



PRACTICE GROWTH

Power of the Talk: A Simple Way to Attract New Patients

Chen Yen | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

One of the most effective ways to bring patients in predictably, especially if you enjoy teaching, is by doing talks. Talks can also bring in another stream of income beyond just seeing more patients one on one.

Use Speaking to Educate, Inspire and Attract

Speaking is a way to educate more people and reach more people at once. Although the public is more receptive to chiropractic compared to 10 years ago, there are still many misconceptions and a lack of full understanding. It is up to you, individually and as a profession, to educate the public and other professionals.

Speaking can also build up a practice quickly when using it as a marketing strategy. For example, many of the chiropractor clients I work with inspire 40-60 percent of the audience to become patients from their talks. Forty percent conversions means that from an audience of 25 people, 10 new patients move forward with care. It is one of the fastest ways to bring new patients in the door.

Common Challenges, Simple Solutions

There are three common challenges many chiropractors run into when trying to do talks to not only educate people, but also to inspire new patients to schedule a visit:

- *Challenge #1:* You tend to get nervous and avoid speaking, even though deep down inside you know you have something important to say.
- *Challenge #2:* You have trouble finding places to speak.
- *Challenge #3:* You already do talks, but feel disappointed because few new patients come from all the effort.



The Solution to Challenge #1

Tending to get nervous and avoid speaking, even though you have something important to say.

In an informal poll from an article I wrote on my website, 38 percent of responders said they get extremely nervous each time they do talks; 26 percent said they don't get extremely nervous, but get butterflies; and 34 percent said the thought of doing a talk is so nerve-wracking they never do one.

Believe it or not, when I first started speaking to the public, I was *so nervous*. I grew up in a family of strict parents. In 3rd grade, I dreaded every Sunday when the paper got delivered to our apartment in N.J. Sundays meant my dad would have me read an article in the paper and do a current-event talk. I hated it.

My dad was a research scientist and PhD-educated engineer. He would critique my talks with a stern approach and I felt like I was inadequate. I dreaded giving talks because it gave me so much performance anxiety.

When I first started speaking after I started my second business, I would get nervous a lot. I remember speaking at a national conference and having my whole talk written out and held in my hand in front of me, because I felt so much anxiety about speaking.

Fast forward to five years later: Now I find myself more comfortable and rarely nervous once I get into my talk. (I still get nervous beforehand.) Usually when you are prepared, it's easier to get in the flow without extreme anxiety.

What Can You Do If You Get Nervous?

If you tend to get butterflies in your stomach, do the Simhasana yoga pose (otherwise known as the

Lion's Breath, taught by many yoga studios in North America) before every talk. According to an article by Anna Petrie at Yoga International, it involves first "inhaling deeply through your nose. Open your mouth wide, stick out your tongue as far as possible, and exhale forcefully by quickly, strongly, and deeply contracting the abdominal muscles and the pelvic floor. At the same time, roll your eyes up and focus at the center between your eyebrows." Try this to help you calm your nerves quickly before you do your next talk.

Solution to Challenge #2

Having trouble finding places to speak, or being disappointed with the turnout.

One of the biggest mistakes many chiropractors make when trying to get booked for talks or when hosting their own talks is not being clear about what talk topic is the best to speak on. What title is the best to use to promote the talk to attract patients? When the talk topic and/or title is not the most relevant to attracting patients into the practice, it may not inspire your ideal patients to show up. Is your talk title interesting? Is your topic engaging?

It is also a common mistake to not be strategic in terms of where to speak. Simply having many opportunities to speak does not always lead to new patients. Are gyms, libraries or community centers really the best places to speak?

Solution to Challenge #3

Doing talks, but feeling disappointed that few patients come from all the effort.

One of the biggest mistakes speakers make is giving too much information and overwhelming people. As clinicians, it's easy to over-educate people by sharing your knowledge and expertise. Clinical knowledge is second nature to us, and it may be hard to relate to how the public is often hearing these things for the first time. If we share too much, it can feel like a foreign language and leave people overwhelmed or bored.

Overwhelmed or bored people don't tend to want to move forward with care or with what you may have to offer. The right balance of information and inspiration is an art and skill.

Another big mistake is not letting people know at the end of the talk what you have to offer. The idea of being pushy or "salesy" is not appealing, so many chiropractors either don't tell people what they offer or feel awkward when it comes to that part of the talk.

What is the best thing to offer? How do you talk about it so people "get it" and appreciate that what you offer can help them? There's a way to be authentic and inspire people to move forward with what you have to offer, without being salesy or pushy.

A Sample Scenario That Worked

I had a client who loves giving talks. His challenge was that people would come up to him afterward and say, "Great talk!", but he would rarely get patients for his efforts. It started to feel like free public service after awhile, without being able to really help people deeply with their health issues. Here's what we did:

1. We created a signature talk that was engaging. (Do *you* have an engaging and compelling talk you can use over and over again without having to reinvent the wheel? Or are you creating a new talk every time you speak and never reaching predictability with conversions?)
2. We talked on the phone right before a talk he was about to do and asked me about an offer

he was planning on giving. We ultimately decided it needed to be a completely different offer. He talked to 50 people and ending up getting 26 new patients from it.

These are the key things to focus on if you would like to not only educate and reach more people, but also to inspire new patients to come from it. For questions about how to get more patients and/or get paid speaking, create a talk or find places to speak, email me at mentor@fillmyholisticpractice.com.

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