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Public Speaking

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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Public Speaking

Part I

Public speaking as commonly understood, though it does not lay claim to the more formal title of oratory, is nevertheless a term which includes that art. As oratory is the appeal of a high order of eloquence to the understanding and to the emotions, so too, the province of public speaking is not only to entertain and inform, but also to convince and persuade.

Possibilities and Probabilities

Although it is not given to everyone to become an orator, nevertheless, it is well within the scope and the power of the average intelligent person to become a good public speaker. Moreover, there never was a time when public speaking formed a more important factor in American life that it does today, nor was there ever a time when this talent brought to the individual more social and political influence.

Every citizen is likely at any time to be called upon to express his or her views on any topic which may be exercising the minds of the public. As an efficient member of the community, he or she should be ready to respond to the claim thus made upon them and be able to lay before their fellow-citizens, in language at once clear and forceful, their opinions and their judgments on the question put before them for discussion.

Fundamentals

“What then,” it will be asked, “is necessary in order to prepare one’s self to become a successful public speaker?”

1. The first essential is a knowledge of one’s fellow-men. By this is not meant that one must necessarily be a psychologist. One must, however, have an all-round knowledge of people in general, especially of the person in the street, with their prejudices to be overcome, their rights to be defended, and their wrongs to be rectified.

Only in this way can a speaker get in touch with an audience. He or she must understand their audience before they will understand them.

2. In the second place, the speaker should have a knowledge of books. He or she should become acquainted with good literature. Not every intending speaker has had the advantages of a college training. He or she may not have enjoyed the privilege of extensive travel, and they may not be wanting in the broader knowledge that comes only to those of wide and practical experience. But books are always open to them; they will furnish them with facts, ideas, and all that is needed for the illustration of their subject. It was Bacon who said, "Reading maketh a full man." It is the man or woman full of their subject, and thereby confident, who will interest and impress their audience.

3. As language is the chief means of conveying thought, it is a matter of your greatest importance to possess a ready command of words. To enlarge his or her vocabulary, the student of public speaking should make notes of all the new or strange words they meets in their general reading, or that they may hear in listening to lectures given by others. He or she should then make a point of using such words whenever opportunity offers; for it is by continuous use that they become their own.

The above three points sum up of what may be regarded as the *remote preparation* for public speaking, in which lies in great measure the secret of success in this principal art. We now come to the *immediate preparation*, or the method to be followed in the actual planning and in the making of a speech.

Choice of Subject

Let the subject you choose be one of interest to yourself and the ones that are likely to be of interest to your audience. Remember, you are to deliver a message. Unless you win the interest of your audience, your efforts to deliver a message will be in vain. Know beforehand the manner of audience you are about to address, and adapt your subject to their capacity. In this way you will not be speaking "over their heads," and your purpose of convincing and persuading will be achieved.

The Plan

No matter how confident you may feel after you have gathered your material, always make in advance a plan or an outline of your intended message. No builder undertakes the erection of a building until he has made a working plan of its different divisions, stories, and apartments. The same principle applies to an address. By making a plan you will put into your speech what you want to say, and will save time in saying it. Moreover, this much is due your audience. The habit of planning, if conscientiously cultivated, will enable you to make a, *mental* plan when opportunity will not allow of a penciled outline.

A speech to be convincing must be logical, - that is, it must be made up of an *introduction*, a *body*, and a *conclusion*. This rule is applicable to the formal address, to the simple talk at a church meeting, to an after dinner speech, or to the toast at a wedding breakfast.

Introduction or Beginning

This should be a brief forecasting of what the speaker proposes to discuss before or prove his or her audience, and it should contain the logical scheme of his or her entire address. In plain words, he or she should let their hearers know how they intend to deal with their subject. In opening your speech, your opening should be easy and natural. This may be achieved in several ways; for instance, (1) by some happy compliment paid to the audience; (2) by reference to some interesting topic of the moment; (3) by an anecdote relating to some well-known character, or by a brief and apt quotation. In this simple manner a speaker may get in touch with his or her audience and at the same time may lead up to their subject.

Body of the Speech

This consists in the gradual and logical development of the proposition already set forth in your introduction. As you proceed the unfolding of your main statements, make

free use of illustration and comparison from other themes and topics familiar to your audience. This tends to greater clearness and insures interest. It is thus that you imperceptibly paint a background from which your word-picture will stand out in more sharply defined and vivid lines. As you pass from one point to another, revert occasionally the argument already put forward, so that your audience may hold in mind the main divisions of your speech.

The Conclusion

The conclusion should be a careful summing up and welding together of the chief arguments developed in the body of your speech. They must be made to stand out lucidly and forcefully, and in such order that, by the presentation of their combined strength, conviction is driven home to the minds of those listening to you.

As has already been pointed out, public speaking may serve either to entertain, inform, convince, or persuade. The formal speech will always have dignity of form and of diction. So much will not be expected of the informal, short address, though the structure of each is essentially the same, both being built on the basis of logical thought. This being true, the informal speech is here dealt with, for practical purposes.

Informal Speeches

You may be called upon suddenly to say "a few words" in public, to propose a toast or to make an after-dinner speech, to take part in a discussion, or to talk as an executive to employees. A hundred different occasions may arise and demand from you some kind of address. You have to win the attention of your audience on the spur of the moment, and make your points as quickly. If you know the essentials that go into the making of a speech, as already stated above, a few hurried notes will be sufficient for the skeleton outline of what you intend to say.

A useful suggestive outline for the short talk or informal address is furnished by the following questions: (1) What is the fact or situation under discussion? (2) How has it come to be as it is? (3) How does it affect you? (4) What are you going to do about it?

Nucleus of an Informal Address

The nucleus, or concentrated matter, of a short talk may often be found (1) in the statement of some striking fact or incident, (2) in the presentation of clear and up-to-date statistics concerning a topic of real interest, (3) in the clever recital of a new story, or of an old one dressed in a new garb, and calculated to raise a laugh or smile. The last method of beginning an address is perhaps the happiest of all, as by it the audience is warmed to sympathy with the speaker, the knowledge of which fact is no small aid to eloquence.

Some Styles of Short Talks

The occasions for the short talk are many, and there are almost as many styles as there are occasions. On the other hand, there are certain similarities to be noted in each, as the following examples will illustrate:

After-Dinner Speech

Usually, you have first to express some pointed sentiment in reference to the occasion, the host, or the guest of honor. A happy quotation or an adage which contains the gist of what you are about to say, will often serve as an appropriate *beginning*. Again, a half serious, half humorous comment will help in the development of the sentiment itself. Also, the flash light of a good crisp story will illuminate your remarks so that your audience will see the point, and be won at once to your favor. As brevity is the soul of wit, so is it the essence of a good after-dinner speech.

