

21st CENTURY

SPEAKING:

Power

Toward Every Goal

by

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21st Century Speaking: Power Toward Every Goal.

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Dedicated Gratefully

to the international friends and peers,

teachers, students and audiences

who keep teaching me

21st CENTURY SPEAKING

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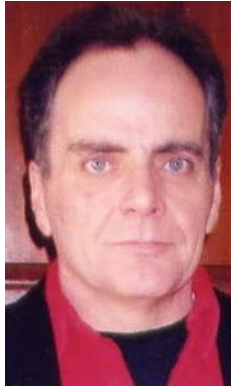
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JACK DEMPSEY (b. 1955) grew up near Boston and became a writer, editor and public speaker in New York City educational publishing. Since his 1998 Ph.D. from Brown University, he has published four books on Native and Early America (called “required reading” by the journal *Ethnohistory*); produced documentary-films and educational events, consulted with National Public Radio, and built new curricula through 17 years of teaching at Brown, Wheaton College and Bentley University.

Dempsey delivers multimedia programs for professional, school and community audiences. Recent works include *Calendar House: Clues to Minoan Time from Knossos Labyrinth* (2010) and a collaborative website, *AncientLights.org*. His latest talk was the Keynote Address for “Living With The Land,” a 2010 public symposium that brought together ecologists, businesspeople, community leaders and citizens in Orange, Massachusetts.

Who doubts that we can produce, from this city alone, almost innumerable excellent commanders---while we can number scarcely a few who are eminent in speaking?...Who can suppose that...there is any other reason to be found for the small number of orators than the incredible magnitude and difficulty of the art?

--- Cicero, *De Oratore*, or, *On the Character of the Orator* (c. 55 BCE)

A skillful Angler ought to be a general Scholar, and seen in all the liberal sciences as a Grammarian, to know how to write out discourse of his Art in true terms, without affectation or rudeness. He should have sweetness of speech, to persuade....He should have strength of arguments, to defend and maintain his profession against envy or slander. He should have knowledge in the Sun, Moon, and Stars....He would not be unskillful in Music, that whenever either Melancholy, heaviness of thought, or the perturbations of his own fancy stirreth up sadness in him, he may remove the same....He must be full of love, both to his pleasure and to his neighbor....Then he must be liberal, and not working only for his own belly, as if it could never be satisfied: he must with much cheerfulness bestow the fruits of his skill amongst his honest neighbors, who being partners of his gain, will doubly renown his triumph.

--- Gervase Markham,
*The Pleasure of Princes, or
Good Men's Recreations*, 1613

Begin Here:

Speaking Power Leads to Every Goal

What is powerful speaking? Citizen or student, business-person or teacher, politician or pundit---three powers converge in speech that moves us. A scientist's loyalty to facts everybody can see; a scholar's seasoned wealth of ways to see them; and, a poet's skills with language and the body. It brings truth into our midst, whose answer is action.

You have this within you. Whatever your goal, it's time to unlock and unleash the dimensions and rhythms of your unique music. Music, the world finds hardest to resist.

Nature gives each being a voice. What you develop in yourself becomes your message. Bring those together, and your speech makes things happen. For power is the sum of all the resources you can apply toward your goals: its proof is your results.

Yet people fear public speaking more than death. A speaking disaster seems like a social death: being judged as incompetent in the subject and/or its delivery. In contrast, we know a first-rate speaking event by its *magnitude*---the burdens, challenges and risks taken on, and the speaker's level of success in direct spite of them. Even in grave situations, a great speaker's homework and practice turn their confidence into achievement---into substance with *style*. They're *at play*.

That's where we want to go. The way you speak either helps or holds you back---in business, education, and social life.

These methods draw from 25 years of experience and feedback, from public to academic and media audiences. They keep developing as I observe and adjust according to results among clients and university students, who describe themselves as newly empowered to work toward their own goals (more than 1000 people in 17 years, including Brown University, Wheaton College and Bentley University). It was their achievements that produced Bentley's Gregory H. Adamian Award for Teaching Excellence in 2010.

These techniques have produced results against challenges from impediments to forms of needless self-inhibition. They can also empower people who come to English as a second language. Human identity is tightly tied to language (Chapter 4). So we work on ourselves when we work on how we speak: we grow by the effort.

Don't fear (or be surprised by!) the abilities you unlock---if you're ready to go back to basics with patience and determination. You didn't learn to drive at 85 mph. We start afresh as speakers---Slow it down, clean it up, and then build toward our unique best.

If you go to the gym but don't work out, you waste your time. These tools and processes demand honest attention to detail and critical feedback. You'll need real homework and humor that both abominate fakery; plus, the will to *Practice Aloud*.

No one can please everybody. You can learn how to move more people all the time. The skills are the same for one or a million listeners.

When you **A)** *visualize and experiment* toward the speaker you want to be, and **B)**, *process your results and feedback into new habits*, you make

language rewire your brain. It can be tough, and it's always worthwhile. With equal speed, it gets easier and more rewarding.

First we identify, attack and clear the small disempowering habits that we fall into or inherit. On a solid foundation of "clean" speech, we then take firm creative hold of the powers that flow *through* us.

What are the stakes? Take charge of your speech, and you live a life more likely to unfold according to your desires. In the midst of all that language does to shape and compel us, there are ways to ride, steer and guide that wild river toward our own particular goals.

Let's go!

1

Performance Anchors: or, Fast Steps to Fundamental Confidence

Performance Anchors are basic elements of excellence that every public speaker must have. Starting right here, you must *deal for real* with each basic aspect. One point at a time, be 100% sure you have conquered this first Chapter each time you speak. Do that, and right away you stand out from the herd, *without seeming to try*: the world's first clues of your first-rate standards in all things.

Basics first. This Chapter is a primary check-list to apply every time you get ready to speak. **Conquer a few basics, and then your brain and your style are 10 times more free of the petty obstacles and worries that hold back your real powers.**

Your New Motto, the Bottom Line of Confidence:

ANYTHING BUT HOMEWORK CAN GO WRONG.

You're in the audience as a speaker falls right on his face before the first word. But he gets up and delivers a talk that changes the world before your eyes. There's no doubt of the substance in the style. You take it home because it gives you more real command of the subject. So, what do you remember of the evening? The power of the talk.

It's the same each time you speak. Above is your new motto and new **first assumption** as a speaker. Let's explore why. First:

Nothing changes about the world when you get up to speak.

You feel safe when you're in the audience. You're with, and hidden by, a group. Its eyes are fixed on someone else. You sit in the chair of a judge, with (of course) your own perfect calm mixture of wide-awake open mind and intelligent skepticism.

You pity and admire a speaker just for being up there, so exposed, but going for it. Most people in an audience are more or less like this.

They do not disappear or turn vicious when **you** get up there.

Remember that "you" are still in the audience---all those curious and mostly-supportive people as real as yourself. If you **A)** know what you're talking about, and **B)** work with all your best practice behind you to communicate, nothing that matters can detract from your effectiveness.

From now on, speak with this first fact in your bones.

From hecklers to bomb-scares, *Anything can go wrong and do you no harm as a speaker---if you meet the essentials for which you are responsible* in a first-rate speaking event.

What are those responsibilities?

HOMEWORK, & PRACTICE ALOUD

Homework and Practice Aloud work together in a circular process that grows more powerful each time you come through it.

Homework is the process by which you discover (and learn how to demonstrate) answers to questions that people can judge for themselves. It's all to your confidence and power that most people work the opposite way---starting with an opinion built from unexamined assumptions, and shoring it up with a few select authorities.

There are criteria for demonstrating Homework (to come). Here, understand that Homework enables you to demonstrate *substance*---a reasoned and real contribution to your subject. All the tricks of language go to hide this when it's lacking. When substance is there, you can't lose.

Homework answers three questions in clear solid terms:

A) What facts, and varying views of them, do people need to grasp this subject?

B) What *must* they have learned when they forget 85% of what you've said and shown? And,

C) How does each part of the content drive that home?

Practice Aloud brings the physical body to bear on the brain-work above. Half of a powerful speaking experience is a physical event. So you **absolutely must** include Practice Aloud to make the most of its benefits.

How can you claim them?

You can think all day and write all night. *Words* will go round and round and convince each other (and finally, you) of their deep sense. Then, when you speak them **aloud**---especially to someone else---you instantly know what's good, and what has to be far better.

Ernest Hemingway called the human ear "a one hundred percent foolproof crap detector." When you sit in an audience, you instinctively

know fluff from substance. So, stop letting go of that skill just because it's now you who is speaking. When you know that a sentence or point isn't good enough, face the message and take real action.

Your ear is not only your best merciless editor. It's part of your body, which---as the complement of your scientist's brain---is the artist in your speaking style, who brings every perfect nuance into the event.

Much more to come on how that works and happens and grows. First, recognize another way that **Practice Aloud** empowers you.

The human brain in some conceptions has two sides---again, the cool rational scientist and the emotional, intuitive artist. So, at any given time along your day and preparation process, you're in one mode or the other. (Sleep is a third mode, too: go over a talk just before your day's rest, and next morning you bring a sharp editor to work.)

Make an ally of this by doing your Homework and Practice Aloud at different times, in different moods, and in different environments. (You can call it Mood Editing.) It seasons your speaking with all the different aspects of yourself. Some sessions improve content, and some improve strategies, rhythm and style.

Each Homework/Practice cycle tells you how to grow more powerful. The main points here:

***Anything but homework can go wrong.**

***The audience is as ready for me as I was for other speakers.**

***I've done my absolute best homework. I have diligently practiced aloud again and again.**

***On these grounds, I have earned an expectation that I can trust:
Whatever happens, it's going to be my best.**

Basic Performance Anchors: Next Steps

Switch On

You don't have to be a perfect speaking being. Half of language is about the pleasures of bonding. We go crazy unless we have places to talk without rules and high-end standards.

The point is to know the difference that most people don't. There are times for pure play, and times when you speak to advance your life---to land a business loan, to meet the dean, or deliver substance to your peers. Not to mention interpersonal affairs.

From now on---in Practice Aloud, and before you aim to speak with power---raise a hand to your temple, and turn on a **Switch** there.

When the Switch is on, we speak only our best.

Your Switch puts an end to habits that rob you of power:

Most of all, waste in our words. If you have 250 words to impress the world, but 170 are "Like," "Um," and/or "You know," it's over. These **dead-air** sounds have other guises, too---for example, "Well," "So," "Then," and "And" itself.

Dead-air noise is a plea, the crudest of place-holders in a talk. What it speaks is lack of real confidence. Does blank meaningless noise between words and sentences keep people listening? In fact, the opposite is true (more on this).

Difficult, but crucial---The Switch also means no more of the “**Question Tone?**” Some call this “Up-Talk?”---when the tone or arc of every phrase? and sentence? seems to be posing a question? Worse, it sounds timid? Tentative, and immature?

“They say it’s going to rain today?” “I think you’re on fire?” “You make a brilliant point?”

See Middle Voice below for more on getting rid of Up-Talk. First, here’s how to create a Switch that’s strong and reliable:

Pause More, with a Breath; Work in Shorter Sentences; and, Slow It Down. Start “high” in your voice-range, and end each sentence low. The richer style you want will return (or grow), but without these killers.

Accomplish one “clean” sentence at a time. Start from the higher “bright” end of your range, and you have nowhere to go (short of comedy or hysterics) **except** down in tone to the finish. It gets easier fast, and the differences make you want more.

Deal with these small problems, and you stand out in every group in both diction and rhythm. You draw the world in without seeming to try.

Start from where you are. A dictaphone or recorder will not lie about where you need work in the basics. *Put your Switch on*---and leave yourself some long phone messages. Talk about your day or a movie, tell a story or a joke. Then call back a day later---and be honest about how clean or “noisy” your best speaking presently is.

Two very important tips about your Switch:

A) Your Switch goes on just *before* you start speaking, and stays on until *after* you sit down again---especially through deceptively-informal Q&A, Discussions or Interviews!

B) If you tell a story that includes **dialogue**, be sure to use “He/She **said**”---or better, action verbs (for examples, “yelled,” “whispered,” “announced”). **Never** use “He/She **was like...**” or “He/She **goes....**”

These Anchors work together to root your performances in confidence. The Switch is a commitment to speaking powerfully or not at all. With groups, I interrupt a speaker when their Switch quits, and ask them to pause and start again. I wish you could hear their peers’ applause when they clear a problem. And I know they’d clap the same for you.

Alas, I’m not there to annoy you directly till you change. So these next Anchors of equal import show you more of how to install, maintain and strengthen a Switch of your own.

Breathe!

When early humans hid from predators, they held their breath. We became hard-wired to stop breathing when afraid. So it’s easy to see why people “go blank” just before or during a talk.

If you cut off oxygen to your body and brain, they interrupt *whatever* you’re doing to demand more. If your mind goes blank before or during a talk (in spite of your best homework and practice), check this first. You likely need deeper, more sustained, rhythmic breathing.

In starting practice (with Switch on), take at least 10 long deep breaths (part of **Grounding**, next section). You’ll feel your nervous system calm down, flush with a fresh oxygen supply. Then, after each sentence, take another deep breath to fuel the next.

Meet this constant need, and you free up brain-cells to help with what matters. Like a poet, you gain a natural (breath-based) rhythm in the way your sentences unfold. And, you demonstrate (without seeming to try)

the confidence to take your time. Plus, a slower pace lets your listeners savor every word and inflection of your talk---the mark of a person sure of the value of their talk.

Grounding

Life animates us with wild (hard to control) electro-chemical energies. Speaking makes bio-energies surge. Ignore or deny them and they cause (at least) a stiff locked-down posture, that fails anyway to control them. They create nervous “tics” that disconnect the body from a talk’s intended messages (rocking in place, tapping a pen, fishing in pockets, toying with hair, crossing feet). These distract your audience and yourself. There’s a better way.

