



WORKING WITH WORDS

DAVID BROOKS

1990 World Champion of Public Speaking

6300 Wallace Cove, Austin, Texas 78750

512/343-0111

dbrooks@texas.net

www.DavidBrooksTexas.com

Commentary on

Magic Moments 2

Magic Moments from the International Speech Contest, 2001-2003

As presented live at the 2004 International Convention in Reno, Nevada

Opening montage followed by Robert Cockburn's introduction

As you heard, in this program I will be showing you video clips--30 clips from 19 different speakers. What you saw in the opening montage were 27 speakers, everyone who has competed in the World Championships of Public Speaking since 2001. You also saw Mark Brown, the 1995 World Champion and Ed Tate, the 2000 World Champion. All of the clips today will be from 2001-2003, with the exception of one clip from Mark and one clip from Ed and the reason that I am showing those is that I showed them in the opening montage of Magic Moments 1 but did not comment on them. And they have a technique that is so important and no one else has illustrated it as well I pre-dated the 2001 barrier with those two exceptions.

Please note in the handout that was in your seat I encourage you to *not* take notes. I want you to watch this program; this is a visual experience. Instead, I have a transcript of everything the speakers on the screen are saying, and we are recording this program today, so I will transcribe everything *I* am saying. So if you will go to my website: www.DavidBrooksTexas.com I will have this posted and you can download it so you can share it and study it. This way you don't have to spend time taking notes today; instead, you can just enjoy what's on the screen.

By the way, regarding my website, www.DavidBrooksTexas.com, I was fortunate to speak in Taiwan recently and I was on a radio program there and the DJ asked for my website. When I told him, he laughed and said “Only someone from Texas would use Texas in his website name.” I can’t help it, I’m proud.

How many of you attended the opening ceremonies last night? Did you enjoy the opening session? Did you enjoy Mr. Greene? Good. I will tell you I enjoyed the presentation immensely and I agreed with the overwhelming majority of his points. However, I respectfully, but vehemently disagree with one point. And that is when he said that only seven percent of your message depends on your words. You watched last night John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. If you had closed your eyes, those messages would have been equally powerful. They were not exhibiting body language. The power of those two clips, the power of those moments, is in the power of the words themselves.

So the first clip that I will open the program with today is the best example of writing that I have seen in the contest in the last three years. In the first version of Magic Moments, I praised Rick Brunton for some outstanding writing in a speech that many people had overlooked. Today, I want to praise David Sanfacon for the example you are about to see. It’s two clips rolled into one. He used marvelous imagery, marvelous body language, but I want you to listen to is the writing. Please enjoy the first two clips rolled into one from David Sanfacon.

Dave Sanfacon, 2003:

Do you ever feel as if someone else is writing your script? The script of your life. The question of a scriptwriter begins at a young age. For me it was the fifth grade. Miss Kettle’s class. I was taking one of those standardized tests that would magically reveal my career destiny. At the end of the class Miss Kettle proudly read the results. “Geoffrey Spencer, brain surgeon. Lovely! Audria Stevens, astronaut. Brilliant! David Sanfacon...oh, this can’t be. Beekeeper! Lovely. Show me the honey!” Who’s writing the script? But isn’t that where it all begins? The classroom. The standardized tests, the standardized desks, the standardized standards. It’s as if we are all stung at an early age with the need to belong where others belong, believe what others believe, become what others become...ladies and gentlemen, who is writing the script? Good question. And as we grow older, the question turns around and it becomes “Do we even *want* to write our own script?” Aren’t there thousands of other scripts out there that we can simply “borrow”? At the age of 20 I found such a script. It was called The Art of the Deal, an autobiography of Donald Trump. Bye-bye beekeeping, hello buildings. Hello

towers, hello Manhattan. Viva Las Vegas, greed is good, Masters of the Universe, ladies and gentlemen, dump the honey and show me the money!

(roll into second clip)

Dave Sanfacon, 2003:

Imagine...a 25-year-old bachelor, with a new wardrobe, a corporate credit card, cross-country business trips, Bombay Sapphire martinis, three weeks vacation...I was living my dream! I was—living my dream...I was...wasn't I? Imagine the shock one feels when flipping through the back chapters of his life and realizing...I didn't write this. Imagine the shock one feels when he realizes that for most of his life he has been nothing more than the ink...the ink inside of a pen being guided by a bunch of unknown, unnamed, unauthorized biographers. Ladies and gentlemen, have you ever surrendered your pen to satisfy the expectations of others? Who's writing the script?