Speech of Presentation or Award

Situations are constantly arising in which a gift or an award is presented in token of friendship or in recognition of achievement. For example, a retiring employee receives a gift in recognition of his or her long service or an athlete is given a medal for

outstanding proficiency. Whatever the occasion, the spokesman for the group making the reward has an opportunity to show his or her best skill in paying tribute to the recipient. The theme of compliment and congratulation may be developed in various ways. It should always be handled with a light touch, but the degree and kind of humor depends, of course, on the persons present and the circumstances. How far whimsical humor may go with entire appropriateness, is illustrated by Sir James Barrie's famous compliment to Ellen Terry. He said, "The young men of my generation were madly, hopefully in love with her. In fact, the standard formula for proposing marriage was for a young man to say to the woman of his second choice "Since I can't have Miss Terry, may I please have you?"

Impromptu Discussion

It may be that you are asked to take part in a running debate or discussion at which you happen to be present. In such a case you will have time to make a mental plan only. Nevertheless, you may adroitly begin your talk by referring to some salient fact or idea already mentioned in the debate, and thus gain time to put your thoughts in order. This is called a "point of contact" to which you may gradually attach your own trend of argument. Thus, often by an *impromptu* speech you can add to the interest of a debate by the orderly and well balanced presentment of your personal views. This happy facility comes from the persistent habit of making plans. To illustrate:

The debate is on the question of *safety* - an important topic to be discussed. Your opinion as an employer of labor, or as an employee, is sought on this subject. Possibly you will find a starting point for your talk by relating some accident which has taken place at the works or store or plant in which you are employed. From this proceed to expand and make interesting your informal speech by putting forward your personal ideas on the best methods for preventing similar accidents in the future.

Again, the discussion may be on the question of *co-operation*. Once more you are asked to join in the debate. In such a case, a possible improvement in an industrial process or a suggestion as to the better management of your business, may well supply

you with a good opening and with excellent matter for an effective talk.

The examples given above illustrate some of the forms that a short address may take. It will be seen how some concrete and definite incidents, or accidents, may become the nucleus of your whole talk, and how in time, you may find all the points you need to make a telling and striking address.

Forms of Public Speaking

The Expository Speech or Lecture

The aim of the expository speaker is to make something clear to his or her audience. It is usually the aim of the teacher. But there are many occasions outside of the school where a speaker has as his or her basic purpose the presentation of clarifying ideas. A new system of handling director personnel may be set forth by a personnel director or a new plan for organized recreation may be presented by the chairperson of the program committee. It is important for the speaker who is called upon to give clarifying information to keep his or her talk on an expository basis; that is, he or she must see to it that they do not bring in their own ax to grind and thus try to straddle exposition with persuasion. There are some six methods of exposition, any or all of which may be employed in a speech for clearness:

(1) *Comparison*. This is, perhaps, the most useful expository device. The audience is made to understand something new by having it compared with that which they already know. Analogy, which is a comparison of ratios, is a most useful form of comparison. When analogy is used the audience is enabled to understand a new relationship or process by seeing it compared to one with which they are familiar.

(2) *Analysis*. Through this device we come to understand something by having it taken apart for us. Thus, we come to see the whole in terms of its parts. It is a good idea to remember that talks making use of analysis should end up with synthesis, so that the hearers see the relationship of the parts to the whole.

(3) *Definition.* Many effective speeches with clearness as the end are based on the elaboration of a definition. We might, for instance, make an expository talk on Public Speaking by elaborating on the terms, and the relationship of the terms, in this definition: Public Speaking is the useful art of influencing human behavior through the medium of purposive speech.

(4) *Cause and Effect Relationship.* This method is often used where the material is of a historical character. A speaker might, for instance, explain Fascism by tracing its development in Germany.

(5) *Restatement.* When a speaker uses the expression, "in other words," and then goes on to give their audience another view of the same thing, they are using Restatement. It is different from *repetition* in that the same words are said over again in the latter.

(6) *Example.* The expository speaker uses *example* when they give a demonstration, actually showing the thing they are explaining. The use of movies in teaching is an application of this method. It can also be said that illustrations by means of pictures or drawings on a blackboard are applications of the method. In the last few years, with the development of various techniques of visual education, expository presentations have been given added effectiveness by use of the example method.

Occasional and Commemorative Speeches

The purpose of the speaker in giving speeches at special occasions or in commemoration of some event or person is *Impressiveness*. The term Impressiveness is used to describe the purpose of those speeches in which the audience, already in agreement as to the concepts presented, is made to feel more deeply about them. Speeches of welcome, farewell speeches, speeches given when a gift is presented, and when one is accepted, have impressiveness as the purpose. Also, those speeches given at dedication ceremonies and at anniversary gatherings have that purpose.

Usually these speeches are eulogistic in character, that is, they are dominated by the mood of praise. Some of our finest oratory has been delivered at such occasions. The speakers have endeavored to catch the spirit of the hour, to voice the feelings of the listeners, to make the audience feel that their best thoughts and sentiments have been beautifully and effectively expressed.

It is in speeches of this kind that the expression comes close to the art of the poet. Metaphor, which is said to be the essence of poetry, is well employed in this form of speech composition. There also may be something of the rhythmic cadence of poetry. When the poetic element in such speech compositions springs from genuine feeling of admiration of the subject being spoken of, there need be no fear of indulging in old-fashioned oratorical language. Love, affection, admiration, veneration, *when sincerely expressed*, is never out of date.

The Speech of Introduction

The function of the *speech of introduction* is to bring the speaker and the audience together in a proper spirit of acquaintanceship. It should meet this need and go no further. The listeners should be given that information about the speaker and his or her topic which will help them and the speaker. The introduction should be warm and friendly in spirit, but should not embarrass the speaker by being eulogistic. It should be as short as possible and certainly should not encroach upon the speaker's topic. All too frequently the introducer is inclined to bask in the limelight of the main speaker, giving a speech of their own, indulging in oratorical flourishes, and generally stealing the main speaker's thunder.

Discussion and Debate

These two kinds of speaking are closely related in that they are a part of a general process, the process of arriving at a new point of view in regard to some public question. It can be said that *debate* picks up where discussion leaves off. Through the

group discussion of a question or problem, a gathering of people may arrive at a point where it must decide whether or not to adopt a new policy in conducting its affairs. At this point debate begins: Should the new policy be adopted or not? For example, in group discussion the general question of obtaining proper medical care for the American people might be given consideration. At a certain point in the discussion the members of the group decide that the matter has been reduced itself to the question: Should we or should we not adopt some form of nationalized health insurance? From that point on the gathering is on a debate basis. Following this line of thought, we shall give consideration first to the topic, group discussion.

