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Talking Physics to Regular People: The Why and the How

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The huge popular interest in the Higgs boson shows that non-physicists can be fascinated by the ideas of physics, even highly abstract ones. That's one good reason to talk physics to "regular people." A second important reason is that society supports physics and in return, deserves to know what physicists are doing. Another is the need to engage young people who may become physicists. Yet another is that when we translate our work so anyone can grasp it, we ourselves better understand it and what it means outside the lab. Especially in today's climate where funding for science, and science itself, are under threat, it's essential that regular people know us, what we do, and why it is important. That's the "why" of talking physics. To discuss the "how," I'll draw on my long and extensive experience in presenting physics, technology and science to non-scientists through books and articles, blogs, videos, lectures, stage and museum works, and media appearances (see <http://sidneyperkowitz.net>). I'll offer ideas about talking physics to different groups, at different levels, and for different purposes, and about how to use such outreach to enrich your own career in physics while helping the physics community.