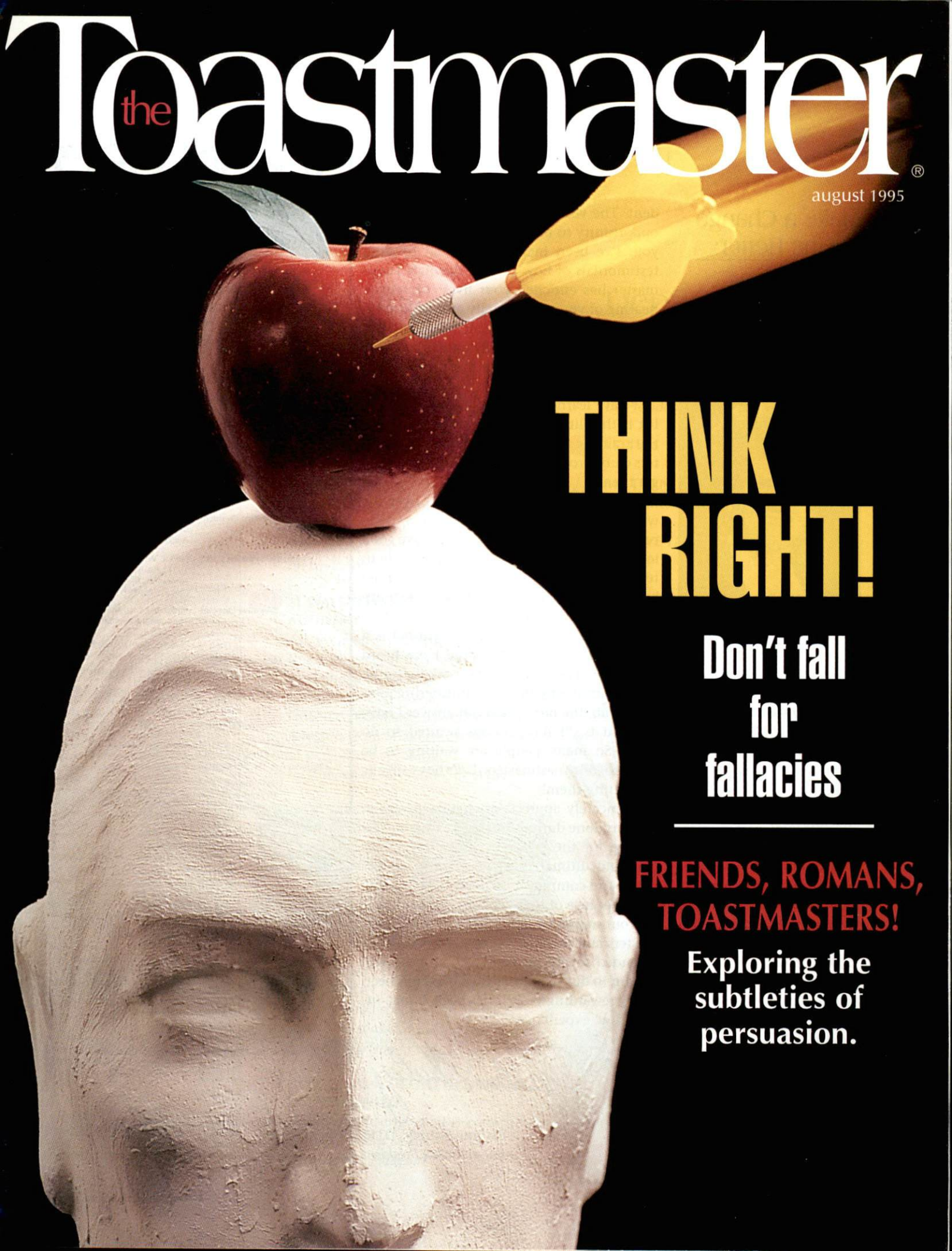
the Toastmaster®
august 1995



THINK RIGHT!

Don't fall for fallacies

FRIENDS, ROMANS, TOASTMASTERS!

Exploring the subtleties of persuasion.

Make a Change for the Better:

Find 'em, Tell 'em and Invite 'em!

Fellow Toastmasters – dear friends! I want to thank each of you for your commitment, loyalty and dedication to our organization's mission of "making effective oral communications a world-wide reality."

Many bridges have been crossed during the past 12 months. Almost 60,000 of you joined this organization during that time. More than 12,000 of you reached the first level of accomplishment and earned your Competent Toastmaster recognition during the year. The mission has been in the forefront as we have made many changes for the better!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your International President. The year has afforded me the unique opportunity to meet and talk with many of you. I've been incredibly moved by your testimonials of how growth through Toastmaster has enriched your lives. Moreover, hearing of your deep loyalty and dedication to your club, your fellow members and our organization has been truly uplifting. I have been constantly rewarded by your zest and enthusiasm.

I have learned many things. First on the list is that literally millions of people need the training and experience our Toastmasters clubs provide. Let's fervently go out and get them!

Secondly, corporate leaders all over the world strongly express the need for employees who can communicate clearly, have good leadership skills and can work effectively in teams. Let's be aggressive in telling those business leaders how our clubs provide training in all those areas.

Thirdly, Toastmasters International is a household word. Most people have heard about our organization. Upon asking future Toastmasters why they are considering joining a club, the most common answer I have received is, "I have always wanted to do that." So many people are waiting to be asked to join Toastmasters. Let's be evangelic in inviting them!

I sincerely appreciate what each one of you has done during the past year to make a change for the better in yourself, in your club and ultimately in your personal life, career and community. The world is a better place because of these changes.

Your support, your commitment to Toastmasters and the warm hospitality you have extended to my husband J.D. and me will remain in our memories forever. It has been a very rewarding year. It has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Pauline Shirley, DTM
International President

the Toastmaster

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Letters

ACADEMIC TRAINING PALES IN COMPARISON TO TOASTMASTERS

At the recommendation of Harvey Mackay in his book *How to Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive,* I joined Toastmasters. I was just awarded my Competent Toastmaster award, after 18 months of effort. Additionally, I was recently elected to serve as an officer in our club, giving me an opportunity to develop my leadership skills.

I am in the sales profession. When I began selling nearly 18 years ago, I started out with a Master's degree. However, my formal training pales in comparison to the education in self-confidence and success I have received at Toastmasters. I'm very grateful to Mr. Mackay for his wise counsel.

David Jarret, CTM
Washington Crossing Club 1100-38
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

TAKING GIANT STEPS

Pauline Shirley's message was right on, in the May *Toastmaster:* "Take a giant step out of your comfort zone." I just participated in the International Speech Contest, Division 61, and, yes, I did take a giant step. As I waited for my turn to speak, I considered making a last-minute modification to my speech. Since the conference theme was "Come grow with us," I decided to go for it.

Yes, I stepped outside my comfort zone. I took the risk and thus achieved a higher level of personal development. Taking a giant step does give you that giant feeling!

Doug O'Brien, CTM
Rive-Sud Club 2273-61
Longuevil, Quebec, Canada

THANKS FROM OKLAHOMA

On behalf of District 16 Toastmasters, thank you! Thank you to everyone who called, who donated to a relief effort, or who simply prayed for the families and victims of the bombing in Oklahoma City.

The Federal Eagles Club 6723-16 met in the Murrah Federal Building and its Vice President Education, Ronata Woodbridge, died in the blast. President Renee Kiel lost her home in the apartment building one block away.

We appreciate your generosity and caring. You proved, yet again, how great Toastmasters members are.

Barbara Joslin, DTM
District 16 Governor 1989-90

Ralph Joslin, DTM
International Director 1981-83
Tulsa, Oklahoma

MORE ANALYSIS NEEDED

As a new member of my fourth Toastmasters club, spaced over 40 years, I look forward to reading each issue as soon as it arrives.

"Conference Etiquette," by Susan Wharton Gates (May 1995) was informative and well-written. One glaring error slaps the reader in the face, however. It is centered in bold print, "Researchers preparing oral presentations need to switch from *synthesis,* in which they decompose a research problem into its many parts, to *analysis,* where they put facts and findings together and draw conclusions."

The word synthesis and analysis have been reversed, either by the author or in the editing process. A quick glance at a dictionary will confirm the error.

Again, this was a worthwhile article. Perhaps the positive aspect of this letter is to document that one reader does read and learn from your experience.

Dr. Ralph E. Kellogg, CTM
Palomar Airport Club 7129-5
Carlsbad, California

IN FAVOR OF NEW SPEAKING TECHNIQUE

When program changes decimated our schedule at a recent meeting, I turned to the June article, "The No-Excuse Way to Become a CTM" for help. After our one scheduled speaker spoke, I passed out sheets of quotations. Club members spent two minutes selecting a quote, then three minutes preparing a speech following Bernadette Conroy's examples.

Everyone in the room participated. (The scheduled speaker even spoke again!) Though the presentations were short (2-5 minutes), each one came from the heart. The exercise was a valuable bridge between Table Topics and prepared manual speeches. We plan to use this technique again soon. Thanks, Bernadette, for a great idea!

Hope E. Anderson, ATM-B
San Diego Gas & Electric Club 545-5
San Diego, California

THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO CTM

I was dismayed by Bernadette Conroy's article, "The No-Excuse Way to Become a CTM" (June). As a rule, manual speeches are prepared speeches. If you spend only three minutes preparing for a seven-minute speech, then you have not practiced your speech even once. Practice should be an important part of a prepared speech!

Let me suggest that a future article deals with ways to fit a practice session into a busy schedule. For example, I prepare a speech during my commute to work.

Marvin Krone, CTM
Thomas Jefferson Club 6490-27
Woodbridge, Virginia

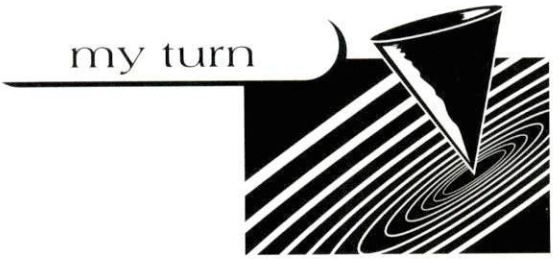
Why save time in a rush toward unprepared mediocrity? Sure we are all busy, but there is a reason for taking time to meet tough standards. It is called excellence – something we all should strive for. Ms. Conroy did offer valuable insights into speech preparation, but please, let's start earning our recognition and stop doing things "the easy way."

Tony Audrieth, ATM
McKinley Club 467-54
Champaign, Illinois

Bernadette Conroy was off the mark when she suggested a manual speech could be prepared in three minutes. The speeches in the C&L manual are designed to teach basic speaking skills, such as speech organization and word usage. This requires a commitment of time and effort by a Toastmaster if she or he is to truly gain the benefits. It is not a matter of preparing just any old speech, but a speech that addresses the objectives of a particular manual project. There are no three-minute shortcuts to learning and mastering new skills.

Ms. Conroy's method is better suited to impromptu speeches, not manual speeches.

K. Rangaswamy, CTM
Sears-Halifax Club 1555-45
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Want to lose a speech contest? Avoid motivational topics and blatant calls for sympathy.

by Charles A. Jones

I Ain't Got No Goals

■ I RECENTLY DID SOMETHING WHICH totally violates the spirit of Toastmasters: I tried to figure out how to lose a Toastmasters speech contest.

I was to represent my club at the division level. I really did not have time to prepare or even to attend the contest. And even if I did manage to win at the division level, I still wouldn't be able to attend the district contest. No one else from the area was able to compete, and I figured that missing the contest would be rude and unacceptable. So, since I had to appear, the question became, "What type of topic ensures defeat?"

