

# Hang up Your Hangups

Becoming a Confident  
Podcast Presenter

By Kevin Anderson & Colin Gray



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## Becoming a Confident Podcast Presenter

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## Chapter 1 - I Hate My Voice!

Every so often mum would bring out the tape-deck, pop in the tape and hit the play button. After a bit of rustling, a high-pitched voice started telling the story of the Battle of Hastings. Of course, that voice was mine. Mum thought it was hilarious to share it. A cruel and unusual torture.

I was only eight when it was recorded, but I hated the sound of my voice. Even now, I don't like listening to recordings of my voice. I've narrated a few videos for my clients and each time they tell me they like my voice. I remain unconvinced.

### ***You're Not Alone***

I don't think I'm alone. We're predisposed to hate the sound of our voice. It's irrational,

and it's normal. Embrace it and don't worry about it. It's worth remembering, the way you hear your voice is different from the way other people hear it. Your skull acts as a dampener of sorts which alters the way you hear your voice.

## ***Your Voice is an Instrument***

As a podcaster, you've got to think of your voice as an instrument. And just like any instrument, it will get better with practice. As your confidence and skills grow, you'll find that your voice improves. If you don't believe me, listen to episode 1 of a podcast series and then listen to episode 50. In most cases you'll notice a significant difference.

Pat Flynn used himself as an example of this during his keynote at Podcast Movement in 2015. He was brave enough to play his first episode on stage, and the difference was

ludicrous for those of us that know his recent work. It was a brilliant moment as he took the mick out of the 5 year younger Pat, and showed us all how much difference practice makes.

## **Top 5 Tips to Loving Your Voice**

### **One | Breaking the mental barrier**

When you're recording your podcast, keep your voice as natural as possible. Don't 'put on' a voice. Talk as if you're talking with your friends.

There is nothing quite so obvious as someone affecting a voice. It sounds false. Be authentic, and work with the instrument you've been blessed with.



## Two | Vary the pace

It's unusual to speak at the same pace for any length of time. Try reading something aloud and maintain the same pace. It sounds robotic doesn't it?

The truth is, we alter the speed of our delivery naturally. Find ways to experiment with your delivery. Vary the rhythm and your voice will become a more dynamic instrument.

## Three | Dramatic Pauses

Silence can be a great asset for podcasters. A dramatic pause captures attention and acts as an audible exclamation mark. It can feel a bit unnatural but try it.

A presentation trainer from back in my sales days always talked about the power of silence. He also told me something that has stuck with me. "Silence always feels longer

for the speaker than it does for the audience.”

#### **Four | Vary the tone**

Varying the tone of your voice is another critical aspect of your vocal instrument. Change the pitch to help deliver a more memorable message. I’m not advocating the use of helium, but subtle changes will enhance your delivery.

#### **Five | Keep your sentences short**

Keeping your sentences short and punchy helps create a natural rhythm to your shows.

Long, rambling sentences are difficult to follow. They’re also difficult for your listeners to follow.

If it feels like “you’re going on a bit” – stop the recording and script that particular

segment. Find a way to break it down into a series of short sentences.

## ***Finding Your Voice***

To start, just focus on one element. Maybe start by working on your tone, then focus on the pace of your deliver. To make it easier – use the following extract from a famous speech as your playground. Have fun. Try some different things out and record everything that you do so you can listen back.

Remember, the more you listen to yourself, the more you get used to it, and the more confident you'll become in future.

## ***Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat***

“I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government: I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind.

We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. This is our policy. You ask, what is our aim?

I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the

road may be, for without victory, there is no survival.”

P.S. If I still had my 'Battle of Hastings' script – I would have gladly shared it with you.

## Chapter 2 - I'm No Expert!

"I'm a writer."

Three short and simple words. Why is it then, that I still find that phrase difficult to say?

It could be because many of my friends have been professional writers for years.

Perhaps it's because I think it sounds pretentious. Or maybe it's because I lack the confidence. Or is it the fundamental human trait of not wanting to call myself an 'expert'?

I become quite cynical when someone uses the label 'expert' to position themselves. Even more so if they use the term 'Guru' or 'Ninja'. Maybe that's just me, but really –

how many have cut their thumb on a shuriken?

I demand proof and for me, that means ‘hearing them out’ (or at least having a go of their nunchuks!). In other words – giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their expertise.

### ***What is an expert?***

The simple dictionary definition of an expert is –

“A person who is very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area.”

## **We prefer this definition –**

“An expert is someone who can explain complex things in very simple ways. Therefore, they often have the appearance of being an everyman.

It’s hard to spot an expert at first because they make everything so simple.”