David's Remarks

As a special treat, I would like to also identify and recognize in person, the author. That clip had so much to learn from, but the most important moment for me was when he said "Imagine the shock one feels when he realizes that for most of his life he has been nothing more than the ink...the ink inside of a pen being guided by a bunch of unknown, unnamed, unauthorized biographers." And then, with a pause, he says "Have you ever surrendered your pen to satisfy the expectations of others?" That's brilliant writing, brilliant staging; it is a magic moment worthy of our respect and worthy of our study.

The next clip is going to show even more in body language and in the specific use of a gesture. It's three clips rolled into one. What I want you to notice is the continuity of the message and the humor that is woven throughout the speech. But also I want you to notice the brilliance of a simple, single gesture. The speaker is Kelly Standing.

Kelly Standing, 2001:

In 1999 I learned a few startling facts about snakes. Facts that actually helped me understand people better. That year my husband's company sent us to Kenya on safari, an incredible perk. One afternoon my husband, Jim, headed back to our cabin to find a little black snake lying on the bathroom floor. (Grimace) Was it sleeping? Was it dead? He wasn't sure, so he gave it a tentative tap with his hiking boot. With that the snake started writhing on either side of his boot (Grimace)

...If you are a snake lover, this story does not have a happy ending.

Kelly Standing, 2001 (second of three successive clips):

When it comes to wildlife, I'm not always the brightest ember in the campfire. So maybe you already know this, but it was news to me. Snakes are born with all the venom they are ever going to have. It occurred to me that unlike snakes, people are not born with all the venom they are ever going to have. We keep manufacturing it. We say venomous things and we do venomous things, all our lives.

Kelly Standing, 2001 (third of three successive clips)

Sometimes snakes come straight at us. When one of my friends met her in-laws for the first time, her future mother-in-law said "Well, you're not as fat as I thought you'd be!" (Sssss!) Sometimes snakes can seem sort of charming at first...and then they STRIKE! One of my mother's co-workers once told her "We need someone like you running our department. Someone with experience, not someone young and pretty! (Sssss!)"

First I hope you noticed the continuity—the thread that is woven throughout that speech. It is very tightly constructed, very well performed. But did you notice that it didn't seem like a performance. Instead, it seemed more like, as our speaker last night suggested, a conversation. And that's powerful communication. And to illustrate the power of a single gesture, how many of you just can't wait until this session is over until you can go up to someone and (gesture) "Sssss!?" Count how many times you see someone doing that the next three days and you will see the power of a gesture.

The next clip is one that is perhaps without equal. In the 18 years of videotapes that I have watched, I have never seen a single use of a prop more effective and more beautiful than this. Previously the "prop master" was Morgan McArthur. If you remember in 1993 he unveiled a full sized replica of a horse on stage. Now that's a prop. And the following year, when he won the World Championship, he used a bucket...and it was exceptionally effective. Previously if someone wanted to know how to use a prop, I would say look at Morgan, and he's still worth studying. But in most recent contests, someone superseded him. And that someone is J.A. Gamache. In 2001, J.A. Gamache gave us this moment, which is one of the single most powerful moments I have seen any speaker do, anywhere. And he did it with a chair. A couple of points you need to know: he is French-Canadian; his initials are J.A. and his middle name is Avamar, which is also the name of his grandfather, whom he refers to as "granpapa." J.A. Gamache.

J.A. Gamache, 2001:

I can still see him sitting off to one side of the room. A tin of tobacco between his knees, rolling another cigarette, unreachable in his silence, as if his shyness chained him to his chair. We were both the same. For example, at movie theatres, I would rather sit in the front row than disturb anyone to have a decent seat. Have you ever watched a movie from the front row? (Pause) When Avamar passed on, he was 93 years old. I will never forget that day. When I entered his hospital room he had just died. I was alone with him. He had become so thin that I could hardly recognize him. For a moment, I thought I was with a stranger. I wanted to touch him, but all I dared to do was to rest a finger on his big toe. Thank you Grandpapa. Thank you for giving me your name. I am so proud to be called Avamar. Bon voyage.