The point of Grounding is to find your own physical, bodily ways to rise to and integrate life’s crazy energies into your performance.

It’s time to speak. You’ve done the Homework and Practice. Your Switch goes on. Your Breathing is deep and rhythmic. And still you feel over-charged with abundant but uncontrollable nervous energy.

Imagine those forces as a magnificent horse that nothing in the world can tame or hold back. This horse is coming your way, right past you---or, over you if you block its path. What do you do?

Start running in the same direction---and jump on! You don’t stop it, or miss it. You rise to it, match its pace and power, become one with it. From there, it carries you like pure inexhaustible energy toward your goals.

How? You must physically explore, identify and do what works for you: your own best bodily ways to rise to and integrate (rather than resist or hide) this source of power.

With decades of classes and public talks, I still need that Switch and deep Breathing. And, I **ground**: clap my hands and/or slap them to my sides, or shake fists on the air. When I can, I sing out, or strut a few measures of music that I call kick-ass. Waiting visibly on a stage, I gently wring my hands, or open and close them from tight to loose and stretched. I breathe even more, police my best posture---**and see myself still sitting in that audience.**

Yet, there's always more crazy energy left over. To that I give myself in getting up to speak (what choice is there?), and it fills the first minutes with a *Let's Go* enthusiasm.

Life's energies enable and empower you. So, welcome them in. **Get Playful.** You've got it when you "shake it off" like an athlete, and **no longer feel divided between a top-form speaker and a nervous animal.**

There is only you, "psyched" up into a full-alert state with a calm, poised, ideally-playful center. You're good, you have earned the right to know it, and you're ready for the room, whatever the outcome.

What **physical** acts lift **you** up and keep you in that state? Athletes smack and smash into each other. In their state, it feels good.

Find your own private experimental space, and:

Imagine---You're on in less than 5 minutes. You need that high-alert state with a calm core, now. You want to be the center of a storm.

Let your body do what it needs to do---until you and that nervous body are one being. Clap. Jog in place. Trust the level where this feels good, and learn to go there by refining what worked.

Each time you hit this state, claim the reward: consummate it with a smashing delivery of (for example) a song, a poem or some magnificent language that makes you feel alive.

There are more ways to know when your Grounding rituals work. Nothing improves your speech more than experience and experiment.

Create a question that needs answering where you are. Do the homework and offer your peers a talk about the findings. Afterward, invite tough feedback on two fronts: How well did your message itself get through? And what were the strong and weak aspects?

Experiment with these Anchors in all your different speaking situations: dinner table, workplace and with peers.

Observe---and each time, connect the Grounding-actions used with your best results. What worked for you: slapping hands to your sides? A few jumping-jacks? The whole process guides you to the best few.

Above all, welcome that wild horse. Rise to the riding of it. Summon and deliberately match (**release and allow**) its powers---It's You. Jump on, hang on and let it carry you through that talk. You mean business.

Homework. Practice Aloud. Switch On. Breathe. Ground. With these first 5 Performance Anchors, we move toward guiding our raw living powers to our goals.

Let's backtrack for one moment. If you take the floor as a jumpy and unsettled presence, work again through the first Anchors to avoid this first impression. Deal for real with them, or they sap away power.

If you settle down into your best style *after* the first few minutes---having realized that nobody threw anything at your head---realize that **A)** There's a need for more Breathing and Grounding beforehand; and, **B)** You want to know more about what creates your best.

What **are** you feeling by the time you hit your best? Consider yourself lead singer in a band: it's got to be your best from the first. From here on, that is the level where you need to start speaking every time.

Identify what kinds of Grounding bring you to that state, and apply them. The reward for all this "pre-game" is that in every different speaking circumstance, you have your own sure Anchors for success.

Middle Stance, Middle Voice, Middle Face

These Anchors are three simple norms---of body, sound, and demeanor---which you establish in your own way, and then from which you depart and return throughout a talk. Begin from these basics, and then the ways you play upon them become the basis of your art and style.

Middle Stance is a strong relaxed posture with feet slightly apart, arms still and loose at your sides. Begin from here, and you wipe the whole expressive slate clean for yourself and the audience.

It only takes a moment if you wish. Then, if you have Grounded yourself properly, every change of footing and gesture that you make, to vary this "blank slate" of a norm, is one of two things.

It's either **A)** natural and unconscious to you, but still appropriate to what you mean; or, **B)** a deliberate and artful element of meaning, emphasis and expression.

Plato and Cicero created catalogues of moves and gestures that evoke certain meanings or emotions with the body. "Hands out on the air" often amplifies a question or a plea. A few strides toward one part of the audience add drama (if appropriate to meaning) on all sides. Arms akimbo can declare a decisive point: a look up, exasperation.

Start to notice and keep a list of moves and gestures you find especially effective---in dance and sculpture, painting, film and theatre, performance, talks and more.

Try them where they might match your meanings. For example, in the margin of your outline for a talk's points, make a note to try one deliberate gesture with each main point. All that's unique to you will make them yours. At the same time, you raise the odds of connecting with different people in an audience who know a like physical language, and with those who key most on visual messages.

Middle Voice is your own comfortable middle range or normal tone of voice---loud and clear enough to be heard by every person where you speak. Push it out from your lower diaphragm, with purpose-anew, for each new sentence. Soon, it's second nature.

In formal circumstances, this means a volume like a lawyer's in a court. In closer settings, it means a bit louder than normal, too. The common-sense standard is that everyone can hear each confident word.

Middle Voice works in the same way as Middle Stance. You establish a "normal" basic tone, and then depart and return to create effects that enrich your talk with levels of meaning.

By all means (again)---Breathe, and Begin each sentence "high" in your range, to end it "low." Make each new sentence flow gently downward in tone, like a waterfall with three levels. Start high to add

energy: it refreshes a listener's attention. Along the middle, take your time and unfold those first-rate details. Finally, descend in tone and bring the whole meaning home---as if you've arrived at the waterfall's deep pool.

Higher tones conjure suspense, or signal a key question. Descending tones create momentum, authority, gravity: they guide us along a process or to a solid conclusion. They can also set up irony and anti-climax.

Middle Voice reveals how many voices you have, and can acquire. We'll see more of how these three Anchors take great speaking toward music, and more---toward a 3-dimensional symphony.

Middle Face links you powerfully to the Neutrals. Never forget: **the Neutrals are watching**. Neutrals are the major share of almost every audience. (We'll see why.) Neutrals as such are the people most free to decide where truth is among many speakers.

If your face shows a sour, snide look of ridicule as you listen to others or invite them to speak, you tell the Neutrals that you aren't one. If you quote from or talk to others with mockery, the Neutrals see and resent your attempt to bias *them* with your face, tone and treatment. What you try to inflict on someone else tells about you.

Whatever happens in a talk, discussion, debate or argument, your face and demeanor express the same equanimity. You present your best self: a person calm and balanced, seasoned, wide-awake, feeling good---*pleasantly professional*. Focused for work, and flustered by nothing.

We'll return (Chapters 2 & 4) to the Neutrals as powerful speaking guides. Henceforth: **Always present allies, opponents *and* the audience with the same Middle Face** and demeanor---and most of all, if someone attacks you on personal grounds.

Breeze past it (and see Chapter 5). Return to the point that matters *to the Neutrals*. You never go wrong that way, because it's public service. It also drops the indignity back onto its speaker, without your lifting a finger.

Eye Contact for Everyone

This Performance Anchor is as crucial as the others. It helps you every time you apply a simple principle, based (like those above) in a kind of golden mean.

Too much or too little Eye Contact disturbs your connection with listeners. The golden mean is the same if you have one listener or millions. The easy, reliable and effective approach is to make Eye Contact **a constant cycle** through your speaking event.

First, one-on-one talks and interviews. Begin each sentence with eyes (in your Middle Face) connected. Toward the middle of each (or, every other) sentence, as your voice descends, let your eyes blink and roam downward, rather than up or "around"---as if working through a rich reflection. At last with your conclusion, re-establish eye contact: it adds confident emphasis. It says you're ready to go on and open right there to a question or response.

Walk into a larger speaking situation, and you have one goal for Eye Contact: **Start to finish, let not one single person be left out of the event.** Again, the Neutrals are watching.

Locate **the person at each extreme position** of the audience. Create a visual **cycle or sweep** that includes every single person present: side to side, and front to back. Each repeated connection sustains their attention and interest, and links you to the Neutrals.

Henceforth, you **sweep every point (each pair of eyes) between those extremes**. Connect your Middle Face as you can with each person for about 2 seconds: then move smoothly to the next through your cycle. Whether this means moving just your eyes, your head and/or your whole body, do what it takes to sustain this rhythm all the way.

We need to work flexibly with the fact that some peoples and cultures prefer less direct Eye Contact in speaking. Yet in most cases, the world expects it---clear and bold. **Rise** to it.

Can you show what you're talking about, so others can judge it for themselves? If so, you've earned the right to look people first and often in the eye and deliver. Do not be afraid to "scare" them just a little, with the confidence you earned by your Homework and Practice.

After all, they're doing it to you! It's your invitation forward.

Let's see how well you command getting ready for your best. What are the 9 Basic Performance Anchors you just read about?

See how well (in every sense) you can explain each Anchor---aloud, and/or with a listener or recorder.

Each time you get ready to speak, check in with and apply these 9 Performance Anchors in the order shown. And you **will** stand out with the best in every group without seeming to try.

If you need a bit of fear, consider: **These are "only" the speaking standards of tough competitors and would-be peers ahead of you.**

We close with the Basic Anchor that enables the most progress with them all, in the least time---if you invest some.

The Power(s) of The Pause

We learn to drive slowly. First we earn real command over each element: then we bring them together to produce a smooth ride, neither timid nor reckless. With experience, the basics become second nature. We grow **seasoned**, and then cruise at our own speed to our destinations.

Slow, It, Down.

Keep Your Lips Together till you're truly ready to go on. Pause. Breathe, Ground, and ponder in silence. Then resume.

Yes, our world hates to wait. But when you pause, and then deliver exactly the right words, people are grateful for the substance. They appreciate the very rare speaker who shows trust in their patience and respect for their attention-span.

When substance arrives, people forget the wait. Indeed, they come to enjoy the next interval of suspense before something worthwhile.

A Silent Pause is **A)** Safety from careless errors; **B)** Time to breathe and gather what's next; **C)** a subtle confident challenge to your listeners; and, **D)** a part of 3-dimensional rhythm and impact (Chapter 3).

Slow, It, Down. When you Practice Aloud, add in Silent Pauses (and Breaths). At first, you may sound stiff or pompous. That will change for the better. **The point is to regain control---until you command each word, phrase and nuance along the downward tone of each sentence.**

Silent Pauses help the most with all these improvements. They grace and enrich speech. Dead-air noise and pure speed never will.

When Chapter 1 is your Check-List, you're on your way to the confidence that unlocks your real speaking powers.

2

Performance Anchors II: Steps For Standing Out Each Time

Cable TV, and websites where people speak out in their own ways (such as YouTube and YouTube.edu), are gold-mines for learning from the worst and best speakers.

At each end of this chapter---now, and after you work with it---devote an hour to “serious surfing” in each medium. Your goal is to observe nothing but how each communication fails or succeeds.

How many Basic Performance Anchors are involved in each case? Speakers who miss the mark, or in no way stand out, have usually neglected even to think about Basics---let alone the advanced preparations that underwrite confidence, substance and style in the best.

Anchors II presents aspects of preparation which, neglected, bring down even speakers with all the Basics going for them. Here, we turn each challenge into another Anchor for your confidence---if, as before, you deal for real with each in your Homework and Practice Aloud.

1: *Context*

What exactly am I *expected* to deliver in this speaking event? Is it formal or informal, and how do I fit into that---from dress to approach?

Will I work solo or as part of a team? Was I asked to inform, to persuade, to entertain, or some mixture of them all?

Always study first the “outermost” aspects of your next speaking-event. **Then** form your plan to make the most of them.

The more you first understand the circumstances and expectations, the more you can play upon them, for the best results.

How much time do you have? You must Practice Aloud with a clock or timer---to match, or to finish just short of, that given limit. Exceed your time, and you lose every way. It makes you “hurry” in delivery, and/or cuts you off before your most deserved impact.

Mood Editing (Chapter 1) does the most to show you where cuts must come. Save important but not crucial points to open the Q&A.

As part of a team or panel, go out of your way to communicate *beforehand* with all members. Discover where each of you is strongest, and plan how to assist each other in deploying it. No person or army is strong everywhere. In Neutral eyes, it's far better to pass a question on than to fake command of it.

There are more benefits to a cooperative team. **A)** Together, people's individual differences deal better with complexity, and guard against team blind spots (Chapter 4); **and, B)** Opposition finds it harder to isolate and fix upon weaknesses. Instead, strengths keep coming at them from all sides.

2: Audience

Naturally, the scale of your speaking contexts, and the number of people who face you directly from an audience, pull your style toward the

intimate or the grand. (On TV, talk to the camera's millions as one person.) The first goal is not to be pulled into either extreme.

Audience demographics---ethnicities, levels of education and income, etc.---are always worth knowing. They shape the expectations of your audience, so they must inform your approach. In Homework and Practice Aloud, create ways to show that you have stood in their shoes.

In the last analysis, neither numbers nor demographic appeals make or break a speaker. For the Neutrals---like your own cool-headed self in an audience---can see fake intimacies, grandiloquent wind-storms, dirty tricks and patronization. The journo-satirist Stephen Colbert shows this folly in a phrase: "*I will feel the news at you!*" Deliver the truth from your Homework, period. Again:

The Neutrals are watching. In Chapters 4-6 we'll see why they are your best guides and anchors for every contingency. Here, we're going to re-define a word that likely drew you to this book: **Power**.