Group Discussion

For hundreds of years the rhetoric of debating has been clearly set forth by text book writers and followed by students in school debates and by lawyers and legislators. It is only in the last decade or so that the art of public discussion has been treated effectively in speech textbooks. However, public discussion of community and state problems has been effectively carried on in this country since the country's beginnings. The democratic method of open discussion of public questions was followed in New England Town Meetings in the 17th century. In the 18th century the same process of group thinking was to be observed in the Constitutional Convention. The delegates to the convention did not come to Philadelphia in 1787 to debate clearly defined issues nor to impress the gallery with persuasive oratory; they came to find the solution to a problem and to reach that solution by "negotiation and accommodation." We find the group discussion method manifested in the 19th century in the Lyceum and Chautauqua movements, the former being at its height in the middle of the century and the latter by the end of the century. The modern *open forum* movement had its beginnings in 1897 as a part of the adult education activities of the Cooper Union in New York City. The movement was given fresh impetus in 1933 under the leadership of J.W. Studebaker, then superintendent of the Des Moines Public schools. The Des Moines public Forums set the pattern for the discussion of public problems by citizens of a community. With the development of nationwide interest in this form of group thinking has come a substantial literature on the technique of discussion.

Today it is more important than ever that people be able to think through their problems in some cooperative fashion. We are no longer a world of isolated communities; the world itself is a community. This world community is endeavoring to find solutions to its problems in group discussions at the United Nations, in peace conferences, in industrial management-labor conferences, in organizations seeking racial harmony, and in international forums conducted by public spirited citizens.

The Process of Group Thinking

There are basically five steps in the process of thinking through to the solution of a problem. While it hardly can be said that any particular group discussion clearly follows the sequence, upon analysis it will be seen that the steps are involved. The steps are:

- (1) Defining the problem.
- (2) Analysis of the problem with the purpose of finding what values will be sought for in a solution.
- (3) Suggestion of possible solutions or hypotheses.
- (4) Consideration of relative merits of suggested solutions in the light of the values or criteria established in step two. Arrival at a tentative solution.
- (5) Testing out the solution by visualizing it in operation.

A forum or discussion leader should keep these steps in mind in guiding a group in its problem solving efforts. He or she should have thought about the problem sufficiently beforehand and be sufficiently informed as to the basic aspects of the question so that they can detect tendencies to jump to conclusions, to reason in a circle, to generalize from insufficient evidence, to ignore minority interests, to fasten on trivial points, to indulge in personalities, and the many other all too human weaknesses to be found in our endeavors to be rational. When the leader sees that a member or members of the group are suggesting a solution before the problem has adequately analyzed (step two), he or she should tactfully raise the question whether there are not values to be looked for in a solution which have not been considered, and lead the members back to the

second phase of the thought process. It will be found that this phase, the analysis step, is the one that is most difficult and which groups are prone to pass over too quickly. On the other hand, the leader must be on guard against having a preconceived solution to the problem, and toward which he or she inflexibly directs the assembly. When that happens, the discussion is no longer a co-operative, democratic process. The leader has become something of a dictator.

Types of Group Discussion

The type of group discussion taken up in the foregoing paragraphs, is the type most commonly used. It is simple in its organization, there being only the chairperson, or leader, or with him or her around the table. This kind of discussion might be called the *conference* type. The unqualified word, *forum*, is also used as a term to describe this form of discussion.

Planning the Conference

The chairperson or leader of the *conference* type of discussion must be imbued with the democratic principle of agreement in a group arrived at through, full, free, and informed discussion. Collaboration for a common end should be the controlling objective. There are some things the leader can do to facilitate the attainment of that objective. He or she should command the respect of the group by being fair, tolerant, gracious, and firm, withal. He or she should be informed of as regards the subject matter of the conference and as regards, the subject matter of the conference, and as regards the process of democratic discussion. He or she should oversee the arrangements for the meeting, making sure that the room is a pleasant one, that the scheduled time for the meeting is a convenient one for the participants, that enough time is allotted for the meeting or meetings, so that the group can arrive at a deliberative decision. When the discussion is going on he or she should carefully gauge the progress of the group, and if they see that opposing interests are bringing about an impasse, they may well suggest a recess, in which heated tempers may cool off. Frequently, important concessions are made during recesses, especially if during the

recess the members can get together on a good-fellowship basis.

Besides the conference type of discussion, there are six others, each type having a distinguishing characteristic. They are similar to each other in one respect, all being more formal than the conference type of discussion. The six types are:

- (1) The *Panel Forum*.
- (2) The *Symposium Forum*.
- (3) The *Lecture Forum*.
- (4) The *Colloquy or Dialogue*.
- (5) The *Public Hearing*.
- (6) The *Debate Forum*.

The *Panel Forum*. In this type of discussion, a panel of two to six speakers sit on the platform along with the chairperson and converse on some chosen topic for the benefit of the audience facing the platform. This is a popular form of discussion, especially in educational circles. Usually the group, the panel and chairperson, have a meeting beforehand, at which an outline covering the material for discussion is worked out, and each member of the panel is assigned some part of the outline on which to talk. The chairperson should keep these points in mind in directing the discussion: No member of the panel should talk for more than one minute at a time. All discussion should be directed toward the audience. The chairperson and panel members should remain seated, for the sake of informality. Spontaneity should be encouraged in the panel members. If two speak up at the same time, the chairperson designates who shall talk first.

After the panel members have finished their conversation and the chairperson has made a summary of the discourse, the audience should be called upon to participate in an open-forum discussion. They may contribute ideas or ask questions of the panel members. It is a good idea to allow as much as half of the meeting time for audience participation, and to inform the audience beforehand that they will have that time for

discussion.

The panel forum, as are the remaining types to be presented here in this lesson, is better suited to the conveying of information than to problem solving. When a problem is to be solved, it is best to use the *conference* type of discussion.

The *Symposium Forum*. This type is similar to the panel forum in that it is made up of a panel of speakers, from two to four, and who have designated points upon which to speak. It differs from it in that each member of the panel gives a set speech, running from five to ten minutes in length. After the panel members have spoken and the chairperson has summarized, the chairperson invites the audience to participate as in the panel forum.

The *Lecture Forum*. Here one speaker takes the place of a panel of speakers. They may be a chairperson, who opens the meeting, introduces the speaker, and conducts the open forum when the speaker finishes. However, the lecturer themselves may act as chairperson. This type is better suited to the conveying of information than to problem solving.

The *Colloquy or Dialogue*. Three units are found on the platform in this type of discussion, a panel of experts, an audience panel, and the chairperson. The audience panel is usually chosen from the audience at the time of the meeting. The chairperson and the panel representing the audience begin the discussion, after the manner of the ordinary panel forum. The members of the expert panel are called upon to supply evidence when the need for it becomes apparent, and to give opinions when they are desired. The *colloquy* is well suited for conventions where experts in a particular field are available, and where the audience members have a specialized interest in the subject matter.