David's Remarks

If you have an example of a better use of a prop than that, then I'd like to see it. He used a chair in how many different ways? Four. First he used it to illustrate his grandfather's isolation. Second, without even getting up from the chair, he used it to illustrate the movie theatre seat. Then, after arising, he used the chair to illustrate his grandfather's passing, and then to illustrate his grandfather's body. Did you realize that an inanimate object could come to life on the stage? It can in the hands of a master, as J.A. Gamache certainly is.

Last night you heard our opening speaker say that the audience takes its cue for feeling—how you feel depends on how the speaker is presenting himself. Have you ever seen a speaker who does not look as if he's having a good time? But occasionally you will see a speaker who lights up the room with nothing more than his or her face. The next two clips, rolled into one, are outstanding examples of two people who bring life to their message through their smiles. Please enjoy first Jeannine Scott, followed immediately by Evelyn Peyton.

Jeannine Scott:

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy I am a part of all that I have met. A line from the poem Ulysses written by Lord Tennyson. The poem I read many years ago. The meaning I understood many years later.

Evelyn Peyton, 2001:

Picture it: it's 2:00 a.m. I'm sleeping soundly, when suddenly a warmth begins radiating from somewhere in here. It begins to grow...hotter, faster, larger, until BAM! It explodes! My eyes pop open, I sit straight up, bathed in sweat, heat pouring from me like an oven. Yes, I had a hot flash.

David's Remarks

In each case, with Jeannine and with Evelyn, did they make you want to hear the rest of the story? Yes, they invited you into their story with their smiles. Marvelous use of face.

Now let's talk about the use of your entire body. Have you ever heard anyone speak with his entire body? You're about to see one of the best examples from Craig Weathers. Watch how he brings this scene to life, and watch how he makes us want to hear more. Craig Weathers.

Craig Weathers, 2002:

My mom...my mom is the Michael Jordan of cooking. My mom will fly through the kitchen sideways with her tongue sticking out with a spatula in her hand. She takes cooking seriously. If you try to take the top off of one of Mama's pots before it's time, she'll block you out in a heartbeat as if she was an NBA player. And don't let her throw her hip into you—you'll be out of there. Mama don't play when it comes to cooking and her kitchen. Mama's talented. One of Mama's giftings is cooking. But as far as I'm concerned Mama was called to make peach cobbler. She was called to make peach cobbler. I mean, Mama makes the kind of cobbler that you don't know whether to sit down and eat it or stand up. You don't know whether to rock side to side or break out and do a full Michael Jackson moonwalk—I mean that cobbler is just that good. You know what I'm saying? And when you're eating the cobbler, Mama sits there and watches you take every single bite. How many of you have Mamas like that? How many of you are Mamas like that? And don't drop a crumb because Mama wants to pick it up and put it in your mouth. She wants to make sure you get it all. Why? Because it blesses her to see someone else being blessed using her gifts and talents.

David's Remarks

Here's a test of effectiveness: How many of you are saying, "You know, peach cobbler really would be good right now?" that's what I call speaking with your entire body. He brought the scene to life. And that is body language—using your body to reinforce the message.

The next clip is an unusual one, yet many of you will have seen it. Do you think that it is possible to win the World Championship in the first 50 seconds? I contend yes it is. Oh, you may not win it completely, but you can certainly lay the groundwork. Many of you have seen this before, but if you haven't it is well worth

study. Watch the first 50 seconds—perhaps the most memorable opening 50 seconds—of a speech from Darren LaCroix.

Darren LaCroix, 2001:

Can you remember a moment when a brilliant idea FLASHED into your head? It was perfect for you, and then all of a sudden, from the depths of your brain, another thought started forcing its way forward through the enthusiasm until finally it shouted “Yeah! Great idea! But what if you fall on your face?” What do you do when you fall on your face? Do you try to jump right up and hope no one noticed? Are you more concerned with what other people will think than what you can learn from this? Mr. Contest Chair...