You rarely see (directly) how your speech most changes the world. It happens **after** the speaking event. The world changes when people go on with their lives but, in changed ways---because of what they learned or what you helped them to realize.

Consider how you as a Neutral reflect on a speaking event. What finally mattered? That A humiliated B? Even if you wholly disagreed with B, odds are good that you found new sympathy for them and so their position; and, new doubts about A. Chapter 5 shows why it's never a good idea to respond in kind to any abuse, trap or ploy meant to do you damage. **Let the Neutrals alone keep score on those levels.**

Did C have incredible style and charisma? Sure. But now that you're out from under C's direct spell, how much of that was substance? Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide ways to discern the differences.

Here, realize a fundamental point.

Speech changes the world **after the event**. Remember this all through, and you guide your treatment of others with perfect civility. What moves the world your way is not dominative short-term power games, but the demonstration of truth that Neutrals can see and later act upon.

3: Homework Criteria

What signs tell you that a speaker knows what they're talking about? They're as sturdy and straightforward as common sense.

First: Is the substance of a speaker's contribution to a subject clearly **Timely and Up-To-Date**, in terms of its best discussions up to this point? It's painful to see a speaker build and support their work with facts and assumptions already significantly modified, or even discredited.

Make friends with librarians. They are there to guide you to the most current sources on any subject. Neglect this concern at your true peril! For you can be sure that your peers and opponents will not.

Second: Is a speaker's Homework clearly **Full and Fair**?

This is to ask: Has a speaker **first** delivered a professionally-thorough treatment of **the facts that all parties already accept**, in the midst of all points of view? And along the way, how well has a speaker let each different view and nuance of those facts be heard?

Timely, Full & Fair. The more positive the answer to each evaluative question, the higher people's judgment will be about the Homework

behind a speaker's substance. For you'll notice here the basics of a "flow chart"---or, Power Formula---that underlies the fundamental form of a powerful talk:

First-rate Homework moves from commonly-acknowledged facts, through varying expert opinions about the facts, to the rendering of your best ("the educated") judgment.

It's a form as old as Classical Greece. It persists because it works. From Chapter 3 on, you'll see more reasons to work this way---if you want to stand out from the start amid a mob of opinions.

4: Form (Practical Aspects)

Just below we'll see Performance Anchors that help to shape a talk in terms of content. Here we deal with elements of Form that either "invisibly" assist the power of your content, or visibly hold it back.

Notes and Eyes: In 90% of speaking situations, it's perfectly OK to hold and refer to some unobtrusive notes. They tell the audience of your care to get every point just right.

A) A note-sheet's size should be no more than half a page of typing-paper. Hold it in one hand, to keep your body free. **B)** Practice Aloud until one glance launches you into the details for each main idea. **C) Never read from notes, nor let them disrupt Eye Contact with the audience.** Create a glancing-rhythm that works **within** the cycle of your Eye Contact.

Materials: A **Hand-Out** with information **in flawless form** has uncanny power to magnetize a discussion. (When people are talking in your terms, you're halfway to success.) Is it practical and appropriate for this next speaking gig? What about **Hands-On Items** that can circulate to help a demonstration? Can you use a **Volunteer** at some point? Are there

aspects of the “hall” or talk’s surroundings that can serve? Appropriate creative ideas add powerful dimensions to a talk.

Tech: Be sure to arrive early at the speaking-place. Meet the people who control audio-visuals, and make sure your speaking aids (a CD of images and charts, for example) are in ready order. At most conferences, you have very limited time to get it done. If setting up Tech takes half your time, the day’s program has little or no mercy.

PowerPoint at best is an **enrichment**. If it helps to **A)** involve people who learn most by visual means, or **B)** adds elements you truly can’t deliver in words, fine. Where PowerPoint is more, your talk is less. People will wait for the screens to change more than they’ll listen to you.

It’s far better to push the powers of your language (Chapter 3) than to lean or rely on images and video-clips.

The main rules of PowerPoint derive from common sense.

Keep it simple. One image and one main point for each screen, supported by the details you point out.

Never---Ever---read what people can read for themselves. Introduce and **discuss** a chosen passage of text. Point to or highlight crucial aspects---and that’s all. If the point is to “See for yourself,” let people do so.

Do not display your talk’s outline as you speak. It makes people impatient for the next point and conclusions to arrive. There’s only one place to show your outline, if you wish---**at the end**, as you sum up and repeat how the main points lead to your conclusions.

Never let the screen disrupt your cycle of Eye Contact.

Do not let controls control you. They keep you glued in place, or hidden by a podium. **After each click**---if you don't have a hand-held clicker or assistant---**walk back out into the most open speaking-space nearest to the audience**, and deliver from there. Each time you come forward, your boldness refreshes audience attention. Each time you return to change the screen, you add anticipation for the next.

5: Bring the Problem In

Remember your motto for speaking confidence: **Anything But Homework Can Go Wrong.** When you do expect that a circumstance or problem beyond your control will affect your success---**Bring It In.** From a technical problem to a personal bias, just **acknowledge it, right up front.** Ask the audience to work with you in spite of it.

Note: This does **not** help any preparation-problem for which **you** are responsible. Never begin with a plea or excuse. Give all you have.

First the simpler situations. How would *you* expect a confident speaker to deal with imminent rain, or a dead P.A. system?

“Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, I am (X-Y-Z), and I'm ready to get into (A-B-C): right here, or in the basement. I know our hosts will keep an eye on the sky for us, so let's get focused on our goals.” **Or:** “No matter! Let me belt this out so every person can hear. Testing!”

Do not apologize for anything. Put a positive solution up-front, and go to work. For example:

A) “I guess we all open one talk with a spill of coffee down the shirt.”

B) “The projector died, but we won't. Let my best language show you each chart or picture, and on we go.”

C) "I expect to survive this head-cold---but I couldn't have wanted more to be here today. So, to start right in...."

If you bear any bias, describe it frankly, up front (next section). As the great journalist Edward R. Murrow once said, "Bias is OK if you don't try to hide it." **Challenge people to watch for and factor in your biases.**

Are you less than confident because English is your second language? I find that international clients who worry this are better than they think: they listen to the worry and their feedback, and **practice**---with a dictionary. Most of them know, for example, that the word *media* is plural (one *medium*: many *media*). Most American journalists do not.

If you hammer your Homework & Practice Aloud, your "accent" or other inflections will not matter to a Neutral. If some words or phrases still challenge you, slow it down. If you need to, repeat them for clarity---It's humility and courtesy.

A wholly hostile audience? "Thank you in advance for hearing me out on this issue. Allow me to do my best, and then I'll be glad to respond to every comment you might have."

What more can you offer? Do this with informed, friendly and calm bravado (Chapters 5 & 6). **Do your dignified honest best, and nobody fair can fault you.**

6: Authority Begins with Hello

Your full name---with warm direct Eye Contact and a firm relaxed hand-shake---is the very first impression you make. As noted, don't get better as you go: Breathe, Ground, and start from your absolute best.

Be sure to make your voice come down in tone on your name's final syllable. You **must** avoid Up-Talk or "the Question-Tone?" (Chapter 1, Switch) in stating this. For awhile as you practice in the mirror 25 times a day, you may sound like a pompous cable-news-anchor. Soon, the sound will say that you mean it and have earned the confidence behind it.

This simple strong first impression---"Hello, I'm X-Y-Z" (**period**)---gains every time if it is a part of:

7: The 1-4 Intro

There are four first questions in the mind of every listener:

- A) Who are you?**
- B) What are you talking about and why?**
- C) What kinds of things are you going to show me (and/or, what methods will you apply) that relate to this subject, idea and purpose?**
- D) What do you expect me to conclude when this is done?**

Launch into a talk without somehow answering those questions first, and you force listeners to speculate---which means less listening.

The 1-through-4 declares, without saying it: **Now that you know my purpose, conclusion, and present relation to this matter, I challenge you to see whether each part bears them out along the way.** Challenge keeps listeners active and engaged. You haven't disadvantaged people by withholding anything. Now they're eager to see all the evidence with which to form their own views---and perhaps to challenge you.

For example:

- (1) "Hello, I'm Dr. Jack Dempsey."**

(2) “Can we discover who most deserves the title of America’s first poet in English? A great and educated country should know.”

(3) “Let’s look in detail down the years of the first Anglo-American writings, and compare each and every contender for this title according to three specific criteria: *First, American, and Poetry.*”

(4) “Then you can judge for yourself where the laurels should go. Personally, I think they belong not to Anne Bradstreet, but to Thomas Morton of Merrymount. So, here comes every scrap of evidence on our question, and some criteria that can guide us to something worthwhile in America’s past. And by the way---When we discuss all this, let me know specifically where any bias of my own comes into play.”

The point is to **deal with fundamental questions before they even arise**. Thus, you give people solid grounds from which to observe freely. Your caliber of suspense doesn’t play simple hide-and-seek.

This approach offers a second strong benefit.

Naturally, your style creates how you’ll accomplish the substance of a strong 1-through-4. Mystery and unpredictable destinations have a place. **The best 1-through-4’s pose a challenge to attention and understanding.** Withholding can arouse suspense---or, needless suspicion. Instead, welcome your listeners to listen and think critically.

Each time you cycle through Homework & Practice Aloud, you understand and trust your own talk more. The cycle edits and sharpens your 1-through-4 till it matches the talk. In return, the talk’s substance fulfills the promise in your introduction.

8: *Creating Form: The Hook, Body & Close*

A sound 1-through-4 can be the best way to hook listeners into your show. Don't fuss over the perfect opening first. The best Hook often emerges only near the end of your preparation process---because there, you yourself are making discoveries.

A strong talk matches inner forces (your content and purpose) with outer ones (its contexts, audience and expectations).

The Hook instantly lays open the **main subject**; the talk's **direction, flavor, style**; and, the **stakes and rewards** of a proper understanding.

Some speakers prefer a Hook that represents one ultimate main idea for the talk---summed up in one memorable phrase, repeated and developed all the way to the Close. Other Hooks pose "the" question about their material, and finding the answers makes even static data come alive, for a question that keeps gaining answers is a kind of story, too.

The first thing a **Hook** demonstrates is the Homework & Practice put in---your energy and your command, combining toward professional play (or, style). Again, the 1-through-4 is an excellent editor, that helps you to locate and precisely state your talk's substance.

Spend time reading, observing, and adapting first lines and Hooks that work best on you and on your peers. *How* does each one work? How can you borrow that structure or tactic in your own terms?

Your energy and command must fill the **Close**, too---the Hook & Close are your **first and final expressions** of your substance and dedication. Where they echo each other, the talk between them gains coherence, clarity and force.

Many a Close is far weaker than the Hook. Why? Too many speakers neglect rhythmic Breathing, and/or real, physical Grounding methods. Thus, they begin from sheer nervous energy, and by the Close, it's trailing off like a dynamo running out of fuel.

The classic Close: an echo of the Hook, your best summing-up sentences, a bright Thank You, and an eager invitation to Q&A.

The Body: If your Hook takes 1 minute and your Close demands 4, how much time lies between? With a first-draft outline, lay out your talk's **Body** according to each main idea or "movement" that emerges from Homework. Divide the time evenly, and begin to Practice Aloud.

In Practice Aloud (with a clock or timer), you shape the Body to fulfill your evolving 1-through-4, in all full and fair ways. How much time does each movement really need? How does the purpose of each part tell you what to vary along the way---from time and detail to pace of delivery?

Time-concerns are teachers. If you have 45 minutes, time the talk for 40. Then you can relax, slow down and deliver with more control.

Locate the key points and turns in developing your content toward your goal. (Some call these peaks among plateaus and valleys.)

At each point, **Be generous with phrases that help listeners know where they are, and where they're going.**

For example, "We realize now that A-B-C: so, what confronts us is X-Y-Z." This refreshes people's attention and builds for the conclusion.

Again---**Let your clock and your ear be your best editors.** You must develop the courage to cut. Non-essential words blur meaning and sap power. Cutting adds value and power to what remains. If something really important just won't fit, bring it into Q&A after your talk.

Chapters 3, 4, 6 and 7 offer more on the crunching and creative processes that go into the Hook, Body and Close.

At this Chapter's final point, devote more serious surfing around the cable TV dial or Internet and find public speakers that intrigue you. What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Apply these Performance Anchors to your analyses. How exactly would you have succeeded against an observed speaking problem?

Congratulations! With Chapters 1 & 2 you are mastering Basics that make you stand out in every crowd, without seeming to try.

From here, we reach for higher levels of technique, strategy and tactics that will carry you toward your goals.

3

Senses, Rhythms, & Substance:

3-D Dynamism

Why do some speakers seem to just take over the world onstage? The most consistently-dynamic ones don't rely on mystical charisma.

Rather, to paraphrase James Joyce, life itself is a short space of time in short times of space. Dynamic speakers work **in multiple dimensions at once**---on every level of the human ability to take in information and understand meaningful action.

Each talk is their next attempt to deliver, in spatial terms, a 3-dimensional sensory experience, and a journey in time with a rhythm all one's own. That is also the power of music: the power that makes the world decide to move.

Let's see what fundamentals help you to reach for this.

What's My Music? Play the Alphabet

First, review Chapter 1 on Middle Voice. It's the professional tone you deliver most comfortably in your natural voice---the middle range from which you depart, high-and-low, for expressive effects.

Now, **apply all your Performance Anchors to this new exercise:**

Working aloud, from Middle Voice, say Hello and declare your full name. Then, tell the world what you think and/or how you feel, today, right now---**using only your A-B-C's**. Notice how each tone, each nuanced change and difference, communicates an inner state.

Try this several times aloud with deliberate variations. Ask a listener to tell you in words the thoughts and/or feelings you communicated only through your voice---or, use a recorder (or cell-phone message), and answer in words the same question.

What you hear is a musical instrument, as only you play its extraordinary range. No other instrument alone can communicate more. (This is also a very good Grounding exercise.)

