

Weekly EMP Newsletter

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CLAUDE AND BETTY LOU LAVAL
ENTREPRENEUR
MENTOR
PROGRAM

Persuasion Skills Put to the Test-Part II

By
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The Luncheon Hosts for our last official EMP session were Mentee **Marcus Beh** and **Maria Dominguez**. Because we enjoyed the previous Malaysian luncheon prepared by Marcus, he graciously agreed to provide another “taste of Malaysia.” Everyone enjoyed the delicious meal. Following lunch, mentee **Colton Cunningham** surprised us with cookies to end a perfect meal.

Before starting the second half of our final presentations, **Colton Cunningham**, on behalf of **Marin Winek**, provided each mentee with a wallet-sized card that listed the professional characteristics of EMP, a list created throughout the semester (S.H.A.K.E.P). This wallet-sized card will allow us to carry a reminder of our commitment to continuing our growth in these areas.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, EMP Fall 2022 has focused on building entrepreneurial and leadership skills that can bring value to mentees as they pursue their careers post-graduation. Persuasive public speaking is a learned skill and one essential to an entrepreneur. To speak well publicly requires sufficient practice in a variety of different speaking situations. The more practice, the greater the confidence and the better the outcome. This semester's final project was designed to allow the mentees to develop and deliver a persuasive speech. This is Part II of the presentations that began the session before Thanksgiving. The mentees were allowed to choose one of the following topics:

1. Sell the audience on a product or service
2. Sell an idea for a change that matters to you personally
3. Sell your 5-year professional plan.

Every mentee was given 10 minutes to make their persuasive presentation and another 10 minutes to receive constructive feedback from the audience. Before we began the presentations,

It is important to note that not all feedback is negative, and not all are positive. But it should **always** be constructive. He urged us to avoid generalities in the feedback and focus on specifics: what worked well (always start with the positive) and what might have been better.

Constructive feedback should be given in a productive respective manner.



"Constructive feedback is an important skill regardless of your future career path".

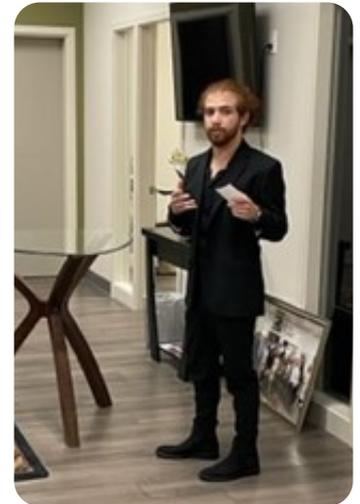
-Neil Koenig

For the presenter, the right feedback tells you which aspects of your presentation have room for improvement. Often times in a business setting, feedback is not given. It's important, when possible, to seek constructive feedback, and consider every type of feedback as an opportunity to better yourself and push yourself to give the best presentation possible.



Kara Hernandez, a first-semester Mentee, chose the topic of selling an idea for a change that matters to her personally. Kara was born and raised in Clovis; she is a fan of her hometown and region. Kara began her presentation by grabbing our attention by sharing that Fresno County is the home of the fossils of one of two dinosaurs found in California that roamed our geography over 66 million years ago. These opening statements made us ponder what Kara was setting us up to hear! She used this intro to illustrate the wonders of our region and the discoveries we have in our backyard. From national parks and proximity to the pacific ocean to discovering unique local experiences and tasting a wide range of great food. Kara spoke passionately about the value of living in Fresno (where she currently resides) and her desire to give back to the community in every way possible. We were impressed with her presentation's structure, timing, organization, and delivery. **Dr. Koenig** concluded that Kara convinced us that Fresno and the Central Valley are “places worth serving.”

Zeferino Oshiro, a first-semester mentee, shared his five-year career plan. He is a business major focusing on fashion merchandising and entrepreneurship and would like to create an innovative fashion brand in the coming years. Specifically, he has the vision for a custom-tailored clothing business to combat fast fashion. He expressed how the skills provided in EMP have allowed him to connect with several major fashion brands regarding mentorship and internship opportunities. He also plans to incorporate his love for photography into his career. Zeferino illustrated his career goals by stating, "I'm going to build a castle, a metaphoric castle, that will be built one brick at a time, one day at a time, with habits that will help me become successful." Zeferino captured our audience with his passion for his future and confidence in the journey. His presentation style was perfect, with the only suggestion being to speak a bit louder. **Neil Koenig** indicated that "the two back-to-back presentations (Kara & Zeferino) were very different in style but equally captivating and important."



Mukesh Chinreddy, a first-semester mentee and international graduate student from India, also chose to present his 5-year plan. He began by sharing the past five years to provide context on how he plans to achieve his goal. He shared personal experiences and the challenges and associated dark moments that came with those experiences. At one point, his depression was so great that he contemplated taking drastic measures. Fortunately, he was able to see that his life had a purpose. He realized that it is critical to believe in yourself and commit to taking care of yourself as a priority. "It's not about survival. It's about living," according to Mukesh. He also indicated that his future would be built "through discipline with patience." (Both essential skills for those with an entrepreneurial mindset). Mukesh also believes "it is important to learn from your mistakes." Throughout his life, he considers networking as one of his greatest gifts. He was recently awarded an internship at California Dairies through his ability to network. Mukesh aspires to establish an import/export company within the next five years. **Neil Koenig** remarked, "It was an event, not a presentation. Mukesh has the gift of inspiration". The mentees all appreciated Mukesh's willingness to be vulnerable and open with us during the presentation. He connected with each mentee and held their attention throughout his talk.