David’s Remarks

May I also ask you to acknowledge, in person, Mr. Ouch, Darren LaCroix. Darren and I do a number of programs together at different districts around the world. And he always says that he is not a writer. He always teases me by saying I’m the writer-guy, he’s the performer-guy. But even though he doesn’t know it or is not willing to admit it, his speech is unusually well written. And that speech is well worth study. Darren did something that took guts. How many of you would have had the courage not only to have fallen, but to have stayed down and deliver that portion of the speech. I contend that the moment that he technically won the contest was the moment that he says “Mr. Chairman.” Anyone that has the courage, or the nerve, to do that is one who makes us sit up and take notice. Now of course, he still had to deliver the rest of the speech, but at that moment, he had captivated the audience and had propelled himself into a position as a front runner. And that’s what a powerful opening can do.

The next speaker, also someone whom you may have seen in recent years at District and Regional conferences, is Jim Key. I want to talk about the power of command of the stage. This is the San Antonio speech, the speech in which we are in San Antonio and he has already talked about the Alamo. He has already set this moment up by explaining the time in which the defenders of the Alamo, drastically outnumbered, were faced by their commander, William Barrett Travis. Travis said “Men the situation is hopeless, so those who wish to leave may do so. But those who wish to stay and fight,” (and he drew a line in the sand with his sword) “please cross the line.” Let’s pick it up from there. Jim Key.

Jim Key, 2002:

There are no accidental heroes, ladies and gentlemen. When the people of the Alamo stood there at their line of decision they acted with purpose as they made

the ultimate choice. Some people might say, “Well Jim, that was a long time ago. Times were different. People were different. No one today would be willing to cross that line.” I disagree. I have a faith in people that was confirmed when I heard two words: “Let’s roll.” It was Sept. 11, United Airlines Flight 93. Ordinary people—men and women just like you and me boarded an airplane. Soon they faced an extraordinary challenge: to retake control of their plane. They stood at a line of decision. It was a different time and a different place, but it was the same line. And they made the same choice.

David’s Remarks

Ladies and gentlemen, Jim Key. Did you hear the silence? And I don’t just mean the silence from Jim. Did you hear the silence in the room? Not only that room but this room? Did you notice that there was not a single cough; there was not a single fidget? The room was silent. And that is command of the moment. He did it with his words, with his actions, and with his silence. That is a powerful moment well worthy of study.

Our next speaker illustrates a technique that is common for stage performers. It is blocking. He has three stories in his speech, and he has a different character representing each story. So he introduces each character in a different place on the stage. Watch how Jonah Mungoshi introduces the first of his three characters, and how he positions the person clearly in her place on the stage. Jonah Mungoshi.

Jonah Mungoshi, 2002:

Ladies and gentlemen, may I invite you all to join me in the house of insanity. Our first inmate, who is over here, is a tiny (like myself) unassuming nun who suffers from an uncontrollable urge to give overdoses of tender, loving care to the wretched in her midst. With hardly any material resources, she believes that she can achieve success that has eluded mammoth organizations with huge budgets. I’m sure you all agree with me that she’s crazy. But wait a minute, before you dismiss her, there’s something you must know. Inside this tiny frame of humility is a heart of gold, a resolve of steel, unbreakable tenacity. Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce you to Mother Theresa...

David’s Remarks

And that was Act 1. In Act 2 he introduced his second character center stage, and Act 3 was stage left. And every time throughout the rest of his speech if he wanted to refer to one of his examples, he didn’t have to mention them other than (gesture). That’s staging.

And speaking of staging, many people understand the concept of utilizing the stage. If you've noticed in the International Speech Contest, the stage is very wide. And you know that standard advice is "always speak to the left side, always speak to the right side, and return to the middle." And many people assume that just because they have gone to the right and to the left and returned to the middle that they have used the stage. But they have used only one dimension. How many of you have ever effectively used front to back? Our next speaker, someone you've seen before, Darren LaCroix, illustrates front to back.

Darren LaCroix, 2001:

So many of us can see clearly where we want to go. And yet, we go back and forth. If I just had a little more time money, if I just had a little more money, if the kids were just a little older...but we never take that first step.

