

## Youth Coaching—Beyond the Basics

### Key Areas:

1. Stage Presence
2. Audience Connection
3. Pacing/Timing
4. Microphone Etiquette
5. Acceptance of Applause

### Stage Presence

Your storytelling starts as soon as you stand to walk on stage. Walk with confidence and hold your head high. Soak in the audience, scan the full audience with a smile, pause, and then tell the story. If you are going on stage with one or more tellers, then walk on stage in the order that you will be there. We do not want the “shuffle effect”.

### Audience Connection

Rather than a staged performance, does the teller give the feeling of talking with the audience? This does not mean direct audience participation, though this technique may be used. Even if the piece is memorized, does the teller still seem to have a rapport with the audience? Is the teller willing to be flexible depending on the audience feedback?

Sometimes we have storytellers who put up the 4<sup>th</sup> wall in theatre and ignore the audience. This CANNOT be done for the Festival, as storytelling is all about acknowledging the audience. Tandems and tridems tend to have a more difficult time in telling the stories to the audience. Mistakes are made when the tellers talk to each other. When a teller represents a character within the story, the teller could “choose” an audience member in the rough direction of their partner and pretend to “talk” to the other character this way.

### Pacing/Timing

Youth tellers tend to want to rush through the story rather than slow it down. Part of this speed may be due to the three-minute time limit...or nerves. If the story is “tight on time”, then it is always better to take out details than to feel rushed. It can be hard to cut out those favorite moments, but it is possible. Suddenly the storyteller could have a dramatic pause or two within the story. Or, the storyteller could respond with an impromptu comment due to the audience’s laughter or response.

### Microphone Etiquette

Before a story is shared, the audience is keenly observant to your comfort level with the microphone.

#### *General Microphone Tips:*

1. Discover how the softest/loudest parts of your story sound when using the microphone.
2. Hold the microphone a good six inches away from your mouth. For whispers you may need the microphone brought a couple inches closer while shouts require putting the mike at arm’s length.
3. Start the story AFTER the microphone is in its proper position.

#### *Corded or Non-Corded Microphone with a Stand*

Always aim the microphone up. If you choose to hold the microphone, then practice telling the story with one hand. For a corded microphone, quietly unwrap its cord from the stand. If not using the stand, place the stand far enough behind you so to have room to move. When your story is done, return the stand to its place.

#### *Lavalieres*

This clip-on microphone is best situated at the center of your neck. Wear a shirt/blouse that helps with the clipping. Please note that while you have both hands for performing, you must still be aware at your head’s direction in comparison to the microphone. You may need to turn your whole body if you want to face the right or left. If you only turn your head to the right, then your storytelling will suddenly get soft (unless this is your intention). This does not mean you have to dip your chin. If someone is over the amplification system, then that person may be able to adjust the power.

### Accepting the Applause

Give a chance for the audience to appreciate you. Pause a few seconds, listen to the applause, and enjoy.