The distinction between the two is the simplicity of HOW they share their knowledge.

## ***You’re a communicator***

Being a keeper of knowledge isn’t enough to qualify you as an expert.

You need to be an effective knowledge distributor, and that means being a confident communicator.



And of course, podcasting is one of the ways to share your expertise.

I'll go further than that – I'd argue that podcasting is THE best way to share your knowledge.

Think about it for a minute. As a podcaster, you have the opportunity to share your message in the most natural way – by talking directly to your audience.

Those that are listening can make an assessment of your expert status based on what you say, and how you say it. They can give you a large amount of time, because they don't have to MAKE time in their day, unlike full attention mediums like video or text. And due to the serial nature of podcasting – you'll build trust with your audience throughout every minute they're with you.

## *You Don't Have to be an expert*

An important thing to remember is that you don't have to be an expert to add value. Let me explain.

I spent six months working in the outdoor advertising industry. That makes it sound quite glamorous – but the reality was, I was selling adverts on buses.

After my first day of the induction course, I was labelled as an 'outdoor media expert' by one of the trainers. When I politely challenged her, she asked me the question

“Will you know more than the person you are selling to?”

I nodded.

“Well then, there you go – you're an expert.”

The entire notion that knowing more makes you an expert can be dangerous.

But I don't think you need to KNOW more. You'll always know less than someone – but your ability to communicate knowledge, in a simple way, will set you apart.

### ***Tips to expertly share your message***

Here are five simple ways to help you communicate your knowledge more effectively. Use it as a checklist for when you're planning your next podcast.

#### **Break it down**

Break difficult concepts into simple steps. It's less intimidating for your listeners and far easier to follow.

## **Plain English**

Don't talk in buzzwords or confusing acronyms. If you have to introduce a new industry term, make sure you take the time to explain it. Don't assume your listeners are familiar with it.

## **Once upon a time**

Use the power of storytelling throughout your podcast. People remember and relate to stories. Find great, real-life examples and case studies that help illustrate the point you're making.

## **Narrow the focus**

Don't try to do too much in one episode. Pick a topic and stick to it. If the problem you're looking to cover feels too big – break it down into a series of podcast episodes.

## Chapter 3 - I'm Boring

I had that most excellent experience, recently, of being asked to come on someone else's show. Caroline McKenna, the host of The Charity Peeks Podcast, asked me to introduce the concept of storytelling for the non-profit sector. I had some rough notes on my iPad, but I didn't refer to them.

As I was being interviewed, I found that I was boring myself. Now, if I was bored of my delivery, imagine how the listeners would be feeling. I could imagine me putting them into a long, deep coma. Or, at the very least, having them reach for the STOP button.

## *Perception Versus Reality*

When I listened back, I discovered three things. Firstly, the ‘ehhms’ and ‘ahhss’ were more frequent than I’d like.

I was reminded that I still have issues with hearing my voice. (Read episode one ‘I hate my voice’ if you haven’t already done so.) But, to my surprise, I found that my interview wasn’t boring at all.

My perception didn’t match the reality. Whether it’s through lack of confidence or my natural self-deprecating manner, I was convinced that I was boring. I think we all have that in us.

The brain can be a cruel organ. It fills us with self-doubt and creates narratives that simply aren’t true.

## ***Boring is relative***

Boring is such a subjective word. For example:

*I'm fascinated by the evolution of the short story.*

*I'm enthralled by the history of football tactics.*

*I'm captivated by the World of entrepreneurship.*

All three of those things will likely bore a great many of you to tears.

The truth is, I've even listened to boring podcasts on subjects that I love. So what it is that makes them boring?

## ***Boring Content***

Sometimes a podcast loses me because the content is just boring. Having said that, I don't think there are many subjects out there that can't be made exciting or engaging, to the right audience, with a bit of work.

So, if you have boring content, maybe the approach is wrong.

I listened to a business writer's podcast episode recently. I'm a regular listener and normally get so much value from it.

This particular episode was delivered as a monologue, but it was the unstructured nature that bored me.

There was repetition, and I found myself losing attention. After five minutes I hit the STOP button and deleted the episode.



If he'd included interviews or a more structured monologue – it could have worked.

### ***Working with Loops***

Let's talk structure, because that's the easiest way to prevent boring content.

The key to structure is the narrative, and the hook that drives listeners through that narrative.

Tell people what's coming, but give them just a teaser of the content. Make sure that teaser includes the problem your solving, and a hint at how you'll solve it.

The teaser is sometimes called an 'open loop'. An open loop is where you hint at something, or you ask a question.

