

Words That Move

A practical workshop on rhetoric, persuasion, critical thinking, and public confidence.

Designed and facilitated by Dr Dmitry Zavialov.

The premise. To think clearly and to speak well are two faces of the same skill. A person who reasons sloppily will, sooner or later, persuade no one. A person who reasons carefully but cannot speak their reasoning aloud will be ignored. The day treats clear thought and confident voice as a single capacity and develops them together.

What participants will be able to do by the end of the day

- Spot the three classical appeals, ethos, pathos, and logos, in everyday talk.
- Name and answer common rhetorical fallacies, including whataboutism and tu quoque.
- Build a defensible argument using a simple five-part structure.
- Adapt the same core message for very different audiences without losing their integrity.
- Manage the body chemistry of public-speaking nerves.
- Hold a productive walking conversation, drawing on the Walk and Talk method.
- Apply a discipline of attention to their own thinking under pressure.

How the day is built

READING

Short, focused passages.
Participants read first, then discuss with a neighbour or in a small group.

REFLECTION

Open prompts relating each idea to the participant's own work.
Written briefly, in the workbook.

PRACTICE

Structured exercises in pairs and small groups. The point is to practise the technique, not to perform it.

What participants leave with

A workbook they have written in, indexed by tool and activity so that somebody who remembers a framework but not where it came from can find it again. A shared vocabulary with their colleagues, which is what makes the change survive the workshop. And a written action plan naming one practice to implement in their own work and one to pass on to somebody else.

The day, module by module

09:00 to 09:30	Welcome, introductions, and the framing of the day.
09:30 to 10:30	Module 1. Why rhetoric matters today. The three classical appeals, worked through a single case.
10:45 to 12:00	Module 2. Critical thinking. Whataboutism, tu quoque, ad hominem, the strawman, the false dilemma, the slippery slope, and the appeals to popularity and authority.
13:00 to 14:00	Module 3. Building strong arguments. Claim, reason, evidence, counter, and rebuttal, with a worked example and an autopsy of an argument the participant has lost.
14:00 to 15:00	Module 4. The art of persuasion. Knowing the audience, choosing the frame honestly, and the test that separates persuasion from manipulation.
15:15 to 16:00	Module 5. Speaking with confidence. Preparation, pace, pause, and what adrenaline is actually doing.
16:00 to 16:30	Module 6. Walk and Talk. Rhetoric in dialogue, and listening treated as a rhetorical move.
16:30 to 17:00	Module 7. The gap. Reasoning under pressure, and the two seconds between what was said and what you say next.
17:00 to 17:30	Module 8 and close. Three real-world scenarios, and the written action plan.

Practical detail

Group size. Twelve to thirty. **Room.** A single space with movable chairs, a screen, and enough room to stand and pair up; no tables are needed. **Preparation.** A scoping conversation and a short review of your own material, so that the examples are drawn from your organisation rather than from a textbook. **Prerequisites.** None. The material assumes no background in rhetoric or philosophy, and defines each technical term in plain English on the page where it appears.

How an engagement runs

One. A short conversation, at no cost, about what the day actually has to achieve. This is usually where the brief changes. **Two.** A written proposal with a fixed fee, a timeline, and a description of what you receive. **Three.** Delivery, and a written summary of the patterns in your team's arguments within two weeks. A schedule of fees is sent on request.

Dr Dmitry Zavialov

PhD in Politics, University of Otago, 2024. Author of *Whataboutisms in International Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). A learning experience designer by trade, and a public speaker. Before New Zealand he spent several years building deliberative forums in Central Asia for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, seating journalists and civil society alongside state ministers under guarantees of protected speech, with the discussion written up and circulated afterwards. In Auckland he founded Walk & Talk Auckland and The Civic Room, co-hosts Auckland Stoics, and teaches the adult course Speak, Lead, Connect at the Onehunga High School Adult Learning Centre.

Enquiries

Tell me who has to persuade whom, and what happens at present when they try.
+64 28 8519 3205 · [linkedin.com/in/dmitryzavialov555](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dmitryzavialov555)