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STAGEREADY  
SPEAKERS

5

# PUBLIC SPEAKING MISTAKES TO AVOID

     @mothyna james-brightful as seen on

AFR   
THE BLACK MEDIA AUTHORITY

EBONY

THE DAILY RECORD

JET

abc 2

WEAA  
88.9FM

BLACK CAREER  
BCWN  
WOMEN'S NETWORK



# GET TO KNOW YOUR TRAINER

SISTER *Mothyna*

Mothyna James-Brightful is described as “energetic, passionate and inspirational” by audiences. Affectionately known as Sister Mothyna her personal motto “community development is a lifetime commitment,” stands as proof of her intense belief in the communal family. “A Nation can rise no higher than its woman,” a quote by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad edifies the passionate belief that Sister

Mothyna has in her mission to work with women and girls. She truly believes that healthy and whole women produce healthy and whole communities. In the last thirteen years, Mothyna has trained over 100,000 individuals in the field of sexual violence prevention

During the past, few years she has worked with several communities and national organizations, including Urban Alliance, National Council of Negro Women, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children which are also committed to community development. As co-founder of Heal a Woman to Heal a Nation, Inc. (HWHN, Inc.) has been recognized by Mayor Rawlings-Blake, Senator Mikulski and Governor O’Malley has proclaimed April 13th as Heal a Woman to Heal a Nation Day

Mothyna is a certified facilitator of the Dare to Be Queen and She Ain’t Mad for Nothing curriculums by Urban Leadership Institute. Through service to organizations such as Butterfly Sistas Mentoring and Leadership Academy, Mayor’s Young Women in Action Initiative, and QUEENDOM T.E.A., Mothyna has over 13 years of mentoring experience and has worked with thousands of girls and teens. She personally mentors youth to this day.

Mothyna was awarded the 2009 Governor’s Award for Volunteer Service in Maryland. In 2013, she was recognized as one of 50 Leading Women in Maryland by The Daily Record and received the Lifetime Service Award from the White House.

Holding a strong belief in continuing education and training Sister Mothyna taught undergraduate courses at Coppin State University. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English from Morgan State University and a Master’s in Human Service Administration from The University of Baltimore. In recognition of her works, she has appeared in publications such as Black College Today, Ebony, Trends Magazine, Be What I Want to Be Magazine, and The Afro-American Newspapers. Sister Mothyna is also the co-author of [Because I am a Queen...100 Affirmations for Daily Living](#). She is the author of [Engage. Inspire. Prevent. Strategies for Educating Teens on Sexual Violence](#).

In addition to her commitment to her community, Sister Mothyna currently works as the Director of Community Education and Training with TurnAround Inc. a non-profit that works with victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

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## **Reading out of a script** (100% of the time that is)

It's okay to have reference material, or an outline of important topics or messaging to guide you when you're on stage... but reading your script all throughout the event is not going to make the right impression with your audience. Being able to command the attention of your audience will require you to be physically, mentally, and emotionally present. You won't be able to do any of those if you don't make an effort to master your speech.

## **Skipping Rehearsals** (You might set yourself up for a panic attack)

Okay, say you followed through with the 1st tip. You mastered your speech and memorized it to a point you can say it backward. But that doesn't mean you can skip your rehearsal. Make sure to allow time to rehearse the key aspects of your time on stage from stepping into the stage, smiling, making eye contact, ice breakers - up until you make your final step off the stage. If you can rehearse on the stage you'll be performing at. It will give you a sense of familiarity which will offer your comfort during the actual event. If you can't, however, then make space in your living room or home office and let your imagination do the work.

## **Too many props. Less is more.** (Don't get me wrong, I love a good prop)

When it comes to visual aids, there is such a thing as too much. You're a public speaker, people come to listen to what you have to say - but not everyone in your audience will be able to absorb or digest your message in words alone. Visual Aids such as presentations, videos, and images can greatly help you get your message across - but keep it manageable. Avoid using over-the-top props that are difficult to set up and navigate - this can be particularly challenging especially if you have a limited time on stage. Theatrical props are best suited for training or whole-day events - not a 30 to 90-minute speaking engagement.

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## **Jargons** (It may make it easier for us to convey our message, but it makes it difficult for our audience to understand it)

Jargons are fun to use, if placed strategically across your speech, they can make you seem more relatable, personable, experienced, or knowledgeable - but use it with caution. If you do plan on using jargon, be mindful to explain it briefly so that your audience can still get a grasp of what you're trying to tell them, but not so much that it turns into a lecture.



## **Too many words, too little time**

(Striving to fill up every allocated second can be stressful, break your momentum and send a confusing message)

You will at some point find yourself trying to catch your breath as you reach the final second of your allotted stage time. When this happens, it's best to prepare to end your speech gracefully and strategically rather than sending rushed and confusing messages to your audience as you try to fight time (This may happen when you're in a hurry). Sum up your speech highlighting key points - and if you end up having a little bit of time left, you can leave them a question or a challenge to take home and consider. This way, you can extend your time until after the event in the form of brain teasers.

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