The *Public Hearing*. There are two types of public hearings, that which is held by legislative committees, and that held by representatives of governmental agencies. In

both types a legislative committee or government representatives seek information, evidence, and existing opinion from members of organizations, pressure groups, or individual citizens. At hearings the committee members and the audience face each other, and the space between them is allotted to the particular speaker who happens to be speaking. He or she addresses the committee with their back to the audience. In the legislative hearing, members of the committee ask questions of the speaker. In the second type, audience and speakers usually ask questions of the governmental representatives. The chief problem for the speaker in hearings is to make themselves heard by the audience at their back, without shouting to the committee.

The *Debate Forum*. This type is similar to the Symposium Forum except for the fact that in the former, the panel of speakers is broken up into two units each, taking the affirmative or negative on some debatable question. When the two sides have presented their arguments, the chairperson invites the audience to participate. After perhaps twenty minutes of open forum discussion, a final summary is made by the opponent of the proposed solution, and by the advocate of the proposed solution. The debate forum is best used when the audience is familiar with the problem and almost ready to decide what to do about it.

Argument and Persuasion

An *argument* is a reason given in support of a proposition. As a form of composition, argument is also the logical arrangement of a proposition and the reasons urged in support of it. Sometimes we merely defend an opinion; sometimes we try to convince others that certain opinions are true or false. When we use arguments to make people believe or act as we want them to, we use *persuasion*. Persuasion is the means by which a speaker or writer tries to move their audience to belief or action.

We succeed in persuasion partly through logical argument and partly through personal appeal to the sympathies and interests of an audience. Both these elements

are necessary. Sometimes one plays the larger part, sometimes the other. Sincere human interest, added to a logical argument, is as necessary to a salesperson as to a lawyer before a jury or to a preacher in their pulpit.

Debate

The best way to learn to argue well is to practice in formal discussions or debates. Free discussion of public questions is necessary to the welfare of people in a democracy. Therefore, schools, clubs, and societies should encourage such discussion and give opportunity to debate. Any debate centers in a question about which two opposing propositions can be made and supported by arguments. We cannot debate words or phrases. We may speak of discussing “taxes” or “freedom of speech;” but the discussion cannot proceed until we have put together a sentence or proposition about the subject. Preparation for debate calls first for selecting a debatable question. This is a question (1) on which opinions may reasonably differ, (2) on which material for evidence and proof is available, (3) which is of real interest.

The steps in planning an argument or a debate are the following:

1. State the question clearly and definitely. Propositions should be stated affirmatively and should be so worded as to throw the burden of proof upon the affirmative. For example:

“Should the City of X purchase the local electric lighting plant?” or “Should James White go to college?” Sometimes the question is stated in a form of a resolution: *“Resolved, That the city of X should purchase the local electric lighting plant.”* The following form also is recommended by some teachers as a title for a debate: *“For and against the election of Bruce Willis as mayor;” “For and against James White going to college.”*

2. Define concisely the terms used in the question. For instance, the terms “purchase” and “plant,” in the first question, and the term “college,” in the second, need

definition.

3. Find the main *issues*, or special subordinate questions, on which the decision may turn. This discovery of issues is really a most vital part of argument; for clear statement of main issues eliminates useless talk about unimportant details. The following is the best method of finding the issues: (1) set down a number of opposing statements upon the question; (2) analyze these to find what are the exact points on which they conflict; (3) state these points as questions. These questions are the issues. Such an analysis of arguments on the question as to the electric lighting plant would probably reveal the following issues:

Is the present electric service unsatisfactory? Is owning and operating public utilities a wise policy for this city? Is some other management to be preferred?

These issues appear in the form of questions, to which the affirmative answers *yes* and the negative *no*. The skillful debater takes account of these questions and sifts them until he or she has found those which seem really essential. Then, by answering these - essential questions, they answer the main question. Such an argument may be outlined as follows:

The *body*, or *brief*, for the affirmative or negative side of the argument should thus take up the issues in order, and answer each question, with reasons and evidence. Then, on the basis of the reasoning given, the *conclusion*, or final answer to the main question should be stated.

In a debate on any question, certain of the apparent issues may be set aside, by mutual agreement, before opening the discussion. They are then called "admitted matter," and the discussion for the sake of brevity and clearness, takes up only the issues on which there is clear difference of opinion.

Logic

“*Why?*” is the student’s most troublesome question, but no progress in argumentative thinking can be made without clear answers to questions beginning with *Why*. The corresponding word in answers is *because*. One thing is true because another thing is true.

All reasoning must be based on long and careful observation of facts. *Logic*, which is the science or art of exact reasoning, teaches us how to arrange and test our propositions so that our conclusions shall be warranted.

The *syllogism* is a common form of logical reasoning. It may be represented as follows:

Major premise (general statement): Wooden houses can be burned.

Minor premise (particular statement): Mr. Smith’s house is wooden.

Conclusion: Therefore, Mr. Smith’s house can be burned.

To make this reasoning true, a sufficient number of cases must have been observed to justify the general statement. It must be certain also that Mr. Smith’s house belongs to the general class of wooden houses.

If we said, *Plants are good for food; geraniums are plants; therefore, geraniums are good for food,*” our reasoning would be faulty, because not all plants are good for food. Our general statement is untrue though our particular statement is true. If we said, *“Lumber is expensive; houses are made of lumber; therefore, houses are expensive,”* our reasoning would be faulty because not all houses are made entirely or mainly of lumber. The particular statement is untrue though the general statement and the fact stated in the conclusion are true. Therefore, in the first example, we would *distinguish* or *question* the *major* premise, *grant* the *minor*, and *deny* the *conclusion*; in the second, we would *grant* the *major*, *distinguish* the *minor*, and *deny* the *conclusion*.

Evidence and Proof

Answering these *why* questions involves evidence and proof. *Evidence* is any fact, testimony, or accepted principle, which tends to bring about a belief in the proposition which is being urged. Evidence may be direct or circumstantial. Direct evidence is such as immediately supports the proposition. For instance, a theft may have been committed, the thief pursued and caught; his or her possession of the stolen property, and the testimony of the person who saw them steal would be *direct evidence*. If, however, no such evidence as this were available, *circumstantial evidence* might be used. This would be made up of facts about the suspected person and his or her movements, which would tend to show that they probably committed the deed. *Proof* is convincing evidence.

Formal Debate: Rules

In a formal debate each side must know which are the most important of the issues raised, and the debaters must remember that the decision depends upon the balance of argument. Every argument advanced by one side must be answered by the other. Unanswered argument stands, no matter how weak the evidence presented by the other side using it. Refutation, or the answering of opponents' arguments, is very important.

The debating leagues of colleges and high schools have developed certain customs and rules for the conducting of debates. The most important of these follow:

1. *Selection of the Question.* Usually one team proposes a question and the other team is allowed to choose to support either the affirmative or the negative side.

2. *Teams.* Each side of the argument is maintained by a team of two (or three) members. An additional member, or alternate, is sometimes chosen. He or she may take one of the regular places in an emergency. Otherwise, they help in the preparation of the debate.