David's Remarks

And no, you don't get to stand up again. Moving forward and back is a good technique that a lot of speakers ignore. But that's only two dimensions. There's another direction on the stage that very few people ever attempt. In fact in the International Speech Contest in the last 18 years the only one person who has ever used the diagonal is Cliff Boer. Watch how he goes from here to there.

Cliff Boer, 2003:

So come with me on a little adventure to rediscover our wonder years. But first, let's have a look at how people get boxed in and get the blinders on. Very quickly. Who, me? No, I can't do mathematics. Art? No, I can't draw. What do you mean—music? No, you need nimble fingers to draw. I couldn't do that! Sing? Hey, I've got a voice like a vulture. I couldn't possibly sing. Computers? No, I can't even handle a remote control. Oh dear me. Luck? Everybody else has the luck, not me. I never win any...I can't even win at Bingo. Public Speaking? You've got to be kidding. You've got to be talented to do that. Management? I can't even manage myself.

David's Remarks

A simple act of going in a diagonal to the back of the stage—what was accomplished with that? He increased the length of time that he could vanish. It gave him a greater distance to traverse, and as a result he could get smaller into his vanishing point for a longer period of time. And it also gave him a bonus. It gave him a chance to finish that moment by hiding behind a potted plant. Use the entire stage, right to left, front to back, and the diagonal.

Our next clip is from one of the more unusual speeches that has been in the International Contest. This moment is wonderful and it is the greatest example of vocal variety that I've seen in the past three years. Watch what Brad Tyler-West does in the opening 30 seconds of a very unusual speech.

Brad Tyler-West, 2002:

We heard the warrior cry echo jubilantly across the plain (loud cry). We could hear the musings of the poet. We had the Iliad, Homer...humanity's love affair with language had begun.

David's Remarks

That's vocal variety. He had the highs and the lows, he had the fasts and the slows, he had the louds and the softs. It was all there in 30 seconds. This speech is one that as I was sitting at home back a few months ago, alone in the house with no one else but me and my dog, and I was watching these clips trying to make my selections. And my dog, who does not normally watch a lot of television, was sleeping comfortably beside me. And when I played this clip, and when Brad did the warrior cry, my dog sprang up, ran to the TV and (puzzled stare) and I promise he raised his eyebrows...so all I can say is I'm not sure what he said, but it was very important to my dog.

Many people say they do not like to watch themselves or hear themselves on tape. But yet, you must. But...do it separately. Listen to yourself without watching and perhaps more importantly, watch yourself without listening. In this next clip I'm going to illustrate how much you can learn by watching yourself in silence. It's a 30 second clip and in the first five seconds, Cliff Boer once again explains what he's about to do. The remaining 25 seconds you will see in silence. Watch his gestures and see if you can determine exactly what he's talking about. Cliff Boer.

Cliff Boer, 2003:

Think with me about what it was like when you were really young. And everything was a discovery. (remainder of clip is with sound off)

David's Remarks

In just a moment I'll play it with the audio. Let's see if you can figure out what he was doing. In just the last gesture alone, what was (gesture)? (Audience answers "Blowing a dandelion") That's the power of body language. Now let's hear it at the same time.

Cliff Boer, 2003:

Think with me about what it was like when we were really young. And everything was a discovery. A leaf falling down from a tree would entrance you. A fleck of dust, lit in the sunlight, would hold your eye as something wonderful. And you'd look down and pick up a magical wand called a dandelion, and you could blow the magical particles into the wind.

David's Remarks

That's why I like to recommend, turn the sound off, just to see what you look like and to see how expressive you really are.

There's a speakers' adage that Repetition plus Restatement will help your message be Remembered. That's the 3 R's of public speaking: Repetition plus Restatement will help your message be Remembered. Yet many speakers do not repeat or rephrase nearly often enough. But watch how, in this 25-second clip, Lisa Albers anchors her point with the 3 R's. Lisa Albers.

Lisa Albers, 2003:

So many of us merely exist...without ever really experiencing life. Always waiting for that bolt of lightning, always saying "tomorrow." I'll tell him that I love him tomorrow. We'll take that family trip tomorrow. What if there was no tomorrow?

David's Remarks

In 25 seconds, she anchored her message. There is no doubt the theme of the speech, and that's the power of repetition and restatement.

