

Make Yourself Memorable:

How to Say it Better Next Time So Others Remember & Delight in Repeating What You Say

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Chapter One: Introduction

1. Capture the Essence to Captivate Others

Why do some ideas catch fire while others are ignored or quickly forgotten?

How do people usually respond to you, and your ideas?

How does memorability happen?

For some insights about memorability, start with this vignette:

In the movie “The Player” during a scene at a Hollywood studio executive meeting, Mr. Levy shows Reeve, the central character, how to pitch a potential movie story.

Levy holds out a newspaper, saying, “Here, read a headline, any headline.”

Reeve responds: “Um... ‘Immigrants Protest Budget Cuts in Literacy Program.’”

Levy’s immediate retort is this blockbuster-making summary:

“Human spirit overcoming economic adversity. Sounds like Horatio Alger in the barrio. You put in Jimmy Smits, you got a sexy ‘Stand and Deliver.’ Next?”

And here are three more:

- Robert Kosberg, a Hollywood producer, convinced a studio to make the 1993 pets-gone-wrong movie “Man’s Best Friend.” His pitch was just “Jaws on Paws.”
- In early 2003, the headline of political commentator Arianna Huffington’s column on the roiling CEO scandals was “Clutching forks and knives to eat their bacon” and the one-liner description of it was “How corporate sociopaths loot, plunder, and pillage—and get off scot-free—while the rest of us pay for it.”
- In the early days of the U.S. Presidential campaign, a radio commentator intoned, “Presidential candidate George W. Bush will be active in making pronouncements in the coming weeks... He wants to define himself before his opponents do it for him.”

(Don’t we all?)

Want to define yourself and describe your ideas so vividly that yours—not others’ words—and are most remembered?

From the vignettes you just read, you can see how a description becomes memorable.

“One lives in the hope of becoming a memory.”

- Antonio Porchia



Whose description of you—and your actions and ideas—is most often remembered and repeated—yours or someone else’s? You don’t need to be seeking the Presidency (or a job or romantic relationship) to benefit from becoming more memorable.

How do you describe your work, friends, critics, and personal interests? These descriptions are the verbal “clothes” you wear throughout your life.

You can be a more major coauthor of your life story as your descriptions become more memorable.

- Where do you start?
- What are the recurring themes in the story line of your life?
- Want to change some of them?
- What are the messages you most want to convey to others?

Many people are affronted by the notion that our culture rewards those who are most skilled at speaking in sound bites. Yet don’t we all turn our attention to the human stories that tug at some emotion, make us feel more alive?

Even if we resist reducing our ideas to sound bites, we instinctively pay more attention to others who do. The truth is that we expect to be beguiled upfront.

We feel time-starved, yet we still have time to eavesdrop. We watch each other, even when we act like we aren’t. We instinctively scan for “The New,” the unusual, ever alert to any tidbit that may be personally meaningful. For us humans, some behaviors simply don’t change.

When are we often most likable and quotable? When we are around those we love or like or with whom we want to establish bragging rights. That’s when we share our most tantalizing incidents in shorthand. That’s when we are masters of the evocative sound bite.

Yet we tend to dilute our story-making skills at other important times. In fact, we are more likely to spill the juicy details of a story sooner when talking in close, animated conversation with a friend than in a high-stakes work situation. The unfortunate truth is we become more boring when we “work” at it for special occasions such as giving a presentation, writing a report, leading a meeting—even describing a favorite cause or grandchild.



2. You Already Know How to be More Memorable

You already recognize—from your fun, informal times with friends and family—that you can speak memorably. Here’s to taking that talent into more parts of your life.

Memorability matters more than ever today. Just one individual with a riveting description can trump even a heavily bankrolled marketing team with a less interesting message.

You can change minds and lives as you become a more memorable communicator. The rewards? When you offer a captivating capsule summary that matches the listeners’ strongly felt needs and interests, they are more likely to:

1. Remember the story (situation, product, idea...) *your way*.
2. Ask for more.
3. Tell others.
4. Want to learn more about you.
5. Seek you out.

3. We Inadvertently Wall Ourselves Off from Others

Perhaps the three most common mistakes we often make in attempting to get others to care about our ideas—and us—are:

a. Describing it “our way”

We speak from our point of reference, our jargon, examples, and needs.

b. Taking too long to get to the point

We offer background, qualifiers, and other “underbrush” before we get to the essential point that most matters to other people. By that time, listeners may have gone on a “mental vacation.”

c. Speaking in generalizations

The specific detail proves the general conclusion, yet we often begin speaking or writing with general statements.

The more specific you are, the more credible and memorable you can be.

4. You Don’t Have to Be Outgoing to be Memorable

Do you sometimes feel that people stop listening before you stop speaking? How can you make others remember and care about

“My life has a superb cast but I can’t figure out the plot.”

- Ashleigh Brilliant



what you say? How can you actually change how others feel about you or your idea, product, program, organization, or cause?

You do it by captivating them with a characterization that changes their perceptions. It's easier than you think. Even if you are penniless and without "important" contacts, you can make what matters to you matter to others. The methods in this book show you how.

You don't need to be a glad-hander or aggressive to attract interest and support. To be more memorable, you simply must learn to:

- First speak to their (not your) hottest interests.
- Use indelible word pictures they can't erase from their minds.

This book will show you many easy-to-adopt tools to help others remember what you say or write, even if they weren't intending to. Even critics and competitors will repeat what you say. They can't help it, because your images stick to the top of their minds.

"Fred honored that need that children have for a real world they can feel safe in and a make-believe world they can escape to," said Teresa Heinz, a longtime friend of Fred Rogers, the pioneering PBS children's show host of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Heinz was speaking at his funeral on May 5, 2003.

What others will say about you at your funeral is a "too late" question—for you. Instead consider a more satisfying question: What do you want others to say about you—while you are living?

What is the most frequently expressed description, the living legacy you choose for yourself if you become a major coauthor of your life story by making yourself more memorable?

Here's to making yourself more memorable to become happier and higher-performing with others. The memorability-building methods begin in the following section.

Tip: Become positively memorable to more people and you'll attract more adventure, achievement, opportunities, and friendship.

"Fine art and pizza delivery: what we do falls neatly in between."

- David Letterman

"Everyone wants to be Cary Grant. Even I want to be Cary Grant."

- Cary Grant



Chapter Two: Be Brief

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5. Less is Often More

Get your tongue untied, but don't talk too long. To make a connection with someone, be brief in presenting an idea, especially at first. If your characterization is sufficiently short, you have more opportunities to repeat it later.

Repeat your phrase with care to not become irritating. Used well, your description can become the unifying Greek chorus.

It can become the central thread of thought for everyone in the conversation.

Brevity helps you establish the context in which others view the situation—and view you. In so doing, you become extraordinarily influential. Why? Because you are creating the playing field on which your topic will be seen and discussed by others and then acted upon. Following you'll find several other methods for being memorably brief.

6. Encapsulate the Situation to Paint the Brightest Picture

As veteran campaign strategist and TV executive Roger Ailes writes in [You Are the Message](#), "See it and say it." If you're online, click on the book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click **Grand Store**.

If you can see a picture in your mind and describe it, others will stay tuned. All your examples don't have to be life-changing, but they can be engaging.

The one-liner pitches for proposed movies that you read at the beginning of this e-book are examples of super-brief encapsulated stories. For any topic, you too can give an instant picture.

Example:

Here's a slightly longer encapsulation of a situation. At the height of the dot-com boom, I passed a billboard on busy Lombard Street in San Francisco. It displayed this message: "Someone is going to win the lottery this week. And it is not going to be you. When will you finally turn to E-Trade?"

Then people will want to hear more. If you say too much upfront:

- Their minds are more likely to wander.
- They won't value your ideas as much.
- You have less chance to ascertain what most matters to them about your message.

*"Knowledge speaks,
but wisdom listens."*

- Jimi Hendrix

*"Having a family is
like having a bowling
alley installed in
your brain."*

- Martin Mull



Unfortunately, the topics for which you have the greatest depth of experience or passion are the very topics that will be hardest for you to whittle down to a well-crafted gem. On these topics you are most likely to pour out a cement-load of information and suggestions before others can “interrupt.” And it will seem like an interruption to you, if they do.