Your voice *always* speaks. It empowers or disempowers your message. So, resolve to make the most of your full range.

As Homework & Practice Aloud clarify each level of your work, your voice joins in to express and enhance them. From understatement and anticlimactic irony to sheer exhortation, **play your voice** like an instrument. It makes your message clearer *and* richer. It's the first of all qualities that turn dutiful delivery into dynamic style.

Senses & Rhythms

Experience is action---a flow of information (how your senses read space, and how you react to/express what they read), structured by our inevitable, time-forward chains of events. (Even "flashbacks" take us forward.)

As a speaker you create *and* become an experience. Each time you step up to speak, you work in those entwined universal terms. Make the most of them and connect with the most people.

Let's learn about each, and then apply them together.

First, forget how obvious it is that strong speech **engages all Five Senses**---and thus, it engages more people who learn in different ways. **Refresh your resolve** to excel at this Basic in every possible sentence.

Where you are, look around with a notebook---and find *the* word or phrase that mirrors a sight; embodies a sound; reproduces the feel of an object; evokes the scents of a certain place, the tastes of a meal.

Make a challenge of "unremarkable" surroundings. Observation, a dictionary/thesaurus, and careful craft in words bring out your poetry. Like any skill, this grows as your results teach you to trust and enjoy your senses. And poetry, like rhythm, is almost impossible to resist.

The more you write out a talk in creating it---and, with Practice Aloud---the more you can craft at least one sense into most sentences, as in each line of the example-passage that follows just below.

Make the most of the senses that most speakers don't: touch, taste and smell. Their challenges demonstrate daring and deft creativity.

Sights, sounds and textures build on, overlap, and qualify each other, to generate power. Craft and clarify your talk in these ways, and people see, hear, feel and sense what amounts to a 3-D symphony. Each sense contributes part of what becomes an experience---a coming-alive "in the round." Together, they **embody** a purpose and a point.

For example:

In the month of June, Anno Salutis 1624, it was my chance to arrive in the parts of New England with 30 servants, and provision of all sorts fit for a plantation. And, while our houses were building, I did endeavor to take a survey of the country.

The more I looked, the more I liked it. And, when I had more seriously considered of the beauty of the place, with all her fair endowments, I did not think that in all the known world it could be paralleled. For so many goodly groves of trees, dainty fine round rising hillucks, delicate fair large plains; sweet crystal fountains and clear-running streams that twine in fine meanders through the meads, making so sweet a murmuring noise to hear as would even lull the senses with delight asleep, so pleasantly do they glide upon the pebble stones, jetting most jocundly where they do meet; and hand in hand, run down to Neptune's Court, to pay the yearly tribute which they owe to him, as sovereign Lord of all the springs. Contained within the volume of the land, fowls in abundance, fish in multitude; and discovered besides, millions of turtledoves on the green boughs; which sat pecking of the full, ripe, pleasant grapes, that were supported by the lusty trees; whose fruitful load did cause the arms to bend. With which, here and there dispersed, you might see lilies, and of the Daphnean tree. Which made the land to me seem paradise. For in mine eye, 'twas Nature's Masterpiece: Her chiefest Magazine of all, where lives Her store. If this land be not rich, then is the whole world poor.

Now read the passage aloud again. Take deep breaths, so that you feel and notice how short, medium and long phrases build into a **Rhythm** that serves a purpose.

You find short, straightforward phrases that establish basic facts. Then (after "*The more I looked...*"), the Rhythm becomes more expansive--- for the purpose is to detail, unfold and reveal America as Morton "more seriously" came to know and experience it.

In this case, the Rhythms carry you deeper (in detail) and higher (in momentum) toward a realization. They lay out plentiful grounds on which people can agree with Morton's conclusion, by the time they reach it---*If there's a paradise, it's like this place.*

Here are some aspects of Rhythm to consider as you craft each part and the full body of your talk:

Speed: How am I using and varying Speed to empower purpose?

Repetition: How many times should I return to an idea or aspect?

Variation: Should each Repetition add emphasis, and/or post a new development of content? What vocal differences *signal* that?

Emphasis: Does the most important content---in a sentence and a full talk---derive more power from *this* position, or from a different one, as the most expressive Rhythms unfold? Should it be first and then qualified or developed? Or last, as part of a forceful summing-up?

Accumulation, or Climax: How do your talk's strong points each provide solid reasons that, together, support its compelling result? As you deliver each part, make clear how it connects to the last one.

A strong argument meets other arguments head-on. Do you want to **pair** each of your points against an opponent's as you work along, so that both accumulate toward your final position? (See below.) Or, is it better this time to restate and confront other views **after** your arguments, and just before the climactic Close?

Let the most appropriate Rhythm **for each part** bring out the best for the whole. Practice Aloud refines and smooths the change-ups---and turns the talk into a dynamic, unpredictable journey with someone who knows where we're going. You discover that you have several strong styles.

On some days of prep time, focus on Sensory Language. On other days, experiment with Rhythm. As they energize your talk in complementary ways, you'll grow eager for the pleasure of sharing it--speaking alive in multiple dimensions.

It's your music.

The Power Formula: Identify, Deliberate, & Judge

Voice-Tones, Senses and Rhythms bring talks alive. There are also less-noticed structures and processes that underwrite and magnify those powers. They make you stand out among speakers who don't use them.

Why? First of all, in societies that value individuality, most people begin a talk with their opinion, and work backward into examples and evidences that support it. The drawback? Having staked their opinion (something personal) in the first sentence, the pressure is on to be "coherent"---which usually leads to over-simplification, or cover-ups.

Working in this direction, the pressure (or emotional concern about "proving right") makes people less scientifically careful about support; and, less willing or able to restate neutral facts and other ways of seeing them, fully and fairly, before refuting them. The more pressure, emotion and personal stake, the more assumptions and blind spots, which make them vulnerable targets. (More in Chapter 4.)

The 1-through-4 Introduction detailed in Chapter 2 also states an opinion: a conclusion that you offer like a challenge (and, if necessary, any

biases) up front. But central facts, and your method of arriving at your view, have come first. A hard-earned, solid 1-through-4 creates a different impression---on you, and on a Neutral audience.

Why? Not surprisingly, the power of content (substance) derives from Homework. Put that on your side, and **lastly** crown it with your view: then you challenge each listener to see how things add up.

To repeat from Chapter 2's third section:

First-rate Homework moves from commonly-acknowledged facts, through varying expert opinions about the facts, to the rendering of your best ("the educated") judgment.

Shape your talk creatively along three steps, and you gain the interconnecting benefits of each phase as you build *and* deliver it.

Identify

First, **Do Nothing But Observe, like a Scientist**. Forget what you "think" or want to be true. Be honest about your goal. Is it to carry one day's water for a side, or to make truth visible in everybody's midst?

Gather every relevant, commonly-accepted fact in the history of a problem or issue---and arrange them in a clear, time-ordered sequence like an outline. Establish your thorough command of this first, because:

Making things happen through powerful speech is not at last personal and charismatic. Weak ideas grow weaker when the rock-star leaves the room.

Rather, the world changes (works differently) through new understandings of facts. If you present "just the acknowledged facts" before any new view of them, you start by connecting with how most

Neutrals see them. Paradoxically then, the most Neutral opening has people already moving “your” way as you go forward.

This is to gain power from what’s already agreed as true. It works with the fact that when people consider an issue in “your” terms, you are already half-way to your goal.

Deliberate

Second, **Do Everything to Become Learned about the Facts. Like a Scholar, process all the expert ways of understanding them.**

This too must be done like a consummate Neutral. You demonstrate it with your practiced **ability to restate** each position: fully and fairly, ideally in its own best documented words, and without a single “comment” of your own.

Continue as in gathering facts: observing, listening and learning, with all belief and “hope” as yet aside. Be sure to keep and study your notes/outline in time-order too. Thus you begin to command both facts and their interpretations as they unfolded, and in relation to each other. Weak positions often use a confused time-order as camouflage.

You can’t help making distinctions as you work. But commit that instinct to **observing, first**, how each understanding matches, critiques and qualifies its predecessors and peers, in the light of acknowledged facts. In what direction(s) is the entire discussion moving? What most-crucial questions have emerged as your own talk approaches?

What aspects must be part of a new contribution? Is there any overlooked strength in a view that most call weak? What are the biases, blind spots and weaknesses in positions that most right now accept?

All this Homework and Practice Aloud trains you to demonstrate a stronger level of restraint and “objective command” (next Chapter) in delivering your talk. Begin with observable facts, and **show** your audience that every possible view of them gives an element of weight to your Close and conclusion.

Sift logically through all positions for your sharpest research-finding. Together, state-of-the-art facts, plus the full range of informed, educated and nuanced views of them, must lead to a compelling judgment: one that ignores no “contradictions” but works with them inclusively.

Judge

Laws---words that shape the common reality in our midst---emerge from this same 3-part process. So does a trial verdict arrive “beyond a reasonable doubt,” and the most accepted science. Facts are gathered. Experts render testimony about them before an ideally-neutral audience. Those people consider all facts and views, and work their way through the dead ends to a stronger grasp of recognized reality.

When the parties reach the best possible consensus, a judgment emerges---in words whose force are their hard-won clarity.

Third: When you know and can demonstrate your finding, go back to the start of your talk-in-progress. If you observed like a Scientist and learned like a Scholar, you’ve earned the power to express your discovery like a Poet.

Poetry is the arranged marriage of words and palpable realities---serious play. Your Homework has generated confidence in what you can show. Confidence and skills born of experience create a speaker’s serious

play with substance. Now you find new ways to trim, shape and color your phrasings, movements and rhythms---from the liveliest Hook, and your relish of each detail of the Body, to your strongest Close.

Try It!

Next chapter we'll see deeper, less-visible reasons why this 3-part process means power in the results of your speaking.

At this point, with all Performance Anchors in play, sit down in front of the most ordinary object you can choose---an old chair, a shoe, a pencil, a light-bulb. This is a fun challenge with other people, but you can also gain from it with a voice-recorder.

The challenge: **Produce the most accurate, lovingly-detailed description of the object that you can muster aloud in words.** Try it, and try again. You might need 100 words at first, and with each try find them growing more essential---concise, yet inclusive and evocative. Now you discover the value of time spent with a dictionary and thesaurus.

Whose or which description is most careful, complete, neutral or "objective" (next Chapter)---and, ultimately artful? What kinds of learning, too, can inform and empower you at this?

Poetry, after all, was the power (eloquence) that first structured civilization. For Cicero, poetry was language crafted to say more than what mere literal words communicate.

Sensual language and rhythmic delivery magnify substance into poetry. Altogether, they make truth about the facts emerge in your

listeners' own minds---and there is no more compelling way to connect with that omnipresent, all-important world of Neutral listeners.

Let's explore **how to anchor and wield these powers in the midst of a relative, subjective universe**: how to **work with** our cosmic predicament, in the midst of most speakers who ignore it at their peril.

4

Points of Speaking-Power in the 21st-Century Universe

The universe is filled with powers that people will never control. You **can** work **with** those powers. Language is one. To work **with** language toward a goal, orators need a clear, sub-atomic grasp of its nature. They have to make allies of its limitations, in the relative universe as it is.

Oratory began long before people understood language; and long before proof arrived that we **are** in a relative universe. Take time to know why those game-changing discoveries matter---and you speak with huge advantages over others who ignore them.

The goal and the reward? First: A knowledge of “where we really are” that can anchor and “center” you even more---in a stormy, confusing sea of subjective human viewpoints, in a relative universe with no apparent center at all.

Second: To be pushed around no more by dinosaurs---those who comfort and aggrandize themselves by pretending they are “objective” or speak universal truth.

Let pretenders fool themselves before an informed intelligent audience of Neutrals. Reality always exposes them, sooner or later.

Back to some existential basics.

Where Am I?

Here is Albert Einstein's answer from his Theory of Relativity:

"Nature is such that it is impossible to determine absolute motion by any experiment whatsoever."

Notice that Einstein doesn't even try to say what the universe (or, nature) *is*. He's a scientist first, then a philosopher. Einstein's first three words mean: *"Whatever nature is, here's a fundamental about it that we can observe, each of us from where we are...."*

In physical terms, all things are in motion relative to each other. Inevitably, each living thing perceives all the others from one limited point of view. And all speakers face the same predicament---creating something to say from experience and study, finding a voice, and putting those to work to communicate toward a goal.

So, real power depends on real learning. For Einstein, that comes only from relentless effort to educate one's limited point of view. To listen and observe---and, in speaking, to factor in as much as possible about other points of view. This is why Cicero found "true orators" rare and important.

Science discovered the relative universe. New understandings followed about language, identity and culture. So again, take time with the next section to find out why those are crucial to an orator today.

Six Big Thoughts, or Why and How Neutrals Guide the Orator

1: We are born into language: it constructs our identity. The orator struggles against the limitations imposed by language and culture---in the visible practices of *trying to be objective*.

You begin without language, in your mother's womb. Between her and you (as a *dyad*), there is no meaningful separation. You exist as one before, beyond or "outside" of language. Her body supplies and responds to every need before you begin to name it. The answer is always Yes.

Language-studies call this realm The Semiotic. In life, it continues to manifest in nature's "automatic" aspects, outside and inside, that support and animate you. The Semiotic speaks without words---in tones of voice and gestures, in eye contact, in the moves and music of a talk's delivery. It either betrays or supports a speaker. It is the physical body of nature within which we act.

After we are born, the senses come alive in the midst of intense mother-child gazing. Your merest noise or movement brings you new kinds of supportive response. Then one day, for some reason---trivial or grave, brief or permanent---it doesn't.

You are separate. Alone. And bounded by your skin, in a body for now all but helpless. Except for one thing: your voice.

Till now, you've only had to moan with lips together: an "mmm" sound. This time, lack and longing (even panic) make you cry out.