But you don't give the answer right away. That creates curiosity, and curiosity produces more engaging content.

You can close a loop every few minutes if you like, or you can have an open loop that isn't closed until the end of your episode.

If it's the former, then make sure you open a new loop either before you close the last, or immediately after.

That can work well in an educational show. Break the lesson down into sections, and create a series of open loops, each leading into the next as they close.

Above all, put thought into your podcast content.

Structure it, don't ramble, be purposeful with where you're going and hint at that direction to the listener.

That's what creates engagement, and THAT'S what compels your listener to listen, with bated breath, to every minute of your show.

### ***Boring Delivery***

Once you've got your content down, the next job is delivery. And sadly, I've abandoned even more podcasts as a result of boring delivery.

I listened to a business podcast last year that, on the surface, looked good. She'd hired a voiceover person to do the dramatic intro.

That guy was a pro. His voice was anything but boring.

Then, the host spoke.

Her voice was pleasant enough, but her delivery was monotone. It didn't alter in the slightest.

For a moment, I thought I might be listening to a robot. I saved my life by switching it off. Yes, I was driving at the time.

We've talked a lot already about voice, so I'm not going to re-iterate that. But remember how much more interesting you can sound with a little thought.

Keep in mind the word variety – both in tone and pace. And practice, practice, practice.

There isn't a person out there who can't become a good presenter over time. That includes you.

## ***5 Tips For a Bore-Free podcast***

Use the art of storytelling to engage your audience. People remember stories much better than facts and figures.

Vary the tone and tempo of your delivery. For more on this read [chapter one](#) in this series.

Make use of interviews. Adding a different voice and perspective creates a more dynamic podcast experience.

Answer the questions that your audience regularly asks. If it's important to your listeners, they're unlikely to find it boring.

If you have a monologue show – just make sure that it has a structure. Use open loops, and make sure it flows naturally.

## *Over to you*

The fear of being boring is real folks. I know it because I experience it all the time. But don't let it paralyse you.

If being boring is the fear that's stopping you from podcasting, remember this – you can't judge yourself. Find a 'test audience'.

Ideally, this should be people you're friends with, BUT that will be honest with you.

Record a five-minute snippet on your phone on a topic of your choice. The audio quality isn't important.

Ask that audience one simple question – 'Is this boring?'.

I speak from experience. I've done this. It works. And remember, putting yourself out there is THE ONLY way to make progress.

## Chapter 4 - What if People Don't Like me?

There's no getting away from it, I like to be liked. There are people in life who don't care what people think of them; I'm just not one of them.

Here's the thing, I'd like to be one of them. And what I've realised over the last year, is that to be different and to stand out from the crowd, I have to accept that not everyone will like me.

Accepting that not everyone will like you, or the podcast you present, is a significant barrier to pass.

Some of the most successful people in the World divide opinions, and that's just as true for podcast hosts.

Take Gary Vaynerchuk for example. There is a man that divides opinion. He is Marmite. You either love him, or you hate him. But he's built up an incredibly loyal and passionate following. I'd argue that much of his success is down to the fact that he doesn't settle for being middle of the road.

### ***Why Would People Dislike you?***

There are a lot of reasons why someone wouldn't like you, personally AND as a podcast host. In no particular order:

#### **You're arrogant**

The show is clearly more about you than it is for your guests or listeners.

#### **You're a Know-it-all**

You cut people off and force your opinions on others.



## **You're Obnoxious**

You're just a 'Grade A' attention seeker who's loud, brash and inconsiderate of others.

## **You're a Big-Head**

You talk about your success and use your podcast as an opportunity to inflate your ego.

The four reasons above are all quite understandable.

I'm sure none of you are like that. The truth is, most people aren't like that.

But even if you stay clear of the obvious reasons to be disliked, some people will still dislike you.

## ***Haters Gonna Hate***

You have to accept that the human species is irrational.

There will be people who dislike you for no apparent reason. There's no logical explanation – they just don't like you.

There's nothing much you can do, and the best advice is to move on and forget about it.

An alternative approach is to follow Jay Baer's advice and Hug your Haters. Smother them with kindness, look like the bigger (wo)man, and grow as a result.

### ***Likers Gonna Like***

But this talk of haters, hating and not being liked isn't exactly the upbeat message we want to leave you with.

So let's look at the positives. Why would people like you? And why would they love to listen to your podcast?

You help people – Whether it’s on-air or off the air – you are always helping people.

You entertain – You’re funny, and you create content that is memorable for the right reasons.

You care – It’s obvious to your listeners that you care about them and are interested in them.

You inspire – Your listeners are given confidence and are motivated by listening to your podcast.

