

## Student Handout 3

### Tips for Getting the Most out of Guest Speaker Presentations

#### Preparation

- Find out something about the speaker and his or her organization ahead of time. This will help you think of questions to ask. Try organizational Web sites as a starting point. You can also type the speaker's name into a search engine like Google.
- If you want to record or videotape the presentation, ask the guest speaker for permission.
- Write out at least five questions you would like to ask. Use the Guidelines for Questions, below.

#### Guidelines for Questions

- **Ask open-ended questions.**

Your questions should be worded in a way that opens up the speaker and encourages him or her to talk. Open-ended questions will usually get more interesting responses than "leading questions," which show the speaker what you think the answer should be.

##### Examples:

- (leading question) "Don't you get frustrated when someone you helped comes back again with the same problem?"
- (open-ended question) "How do you feel when someone you helped comes back again with the same problem?"

- **Try to avoid questions with yes-or-no answers.**

If you ask a yes-or-no question, follow it with an open-ended question.

##### Example:

- (yes-or-no question) "Do you enjoy your work?"
- (open-ended question): "What are the things about your work that you find rewarding?"

#### During the presentation

- Show that you're paying attention. Look at the speaker, and maintain an attentive posture.
- If you have questions, make a note of them and hold them until an appropriate time. Don't interrupt.

#### After the presentation

- Thank the speaker.
- No later than the next day, write a thank you note and mail it.

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