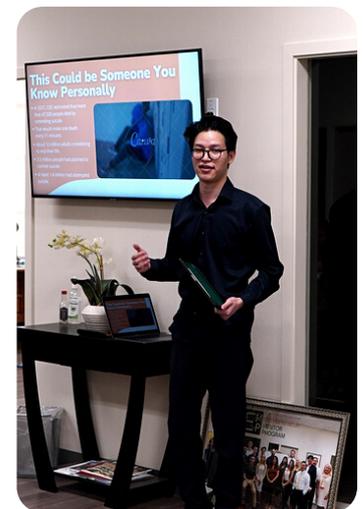




Manuel "Manny" Gonzalez, a veteran mentee, presented his past journey before sharing his future goals. Specifically, where his life has been and where he is going. It was the first time Manny shared his personal story with anyone. Courageously, he discussed the challenges in his path and how he realized it was his purpose to take care of his mom and sisters. He became a problem solver out of necessity. One of his early mentors advised him to "push through the hurdles, believe in himself, and attend and finish school." The skills developed throughout the years and Manny's growth mindset, including a high level of resilience, have established a strong foundation for his future. Not only did Manny graduate in Mechanical Engineering, but he is working in a leadership position in a local manufacturing company. **Neil Koenig** indicated, "Manny is a great storyteller and garnered respect from everyone in the room by being both genuine and vulnerable." Manny's long-term goal is to ensure that he "shines the light on others" and hopefully provide mentoring to others that can learn from his experience."

*Marcus Aurelius' quote, "Love the hand that fate deals you and play it as your own".
(quoted by Manny Gonzalez during presentation)*

Ricky Rachmat, another veteran mentee and international student from Indonesia, gave us a look into an Artificial Intelligence project that he has been working on for the past year. Ricky shared that he has always felt under significant stress from his family because he was the only one to attend school internationally. There are very high expectations for Ricky to succeed. Because it is not easy for Ricky to be vulnerable and to talk to other people about this issue, he is often anxious. Thus, his idea was born to develop emotional support and conversational artificial intelligence. His initial idea is to use a potted plant to converse with the user like a friend to help prevent isolation and depression. His passion is to provide people worldwide with a product that uses technology to help improve mental health. Ricky's presentation was compelling, inspiring, and delivered in a serious but light-hearted manner. **Neil Koenig** indicated that Ricky successfully "took us through the journey of where he started and where he is now and his goals to solve a severe problem.



John Petrogonas, a first-semester mentee, shared his start-up idea and pitched us how he intends to create a successful product, Spartan Sauces. John currently makes small batches of fermented hot sauce and is looking to expand. (over 300 bottles to date) John shared the challenges of scaling a food business and the options he will have to consider as he grows his idea. John provided each mentee with a sample of the hot sauce on a cheese quesadilla to grab our attention--and it did! The sauce was delicious! He started producing small batches in April last year and is looking to expand his options by using a co-packer or a commercially licensed kitchen. John explained the "why" behind his decision to launch a hot sauce: he comes from an agricultural family, enjoys cooking, and has developed a passion for creating a hot sauce that delivers a different taste to the consumer. **Neil Koenig** stated that the presentation was straightforward and honest. Although there was more time available to him, John was able to tackle many questions and suggestions.



Timofey Volkov, a veteran mentee, chose to persuade the mentees on why 3D printing can improve engagement in education. Timofey shared with us that 3D printing is a way for educators to encourage more active participation in the learning process and greatly enhances the classroom experience. Traditional education relies on books, drawings, and other materials, not hands-on learning. Because 3D printing is becoming more affordable, accessible for anyone to operate, and increasingly faster and more reliable, it should be used in education. Timofey brought a small 3D printer and a few projects he has produced. He also showed us a small bust of himself that he had scanned and printed. **Neil Koenig** commented, “the presentation was very understandable to the audience given its technicality” Timofey’s style, mixed with his dry humor, made the presentation interesting and intriguing.



Kevin Robles, a first-semester mentee, shared his five-year plan to commercialize his artistic talents. Kevin began his presentation by providing some background on his life and how he used an entrepreneurial mindset to survive financially. Over the next five years, Kevin will continue to grow his self-taught artistic techniques. Additionally, he plans on gaining a more in-depth understanding of business processes, self-promotion, and sales techniques tailored to his creative field. **Neil Koenig** mentioned that “Kevin’s presentation indicates that he has a natural gift and is an “artist at heart.” Kevin ended the presentation by showing us a video he had made when he started creating and a recently made video showing how much he has grown. Kevin plans to work with large companies and support small businesses in our community. The mentees know that we will see more of Kevin’s work commercially in the years to come.

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Our final set of Mentees, Kara, Zeferino, Mukesh, Manny, Ricky, John, Timofey, and Kevin did a great job persuading us on their topics. They were each innovative, passionate, and inspiring. The audience also did an excellent job of providing respectful and constructive feedback that gave the speakers areas that would allow them to continue to grow and improve their public speaking.

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The two full days of presentations exceeded our expectations!” Claude, Mendy, and Neil