Then I remembered the five T's: "Three Terrible Trite and Trying Topics."

1. First, I could give the standard trite talk about **goals and motivation!** I could talk about The Four-and-a half Deadly Habits of Highly Slovenly People or books written by Bob Fullofbum or Derrick Chopopera.

But then I realized I ain't got no goals! Plus, I remembered that one-third of the winning speeches I have heard in Toastmasters speech contests were about this subject.

Bad idea.

2. I next considered talking about topic number two: **Toastmasters!** What better way to lose a contest than to give the classic, rambling, dull, tell-us-what-we-already-know speech about Toastmasters, sharing with the audience this unique insight – Toastmasters helps people improve their public speaking skills!

I could drone on and on – and then on and on some more – about how I was facing the most important presentation of my life and then one of two outcomes occurred, thanks to Toastmasters: 1) All aspects of the program preparation and equipment worked perfectly and I performed brilliantly, or 2) All aspects of the program preparation and equipment failed and *I still* performed brilliantly.

But then I remembered that one-third of the winning speeches I have heard in Toastmasters speech contests were about this subject.

3. I was left with one option: **personal tragedy and sympathy!** I could talk about the time when I was seven years old and my parents threw bricks at me because I failed to properly clean the house, wash the car, cook meals, pay the bills and do the budget.

Or I could talk about my uncle, who was kidnapped by aliens on a UFO, or my cousin who died after eating four boxes of rat poison. I could talk about my aunt, who told me wonderful tales about her life on the farm. (I miss her now that she is on death row, awaiting execution for killing her husband, my four cousins, my three step-cousins, my two-cousins and the paperboy.) And to top it off, both my cow and rubber plant also died last year.

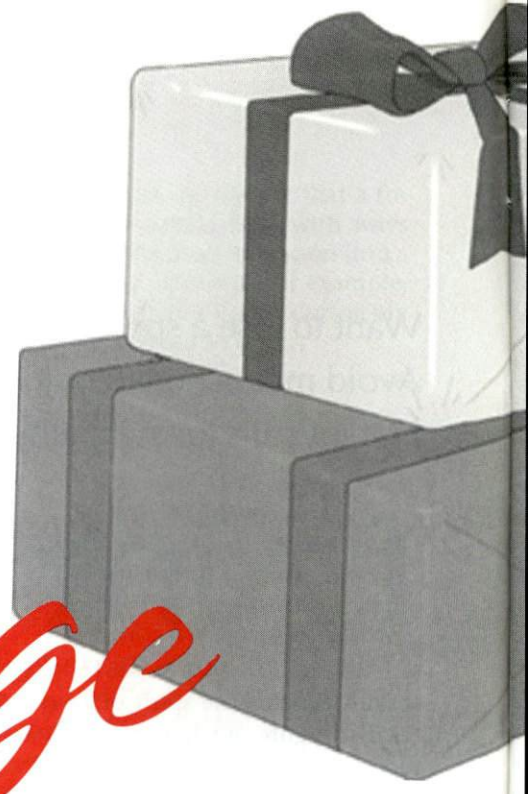
I abandoned all these topics after looking up the words "maudlin," "bathetic" and "gushy," realizing that I stood a good chance of winning a contest if I, while weeping, aired these tragedies in public. Also, I remembered that one-third of the winning speeches I have heard in Toastmasters contests were about similar subjects.

I now was frustrated, for I could not determine how to lose a Toastmasters contest. Finally, I remembered some speakers I had heard in previous contests who lost by choosing topics that did not blatantly throw black ropes of sympathy around my neck. They gave clever, funny speeches that appealed to my intellect: one was about family travel, the other about personalized license plates. Goals, Toastmasters and tragedy were unmentioned.

I had finally found a sure loser. T

Charles A. Jones is a member of Speak Up Club 6181-66 in Norfolk, Virginia.

As Toastmasters we sometimes become so fascinated with how we wrap our speeches, we neglect to spend time improving what is inside.



The Package

by Jim Thacher, ATM

Our grandson Noah reveled in his second Christmas. But he seemed more intent on playing with the packaging materials than with the contents. Scrunching up the wrapping paper into a ball, he threw it across the room. Ribbons flowed between his fingers. Alternately he compressed and pulled the bows. Noah was having a great time!

As Toastmasters we sometimes become so fascinated with how we wrap our speeches, we neglect to spend time improving what is inside. A recent ad in this magazine by a presidential speechwriter states, "Content is only seven percent of your impact as a speaker." If that is true, then what is the other 93 percent? The implication is that the rest of your presentation relies on packaging. Recent letters to *The Toastmaster*, however, have pleaded for a greater emphasis on content.

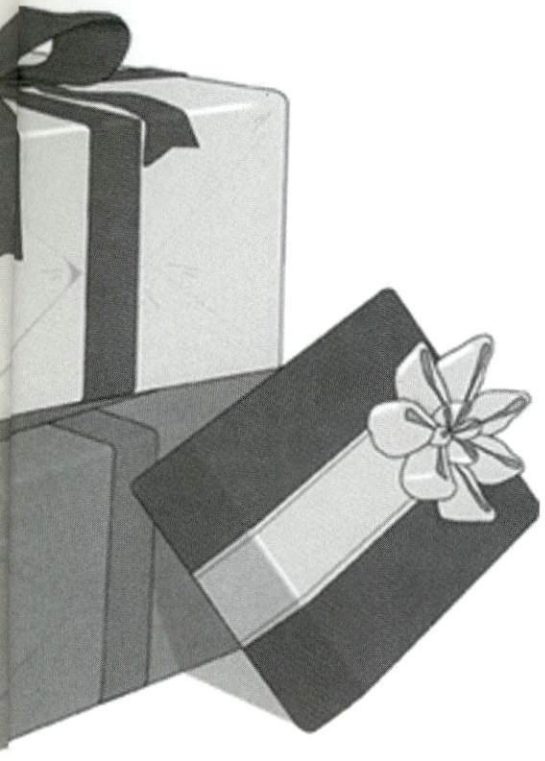
While delivery does have a major impact on communication, I think we have forgotten that the fundamental purpose of a speech is to convey information – otherwise our speeches are beautiful packages with little of value inside. As Toastmasters we are supposed to inform, persuade, inspire and entertain. Many of our speeches call the audience to action. But does this rely on the speaker's personality or the content of the information?

I ask you not to neglect presentation skills, but to balance delivery with substance. The pendulum has swung too far toward externals; we must move it back in the direction of content.

Continue to package your wonderful words in the wrapping paper of gestures, the ribbons of voice inflection and the boxes of organization and grammar. Decorate them with the bows of visual aids. But let's all be mindful of the quality of our messages.

As Noah grows older he will value the contents of his gifts more than the fancy wrapping paper and will develop expectations concerning the contents. Imagine his disappointment if he were to receive a gaily decorated package that was empty inside! On the other hand, what if he opened a package which, despite its plain appearance, contained a book or toy that would entertain and stimulate his imagination – not just for a few moments, but for months to come?

I have had similar experiences when listening to flawlessly delivered Toastmasters speeches. The speaker usually has great confidence from many years of public speaking. He or she makes excellent use of gestures



and vocal variety and the speech is well-organized with an identifiable opening, body and conclusion. The audience appears to devour every word. When the speaker is finished, however, I often realize the wrapping materials were far more interesting than the platitudinous content.

On other occasions I have heard speeches by more novice members that were less-than-professionally delivered. The wrapping paper had tears and the ribbon was crumpled. Yet once the contents of the package had been fully revealed, I was pleasantly surprised.

I remember one humorous speech in particular whose content was exceptionally well-crafted. One of the features included clever comparisons between behavior and musical instruments, frequently incorporating a play on words. With terms such as "drumming up business" and "vile inns," each sentence made me smile and appreciate her speech. Yet, judged by the standards of the humorous speech contest, the speaker's lack of polish made the trophy beyond her reach. However, I found her gift to be of considerable value.

Don't disguise your Toastmaster gift beyond recognition! I want to see your ideas, your motives and your soul. Inform me about your hobbies, challenge my thought patterns and inspire me to greatness. Appeal not just to my emotions; persuade my intellect as well. Teach me about yourself, your goals and your desires. Tap the great riches of science, history and religion, and interpret them through your eyes. Concentrate on what forms the core of your speech. Your audience isn't as interested in ribbons and fanfare as they are in the greatest treasure of all – you.

The speeches I have most admired reveal the personality of the speaker. These Toastmasters have dared to become vulnerable because they have been willing to share from their own experiences. Humorous speeches have succeeded because the speaker was not afraid to make fun of his or her own shortcomings. I have truly enjoyed speeches on gender bias, computer illiteracy, home improvements and personal adventures that showed not only the speaker's external motions but also his inner thought processes. I have most appreciated speakers who venture beyond easy platitudes and spend time researching to explore more interesting terrain. Through carefully crafted words, I have traveled to faraway places and probed the inner recesses of the human mind and emotions.

Each one of these speeches balanced content and delivery. This careful combination helped me form a deeper relationship with the speaker.

I'm looking forward to your next speech. I'm intrigued by its pretty wrapping paper, gorgeous ribbon and beautiful bows. But most of all I am interest in what is inside – you!

Jim Thacher, ATM, is a member of The Presidents Club 1582-15 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"Don't disguise your Toastmaster gift beyond recognition! I want to see your ideas, your motives and your soul."

by Jan Rainbird

Don't substitute style for substance. Emotions are easy to raise; valid thoughtful perspectives are more difficult.

Those who pursue the art of public speaking do so for various reasons. They may wish to inform, entertain, persuade or merely harangue their audiences. Their methods and speaking styles vary according to subject matter and the needs of both speaker and audience. But a temptation facing most speakers today is to allow style to take precedence over subject matter. If the purpose of an analytical presentation is to have the audience consider a particular point of view, then the quality of the support of that perspective must be considered – not just the method of presentation. The desire to let substance be subordinate to form should be recognized and kept in check.

A speaker may have a most powerful and attention-grabbing delivery, complete with state-of-the-art visual aids, but if he or she uses logical fallacies and otherwise tries to manipulate the audience, the speaker's credibility will be lost.

Politicians and advertisers understand the importance of public conformity and spend vast sums of money to achieve their desired results. These sophisticated messages are advanced by hypnotically persuasive media techniques and flourish amid an educational system that rewards rote memorization rather than critical thinking. As a result, we have developed into a society that not only accepts fallacious thought as the truth, but also embraces such thought and incorporates it into daily reasoning and decision making.

ILLOGICAL REASONING: APPEAL TO EMOTIONS

What are some of the most typical logical fallacies in use today? Succumbing to ambiguity – careless use of language in which no clear thought is expressed – is particularly common, and there are several ways to fall victim to it. One is to not distinguish between literal and emotive meaning. Words should refer to something specific, rather than appeal just to the audience's emotions.