Last night as you saw "mustache guy"—wasn't that a rare moment realizing that 1500 people in the room knew who he was and one did not? I wonder if anyone told him afterwards. When he was trying to get Gavin to pause and Gavin said that was something that was very hard for him. I told Gavin—Gavin are you here today? Please stand. May I congratulate you on your restraint. I asked Gavin to come today because I said I will show you the single most powerful example of a pause that has ever been in this contest. And this is one of those clips that pre-dates the 2001 starting point. This is Ed Tate in 2000. And there is no one who has illustrated the power of a pause more effectively. However, this is an important distinction. A pause is a mechanical device. Silence is a message. Watch what Ed Tate says in silence.

Ed Tate, 2000:

You had better figure out a way...to get us on that plane. The customer service agent said, "Sir, the next flight where I can get both of you on is a 6 o'clock." He

said “Do the math, lady, the wedding is a five!” Then he committed the unpardonable sin. (Pause) He called her the “B-word.” (Pause) And the silence was deafening. (Long pause). Then he stormed off. And I was next!

David’s Remarks

That’s the power of silence. You see, great speakers do not fear silence, they embrace it. When your message and your gestures come together, when your movement illustrates your message, that moment is powerful. You notice he had two pauses in close succession. The first one was 2 ½ seconds long. Do you know how long the second pause was? Seven seconds. Try standing in front of an audience in silence for seven seconds. And then try doing it in the World Championship. It takes courage, and that’s one of the reasons why he won. Poise, confidence.

A similar point, again on the use of silence: not as long but equally powerful. Again, Darren LaCroix.

Darren LaCroix, 2001:

We also have friends and family that love us and don’t want to see us fall on our face. Imagine my parent’s reaction, when after stretching their budget to send me through college, seeing me fall on my face, and then I come home... “Mom, Dad...I want to be a comedian!” I was met by silence. Ouch!

David’s Remarks

At the risk of giving him an even bigger head, that is an absolutely brilliant moment. Darren’s speech has a number of great moments and again, it is one well worthy of your study.

The next speaker is Jim Key and I’m not going to tell you what the topic is. Instead, I’m going to play about seven seconds of the opening of this clip. Then we are going to freeze the image on the screen and I want you to finish the phrase that he has just started in the first seven seconds. So be ready, when he pauses I want you to tell me what the next line is. Jim Key.

Jim Key, 2003:

Ladies and gentlemen, we were meant to dream. We were meant to dream. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the greatest dreamers of our age said: (7-second pause)

David’s Remarks

“I have a dream” Let’s see. Survey said:

“The time is always right to do what is right.”

David’s Remarks

Just a reminder, if the audience can finish your sentences for you...you’re done. Good speakers know the power of misdirection. A set up and a twist. That’s what Jim did. He didn’t lead us to the obvious thought. And that’s what good speakers do—they stay one step ahead of the listener.

The next speaker is Dwayne Smith and he uses a metaphor. If you remember high school English: metaphors, similes, analogies, it’s taking two dissimilar objects and comparing them to show the similarities. Dwayne Smith.

Dwayne Smith, 2002

One of my favorite styles of music is called be-bop. It’s a genre of modern jazz that has severely revamped chord structures, unusually accented rhythmic phrasing, and lots of improvisation. Many of us live our lives in a be-bop kind of way, in that we tend to do things differently from others—we take on life as it comes and we make up stuff as we go along.

David’s Remarks

That’s the power of a metaphor. And what about the power of humor? You’ve seen many great examples of things that have made you laugh so far. I have two more quick examples from a speech in 2003 and both made me laugh uproariously. They are from Jason Malham.

Jason Malham, 2003:

In this speech I will prove to you that women have earned the unrestricted right to roar, because they have the pride of lions, the fortitude of tigers, and yet, the tenderness of mother bears. Pride, fortitude and tenderness. A formula easily remembered by the acronym: Pfffffft!

David’s Remarks

And while you’re in a good mood, let’s see a second example from the same speaker, Jason Malham.

Jason Malham, 2003

And how about their fortitude? A friend of mine is a policeman and I asked him one time “What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?” He said, “Call for backup.”

David’s Remarks

You see, with humor sometimes shorter is better.