You are in desperate need of coaching help from your friends and colleagues—especially those whose lives are a step or two outside the world about which you want to write or speak.

Ask for their help. Tell them to be frank—very frank. Then tell them your capsule summary. Do not be defensive as they peel away the extra layers of details (all important information, to be sure) to get to the bare essence.

As you open your mouth to defend your details, instead thank these thoughtful colleagues. Even in your mounting frustration, realize that you don’t need to tell everything upfront. Otherwise you’ll leave listeners far behind you, diverted by something more memorable—even if they didn’t intend to be distracted. If you resist your friends’ advice too strongly, they will give up.

After a decade of consulting as that outside communication speaker and coach attempting to help others craft a memorable message, I know this to be true. You will bargain, cajole, and ignore the advice of those you’ve asked to help you pare down the details.

You will let your “brief” summary run on too long to shine as a summary. It’s only human. Truth be told, many times I’ve done the same myself. Then I’ve watched others’ energy and interest seep out of a situation because I talked too long. Thank your friends who stick in the discussion with you, suggesting the parts you can eliminate in your main message.

See your willingness to be brief as a sign of your belief in yourself and in others.

When you do share your brief, vividly encapsulated story with others, they will listen longer. And they will be more likely to ask questions.

As you share your encapsulated gem, watch how others respond.

Observe them closely. As you listen to their comments and questions, you will discover, in *their* descending order of importance, what they want to know next. Now you can offer up more servings of your idea in the order and manner they’ve just indicated they want to hear. By listening, you let them show you



how they want to hear you. You are, in effect, “going slow to go fast.” That’s a priceless insight, especially if you want to involve others in your ideas rather than winding up talking or writing to yourself.

Here are more examples of an encapsulated summary. Because it is such a powerful memorability-building tool, you’ll find other examples sprinkled throughout the book.

Examples:

- Jenny Lee’s literary agent offered this encapsulated summary of her book *I Do. I Did. Now What?: Life After the Wedding Dress*: “Here’s a rant that (almost despite itself) ends up as a celebration of marriage.”
- Financial analyst Alan Parisse shared this perhaps apocryphal newspaper advertisement with me: “For sale. Infant shoes. Never used.”

7. Use a Familiar Word in a Fresh Way

Solidify your reputation as a special kind of expert by being the first to label a pertinent phenomenon.

Examples:

- Futurist Faith Popcorn predicted that people would want to be “cocooning” in their homes.
- “Roadmap” is the current media/politically spinned label for a plan in a hotly contested arena such as “Roadmap for peace in the Middle East” or a plan for government or business reform. We will probably hear more about various road maps, in many other sectors of life, by the time you are reading this e-book

8. Coin a Phrase

Craft the brief phrase that others can also use as:

- An acknowledgement of affinity with a group or a belief
- A response to an often-asked question or frequently recurring behavior
- A salute
- A retort
- A motto
- A piece of advice
- A call to action

*“In the end,
everything is
a gag.”*

- Charlie Chaplin



Examples:

- “Make my day” is perhaps Clint Eastwood’s most famous movie line.
- “Mass customization” is the shorthand label Don Peppers and Martha Rogers give to their notion of personalizing a service or product to each customer.
- “Dig your well before you get thirsty” is the reason Harvey Mackay gives for never neglecting your networking opportunities.
- “Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus” is author and relationship expert John Gray’s central theme for describing the differences between the sexes.
- Bill Clinton’s 1992 Presidential campaign was going nowhere. Then the tide turned when Clinton started focusing on the winning theme his strategist James Carville memorably labeled “It’s the economy, stupid!” This phrase, in many variations, has been adopted as an admonition in many places outside politics, recently turning up over 400 times in a Google search.

9. Arrange Alliterative Phrases

Alliterative phrases are fun to say and hard to forget.

Examples:

- “Peak performance” became an over-used but long-remembered phrase in business.
- “High tech/high touch,” advocated futurist John Naisbitt.

10. Next Time, Make it Rhyme

It’s no accident that some of the most remembered songs and advertising jingles and summaries use rhyme. They continue as if on a continuous-feed loop in our minds and pop back to us even when we hear only part of the rhyme in the future.

Example:

- Recall the first vignette in this book: “Jaws on Paws.”

11. Repeat a Word to Reinforce a Sentiment

Repeating words is one way to emphasize obvious but often-ignored wisdom.

Example:

- “First things first” is a phrase Steve Covey used to brand his approach to living by your values.

“C is for cookie, it’s good enough for me; oh cookie cookie cookie starts with C.”

- Cookie Monster, character on *Sesame Street*, U.S. children’s television program



12. Make a Pun

We can't help ourselves—kids of all ages love to repeat puns. And it is one of the most powerful ways to make your ideas contagiously memorable.

Example:

- [Tongue Fu!](#) is the title of Sam Horn's book about verbal self-defense. If you're online, click on the book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click Grand Store.

13. Turn a Phrase in an Unexpected Direction

You can build others' involvement by turning your sentences toward a different sentiment than they expected when you began.

Examples:

- To connect with people upon first meeting, I suggest "going slow to go fast."
- Photographer Robert Stewart offers prospects this helpful benefit: "My pictures say a thousand words so you don't have to."
- Garrison Keillor once said on his show, "I believe in looking reality straight in the eye and denying it."
- One of my favorite comediennes, Rita Rudner, commented in her show in Las Vegas, "Before I met my husband, I'd never fallen in love, though I'd stepped in it a few times."
- Lance Mead of Lunar Travel Agency stands out from other agents when he says "Ninety percent of all accidents happen in the home. So travel."

14. Hijack a Familiar Slogan to Use in a New Way

After a company has spent millions to make a slick slogan well-known, ride the visibility they created by twisting their slogan in another direction to serve your intended meaning.

Example:

- Redwood Hospital in Northern California used this billboard variation of the popular milk slogan to ask for blood donations: "Got blood?"

"A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him or her."

- David Brinkley

"In spite of the cost of living, it's still popular."

- Kathleen Norris

"It is not necessary to imagine the world ending in fire or ice. There are two other possibilities: one is paper work, and the other is nostalgia."

- Frank Zappa



Chapter Three: Offer the Startling Comparison

15. Make Favorable Comparisons with Familiar Objects

When people in your work world are immersed in their jargon, your remarks can stand out when you make a comparison with a well-liked product, person, or situation from outside your profession or industry.

Examples:

- At the high stakes Quist H & Q Healthcare conference, venture capitalists hear 20-minute talks by CEOs of start-ups and public companies who seek funding or favorable stock analysts' reporters. The tension is high and the schedule is packed. Most presenters speak fast, using a mix of highly technical scientific and finance language.
- The speaker from biotech company Amgen walked past the podium to the center of the stage and pulled up one suit and shirt sleeve to bare his raised forearm. He then opened his talk, saying, "You will feel the effects of this medical patch faster than it takes a Porsche to go from zero to ninety."
- On July 25, 2002, *The Wall Street Journal* characterized the corporate reform legislation as "the world's biggest legal lunch ticket."

16. Create a Humorous Juxtaposition

Make them chuckle or simply smile and you move them closer to your point of view. In a variation of #8, make a humorous comparison with an easy-to-picture image.

Example:

- Jimmy Guterman of The Vineyard Group set up his characterization of legislation to reform accounting procedures in three quick sentences and then nailed his conclusion with an other-world comparison: "The first thing you should know about the bill, which President Bush has promised to sign today, is that it is complex. How complex? Let's just say that the *Wall Street Journal* tried to break it down into bullet points and found it needed 18 of them. As you might suspect, any story with that many key parts is going to have more spins than a square dance."

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"Time sneaks up on you like a windshield on a bug."

- Jon Lithgow

"Duct tape is like the Force. It has a light side, a dark side, and it holds the universe together...."

- Carl Zwanzig

"Thus the metric system did not really catch on in the States, unless you count the increasing popularity of the nine-millimeter bullet."