3. *Teamwork.* All members of the team should work together in preparing the debate. They should confer upon the selection of the important issues and the arrangement of material. Before the debate, each member of the team should be familiar with the entire argument, but the actual presentation should be divided among the three debaters. Each one should have a definite part of the case to present.

4. *Division of Work.* The first speaker on each side has to state the position of their side, make one strong point, and win the attention and the interest of their audience. The second speaker has to maintain interest, make at least one striking argument, and refute some of their opponents' arguments. The last speaker has to drive home the strongest argument of their side, answer some of their opponents' arguments, and sum up the case.

5. *Organization of a Debate.* A formal debate is organized with a chairperson, a timekeeper, and usually three judges. The chairperson calls the meeting to order, announces the question and any special rules for the discussion, and introduces the speakers. The timekeeper gives each speaker a signal one minute or two before their speech is to close and another, if necessary, when their time has expired.

6. *Order of Speaking.* The speakers on the two sides alternate, first an affirmative and then a negative speaker. Usually the debaters give two series of speeches. The first consists of direct argument; the second entirely of refutation. This second series of speeches is called rebuttal. The order of speakers in rebuttal may be changed from that followed in the direct argument. The affirmative may elect either to open or to close the rebuttal.

7. *Time.* Each speaker in direct argument is allowed a definite time-six, eight, or ten minutes for their direct speech, and a shorter time for rebuttal. The first direct speakers and the last rebuttal speakers are sometimes allowed two or three minutes more than the others.

8. *Intermission.* At the close of the direct speeches the debater are allowed a brief intermission for conference before beginning the rebuttal.

9. *Limitations of Rebuttal.* In rebuttal the speaker must confine themselves to refuting their opponents' arguments. They are not allowed to bring in new material.

10. *Decision of the Judges.* At the close of the debate the judges render their decision, usually without conferring. The chairperson announces the decision, which is accepted as final.

Forms of Oral Interpretation

In schools, in clubs, in church and social gatherings, and in the home, there are occasions when we desire to read, recite, act out, or tell about something from the printed page. Many of us hesitate to do so for fear of being elocutionary. It is true that the exhibitionary kind of recitation that flourished in the nineties and in the first decade of the twentieth century has gone out of style, and is heard today only when it is being satirized. But there is no reason why one should be fearful of communicating to others what they have found worth-while in our literature. The sincere expression of fine literature is never out of date.

There are four forms of oral interpretation which are frequently used, the characteristics of which will be presented here. They are: *Interpretative Reading, Recitation, Impersonation, and Story Telling.* These forms might be called patterns of delivery. Each form is made up of certain factors of delivery which are so integrated that they make a characteristic pattern. It is well for the speech student to know these patterns. When he or she does, they will be able to be judicious in their oral interpretations. They will know when to act out and when to recite. They will avoid the mistake frequently made of acting out in a literal fashion that which should be

suggested. In other words, they can avoid being told they are “elocutionary.”

Principles of Oral Reading

There are certain techniques in oral interpretation which are applicable to all the forms mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, and which we will take up here preliminary to our discussion of the four specific forms.

Phrasing

A speech phrase is different from a grammatical phrase. In the sentence, “While John was walking up the hill, he stopped and looked back at the sunset,” there are two grammatical phrases, “up the hill” and “at the sunset.” These grammatical phrases are only a part of the two speech phrases which go to make up the sentence. A speech phrase is a unit of speech expression which presents some element of experience for the audience to grasp. That element may be an idea, an image, an action, an emotion, an attitude. Thus, in the sentence about John we have two elements of experience, that of John walking up the hill, and John’s turning to look at the sunset.

Characteristics of a Speech Phrase

The speech phrase is a *unit* in several respects. It is a unit in its separateness. Usually it is separated from other phrases by a pause. Sometimes, however, a change in pitch or volume or rate may indicate the end of one phrase and the beginning of another. It is a unit in its presenting one pattern of experience, something which can be grasped and reacted to by the listeners. It is a unit in its cohesiveness. The words in the phrase, “while John was walking up the hill,” tie up with each other in the same way as the syllables of a polysyllabic word, are related. In fact, we can say one speaks a speech phrase just as he or she would pronounce a many-syllabled word, such as *unconstitutional*. Finally, it is a unit in that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Almost always it has a key word or combination of words which form the backbone of the phrase. The reader both in voice and bodily movement, leads up to this keyword, emphasizes it, and returns from it.

Phrasing in Oral Reading

Once a reader gets a command of phrasing, most of the battle for good reading is won. He or she will be reading ideas and images rather than words. His or her voice will have the spontaneous character of conversation, because he or she is really thinking and responding to the content of their phrase units. He or she must always remember to look ahead, grasp the meaning of the phrase they are to read, and speak that phrase, with the aim of stirring up the same meaning in their audience.

Emphasis

It would seem that if one had caught the meaning of a phrase he or she would give the proper emphasis to the words. But this does not always follow, since we are inclined, at least in reading aloud, unconsciously to give less emphasis to important words when we, the readers, are no longer reading the material for the first time. In other words, because the content is no longer fresh to us, the kind of emphasis which comes with the spontaneous realization of ideas and feelings is lost.

Three Kinds of Emphasis

The voice should give prominence, usually through raising the pitch of the voice, to that which is new or which advances the thought of the material; to that which involves contrast or comparison; and to that which is given emotional intensification because of its importance. The first two in the above have to do with new ideas; the third, intensifying emphasis, has to do with old ideas. Terms used to designate these three kinds of emphasis are (in the order given above): *Assertive*, *Antithetic*, and *Intensive*. In the sentence which follows, these words which require *assertive* emphasis will be italicized; those requiring ANTITHETIC will appear in caps; and those requiring **intensive** will be in boldface:

There abides *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*, **these three**; but the greatest of these is CHARITY.

“Faith, hope, and charity” are the *new* ideas; that is, it is the first time they have been spoken of by the reader, and consequently they get the downward stroke in the pitch of the voice that goes with *Assertive* emphasis. “These three” involves the giving of emotional significance to something already taken up and is consequently given *Intensive* emphasis. In the word “greatest” the thought is advanced with a new *assertion* and that kind of emphasis is given the word. When “charity” is repeated at the end of the sentence it is used in a comparative sense and consequently receives *Antithetic* emphasis. We have already pointed out that the voice takes a downward stroke in pitch for assertive emphasis. For antithetic emphasis it does likewise, but before starting down it takes a slight upward turn giving the voice what is called a *circumflex* inflection. For intensive emphasis the voice remains on a high level of pitch until the whole idea has been intensified. Thus, in “these three” the voice remains on the same high pitch for both words.