The next example, continuing on the humor theme, shows the power of a twist. Once again, J.A. Gamache. Watch how the power of his message depends on the use of one single word.

J. A. Gamache, 2001

To challenge my fears even more, like you, I joined Toastmasters. Tell me this— have you ever rehearsed a speech in your car...and...stopped because someone is staring at you at a red light? Well now, I turn around and I give my speech to them. No longer afraid to voice my emotions, now I write poems and love letters. Gentlemen, you have no idea of the power of a love letter...until your wife...intercepts one!

David’s Remarks

And that’s the power of one single word—“intercepts.”

The next example illustrates the power of the personal story. Don’t tell someone else’s story; tell yours, as Kyle Hall does here. Watch how his emotions change, and see if yours do to as he tells of a very difficult night.

Kyle Hall, 2003:

I was going to ask her to marry me. That was the plan. Well Carol was kept late at work that night—very late. When she finally got out and we met, I whisked her off to the restaurant, just to be told “I am sorry monsieur, the kitchens are closed. You are too late.” I went to another nearby restaurant. “Oh, I am most sorry. It is very late and the kitchens are closed. We cannot serve you.” After several other restaurants we ended up sitting in this late night greasy spoon diner...with burnt orange Naugahyde seats. The color of my parents' old fondue set.

David’s Remarks

Could feel his emotion changing? Yes, you could feel the frustration and the tension from his personal story.

Before I show you the next clip I want to tell you one of my personal stories that I've actually never shared with any audience before. Do any of you watch the Extreme Makeover shows? You've seen them? Well, my wife was selected for Extreme Makeover. This is not a joke. In Austin, one of the local news stations wanted to do a local follow-up to the Extreme Makeover program on ABC and so they said, "We will give one of our viewers an extreme makeover if you allow us to film it and broadcast it on the news." And through a variety of selection processes, they selected her. And I still remember when she called and she said "Well, they've offered this opportunity to me." And then she said, "I think I want to do that. What do *you* think?" Well, drawing on my 16 years of Toastmasters Table Topics training, I said, "Oh, yeah, you should do that." Now I know the proper answer was, "But why would you tamper with perfection?"

The power of the personal story is illustrated here by Larry Lands. Watch how he tells about the fact that he's been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and been essentially given a death sentence. He's already said that he sold his possessions in Fort Worth, Texas, and decided to move to Hawaii to die. The story picks up here. Larry Lands.

Larry Lands, 2001:

But it was on this single's group outing that I was talking to a woman that I really liked named Joanna, and I asked her out to dinner, so I could tell her I was leaving and to say goodbye. Well we went out to this really nice restaurant and were having a great time, laughing, and talking, and I was about to tell her of my plans...when the universe stepped in and changed the plan by creating an event that had never happened to me before in my life. My blood sugar dropped dramatically right in the middle of a plate of lasagna, which normally drives it way up. When this happens, your brain, recognizing its running out of fuel, springs into action, begins shutting off unnecessary functions. First you lose emotional control, and then rational thought...you know, a couple of things you don't need on a first date anyway...

David's Remarks:

(Introduce) Larry Lands.

Next, the power of the illustration, and the power of localizing: recognizing where you are and whom you are with. Illustrating the two, Jim Key.

Jim Key, 2002:

We're here today in San Antonio, Texas, a town where one out of every three businesses is named Alamo something. Now there's a reason for that. Something significant happened here 166 years ago. During the war between Texas and Mexico, monumental decisions were made here. Col. William Barrett Travis led a group of 189 men in defending the Alamo against untold thousands of troops led by Gen. Santa Ana. Let's put that in perspective. That's like me and Mr. Corcoran against all of you. And I don't even know if he can fight.

David's Remarks

May I also congratulate Jim on his courage. Acknowledging where you are and with whom are in company. And since he acknowledged Mr. Corcoran, Ted are you here? Where are you? Can you in fact fight? I've had many honors and privileges within this organization and winning the World Championship is first among all. But among all the extra things that I have been afforded, perhaps the greatest honor that I have received is the fact that just recently I co-authored a book and I wrote to Ted Corcoran and said "Would you please do me the honor of writing the foreword?" and I'm proud to say that he did. And I'm even more proud to say that he told me only last night that he presented a copy of this book to the President of the Republic of Ireland. Now I would personally give a copy of this to the President of the United States...it's called the Seven Strategies of Master Presenters...well, you can fill in the rest.

