



The Conference on
Death, Grief and Belief
Deconstructing Culture, Myth, and Meaning

Tips for Conference Presenters

- **Don't use slide shows as a crutch**

Visual aids are helpful only if they are *necessary* to make a point, especially for presentations more than two hours long. But for a 60-75-minute lecture, if you can't rely on your engaging personality and public speaking skills to hold the attention of an audience, you might need to brush up on your presentation skills. People want to interact with you, not with your slides. We prefer that you do your presentation without slides, but if you *must* use a slide show, see the next item...

- **Know how to use your technology!**

Test your slide show before you come to the conference. Make sure you have any required adapters for connecting your computer to a projector. If you are using a Bluetooth speaker for playing music, know how to pair it to your device. We have an audio-visual person on-call during the conference, but he can only be in one room at a time, so the more you know about operating your equipment, the fewer delays and technical glitches you'll experience.

- **Be qualified to speak on your proposed topic**

Back up your content with research, concrete examples or experiential demonstrations. You can use your personal story as a foundation for what you're teaching, but do not make the whole presentation about your story.

- **Notes are OK, but please do not READ from them!**

Hopefully you know your material well enough that you don't need detailed notes. Notes should contain only a few bullet points to remind you of the key concepts you want to cover. The more natural you are in your speech and body language, the more resonance you'll experience with the audience.

- **Invite audience questions throughout your presentation, not just at the end.**

If you allow your audience to *participate* rather than just listen passively, they will be more enthusiastic and more engaged. They will also give you ideas and opportunities to explore your topic more deeply. Remember, you are learning from them as much as they are learning from you!