In applying these principles of emphasis, the important thing to remember is that the reader must be constantly on the alert so that he or she distinguishes between that which is *new* or *important* and that which is *old*. On the new and important ideas his or her voice jumps to a high level and descends with a quick stroke; on that which is old, his or her voice remains on the neutral, “taken-for-granted” level. We mention again here that “new” and “old” are always used in terms of the audience. Good oral reading involves the constant fluctuation of the voice between the level of stress and the level of words which have been referred to before. If the reader effectively applies the two techniques taken up in the foregoing paragraphs, namely, *phrasing* and *emphasis*, he or she will have the necessary oral reading fundamentals for performing in the specialized forms to be taken up below.

Interpretative Reading

In the reading of literature from the printed page for the benefit of a listening audience, the reader acts as a mediator between his or her material and their audience. Their aim is to recreate the material in the minds and imaginations of their listeners.

Therefore, it is important that he or she subordinate themselves as a personality and a performer to that end. If he or she calls to much attention to themselves by displaying their elocutionary facility or by literally acting out the happenings of their material, their listeners will be distracted from their imaginative activity and pay attention to what is happening on the platform. If he or she concentrates on stirring up use of *suggestion* (as opposed to the literal portrayal of acting) he or she will be properly carrying out their function as an Interpretative Reader.

The following points should be kept in mind as important in the technique of Interpretative Reading:

1. The reader's relationship to the audience is a *mediate* one.
2. The reader's activities are on a *suggestive* basis, as opposed to the literal.
3. Because it is the literature being read which is the audience's chief concern, the manuscript or book *must* be used. It is best to have the book on a reading-stand, thus freeing the reader for suggestive activity.
4. What the reader does with their voice and body must always be *spontaneous* or *extemporaneous* in character. Conscious control of the voice and body to the extent that we in the audience listen to the reader's interesting inflections and notice his or her graceful gestures interferes with imaginative activity in the audience.

Interpretative Reading Today

This form of oral reading was developed at the end of the last century as a reaction to the elocutionary display of the *recitation* vogue, which had swept the country. It is a form of speech activity which when understood and not confused with recitation or acting, has a real place in our everyday life. We can use it in our clubs and in church meetings and in library reading-hours. It is particularly adaptive to the reading of plays and novels.

Recitation

While it is true that Recitation easily turns into a display of the performer's elocutionary virtuosity, it need not be so, if the reciter appreciates the true character of the form. When one recites, he or she is doing much the same thing as when one sings a song. The beauty and story of a poem is being conveyed to an audience through the reciter's body and personality. The more interesting the personality of the reciter, the more interesting will be the performance as a whole. As William Butler Yeates has said, the reciter is "an interesting and exciting messenger." It can be seen that the reciter's role is somewhat different from that of the interpretative reader's. Whatever the reciter can do to make more interesting what he or she has to report, they are at liberty to do. But he or she must make sure what they do always pertains to what they are reporting. It was when the old "elocutionists" indulged in exaggerated graceful movements and poses and when they overused their vocal variations that the message was lost in the process.

Characteristics of Recitation

1. The material is *memorized*.
2. Poetry of a musical nature and ballads are especially suited to recitation.
3. *Literal elements* are not out of place. What the performer does is not subordinated to the material as it is in Interpretative Reading.
4. *Formalized elements* in delivery are permissible. The reciter may consciously attend to the musical patterns of his or her material. He or she may also take on the formal movements of stylized behavior, when the material permits of it.
5. The reciter's relationship to his or her audience is *direct*. There may be an element of *display* in the relationship.

Choral Speaking as a Kind of Recitation

The speaking of a piece of literature by a group is a popular activity in our schools today. Usually the material used is strongly musical in character. The director of the choral speaking choir strives for a clear-cut unison in the voices and for interesting variations in the use of the bass and alto voices in the group. There are several good books to be found now which explain the technique of speech choir directing and which give suggested methods for handling poetry on a choir basis.

Impersonation

This form of speaking is closely related to *acting*. When a performer takes a dramatic monologue, such as Browning's *My Last Duchess*, memorizes it, and acts out the character of the duke in that famous piece of literature, he or she is *impersonating*. Monologues, long speeches from plays, and short scenes from plays having few characters are best suited to impersonation.

Characteristic of Impersonation

1. The material is *memorized*.
2. *Literal elements* predominate over *suggested elements*. What the audience sees before them is of primary importance; their own imaginative activity is subordinated.
3. The performer's personality is *submerged* in the character he or she is portraying. In Recitation the performer's personality is very much in evidence.
4. Impersonation differs from *acting* in that costumes, scenery, and make-up are seldom used and the activity on the platform is usually limited to an area about four feet in diameter.
5. The impersonator tries to create an *illusion*. Through literal activity and through

suggestion he or she tries to give their audience a picture of life, sometimes realistic, sometimes idealized.

Story Telling

This form of oral interpretation is closest to public speaking in its character. In preparing to tell a story, the performer should go about it much in the same way as he or she would prepare an extemporaneous speech. He or she should read the story carefully and set the gist of it down in outline form. Then they should rehearse the telling of the story just as they would an extemporaneous speech. In telling the story to their audience, he or she should have the same spontaneous quality which is so desirable in speech-making.

Characteristics of Story Telling

1. The story is not *memorized*. Only those parts of the story which the public have come to know and expect to hear should be spoken from memory. The dialogue in the story of *The Three Bears* would be well given as it is found on the printed page.

2. Story telling is not *reciting*. The story teller is conversing *with* an audience rather than performing *for* it. His or her relationship to their audience is that of social intercourse.

3. The *literal* and the *suggested* go hand in hand in this form. At times the speaker may appeal to the imaginations of their listeners, and at times he or she may act out their characters quite completely.

4. The story teller's personality should play the same part it does in public speaking. It should enhance what he or she has to say.

DELIVERY

The following words of Quintilian, the famous Roman orator and teacher of rhetoric, contain advice for the speaker which is as appropriate now as when they were written:

“In all kinds of public speaking, but especially in popular assemblies, it is a capital rule to attend to all the decorum of time, place, and character. No warmth of eloquence can atone for the neglect of this. That vehemence which is becoming in a person of character and authority may be unsuitable to the modesty expected from a young speaker. That sportive and witty manner which may suit one assembly is altogether out of place in a grave cause and solemn meeting. No one should ever rise to speak in public without forming to himself a just and strict idea of what suits his own age and character; what suits the subject, the hearers, the place, the occasion; and adjusting the whole train and manner of his speaking to this idea.”

There are, in general, four methods of delivering speeches. Each has its especial strength and its peculiar weakness. It is important that a speaker should adopt for their main dependence the method to which his or her abilities are best suited.

Speaking from Manuscript

The use of a carefully prepared manuscript is the most certain method of delivering a speaker's thought completely, logically, and economically. It is especially appropriate for formal occasions, such as lectures, when the speaker's chief purpose is to convey information to his or her hearers. The weakness of this method lies in the tendency of the speaker to keep his or her eyes too closely riveted to their manuscript, and thus lose the attention of their audience. The speaker who uses a manuscript usually sacrifices some of the directness of address which is so important a quality of oratory. For the speaker of small experience, however, the use of a manuscript during delivery is to be recommended.

