HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE:

Explaining your research to family, friends, and humans outside of your area

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STEP 1:

Believe in yourself (and your research)

It is important to believe that what you are doing is important before you explain it to others. Remember, you are the expert in your research and/or thesis, and your enthusiasm can be contagious!

STEP 2:

Find a human you would like to communicate with

(Tip: they might be outside of your lab or the library.)

STEP 3:

Use these tips for making your explanations more accessible to a variety of audiences

- Use plain language and try to avoid more technical terms. For example, terms like ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) aren't common to people outside of the research world, and often aren't that fun to talk about anyway.
- Try and keep your explanation short and make it compelling by talking about what it is and why it matters (your research is cool, promise). Create an elevator pitch - this is a 30 second to two minute summary of your research.
- Remember that communicating with those without your background and understanding in an area takes practice (just like learning to communicate in a technical manner with those in your area).

Check out these resources:

https://cebc.ku.edu/sites/cebc.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/Tips%20on%20sci%20communication.pdf
http://thescientistvideographer.com/wordpress/can-you-explain-your-research-to-a-lay-audience-in-3-minutes/
https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/news/communicating-your-research-lay-audience
https://sociallyintegratedsciences.wordpress.com/2012/01/09/tell-your-grandma-about-your-research/

STEP 4:

Tailor your response to the person you are talking to (this helps if you know them a little bit)

- Ask them: what do you already know or what have you heard about *the topic or research*? Try to draw upon their experience and understanding and relate your research to this.
- Be open to listening to, discussing and kindly challenging misconceptions about your field or area of research.

STEP 5:

Be open to learning new things

These conversations give you the opportunity to learn from others. A non-specialized audience may ask you questions you hadn't considered, provide new insights and may help you better understand your research.