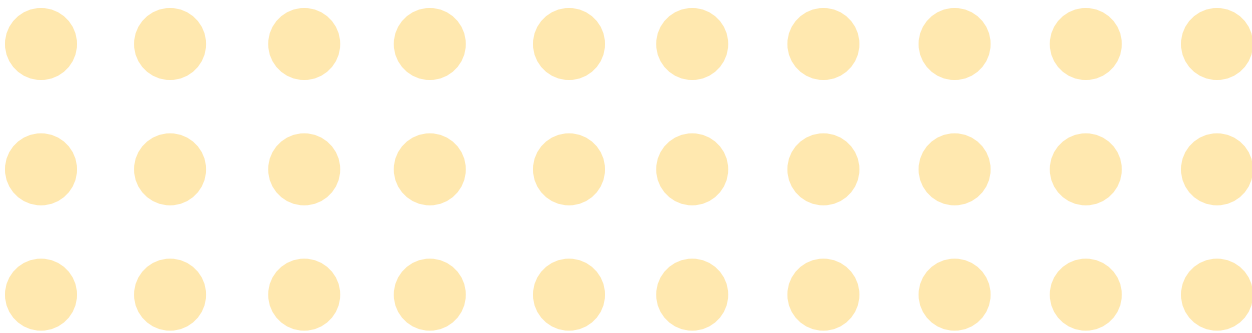# 100 THINGS

EVERY PRESENTER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE

SUSAN M. WEINSCHENK, Ph.D.

100 THINGS

EVERY **PRESENTER** NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT **PEOPLE**
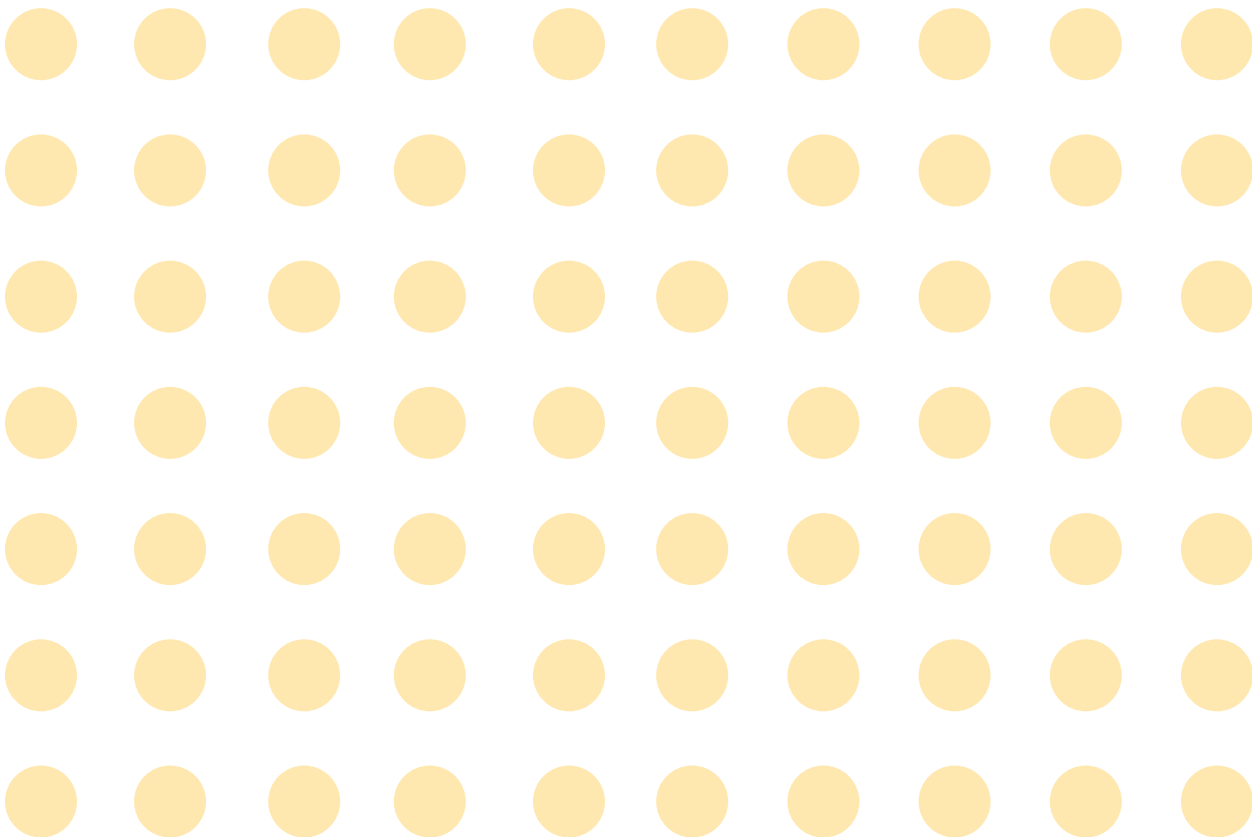
SUSAN WEINSCHENK, PH.D.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my family, who endure my endless talking about whichever book I'm working on, who put up with my habit of moving from room to room as I write, and who allow me to give up weekends and holiday events because I have to "work on a chapter." Your support keeps me going!

