

Question and Answer Tips: Maintaining your Self-Confidence

- Think about all possible questions that could be asked and prepare/practice these answers ahead of time.
- Determine what the speaker is really asking.
- Elaborate if necessary.
- Introduce the response, make a connection, and then begin speaking.
- Look for a reaction from the person who asked the question and check to see if you have answered their question.
- Answer each question with confidence; remember this is your project and you know the most about it.

Quick Tips for Handling Question and Answer

- Repeat the question. Audience members may have difficulty hearing one another.
- Keep a pen and note card at the podium so you can jot down questions with multiple parts. That way you will be sure to respond to the entire question.
- Don't be afraid to tell the audience, "I don't know," if you don't. This is a better opinion than guessing or giving out wrong information. Point the audience member to resources for more information when possible.
- Don't fight back. Some audience members may try to challenge the speaker, play devil's advocate, or simply express strong opinions that are in opposition to your own. Don't raise your voice or become verbally combative. Acknowledge and thank the speaker for his or her point of view.

- Address the entire audience. Frequently audience members ask questions about their own personal situations. Use the questions as a springboard to address themes that would be of interest to the audience as a whole.
- Keep it moving. Often, the speaker responds to the first question with a long answer, and the balance of give and take between the speaker and the audience (one of the benefits of a question-and-answer session) is destroyed. So, maintain a fairly brisk pace.
- Keep your answers brief, and keep an eye on the clock for the entire session. Prolonged question-and-answer sessions, unless built into the program, can become tedious, as audience members will have varying degrees of interest in your topic and different motivations for being in the audience.