- Dave Barry

"The important thing in acting is to be able to laugh and cry. If I have to cry I think of my sex life. If I have to laugh, I think of my sex life."

- Glenda Jackson



17. Will It be “Either Or”?

As a variation of 16, craft a comparison that does not involve humor but still colors the way others see the situation. Inherent in your comparison, create a “would you want this or that?” sentiment that moves people toward the one you want them to feel and do.

Example:

- Michele Kayal wrote this characterization of the proposed legislation for citizen surveillance of potential terrorists, which appeared in the July 26, 2002 issue of the *New York Times*: “Enlisting citizens to report on other citizens will erode the soul of the watcher and the watched, replacing healthy national pride with mute suspicion.”

Whoever most vividly characterizes the situation usually determines how others see it in their mind’s eye, believe it, tell others, and act upon it.

18. Make a Comparison with a Physical Action or Part of the Body

For an image they can’t forget make a comparison to some physical behavior or part of the body of a human or animal.

Examples:

- What could have been a dry description gets an emotional thrust when former *Wall Street Journal* writer Alan Gunterman uses a “thumb” comparison: “The new bill would create a regulatory board to oversee the accounting industry and punish corrupt auditors. Such a board could be seen as a thumb in the eye of the accounting industry, which sought to continue policing itself through its own board of standards.”
- *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Jon Carroll provided this body comparison, “After the stock market slumped like an old dog’s belly...”
- “Let me take the world off your shoulders,” offers Sharon Howard, massage therapist.

“After the grand jury session, he (Vernon Jordan) told reporters that he answered the questions truthfully and to the best of his ability. Well, come on, which is it?”

- David Letterman

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”

- Derek Bok

“Giving birth is like taking your lower lip and forcing it over your head. ”

- Carol Burnett



Chapter Four: Share the Story That Shows Your Perspective

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19. Anchor Your Advice in a Pertinent Story

To inspire others to see an idea your way, set the stage with a brief anecdote rather than telling them what they “ought” to do.

Examples:

- If you are going to be asking a group to change their way of doing things, consider telling this story first: There is an old joke in Soviet Russia about a guard at the factory gate who at the end of every day saw a worker walking out with a wheelbarrow full of straw. Every day the guard thoroughly searched the contents of the wheelbarrow but never found anything but straw. One day he asked the worker: “What do you gain by taking home all that straw?” “The wheelbarrows.”
- Once out on the road toward a speaking engagement, I turned on the radio in my rental car. A low, almost neutral-sounding male voice came on: “One in three women in Louisiana who are murdered... (long pause)... are murdered by their husbands. If you or someone you know’s life is in danger, or you even suspect it might be, here’s the number to call right now for help... I wish I had. It might have saved my sister’s life.” Then he gave the number.
- Notice how Michael Kinsley’s humorous perspective, offered in his May 5, 2003, article makes us laugh with him and at the hapless subject of his story: “Sinners have long cherished the fantasy that William Bennett, the virtue magnate, might be among our number. The news over the weekend that Bennett’s \$50,000 sermons and best-selling moral instruction manuals have financed a multimillion dollar gambling habit has lit a lamp of happiness in even the darkest hearts. As the joyous word spread, crack flowed like water through inner-city streets, family court judges began to hand out free divorces, children lit bonfires of *The Book of Virtues*, *More Virtuous Virtues*, *Who Cheesed My Virtue?*, *Moral Tails: Virtue for Dogs*, etc.”

“Wooing the press is an exercise roughly akin to picnicking with a tiger. You might enjoy the meal, but the tiger always eats last.”

- Maureen Dowd

20. Now I See It Differently

Here is the first of four phenomena (the others are described in 21, 22, and 23) by which you can inspire people to change their beliefs and behavior. Elliot Aronson, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and Richard E. Petty, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Ohio State



University, provided the research and some of the related ideas for this section and reviewed my description for accuracy.

The *Reader's Digest* is full of dramatic personal stories that follow certain formulas to evoke an emotional response in readers. One story might follow this structure:

"Marie Beckinger (not her real name), a thirty-two-year-old mother of two, was driving home from grocery shopping when a dented pickup truck streaked through a red light. The truck was driven by a would-be bank robber trying to escape the police. He struck the passenger's side of Mary's car, where her infant was buckled into his red car seat in front and her toddler was belted to his car seat in back. The side and front safety airbags inflated within 20 milliseconds, lifting and displaying her children like jewels in cushioned boxes. They were safe."

Stories and examples get people invested in learning more facts and other information, rarely the reverse. Examples are usually easier to comprehend and require less effort to consider. People will have an emotional response to examples and consider them longer than they will statistics, which they simply try to remember. They react more fully to examples, as they recollect their own similar personal experiences.

To make information memorable and credible, start with the story. Then continue with the statistics.

21. What's the Payoff or Penalty?

Consequences influence behavior. People are more likely to do things when they like what will follow. Thus people are reinforced to repeat certain ways of acting, reduce other ways, and stop still others. When you wish someone to act differently, how are you supporting or preventing that desired change? Consider the three Rules of Consequences and Reinforcements:

1. Consequences that give rewards increase a behavior.
2. Consequences that give punishments decrease a behavior.
3. Consequences that give neither rewards nor punishments extinguish a behavior.

If you want to increase a behavior (make it more frequent, more intense, and/or more likely), provide a Consequence of Reward.

If you want to decrease a behavior (make it less frequent, less intense, and/or less likely), provide a Consequence of Punishment.

If you want a behavior to disappear, provide no Consequence (ignore the behavior).

"Saying that men talk about baseball in order to avoid talking about their feelings is the same as saying that women talk about their feelings in order to avoid talking about baseball."

- [Deborah Tannen](#)

"An eye for an eye only leads to more blindness."

- Margaret Atwood



22. Shoot to Save

How do you get people to feel supportive of your idea, cause, or product? You “inoculate” them. For example, most American youth get shots to inoculate them against diseases such as polio and diphtheria.

The shot actually gives one a weak dose of the virus, which activates the body’s immune system. By fighting off this weak attack, the immune system becomes stronger so it can withstand a larger assault of the disease.

If, however, the shot contained too strong a dose, it would overwhelm the immune system, causing a strongly adverse reaction or even death.

Deepening beliefs happens in a similar way. If you want to strengthen someone’s existing attitude or behavior, create a situation where that person experiences a “weak” attack on that belief.

Here’s how:

1. Warn a person or people of an impending “attack.”
2. Make a weak attack or watch an attack happen.
3. Inspire the person(s) to actively defend the attitude.

1. Warn of the attack.

When people are threatened in this way they immediately begin to generate possible defenses against the coming attack. In fact, people will consider multiple actions, many that may never be useful or necessary during the coming attack.

This is akin to a group of soldiers who have some time to prepare for an enemy’s approach. Because they don’t know exactly what the enemy will do, the soldiers get every weapon and construct every barrier they can. Maybe they won’t use everything, but they want it available if needed. Thus they become more mentally and physically prepared and motivated to defend.

2. Make a weak attack or watch an attack happen.

An attack is, in fact, a form of persuasion, an attempt to change the thoughts, feelings, or actions of others. Advertisers attack our existing attitudes when they try to get us to prefer their product over that of a competitor. The attack must be strong enough to force the receivers to defend. It must not be so strong as to overcome the defense.

“Reality is nothing but a collective hunch.”

- Lily Tomlin



3. Inspire the person(s) to actively defend the attitude.

The more actively someone defends an attack or opinion, the more intensely that person will believe in and act on that view. An active defense occurs when the receiver does more than merely think, but rather acts.

Example:

- Political campaign strategists often try to influence votes through “inoculation.” For example, the Republican Party might mail flyers to registered Republican voters, warning them that the Democrats are likely to attack a Republican candidate on certain hot issues.
- The flyers provide a weak version of the attacks they predict will come. Thus when the real Democratic attack ads hit, the Republicans are inoculated against the arguments and more likely to fight them off.

23. That Seems Reasonable

A stranger approaches you at the shopping mall one day and politely asks if you would spend just one or two minutes hearing about how you can help fellow Americans remain safe in these times of greater risk to bioterrorism.

