



THE
5 Stage
LANGUAGES
STARTER KIT

ABOUT THE STARTER KIT

A practical, story, rich checklist for showing up unforgettable on stage, based on the core ideas from:

Make a Scene by Mike Ganino

These five “stage languages” are the real ways we speak — not just through words, but through presence, posture, perspective, and power. The most magnetic speakers don’t just speak clearly. They communicate on all five frequencies.

Use this expanded starter kit to rehearse like a director, not just a presenter.





SETTING THE SCENE

Here's what you'll learn:

1. REHEARSE LIKE A DIRECTOR,
NOT JUST A PRESENTER
2. HOW UP FULLY IN BODY, VOICE,
STORY, THOUGHT, AND ENERGY
3. DELIVER TALKS THAT MOVE THE
ROOM, NOT JUST INFORM IT

STAGE LANGUAGE 1: BODY



What they see before you say a word.

Your body walks into the room 3 seconds before your message. Are you directing it, or defaulting?

5-Point Checklist:

1. Do I walk on stage with presence — not hesitation or apology?
2. Do I intentionally shift between stillness and movement?
3. Are my gestures clean, expressive, and aligned with my message?
4. Does my posture communicate confidence without arrogance?
5. Can I stay grounded and connected during silence?

Real World Example: Viola Davis delivers more with a single look than most actors do in an entire monologue. Study her stillness — it radiates presence.

Gold Nugget: Your body is the first thing the audience reads. Direct it like a scene, not a side effect.

Try This Exercise: Film a 1-minute clip of yourself delivering a line without sound. Watch it back and ask: Can someone tell how I feel just from how I move and pause? Then try again — but this time rehearse like a silent film actor.

STAGE LANGUAGE 2: VOICE



The difference between being heard... and being felt. Your voice isn't just sound. It's texture. Temperature. Tension and release. Great speakers treat their voice like a full symphony, not just a mic check.

5-Point Checklist:

1. Am I varying tone and pace for meaning — not just reading the script?
2. Do I pause to let ideas land — or fill every space with sound?
3. Am I breathing from my belly — not shallow and rushed?
4. Does my voice match the emotion of each moment?
5. Do I sound like I'm in conversation — not presentation?

Real World Example: Brené Brown uses silence just as powerfully as she uses words. Every pause is packed with meaning. Watch any of her TED Talks to feel it.

Gold Nugget: Great speakers don't speak to fill space. They shape sound to land emotion.

Try This Exercise: Pick a single sentence from your talk. Record yourself saying it 5 different ways — emphasizing a different word each time. Listen back. Which version makes the meaning land deeper?

STAGE LANGUAGE 3: STORY

What makes them lean in, not check out.
Facts inform. But stories transform.



5-Point Checklist:

1. Does the story start in a real, specific moment?
2. Are the characters vivid and emotionally grounded?
3. Is there tension or transformation that makes us care?
4. Am I describing scenes — not summarizing?
5. Do I feel emotionally connected to the story as I tell it?

Real World Example: Sarah Kay's spoken word TED Talk is a masterclass in scene-driven storytelling. It's not a lecture — it's lived experience on stage.

Gold Nugget: The best stories aren't about what happened. They're about what changed.

Try This Exercise: Write your story as a script with stage directions. Include setting, sounds, gestures, facial shifts. Now read it aloud like you're reliving the moment, not just reporting it.

STAGE LANGUAGE 4: THOUGHT



How your ideas travel and stick.

This is the architecture of your message. It's the difference between a nice-sounding talk... and an unforgettable idea.

5-Point Checklist:

1. Can I state my big idea in a single sentence — clearly and vividly?
2. Am I offering a fresh take — not just confirming what they already believe?
3. Do I use metaphors or visuals to make ideas tangible?
4. Is my message emotionally resonant — not just intellectually correct?

5. Do I frame my point as a story or a shift — not a bullet point?

Real World Example: Simon Sinek's "Start With Why" isn't just a sentence — it's a structure. That's the power of tight thought architecture.

Gold Nugget: Your message isn't what you say. It's what they remember when you leave.

Try This Exercise: Distill your entire talk down to a single tweet-length sentence. Then test it on three friends. If they can remember and repeat it the next day, you've nailed it.

STAGE LANGUAGE 5: ENERGY



The invisible current that makes everything else matter. Energy is the glue. It's what keeps the audience emotionally invested, even when the content is dense, deep, or disruptive.

5-Point Checklist:

1. Do I feel emotionally in the message — not just narrating it?
2. Do I shift energy to mirror the emotional arc of my message?
3. Am I reading and adjusting to the room — not stuck in script?
4. Do I recharge the room with my presence?
5. Would I want to watch me speak?

Real World Example: Michelle Obama's speeches land because she doesn't perform — she transmits. Her energy is grounded, clear, and undeniable.

Gold Nugget: Energy is the message before the message. It's what the audience remembers in their body.

Try This Exercise: Before you rehearse, do 60 seconds of movement that raises your heart rate — dancing, shaking, running in place. Then go straight into delivery. Notice how your energy shifts.

WRAP UP

Great speaking isn't about being perfect, it's about being fully present across every stage language.

You're not just delivering a talk. You're directing a transformation.

Rehearse your body like choreography.
Shape your voice like music.
Design your story like theater.
Architect your thought like strategy.
Craft your energy like it's the main character.

This is stagecraft. This is what makes a speaker unforgettable.

Want more? Stay tuned for the full Stage Language Playbook, your next-level guide to presence, power, and performance.

**mike
gamino**

NEXT STEPS

Every day you put off mastering your stories is a day you miss opportunities to connect, inspire, and lead.

