

Every week we will feature the adventures of one amazing woman. We aim to celebrate the varied and colourful roles women play within industry and business. Experience inspirational, real stories by real women; Interested in being featured? Please send your adventures to [info@zarsmedia.com](mailto:info@zarsmedia.com) [For previous adventures please click here](#)



*Adventures of Robyn Hatcher*

*CEO SpeakETC.*

**SpeakEtc.**  
*Personalized Presentation Skills*

I've been a professional actress for over 20 years and a public speaking coach for more than 15. I own my own company, SpeakEtc. which provides creative and personalized communication and public speaking training to individuals and corporations. Using videotaped feedback, SpeakEtc. helps clients polish the non-verbal elements of communication – body language, gestures, vocal quality as well as the verbal – word choice, content and organization to become more powerful and engaging communicators.

Interesting job choice since my nickname growing up was Shy AKA Shai! I was so shy; I wouldn't speak to anyone outside of my very immediate family. So how did I get from Shy to owning and running my own presentation and public speaking skills training company? It's been a detour filled journey. At the time the journey was unfolding, it seemed very circuitous, but in retrospect, it was fairly linear.

In my freshman year of new high school, desperate to overcome my shyness I heard a loudspeaker announcement about auditions for a new play which was going to be put on at the boy's school down the street. Without thinking or rationalizing it away, I took down the information. To audition for the school play I needed a two-minute monologue. I had no idea where I could find a suitable monologue, so I wrote my own. Somehow, I channeled my desperation to break out of my shyness into that audition performance and I was cast in the very powerful role of the Sphinx in a Jean Cocteau play. Performing in that play changed my life. I continued acting through high school and decided to major in theatre in college. And little did I know that the skill of writing that audition piece was something that would factor into another one of my career turns.

After going through four years of a rigorous theatre program, I had my BFA in theatre from Adelphi University and set about securing acting work in my hometown of Philadelphia. I was able to work there professionally and at 20-something years old got my first teaching experience - teaching acting to adults at a popular Philadelphia theatre company. I soon realized that most of the "real" acting jobs were being cast in New York so I decided to pack up and move there (with my soon to be husband). In New York I also met with modest success - acting in commercials, off & off -off Broadway theatre, soap operas and some episodic TV dramas. I was a working actor but, like most working actors needed to find money-making opportunities to fill in the gaps when the work wasn't there. One of the jobs I trained for was in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). I was hired at one of the New York's City Universities, Baruch College, and started teaching writing and grammar to adult learners. Teaching ESL, I was able to utilize a lot of my acting skills and I really loved working and helping people learn and grow. I was teaching advanced level English learners but became frustrated to see that even though they were learning grammar and vocabulary, they still weren't comfortable or confident COMMUNICATING in English. That's when I decided to create a class specifically for public speaking. I thought that maybe taking the "rules" away from learning the language would help students feel more comfortable. It worked. I had them work solely on speeches, conversations and presentations and topped it off with

making them do public debates in front of all of their peers. I learned that once students dealt with and overcame the anxiety of defending their opinion, their confidence level soared and their language acquisition soared along with it.

My public speaking courses went so well that Baruch College asked me to teach public speaking courses to MBA students and continuing education classes for adult professionals. I enjoyed it so much that I started marketing myself as a coach; which gave birth to my current coaching & training business.

But then another career path opened up for while. In addition to the acting and teaching I was doing, I had re-connected to writing monologues for myself like I had begun to do in high school. My acting teacher at the time suggested I turn one of my monologues into a play which I did. That play was produced in San Francisco and Off-Broadway and got me the attention of an agent who submitted it to the ABC daytime writing program. This launched a new career into soap opera writing. That was an extremely interesting period. Writing soaps is a fun, challenging and stressful job. I had the misfortune of being hired around the time when lots of soaps were being cancelled and being the low-man on the totem pole, I was replaced in two years by more experienced writers from shows that had gone off the air. Since I no longer had to turn out a script a week I had more time and impetus to grow my business which is exactly what I did.

I'm so happy that all of these experiences led me down this wonderful path. I use my acting skills and techniques to help people overcome their fears and to be more powerful and engaging. I use my writing skills to help people create powerful presentations and I use my teaching skills to create curriculum for my classes and workshops.

One of the best parts of my job is getting to work with so many different types of people across so many different industries. I get to learn about things like how Scotch whiskey is made and how fund managers decide on what stocks they recommend in their portfolios. I get to work with social workers and network television sales teams; entrepreneurs and CEO's. Since I am someone who loves learning new things, this is one of the best parts of my job. My job is never routine.

One of the things I loved about being freelance and then about being an entrepreneur is that it gave me the flexibility to be with my son while he was growing up. I couldn't be prouder of the job my husband and I did with him. He is now a Yale senior AND professional baseball player who will report to his second season playing in the minor leagues for the Cincinnati Reds. Since he's been in college, I have been able to devote more of my focus on my business and it has made a big difference. In the past three years my revenues have almost doubled and this year I'm hoping to see it triple.

Because I worked hard and continue to work hard at being able to own and communicate my power and purpose, I am passionate about helping women do the same. Too many women feel uncomfortable tooting their own horns or speaking out for what they believe. I think it's so important in the workplace for women to find their authentic voice and feel and look confident about expressing and standing up for themselves.

Look for my soon to be released book called *Standing Ovation Presentations (Motivational Press)* in which I combine all of my skill sets to help readers discover their communication style and elevate their presentation and communication skills. And I am also proud to have been a contributor to an amazing anthology called *Dancing at the Shame Prom* (Seal Press)

The one thing I would still like to accomplish, is a further merging of all of my skills by having my own television talk show or becoming a recurring guest on a talk show where I can help a larger and more diverse audiences of people who may not be able to afford coaching or training on how to elevate the way they communicate.

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