You say you have only a few minutes.

The stranger briefly describes the importance of the local blood bank. You nod your head in polite agreement, but you know there’s a gimmick coming.

Then the stranger asks, “Would you be willing to be a blood bank volunteer? You’d have to give ten hours a week for the next year and solicit blood donations from the people of our community by contacting them over the phone or face-to-face.”

You politely tell the stranger no.

The stranger looks a little disappointed and follows up: “Well, if you can’t give your time, could you at least give a unit of blood right now? We have a station set up right down this hall in the mall.”

“Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint you can at it.”

- Danny Kaye



People do this two-step dance in two different ways:

The first way, as illustrated by the blood bank story, is the door-in-the-face (DITF) and the second is the foot-in-the-door (FITD).

- With DITF, a would-be influencer's first request is aimed solely at getting the receiver to say no very quickly. The influencer's second, much less extreme request is then much more likely to be accepted.
- In the foot-in-the-door tactic, the influencer starts with a small request that almost no one would refuse. After getting a "Yes!" response to this little request, the influencer makes a bigger request. Because listeners have already invested in the idea, they are often likely to increase that investment and agree to the second request. For example, you are first asked to sign a petition and then asked for a donation of time or money.



Chapter Five: Find the Humor

24. Use Others' Serious Comments for Your Humor

Here's an irony. The people who volunteer as witnesses to record human rights violations, which often include acts of torture, often have honorary dinners filled with laughter. Those involved with Amnesty International have seen so much evil, they maintain balance and acknowledge the darkness of what they've seen by often turning to dark humor in the speeches and awards they share together.

We take so much of life seriously. Easily irritated by a tailgating commuter or too-slow sales clerk or meandering meeting, we add to the tension by our actions when we might change the tone with humor.

Lighten up more often. Consider opening a meeting with a mock-serious inspiration or admonition and then grinning. Real life is rich with humorous material free for your use. As you listen and read, look for inadvertently funny, sometimes Dilbert-like comments for your dry-humored use. These lines from real life were gathered by Accountemps:

Examples:

- "What I need is a list of specific unknown problems we will encounter." - Lykes Lines Shipping
- "This project is so important, we can't let things that are more important interfere with it." - Advertising/Marketing Manager, United Parcel Service
- "We know that communication is a problem, but the company is not going to discuss it with the employees." - Switching Supervisor, AT&T Long Lines Division

25. Bungle Your Translation to Bring a Chuckle

If you are with a worldly group, offer your humorous variation of a well-known expression in a foreign language. Change a single letter and provide a definition for the new expression. Share these rules and your expression with your colleagues and ask for their contribution. *New Yorker* magazine held such a contest in 2001. Here are some of the winning contributions:

- HARLEZ-VOUS FRANCAIS: Can you drive a French motorcycle?
- IDIOS AMIGOS: We're wild and crazy guys!
- RESPONDEZ S'IL VOUS PLAID: Honk if you're Scottish.

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"The President has kept all of the promises he intended to keep."

- George Stephanopoulos,
Clinton's aide speaking on
Larry King Live

"Hey, you can't fight in here! This is the war room!"

- Dr. Strangelove



- POSH MORTEM: Death styles of the rich and famous.
- ALOHA OY: Love; greetings; farewell; from such a pain you would never know.
- VISA LA FRANCE: Don't leave your chateau without it.
- VENI, VIDI, VELCRO: I came, I saw, I stuck around.
- ZITGEIST: Clearasil doesn't quite cover it up.

26. Create Your Own Word and Define It for Laughter

Make up words to encourage people to laugh with you—and around your ideas. Each year the *Washington Post* asks readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and suggest a new definition. Below are the 2001 winners of their “Style Invitational.”

- Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
- Foreploit: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
- Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
- Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
- Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
- Hipatitis: Terminal coolness.
- Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
- Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
- Glibido: All talk and no action.
- Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

“The truth is, laughter always sounds more perfect than weeping. Laughter flows in an effortless riff and is always melodic. Weeping is often fought, choked, half strangled, or surrendered to with humiliation.”

- Anne Rice



Chapter Six: Become More Colorful

27. Speak English Like it Tastes Good

Say “shoes” and you are not as memorable as when you say “blue shoes,” which will not stick in others’ minds as long as “cobalt blue shoes,” which, of course, will not be remembered as long as “sleek cream-and-cobalt-blue running shoes with a glow-in-the-dark lightning bolt on the heel and toe”... will it? Why use gray generalities to describe your full-color, SurroundSound world? Offer sensory details. Consider this:

Dusk settled coolly over the vineyards in Napa Valley, California, one fall evening. Through the window, I gazed wistfully at a thin stream of bittersweet chocolate sauce a waiter was ladling high over a raspberry-colored cake at the table of a hand-holding couple, inside the big stone restaurant operated by the Culinary Institute of America. I knew it was bittersweet chocolate because the rich smell was drifting through the French doors out onto the patio, where we were drinking a fine Cakebread cabernet next to two giggling toddlers, just as happily chewing red licorice twists from the local 7-11 store.

“See” the picture? Here’s the pity. As adults, we tend to lose our picture-making way of speaking. We forget to tell the story that tells the story. We’ve gradually forgotten how to speak English like it tastes good, even when we desperately want people to remember what we are saying. Our conversations often begin with sweeping generalizations.

Unlike most children under the age of 12 or so, we adults offer qualifiers and chronology before we finally get to the delicious details that are most involving, credible, and evocative. Think of the speeches, advertisements, and conversations you most remember. Did the words evoke some visual experience?

Let ideas roll around in your mouth like a good merlot.

How colorfully can you describe the habits of the people you love, the actions of those you admire, the interests for which you have a fervent passion? Skip the generalities. Serve up more specifics.

Following in 28-31 are four other ways to offer the details most likely to stick in others’ minds.

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“Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.”

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh



28. Throw Your Ideas onto the Biggest Hooks in the Brain

Imagine the brain as a wall with clothes hooks on it. For the brain to catch and retain a detail, that detail must hang on one of the memory-inducing hooks already there.

The biggest hooks are the three universally felt core life experiences:

1. Family
2. Hometown or town where you have lived or are living
3. Past or current kind of work

For family, relate what you're saying to a family situation: yours, theirs, someone else's, or even a metaphorical family of services.

Or relate your topic to the listener's work situation or work with which she is familiar. People also remember well-known places or landmark places where they live, have lived, or have visited. For example, our business is in Sausalito, which evokes pleasant by-the-bay memories for most who've visited here.

29. Motion Makes Memories

Whenever people are moving or see movement, they remember more and are more emotional about what they remember. Get others in motion with you in a positive experience, and they will be fervent, vivid, and believing fans, more likely to evoke their bragging rights and likely to share their experience with others. That's why we literally move to offer samples, getting people to reach out so they feel the experience more deeply.

Here are the four levels of emotional intensity and memorability that you can evoke, using motion:

1. An experience is most memorable and emotional when you and the other person are both in motion, such as when you shake hands, walk together, or reach to exchange something. Pick those ripe moments to say the most vivid, specific detail you want the listener to remember and repeat to others. Times are next most memorable for the listener who is in motion even if you are not.
2. The second most effective way to evoke deeper emotional intensity and memorability is to get the listener in motion even if you are still. Ask the person to reach or turn for something while you're saying your tasty tidbit to remember.
3. The third most intense method is when you are in motion, even if your listener is not.

"I base my fashion sense on what doesn't itch."

- Gilda Radner



4. The least potent way to evoke emotion and memorability is to be in a situation where you both are sitting or standing still, watching others in motion. For example, you both might be watching people flood through the downtown streets at noontime.

Warning: Movement is a two-edged sword—it is never neutral. The listener who experiences something negative where motion is involved will also remember the experience longer and more intensely. As to a vibrating pole, we hold on sooner, longer, and more strongly to the negative incidents of life than to the positive, because the primitive triune part of our brain—wired to help us survive—causes us to respond to appearances of danger more strongly than to those of delight.