Do you want to be average or extraordinary?

If you do something that matters and find your ideal tribe, you will naturally divide opinion. Many will dislike you; some might even hate you.

But, the thing is, that’s the only way to find a loyal, loving audience – the type of people

who will love and support what you do passionately.

You can't find that audience without putting yourself out there, and being honest in how you do. I know that only too well. I've only just started using video as part of my marketing.

I just didn't have the confidence to talk to the camera. I convinced myself that I 'had a face for radio'.

Put yourself out there.

Be authentically 'you'. Find your voice and you can be confident you'll find your audience.

### ***Over to you***

We all suffer from our own insecurities, and 'not being liked' is certainly a concern that many of us have.

Every so often, we need a reminder of why we are liked and loved. This will be uncomfortable for some of you, but trust me – it's a worthwhile exercise.

Ask your friends, families and colleagues this very simple question:

“Why do you like me?”

To protect your own ego and self-worth, I'd recommend you pose this question to people that you KNOW like you. Nothing will crush a soul like someone saying – “Errrrrm sorry Kev – don't know where you got that idea from, but I actually despise you.”

Get the feedback. Write it down, and refer to it the next time you lack confidence.

## Chapter 5 – What if Nobody Listens to me?

### *The Sound of Silence – My Narrative Experiment*

I've been a bit self-conscious about using audio and video platforms. But I decided to give podcasting a bash.

The results were, frankly, embarrassing. I'd narrated some personal stories I'd written, created a prototype, and let my trusted friends decide if it worked as a concept. I feared it didn't.

My friends concurred. The reality? Nobody would listen to my podcast show in that format. It just wouldn't work.

### ***Fear is Rational***

I'd just thrown together a recording to test the theory. I know that a lot of time goes into planning, writing and producing a podcast.

It's a big investment of your most precious resource – time.

It's natural then, that you might question that investment if nobody listens.

What if, when you launch your podcast nobody listens? Could your fragile ego handle it?

### ***What if people did listen?***

I can guarantee you this; you'll have zero listeners if you don't publish your podcast. We're great at thinking negatively.

We're wonderful at talking ourselves out of things. Don't let podcasting be the same.

Consider this; ‘what if people did listen?’  
What difference could you make to your  
listeners?

What new connections and friendships could  
you form? Who could you help and inspire?

Through your podcast, you have the power  
to reach a new audience across the world.  
Be excited by that.

Produce a great show and market it  
correctly and you will have listeners.

### ***Why Wouldn't People Listen***

To give yourself the best chance of having a  
podcast that people listen to, let's look at  
some of the reasons you might find it hard  
to reach your audience.

### ***Your Show is Too Niche***

Picking a niche is great, just don't make it  
TOO niche. It's all well and good ‘owning’ a



specific topic, but if not enough people are interested, you'll be facing an uphill battle to find listeners.

A road racing podcast for passionate cyclists would work, but a podcast dedicated to puncture repair kits would struggle.

### ***Your Show is Too Broad***

Conversely, if your show is too general, you'll also struggle to find an audience.

A general racing site that includes cycling, Formula 1 and horse racing, would understandably struggle to maintain a listener's attention.

### ***Poor Sound Quality***

Even if you do strike the sweet spot and find a decent sized audience, nothing will drive them away quicker than atrocious audio production.

If you make it hard for people to enjoy your carefully crafted content, you'll find it almost impossible to find loyal listeners.

### ***Poor Delivery***

Even if the sound quality is great, you could still find yourself without listeners because of how you deliver your show.

If you're annoyingly obnoxious or deadly dull, you're going to do a wonderful job of driving people away.

Here's an idea; be yourself. Be prepared, be organised – but don't try too hard.

### ***Being Brave***

Accept the fact that nobody might listen. Embrace it. Be brave and do it regardless of your fears.

Because here's the thing – even if nobody listens you'll get a lot out of the experience.

For a start, you'll learn what DOESN'T work. But you'll also have gained valuable public speaking experience. And, you can use the show as a way to grow your personal network. Use it as a way to find your voice.

You have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Don't let the fear of failure or your natural negativity hold you back. Go on, put yourself out there.

Banish the negative thoughts and find your ideal audience.

There is an audience out there for you.

### ***Over to you***

I'm a great believer in reverse engineering. So here's what I want you to do;

Think about a time you abandoned a podcast episode before it finished. What

was it that made you stop? Take a note and add it to your 'what not to do' list.

Next time you're searching for a new podcast, ask what it is that makes you skip scroll past a potential show.

In other words, what stops you even trying a new podcast?