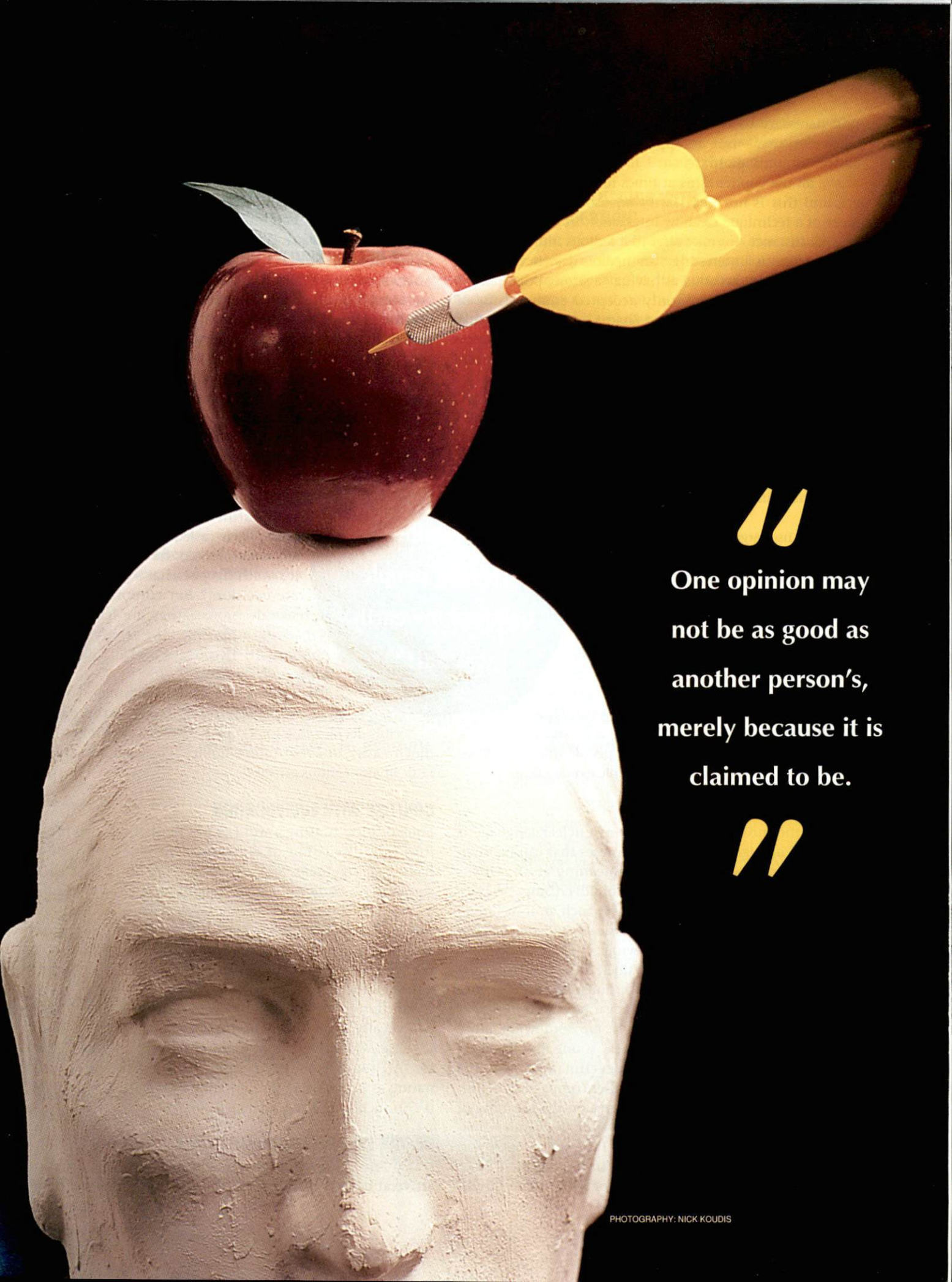
For example, if you'd ask your fellow club members for their immediate response to the word "politician," their answers will probably range from "thief" to "sleazeball." If the word is used in a particular context, such as "We all know what we can expect from 'politicians'" – and said with a sneer or sarcastic tone of voice – the audience will have been manipulated into thinking negatively with no specific facts offered. Although this method is tempting, it is a disingenuous shortcut that circumvents critical thought. The term "elected officials," though less biting, will allow a more rational perspective of the issue at hand. If the speaker is feeling benevolent, he or she may try "public servant," although this term risks emotive appeal in the other direction.

Many other terms are commonly used that carry powerful emotional messages – and little else – if used carelessly. In the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, a reader sent in a letter championing support for Operation Rescue, saying that "the safest place for a baby should be in the womb, below the heartbeat of a mother." She chose several words that communicate a powerful emotional message: "baby," "womb," "heartbeat" and "mother." Certainly the reader will be hard pressed to avoid an emotional response to such an appeal, but the writer is avoiding many difficult issues that deserve more analysis. Any debate, this one included, deserves more specific language and analysis.

Other words that push emotional response are too numerous to mention here, but some of the more common are "feminism," "pornography," "taxpayers' money," "liberal," "conservative," "affirmative action," etc. All of these terms deserve fair definitions if used in a presentation or in writing. Emotions are easy to raise; valid, thoughtful perspectives are more difficult.

OBSCURE FACTS WITH EUPHEMISMS

Another common misuse of language is the incorporation of euphemisms and jargon into a commentary. Euphemisms are commonly used to cushion the impact of a less direct word choice. The military, for example, has a term called "sunshine units." Without explanation, possible interpretations could range from temperature predictions to recommended daily dosages of Vitamin C. However, the term actually refers to the amount of radia-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One opinion may not be as good as another person's, merely because it is claimed to be.
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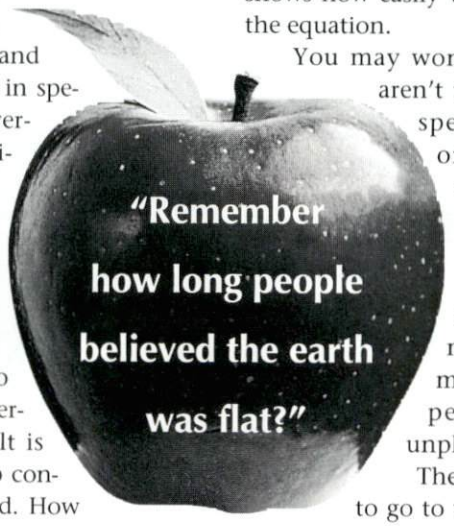
PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK KOUDIS

tion necessary to kill a particular amount of people in a particular area – not an appealing definition for such a pastoral-sounding phrase.

We all use euphemisms at times to avoid offending others, and this is not necessarily misuse of language – it's more of a technique to allow interaction in a complex society. For instance, we may refer to a tedious film that someone else likes as "interesting," an inedible dessert as "unusual," or an obnoxious child as having "a strong personality." There are also the commonly accepted euphemisms of "passed away," "expecting" and "had a few too many" that allow us to handle embarrassing or sensitive situations. We must be careful, however, not to use them to obscure facts that are essential to effective communication.

Jargon is something that anyone shopping for a computer has run up against. "Bit," "bytes," "motherboards" and RAM" mean a great deal to those fluent in specialized computer vocabulary, but the average layman finds these terms unintelligible.



People use jargon for various reasons. Sometimes they assume others are just as fluent. Other times, jargonists don't know themselves what they're talking about and try to cover up their own lack of knowledge. And some just attempt to impress others with their supposed expertise. Regardless of the reason, the result is generally the same – the listener ends up confused, irritated and sometimes humiliated. How can this be prevented? The best rule is to know your audience, and if there is a possibility that people will be confused by technical language, provide a simple explanation.

MANIPULATE WITH AMBIGUITY

Perhaps the most overused aspect of unclear language is semantical ambiguity: words and phrases that can be interpreted in many ways or have no meaning at all. This is especially obvious in the language of advertising. "Pepsi – Gotta Have It." Gotta have what? Why such an imperative? "Chevrolet – The Heartbeat of America." Will the country suffer cardiac arrest without Chevrolets? These phrases are quite obvious in their ambiguity, albeit quite effective; companies would not spend billions of dollars a year if people could not be manipulated into an advantageous response.

Other popular phrases, though, are somewhat more deceptive. "Traditional family values" is one that has been successful in political arenas. Speechmakers toss this phrase around as if there is some all-encompassing definition we all understand, just as we agree on the meaning of words like "door" or "lightbulb." Everybody wants a society with stable, loving families. It is quite illogical, though, to speak as if these values can be legislated. Does any presidential candidate calling for a return to "traditional family values" really believe our diverse population can be restructured according to this style? Or is this, perhaps, a ploy meant to condition the voting public into thinking of him or her as a benevolent entity, capable of dispelling all evils in our society with a return to the "good old days"?

AVOID RESPONSIBILITY WITH PERSONIFICATION

Another overused fallacy is that of personification – ascribing human qualities to inanimate objects. You have probably heard the following quote: "The White House said today..." Of course, unless buildings have started to talk, it's a safe guess that a person rather than a structure made the announcement. Innocuous? Perhaps, but such an example shows how easily we can get used to leaving people out of the equation.

You may wonder, "What's the big deal – after all, aren't things like this just innocent figures of speech?" Yes, sometimes – but all too often this technique is used to avoid responsibility. If an employee, for example, is called into his boss' office to be terminated, he may be told that it's nothing personal – just a "corporate decision." But corporations don't make decisions – they are legal entities made up of people. The reality is that a person in the corporation made the unpleasant decision.

The same is true when governments decide to go to war, businesses declare bankruptcy, or a club decides not to accept a particular member. How much easier to avoid responsibility when actions are the fault of amorphous entities!

CONFUSE WITH EQUIVOCATION

Equivocation is using a word or phrase that has two meanings in a discussion of argument. Imagine two spouses having an argument, and one accuses the other of a lack of support – in choice of career, friends or any other lifestyle aspects. The other responds by saying that of course there has been support; after all, who went to work each day and brought home a paycheck? The word "support" is used equivocally; the meanings are entirely different, although the word is the same.

Similarly, the phrase "laws of nature" is often used equivocally; such laws describe what happens in a scientific sense, while the laws of man proscribe particular behavior. All too frequently, people will refer to the laws of nature as if they were written laws that legislate our activity; no such legislation, of course, exists.

CREATE STEREOTYPES WITH GENERALIZATIONS

Hasty and misapplied generalizations are often used to arrive at decisions and create guidelines for personal opin-

ions. A hasty generalization can be applied to the process of inductive reasoning, in which someone arrives at a general conclusion based on particular observations. Let's say that on the way to work one morning, you encounter three rude drivers, all of whom are driving Fiats. Based on these experiences, you may decide that all people driving Fiats are inconsiderate – a tempting conclusion, but one made with knee jerk rapidity.

The misapplied generalization, on the other hand, relates to deductive reasoning. Here you take a major premise, apply a minor premise, and reach a conclusion. If you believe that all people who drive Fiats are inconsiderate, you have a major premise. If you meet a person named Sam who you notice has a Fiat, you have a minor premise – Sam drives a Fiat. Your conclusion is that, therefore, Sam is inconsiderate. But have Sam's driving skills been fairly assessed? You actually haven't seen his driving, and you don't have any evidence to ascertain his character. Nevertheless, the impression is bound to take a powerful hold over your dealing with Sam.

This type of reasoning taps right into our prejudices regarding ethnicity, gender, weight, lifestyle, tastes, political preference or any other permutation that labels us and sets us apart from others. All of us use inductive and deductive reasoning; the key is to use them correctly, assessing the validity of one's observations and – if they are – whether or not they should be applied piecemeal. Usually, the answer is no.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS WITH 'BEGGING THE QUESTION'

Begging the question, a fallacy that results from faulty use of this reasoning process, means that what is asserted in the major premise is repeated in the conclusion. For example: "Adult language should not be allowed on television; the film, *Apocalypse Now* uses adult language; therefore, *Apocalypse Now* should not be shown on television." Notice that the major premise and conclusion are almost identical – there is no rationale presented about the dangers of adult language. A better example would be: "Studies show that adult language causes deviant behavior; *Apocalypse Now* uses adult language; therefore, those who see *Apocalypse Now* will act defiantly." Of course, the person asserting this argument will have to define "deviant" and cite the studies used, but at least the logical process is accurate.