30. Address Strong Interests

Speak first of the other person's most current pressing interest. Just as those in the market for new cars are most likely to hear car ads on the radio, all people listen sooner when you first speak about what is most on their mind at that moment.

Sadly, in fewer than 5% of interactions where we want something from someone else do we first speak about what matters most to them. We are more likely to speak about our own interests first.

Tip: To make yourself more memorable, paint the pictures you want people to remember.

"If love is the answer, could you please rephrase the question?"

- Lily Tomlin



Chapter Seven: Bring Out Their Best Side; Then They'll See Yours

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31. Feel Familiar to Others

People like people who *are* like them.

Shine a spotlight on their most positively colorful actions—or the actions you want to inspire them to take. That way they'll naturally see your positively memorable side.

Like all other animals, we are most comfortable with those who look and act right—like us. In fact, the more you look familiar to me, the earlier in the conversation I will literally hear your words, absorb their meaning, and be more able to accept them and you.

The more you look and act different from me, the more narrow my peripheral vision becomes—at least at first. Further, my skin temperature will go down and my heartbeat up in anticipation of the possible need to flee. That is because the primitive triune part of our brains has not changed since we dwelled in caves. We are forever hardwired to respond to new, unfamiliar situations with the fight or flight syndrome.

Tip: Move, speak, and act similarly to others at first so you feel more familiar and comfortable to them.

32. First Involve Others to Forge a Strong Connection

As author Sam Horn pointed out after observing Mark Scharenbroich present at NSA, a convention of speakers, “Again and again, I witnessed that the power of our message lies not in what we SAY but in what we ASK. While discussing the Vietnam War, Mark asked the members of the audience to call out their draft number. The emotional drama of the voices ‘251, 89, 6, 18’ rising from the audience drove his point home more enduringly than any rhetoric ever could have.”

Tip: The more opportunities you involve others in along the way, the more likely they will stay involved and supportive in your idea or project.

“Be careful what you pretend to be because you are what you pretend to be.”

- Kurt Vonnegut, Jr

“Politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed.”

- Mao Zedong



33. Gain Approval or Agreement the Easier Way

When the priest was moved to a new parish, he approached his superior to ask for permission: "Would you mind if I smoke while praying?" He was, not too surprisingly, turned down.

Some wise—and popular—people know they can gain approval by *how* they ask. One way to influence others' perceptions is to set the stage or provide the context in which you want the listener to hear your words.

The priest would have been more successful making his request another way: "Would you mind if I pray while I am smoking?"

Tip: Set the stage for the other person to like what you say

34. Praise What You Want to Flourish

Here are two ways to praise. Both are positively powerful ways to spur higher performance with the people you praise:

1. One is to praise someone directly. Whatever you praise you will encourage that behavior to continue. The more specific your words, the more memorable your message. Describe the actual act in rich detail so you honor the person in acknowledging how vividly it affected you.
2. The second and even more powerful way to praise is to compliment the person to someone or several people who are important to that person. See multiple heartwarming examples in the following story.

35. Shine a Spotlight on Others

Here's a true story with spotlights, creating multiple happy endings. As you read it, consider the many ways and situations where you can shine your spotlight.

My client, the CEO of Punjabi, a Berlin-based manufacturer of wireless portal equipment, wanted to celebrate a successful third year of operation during which all employees has worked long hours. In addition to handing out the ten top team awards in the traditional way, at a company event where everybody celebrated together, he also tried something different.

He honored his team leaders in front of other people who mattered to them and who were outside their work life. After carefully asking their friends and family members if that star team leader might enjoy being honored in front of people in their

"Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position falls, your ego goes with it."

- Colin Powell

"If an American is hit on the head by a ball at the ballpark, he sues. If a Japanese person is hit on the head, he says, 'It's my honor. It's my fault.'"

- Koji Yanase of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations on why there are half as many lawyers in his country as in the Washington area



special-interest group, he approached that outside organization to arrange for a surprise ceremony.

Some of the outside groups in which these star team leaders were involved included an Islamic youth group, a rugby club, a college alumnae organization, and an antique car association. With the permission of these organizations, the CEO arranged to give his award and an eight-minute speech, describing both the winner's accomplishments at work and a specific incident where the winner exemplified the heroic character of a true team player.

Thus each (surprised) winner got to bask in the spotlight in front of valued people in her or his non-work world. The CEO's greater effort also put his company in a genuinely positive light in many new places. Although it did not appear that any of the people who saw their friends receive the awards were immediate potential customers of Punjabi, they were sufficiently inspired to stir some positive word-of-mouth buzz about the award ceremonies.

A Month Later...

A month after these ceremonies, a feature writer for the equivalent of the "lifestyle" section of the main Berlin paper heard this story through a friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend who was a rugby player. Not one to be interested in business stories, the journalist was nevertheless touched by the way the ceremonies had rippled out to surround the winners' lives.

She tracked down the CEO and interviewed him, thus affording him another chance to speak glowingly about some of the specific examples of his winners' dedication and ingenuity. As he praised each person, the glow of the values he admired reflected back on him—and his company.

The reporter also interviewed the winners and several of the people at the organizations where the awards events occurred and then wrote a human interest story that appeared, with photos, in a Sunday edition. The article generated several glowing letters to the editor by people who witnessed the ceremonies, the winners, and others who were also moved by the story.

Mr. John Sunui, a vice president of sales for a Singapore-based construction management company, in Berlin on business, happened to read some of the letters in the paper while eating his breakfast in his hotel. Sunui e-mailed the reporter to request a copy of the original article. The reporter e-mailed a copy to him.

That December holiday in Singapore—and 14 other countries where Sunui's company has offices—both the office director and one

"The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid, deeds left undone."

- Harriet Beecher Stowe



person in each office who had done an outstanding job at their work, as voted by their coworkers, got pleasant surprises. When each walked in the door at a place that was special to them, they were greeted by a company representative. That representative stood in front of their non-work gathering of friends to give the awardee a present and share a glowing story about another side of the winner.

***Tip: Who exemplifies a trait you admire,
and who do they admire?***

Think of a specific incident where someone's words or actions exemplified a quality you deeply admire.

What individual or organization is important to that person?

If you believe the individual or the people in the organization share your admiration, call or write that person or someone in the organization. Describe the incident you admire. When you praise indirectly this way, your praise tends to spread farther, faster, longer—and perhaps boomerang back to you with unexpected opportunities for a more adventuresome life.

Why not give yourself a weekly goal of such rich opportunities for sharing your admiration?

Make such praise a part of your daily life. See each situation as an opportunity to choose where you put your attention by what you choose to remark on. This is a free way to reinforce your values, bring out the best side in others—and get to know new people in a life-affirming way.

If you give other people what they need and desire in life, you will often get what you need and desire, often before you know you need it and from people you didn't know could support you.

Here's how to practice your spotlight-style praising. Replay the situation in your mind so you can describe it in all its story-building, touching detail. Practice saying the story while focusing on your positive feelings for that person. Begin with the specific details before you end with the general statements that reflect your feelings and values.

You have several ways to pass along your praise about the person you love or admire. You can call, e-mail, or write to someone in their valued affinity group and share your story of praise. Or, like the people in the story just told, you can ask for permission to confer a gift on the person at a gathering of their group.



36. Extend Your Praise and Expand Your Circle of Friends

In advertising, this method of indirect praise you have been reading about is called a third-party endorsement. For example, when customers praise a product in an advertisement they are providing a credible third-party endorsement. Because we are all instinctive voyeurs, naturally interested in the stories of each other's lives, we are more drawn to third-party endorsements than to other kinds of advertisements.

Further, when we hear a positive story about someone told by another person, we find it more credible and compelling than if the person "boasts" about it in telling it himself.

Here are other ways to offer heartfelt, long-lasting third-party endorsement gifts to those you hold dear:

Support Their Cause.

Donate money or another gift to a charity or cause in which that person is active, and ask that your story about them be included in any acknowledgement of the gift.

Seek Out Favorite Places the Person Frequent.