Mmmm---Maaaa!

When mother responds, she becomes *Ma*. A word---a sound you made that made the world respond. Word: a sound you make with which the world seems to agree, because it “works.” The word *Ma* suddenly *symbolizes* or represents a real referent in outer reality.

Our brains catch on fast and conform to this tool of survival and empowerment. We learn our way along, from a basis in The Semiotic realm and into what is called The Symbolic. There, we learn to make and combine thousands of sounds already used by our tribe to get something accomplished, from cooperative work to personal expression.

Words become Bonds. They underwrite a culture and express it. But a bond is a two-sided thing. Bonds comfort, and they restrain.

The more we share and master the tribe’s language (its Symbolic or imaginary realm), the more well-being. We feel less alone and can act with more power. But our share of our tribe’s language, in turn, masters us.

The name to which I answer makes me a Subject: another two-sided word. “I” is what speaks from my body; and for some, it’s just another subject of an ongoing power-structure---based in language, those double bonds. Like everyone, I have to speak from within the inevitable subjective boundaries of my skin, native language, and point of view.

Power sells itself as “objective.” But there never was or will be an “objective” human being, because no one sees or speaks from outside the body: no one speaks from “the center” of the web. The claim or attribution is ignorance or lie. **For the orator, what matters are *the visible practices of trying to be objective*.** Further on, we’ll explore them.

So “where you belong” has a double sense too: it’s where you decide, or where power points you. Your unique Symbolic (or culture, or *Imaginary*) is your inheritance of your family group’s past. Come of age,

and you take that inheritance into the world, where you have to communicate with very different others.

2: Your culture orients you to the universe in its own particular way. Some cultures, some individuals imagine that they and/or theirs *are* the universe. But it forever surrounds them, too---an infinity of different kinds of Neutrals.

Every human group hands on a language with a past. A language has multiple roots that create its particularity: a homeland-region's ecology and the group's experience of nature; the memories of group ancestors, the social forms approved and practiced for organizing power; and a given group's literal experiences through time, their history.

Imagine two wholly different groups as they arrive at opposite sides of a broad green meadow that neither has seen before. In the field between them stands a cow, indifferent to both groups.

One group---call them English colonists in America---sees the cow with their own particular history of experience. They see tranquil domesticity, civilization, wealth, all kinds of food and useful things.

The other group---call them Native Americans---has zero experience of cows, and so no word for them. As they experience the consequences of cows in the landscape that shaped them, their word for it evokes wholly different responses: stranger, intrusion, change, damage, threat.

Which group's description of the cow is more accurate? Each group's history shapes how it sees the cow: on those terms, they are equal.

However groups come into conflict or agree about the cow (*i.e.*, the world) in their midst, they both *remain parts of and surrounded by two constant realities*:

A) Nature itself, which is always the greatest context in which they speak; and

B) the fact that they themselves with all others never cease to comprise what we call multicultural---a world of proudly-different ways of looking at the world, most of them indifferent or Neutral toward what's at stake between any two (or more) speakers or parties.

In physical science, there is no center by which to judge direction. In language alike, there is no central "Transcendental Signifier"---no absolute rock of reference for "proving" what words mean in universal terms. There are only demonstrable positions, and others that fly by tricks or force.

To many who ignore these realities, Relativity is chaos. To scholars and orators, it means a practical and powerful (Neutral-guided) basis for respecting other views---and for turning them into allies.

Multiculturalism is not a passing fad. (See Chapter 5 on Political Correctness.) Along with Relativity, it represents the first time we truly and wholly see where we are: hurtling through space on a planet full of peoples who don't want to be all alike, and who naturally resist the idea.

How does an orator start to work with these realities?

3: All cultures are equal in their particular right to see and speak of the world as they do---but they are not all equally-accurate descriptions of the mysterious, solid "objective" reality in our common midst.

The Symbolic or Imaginary of one culture can be well-defined but open to new experience and learning. Every one lives by a kind of ideology (an idea of the universe and a social code to match). They are “always already” affected by the past inherited through language.

After all, no word or name can fully describe you. Language is so arbitrary and unstable that no word has a final universal meaning. We know what a word means only by its differences from others; and, at last (even in laws), we “defer” what it ultimately means (till next time).

Some cultures’ ideologies, on the other hand, are born or become less flexible, less open to new observation and phenomena.

When one side tries to force its ideology on another, resistance naturally follows. The truly-ideological side defines itself as Center, as Rational, and its leaders as heroes---while everyplace outside is addressed as Margin, each leading resister an irrational half-being without reason.

Looking on is the universe of Neutrals.

Not every contest or conflict is so extreme. But language as a limited thing weaves subtle and near-invisible biases into and around every subject. Consider the mere pronouns built into English, and what their limitations dictate.

He, She: Very well, we have so far two kinds of humans---those with male and female sex organs. What about humans who somehow aren’t accurately described by those two words? Who receives respect when referred to as an *It*?

To be treated as an *It* is to be overpowered by an ignorance. Even people who disagree with a certain speaker usually recoil from seeing them treated with disrespect.

You too have an instinct to resist that. So expect it from other people when you try to push them your way---not to mention trying to bias the Neutrals all around.

How can the orator lead, rather than push? Start with a choice about how to conduct yourself.

4: Language is struggle: to bond with others across objective realities, to define and so to “rule” reality. Will you adjust to limitations and resistances, or become more dogmatic (and hence, vulnerable)?

Every single talk and argument has weaknesses and blind spots (like each subjectivity or human being). Tricks and varying levels of violence (Chapters 5 & 6) give a daunting but fake authenticity to weak descriptions of reality. English colonists were not devils: Native Americans were not savages. Each was a refusal to include more complete information. Stereotypes and blithe dismissals alienate most Neutrals.

Where you encounter resistance, you gain power as you acknowledge and/or adjust to other points of view. Consideration---part of the effort to be “objective”---does not equal conciliation (Chapter 6).

5: The orator’s point of power in the relative, multicultural universe lies in the skill to demonstrate fact and truth so that Neutrals can judge both for themselves.

This is the “reverse secret” about real speaking power. Einstein moved the world because he made it see Relativity for itself.

You don't need to hammer or control. Instead, facilitate the demonstration of fact and truth. Forget about "power" and you gain it.

For the talk ends. The Neutrals go home to evaluate what they learned---but now, without your charisma and presence, your tricks and spin and labors to control or eliminate every other option.

Were you speaking, finally, to a self-reinforcing bonding group, or addressing all the undeniable facts and viewpoints? Did you work through them fully and fairly, with reason, and give people criteria (below) with which to make their own experiments and judgments?

The Neutrals (like you in an audience) will know the difference. Let the Neutrals alone keep score.

In Chapter 2's Power Formula, you already have the time-tested means to guide you the Neutrals' way, and so to lead them toward yours:

6: Identify, Deliberate, and then render your finding or Judgment. Observe like a Scientist: Process like a Scholar: Express like a Poet.

Now let's see specific components that build to your advantage. What makes those advantages legitimate? The **public service** within each.

Definitions: How many promising talks dissolve into mush because of a careless, missing, twisted, or concealed definition of a central term or subject? How many debates thus descend into fruitless chaos?

To the orator, a state-of-the-art definition is a fulcrum of lifting-power, and a game-changing opportunity---if Homework is behind it.

Identify crucial terms that shape discussion of your subject or the outcome of debates. Begin with *The Oxford English Dictionary* or, OED: the work from which all other English dictionaries derive. Build from there on uses of the word in the latest specialized professional senses.

On these bases you know, and can show (or expose) far more easily, where the use of a word either builds on or departs from its most-accepted meanings. To show *where* reveals a great deal of *why*.

Compare, for example, current uses of *liberal* against its past, beginning around 1375. OED: *Originally, the distinctive epithet of those "arts" or "sciences" that were considered "worthy of a free man": opposed to servile or mechanical....Directed to general intellectual enlargement and refinement: not narrowly restricted....Free in bestowing: bountiful, generous, open-hearted....Free from restraint: free in speech or action....Free from bigotry or unreasonable prejudice [which are] in favor of traditional opinions or established institutions: open to the reception of new ideas, or proposals of reform.* The original core of the word was free self-development that leads to human progress.

Work before the Neutrals from the most neutral definitions, and they thank you for perspective: more power to judge for themselves each deployment of a term. (See also Chapter 6: Clearing the Air.)

Functional Criteria: A definition is a kind of Functional Argument. You give the Neutrals well-researched Criteria by which to judge for themselves each aspect of a talk or discussion. Shape each element of Homework to "function" for Neutrals to that end.

Ask: What criteria do people need to discover their own answer to a question? For the truth will be where the Neutrals agree.

Do they need a “sub-set” of solid, acknowledged **facts** to assist their judgments? The **precise text** of a court decision or statute? The best **critical** commentary? A well-stated **ethical or moral** position?

Give the Neutrals what they need: perspectives, not blinders. Do that and you offer a challenge and discovery, instead of top-down pronouncements that incite resistance.

For example: Who is America’s First English Poet? A full, fair investigation demands a close look at every possible contender for that title, unfolded one by one in time-order. Yet, how can we even begin to gather examples and recognize a contender? How can we know poetry from the library-shelves of ordinary prose?

So, the first Functional Criterion is a well-researched answer on how acknowledged experts *from the beginning* distinguished poetry from prose. What characteristics and clues did *they* find most reliable? For those, in turn, were the standards by which contenders chose and aimed to write poetry or prose. In this example, **When Neutrals know the Criteria, they gain functioning instruments to judge how widely the research-net was cast to include all possible contenders.**

A well-designed question points you to the key Functional Criteria and Arguments required to answer it. In this case (beyond the obvious category of *English*), the Neutrals need a solid meaning for *First*, for *America*, and for *Poetry*, which they can apply toward each contender.

The author who best-fulfills each Criterion and aspect of the search must be the answer of most substance: the most demonstrable.

Watch out for *adjectives* in questions and topics (including best/worst, good/bad, right/wrong, etc.). “Is Led Zeppelin the *greatest* rock band ever?”

What are your Functional Criteria for *great*? What do we have to accept to reach the same answer?

I know the answer. But it's near-impossible to eliminate or hide my bias (the opinion I just can't explain) in defining *great* for the Neutrals.

The Straw: Also known as a Straw Man. The best examples are common because they're so efficient as a way to frame new talks and arguments. Through research and Homework, you discover one or more sources, voices and statements that most fully and fairly sum up, so far, "the" question or subject at stake---and you make them heard and understood before you take your work forward as a response.

Read into scholarship on a question that interests you and observe how often and variously the Straw works. Rightly used, a Straw has two main benefits. It connects your new work to the cutting-edge questions on a subject and to its audience. Writers and orators draw power, as well, from the focus and unity it brings to a whole performance.

The worst examples of a Straw---meaning, the most damning before the Neutrals---are simply targets set up for easy bow-and-arrow practice. Satire starts from here, of course; but so can an unwitting self-parody. It's one thing to stand on other people's shoulders, and another to kick them in the head while doing so.

How would you as a Neutral respond to your onstage treatment of this predecessor?

Comparisons: In a relative universe, Comparison brings instant perspective (reference-points) into confusing and stormy discussions.

People and their cultures, after all, bond around key assumptions about what is real, normal and important. (See next section too.)

What happens to both extremes, in the standard stormy discussion of an American legal drinking age, when confronted with comparisons? The results of different policies on alcohol in other societies put most American assumptions in instant perspective. So do policies, results and statistics compare in many-sided discussions of firearms.

Comparisons are reference-points to gauge “universal truths” and to reveal exceptions to their claims. People who cannot deal with a complex relative universe cling to or create imaginary absolutes which, for them, order “chaos.” They find that bonding-group “reasons” mostly fail before a Neutral audience that demands demonstrable explanations.

A qualified truth is stronger than an absolute that ignores real complexity. One (for all its exceptions) corresponds more closely than the other to the common “objective” reality in our subjective midst.

Comparisons won’t lead you or the Neutrals astray **if they’re carefully prepared and clearly applied.** Avoid most on-the-spot improvised comparisons: they can hand opponents a trivial but damaging way to put you back on your heels.

Again, orators derive the most power from life-long learning: from an increasing range of knowledge and perspective that generates revealing comparisons (similarities and/or differences), which they deploy as functional elements for the Neutrals.

Assumptions: Theirs & Yours: Assumptions (or blind spots) are deadly danger. Work hard with this Chapter’s last element. And---if you

demonstrate effort to address your and others' Assumptions---you can sometimes turn a debate in the first round.

Subjectivity makes it sure that everybody "misses" something, in spite of all effort toward unreachable objectivity. (Einstein too.) Part of the most-scientific rigor is the effort to make visible every last assumption that plays a part in observation; and thereby, to make adjustments for it, in a process toward the truth.

Why do you see XYZ as you do? Where are you told most subtly (and, where have you decided) what is real, credible, normal and/or important: in your language, history, culture, position in the universe, experience, and/or particular agenda?

To look for your opponent's Assumptions and blind spots is standard preparation-procedure. Look for your own with equal energy, and address them in your positions---for you can be sure your opponents will.

Because every debate is unique, there is no one method to help spot assumptions in every case. But let's explore this crucial skill. It's the most difficult and the best of both defense and offense.

Imagine that you've spent weeks in Homework & Practice Aloud for a talk or debate. You turned mountains of evidence into a dynamic 3-D performance that takes an audience on a journey to the truth of your claim (your argument, your finding based upon the evidences). You're ready for every contingency, too.

Suddenly your opponent simply divests you of all your Homework and evidence---by exposing a crucial Assumption behind your claim. Where now will you turn to demonstrate it? What happened?

Call it Toulmin Logic---after its inventor, the eminent rhetorician Stephen Toulmin.

