

A tennis pro's unscripted speech leaves us smiling

This month's Best Communicator Award may surprise you, but I'm giving it to Naomi Osaka, the professional tennis player, after winning the WTA event in Indian Wells. It was the first title of the 20-year-old's career, and you could tell it was her first acceptance speech, at least on that grand of a scale.

By all standards, she bombed. She mumbled, littered the speech with "ums," and moved around the staged nervously. All textbook public speaking no-nos. Beyond that, her speech was nothing more than a laundry list of thank-yous.

Despite it all, I couldn't help but smile through the whole thing. Her own smile was bright and beautiful. She was giddy, and her giggle revealed her genuine emotion.

She tried hard to ensure she didn't forget anyone—forgoing a cheat sheet. I found it especially endearing that she thanked her opponent, her opponent's team and even the ball boys and girls, because it came from the heart.

Toward the end, Osaka admits, "This is probably going to be the worst acceptance speech of all time," and technically, she may be right. Still, there was something so pure and unscripted about it. Because she wasn't hyper-focused on the words, and obviously hadn't rehearsed, [we got to see a glimpse of the real person](#). Her personality shined, and she was memorable.

We're always telling you how to prepare and polish presentations, and we stand by our advice. However, you can learn from Osaka's performance too: Loosen up, show a little emotion and let people see the real you.