

# Your Default Approach Assessment for Presenters



**TURPIN**  
COMMUNICATION

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# Instructions

- Take the assessment on page 3
- Add your score for each column
- Study page 4 and confirm the accuracy of your score
- If you assess as
  - A **Writer**, study the pathways on pages 5 & 6
  - An **Improviser**, study the pathways on pages 7 & 8

# Assessing Your Default as a Presenter

With each pair of statements, choose the one that describes you better. Try not to answer them in terms of how you would like to see yourself but in terms of how you actually are or have tended to be in the past.

**W**      **I**

I feel that if I put a lot of work into my slides, I'll succeed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel that slides are just a part of an effective presentation.
Organizing information comes easily to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking to groups comes easily to me.
Whether it's true or not, I feel I'm more likely to succeed if I practice my presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whether it's true or not, I feel that I can wing it and be okay.
If I could, I'd deliver my presentation and then answer questions about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If I could make them that way, my presentations would be nothing but a series of questions and answers.
Having to make last-minute adjustments to my presentation frustrates me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	One of my fears is delivering my presentation and getting no response from my audience.
I like preparing more than presenting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like presenting more than preparing.
For me to feel confident, my presentation needs to take a logical path from A to B to C.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For me, a successful presentation could follow any path.
I spend a lot of time making sure my presentations are thorough and accurate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Even when I have plenty of time to prepare, I often delay preparation until the last minute.
I feel confident that my presentations are well organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel confident that I can engage my audience in the conversation.
When I'm delivering a presentation, I often get too wrapped up in the details of my slides and forget about my audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When I'm delivering a presentation, I often lose track of or get ahead of my slides.
I feel that I am naturally organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel that I am naturally disorganized.
Timing the presentation exactly is part of being well prepared.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I tend to run out of time.
I find it difficult to speak off the cuff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking off the cuff is easy for me.
<p><b>Add up each column</b></p> <p>If you have more statements checked in the "W" column, you are a <b>Writer</b>.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Add up each column</b></p> <p>If you have more statements checked in the "I" column, you are an <b>Improviser</b>.</p>

# Default Approach

More in the  
LEFT COLUMN



## WRITERS

Thrive with organization and preparation.  
Often feel there isn't enough time to prepare.  
Want structure and predictability.  
Are naturally thorough, careful, detailed,  
and accurate.

But can be inflexible and strict  
during delivery.

Who are you  
more like?

More in the  
RIGHT COLUMN



## IMPROVISERS

Thrive with connection to listeners.  
Delay preparation until the last minute.  
Want to be spontaneous and engaged.  
Are responsive and unafraid to make  
last-minute changes.

But can lose focus and confuse  
during delivery.

# Writers

## Adapting during preparation

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### Which can lead to:

- Too much faith in preparation
- Too much desire for complete control
- Analysis paralysis
- The desire to include everything you know about your topic
- Scripting (memorization, desire for notes)

### Adjustments:

- Plan to cover less information than you'd like
- Use your preparation time to simplify, not complicate
- Trim notes down to the very minimum
- Think about concise explanations
- Think about alternative ways to explain ideas

### Which may feel as if:

- "I'm not being accurate."
- "I'm not being thorough."
- "I have to have notes."

### But will lead to:

- Clear, easy-to-follow structure
- Appropriate level of detail

# Writers

## Adapting during the presentation



"I assume that perfect slides ought to lead to perfect delivery."

"I worry about saying things right."

"My slides are more important than I am."

### Which leads to:

More attention to slides than listeners

Sense of failure when things don't go according to plan

### Adjustments:

Stop trying to say everything perfectly

Use slide titles to pull yourself out of the details

Emphasize big-picture ideas from the introduction throughout the presentation

### Which may feel as if:

"I'm not demonstrating my knowledge."

"I'm not giving enough detail."

"I'm not being accurate."

"I'm not doing my job."

### But will lead to:

Clear, concise explanations

Flexible, conversational delivery



# Improvisers

## Adapting during preparation

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**Which leads to:**

- Delayed preparation  
OR
- Trouble settling on a single organizational approach, constantly trying out new ways to present information
- Slides that are inadequately prepared or inappropriate for this presentation

"I'm naturally comfortable with my audience."  
"I'm flexible and like a loose organizational structure."  
"I trust myself to be engaging."