CONTENTS

HOW TO GRAB AND HOLD PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

HOW TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION

HOW PEOPLE LISTEN AND SEE

HOW PEOPLE REACT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

HOW PEOPLE REACT EMOTIONALLY

HOW PEOPLE REACT TO YOU

HOW PEOPLE DECIDE TO TAKE ACTION

HOW TO USE PSYCHOLOGY TO BE A BETTER PRESENTER

"There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave: the one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave."

—Dale Carnegie

Which of the following is true of you:

    A)   After you give a presentation, you usually feel that it was quite successful.

    B)   After you give a presentation, you are usually tormented by all the things you should have done or said differently.

    If your answer was A, then this book might not be for you. Not because you are already a great presenter, but because you might not be motivated enough to learn what you need to know about people to be a better presenter.

    I've given hundreds of presentations in my career, and I'm a popular speaker. People say things like, "That was the best presentation I've ever attended." And I'm grateful for these kind words. But I'm never satisfied. Although I usually think that there were several aspects of the just-completed presentation that were quite good, I am my own worst critic. Maybe I'm too hard on myself. All I know is that practically before the presentation is done, I've already identified what to change.

    Sometimes when I'm coaching people on presentation skills they will say something like, "I'm not a great presenter. I don't know if I'll ever be a great presenter. I'm never satisfied with the presentations I give." "That's good," I respond, "now I know that you have the capability of being a great presenter." Like any great artist or performer, great presenters are constantly striving to improve their performance and their craft.

In his book *Drive*, Daniel Pink talks about the research on motivation and mastery. People are motivated to master a topic or skill. The drive for mastery keeps us working at a task. But, according to Pink, mastery can never be reached—it can really only be approached.

Every day around the world millions of presentations are delivered. Some are great, some are mediocre, and some are just downright boring. How much better would the world be, how much more inspired would your audiences be, and how much change could you make in the world if you improved the quality of your presentations?

There are two sides to every presentation. You are speaking, but an audience is listening. If you want to give a great presentation, you need to know a lot about people. The more you understand how people think, learn, hear, see, react, and decide, the better able you will be to put together a presentation that informs, inspires, and motivates. When you learn about others, you'll know how to craft and deliver a powerful presentation.

4 THE MORE UNCERTAIN PEOPLE ARE, THE MORE THEY DEFEND THEIR IDEAS

In #3, I mention the idea of cognitive dissonance—the uncomfortable feeling you get when you have two ideas that conflict with each other. You don't like the feeling, so you try to get rid of the dissonance by either changing your belief or denying one of the ideas.

In the original research on cognitive dissonance, people were forced to defend an opinion that they did not believe in. The result was that people tended to change their beliefs to fit the new idea.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO SUPPORT NEW IDEAS?

In recent research by Vincent van Veen (2009), researchers had people "argue" that the fMRI scan experience was pleasant (it's not). When "forced" to make statements that the experience was pleasant, certain parts of the brain lit up (the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insular cortex). The more these regions were activated, the more the participant would claim that he or she really did think the fMRI was pleasant.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T FORCED TO SUPPORT NEW IDEAS?

