

Fearless Speaking Video #3 – Available Eyes

Welcome back to my Fearless Speaking video series. Today I'll be sharing with you my third secret, which is called Eye Availability. In most traditional or conventional speaking training programs they'll be talking about this in terms of eye contact. I stay away from calling it eye contact, because I think that is a loaded instruction...to look directly at people.

What I'm really trying to do is to help you feel more comfortable being the center of attention and having all eyes on you, as well as being able to look out at the eyes of your listeners.

So that's why I call it Eye Availability. This is keeping your eyes open and soft and gently looking out to the people who are listening to you, the people who are looking back at you.

In our society, I know that the messages that we get about eye contact is that we should not be looking directly at people for a certain amount of time, that we should stay away from engaging one-on-one in this kind of way. A lot of cultures and societies say that if you look directly at somebody, that you're actually inviting them, like a stare down, to engage in some kind of duel.

What I'm simply trying to do is to help you have a new way of thinking about eye contact, having it be called Eye Availability, means "how do I make myself and my eyes open and receptive?" "how do I make my eyes available to my listeners?"

What I say sometimes it's just let your eyes rest softly in their sockets and when you gaze, be thinking of it more as a gazing out at your listeners, rather than eye contact. And I think that we're wired in our brains when somebody says eye contact. You think this means to plug in directly.

So instead, let's have it be a soft available gaze at your listeners and then receive them, be available. Again, in some traditional speaking programs they say look at a spot on the wall or look at the center of the forehead, don't look directly at the eyes because that's what's going to terrify you.

But what if, on the other hand, you learn to just be softly available with your eyes? I think that this softening contributes better than anything else to being a fearless speaker. I'm no longer afraid to have people look me directly into the eyes, because my eyes are softly available, and I'm no longer afraid to look at people in the eyes because I just see them as soft eyes.

I can no longer see or imagine what's behind those eyes if they are critical. They say the eyes are the windows to the soul right? Those eyes to me are actually openings, openings into the human, the person, that's in front of me or the whole audience that's in front of me. I'd like to be thinking of those eyes as a way that I can reach the heart, reach inside of the person and connect on a deeper level.

Tomorrow I'll be talking about the fourth secret, which I will call Listening. Keeping yourself in a listening mode as opposed to a speaking mode, so be thinking about what that might mean to you.