Speaking from Notes

The speaker who uses notes, that is, an outline of the previously prepared

manuscript, has the advantage of possessing a ready guide through his or her argument, while at the same time they are freer to meet unexpected situations than is the person who must follow a complete manuscript. This is a weighty consideration in discussion or debate. All notes, however, should be clearly written, so that the speaker's eyes will not be taken from his or her audience for too long a time, while they attempt to decipher their outline.

Speaking from Memory

The memorized speech has the distinct advantage of permitting the speaker to look constantly at his or her audience. It does not, however, allow him or her to adapt themselves readily to unforeseen circumstances, such as disturbances in an assembly, or the necessity of answering unexpected arguments in a debate. It is appropriate to formal occasions; for it permits the attainment of highly finished style both in composition and in delivery. The chief weakness of the method is that his or her effort to recall the memorized words, may rob the speaker of directness and spontaneity. The ideal in the use of the memorized speech is to combine finished perfection of form with the appearance of that naturalness which marks the extemporaneous address.

Speaking Extemporaneously

Undoubtedly, the most effective form of public speaking is the extemporaneous address. This is to be defined as the presentation of thoroughly prepared thought in language which is the product of the occasion. As extemporaneous speaking is the most effective type of oratory, so it demands the most exacting and long-continued preparation and practice. However, the reward of the master of extemporaneous oratory is the consciousness of the most thorough command over his or her audiences. Extemporaneous speaking does not preclude the use of notes, and, for the short, informal address, the preparation of notes, outlining the thought to be clothed in extemporaneous language, is usually advisable.

Whichever of these general methods of speaking you choose to employ, you must

observe certain well-established principles pertaining to manner and to voice. The total effect of a speech is compounded of the words, the body attitudes, and the voice of the speaker. He or she must know how to adapt these elements to each other and to the spirit of his or her audience. It has well been said that the best oratorical style for a given individual is that of his or her best conversation.

The attainment of an effective manner before an audience is worthy of long and careful effort. Each speaker must study his or her own problems. However, there are two means which you will find to be fundamental:

1. Know your subject and your plan so well that you show *confidence* (a) by looking at your audience, and letting them see your eyes, (b) by speaking directly to your audience, letting them see your lips move. The audience is entitled to this directness of address.

2. Be so thoroughly interested in your talk that you show ease (a) by standing firmly *on both feet* that you can change your position without “teetering,” (b) by such gestures with arms or body as are prompted by your thought and feeling *at the time*, (c) by directing your eyes and your voice at some time to everyone in your audience, (d) by deep, steady breathing.

Gesture

The name for the bodily attitudes and movements and facial expressions by which a speaker supplements and emphasizes his or her words. Every speaker will use gesture in some way, because bodily movements are a fundamental mode of expressing ideas and feelings; and the more earnest and emphatic the speaker is, the more frequent and vigorous will be their gestures. Two rules you may observe: (1) Do *not* try to repress all gesture, (2) Strive to make every gesture mean something definite. Superfluous gestures take the attention of your audience from what you are saying. Notice the gestures that you make spontaneously in conversation. Try to employ those and adapt them to the “enlarged conversation” of your public speech. We usually think of gestures

as movements of the arms and hands. But remember that you can make many of your most effective gestures with your facial muscles, your head, or your whole body. This caution will help you to avoid the windmill method of gesture, or merely throwing your arms about. In gesture, as in any other phase of speaking, sincerity of thought and purpose is the best guard against meaningless expression.

Enunciation

For *good speech*, in uttering your own thoughts or reading orally, the words of another, the first essential is this: *Carefully think* your words and phrases. Your voice will respond with wonderful accuracy to your understanding of the words you use. The second essential is this: Pronounce your words *distinctly* and *correctly*. This includes the true forming and arrangement of the sounds, faultless accent, and clear quality of voice. A good dictionary will be helpful also to the speaker in learning how to correctly pronounce words.

Voice Qualities

Pleasing and effective speech is very largely a result of the speaker's mastery of good voice qualities, the fundamental principle of which is proper breathing. Individual voices differ in quality because of the varied forms and conditions of the vocal cords and the resonance chambers of the mouth and nose. Each person has a normal quality of voice which he or she uses in conversation, and by which it is possible to recognize him or her even when their features cannot be seen. But, by altering the shape of the mouth cavity or by opening or restricting the nasal and throat passages, each individual can produce several other qualities besides this normal one.

Eight qualities of the speaking voice are usually distinguished. Three of these the public speaker should cultivate: (1) *Normal*, which is a clear, resonant quality produced by the natural position of the vocal organs and the simple enunciation of vowels and consonants, the ordinary conversational voice. (2) *Orotund*, a fuller, clearer, and more resonant quality. It is appropriately used to express grandeur, sublimity, and similar

thoughts and ideas of a lofty and impressive nature. The speaker should be careful not to use this quality too frequently, as it may easily pass into bombast and become unconvincing. (3) *Aspirate*, which is a breathy utterance either devoid of vocalization, as in a whisper, or partially vocalized, as in the so-called “stage whisper.” The quality may suggest weakness or excessive emotion. It is sometimes used effectively in public speaking to give striking emphasis to an expression.

The remaining five qualities are generally undesirable and to be avoided in public speaking. They are confined to the art of the actor in portraying characters or in suggesting emotions with which they are associated. (4) *Guttural*, a throaty sound. (5) *Pectoral*, a hollow, breathy quality. (6) *Oral*, the result of a rather thin, mouth resonance. (7) *Nasal*, a quality characterized by a harsh twang. (8) *Falsetto*, a quality of tone above the speaker’s natural range.

Cautions. -- Three very common faults of American speech are *high pitch*, *nasality*, and *throatiness*. Too high a pitch of voice is due to nervousness and to lack of self-control. Nasality is not talking through the nose but failure to use the nasal cavity properly in speaking. It is frequently due to some obstruction of the nasal passages. Throatiness, or making sounds too low down in the throat, is usually caused by contraction of throat muscles.

Inflection

What punctuation is to written language, *inflection*, *change of pitch*, and *pauses* are to spoken language. The importance of changes of pitch in indicating emphasis was discussed under *emphasis* in the section on Oral Reading.

Change of Pitch

By pronouncing one of the words in a sentence with a decidedly high or low pitch as compared with the pitch of the others, you can give several additional meanings to the sentence. For instance: If *you* is given a higher pitch than *are going*, the sentence

means that you are going and not someone else; pronouncing *are* with a higher pitch than *you* and *going* may indicate either surprise or decided determination. This abrupt shifting of the key, or tone, of speech *between* words, phrases clauses, or sentences is called *change of pitch*.