There's another reaction that sometimes occurs. What if people are *not* forced to state they believe in something that they actually don't believe in? What if they are instead presented with information that opposes their beliefs, yet they aren't forced to espouse this new belief? In these situations, the tendency is to deny the new information instead of changing their beliefs to fit.

IF UNCERTAIN, PEOPLE WILL ARGUE HARDER

David Gal and Derek Rucker (2010) conducted research using framing techniques to make people feel uncertain. For example, they told one group to remember a time when they were full of certainty, and the other group to remember a time when they were full of doubt. Then they asked the participants whether they were meat eaters, vegetarians, vegans, or otherwise, how important this was to them, and how confident they were in their opinions. People who were asked to remember a time of uncertainty were less confident of their eating choices. However, when asked to write their beliefs to persuade someone else to eat the way they did, they would write more and stronger

arguments than those who were certain of their choice. Gal and Rucker performed the research with different topics (for example, preferences for a Mac versus a Windows computer) and found similar results. When people were less certain, they would dig in and argue even harder.

Takeaways

* When a belief is deeply ingrained, it will be hard to change. Be practical and realistic. Try for small changes in belief instead of expecting everyone to have a huge "a-ha" moment and instantly change a belief they have had for a long time.

* Ask for a show of hands on certain beliefs during your presentation. This will have a twofold effect: it "forces" people to decide, which will make them less likely to defend old ideas, and it may help them change their belief if everyone in the room believes differently.

* Instead of just giving people evidence that their belief is not logical or tenable or a good choice, instead offer the benefits of a different belief.

INDEX

consistency, 211–212
content
  choosing formula for, 231–232
  outlining, 231
  Post-it notes for, 231
  storyboards for, 230, 232
  when to put into slides, 231
context
  cultural perceptions of, 40, 41
  providing for presentations, 4–5
  titles and headlines for, 100–101
contingent rewards, 75
control
  choice equated with, 192–193
  controlling unconscious influences, 52–53
  maintaining for presentation, 180–181, 202
  as motivation, 77–78
Cowan, Nelson, 18
crafting presentations
  doing your research, 222–225
  overview, 221
  performing, refining, and repeating, 234
  practice for, 233
  using Magic Presentation Formula, 225–229
creativity
  activities fostering, 36–37
  kinds of, 34–36
  mind-wandering linked to, 59
cues for behavior, 73
cultural differences
  attractiveness, 176
  hand gestures, 166
  meanings of color, 117–118
  seen among people, 40–41
Current State, 225, 226
Custers, Ruud, 76

D

danger
  brain's perception of, 52, 53
  picking up signals of, 187, 188
Darley, John, 203
Davies, Robertson, 89
de Vries, Marieke, 150, 196
decision-making
  dangers of group-think, 198–200
  fear of loss in, 187–189

influenced by dominant personality, 201–202
influencing uncertain in, 203–204
mood's influence on, 196–197
unconscious, 184–186
writing down commitments, 215–216
delaying gratification, 79–80
deliberate creativity, 34, 35, 36
desire for familiar, 150
Deutsch, Morton, 215
diagram of room setup, 96, 97
Dietrich, Arne, 34
Differentiation through Learning Styles and Memory (Sprenger), 45
direction and orientation, 159
disrupting memory, 27
distractions
  laser pointers as, 97
  minimizing during flow state, 39
  moving during presentations, 109
dominant personality, 201–202
dopamine
  eliciting wanting with, 70–71
  listening to music releases, 149
  monetary rewards releasing, 75
Downar, J., 47
dreams, effect on memory, 28
Drive (Pink), 75, 77, 78
Dutton, Denis, 146–147

E

Edison, Thomas, 35
Efran, M.G., 175
Einstein, Albert, 1
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 61
Ekman, Paul, 169
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 153
emotions
  appealing to, 136
  beauty and aesthetics' effect on, 146–148
  bodily feedback loop for, 162
  craving familiarity, 150
  deliberate and emotional creativity, 34, 35, 36
  engaging, 137–139, 144–145
  enjoying surprises, 140–141
  equating scarcity and value, 151–152
  facial expressions of, 169–170
  feeling safe, 142, 142–143