

DIA BONDI'S 21 THINGS

How to be excellent in front of
any audience, any size



COURAGE



CONTROL



IMPACT

THING

1 *Go first.*

You have to. No one's gonna get excited/enthralled/aghast/emotional/thoughtful/happy/enraged about your story if you don't.

THING

2 *Parachute in.*

Make your first words your best words. No "thank you." No "my name is." No "the bathrooms are down the hall to the left." Jump in and back into the other stuff.

THING

3 *Care.*

Don't look like you care, actually care. And make people know it. Because if you don't, they won't. Care hard enough to invoke Thing 21.

THING

4 *Make it better.*

Better doesn't mean more [insert adjective here]. It just means better. Look at your story. Improve it fearlessly.

THING

5 *Be weird.*

Just enough so it makes people know who you are.

THING

6 *Information is good.*

Whether you get a mumble, an eye roll, a blank stare, that's all good information. Don't judge it. Be curious and find out what sparked (or didn't spark) it. That way you can do Thing 4.

THING

7 *Get uncomfortable.*

Safe sucks. It works for you, but it sucks for your audience. So take a chance. Being a little uncomfortable means you're onto something. And that's awesome — for you and for them.

THING

8 *Silence rocks.*

It rocks people. It creates anticipation. Audiences like that.

THING

9 *Trust your audience.*

They can handle themselves. They'll know what to do when things get all Thing 1 and Thing 5 and Thing 7.

THING

10 *Know what you want to say.*

Then don't say it. Not necessarily. But know EXACTLY what it is, then figure out if you can say it or how to say it so you don't lose them.

THING

11 *Connection matters.*  

Period. Don't get all "you're over there and we're over here and pieces of data are all around just stating shit." Connect the dots, connect with your story, connect with your audience.

THING

12 *Have a map. Then throw it away.*  

It's great to have a plan. But if things go sideways, acknowledge it and go with it. That's really listening to your audience.

THING

13 *Notice your status.* 

Are you goofy wiggly or still and reverent? Know where you are and activate the superpower of your status — or do stuff to shift it. But start by noticing it.

THING

14 *Use better last words.* 

Better doesn't mean fancier. It means better.

THING

15 *Wait. Then don't.*  

Giving people everything all up front isn't actually what they want. Wait to give them what they want. It's kinda like Thing 8 with a plot.

THING

16 *Speak when you're ready.*  

Wait for it. Seriously. Your words will be better. Everything will be better. This is hard. And it is good.

THING

17 *Have a point (of view).* 

If you don't have a point, your story won't have one, so people will just make up their own. You don't want your audiences to do this (except for when you do).

THING

18 *Listen.* 

Non-negotiable.

THING

19 *Meet me here. Take me there.* 

Dragging me, convincing me, pulling me, pushing me feels like a fight. Meet me where I am, THEN take me where you want me to go. Like Thing 16, this is hard. Like Thing 16, this is good.

THING

20 *Fun is good.* 

And anyone who says otherwise is not my friend. Use it — whenever you can.

THING

21 *Break stuff.*   

Anything. An assumption, a tradition, an expectation, an idea, a habit. It's freeing. For everyone.