You might buy a needed piece of equipment or pay for a repair in that person's name. In our Sausalito church you can buy a hymnal and dedicate it to someone, with a related phrase. So every Sunday someone at my church opens up a hymnal with this message, in calligraphy, on the inside front, dedicated to my mother who loves piano music: "To Lestelle, whose piano playing washes away the dust of everyday life."

Personalize Their Playthings.

On an object the person might use frequently (coffee mug, bath towel, key holder) imprint or monogram a positive nickname or one-phrase characterization of the "hero's" action. To my English rugby-playing friend Richard, we're giving a glass beer stein this holiday with these words etched on the bottom: "Great giver of bone-crushing hugs."

Put It in Print.

Make a large, colorful postcard, using your desktop software, to print a description of the positive incident involving your hero. Then ask your colleagues to join in signing it before you send it to that person's home—or post it on their office wall.

"The trouble with the rat-race is that even if you win, you're still a rat."

- Lily Tomlin



Acknowledge Their Partner.

Give a gift to the person's partner in work or personal life as an acknowledgement of your admiration.

Display Their Heroics.

Make a banner or poster with a celebratory sentence and an enlarged and flattering image of the hero. Hang it in a prominent place (wall or door of the person's office, home, or event).

Pay Their Way.

Find a place the person frequents (dry cleaner, golf club) and offer the business manager at that site your credit card number with a set dollar limit. Ask the manager to pay the next bill of your hero and fax you a copy of the bill. Hand the manager a gift card with your inscription on it to be given to the hero at their next visit.

Even the Waiters Began Crying...

You might think of a variation of this story.

Two years ago I learned that Jana, a meeting planner who had hired me to speak at her association several times over the years and who had been exceptionally gracious and generous with me, had contracted leukemia and was not doing well. I learned this from her assistant, who called to confirm some details of my next presentation at their annual conference.

On a long plane flight back from another speaking engagement, I looked out the window, thinking of Jana, and conjured up this idea for a third-party endorsement of the Hawaiian-born meeting planner that would reflect one of her most passionate interests, gardening. I called the association's executive director to share my idea and he immediately agreed.

Two months later, just after I was introduced to speak at that association's convention's opening breakfast, I moved to the center of the raised stage and signaled the 500 attendees to rise from their seats. The board president caught the elbow of our surprised meeting planner, Jana, who, at the bottom of the stage steps, was still focused on making sure the room lighting would be all right for my speech.



He guided her up the steps as I stepped back to the side of the stage, and the first person in the audience, roving mike in hand, told a vignette of how Jana had guided him at the beginning of his career. As Jana reached the center of the stage in front of the people she had served for 14 years, eight other people in various parts of the room lifted their mikes in turn and told their brief stories about her.

Then a saxophone player stepped out from the side of the stage to serenade Jana with a fragment of her favorite Kenny G song as the screen on the stage was filled with purple words on an emerald green background (her favorite colors)—“Jana is a special flower”—followed by a swiftly changing set of images of Jana in several situations.

As the song ended, all 500 people, on cue, pulled from out of their pockets and purses fragrant Hawaiian-grown white gardenias, tuber roses, and pikaki and held them aloft toward Jana. The board president handed Jana a bouquet of the flowers and asked her to speak, which she did, briefly, through her tears. By then even several of the hotel waiters in the room were crying too.

My speech had, of course, been moved to the luncheon so people could drop by Jana’s table to say hello through the ensuing breakfast.



Chapter Eight: What's Not Revealed is Often Most Revealing

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37. Notice What's Not Said

You never really know somebody until you see the choices she makes. What you see is often not what you get. You've long known that it's usually not the "content" but the "people" challenges that determine how well you can do your job.

We instinctively put people into categories to make the world more understandable and then get surprised by a coworker's sudden vehemence about a new subject. That's the mystery of life. You can have fewer surprises, however, when you seek to understand others' less visible, underlying motives, and you might find easier, more satisfying ways of working with them. Notice, for example, that what you—and others—don't reveal or say often says it all.

"The nice thing about being a celebrity is that when you bore people, they think it's their fault."

- Henry Kissinger

38. Notice What's Not Shown

Like many photographers before him, Richard Zaltman was visiting remote areas of the world to capture images of people living lives far removed from those in the United States. One morning, while walking through an isolated village in Bhutan, he suddenly got the idea of turning his camera over to the locals to see what they would consider significant enough to show others about themselves. Later, when he looked at all their pictures, he noticed that most of the photos cut off people's feet. "At first, I thought the villagers had just aimed wrong," Zaltman says. "But it turns out that being barefoot is a sign of poverty. Even though everyone was barefoot, people wanted to hide that—which is an important message to see."

As surrealist painter Rene Magritte wrote, "Everything we see hides something else we want to see." Surrealists in art and literature in the 1920s and 1930s sought to understand and portray others' subconscious perceptions of the physical world. If you want insights into why people do what they do—so you can get them to be more open to doing what you want them to do—discover their unstated or even unconscious motivations for protection or pleasure. To "Say It Better," uncover what they feel but are not saying.



39. Look for Underlying Feelings

To better understand someone and how to inspire that person to take positive action, learn to recognize his unstated hot buttons of high emotion, positive or negative. These are the major rules to his “operating manual”—what makes him run smoothly, bump into obstacles, or simply be stuck.

People act most quickly and intensely to avoid what they fear, even if their worst fear has a much lower probability of occurring than the possibility of their dream scenario. That’s because our deepest, most innate and primeval gut instinct is to survive. We reflexively react to any appearance of danger from the most primitive, triune part of the brain, which was developed way back when fight or flight seemed the only options for any situation.

40. See Them in Motion to See Their Emotions

Seek to understand what the other person most wants to avoid—what most annoys them or makes them angry or anxious.

To recognize others’ hot buttons, look for changes in their behavior as signals that you are on a hot topic of concern. Facial expression tells others how we feel, while our bodies suggest the intensity of our feelings. Look for the “vital signs” of increased excitement such as dilated pupils, constricted throat that produces a higher and/or thinner voice, rapid blinking, flushed face, more rapid and shallow breathing or much less breathing, and avoidance of direct eye contact when the person had looked you in the eye earlier in the conversation.

If the person usually moves and gestures little, look for the times when he has more and more rapid body movements and hand or foot changes. If he tends to be more animated, look for the times when he becomes more still.

Women in time of increased concern are more likely to “hand dance”; that is, to move the hands and forearms more. When seated, men tend to “leak” their feelings by twitching one foot when their legs are crossed.

In general, in times of conflict or other kinds of tension, women tend to move and talk more and more; men tend to move and talk less and less. Psychiatrist Pierre Mornell wrote a book about this effect, vividly called *Passive Men and Wild Women*.

Once you recognize when other people get upset, you can consider what gets them upset and come closer to understanding their operating manual. Now you can present your ideas in ways that address their concerns, either directly or indirectly. Thus you can

“University politics are vicious precisely because the stakes are so small.”

- Henry Kissinger



get someone to either take action to avoid perceived danger or recognize how the perceived danger can be overcome or avoided in order to contemplate an “upside” opportunity.

41. Often We Don't Understand Our Own Strong Reactions

Many times we are not aware of our underlying fears or concerns. We often go through life in a trance, reacting to earlier patterns, especially vividly negative experiences, and not knowing that we are not acting in our current best interests.

Only at age 42 a client of mine realized that because she'd had a stocky brother who often physically and verbally bullied her, she'd developed a life pattern of what she now calls “preemptive defensiveness” around any man with a similarly chunky body type. Only by understanding her previously unconscious “imprinting” from childhood could she begin to change her behavior toward new people she met.

Another colleague grew up in a household where tidiness and timeliness were paramount. He was the exception in the family, who resisted. Even into adulthood, he kept a messy home and office and was often late, especially for people he felt were trying to control him. However, not until he recognized the pattern—and his unconscious desire for independence from his family's dictates—could he choose how he really wanted to act.