You support a **claim** with a body of evidence. Holding the claim and the **evidence** together is what Toulmin calls a **warrant**: why the evidence seems to point toward the claim. For example:

CLAIM: Banks that issue credit cards are being devastated by current Bankruptcy laws, and those laws must change to redress this.

SUPPORT: People who successfully file for Bankruptcy under its current laws are not required to pay their credit card debts.

WARRANT (or Assumption): The purpose of Bankruptcy laws is to protect banks and make people pay their debts.

The faulty Assumption leaps out of Homework on actual preexisting Bankruptcy laws. In fact---until the U.S. Congress recently *accepted* this argument---the purpose of Bankruptcy laws was to protect not banks, but responsible hard-working entrepreneurs, who might otherwise spend the rest of their lives frozen in debt if they failed at a business.

Locate and expose the warrant or Assumption, and you separate a claim from its evidence: you also expose the claim's real agenda. In this case, it was changing the beneficiaries of Bankruptcy laws.

This example also reflects that Homework cannot always win---at least short-term, in some circumstances.

Each element of this and the next Chapters is an advanced kind of Performance Anchor. Each one connects you more surely to the Neutrals. Together, they have cumulative effects.

It follows that if you review, repeat or “stack” these elements and anchors in the Close of a talk (or summing up a position), you magnify them even more. You give people more chance to realize and remember how much substance and perspective you gave them in each part for reaching their own conclusions.

But how do you “get in there” to speak, and stay effective, without taking on your opponents’ worst tricks and tactics?

Let’s see how to turn those into opportunities.

5

Claiming Space: Diplomacy & Combat

The ancient Greek scholar Archimedes said, “Give me a point on which to rest my lever, and I’ll move the world.” Where is such a point in the orator’s relative and multicultural universe?

21st Century Speaking is built around the Neutrals in an audience. For Neutrals are most often the largest share of them. As your speaking works for Neutrals, it does more work toward your goal. Playing to the pre-decided people who like or dislike you rarely delivers truth, and seldom brings a speaker to a better place relative to either. It also carries far fewer Neutrals your way.

The approaches ahead in Chapters 5 and 6 build on what you’ve been learning about Audiences. In a phrase---**The People Out There Are You.** So right now, review this fundamental from Chapter 1:

Nothing changes about the world when you get up to speak.

You feel safe when you’re in the audience. You’re with, and hidden by, a group. Its eyes are fixed on someone else. You sit in the chair of a judge, with (of course) your own perfect calm mixture of wide-awake open mind and intelligent skepticism.

You pity and admire a speaker just for being up there, so exposed, but going for it. Most people in an audience are more or less like this.

They do not disappear or turn vicious when you speak. Remember in speaking that “you” are still in the audience---all those curious and mostly-supportive people as real as yourself.

Now let's advance into ways to make the most of this.

Breaking In: The 1-2

See yourself in an audience watching an important, many-sided roundtable debate. In this debate, the air crackles every moment with overlapping voices that vie and try again to be heard. The panel-members maximize speed and minimize listening: they can hardly wait to interrupt each other for advantage. You see little if any chance for a speaker who is shy, reserved, speaks slowly---or who dares any less of the fine line between a properly forceful entry and sheer rudeness.

Suddenly, one speaker all but crosses that line. With a brashly-loud “Excuse me!” and both hands out wide in the air, they find the words to urge everyone to hear or give more weight to a crucial point.

You, in the audience, really do not like (1) the way they broke in. But a moment later, you forget it---because (2) the substance and Homework in what they said was powerful. Prepared and essential.

The 1-2 is a combination. Its leverage-points are (1) an audience concerned more with substance and Homework than with perfect interpersonal relations; and, (2) your own hard-won confidence in the worth of your contribution.

However you must forcefully claim speaking-space, if you deliver something worthwhile, the audience will take in stride what you had to do to make it heard.

You either believe in the Homeworked substance you bring to the table, or you don't. In preparation, **Deliberately craft a few highly-diplomatic ways to break in**, so you can deliver it when the right moments come in any situation.

For examples:

"Ladies and gentlemen! I'm listening closely to every person here, but grant me 30 seconds, because we have yet to consider XYZ...."

"Very good! All this has to be heard. But, friends, at this point we need more specifics. This is just where the weight of our/my research can help out our listeners today...."

This may feel self-conscious. But **you don't find the best ways of breaking in under fire. In Homework and Practice Aloud, create several kinds of The 1-2. (Think of yourself as a diplomat: you are).** Then, yours will be ready to get you heard in the best way, while other speakers fumble onstage to break in. For **Power in debate is both substance and repeated impact.** The more advanced an orator, the more there's a skillful element of theatre in how they work toward a goal.

(1) Prepared, Forceful Diplomacy: Describe out loud the kind of space you want (for example, 30 seconds), and **connect it to the service of the listening audience** (Chapter 6).

(2) Delivery of Substance justifies and takes Neutrals past the rough edges of the entry you had to make. Yes, you are "gambling" on yourself to

really deliver. But that is why Homework and Practice Aloud make your impact twice as likely *and* effective, when you go for it.

Giving It Away

With ready, strong kinds of The 1-2 at your command, the more you claim space for being heard. Before you know it, you're emerging as a force or a leader in a discussion. Though few speakers realize it, this presents a new danger---alienating the Neutrals, *no matter how good you are*, by giving almost no one else a chance to speak and contribute.

When you watch from an audience, what seems more remarkable than a speaker who *can* claim all the speaking-space they want and fill it with substance---but who, as often, "gives it away" to other speakers at just the right times, with an effect that still works toward their goal?

Leaders are listeners. From Homework, they know their own strength and the strength of each teammate, too. Go out of your way to know others' contributions. For **Neutrals, watching you, never miss an Assist. When you claim space, restate or make a brief point, and then quickly hand off** to the teammate with the best Homework just then.

This makes you a speaker whose first aim is to facilitate truth. It is generous and democratic; yet, it keeps the ball in your own team's hands. It puts all your team's various strengths up front---and deprives opponents of singular targets (which you become, the more you believe that only you can do it best.) Claim space, make your own point brief, and give it away. It keeps opponents busy reacting rather than scoring from their side.

An Assist to an opponent---claiming space, and quickly inviting the right person to use it (to explain, demonstrate or clarify)---is also

magnanimous in front of the Neutrals. But it puts an opponent under instant (and often unexpected) pressure. At your say-so, they have to excel, or be damaged by your generosity (Chapter 6).

Hecklers, Interruptions & Talk-Overs

Observe the world of speaking from Public Broadcasting to cable-TV, talk-radio, and conferences in your field(s) of interest. There are participants whose means and goals are not discussion toward truth in service of the Neutrals. Their role is to sell soap and/or advance “careers” through a mechanism baited and armed with sound-bytes---and/or, to sabotage presentation of other views. The one advantage of their position is outright or subtle control of the speaking-space.

So-called anchors, moderators, hosts and pundits can be the most interruptive and obstructive. Anybody can hack their way through a discussion that goes nowhere but the next commercial---or whose contributions keep getting twisted (“disciplined”) back into what the local tyrants and sponsors deem to be acceptable topics, questions or views.

Sometimes a roundtable of people speak right over and past each other. Some are collisions of egos. As often, the structure of forums and media derives from commercial goals, narrow purposes and a low idea of audience attention-span.

You are “free” to banter the quick provocative commonplace. But offer a view that calls for details, examples and nuance, and you’re lucky to finish a sentence. Please, you’re boring the idiots! Please---Must you keep moving this subject forward?

Even worse, *confront* an interruption---whose extreme is outright heckling---and sometimes, the offender turns instantly into the offended one. How rude of *you*, to point out their rudeness! How low of you, to suggest that their trivial trip-ups had some ignoble purpose!

How can you always do your best in such conditions? Be ready with 5 Neutral-friendly steps that demonstrate high standards.

See yourself, yet again, from the audience. What Neutrals want from an orator is worthwhile listening-time: leadership toward substance. So, **when you take the floor or stage, you are judged according to that service.** Make a decision about the values you're going to demonstrate as a speaker. With calm courage, insist upon them.

(1) The first interruption: take it gracefully on the chin. Simply show a wisp of patience with a pause, and then try to resume ("As I was trying to say..."). **Do not address the content of the interrupter's words: that is what they want.** First, with all possible brevity, complete your statement. Then you might ask them to speak.

(2) The second time---**no matter what the content** of interrupting words, relevant or trivial---**address the interruption itself**, with calm courage. "Excuse me, I'd like to finish quickly if I may." **This is a request, not an accusation** ("You interrupted me") that only invites worse.

The Neutrals are watching. Let Neutrals alone keep score.

(3) The third time, you have earned a right to point out that "You keep interrupting." Instantly, **offer a truce** that promises order and fairness. "Give me 30 seconds to finish, and I'll give you a full minute. Let's take turns speaking and let the audience decide---Fair enough?"

(4) Now, you've drawn a line. If they step right past the truce and go back to issues (or obfuscation), let them finish---for they speak beyond the bounds of courtesy. Then: "May I now have equal time to speak?"

(5) **If you don't get it, calmly withdraw. Period.** "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for *your* patience. But clearly, it's impossible to deal with our subject today. Perhaps another time."

Turn Ploys, Traps & Dirty Tricks into Your Opportunities

Neutrals know when an argument derives from flawed Homework and reasoning (or presents a *fallacy*: a hasty generalization, a false dilemma and so on). They also know when an argument is really a ploy, a trap, or a dirty trick---an act of sabotage.

First and always, keep the Neutral audience in mind. On that basis, your dignity and common sense know how to reverse the worst of such maneuvers. More---Be the orator who takes a discussion through and beyond these obstacles, and you turn them into opportunities.

In Chapter 1 we saw the need to **bring in** a problem that cannot be avoided---to make the defeat of obstacles a part of your performance. **When opponents deploy these tricks, the goal is to bring them out:** to expose them for the Neutrals while moving right past them.

Rhetoricians identify over 100 kinds of fallacies. The examples in this section are fundamental and most common. Let none interfere with your work toward truth before the Neutrals, and you cannot lose.

Appeals to Ignorance

Disregard or Not Knowing can never be virtues supporting a position.

(X): "What was your source for that information?" (Y): "The Congressional Budget Office." (X): "Never heard of it."

The speaker who "never heard" of the CBO is dismissing any idea of its authority---and courting approval from an audience equally ignorant or hasty. **The remedy is ready facts that can show, when you need them, why it's important to know about what you bring into a debate.**

In this case:

(Y): "Well, the CBO is a central source of national economic data. All sides in Washington and major media have long-acknowledged the CBO as accurate *and* nonpartisan. So, to continue...."

An Appeal to Ignorance tries to narrow discussion ("Nobody is interested in that"); or, to control or even stop it, without offering anything beyond a subjective (or even empty) position. Expose it for what it is:

(X): "I cannot imagine a wholly random universe."

(Y): "And I/we can respect how you see and feel about this. At the same time, discussion cannot be limited by what you describe---an emotion, or an inability to consider all evidence and possibilities."

Appeals to The Mob

Sometimes called *ad populeum*, this trick appeals to the lowest common idea of human beings and behavior. It presents itself as hard-nosed, purely and “sadly” realistic: it paints opponents as naïve, and makes listeners fear that any view but the darkest creates disaster.

For example: “Sex education, birth control and abortion rights promote promiscuity and irresponsible sexual behavior.”

Identify and expose the flawed assumption. For example:

(Explain): So the basis and future of sexual values is a lack of knowledge, control, and rights? Who then *will* make these choices?

(Compare): What evidence from comparable other societies, with and without these rights, supports this claim?

(Particularize): Such rights might affect *some* people thus. Why should everyone forfeit them based on the possible behavior of a few?

(Reverse): Please detail how a society gains from the consequences of ignorance, from STDs to overpopulation.

Stop the Show: Five Dead Ends

Textbooks on public speaking anatomize dozens of fallacies. An orator has to know and be ready for them. Debate is the combat-theater of speech. Go out of your orator’s way to study how fallacies try to work.

The key is to speak from a “simple” grasp of their common ground and goal---to make listeners ignore certain things, to sabotage the demonstration of truth, or to stop the show altogether.

Some tricks simply lead astray. **Act immediately to expose** (for example) a false analogy that compares apples and oranges; or, faulty cause-and-effect, which confuses mere time-order (one thing after another) with causation (this resulted in that). The least Homework can show that a bandwagon of believers is no guarantee.

Five common tricks do more than lead astray. They guide toward a mirage of a single choice, or into dead ends that waste the discussion's time. They are:

Tautology: Circular reasoning that supports itself not with Criteria for the Neutrals, but with reference to itself (a product of the insular bonding-group). "I can't define pornography, but I know it when I see it." "Tradition says that citizenship was always this way."

False Dilemma: "It's war or surrender." A calculated simplification heaps infamy onto every alternative: there is "really" only one way. This is a cousin of the Slippery Slope: "If gay people have equal marriage rights, others will demand the right to marry anything."

Loaded Question: "Have you stopped beating your spouse?" There is no "right" answer. **Again, do not answer---Instead, expose and refute the very premise.** "I never have beaten and categorically reject the idea of beating anyone. Can we return to the subject now?" **Or:**

"As you speak against gun control, you're not concerned about guns' consequences?" "Government control is not the only way to deal with abuse of a right. Here are specifics...."

A Stacked Deck depends on missing information or dismissed, essential contexts. "This hot dog is 10% less fat!" (It is now only 52% fat.) "This invasion is a defensive action." (It deals with a country made hostile by one's own behavior.)

Research Statistics and Polls often pose a Stacked Deck. “74% of the American people support XYZ.” Contrast how commanding that sounds with what is most missing: the fact that no research or poll ever has spoken or will speak with so many millions of people.

Contrast too what can emerge when you **ask for the details about** statistics and polls. “74% of the 18 American people polled yesterday in front of Joe’s Bar in Hoptown support XYZ.” What exact questions were asked? What were the possible responses? A major university’s research-study, too, may be heavily qualified in minor professional journals.