APPEAL TO TRADITION

The appeal to tradition, or the "is/ought" fallacy, also springs from lack of attention to major premises. Here,

Don't Fall For Fallacies

As both a good speaker and a discriminating listener, you should strive to examine fallacies, or flaws, in thinking.

Here are the three general categories of fallacies to look for in your arguments and in the arguments of others:

1 FALLACIES IN EVIDENCE. **Hasty Generalizations** or jumping to conclusions based on limited evidence. For example, "We should ban stockbrokers because we've found a few crooked ones." **False Division** is another fallacy in evidence. A tip-off of false division is when a speaker claims, for example, that there are only two ways to revitalize the poorer sections of a city (there may be other ways). This type of fallacy can usually be found when someone advocates a position based on tradition, or how long an idea has been around. The truth of an idea is obviously not related to how long it has been around or how many people believe it. Remember how long people believed the earth was flat?

2 FALLACIES IN REASONING. We should test our own arguments and those of others against faulty reasoning: **Appeal to ignorance** (since you don't know it's false it must be true); **Appeal to popular opinion** ("everybody knows that..."); **Sequential fallacy** (because two events occurred subsequently, the first caused the second); **Begging the question**, or rephrasing the idea and then offering it as its own reason ("abortion is immoral because it is wrong"); **Either/or logic** ("either you're for raising all taxes or you're against raising all taxes").

3 FALLACIES IN LANGUAGE. **Ambiguous words or phrases.** The use of ambiguous words with several meanings and the use of qualifiers (or non-qualifiers) that shift the meaning of a sentence (such as maybe, might, probably) often slip into speeches. Political candidates, in particular, use this type of vague language when trying to force a definition on their audiences. Look for clue words such as "freedom," "true" and "real." An example of this "persuasive definition" would be "the only true (or real) education comes from a private school." **Name calling.** Here, the speaker doesn't attack the argument, he attacks the person (because of that person's religious affiliation, job or personal characteristic or belief).

by Jim Patterson

an assertion is made on the basis that just because things have always been done a certain way, they should continue in the same manner. So as Christmas approaches each year, millions of people go into debt because they traditionally buy magnificent presents for every friend and family member. Or perhaps the family always goes to Aunt Kneel's house for Thanksgiving – although Aunt Kneel's house is 100 miles away and about as big as a shoebox. These traditions are not necessarily wrong, but the reasons for doing them should be stronger than just the old excuse that "it's always been done this way." After all, if this line of reasoning were correct, we would still have slavery, women wouldn't be allowed to vote, and everyone would drive around in horse drawn buggies.

LIMIT CHOICE WITH FALSE DILEMMAS

The false dilemma fallacy implies the availability of only two choices in any situation. Near my neighborhood, we have a Marine helicopter base, and flights take off at low altitudes at various times of the day or night; the noise makes it impossible to have conversations for minutes at a time. Occasionally, someone will write a letter to the local newspaper complaining, and the next week we can count on a response with the following theme: "Would you prefer that they were Russian helicopters?" As if that were the only alternative! Here's another example: one man may learn that an acquaintance prefers ballet to football and questions the acquaintance's sexual preferences, as if there are only two possibilities with such choices. The idea that there are always two sides to an issue is often wrong – there may be many other alternatives.

ATTACK THE MESSENGER, NOT THE MESSAGE, WITH 'AD HOMINEM'

Finally, we need to examine the fallacy of directing a personal attack at a person asserting a particular point of view, and not at the person's argument itself. This is called the ad hominem fallacy – Latin for "to the man." When a political candidate constantly attacks the character of a competitor, be suspicious; what a person may or may not have done may bear little relevance to the issue at hand. If, for example, Candidate A says we should raise the sales tax and Candidate B counters that A has had extramarital affairs, that argument is diverted from a pressing economical issue to one that will turn into a tabloid feast, doing nothing to advance the cause of government. Outright character assassination may be used ("My opponent used the 'F' word in grade school"), attacking the circumstances of a person's life ("My opponent attended a segregated high school") or cheap attempts at humor or ridicule ("Who can believe a person wearing such ugly ties?"). A person's character may be relevant, but that does not relieve the other's responsibility of addressing the actual argument.

Considering these fallacies carefully should lead people to the somewhat unpleasant conclusion that just because someone has an opinion, it may not necessarily be a good one. In a society where we hear that everyone is entitled to an opinion, this may seem heretical. But I'm not asserting that people are not entitled to their opinions. Instead, we need to realize one opinion may not be as good as another merely because it is claimed to be. Enhance the quality of your presentation, oral or written, by subjecting your opinions to rigorous scrutiny. Your audiences will be impressed with the results, and you and others will contribute to a better informed, more intelligent citizenry.

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First you choke up,
then you gag.

by Carol Richardson

The Sentimental Journey

■ IT'S BEEN MORE THAN A DECADE SINCE the doomed Debra Winger succumbed to cancer in the film "Terms of Endearment." It made a lobby hanky concession one heck of an idea. I still remember fighting the tears that I had been warned were inevitable. But along with the tight throat and moist eyes came feelings of resentment.

The pathetic sight of someone dying short-circuited the other issues the movie raised. In the contest of beautiful-young-mother-with-tubes-in-her-nose, such everyday concerns as family dynamics, attitudes toward aging and marital infidelity could hardly be contemplated; issues far more capable than death-by-incurable-disease to uncover the nuances of human relationships. The writers had created a complicated knot of ideas, and rather than untying it, simply cut it. And manhandled our sympathies in the process.

Of course, emotional extortion is the *lingua franca* of popular culture. It is what we commonly identify as sentimentality. Indeed the great themes of humanity – life, death, love, war – are so charged with urgency it's no surprise that many who tackle these topics are apt to equate overloaded emotional circuits with significance, or worse, art.

The appeal of sentimentality is its simplicity. Push the right "hot" buttons, from furloughed convicts to doe-eyed puppies, and you're sure to get a swift, predictable response. Politicians fuel their campaigns with it. Advertisers sell everything from insurance to toilet paper with it. And, alas, novice speakers often use sentimentality as a verbal air bag, something to fall back on when the blood suddenly vacates the cerebellum as they ascend the podium.

But what engages us in a movie, speech, or any form of creative communication is the ability to bring freshness to the subject. We're exhilarated by a speaker whose ideas startle us, whose rhetoric takes us in unpredictable directions, who is, in a word, original.

Now, originality should not be confused with the provocative. Things outrageous run the same chance of being hackneyed as things sentimental, and for much the same reason. Without a fresh perspective, the provocative never gets beyond its flashy exterior and risks sinking in its own narcissism.

But creativity doesn't come easy. Especially for those of us who had our unconventional impulses squashed, bug-like, by a multiple-choice education. And most of us aren't self-critical enough to edit the prosaic from our discourse. For many, public speaking is worrisome enough without compounding it with the onus of a personal, yet illuminating perspective. So we opt for the sure-fire crowd pleaser that is as likely to be ordinary as it is convenient.

For example, not so long ago speakers had an almost irresistible urge to pledge their support for "our troops in the Gulf." Oversimplified, albeit popular, appeals to patriotism seem to be the easiest way for a speaker to ingratiate himself to an audience these days.

Likewise, election years find hopeful candidates peppering their lectures with vague paeans to "the American way of life" and "family values." Of course, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with patriotic feelings or gratitude for one's country or family. It's the oily residue of self-insinuation that stains the sentiment.

The problem with sentimentality goes beyond its self-indulgence, however. It corrupts the very goodwill that discourse is meant to engender. Mostly that translates into boredom. Which eventually turns to resentment. Platitudes are by their nature shop-worn and easy targets for derision. Cynicism and mistrust follow. And what should be the most precious of human qualities, speech, degenerates into a looking-glass world in which hate is love, poverty is prosperity, and war is peace. Which is a whole other essay.

Suffice to say that while emotion is fine, a little goes a long way. Use it, if you must, but beware. As champions of the spoken word, we have an obligation to tread lightly on the mawkish. Ⓣ

Carol Richardson is a freelance writer living in Laguna Beach, California.

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Editor's note: *The ability to present ideas to a group is one of the most important assets an employee can possess. It affords a greater visibility within an organization and often leads to promotion.*

This article by former Toastmaster and AT&T executive Anthony W. Salinger, an accomplished speaker, presents his approach to communicating with any type of audience.

11 Ways to Connect with an Audience

by Anthony W. Salinger

Ask yourself, "Why this message, to this audience, at this time"?

1 Let 'em know you're human. Establish a bond with the audience. Mention something you have in common: experience, interests, values, etc. Let the audience know right away you are glad to be there. Allow your warmth and sincerity to touch each person as if he or she were a trusted friend.

2 Be your unique self. No one has lived your life, experienced your thoughts and feelings, or dreamed your dreams. Be proud and confident in how you differ from every other person. Look for and allow your own style to develop. Consider how you would like people in your audience to describe you to someone else. That description is a clue to your style.

3 Use stories and human examples. Who are or were some great storytellers you admire? Jesus Christ? Aesop? Bob Hope? Alan King? Uncle Remus? Your minister? Study their techniques and imitate them!

4 Perfect your timing. Have you ever attended a concert, listened to a dramatic reading, watched a relay race, or observed a famous comedian? Each of these experiences demonstrates the value of timing. Some of the tools of good timing are effective use of the pause, skillful story line development and the surprise ending.

How do you develop a keen sense of timing? Watch the best and analyze what they do. Read or watch plays. Practice reading poetry into a tape recorder. Listen to a cassette tape of Reverend Jesse Jackson – he is a master at using the pause. Think about creating the unexpected in your communication. Ask yourself, "What would surprise them?"

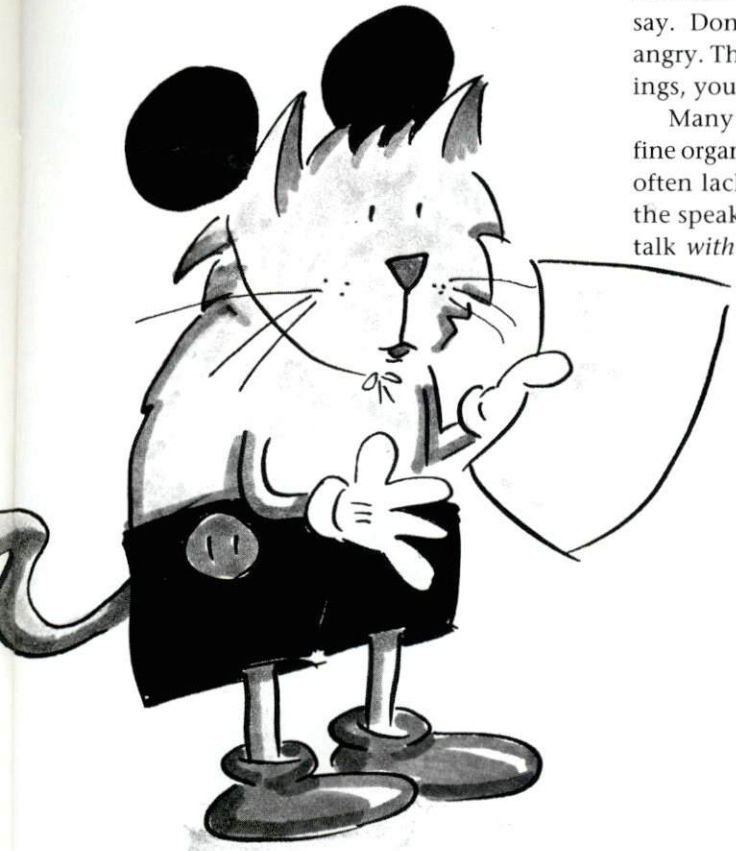
5 Stay informed. A skillful communicator cannot be too well informed. What are the current topics of interest to your audience? What unifies them? What's in the news today? What are some pertinent facts about the group you will speak to? About the locale you will speak in? Can you learn something interesting about your host?