**Adjustments:**

- Remember that the primary purpose of your slides is to keep you on track
- Include more introductory slides than you think you need
- Make sure your slides are specific and accurate
- Create short, meaningful slide titles

**Which may feel as if:**

"I'm committing to slides that may not work."  
"My slides are going to get in my way."



**But will lead to:**

- Clear, easy-to-follow structure
- Appropriate level of detail

# Improvisers

## Adapting during the presentation

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### Which leads to:

- Long rambling delivery
- Glossing over the logical flow of your presentation
- Ignoring slides, getting ahead of what's on the screen
- Feeling lost if the audience is not responsive

"I assume that effective delivery occurs in spite of my slides."

"I am more interesting and important than my slides."

"I hope I can fit in everything I have to say."



### Adjustments:

- Force yourself to pay special attention to the slides in the introduction and conclusion
- Feel free to improvise within the limits of the slide you're projecting on the screen
- Use slide titles to keep you on track

### Which may feel as if:

- "The slides are getting in my way."
- "This is silly. They can read my slides; I don't need to."



### But will lead to:

- Clear, concise explanations
  - Flexible, conversational delivery
- .....



# About Turpin Communication

Turpin Communication's Founder, Dale Ludwig, and EVP, Greg Owen-Boger, are the co-authors of *The Orderly Conversation: Business Presentations Redefined*, which challenges conventional thinking about what it means to present and facilitate in today's business environment and replaces it with something better. The book has been called "groundbreaking" and "eminently practical." Their second book, *Effective SMEs: A Trainer's Guide for Helping Subject Matter Experts Facilitate Learning*, was published in 2017 by ATD Press. Both books are available at amazon.com. They have also contributed to a number of books

published through ATD Press. When the pandemic hit, they took the opportunity to write a companion piece to their first book. It is entitled *The Virtual Orderly Conversation* and may be downloaded at [www.turpincommunication.com](http://www.turpincommunication.com).

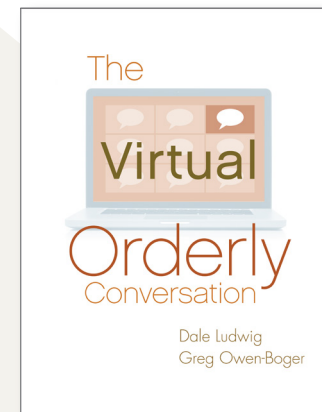
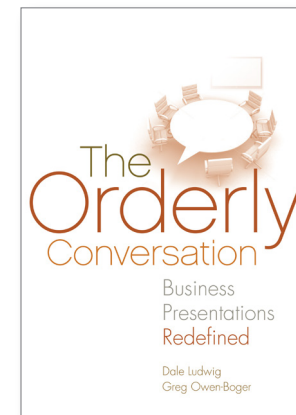
Dale and Greg both hold the Bates ExPI (Executive Presence Index) Coaching Certification. In their spare time, they run Turpin Cares, NFP, the philanthropic arm of Turpin Communication.



**Dale Ludwig** is the Founder and President of Turpin. Over the past 26 years, he and his partners have developed methodologies that challenge much of the conventional wisdom in the field. Working with presenters, facilitators, and trainers, Turpin's work (1) focuses on The Orderly Conversation® that must take place, (2) acknowledges the Default Approach that every presenter and facilitator brings to that process, and (3) helps communicators develop the skills they need to engage listeners in a productive interaction. Dale has a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a frequent blogger and the author of the white paper "Getting Past 101," which can be downloaded at [www.turpincommunication.com](http://www.turpincommunication.com).



**Greg Owen-Boger** is the EVP of Learning and Business Development. Schooled in management and the performing arts, Greg brings a diverse set of skills and experiences to the organization. He joined Turpin in 1995 as a cameraman and quickly worked his way up. He now serves as a communication trainer and executive coach for Turpin's largest clients. He was the 2015 President of the Chicagoland Chapter of the Association for Talent Development. Like Dale, he is a frequent blogger and has made guest appearances on a variety of learning & development podcasts, radio shows, and webinars.



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