When you present Research Statistics and Polls, provide the full source, contexts and details before you cite them (see next Chapter’s Empowered Authorities). This gives the Neutrals up-front functional criteria for evaluating them. It shows your own confident command of precise information: you’re not trying to turn the world with one stroke. And it brings high standards to discussions: perspective by which others’ motives can be gauged.

There is one other obstacle too commonly deployed, like a monkey-wrench tossed into the wheels of progress:

Political Correctness

In Chapter 4 we saw that language is tied to a people’s history (their memory of their ancestors’ deeds). As Relativity and multiculturalism have become recognized descriptions of common realities, so-called culture wars have been fought over how language (and education itself) should respond to changes in many pre-Relativity assumptions.

Language and history have been instruments of force and of liberation. Words “frame” our perceptions: we also look back on that framing, and find new words for what we see. So, one side of the PC culture wars demands an end to prejudice-laden words and stereotypes, which long attached inferiority and insults to aspects of people’s gender, sexuality, race, age, abilities and/or culture(s). Over time, this side has mocked itself with the humorous irony of seeming to “force” people to let go of history’s traces of oppression in language.

As noted, people go crazy without a place to say what they feel and think without constraints. They have to talk frankly to ease, understand and respect their differences. So, *Politically Incorrect* became a signal to warn (or, boast) that a speaker is not constrained by any worry about bias, offensiveness, or orthodoxy. This we recognize from Chapter 1: when there’s a problem or obstacle, bring it in.

To other culture-warriors, Political Correctness is Stalinism. Where they find little tolerance for language that has carried demonstrable prejudice and does present harm, they feel silenced---an ironic result for an age of liberation through language. Where new understandings of Relativity and multiculture cast light on the past and present, they see a politically-motivated “revisionism.”

No one can finally separate study and learning. There is a genuine Political **I**ncorrectness that (as usual with human beings) defies every kind of control. It will have no privilege. It keeps us human.

Of course, the past must be studied “from within” on its own terms, as objectively as possible (Chapter 4). But History is only a static museum (and a pillar of continuing injustice) unless the living can apply what they learn from its mistakes, inequities and exceptional examples.

Political Correctness **asks for** thoughtfulness and respect. It interrupts injustice, which keeps us human also. To sabotage or dismiss discussion on “revisionist” grounds **demands** respect for ignorance or disrespect; that discussion be shaped by a lack of new learning. It demands that people blindly inherit and carry on words and forms that keep the nightmare of history alive.

As an orator you work before the Neutrals. Never let anyone be silenced---including those who favor such constraints. Bring them in.

Make space for and welcome them to speak. Where they charge that “excessive deference” is limiting expression and truth, invite them to express and demonstrate both: there and then, in the wholly-free environment for which you stand.

Then carry on, and leave it to the Neutrals.

Be prepared to apply these anchors and techniques, and you function in combat with high standards. In Chapter 6, we’ll see more positive ways to move a Neutral audience toward your goals.

Here is what unites all the approaches of Chapter 5:

Generosity is the crown of an orator’s skills and powers. Generosity works with, includes, and unleashes more powers than its own. It makes the most of relativity and diversity, gains from every view---and kindly drops the foe into the frying-pan called learning and perspective.

6

Persuasion & Service

In Native American traditions of speaking, the greatest perspective that surrounds human language is Silence. “Man” is only one of many equal creatures and powers with a voice. Silence asks a speaker to know and show clearly what is so important that we break it.

In a Native American universe, the most-acknowledged leaders are not those who try to lead, but the people most sought-out because their ability to listen, their skills and learning produce results---public service.

It follows that **listening first** is crucial to inner confidence and, in turn, to outer influence. What in your speaking situation will most of the audience (Neutrals) be looking for? What would **you** be looking for?

Contributions that advance the purpose of the forum. Build yours to lead toward it, with gentle resolve---and to say the least, you cannot lose.

Neutrals by definition are not yet “going your way.” Like most people, they resist attempts to persuade or move them from one understanding to another (healthy skepticism).

When you **start from a question** (*vs.* an opinion), you promise to work toward answers beyond your own views, biases and will. You lead without pretending to know the one right way or possible answer. You invite participation and, thus, more likelihood of success.

Next here are three more ways to empower your contributions by connecting them to the benefit of the forum where you speak.

Clear the Air

Discussions and debates begin with (at least) two people or groups working, separately, at observation and evidence-gathering, definitions, criteria, and every kind of Homework. When they lock horns, the first struggle is to find out where and how their different approaches interlock, so that discussion can develop.

Speakers and listeners find out fast whose Homework (questions, terms, arguments, proposals) has the substance to focus, magnetize, and persist through the discussion. One group seizes and builds on this discovery. The other responds with defense and resistance.

The higher the stakes, the more intensity---and, the more a Neutral audience wants less thunder and more lightning.

In the midst of confusion and wandering chaos, **be the speaker who's always ready to clear the air.** How?

First: **Homework.** As F. Scott Fitzgerald remarked, having something to say is the product of sleepless nights. Only that kind of effort gives you power to state **the very core definitions, criteria, questions and evidences that will matter most to the Neutrals where you speak.**

Second: **Create and practice** diplomatic, even good-humored **ways to break in (The 1-2, Chapter 5). Don't wait to be in combat under fire to create them.** Then you're ready to make contributions of substance---to return a debate to civilized order and development. Listeners appreciate few things more. And this becomes your chance to move the room.

For example (with even a few mild claps of your hands): “People, friends and all of us, hold on, please! It’s clear we cannot go forward without a very clear common definition we can share, for the meaning of ABC. Let me sum up the best we have so far....”

Again: let others fumble onstage for the right gracious words to win clear speaking-space. Be ready to be the speaker who keeps the forum moving forward.

Empowered Authorities

We listen to learn. But we learn little when a speaker cites “many experts” or “a recent report.” A second suspicious ploy is name-dropping; a chance to persuade only people who trust the name as an implicit authority. The Neutrals need functional criteria (Chapter 4) to figure out what should carry most weight.

With each **Empowered Authority** you create in advance and then deploy, you meet that need. You stand your own contribution on each authority’s visible strong shoulders.

An “E.A.” is a brief factual introduction that we hear every day and hardly notice, but usually respond to. The more you build each E.A. from your Homework’s details, the more compellingly it sets up what you want to make heard and recognized.

For example:

“Dr. Rex Badger was Director of the Smithsonian Institution for 18 years. His history of American arm-chairs won a 1998 Pulitzer Prize, and today he’s CEO of Take It Easy, the worldwide antique trade

confederation. So, let's consider Dr. Badger's definition of what the chaise lounge is all about...."

Why should we listen to Badger? **Three quick clear statements of fact show why instantly, up front.** They don't praise Badger with adjectives. They **empower him as an authority with external measures of it**---whether or not a listener already knows or trusts him.

With each E.A. you prepare in this way, you create points of reference and learning for the forum. You don't "claim" authority for a source. You give three quick facts about it that **show**, in a positive "see for yourself" way, why Neutrals and opponents cannot easily dismiss the authority of what comes next.

As you work through sources in Homework, it's easy to notice an authority's most impressive aspects. **Create short phrases that describe them, and build those into the way you deploy an authority's power.** The more you depend on a source, the more you need to know how it has already been received in its field of expertise.

This also makes you more aware of limitations or problems with a source. If you must use it (many excellent sources have flaws), **Don't wait to let opponents reveal the most relevant. Share them up front**, as well---a sign of your wary and seasoned scholarship.

Common Ground & Standing Yours

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is an empowering field of applied language-study. NLP research and techniques range from medical and life therapy to rhetoric (making language an asset toward a goal). The more we

know about language, the more we can do with the dynamics of human behavior and interaction.

How can words and thoughts keep your bare feet from burning as you walk over red-hot coals? Nobody yet knows---but it's a measure of the powers an orator keeps on learning to work.

One of NLP's core insights is: **You are responsible for the response you get, regardless of your intention.** So, one of the subtlest and most empowering challenges of language is how to work with it and make adjustments based on feedback, to shape and produce effects you want.

Here are two ways in which speakers often "step in it"---when a phrase such as "That is not correct" has a wholly different impact.

"That's a lie!" "You're wrong!"

You want to stand your Homeworked ground and concede nothing easily. But when emotion and desire for "victory" unleash statements like those, you're halfway to saying "You're *bad!*"

Expect in return only more-intense resistance, and polarization---a debate that moves away from discovery of truth and toward mere conflict. This is not what wins over Neutrals or opponents.

At the other extreme is gratuitous agreement. "I respect your view and grant your valid point. But the fact is...."

You *claim* to have listened, but the lack of specifics does not convince. You claim to agree somehow, and yet the very next words ("But" and "the fact is") subtly dismiss and sweep aside what your opponent just said, to make room for yourself. It closes off grounds for agreement---and the Neutrals are keen score-keepers. If you treat others this way, why do you deserve better?

Here is a structure of language that creates more-effective results. One of NLP's innovators, Anthony Robbins, calls it an **Agreement Frame**.

(A) Show (demonstrate and prove, rather than claim) **that you truly listened: Restate** your opponent's position, **in full and fair detail**.

(B) Then apply a wholly-neutral or positive-spirited phrase, like a bridge, to move toward your own contribution; and,

(C) Deliver from your Homework in your best direction forward.

For example:

(A) "It's true. Malcolm X's own life-story describes a young man with serious problems: a petty thief and drug-dealer with a great deal of race-based hatred---a crippling awareness of waste, injustice, and dead ends on every side. You make that very clear."

(B) "It is also true that..."

(C) "Those realities became reasons why the mature leader Malcolm X could understand and do so much about problems confronting Afro-Americans in the 1960s. Let us show you in detail where the key turn of this transformation came, and why that turn matters now....."

Create a list of wholly-neutral or positive-spirited bridging-phrases to keep at your command. For examples: "At the same time...", "We can also recognize...", or, "Now, this is another way to understand...."

Notice around you how the most common, "unconscious" bridging-words---as slight as "but" and "however"---produce dismissive and negative effects. That's why this change in habit demands discipline, and generates power.

Prepared, carefully-neutral bridging-words simply move from a real demonstration of listening to the Homework that guides Neutrals toward your goal.

An Agreement Frame offers more to a forum. The more you apply it, the more bridge you build---more space and richer options for an ongoing discourse, by which everyone can cross toward truth of a matter.

How do you know when to stand your ground, and when that ground really must be qualified?

Victory in debate is not brief domination or stony dismissal. What wins is what carries the Neutrals after and beyond the confines of discussion. They put into action what emerged as substance from debate: **the most observable, complete and flexible description of the common realities and choices in the midst of all subjective views.**

You can't always move human beings in the most rational direction. In speaking, you can know what your audience of Neutrals always knows. As the Native American orator Nanepashemet said it, "No one has a monopoly on the truth."

If real discussion leads you to a truth from the other side, you can be sure the Neutrals see it too. What then? Damage, deny and dismiss it? Or, bring it in---to make your own best position more observable, flexible and complete? That is the real show of strength and confidence.

Let the mirage of "total unqualified victory" lead others astray in a complicated universe. There is nothing conciliatory about combining your demonstrable truths with those of others. Neutrals expect it.

For example, imagine a debate on this question: **Do Online Social Media lead to more or less real contact among people?**

The two sides tangle first over key terms. They manage to agree that **real contact** means a relationship that's regular and close: visibly positive, supportive, and appreciated (if not always physical, present or intimate).

Now each side fights harder to apply more emerging criteria toward truth---meaning the findings of each side's Homework, and so what they want the Neutrals to find from the evidence, as they did.

(X) "Our examples so far show that computer-based relationships are seldom more than that: often damaging to real ones, and always short!"

(Y) "You make a credible point, and now we'll show authoritative studies and polls of people with experiences to the contrary!"

Then (by listening and adjustment) a new phase emerges. The sides begin to interpenetrate---discovering complex realities.

(X) "There can be benefits to Social Media, but the dangers and damages still outweigh them. A person tangled up in techno-gimmicks sells their own life short." (Y) "Many Internet relationships do vanish, distract, or lead to bad results: so can those outside computers. Social Media are just new imperfect options and potentials to connect."

Neither side can tell who clearly won. But each speaker's impact contributes to an observable, complete and flexible new view---which leaves the forum *with the Neutrals*:

"There are serious dangers in a superficial, abusive or escapist approach to Social Media, while their ability to create and sustain real contact can hardly be dismissed."

Such is the orator's domain. If your labor delivers part of a solid truth that's of value to the forum, it's a good day.

Cumulative Criteria: Five Audience Demands

Encourage **direct feedback** from listeners. Supplement outside feedback with **audio/video-recordings** of your voice and speaking-style. And keep learning through these Chapters to **see your own performance from the audience**.

See yourself that way **beforehand** and cut to the editor's bone. See it **during** delivery and you know that most of the audience wants you to succeed, as you wish for others.

Practice balance between what's "you" and where outside feedback tells you to **adjust**. You won't lose yourself if you give a bit more weight to the outside view. For that after all is your world of listeners answering, with whom you must treat toward your goals.

Here are five summary criteria to assist a regular self-evaluation. Apply them with equal rigor before **and** after a speaking engagement---and each next time, more and more of the elements converge.

(1) Command of Basics. Focused poise and clean precise diction, **especially when most invited to relax**: keeping listeners engaged with a 3-dimensional style that magnifies substance and message.

(2) Command of Homework. What you can **show**---from a many-sided, full and fair grasp of facts, and from command of the cutting-edge views of the facts, with the virtues, choices and options they present.

