



Brock says it's important to look at the audience directly to make a lasting impression

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**V**IBRANT and effervescent are two of the simpler adjectives one can use to describe Katie Brock. As she sits down dressed in a formal black and grey dress, in between a public speaking workshop, at the British Council Library, one cannot help but be amazed by her vitality and energy, that are evident from her eyes.

"I was intrigued about public speaking at a young age. In fact, it was comedian Jerry Seinfeld who inspired me to take up public speaking. Though it was a funny joke he had cracked, I sat up to think was it really that dreadful to be able to speak in front of an audience. And after having spoken in front of diverse audiences over the world and coached people from different backgrounds to take up public speaking, I have realised its

speaking coach, is a graduate in Theology from the University of Bristol. She is also the head of events and projects at the Flame School of Performing Arts. Speaking about her wide-ranging interests, she says, "Again, I would attribute all my other interests to this art of public speaking. One of the most important things that it teaches is the art of being able to communicate the simplest of human emotions effectively. What I mean is that while most people construe public speaking to be a domain of leaders and politicians, it is much more than that."

As to how does she manage an unruly crowd during a session of public speaking, she says, "For anyone who wishes to become a public speaker this is a bitter pill to swallow. It's like being baptized by fire. Usually, I make it a point to inject a little bit of humour and speak to the crowd directly and ask them what interests them.

# Not just talk

really not that hard," says Brock when quizzed about her start as a public speaker.

"To be honest, I myself, as most others, was apprehensive initially. A probable reason why this supposed stage fright happens to all of us is because deep down, all of us harbour this desire to be liked by everyone and not be judged. And when we are up speaking to an audience on a topic, we tend to keep this thought in the back of our mind, which bogs us down. For me to become a good public speaker, it is this feeling that needs to be conquered. In fact, public speaking came to me because of the diverse range of people that I would interact with as a member of the English Speaking Union in London."

The multi-talented Brock, other than being a public

**For public speaking coach Katie Brock, being able to articulate in public is a surefire way to becoming a good conversationalist**

That way you can reach the root cause of the unruly behaviour and tackle crowds, but this is something that comes only with practice."

Her advice for budding public speakers is to understand the audience first and accordingly prepare the speech. "That way you are aware of your hearing group and can keep them interested. The second most important thing is to just be you; experiences good or

bad on stage will help a person grow. Besides, people appreciate honest speakers rather those who are artificial. And lastly, it's very important to look at your audience directly and be humble and respectful. These little things go a long way in becoming a successful speaker and more importantly, a good conversationalist," says Brock.