Try libraries, bookstores, magazines and newspapers. Ask questions and keep records of useful information.

6 Let your voice make you friends. Can you smile with your voice? Have you learned to use inflection, volume, pitch, tone and intonation to make your voice sound warm and friendly?

Listen to the best TV anchorpersons or talk show hosts. Talk or read into your tape recorder. Do you like what you hear? Think about how you want your voice to sound. Close your eyes and imagine you are an audience member. Do you hear a friendly, engaging voice? Practice until you do.

7 Be flexible – adapt. Your life is one of the richest sources of speaking material. Remember, you are unique. No one has ever seen the world through your eyes. No one has ever felt your feelings. Whatever you use, make it your own.



forward in anticipation of what you have to say. Don't be afraid to get excited, even angry. The audience wants to hear your feelings, your values and what you care about.

Many speakers have excellent material, fine organization, smooth transitions. What's often lacking is the richness and variety of the speaker's personality. It is important to talk *with* the audience. You want them to

Take a story that has been told many times. Change the names of the people, change the setting and alter the story line. Use your imagination and the special way you see life and the world. Paint visual images in the audience's mind. Now the story is different. You've told it your way – it is yours.

8 Use variety. Don't limit yourself to one subject or style. Think like a professional – imitate your favorite performers, artists and speakers. You don't want people who have heard you before saying, "He/she always gives the same speech."

Since you are gaining new information and experiences each day, let them be reflected in your communication. Try different introductions. Try humor, material from a book or reading a poem aloud. Try talking in a subdued voice, even whisper. Get the idea?

9 Involve the audience. Invite questions, give a brief quiz or ask for comments. Mention something provocative and then ask, "What do you think?"

10 Project sincerity. Strong beliefs, enthusiasm, energy – these are the qualities that cause your listeners to lean relate to you as a person, not just as "the speaker."

To paraphrase a well-known illustration of the power of the spoken word: "When Cicero spoke, men listened; when Mark Antony spoke, they marched on Rome." Read Mark Antony's funeral oration in William Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. The words ring with emotion and with power. (See article on pages 16-24 of this issue.)

11 Practice! Practice! Practice! Do you think that world-famous opera singer Luciano Pavarotti practices only once in a while? Or that former President Reagan gave his inaugural address but once? Could Robert Ludlum write best-selling spy novels with no editing and no revisions?

You see my point. Effective communication is a highly developed skill. Some of us spend a lifetime studying, practicing and learning.

As Harry Harrison, former owner of the Redpath Speaker's Bureau and the School Assembly Service and one of the greats in the lecture business, always said, "No speech should ever be given the first 30 times."

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"Strong beliefs, enthusiasm, energy – these are the qualities that cause your listeners to lean forward in anticipation of what you have to say."

ILLUSTRATION: KRISTY JIMENEZ

by William H. Stevenson, III, ATM

A lesson from Shakespeare in the art of persuasive speaking.

FRIENDS, ROMANS

A coup d'etat. A city in an uproar. A throng of citizens surrounding the capital demanding an explanation.

This is how Shakespeare imagined Rome following the assassination of Julius Caesar.

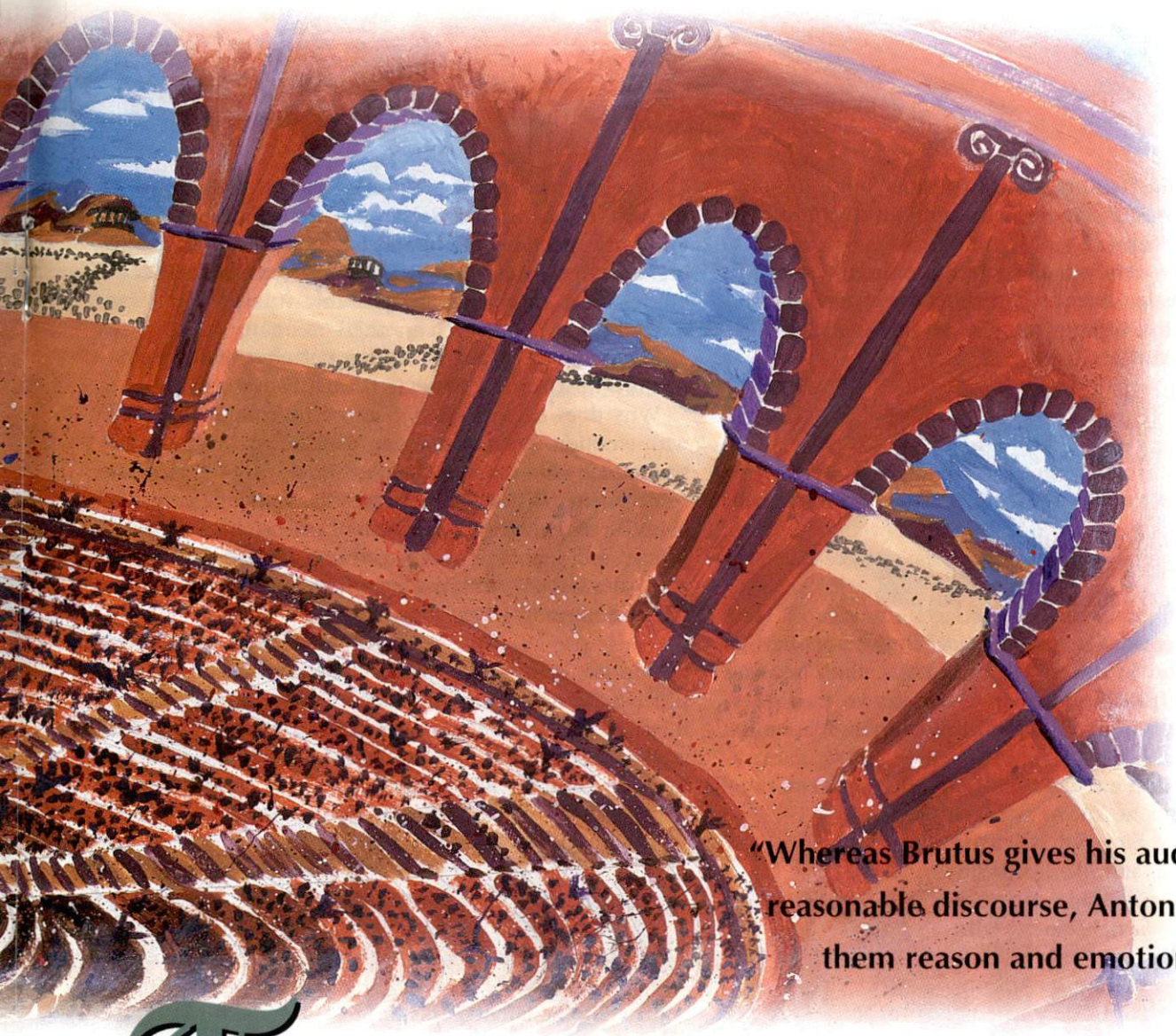
The result is well-known. Brutus, one of the ringleaders, speaks to the mob and sways them to his point of view – that Caesar was ambitious and a danger to the Republic. Mark Antony then takes the lectern and changes their minds. Although fiction, this battle of the orators illustrates many of the best techniques of persuasive speaking. Why is it that Antony succeeds and Brutus fails?

Brutus is not a bad speaker. He had been trained in the classical rhetoric expected of a Roman and uses it well. Parallel construction is one of his favorite devices. Why had he killed Caesar? Brutus replies, "This is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I love Rome more."

He then combines parallelism with another effective device, cause and effect, saying: "As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him."

We can imagine the build up to the punch line at the end. Finally, Brutus challenges his audience with a series of rhetorical questions: "Had you rather Caesar living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freedmen?"

Like all good rhetorical questions, this one is phrased so that only one answer seems possible. Brutus continues his theme, hammering home the point:



"Whereas Brutus gives his audience a reasonable discourse, Antony gives them reason and emotion."

S, TOASTMASTERS!

Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who here is so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended.

He pauses for reply and predictably receives none. The people are convinced. Since a persuasive speech needs a strong close, Brutus has one ready. He dramatically shows his audience the dagger he had just used against Caesar and pledges to use it against himself if it will serve the good of Rome.

Waiting in the wings with his funeral oration, Mark Antony must have thought he had a tough act to follow. Worse, he faced a hostile audience ready to stone him if he said anything against Brutus. How was he going to solve this dilemma? First he had to get their attention:

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

This has a ring to it. Notice how the first three words build to a climax – one syllable, two syllables, three syllables – and the neat metaphorical request for attention that follows. This certainly beats Brutus' rather prosaic introduction: "Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause and be silent, that you may hear." Brutus says basically the same thing as Antony, but what a difference in the way he says it!

Once he has the listeners' attention, Antony knows it would be unwise to launch into a direct attack on Brutus. A hostile audience must be moved by degrees. He begins by seeming to agree with their point of view, calling Brutus noble and honorable and referring to the conspirators as "all honorable men." Having put the crowd at ease, he begins his funeral oration, speaking in general terms of

Caesar, a friend "faithful and just to me" but reminding them that, "Brutus says he was ambitious/And Brutus is an honorable man."

Antony now subtly changes tact, praising those attributes of Caesar that seem to contradict the charge of ambition. Like Brutus, he knows how to set up his audience for a rhetorical question:

He hath brought many captives home to Rome
whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

Antony gives them more examples, reminding them that:

You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him with a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: Was this ambition?

Antony's repeated assertions that "Brutus says he was ambitious/And Brutus is an honorable man" become increasingly ironic and biting. The crowd murmurs. "Methinks there is much reason in his sayings," one listener remarks.

But reason isn't enough for Antony. He wants emotion, too. Like Brutus he knows the best way to stir up a crowd is with a good visual aid, and like his predecessor he has one ready. He pulls from his toga "a parchment with the seal of Caesar... 'Tis his will."

"The goal of a persuasive speech is to achieve a state of 'logic on fire.'"

Caesar loved them, says Antony, and he can prove it. They, the people of Rome, are his beneficiaries. He put them in his will and bequeathed them a rich legacy.

What could be more dramatic than the reading of a will? (Remember all the murder mysteries that have one of these scenes?) Of course the people want to hear the will, but like a good actor and an excellent speaker, Antony draws out the suspense. He better not read it, he says. It would make them mad. It would inflame them against that "honorable man" who stabbed Caesar. This, of course, is just what he wants, and he finally yields to their demands. But first, he unveils his ultimate visual aid: The body of Caesar.