I would like to thank you—I have two more clips to show, and we started at 3:00 so we'll end at 4:00. But I have two more clips to show. But before I show them, I will thank you for being here in the audience. I know you had a number of other choices, so I would like to give three door prizes, and they are already selected. I would like to give a copy of my book, *The Seven Strategies of Master Presenters*, with a foreword by Ted Corcoran, and I understand for an extra \$5 he won't autograph it; Speaking Secrets of the Champions, the six-CD set featuring six World Champions; I will give this to one person in the room along with Elements of Eloquence.

Again, thank you for choosing this session and I hope that you have learned how to take a speech apart. The last two clips, though, are in a slightly different category and the first one is to illustrate how sometimes even World Champions can be fooled. This is Mark Brown and what I want you to notice specifically is, watch his eyes immediately after he says the word "Why?" I'll explain why in a moment, but watch his eyes. Mark Brown.

Mark Brown, 1995

This angry mob cuts down trees and they make clubs, they brandish knives, pitchforks, and torches. And they march through the forest singing “We don’t like what we don’t understand, in fact it scares us and this monster is mysterious at least—bring your guns, bring your knives, save your children and your wives—we’ll save our village and our lives.... We’ll kill the beast! (Pause)” Why?

David’s Remarks

Why did I want you to watch his eyes? What did you see? Usually when the audience is laughing like that, the speaker is going to be laughing too. But there were two people in the room that day that were not laughing at that moment—Mark and me. You see, I had helped Mark with that speech. I had coached him by fax. And as I had read that script and he had talked it through on occasional telephone calls, every time he got to that moment, it was supposed to be silence. And yet, when he gets to the moment that was supposed to be powerful silence—Ed Tate silence—and instead the audience is laughing uproariously, when he’s looking over to the left...he’s looking for me. And I’m over there going (shrug). That shows you that humor is capricious. It can fool you—you don’t always know what the audience is going to like or not like.

The last clip is perhaps the greatest summation of everything we have covered today. Everything that we covered: writing, imagery, stage usage and humor is in this clip. Every once in a while when you see a speech in a contest and you say “That was good” but then you go back and watch it for second time and a third time and the fourth time...each time you see it you realize how deep, how rich, how full that speech is. And you see that you missed a gem the first time around. And this is what I can say is the undiscovered gem of the last three years—this speech by Mark Hunter. Please watch everything that he does, especially one use of a phenomenal, yet simple gesture. Mark Hunter.

Mark Hunter, 2001:

I was six years old and I was hanging from the branch of a tree, 10 feet above ground. HELP! Can someone help me? Mr. Contest Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, as a child I did not do this very often. But on that day, I had scaled a tree to escape the amorous advances of an older woman. Sue Ellen was 7! And I was not ready for commitment. In a desperate attempt to put distance in our relationship, I scaled that tree and slipped. Hanging from the branch, I yelled again, “Help! Can someone help me?” Well, I wasn’t going to jump. It was a long way down.

Oh, I had dreamed of being Superman, but I wasn't stupid. I knew for certain there were no telephone boxes in *my* tree. So I had a choice: let go, or hang on. I decided to hang on. As children, we all do childish things like hanging around in trees. But sometimes as adults, we still do childish things...like not letting go. I mean have you ever clung to the memory of a lost love? Or longed for times which had been better? Sometimes the last thing we want to do is forgive and forget and we cling to the past like, like, well, I clung to that tree. So what happened that day? My mother, hearing the first desperate plea, ran outside, stood beneath the tree, and yelled, "Let go!" I looked down...from ten feet up she was not a good target! "Let go!" she yelled again. I looked down, closed my eyes...took a deep breath...and yelled "Dad!"

David's Remarks

Ladies and gentlemen, that is the summation of everything we've tried to accomplish in the last hour. I hope you will leave this program today understanding what I mean by taking a speech apart. You see every speaker and every speech is deserving of study. It may not be the best seven-minute package, but in one moment they dazzle us, they sparkle, they shine, and those moments are magic.

Please remember: every speech is built upon Magic Moments.

(end)