I've Memorized My Opening & Closing. Now what?

Total: **60 Minutes**

Speakers:
Michael DeBlis III

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"Virtually every performance coach will agree that memorized text should be spoken in a way that makes the listener feel that the thoughts are coming to the speaker in the moment and that he is speaking them for the first time, as if they are freshly-minted. After all, this is how we speak in real life. Thus, we aim for spontaneity as opposed to a monotone or pre-planned delivery that wrings the meaning out of the words and that makes them sound as if they are being recited verbatim off of a page such as when a flight attendant makes the obligatory "evacuation" speech before takeoff.

Why is this relevant for trial lawyers? Reading off of a page is not an option for trial lawyers. Instead, trial lawyers must memorize their opening statements and closing arguments in the same way that actors memorize their lines so that the jury becomes the entire focus of their attention. The danger posed by a notepad or worse yet, an electronic device is that they are distracting to the jury and they continuously beckon for the attorney's eyes. The attorney who so obliges will begin to look down instead of into the eyes of the jury, thus breaking eye contact during the most formidable stage of the trial and losing the human connection that is so vital for building rapport with the jury.

In this way, these objects create a "barrier" or "wedge" between you and the jury. In the overall scheme of things, you risk squandering one of the few opportunities that you have during a trial to "break the fourth wall" and to address the jury directly.

What follows is a more expansive investigation into discovering the hidden "treasures" that lie within your speech. This is what I have learned from many different instructors that I have worked with over the years and that I continue to rely upon when I am in the "rehearsal stage" of a new play or when I am preparing for a trial. These concrete tools are designed specifically to enhance the delivery of your opening statement and closing argument. I've also included a number of exercises."

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Topics include -

- Speaking Memorized Text (12 min.)
- Owning Your Words (10 min.)
- Long Thoughts (10 min.)
- Voice Training (10 min.)
- The Jury (10 min.)
- Status in the Courtroom (8 min.)

Total: 60 minutes

Speakers

Michael DeBlis III, Esq, LL.M.

Michael is a trial lawyer. He graduated Cum Laude from The Thomas M. Cooley Law School and Summa Cum Laude from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law with his Masters of Law in Taxation. Michael is known for his charismatic personality and his unyielding dedication to his clients.

Michael spent the first five years of his legal career as a public defender in the NJ Office of the Public Defender cutting his teeth on some of the most serious felony cases to pass through the state courts of New Jersey. He then joined his father's law practice, DeBlis Law, expanding the practice into civil tax controversies and international tax compliance.

As a graduate of the National Criminal Defense College, Michael has trained under some of the best-known criminal defense attorneys in the country. That experience has taught him that justice for a person accused of a crime is only won through a full understanding of the client and the case.

To that end, Michael attempts to understand each client's case as a convincing narrative, not just as a set of innocuous facts and arcane legal rules.

When he's not in the courtroom, you can find Michael on stage. As a professionally trained actor, Michael's passionate about helping trial lawyers harness the power of persuasion and positive communication in the courtroom in order to connect to the jury on a human level.

Michael's training as an actor allows him to combine a unique blend of left-brain thinking with right brain artistry to make even the most dull and abstract areas of the law come to life.

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Michael is a prolific writer and a passionate blogger. He has written articles that have been featured in leading tax journals and "Law 360."

Michael is a living example of the tremendous power that comes from combining passion, preparation, persuasion, and positive communication in the courtroom. His courage and relentless

work ethic has earned him a reputation as a zealous advocate and one of New Jersey's rising stars of the legal profession.

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