The good news? You don't have to figure it out alone.

Let's work together.

If you are a high-growth individual, team or organization who knows that there is a bigger story for you tell to create real connections and authentic engagement, then we should talk.

Whether through VIP coaching, brand consulting, small group workshops, or keynote speeches, we can work together to help you...



WORK WITH MIKE

So, you've made it this far and you're thinking, "This Mike guy seems to know his stuff. How can I get some of that magic?" Well, you're in luck! The Mike Drop Method isn't just a catchy name (though it is pretty catchy, right?). It's a full-blown system for turning ordinary mortals into captivating speakers, minus the radioactive spider bite.

Here's how you can get your hands on some of that Mike Drop magic:

In-Person Retreats and Immersions

(aka "Story, Speak, and Sip" weekends)

Picture this: You, a group of like-minded speakers, and yours truly, locked in a room (okay, a bougie hotel or my swanky midcentury LA office) for a weekend of intensive speaking training. We'll laugh, we'll cry, we'll probably drink some wine (remember, I'm a sommelier), and by the end, you'll be ready to command any stage. Warning: Side effects may include spontaneous storytelling and an irresistible urge to "make a scene" in elevators.

Private Coaching VIP Days

(Because who doesn't want to be a VIP?)

For those who prefer their Mike Drop Method straight up, no chaser, there's the VIP Day experience. It's just you, me, and a whole day dedicated to transforming your speaking skills. We'll dive deep into your content, polish your delivery, and maybe even work on your power pose. By the end of the day, you'll be ready to take on the world—or at least that big presentation next week.

Courses + Online Workshops

(For when you want to learn in your pajamas)

Not ready to commit to in-person training? No problem! The Mike Drop Method comes in digital flavors too. From on-demand courses that let you learn at your own pace (perfect for those 3 AM inspiration strikes) to live online workshops where you can interact with me in real-time (yes, I'm just as charming on Zoom – didn't you read that chapter already?), there's an option for everyone.

Corporate Training + Keynotes

(Because even Disney needs a little extra magic sometimes)

Think your company could use a dose of the Mike Drop Method? You're in good company. I've sprinkled my communication fairy dust on some of the biggest names in the business world. From helping Disney executives tell stories that would make even Moana's Grandma jealous, to teaching Adobe teams to design presentations as sleek as their software, I've done it all.

Need a keynote that will wake up even the most jet-lagged conference attendees? I've got you covered. Just ask the folks at Netflix – I helped them binge on better communication skills faster than you can say "are you still watching?." And let's not forget the American Cancer Association, where I proved that even serious topics can benefit from a little humor and a lot of heart.

Whether it's rallying the troops at Caesars Entertainment (no, not with free chips), or helping Virginia Trial Lawyers Association object to boring presentations, I bring the Mike Drop Method to companies big and small. The result? Teams that communicate with the precision of a Swiss watch and the excitement of a Vegas show.

Visit www.mikeganino.com to learn more

ABOUT MIKE



Mike Ganino is a man of many talents—think Renaissance man, but with better wine recommendations. From slinging sandwiches as a restaurant manager to slinging Shakespearean verse in improvised performances, Mike's career has more twists than a corkscrew (which he wields with sommelier-level expertise given his experience as a an actual Sommelier and wine educator).

After selling his restaurant company to private equity (because who doesn't dream of turning burritos into stock options?), Mike pivoted to the world of public speaking faster than you can say "Exit, pursued by a bear" — that's a Shakespeare reference. He's shared stages with celebrity chefs, reality TV stars, and even an alligator (the alligator, unsurprisingly, had little to say).

As a keynote speaker and consultant, Mike has helped companies like Netflix, Disney, and Adobe tell better stories—without resorting to "Once upon a time" or "In a galaxy far, far away" – because let's be honest – they already nailed those ones. He's trained over 5,000 speakers, written "Company Culture for Dummies" (no dummies were harmed in the process), and was even a contestant on "American Idol" and "Popstars" (sadly, his pop career was short-lived, but his hair game remains strong).

When not teaching people to "make a scene" (in the best possible way), Mike can be found sipping wine, spoiling his daughter Viviana with Crocs, and trying to convince his dog Elliott to appreciate the finer points of improvised Tennessee Williams. No matter how "Brando" Mike screams "Stellaaaaa" – Elliott seems unimpressed.

Mike splits his time between Los Angeles, New York City, and Barcelona—or at least he would if he could figure out how to be in three places at once. For now, he settles for being omnipresent in the world of storytelling and communication (and probably on your favorite podcast).

If you are a bullet point person, here ya go:

- I've earned over \$3 million as a professional speaker and author, delivering more than 300 speeches around the world.
- I've trained over 5,000 speakers, helping them refine their stories, perfect their presence, and grow their speaking careers.
- As an Executive Producer at TEDx, I've shaped talks that leave audiences spellbound and launched ideas that continue to rack up Youtube views, paid speaking gigs for our speakers, and have been featured on TED.com.
- My client list includes industry giants and innovators—names you know and admire in public speaking, media, and publishing.
- I've worked with top-tier companies like Disney, Adobe, Netflix, Caesars Entertainment, Uber, and the American Cancer Society, helping them tell stories that connect with their audiences and drive results. Raised over \$200 million in private equity funding across the hospitality, restaurant, and tech industries, mastering the art of strategic storytelling to secure major investments.
- #1 International Bestselling Author: "Make A Scene: Storytelling, Stage Presence, and The Art of Being Unforgettable in Every Spotlight; Authored Company Culture for Dummies (Wiley, 2018)

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH!

