

The background of the slide is a reproduction of Michelangelo's famous fresco, 'The Creation of Adam'. It depicts two hands reaching toward each other in a tense, suspended moment. The hand on the left is extended from a reclining position, while the hand on the right is extended from a seated position. The fingertips are just inches apart, creating a sense of tension and divine spark. The background of the fresco is a cracked, aged stone surface.

# The Common Touch in Research

Or, How to Be Smart about Talking Down to People



# Recently Published Dissertations at the University of Utah

**“Working Towards an Optimized Therapy for Abnormal Endometrial Proliferation:  
Treatment Approaches and Disease Modeling”**

**“Seismic Evaluation of Grouted Splice Sleeve Connections for Bridge Piers in Accelerated  
Bridge Construction”**

**“Development of Materials for Ultraviolet Plasmonics”**

**“Intensity-Only Imaging with Waves, Restarted Inverse Born Series, and Analysis of  
Coarsening in Polycrystalline Materials”**

**“Numerical and Experimental Techniques for Enhanced Power Generation in a  
Nanoscale-Gap Thermophotovoltaic Device”**

# Rules of Engagement

Assess Your Audience

Keep it Simple

Use Limited Metaphors

Show the Impact

“Good Evening. I would like to thank the Commissioner of Energy for the opportunity I have to address you today regarding the development of extra-solar gamma radiation.”



# audience

“Yo, wassup?”



# Assess Your Audience

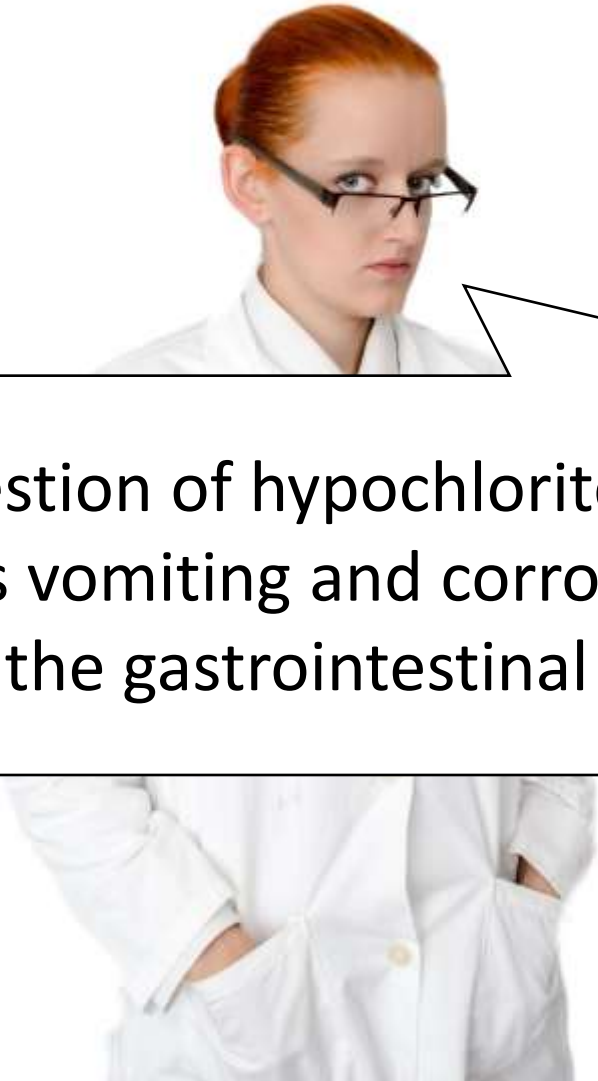
## Do's

- Determine the Level of Expertise of the Audience
- Determine the Basic Desires of the Audience
- Be Clear what you want the Audience to Do
- Be Confident

## Don'ts

- Overcorrect Downwards
- Ask for Forgiveness

# Keep it Simple



Ingestion of hypochlorite solutions causes vomiting and corrosive injury to the gastrointestinal tract.”



“Drinking bleach will eat your stomach from the inside out.”