Commanding them to form a ring around the bier, Antony points out the gashes on the bloody mantle covering the body. No more talk of honorable men. The conspirators are traitors. Cassius, Casca, even the beloved Brutus, who gave him "the most unkindliest cut of all" – these were men whom Caesar loved. And see how they repaid him! Calling himself "no orator," Antony says he doesn't have to be one, because every wound on Caesar's body speaks for him. They are the "poor dumb mouths" that cry for revenge!

Now that the crowd is suitably aroused, Antony reads the will, revealing that Caesar gave each of them money ("seventy five drachmas") and left his walks, arbors and orchards to the city of Rome for their recreation. He concludes with an eminently quotable finale, "Here was Caesar! When comes such another?"

The audience responds, tearing out after the conspirators in a fury. Antony has won the battle of the orators.

Why does he win? First, because he combines reason with emotion. There is a saying that the goal of a persuasive speech is to achieve a state of "logic on fire." Antony achieves this. Whereas Brutus gives his audience a reasonable discourse, Antony gives them reason and emotion. Brutus' only effort to arouse emotion (flourishing a dagger) pales besides Antony's waving the bloody mantle of Caesar and reading a mystery will.

Second, Antony gives the people concrete examples. He offers specific proof that Caesar was not ambitious: He had three times refused the crown, he used his wealth for the good of Rome, and he made them all his heirs. In contrast, Brutus never backs up his claim with evidence. He says, in effect, "Caesar was ambitious. Take my word for it." That's a weak argument in the face of evidence.

Finally, Antony has a better turn of phrase than Brutus. It is no coincidence that the former speaks in verse while the latter speaks in prose. Despite his claim to be a "plain, blunt man," Antony's oration shows him to be something of a poet. He uses his eloquence to start the audience thinking and then to whip them into a fury. Both men understand the art of rhetoric, but Antony is the more imaginative and captivating speaker.

The great irony of all this is that Caesar actually *was* ambitious. In fact, he had been in the capital that morning only because the conspirators had assured him the senate would crown him king. If Brutus had pointed this out, and if he had compared Caesar to other adventurers who had destroyed republics, and if he had described in harrowing terms what it would be like to be a slave to such a monarch – who knows? Perhaps it would have been Brutus who emerged triumphant and Antony who was driven out of town.

Not all of us will have a chance to save a republic from collapse or stave off a coup d'etat. But we all can learn something from the battle of the orators in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to help make our own speeches more persuasive. T

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Exploring The Subtleties of PERSUASION

A really good speaker can sit back, relax, and make us persuade ourselves.

"Make it Persuasive," the manual says. Now you're sitting down to write a persuasive speech. That doesn't sound too hard. After all, most of us view persuasion as having a simple premise: "If we show someone why it makes sense to do something, they will do it." Right?

Maybe.

We human beings are complex creatures. We have a lot going on in our heads. Sometimes a carefully constructed argument by a good speaker can persuade us that changing our views or taking an action is to our own benefit. But sometimes a really good speaker can sit back, relax and *make us persuade ourselves*.

TWO VIEWS OF PERSUASION

Most of us like to think we are intelligent, reasonable people. We have goals we want to accomplish in life, such as staying healthy or raising good kids. We have a set of personal values and beliefs, usually based on religious teachings or the "school of hard knocks." We choose our behaviors and actions to reach our goals while staying within our values. In other words, *our beliefs guide our actions*.

Most of us would laugh at the idea that a so-called "persuasive" speaker could change any of our core beliefs or values, or could coax us into actions that would hinder our progress toward our goals. So speakers developing persuasive presentations must present the audience with a suggested course of action that will *help them accomplish their goals* while *remaining consistent with their beliefs*.

Let's say the topic of your persuasive speech is "Why you should check the air pressure in your car's tires." Your goal is to persuade the audience to check their tires for proper inflation. You might analyze an audience and determine that one of their goals is to save money, and one of their beliefs is that good automotive maintenance will *help them* save money. You suggest the specific action of checking tire pressure as a way to improve tire life and forestall the need for expensive new tires. Voila! Your recommended action will be very persuasive to an audience of automobile owners interested in saving money.

by Mark Boylan

Now consider the reaction of a particular audience member, John Smith. John owns a car and thinks saving money is a good idea. After hearing your speech, John might take some time over the weekend to check his car's tires. The information from the speech will have prompted him to perform a specific action consistent with his goals and beliefs. Your persuasive speech worked... so it must be true that our beliefs guide our actions!

But is it *always* true? What if the persuasive intent of a speaker is so completely outside the experience of an audience that they have no established goals or values in that area? Would John take the same amount of time out of his weekend to compare the quality of two tutus after hearing a speech about ballet?

When thinking about our own lives, we realize that sometimes our system of goals and values applies perfectly to a situation and sometimes it doesn't. When presented with information from a speaker, we sometimes know exactly why we react a certain way, but sometimes we really have no idea.

The key to understanding the difference lies in the way we humans create new values and goals in unfamiliar situations. When confronted with a situation that doesn't fit our existing value and goal system we obviously can't use our values or goals to direct our actions. So we do the opposite! We act, we think about our actions, we observe how others react to our actions, and *then we decide* what it meant to us. In such situations, therefore, we don't figure out how we feel about something until *after* we've already done it. In short, the flip side to human persuasion is that sometimes beliefs don't guide our action – sometimes *our actions guide our beliefs*.

For example, let's say John's wife Jill is invited by a friend to an environmental rally in favor of saving the long-necked whoopwopper, a fictitious endangered species of bird. Jill has nothing better to do so she attends the rally. Jill has never been to an environmental rally, has never heard of the long-necked whoopwopper, and she certainly has no opinion about the value

of the species. At the rally everyone enthusiastically talks of saving the bird, and several acquaintances comment to Jill that they are glad she came and tell her how much her support is needed. A week later John asks Jill how she feels about saving the species. Even if Jill can't remember a single positive thing anyone said about the bird itself, chances are now good she has taken a position in favor of saving the bird *simply because she attended* the pro-whoopwopper rally.

What went on here? Remember that when confronted with an unfamiliar situation we humans tend to look at our actions, observe how others feel about our actions, and then decide what our actions meant. Jill did go to the rally and people commended her action. The logical conclusion she draws from the experience is that she must be pro-whoopwopper... otherwise why would she have gone to such a rally? In other words, because of her actions, she *persuaded herself* that she had certain beliefs!

How can a speaker take advantage of this little-recognized component of human persuasion? There are three ways:

1. Get your "foot in the door." Salespeople know that if a potential customer can be persuaded to make a small initial purchase or commitment to an idea, it is much more likely that the customer will agree later to a larger purchase or commitment. The customer persuades himself that he supports a cause or values a product because of his past actions in favor of it. The act of attending a rally is a small action that predisposed Jill toward agreeing to take future actions in favor of the whoopwopper. Who knows? Soon she might be volunteering time to staff a booth!

As a persuasive speaker advancing a point of view, you might ask your audience to accept a bumper sticker or wear a button supporting your issue. If they agree to something small at first, chances are they will be much more receptive to additional requests in the future.

Naturally, the "foot in the door" strategy doesn't always work. Perhaps the action you're asking an audience to take may conflict with one of those values and goals mentioned earlier – perhaps some of your audience members hate bumper stickers! Or maybe others feel coerced into taking a bumper sticker because you insisted. Reasons like these might prevent an audience from staying receptive to your future requests.

2. Give your audience a "push." If audience members have an existing predisposition toward certain beliefs, a speaker can work to persuade them to make even stronger commitments toward those beliefs. In other words, sometimes you can persuade audience members that they feel more strongly about something than they thought they did.

"Pushing" an audience toward a stronger commitment in their beliefs is done by asking audience members to publicly state one of their beliefs in front of others. When someone states their views in front of other people and is praised for doing so, they tend to mentally reinforce the importance of those views in their life – they *persuade themselves* that they feel more strongly about an issue than they thought they did.

As a persuasive speaker trying to develop deeper audience commitment toward a subject, you might consider working into your presentation an interactive segment

The two theories of

where audience members are asked to state their views in front of the rest of the audience. If the individual receives positive feedback that she sounded sincere, that others share her beliefs, and that she expressed her beliefs well, chances are the individual will leave the meeting with a stronger commitment to the view than when she came.

"Pushing" also can be used to persuade audience members to take more extreme positions in line with their general beliefs. For example, perhaps John Smith values regular preventative automobile maintenance as a way to

keep his car running well. He states his view that "I need to keep my car running well to keep repair costs low and to prevent smog." The speaker praises him for his views. Consider John's reaction if the speaker then describes a proposed community program to require regular automotive maintenance by car owners as a means of smog control. Since John's personal values include good automotive maintenance as a method of smog control, he may be inclined to expand his view beyond its original scope to say, "*Everyone* needs to keep their cars running well to keep costs low and to prevent smog." John will have *persuaded himself* to adopt a position broader than the one he came in with.

You can't "push" just any audience. Generally, the audience must be somewhat homogenous or partisan toward an issue. It is relatively easy to encourage church members to work toward greater adherence to religious teachings, or to persuade a group of Toastmasters into striving for public speaking excellence. Try switching the audiences, though, and see what a mixed reaction you will get!

You can't "push" just any issue, either. A message in line with a person's goals and values will be received more positively than one that violates a cherished belief, or one that will stall progress toward a goal. Perhaps one of John's beliefs is that government already has too much say in people's lives... so he might not agree with a community car maintenance program even if it supported his belief in regular car maintenance.

You also can't "push" too far. While Jill might be persuaded to expand her belief to include protection of all endangered birds, that doesn't mean she can be persuaded to adopt an extreme position, regardless of whether it is in line with her original belief. Jill might agree to send out pamphlets to save the whoopwopper, but she probably won't agree to sabotage bulldozers to save their habitat!

3. Persuade using audience emotions. It sounds funny but it's true: sometimes we don't know how we feel about something until we try to figure what our emotional symptoms meant. *We sometimes use our behavior to infer our emotions.*

Consider how many possible interpretations there are to these emotional symptoms: blushing, sweating, loss of appetite, crying or any of a dozen others. There is no one-to-one correspondence between an emotional symptom and what it must mean – so we invent one! When John first met Jill he couldn't eat for two days. From that he concluded that he must really like her. Jill once felt emotionally "empty" inside so she decided to treat herself to a banana split and a movie. From that she and her mother decided she must have been depressed.

Sometimes it is only *after* we experience an emotional state that we decide what it all meant, using our experience and cues from those around us. "I yelled and cursed, so I must have been angry." "I blushed and cried so I must have been embarrassed."

As a persuasive speaker, you can use this principle to persuade an audience. For example, perhaps Jill coaches a pee wee baseball team. Before a big game, one of the young boys is red faced and trembling. How does he feel? Chances are he doesn't know yet. Maybe the other kids will tell him he looks scared. From then on the boy might associate "red faced and trembling" with "being scared."

But maybe Jill can remark to the boy that he looks like he is excited, and he must be ready for the game. From then on the boy might associate "red faced and trembling" with "excited and ready for the game."

Even Toastmasters are told to take their "pre-speech butterflies" and to "make them fly in formation;" or to

Continued on page 27

ILLUSTRATION JEMART

f human persuasion?

Speech Safari

Give the audience a map of your speech and they won't get lost.

by Kim L. Whiteside

■ YOU ARE A TOUR GUIDE FOR AN AFRICAN Safari. Twenty tourists are waiting for you as you drive up to a hotel in a very large jeep. You stop and tell the anxious tourists to "hop in." How many will go?

I'd venture to say very few. Why? Because you haven't told them where they are going. But hold on. Let's take this scenario a step further.

