

8 ways to get invited back: metaphors for presentation preparation

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1. Give away crack.

Making them laugh, making them cry, is great. If all they can remember is, "Wow, what a great speaker," if they can't remember anything but how you make them feel, then you are dealing crack. But if that's what you want, be good at it. (And be honest about it)

2. Give away sandwiches.

In crises, the Salvation Army gives sandwiches and coffee. They have way more than they offer, but sometimes people just need food for the next few hours. If you can teach them something that will help them survive today, that may be what's needed. *"Here's how you deal with the first day of unemployment. Tomorrow, we'll talk about find a job but today? How to get out of bed."*

3. Give away kits.

Kits have all the pieces cut and all you need to do is glue them together. You don't learn about house building, but maybe all you need is a house. Sometimes we can teach people how to do the simple task in a perfect world. Then they can come back to learn how to actually cut the pieces themselves for the next time.

4. Give away maps.

And maps may include travel stories and guidebooks. Sometimes we teach journeys; trips that we've been on that other people need to take. Give them direction and make sure they know your phone number if they get lost.

5. Give away life jackets.

"Right now, you don't need this. But someday, a crisis is coming. Here's how to put it on." Teach people how to do what they'll need. Train them even. Have them repeat their home phone number so when speed dial fails, they'll know how to get home.

6. Give away lens cleaner.

Sometimes what we say isn't anything new. It just helps people see a little more clearly, taking the smudges off. Those of us who do this minimize it: "It's not real value." But greasy glasses and broken wiper blades cause accidents.

7. Give away hammers.

A good hammer can be used to build houses and churches and businesses. If you teach someone to use a hammer (or circular saw or whatever tool), you allow them to take it into their world for whatever they are building. They will come back for updates or new tools, and they will send other people to hear you. But you need to show them how to use it. In real time, as you are speaking. (There is a danger when all we give away is sledgehammers, by the way. Demolition can help clear the way, but if no one knows how to build something new, it gets really cold.)

8. Give away hope.

"You can make a difference, and here is the difference you are making." This is not platitudes, not placation. Giving people a concrete way to change lives whether through giving or touching or building or loving or praying will bring them back for the next project, the next life change.