# Keep it Simple

## Don'ts

Jargon

Discipline-Specific Appropriation of Other Words

Define More than Two-Three Words

Explain the Subtleties

## Do's

Everyday Language

Accessible Register

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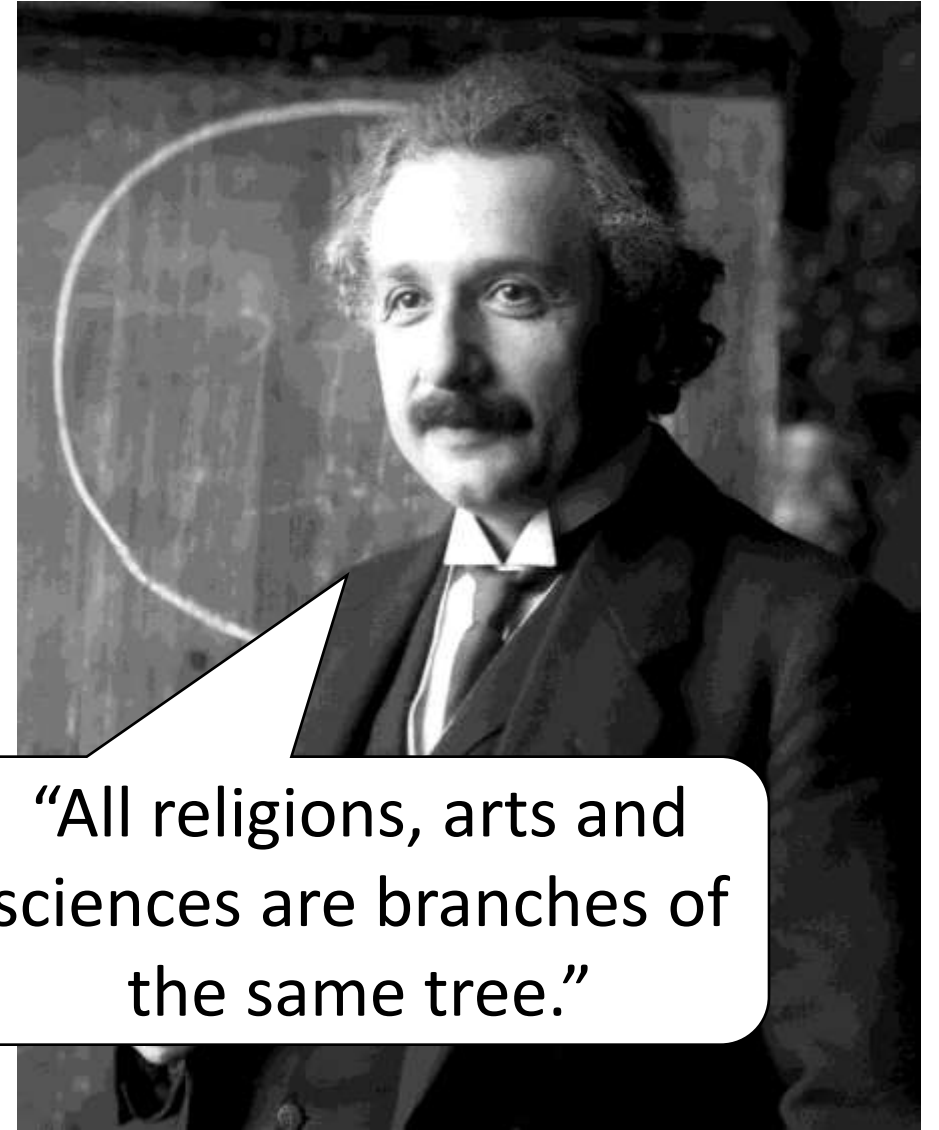
Basic Words



“Learning is like gardening. The teachers are the tools, like the rake and trowel, that you use to prepare the soil. The knowledge you bring in your own brain is like the seed that is planted. Study is like being watered by rain or a watering pot. Sometimes there are weeds that have to be pulled. Schools will sell you as the finished product of learning to the marketplace of ideas.”



# Metaphors



“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.”

# Use Limited Metaphors

## Do's

Choose an Everyday Occurrence/Example

Have 1-3 Points of “Contact” with the Metaphor

Keep it Brief

## Don'ts

Explain Every Possible Connection Point

Use More than Two Metaphors (Ideally, 1)

Let the Metaphor Distract from the Main Point of the Research

# Show the Impact

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER CHEMICAL  
CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHY  
REPRODUCTIVE SHUT-DOWN IN POST-  
MIOTIC PLATELETS WHICH, WITH  
FURTHER STUDY, MAY HELP EXPLAIN  
FAULTY SHUT-OFF IN CANCEROUS CELLS



SCIENTISTS DISCOVER  
POSSIBLE KILL SWITCH  
ON CANCER

# Show the Impact

## Do's

Keep it Simple

Answer the Audience's Question: "Why Should I Care?"

Tailor Your Answer to Your Audience

Remember Emotions

Be Specific

## Don'ts

Focus on Your Own Goals

Revert Back to Jargon/Discipline-Specific Language

Think that the Impact is Self-Evident

# Upcoming Graduate School Activities



Graduate Funding Success  
Workshop

[gradschool.utah.edu](https://gradschool.utah.edu)



Diversity Office  
Taco Tuesdays



Fulbright Scholarship  
Information Sessions

Facebook: [UofUGradSchool](https://www.facebook.com/UofUGradSchool)