Six out of the 20 tourists get in the jeep. You drive around and point to things of interest here and there. You give them general information about what they are seeing, and you continue to drive. How many of the six tourists are absorbing what you're saying?

Again, probably only a few. Why? Because you haven't mapped out their course, and for all they know, there may be danger ahead. They have no idea where they're going, nor do they know how the sights they are seeing relate to one another. So what's this got to do with speeches? Everything!

Just like those tourists on safari, your audience will be happier if they are informed of the itinerary. Otherwise, they may spend their time wondering, "Where is he going with this?" "What point is she trying to make?" Or the dreaded, "I don't get it."

When we give speeches, we should think of ourselves as tour guides. Somewhere in

the opening commentary, we should let the audience know the purpose (or destination) of the speech and the major points (or route) we will take to get there. This way, the audience can follow along and understand how the different parts of our speech fit together to accomplish the objective. Sounds simple enough, but how many of us do it?

You can use several techniques to guide the audience through your speech. The first is to tell them up front where you're going. For example, you could begin by saying "Today I'm going to share three schools of thought: The Libertarian Theory, The Social Responsibility Theory and the Wanton Disregard for Any Theory Theory."

When you introduce your main points to the audience, you prepare them for what's to come. As a result, they are receptive to your points as you make them. In essence, you've given them a road map.

Another guiding technique you can use is transitions. Transitions from major point to major point signal the end of one path and the beginning of another. Going back to the Safari guide example, let's say you are driving your tourists through a fairly open area of land. Suddenly you come to a fork in the road. Without acknowledgement, you veer right onto a bumpy, plant encroached area. Without adequate preparation, some of the tourists may become nervous and wonder if you are going the right way. They may question your credibility as a guide.

This confusion can be avoided by announcing your turn. Let the audience know you're changing directions, and they'll sit back and leave the driving to you.

Now, let's switch roles. Ask yourself how you would like to remember a safari trip. Would you take pictures? Record a video? Keep a journal? You probably would want something to remind you that you were there. As a speech maker, you can provide this service to your audience at the end of your speech simply by reviewing the journey.

By summarizing the main attractions, you give the audience a sense of closure and completion. Instead of abruptly whisking the tourists back to their hotel before they realize what's happening, make it a more memorable experience by reminding them of what they saw on the tour.

In speech making, a summary is created by restating the main points and concluding the ideas presented. This wrap-up technique gives the speaker a second opportunity to make her points and allows both speaker and audience to feel as though they have come full circle.

One of the keys to successful speech making is giving the audience a map or itinerary of your presentation by using guiding techniques at the beginning, middle and end of the speech.

And remember this old tour guide adage: "Tell 'em where you're gonna take 'em, take 'em, and then tell 'em where you took 'em." T

Kim L. Whiteside is a member of Towers Talkers Club 7047-24 in Omaha, Nebraska.

"When you introduce your main points to the audience, you prepare them for what's to come."

How to Be a Friend In D

Doing something small is better than doing nothing at all.

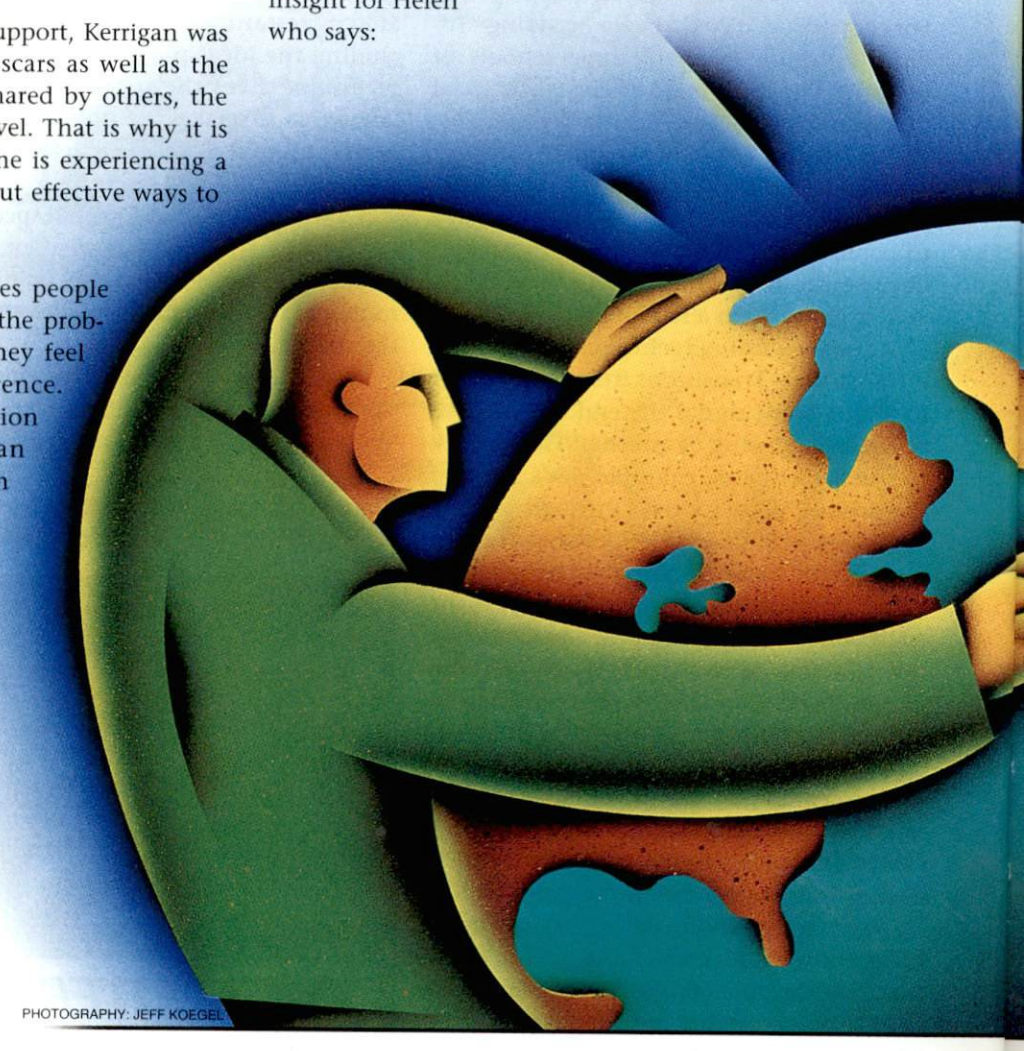
After Olympic ice skater Nancy Kerrigan was brutally bludgeoned on the knee at Cobo Arena in Detroit last year, she returned to the sanctuary of her family and home near Boston to mend. Her knee healed relatively fast – the emotional trauma took longer to conquer. However, she was helped tremendously by the great emotional support of thousands of people. Friends as well as strangers sent letters of encouragement. By the time Kerrigan arrived at her home, she was greeted by a stack of cards and letters on the hall table, some with envelopes decorated with children's drawings. Kerrigan read aloud from one of the letters: "We are so thankful you weren't harmed. We both know how difficult it can be to live in the public eye." It was signed by Nancy and Ronald Reagan.

As a result of that outpouring of support, Kerrigan was able to deal with the psychological scars as well as the physical injury. When suffering is shared by others, the impact is reduced to a manageable level. That is why it is important to reach out when someone is experiencing a crisis or trauma. Here are six simple but effective ways to be a friend in deed to a friend in need:

1 Offer a "half-straw." Many times people hesitate to act and help because the problem looks large and intimidating. They feel their assistance will make no difference. Offering a "half-straw" is a recognition that doing something is better than doing nothing at all. This was a lesson learned by Helen through her teenage daughter Lisa. Helen had spent the day touring nursing homes for her father who suffered from Alzheimer's disease and could no longer care for himself. The experience was emotionally draining and she returned home that evening quite discouraged and depressed. A phone call during dinner brought her more bad news: Her eldest son had been hurt at work and was in a hospital halfway across the country. Dinner was tasteless. Afterward, Helen was greeted by water all over the kitchen floor, caused by a leaky dishwasher.

Consequently, she sat down and began crying hysterically. Her daughter came running to see what happened. Between sobs Helen explained that the dishwasher was broken. Shaking her head in disbelief, Lisa said, "The dishwasher isn't worth all those tears." Helen responded: "It's the straw that broke the camel's back." She went on to explain the events of the day. Lisa pulled out a towel and started soaking up the water on the floor. "I don't know if I can handle a whole straw, but I can take a half straw," she said simply but eloquently.

That was a powerful insight for Helen who says:



PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF KOEGEL

Deed to a Friend In Need

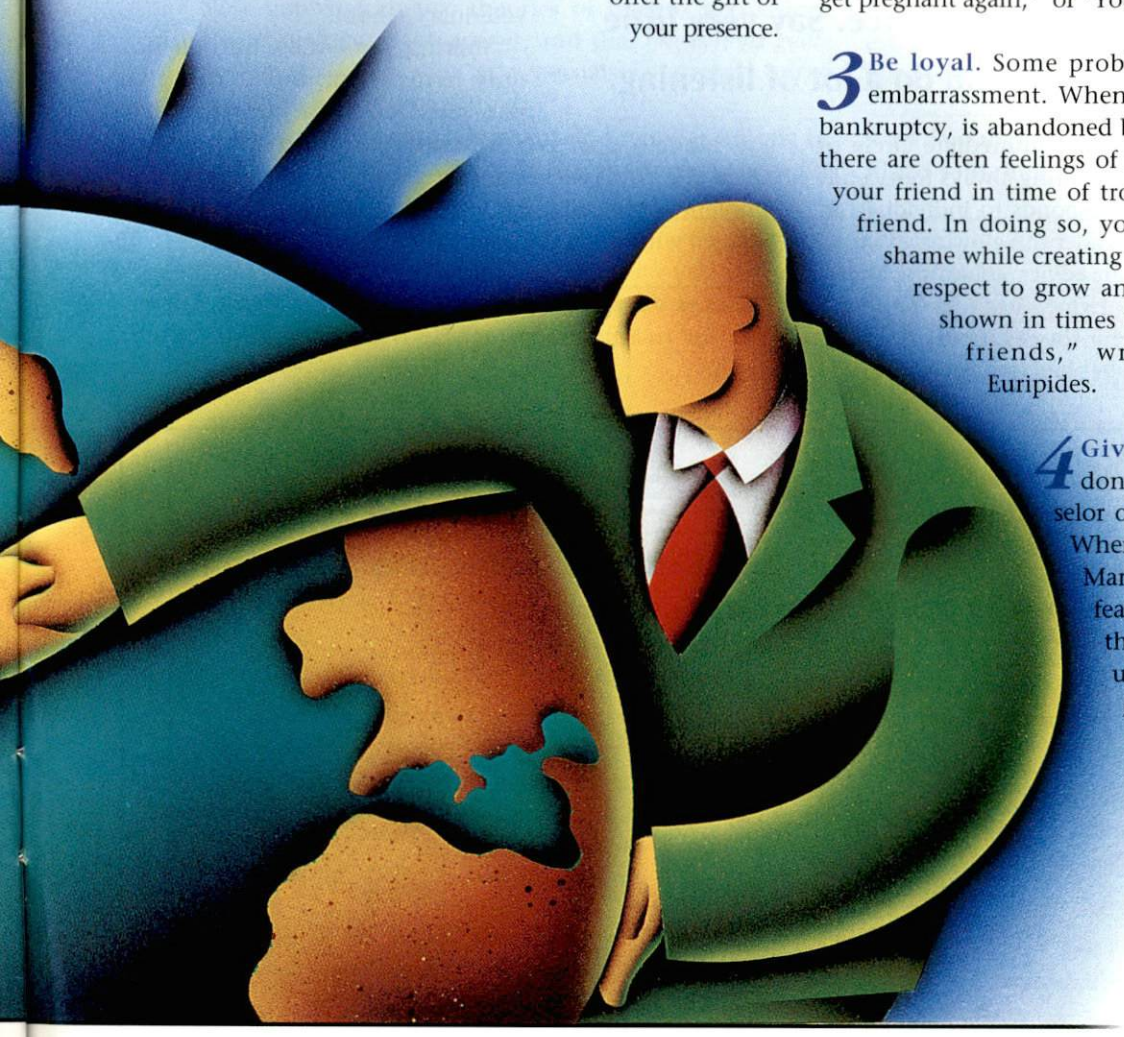
by Victor M. Parachin

"The half-straw Lisa offered was enough. Somehow my problems seemed smaller – I knew I'd find the strength to handle them."