Again, take a note and make sure you don't fall into the same trap.

Learn from others' mistakes and create a podcast that's worth listening to.

## Chapter 6 - Dealing With Bad Reviews

### *Turning a Negative Into a Positive*

I embarked on a writing challenge at the start of the year.

My plan is to write a new 100-word story every day. Initially, I was going to keep them to myself and maybe publish them some day.

But, I decided that it was best if I shared them on Facebook.

Why? Because I wanted feedback. I wanted people to judge my writing. I want to hear the positive and the negative, because – ultimately – that will make me a better writer.

And it's the same for your podcast. Getting iTunes reviews is a critical factor to being discovered by your ideal audience.

The more positive reviews you have – the more likely it is that you'll appear high in the rankings for your category of show.

But the very existence of reviews is something that holds back many would-be podcasters. They are scared of the prospect of negative reviews.

### ***Why Do People Give Bad Reviews?***

In my experience, people leave bad reviews for two reasons. They either want to offer a critique, or they want to be cruel.

Those that critique your show are doing you a favour – they are pointing out areas for

improvement. See past the slight and learn the lessons.

But we also have to accept that from time-to-time, the bad reviews will just be cruel and spiteful with no logical reason given.

### ***How to React***

So what do you do when you get a bad review? First of all crying or being depressed is not an option.

### ***Respond***

While you can't respond directly to a negative iTunes review, you can indirectly respond by approaching the subject of a negative review in a future podcast.

This shows that you're listening to your audience. If the bad review has no merit or appears personal in nature, you can report

an individual review to iTunes and request its removal.

The reasons for doing so will fall under one of the following categories.

This review contains offensive content

- This review is not a review or is off-topic
- I disagree with this review
- My concern isn't listed here

I would only recommend that options 1 & 2 from the above are valid reasons for going down this route.

If the review is published on your website, you can, of course, respond more directly to the person that left the comment.

I wouldn't use the comments to get into a war of words. But having a dialogue to



better understand their issue could help you make improvements to your show.

### ***Ignore***

In cases where the review is either difficult to comprehend or is of a personal nature, the best approach is to ignore them.

Nothing to see here. Don't waste your time trying to draw deeper meaning where none exists.

Brush yourself down and get on with the job of creating another great show.

### ***Learn***

Identify the negative reviews that you can learn from. Be honest. Read the review with an open mind. Does their review have merit?

Pull out the lessons you can learn and start applying them to your show. Remember –

bad reviews can genuinely help make your show better.

### ***The Reality***

This is a classic `good news – bad news` situation. First the bad news – it’s highly likely that you’ll receive some negative reviews. It’s just the nature of the world we live in.

Podcasts, just like music and films, are hugely personal in nature. Some people will just not like your show.

But here’s the good news – produce a great show, and your positive reviews will far outweigh the negative ones.

### ***Tips to get More Reviews***

Actually getting reviews, be they good or bad, can be tricky. In most cases, reviews

don't happen automatically. You have to ask for them.

### ***Ask for Them in Your Show***

At the end of your show, let your audience know how important reviews are.

Be honest, tell them that their reviews will help your show rank higher in iTunes.

Make it clear that you're asking for an honest review and constructive feedback.

### ***Ask for Them in Your Show Notes***

Replicate the message in your show notes and include a direct link to your show within iTunes.

Make it as easy as possible for them to leave a review.

### ***Ask in Emails***

If you have a regular (weekly, monthly etc) e-mail that you send out to your audience,

make sure you have a standard section that reminds your audience of how important reviews are to you.

### ***Read Reviews on Your Podcast***

Reading out a review of your show, on your show can help.

It demonstrates how important they are to you and it can be used to encourage others to do the same.

### ***Run a Competition***

You can encourage reviews by running a competition. For example, everyone that submits a review will automatically be entered into a prize draw for a book. It's low cost, and can produce great results.

## Final Thoughts

Don't make drastic decisions based on a single negative review.

But, if a pattern emerges and many people are saying the same thing, it's probably a good indicator of a change you really should make.

Ensure that you have balance, though. Celebrate the good reviews and keep a personal bank of the reviews that have meant the most to you.

Dip into those when you have a bad review and remind yourself of just how well you're doing.

## Afterword

Thanks very much for reading! I hope this has given you the confidence to start your own show, or to continue the one you already do with much more gusto!

If you'd like a primer on starting your own podcast, then visit our email course here:

<http://podhost.me/hhecourse>

Or, to keep up with our content and all of our podcasting equipment guides, technique tips and growth and success articles, just visit the site here:

<https://www.thepodcasthost.com/>

Hopefully see you there!