Few people are aware of how dramatically bodies shut down in times of perceived crisis or even unfamiliar situations, yet the phenomenon has wide implications. In times of fear or even mild discomfort, people have diminished hearing. They start listening to you later in the conversation and hear and remember less. Their peripheral vision narrows in times of mild or extreme upset. Even the ability to taste goes down. Imagine a police officer who's afraid in a dark alley, a surgeon who becomes angry during an operation, or a child facing a teacher on the first day of school.

In each shut-down situation, these people are hampering their ability to perform. Others may misinterpret their slowed reactions, with possible negative consequences for several people in the situation. You might see the pattern in someone else's hot buttons when the person does not, especially if you are around that person frequently. If this is someone close to you at home or work, it pays to recognize these unstated warning signs so you appear safe and familiar and the person can be open to hearing you.

Don't assume the other person fully realizes why she is saying or acting the way she is. Her words or deeds may have very different meanings for her than for you. For example, many Americans are

“Big egos are big shields for lots of empty space.”

- Diana Black



disturbed when another person does not look them directly in the eye while talking. Yet for some cultures, such as Spanish, direct eye contact demonstrates a lack of respect. Also, many shy people or those deep in thought prefer to look away.

When someone else does not act right—like you—your strongest instinct will be to attempt to make that person “act right” by acting out a more extreme variation of your “right” behavior. For example, you might exaggerate your attempt to look closely at the other person so he will look at you. Instead, look to your “bottom line,” the main goal in the situation—which might be to get a task done or to simply play. Do not focus on changing them unless—and this is rare—their behavior is interfering with your goal.

42. We Are Far More Revealing by the Questions We Ask Than by the Answers We Give

To increase the chances of learning what is really on someone’s mind—and thus what will motivate them to act—know that people are far more revealing when they are the questioners: when they question you, rather than when you are questioning them. Although we are taught to ask questions to show interest and learn more about another person, we will learn more, more deeply, and more quickly when we get that person to ask us questions. How? Explain something that engages their interest, touching on the highlights so they want to ask questions to learn more.

Respond directly but briefly to their questions so they are “in charge” and asking follow-up questions to learn still more. Note the direction the other person’s questions take. On average, by the third question you will know more about the nature of their deeper concern or interest than if you had taken charge, even with good intent, to ask your own sequence of questions.

Why? Because you don’t know what you don’t know. Your line of questions will be based on your world view and your feelings in the moment and about others in the situation. Their line of questions will reveal some of these same factors in them. Their questions bring you closer to what’s most on their mind, especially if they can ask them in close sequence to get at what they most want to know.

43. What Do You Not See in Yourself?

Want to learn more about your own blind spots and hot buttons? Or solve a nagging, recurring problem? Or have a novel approach to an opportunity pop into your mind? Take time to do some of the apparently time-consuming daily tasks you often do too fast or hire

“Anyone who conducts an argument by appealing to authority is not using his intelligence; he is using his memory.”

- Leonardo da Vinci



someone else to do: garden, wash your car, walk rather than drive to an errand, build or repair something yourself.

You need these times to “sidelong” glance at the periphery of your thoughts to gain insights into your own operating manual. When you do a physical task, especially one that involves motion, sunshine, and fresh air, your mind can move in different directions. Consider these tasks your mental cross-training to get deeper into your psyche and imagination.

You’ll gain a second benefit from your labors. Beth Berg created a job out of designing and maintaining rich persons’ gardens in Southern California. We went sailing near Santa Catalina Island in a boat lent to her by Richard, a client who was detained in New York and could not use it.

I asked her if she would ever hire someone like herself to do some of her maintenance tasks. “I don’t think so,” she replied. “I think I would always want to take care of those basic things in my life. Because if you don’t put the work into something, you don’t know the worth of it, either.”

Beth said she told Richard, her client, “We plant these flowers in your garden and most of the time you just walk by them. It’s sad, really. You don’t get the good feelings from your life that I get from your life.”

44. Ways to Sidelong Glance Back at Your Own Decision-making

- Do the mundane to experience the profound.
- Go slow to go fast.
- Step back from your hot subject to walk close to it.
- Do something real to see something intangible.
- Move your hands and body to move your mind and imagination.
- Look sideways to see directly.
- Look wide to see narrowly.
- Look at what you hate, to recognize what you fear and don’t like in yourself.
- Hear your criticisms to see your inadequacies.
- Notice what you avoid, to recognize what you need to learn next.
- Notice when and where you dabble, doodle, and dawdle to see your dreams.

“Happiness is good health and a bad memory.”

- Ingrid Bergman

“The life so short, the craft so long to learn.”

- Hippocrates



45. Navel-Gazing Doesn't Help

What if you were offered a free art poster? You could choose from five posters and were asked to describe what you liked and disliked about each as you made your choice. Two weeks later someone asked you how happy you were with your choice.

Guess what? You'll be less happy with your decision than if you'd simply picked one picture without analyzing why. It seems that your intuitive gut instincts may serve you better than further introspection about "why." That's what Timothy D. Wilson, professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, discovered in his research for *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*.

In another experiment, Dr. Wilson and a colleague asked college students to write down the reasons a romance was going strong or faltering. Everyone had detailed reasons. But writing them down made many more students change their minds about the relationship—some became happier, others less so—than in a control group of students who didn't analyze their feelings.

According to Wilson, introspection can't help us understand how we process what we see or remember or even feel. Says Wilson, "We stop short at the shut door to our unconscious. Then we wing it when asked for a reason." Want to get a glimpse at your less-conscious values? *Suggestion*: Stop thinking about how you feel and, instead, notice how you behave.

*"What is the answer?
In that case, what is
the question?"*

- Gertrude Stein,
Last words



Chapter Nine: Call on the Collective Intelligence

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46. Get Smarter Together

One way to make yourself memorable is to inspire others to be proud of the efforts they make with you. Here's an approach proven to be successful in keeping with animal and human nature: Recruit others to become part of a small group with you that enjoys success together.

Research backs up the benefits of such smart—and mutually satisfying—group behavior. On the TV show “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” a contestant can call his smartest friend or ask the audience for help with the answer. Contestants are more apt to get the right answer when they ask the audience than when they call one person.

The insight? Calling on the collective intelligence can get you smarter support.

Cultural critic and cofounder of the e-zine “Feed” Steve Johnson came to the same conclusion in his book *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*. He found that intelligence resides at the small-group “street” or local level.

Whether it's harvester ants—capable of great coordination or quick improvisational response to attack despite their limited cognitive skills—or workers in the primitive factories of 19th-century England, Johnson found that groups could achieve extraordinary feats through decentralized thinking or what is often called emergent behavior.

More bluntly, that means that even simple agents following simple rules in small groups can create sophisticated structures. In the Digital Age, this is a powerful concept because of the Web's capacity for facilitating far-reaching group intelligence.

As massive proof of this theory, consider the most popular e-commerce site, eBay. Despite some sporadic misuse of the rules, the eBay community still manages to reward most people who play by the rules and banish most people who do not.

In fact, the collective intelligence of eBay users has raised the level of their collective game over time, to the benefit of all players. Some participants have built an entire business for themselves that could not have existed before the emergent intelligence of the eBay model.

This finding is especially important in our post-9/11/01 world when we want to live a life that matters. More than self-styled

“Try not to have a good time...this is supposed to be educational.”

- Charles Schultz



solo star performers, we seek out those who want to create opportunity and community with like-minded others.

47. Recruit Small Groups for More Satisfying Work and Play

Here's how. Pods are another way for people to feel more connected and capable, even in a larger group, and to reap the benefits of their collective intelligence. Transform a larger organization such as a company, college student body, synagogue, association, or civic club into 8- to 10-person pods of diverse people with specific goals and Rules of Conduct.

Like ants, we can accomplish more together, when we feel known and appreciated. We are more nimble in changing direction when we've established one in the first place.

Also, people in pods tend to feel a deeper affinity for each other and for their common purpose. Further, they are more likely to demonstrate more confident, higher-performing behavior. The University of California campus at Santa Cruz was created around pods of students who are then part of colleges within the larger campus. Compared to those on other UC campuses, the Santa Cruz students have fewer reported health problems and accidents and a higher sense of well-being.

