

AI-04036 Summary Smart Not Loud

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In the video *How to Speak More Clearly at Work (Even If You're an Introvert)*, communications expert and Columbia University instructor Jessica Chen shares four core, research-backed lessons that transformed her own career from a quiet, overlooked professional into a confident communicator. These strategies are also the foundation of her book, *Smart Not Loud: How to Get Noticed at Work for All the Right Reasons*.

The four key strategies to speaking clearly and building influence at work are:

1. Shift Your Focus from "Impressing" to "Simplifying"

- **The Trap:** When starting out, Chen tried to build credibility by speaking formally—using heavy data, complex jargon, and sophisticated language. This is driven by the "**curse of knowledge**," where you forget what it is like *not* to know something and skip crucial context.
- **The Fix:** Her boss advised her to simplify her points. Instead of trying to look smart, put the audience at the center of your message. Before any meeting, ask yourself: *What do the people in this room already know?* and *How can I share my points in the cleanest, clearest way?*

2. Understand That *How You Say It Matters as Much as What You Say*

- **The Power of Voice:** Research shows that intentional vocal variation (rather than a monotone delivery) makes you measurably more persuasive and memorable, even if the actual words are identical.
- **The 5 Elements of Tone:** To develop executive presence and gravity, practice modulating the five core elements of your voice:

- **Pitch:** High or low.
- **Intensity:** Loud or soft.
- **Rate:** Speed of speech (e.g., slowing down to emphasize points, speeding up to show excitement).
- **Inflection:** Which words you choose to emphasize.
- **Quality:** The distinct, recognizable texture of your voice.

3. Treat Public Speaking as a Trainable Skill, Not a Talent

- **Deliberate Practice:** Chen shares how she used to feel incredibly awkward presenting. She overcame this by filming herself, auditing her weaknesses, and using "deliberate practice"—making just one highly specific, focused adjustment at a time (like consciously speaking slower).
- **The Compounding Effect:** Public speaking is a major differentiator; Warren Buffett noted it can increase your career value by 50%. Visually imagining yourself succeeding (**self-modeling**) also rewires how you perceive yourself, accelerating your growth.

4. Stop Waiting to Be Noticed; Build "Strategic Visibility"

- **Staying Top of Mind:** Hard work alone does not guarantee recognition. Chen shares a painful lesson from her TV news days: she lost a highly desired opportunity because a colleague simply talked about wanting it more often, keeping herself "top of mind" with the manager.
- **Repetition is Strategy:** Human memory requires hearing something 5 to 7 times before it fully registers. Sharing your ideas, goals, and follow-ups repeatedly across different mediums (emails, meetings, casual hallway chats) is not annoying—it is a cognitive strategy to ensure key decision-makers remember you when opportunities arise.