Today, Helen doesn't hesitate to help others. "In the past, when friends and family members seemed overwhelmed by their problems, I'd feel helpless," she says. "I knew I didn't have the resources to solve the problems, so I'd do nothing. I did not understand that sometimes offering a "half-straw" can give someone enough support to survive a struggle or deal with suffering."

2 **Listen more; speak less.** As soon as you hear that a friend is suffering, offer the gift of your presence. Say very little and do a lot of listening. If you must speak, offer brief words of comfort and consolation. Do not use a friend's trial as an opportunity to advise, counsel, teach, admonish, scold, castigate or judge.

Terri, a woman who experienced two miscarriages within a short period of time says, "After each one, I received all kinds of advice from friends, family and co-workers. Most of it was useless," she says. "When you come to see women in my situation, be supportive and allow us to speak openly about our feelings. Resist the urge to recite stories of your loss. We don't want to hear about it. This was our loss, and we want to experience it in our own way." Terri urges friends to suppress the urge to offer trite clichés such as: "It was for the best," "It wasn't meant to be," "At least you can get pregnant again," or "You're young, you can try again."



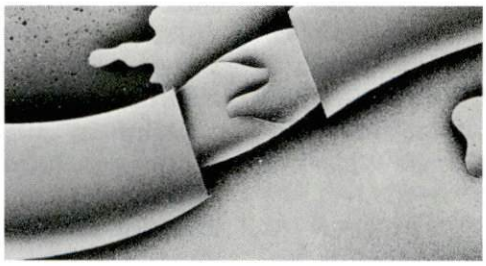
3 **Be loyal.** Some problems cause deep shame and embarrassment. When a person is forced to declare bankruptcy, is abandoned by a spouse, is laid off or fired, there are often feelings of humiliation. Do not abandon your friend in time of trouble. Be loyal. Stand by your friend. In doing so, you will minimize the sense of shame while creating the emotional climate for self-respect to grow and flourish. "Real friendship is shown in times of trouble; prosperity is full of friends," wrote ancient Greek writer Euripides.

4 **Give practical assistance.** You don't have to be a trained counselor or clinical psychologist to help. When you see a need, meet it. How? Marian Crawford, 73, was recently featured in a magazine as "one of the nation's most dedicated volunteers." The Vermont great-grandmother gets up at 5 a.m. each day to drive to the homes of several elderly neighbors, whom she helps bathe or shower and then prepares breakfast. "Older people like to remain in their own homes," Crawford explains. "I saw a need to help some of them." In the afternoon, she returns to do laundry,

vacuum, go grocery shopping or take someone to a medical appointment. After spending part of the evening with her husband, Walter, she bakes bread. "I do about 100 loaves at a time," she says. "The next day, I take them to the people I visit." At 73, her philosophy is simple and sound: "We only pass this way once, and while we're here we should do all the good we can."

5 Help in spite of the inconvenience. Helping another person can be costly. It takes time, effort and energy to reach out and help lift a burden. Sometimes it is difficult and inconvenient to respond when a need arises. Yet, the effort makes a difference in the life of the person receiving the support.

A career army officer in California once rearranged his entire work schedule to attend the funeral of his best friend's father in New York. "Can you imagine," the grieving friend confided to family members, "my college roommate flew all the way from California at his own expense to be at father's funeral. I'll never forget that!"



"...offer the gift of your presence. Say very little and do a lot of listening."

6 Remember the stranger. Help should be extended beyond the immediate circle of family, friends and colleagues. True caring always transcends the circle of familiar people and responds to individuals in pain whoever they might be. Consider the glowing example of a young woman who wrote an advice columnist asking for help to thank a stranger who treated her with profound kindness. "I will remember him for the rest of my life," the young woman declared. This is what had happened:

In the spring of her final college year she flew from California to Washington state to be interviewed for admission to a veterinary school. She had two hours from her arrival at the airport until the time of the interview. Upon landing she went directly to the rental car agency's desk where she planned to pay for the car with her credit card. She had carefully mailed her monthly credit card payment five days earlier so her new charges would clear. To her shock the credit card transaction was rejected. She had no other form of payment. Furthermore, she was planning to pay for her motel room with the credit card. The young woman was stranded at the airport with no money. Crying, she raced to a phone booth and called her roommate in California. While she was still on the phone, a gentleman came up to her, tapped her on the shoulder and handed her a one hundred dollar bill. Then he disappeared. That anonymous benefactor not only enabled her to arrive on time for the interview, but made it possible for her to enter veterinary school.

Sharing someone's burden not only helps them, but it can give you satisfaction of knowing that you made a positive difference to a hurting person. Although the assistance you give may not resolve the problem completely, the load is lightened so that life can be lived with more hope and less fear. Ⓣ

Victor M. Parachin is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to this magazine. He lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Exploring Persuasion
Continued from page 21

change the *label* of the emotional symptom from "nervous" to "excited and ready."

Remember, *individuals use their behavior and cues from the behavior of others to infer the nature of their own unexplained emotions.* If the young baseball player feels that the explanation he is given is consistent with his emotional symptoms, he is likely to *persuade himself* to accept the label of his emotional state. As a "persuasive speaker" talking to her "audience" of young baseball players, does Jill think the label "scared" or "excited" is of most value to the boy and to the team, and to the way they think about each other?

"Sometimes you can persuade audience members that they feel more strongly about something than they thought they did."

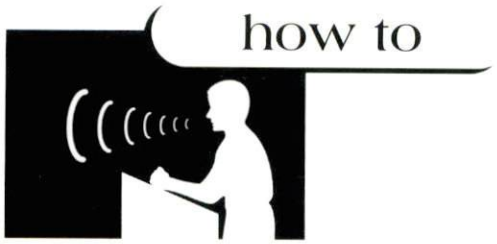
Now you've seen two theories of human persuasion: that *our beliefs guide our actions,* and that *our actions guide our beliefs.* How can you, as a persuasive speaker, know when to use which theory?

In general, the more important and familiar a topic is, the more likely it is that an audience will have analyzed it and established a set of goals, beliefs and values around it. In such a situation, an audience will be receptive to a speaker who can identify specific choices and show why they are consistent with goals and values held by the audience. *(Our beliefs guide our actions.)*

On the other hand, the less familiar and less important a topic is, the less likely it is that the audience will have given any thought to it. In those instances, audience members are very likely to evaluate their actions and the reactions of those around them and then label emotions and form values and goals based on their observations. *(Our actions guide our beliefs.).*

As a persuasive speaker, your job is to inspire your audience to take action. Sometimes you can do that by persuading them that the action is in their own best interest. But don't forget... sometimes you have to let the audience persuade themselves!

Mark Boylan is a member of Rise and Shine club 3505-15 in Idaho Falls, Idaho.



THE Q&A SESSION

They won't throw tomatoes...but it will probably hurt just as much.

by Marjorie Brody

Your worst nightmare is about to come true. You have just completed your presentation thinking that it went pretty well and now you're gearing up for the final phase, the question and answer period.

You're looking around the room, hoping to see a smile, a friendly face, a sympathetic someone with a raised hand. But that's not what appears in front of you. Instead, you begin to sense hostility. No one is smiling, and the first question just about knocks your breath out. Your stomach falls to the floor as your try to think of the right answer, but as you begin to hem and haw and sweat, your audience begins to leave the room.

But, wait. Let's backtrack for a minute. Could you have saved this situation? What steps could you have taken to make sure you were prepared for this "worst case" scenario? All too often, a dynamic speech is ruined by a poor performance during those crucial last minutes of the presentation when the question and answer period is held. And the usual reason for this is simple — poor preparation, or no preparation at all. Many speakers feel so confident about their subject that they believe they will be able to "wing it" successfully at the end. In more than 20 years of experience as a speaker and trainer, I rarely have found this to be true.

Although you cannot plan for the question and answer period as precisely as you can for your own presentation, you can be prepared and know how to cope with a hostile audience. Here's how to prepare for a question and answer period – whether your audience members have their teeth bared or are smiling at you.

BE PREPARED

Know your subject, and know it cold. Nothing will be found out quicker than a speaker who doesn't know what he or she is talking about. Your preparation should include anticipating who will be in the audience, what questions they are most likely to ask and why they will ask them. This is common practice for lawyers preparing witnesses and essential procedure for politicians before a press conference or debate. Some questioners will

ILLUSTRATION: JEMART

attempt to put you on the spot as they try to show off their own knowledge or impress their boss or co-workers. By learning about your audience in advance, you can be prepared with information to help reinforce your message. Of course when speaking before a large group, it may not be possible to anticipate what you will be asked. But as long as you know at least as much, if not more, about your subject than your audience does, your confidence level should carry you safely through even the roughest interrogation.

KEEP IT SHORT

Even though you have a wealth of information to share with your audience, don't forget that the "Q & A" period is not the time for a lengthy discourse. Answer the questioner as briefly and succinctly as possible. Save some information for follow-up questions. With a long-winded response you run the risk of boring the rest of the audience. If you feel it is appropriate, tell your questioner you will be available after the presentation to give a more detailed answer.

DON'T GET DEFENSIVE

If a questioner asks you something you don't know, never, ever try to bluff you way through. I guarantee you'll be found out. The best answer is an honest one. Simply say, "I don't know the answer to that question, but I will find out and get back to you if you give me your name and address at the end of this session." Then make sure you do follow up. An honest answer may not necessarily calm a hostile questioner, but you will look good in the eyes of the rest of the audience. Here are some tricks to diffuse hostile questioners:

- Rephrase the question before answering – this gives you some extra time to formulate your response.
- Use the question as a way to reinforce your views.
- Instead of getting defensive, use humor or a short anecdote to lighten the mood.
- If you can't answer exactly what you were asked, talk about an aspect you do know about.
- Don't take hostility personally – and don't let the situation get out of hand. Stay calm and focused and above all, be courteous to the questioner.

"If you can't answer exactly what you were asked, talk about an aspect you do know about."

MAINTAIN CONTROL... AND KEEP YOUR COOL

All successful question-and-answer periods have something in common: The speaker maintains control of the room. You don't want to appear stern or unapproachable, merely in control. This requires you to be prepared and to use finesse when answering. Use this time as a chance to get to know your audience better, to share useful information with them and to let them get to know you. A successful question and answer session helps you end your preparation on an upbeat note. And when you've learned to deal successfully with hostility, both your audience and you will be winners. Ⓣ

Marjorie Brody is president of Brody Communications, Ltd., a communications consultancy specializing in presentation skills training in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

hall of fame

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