



SPEAKERS' CORNER NEWSLETTER



Helping people deliver their best stories

January 2012

“Don’t just dream of winning, train for it.” Mo Farah, 2011 world champion 5000 metres.

In the Nike superstore in Oxford Circus you’ll see this quote blazoned across one large window. It’s a great quote to start a New Year, to sell Nike and to nudge us all into realising that winning is an active verb and needs us to take responsibility for the results we want to achieve in 2012.

With less than 200 days to go to the start of the London Olympics, Mo with his coach will have already worked out what winning times he will need to run to win the gold medals in the 5000 and 10,000 metres finals. Athletes are good role models for all of us to follow. They set long term objectives, break them down into smaller chunks and know what they must achieve every day.

What do you want to win this year and how will you train for it? If we can help give us a call – we are winning trainers.

“Pressure is nothing more than the shadow of great opportunity.”

Michael Johnson, a four time Olympic gold medallist and eight world championships. He currently holds the world and Olympic records in the 400 metres and 4 x 400 metres relay.

Show not tell

The new film “The Artist” looks like it’s going to win an Oscar or two. It’s funny, charming and there are no words spoken except a couple right at the end. But the combination of the acting and soundtrack is more than enough to keep the mind stimulated. It’s a film about the transition from silent movies to talkies in Hollywood. If you want to brush up on your facial expressions, gestures and body language this is the film to see. It demonstrates the power of “showing” not telling. It also demonstrates the power of a smile. If you haven’t seen it hurry – as a film it’s not an out-of-date movie genre but a first class demonstration of that old saying, “actions speak louder than words.”

“If I’ve learned nothing else, it’s that time and practice equal achievement.”

Andre Agassi, an eight-time Grand Slam tennis singles champion and an Olympic gold medallist.

Lucky strike?

Pitching for business is a fact of life. But what part does “how lucky you feel” compared to the competition contribute to success? We think quite a lot. Because the difference between lucky and unlucky people is their response to life’s events – those they control and those they don’t.

Here are the four key life principles 'lucky' people say they follow:

Principle 1. Maximise your chance opportunities. Lucky people create, notice and act upon chance opportunities in their life -so they build and maintain a strong network and are more easy-going.

Principle 2. Listen to your lucky hunches. Lucky people make successful decisions by using their intuition and gut feeling – so they listen to and act on their hunches.

Principle 3. Expect good fortune. Lucky people's expectations about the future help them fulfil their dreams and ambitions – so they actively look for and expect good fortune.

Principle 4. Turn your bad luck into good. Lucky people are able to transform their bad luck into good fortune - so they imagine good fortune, look for the silver-lining & move on.

“The day YOU decide to do it is your lucky day.” Japanese Proverb.

Kwik-Fix Presentation Stop

In working with delegates to improve the impact of their presentations we can normally anticipate where the changes will have to be made. Most presenters make the same mistakes because they're taking short cuts to arrive at what they feel is “good enough”. But this attitude doesn't produce first class presentations - another 30 minutes fine-tuning could make all the difference.

Fix 1. Have an opening which commands attention and allows your personality to come out.

Fix 2. Deliver a route map of your presentation. To do this you will need a clear structure - a strong opening, a logical middle section and an ending which acts as a proper finale.

Fix 3. Minimise the use of slides and ensure each slide makes one clear point only.

Peter Ustinov summed it up well when he said: **“All speeches should have excellent beginnings, fine endings and as little as possible in between”**

Principles & beliefs

Two creative agencies we've worked for, M&C Saatchi and BBH, display their principles and beliefs on their premises for their visitors to read. Two founders of these agencies have just published books extolling these principles and we found both books entertaining and inspiring to read.

The first by Maurice Saatchi is called “Brutal Simplicity of Thought” (ISBN 978-0-09-194331-8) and opens with a few words on simplicity which provides a great set of references for speakers.

The second by John Hegarty of BBH is called “Hegarty on Advertising. Turning Intelligence into Magic” (ISBN 978-0-500-51556-3]. It's a history of advertising over the last 45 years, the craft, the people, the campaigns. We liked his tip on pitching: “Get the magic out early”.

“The best way to sell an idea is to make the person to whom you are selling it feel that it is solving their problem, not feeding your ego.” Sir John Hegarty

Expanding your empathy.

So there is scientific proof that fiction has the ability to transport us into the heads of others and make us better human beings. Yet more evidence, [as if we needed any], why storytelling has evolved as an art form.

Professor Christian Keysers, a Dutch neuroscientist has recently helped to identify ‘mirror neurons’ in the human brain. He and his team discovered for example that when we witness pleasure or pain happening to a fictional character on screen, our mirror neurons reflect this character’s supposed neurological activity – meaning that we quite literally experience what they do. So when we watch a good horror film, we might know that we should pull ourselves together as it’s only a film, but we can’t stop ourselves feeling frightened because our mirror neurons are fully activated. They work the same when we engage with any fiction and the more we engage the more mirror neurons we produce, so expanding our empathy. So read more stories, you’ll make better connections.

“The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them and learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.” From the book ‘Crow and Weasel’ by Barry Lopez.

What have we learned in 2,067 years?

"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome becomes bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance." Cicero, 55 BC.

Evidently nothing!

“Successful leadership is not about being tough or soft, sensitive or assertive, but about a set of attributes. First and foremost, character.” Warren Bennis, an American scholar, author and organisational consultant, widely regarded as a pioneer of the contemporary field of Leadership studies.

Future Event: “Make It Stick” Speechwriters’ Conference.

We are speaking at the UK Speechwriters Spring Conference on February 23rd at The Institute for Government in London. The theme is **“Make it stick: Techniques for leaders to get their message across.”** This conference is aimed at professional communicators who work for international organisations and companies. It will help anyone who wants to improve the quality of their pitches, presentations or speeches.

If you would like to come along a £50 discount is being offered by the organisers. You can claim this discount by putting ‘Speakers Corner’ in the promotion code box on the Eventbrite page. Go to: <http://uksgspringconference.eventbrite.co.uk>

Good luck in 2012!

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

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