(3) Quality & Number of Contributions to a Forum. The criteria in 1 and 2 above increase the content-value of what you contribute. **Repetition and repeated impact** are as crucial to results---in direct proportion to the number of speakers. The more vying voices and views, the more likely that

one high-quality entry gets “run over” or forgotten. **Make at least one early, middle, and late-session contribution. Politely insist on it.**

(4) Skills & Tactics. How broadly informed and consistently precise (Homeworked & Practiced) is your language? How much neutral service do you provide (Chapters 4, 5, 6) as you work toward your own goal? How do you handle obstacles and resistance? And, how exactly do **your** views and goals fit with, and differ from, the truth and best options that emerge in the midst of them all?

(5) Teamwork. Claim space and deliver substance. What else do you do with power? An Assist is a real contribution. With Homework on teammates **and** opponents, you know where to promote team strengths, and when to generously drop choice opponents into the fry-pan.

There are always new and more kinds of oratory power. Keep an Observation Notebook. Record your anatomy of why a speaker or technique “carried” or moved you and others. Time and life go on---and without notes, you won’t remember them when needed! Each example you articulate is a solid basis for experiment and imitation. It helps to make yours the world’s infinite varieties of power.

7

Magnitude

Astronomers gauge the relative brightness of a star this way. In speaking, magnitude derives from the burdens and risks taken on (what was attempted), and from how much serious play a speaker delivers in spite of them: the pleasure, substance and benefit an audience gains from a daunting endeavor. Constant experiment develops control and **range**--- delivery of substance according to circumstance and chosen style.

Orators thrive on sciences and arts. What you select from the universe as your learning, and the challenges you take on with it, describe you. They show where you devote your best time in developing yourself, and how you want to shape your learning's impact.

Magnitude is precision-detail, breadth of perspective, rigorous harmony of parts, confident command, focus of impact: a speaker-controlled yet exhilarating **event**, that rings like a language-symphony through risks, obstacles and resistance.

Many discoverers have said they felt guided on the way to something important. Your best speaking makes the audience experience that experience. Time and application do build your range of ways to do that--- but you don't have to wait on the clock.

Here are three fast-forward methods.

Study and imitate speaking-power in action. Pursue **direct experience and feedback**: nothing seasons and rewards you faster.

A third path deserves a triple emphasis: **read, read, and read acknowledged “great” works of language. Start with the ancients (in Sumer, Egypt and Greece, for example), and read forward.** Nobody likes them all. Yet, reading remains the true heavy weight-lifting behind your reach for range and magnitude. Achievements in communication endure for real reasons. Ignore them at your peril: your competition won’t.

Learn from that inheritance of power, or go it alone by luck. From word-choice to structure, from strategy and story to sheer rhythm, there’s more than enough---in the canon of your culture, and in new letters---to empower a lifetime-quest for more speaking-power.

Recitation, Interpretation & Performance

From left to right along each line below, this chart sums up several processes, principles, and empowering levels of speaking endeavor that build on each other---like the structure of this guide.

<i>Grammar</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Dialectic</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
<i>Identify</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Deliberate</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Judge</i>
<i>Scientist</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Poet</i>
<i>Recitation</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>Performance</i>

How professional is your Form (Grammar)? How many languages of expertise are at your fingertips (Dialectic)? And once you discover a truth, how adroitly do you demonstrate it to diverse, resistant listeners? That’s

the measure of your Rhetoric (Performance). Together, this was the *trivium* or program of learning at the first universities, which trained people for careers of distinguished service of the realm.

Creatively plan and build your future as a self-advantaged speaker. Below, we'll look at how to envision that. First comes a way to look at how experience and learning underwrite different magnitudes of speaking-power---and how to accelerate the process.

Recitation---a feat of memory, which for purposes here means “only” the precise establishment and recollection of a text or discourse.

Whether you “had to” memorize a text or fell in love with it, you probably know whole passages, poems or lyrics to at least a dozen songs. When they come into mind and speech because they enrich a subject, they exemplify how learning enriches your oratory. Every bit of effective language you learn has potential to enrich how you communicate.

The more learning you really acquire (with Recitation one measure), the more perspective you bring to the choices of the words you actually do use. Where observation and reason matter, perspective wins.

Interpretation---You gain full command of a text. Along comes the chance and reason to deliver it. Inevitably, you do this in your own way (interpret). What you **don't** want is an inappropriate delivery because of ignorance **about** the text, or an approach **done before** by others.

Go out of your way to discover what the text's creator most clearly intended it to say. As crucial, find out how experts in that kind of text

gauge your example's successes and strengths---and, its ironies (the ones built-in, and those that contradict its intent).

Third, consider for example getting ready to deliver Hamlet's "To be, or not to be...." You must know how actors and orators already have interpreted and delivered it. Without this, odds are that most people's best effort might "only" reproduce the greatest interpretations already known---in unwitting part or whole. That can look like stealing, which lacks even the dignity of open imitation.

When you know a text inside-out and what's been done with it, it's your turn to build. Your Homework, world-view and style, plus the contexts of your delivery (audience and purpose), weave together into a new frame for a text---or even elicit from it a new message never brought out before. You make what was familiar fresh.

Performance---While Recitation and Interpretation concern pre-existing text or content, Performance can include both. Performance is the sum-total of your powers to communicate. You're ready to take over the room and, when you're done, the audience is glad you did.

When you perform at your highest level, every speaking Basic is in play (Chapters 1 & 2). Thanks to Homework & Practice Aloud, your delivery of substance is 3-dimensional, musical and rhythmic (Chapter 3). In intellectual and diplomatic terms (Chapters 4 & 5), what you deliver and how you deal with obstacles is state-of-the-art---because you know what most audiences look for and demand (Chapter 6).

On the path to real magnitude as a speaker, there is no avoiding the first half of a formula rendered as a quip by jazz great Charlie Parker. You learn every rule, requirement and method, repeat and repeat the cycles of

Homework & Practice Aloud---and then you “forget all that crap and play.” But it’s not that you’ve forgotten anything.

Having dealt rigorously with every “small” aspect, your confidence keeps building and freeing up your best to deal with the big challenges. What delivers you to a performance of magnitude is synergy: a building-process that at last is something more than the sum of its parts.

Keep On or Fall Back

As soon as you really apply the Performance Anchors of Chapters 1 & 2, your “ear” begins to change. You notice (sometimes with pain!) how much dead language shapes and rules the world. Abuse of the word “like” and dead-air “Um’s” start to make you cringe. Yet the further you advance, the more you recognize this as opportunity.

Your new ear means changing language-pathways in your brain---turning away from lazy and conforming habits toward fresh ones, and so creating a voice only yours. In every transformation there’s an awkward phase between old and new: it’s a sign you’re moving. “Up-Talk” disappears as a measure of new confidence. Soon, from the utterance of your name, people know you’re a professional with standards.

The more you try, the easier and more empowering the result. If you worry about losing bonds with peers because you speak differently, what you discover is that people listen more than before---even enjoy and imitate your new ways.

We do need times of pure spontaneous speech. The difference that makes the difference starts with your Switch.

Workaday language, and the human need for bonding, will tempt you back into old ways at every turn. As with language itself, there is no standing still. **Keep working to improve, or you will fall back into the crowd of vying voices.**

Let others start with opinions and work backwards. You begin from inclusiveness and neutral statements of fact, deliberate the possibilities--- and arrive at a judgment with magnitude because of that near-invisible process. Let others clutch at false anchors because they don't understand language and the relative universe. Let them fight and fumble to be heard, making brute force serve where you come gracefully prepared---to claim space, to serve the Neutrals, to assist teammates, and to kindly give opponents all the rope they need.

Here are four ways to continue your advancement:

(1) Never neglect your physical process for grounding your energies. The body **will** get in your way if you ignore it.

(2) In Homework & Practice Aloud, work with two timing-devices: a clock and a calendar. A clock never lies about how your talk and its best pace fit the given time-limit. When you know the date of your next talk, post it, and count backward in days or weeks, to apportion your time for **research, creation and practice of the finished talk.** For truly-last-minute changes upset your sense of real command. **Plan to be practicing the finished talk at least two days before delivery.**

(3) Record and listen to your best practice, and/or ask other people for feedback. Keep adjusting as you work. You as editor and other people are the world suggesting where it doesn't yet understand or connect with you. You are responsible for the response you get.

(4) **Envision** the speaker you want to be five years down the professional road. What is that person doing onstage that's at once so playful **and** substantive? **Measure where you are now as a speaker, and go after every element that marks the difference.** From basic excellence to 3-dimensional music and rhythm, from unflappable poise to endless techniques and resources that keep on enriching the forum---that can and will be you, sooner rather than maybe later.

To the orator, the universe is a vast performance-hall with incomparable acoustics. It vibrates and resonates with every sound and move we make.

For better or worse, what you broadcast comes back to you, amplified. It's time to take advantage of that fact---to shape your expression and so your life into a conscious compelling work of art.

Speaking well is power toward every goal.

Coda:

The Mighty Game of Duh!

This game is an orator's mirror. Duh! brings out what and how much you know about the entire universe (your inner wealth of resources), and how deftly you can use it toward a goal on the spur of a moment, when it counts---not least, in debates and interviews.

Here is the **premise** of the game. You love working with an organization and want to advance. You happen to hear that a person with a job you want is leaving. One day you're the last to leave the office when, suddenly, there is the CEO heading home. You've never conversed much. But today the CEO asks your name, how it's going---and then she/he suggests a casual coffee or cocktail "to unwind" across the street.

This is the interview. You have to impress to get into the game-forward. And it's going to be harder than a standard interview---because the CEO does everything to put you off-guard. You sit down and relax, and the first thing she/he says is,

"How about that King Kong?"

Welcome to the game of Duh!

You need: **(A)** Two equal opposing teams, **(B)** an odd number of judges, and **(C)** a blackboard, a shared computer-screen, or a pen and paper for each and all players. Decide who plays each role: rotate judges with each new game. One judge will be **Time-Keeper** and needs a watch

that tracks 60-second intervals. Decide on a score (perhaps, 7) that gives a team victory, or play without such a limit.

(1) First, all players contribute to a brainstorm---whose entries (below) a volunteer jots down on a blackboard/common screen, or that each player records on paper.

Imagine the history of the universe and all its human learning: from The Big Bang to Earth's own story, from (for example) dinosaurs to the most world-shaking and trivial events, discoveries, ideas and figures.

"The first use of fire!" "The U.S. Bill of Rights!" "High-heeled shoes!" "Pizza!" "Krakatoa!" "Baseball!" "The Beatles!" "The Euro!" Take turns till each player contributes 3-5 topics.

Then, for a moment, step back and together examine the list---but don't (this time) change or improve it. It reflects the learning, values and perspectives that each brings to the game.

(2) Have a judge toss a coin as "you" call heads-or-tails. If you **win the toss**, choose a topic and a player of **either** side to speak impressively about it for 1 full minute. (Choose a teammate and keep a chance of scoring, which has risks---or, choose an opponent to challenge). If you **lose the toss**, these options go to the opponent nearest or facing you.

(3) Together the judges say to the player: "Impress Us! Begin!" And now "you" as speaker must find a way to do that with the topic.

(4) Keep working with your best till a judge calls "Time!" Each judge then renders an honest Thumbs Up or Down (**more for judges, Step 6**).

(5) If somehow you "just can't" complete your minute with any sense of success, **Say "Duh!"** and choose (don't *ask*) a player of either side to give the topic a full try. If the new player completes the minute and gets a

majority of judges' Thumbs Up, they score +1 for their team. If not, the judges record **no** score: neither subject nor speaker(s) have advanced.

If the new player also must say "**Duh!**" or gets a majority Thumbs Down, players on **either** team can volunteer to **Go For It**---with the same risks and chance to score. The Time-Keeper designates the first person they see volunteering for it. The last player to speak restarts the game with a new teammate or opponent, and a topic from the list.

(6) Before each next round, each judge explains their vote for each speaker frankly and constructively. Why each impressed them, or didn't; what was strong and could have been better; and/or, what impression of each speaker they drew from the performance. Then, all players add their own observations and suggestions---and the game goes on.

The Secret is---Nobody can know everything. If you happen to know a subject, make the humble most of it. Opportunity looks ever-more for people who cultivate a many-sided learning about the world.

If you know *nothing* about what comes, what will you do? *You*, of course, quickly recognize a speaker faking their way along. And you know what they reveal---somebody willing to fake their way along, in speaking and Lord-knows what else.

That is not the impression that brings responsibility and rewards. Do not imagine you can "pull it off"---because you and your audience are one, and *you're* not fooled by fakery when you're sitting safe among them.

When you don't know, admit it up front---and then, smoothly segue in a direction where you do have strengths to offer and deploy toward your goal. The point is **to show the qualities of your mind**.

Admit with grace that you don't know. Then, for example, demonstrate with confidence **(A)** How you'd go about looking into and learning more on the subject; or,

(B) Identify and focus on **an aspect of** what's mentioned (example below); which is easier to connect with a subject or experience that you **do** have at your command; or,

(C, wherever possible), Explore how a subject might be a source of unexpected value or insight to the situation, purposes and goals at hand.

"So, how about that King Kong?"

"It might surprise, but I've never seen any of the Kong movies---just a monster-flick or two. Historical films I can discuss. Or, tell me about Kong and we can compare the Wolf Man: that poor guy's story I did catch. One thing strikes me---that between the Kong PR I've seen and a couple of monster classics, the treatment of animals in films has come a long way. I've always liked working for firms that make the most of cultural change. If you saw *The Wall Street Journal's* Op-Ed last Friday, a lot of firms prosper by a nature-friendly name. For example...."

The Question posed by casual relaxed atmosphere and/or seemingly random topics is to elicit *You*, and the caliber of your resources: wide-awake intelligence, constant industrious learning, versatility, responsible independence, imagination.

With "I don't know" or "I wish I knew more about that," you don't start with an apology or bluff---but with the virtue of frank honesty.

Those are the people you want to entrust with a speaking-subject, a civil matter, a business-project---the speakers whose speaking marks them out for higher opportunity.