In the early 1990s, George Colony began organizing his company into pods of 8 or 10 people from different disciplines. Colony is chair and CEO of Forrester Research, Inc., one of the largest Internet research firms. Says Colony, "The pods are a way to mitigate the alienation of size as our company grows. It's like being in a squad of people in the military. You get so that you are willing to die for the guy next to you."

48. Spiral Up into Stronger Mutual Support

In his book *The Tipping Point*, author Malcolm Gladwell writes that the human brain is wired to have no more than 150 relationships. The deeper the affinity and rewards people feel in those relationships, the more optimistic they feel about their participation—and their lives in general. The more optimistic one feels, the better one performs. To learn more about this phenomenon, read Martin Seligman's book, [Learned Optimism](#). If you're online, click on the book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click **Grand Store**.

Thus the group creates a reinforcing upward spiral of smarter mutual support. That's probably why people are more likely to excel not in solo tasks but when they are part of a small group

"The highest purpose of communication is communing, which is becoming one with each other."

- Barry and Joyce Vissell, coauthors, *The Shared Heart*

"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm."

- Henrik Ibsen



with a specific goal and deadline, be it a school play, cause fundraiser, or new product launch.

In times of turmoil and great uncertainty, when people are more likely to seek affinity, we have grand opportunities to test these ideas. We desire camaraderie more than competition. We want to make a difference with others.

Find or form a pod around your greatest passion and see emergent intelligence in action. To learn more, read Linda Seger's book [Web Thinking](#). If you're online, click on the book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click **Grand Store**.



Chapter Ten: Love's at the Root of What Lasts

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49. Get Wiser as You Get Older About What We All Want

After winning several music awards in 2002, Carlos Santana was interviewed about his long career as a musician and his many successes. As Santana answered each question, he expressed great admiration for someone. Then the reporter asked her last question: "What do you consider your greatest achievement?" Sidestepping his role as a musician, Santana broke out in a slow smile and replied, "I am becoming the people I love."

What could be a better living legacy than absorbing and praising the qualities in others you most love and admire?

Especially when we are young, we hunger for fame. As we age, that desire to be a Significant Someone takes on new meaning. We become aware of the partially hidden prize of memorability. As we bring out others' special qualities, we join them in generating our memorability—and meaning in life.

As we support others' opportunities to demonstrate their greatest temperament and talents, a wonderful alchemy often happens. We attract more opportunities to perform at a higher and more satisfying level *with others*.

"He had the voice that seemed to lower the anxiety level whenever you heard it," said PBS president Pat Mitchell in describing Fred Rogers at his May 5, 2003, funeral. Rogers gained three generations of fans as the gentle creator and host of the beloved TV show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

Andy Rooney offered this related insight on the enduring power of expressing love in his commentary at the end of the TV show *Sixty Minutes* in November 2001:

I've learned...

- That when you're in love, it shows.
- That just one person saying to me, "You've made my day!" makes my day.
- That being kind is more important than being right.
- That you should never say no to a gift from a child.
- That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.
- That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

"I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific."

- Lily Tomlin



- That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.
- That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.
- That the Lord didn't do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?
- That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.
- That when you harbor bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere.
- That one should keep his words both soft and tender, because tomorrow he may have to eat them.
- That I can't choose how I feel, but I can choose what I do about it.
- That love, not time, heals all wounds.
- That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.

50. Love Leaves Hard Lessons

Jith Sreedharan, a subscriber to my ["Say It Better" e-zine](http://sayitbetter.com/ezine.html) (sayitbetter.com/ezine.html) who lives in the United Arab Emirates, e-mailed these insights to me from an unknown source:

I've finally learned...

- That I cannot make someone love me; all I can do is be someone who can be loved.
- That no matter how much I care, some people will not care back.
- That it can take years to build up trust and only seconds to destroy it.
- That it's not what I have in my life but who I have in my life that counts.
- That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- That money is a lousy way of keeping score, and that there are fewer reasons to keep score than I thought in my youth.
- That my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have a happy time.

"The story of a love is not important—what is important is that one is capable of love. It is perhaps the only glimpse we are permitted of eternity."

- Helen Hayes



- That sometimes the people I expect might kick me when I'm down will actually be the ones to help me get back up.
- That just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other. And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.
- That two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.
- That it's hard to determine where to draw the line between being nice and not hurting people's feelings and standing up for what I believe.
- That even when I think I have no more to give, when a friend cries out to me, I will find the strength to help.
- That I should always leave a loved one with loving words. It may be the last time I see that person.

51. In Conclusion... For Once an Epiphany Comes to Me

Only once in my life have I experienced a deep epiphany. The words came to me seemingly out of nowhere. It was after one of my last assignments as a journalist in Europe when I'd just finished covering a conference of futurists. Many of the experts forecast bleak scenarios for the next decade. They predicted breakdowns in many institutions, including those in religion, family, government, and business. They predicted episodes of uncontrollable conflicts along tribal and religious lines, a deepening divide between the haves and have-nots, transiency, and loneliness.

Yet with the advent of new communication technologies, people would learn more about each other. News would travel in more ways, outside the control of government or professional journalists. The world would shrink as people gained more ways to learn about each other. Censorship would be more difficult. Some optimistically suggested that, with greater access to knowledge about each other, individuals would seek out like-minded people and systems to work together toward their mutual interests.

Forging ways to work together must begin by communicating to connect, not conflict. It is my fervent hope that some of the tools you found in this e-book help you connect. I hope you use them to create the opportunities and friendships that can make the next stage of your life the kind of adventure story YOU want for yourself—with others.



So, what was the epiphany?

Leaving the gleaming, columned building where the futurists' conference was held, I walked out into the bright afternoon sunlight and down a long, broad set of white marble steps. Not more than twenty steps down, these words came so clearly to me that I sat right down on the steps and wrote them in my small spiral notebook:

In a civilization, when love is gone we turn to justice,
and when justice is gone we turn to power,
and when power is gone we turn to violence.

Here's to finding more opportunities to bring out the better side in others—and become positively memorable *together*.

Toward that end, I'd be delighted to hear about how you put this book to practice in your life. What was most helpful? Also, what are your favorite pieces of "communicate to connect" advice from other people? Perhaps I can include your insights and advice in a future [e-book](http://sayitbetter.com/store/merchant.mv?Screen=SFNT) or issue of my [e-zine](http://sayitbetter.com/ezine.html). I'd ask for your permission first, of course.

Let's stay in touch.

Warmly,

Kare Anderson

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Chapter Eleven: Ready to Learn More Ways to Say It Better?

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52. Practice Your LikeABILITY

Take the next step. Reduce the biggest source of personal stress. Learn how to respond to difficult people or situations with greater ease, strength, and grace. Don't react, but choose how you want to respond. Learn exactly how in my idea-packed e-book that you can instantly download right now, complete with a year-long Personal Plan of Practice: [LikeABILITY: How to Come Through Conflict to Create a Happier, Higher-Performing Life for Yourself –With Others](#). If you're online, click on the book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click **Grand Store**. I guarantee you'll be happy you did.

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"Why doesn't she like me? Is it my hair, my overbite, the fact that I've worn the same shirt and shorts for the last four years?"

- Bart Simpson,
young character
from *The Simpsons*,
U.S. animated
television show

"If I knew I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself."

- Mickey Mantle



ABOUT THE AUTHOR, KARE ANDERSON

As a speaker, columnist, Emmy-winning former TV commentator, and *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Kare offers insights into how to communicate to connect. Kare is the founder of SayItBetter Publishing. She is the author of *Getting What You Want* (in 19 languages), [*Walk Your Talk: Grow Your Business Faster Through Successful Cross-Promotional Partnerships*](#), *Resolving Conflict Sooner*, and *Beauty Inside Out*. If you're online, click on the *Walk Your Talk* book title to go directly to it, or go to sayitbetter.com and then click **Grand Store**. I guarantee you'll be happy you did.

Kare's clients are as diverse as CNBC, Sony, Pfizer, RE/MAX, National League of Cities, Hewlett Packard, and Nordstrom.

To learn more about Kare, [click here](#) or go to sayitbetter.com/bio.html.

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