Practice will show you the importance of this means of emphasis. It is, in fact, the natural method of marking off one idea from another in speech. If you think clearly, you can hardly keep such changes out of your voice.

Pauses

Plan your pauses as carefully as you arrange your words. Silences are the wells of thought. Definite pauses serve at least four main purposes: (1) They give your audience time to grasp important ideas. (2) They enable your audience to make the necessary transition from one thought to another and so to “follow” you. (3) They convey the impression that you are choosing your words carefully. (4) They impress your audience with a sense of your consideration for them. Thus, directly and indirectly, pauses serve to give emphasis to your speech.

Rate of Speaking.

Just as the natural qualities of voice vary among individuals, so too their natural rates of speaking differ. Some people are naturally quick and nervous; others are slow and phlegmatic. It should be remembered, however, that the brain of the listener is capable of receiving and registering only a limited number of words in any given unit of time, and that a speaker should adjust his or her rate to the ability of the audience to take in what they are saying. Generally, it is unwise to exceed 125 words a minute in ordinary speaking. On the other hand, it is tiresome to listen to slow, drawling delivery. Hence, rate should be adapted (1) to the capability monotony, (2) to the nature of what is spoken.

It is important that, in the course of any speech or address, one should, from time to time, alter their rate of speaking. Change of rate (1) relieves monotony, (2) helps in

emphasis, (3) suggests certain emotions or movements.

That which will quicken or retard a person's footsteps will also quicken or retard their rate of speaking. Narration, for example, is flowing, easy, and graceful; vehemence is firm and accelerated; anger and joy are sudden, sometimes hysterical. Again, dignity, authority, sublimity, and awe assume deeper tones and a slower movement. One may often hear a good speaker, at some sudden turn of thought or feeling, check themselves in the full tide of utterance and give indescribable power to a passage by slackening their rate and by adopting a slow, deliberate enunciation.

Breathing

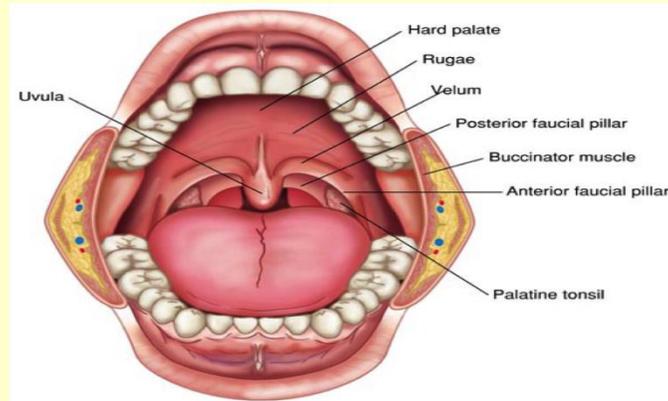
Breathe deeply and steadily, using the diaphragm and chest walls. Learn to feel your diaphragm, which is the flexible floor of your chest, expanding and moving downward as you "take in" breath. You can then control and steady its movement, keeping it expanded, and give *carrying power* to your voice. Practice this breathing. It will help you to avoid "stage fright." Take a "deep breath" before you begin to speak.

Correct Speech Sounds

These are secured by right breathing, proper shaping of the mouth, and correct placing of the various sounds. The voice is produced by vibrations, or waves, set up by the vocal cords in the column of air reaching from the lungs up into thorough and the nose. The different shapes that the mouth cavity may take give special forms to these waves. The forms, thus produced, give rise to the *vowels*, or open voice sounds. Each vowel sound is made with the jaws and the flexible palate, lips, tongue, and cheeks in a definite position.

The cavities of the throat, nose, and mouth act as a *resonance chamber*, like an organ pipe or the body of a violin, to give volume and tone to the voice. Any obstruction, such as the mucus from a "cold," enlarged tonsils, or adenoids, interferes with the volume of the voice as well as with the purity and the clearness of its tone.

The *consonant sounds* we form by partially or entirely closing the mouth cavity with the teeth or tongue or lips. We thus, to some extent, shut off the vowel sound; at the same time, the friction or explosive force of the moving breath makes sounds which join or articulate with the vowels to form syllables.



Part II-SPEAKING

Speaking is an even more fundamental part of language than writing. All human beings of normal intelligence know how to speak. More than any other characteristic, this is what sets humans apart from other creatures. Parrots and mynah birds can mimic human speech. Chimpanzees have been taught to communicate a few rudimentary ideas through sign language. But no animal can do what the human child can do: speak.

Children learn to speak without special instruction. They gradually master a set of amazingly complicated rules that enable them to communicate feelings, thoughts, and wants.

The origins of human speech are lost in antiquity, but it is clear that humans began speaking hundreds of centuries before they began writing. Students of language estimate that speech began at least 5000 centuries (500,000 years) ago. The earliest known written language dates back to only 60 centuries (6,000 years).

Mechanics of Speech

Spoken words are produced in the same way that notes are produced by a musical instrument. Vibrations created when air is pushed between two bands of muscle called the vocal cords. The vocal cords are about five-eighths of an inch long and are situated in the larynx, or voice box. When air passes through them, vocal cords vibrate just as the strings on a guitar when they are plucked.

The vibrations are amplified and enriched by resonating through the hollows of the chest, throat, mouth, and sinuses, the way of the body of a guitar enhances the strings' vibrations. Finally, the sounds are shaped by the teeth, lips, tongue, and palate.

The Four Functions:

Speaking consists of the four functions of breath, vibration, resonance, and articulation.

Breath

The breathing that accompanies speaking is different from normal breathing. When people are not speaking, they inhale and exhale through the nose in breaths of equal duration. When speaking, however, they inhale air rapidly and let it out more slowly through tightened vocal cords to produce sound. This is called diaphragmatic breathing.

The diaphragm is a sheet of muscle that lies above the abdominal organs and beneath the lungs. The action of the diaphragm can be felt by breathing in with the mouth open. The abdomen will push out in front as the diaphragm flattens, pressing down on the stomach and other organs. As air is let out in speaking, the diaphragm relaxes and the abdomen pulls in again. Learning to breathe from the diaphragm can help a person to speak clearly and forcefully, since an adequate supply of air is necessary for clear speech.

Vibration

When people are breathing normally, the vocal cords are relaxed. In speech, muscles in the jaw, throat, and neck lengthen the vocal cords and pull them closer together. The air rushing between the vocal cords causes them to vibrate. The more tightly the cords are stretched, the higher the voice is pitched. The comfortable range of pitch in speaking is about five or six notes. Singers learn to pitch their voices over two octaves or more.

Resonance

The vocal cords provide only 5 percent of the volume of the voice. Much of the rest is provided by the resonators. These are the hollow spaces in the chest and head through which the sound from the vocal cords reverberates. The best way to sense the power of the resonators is to hum loudly. This will produce vibrations that can be felt in the chest and head.

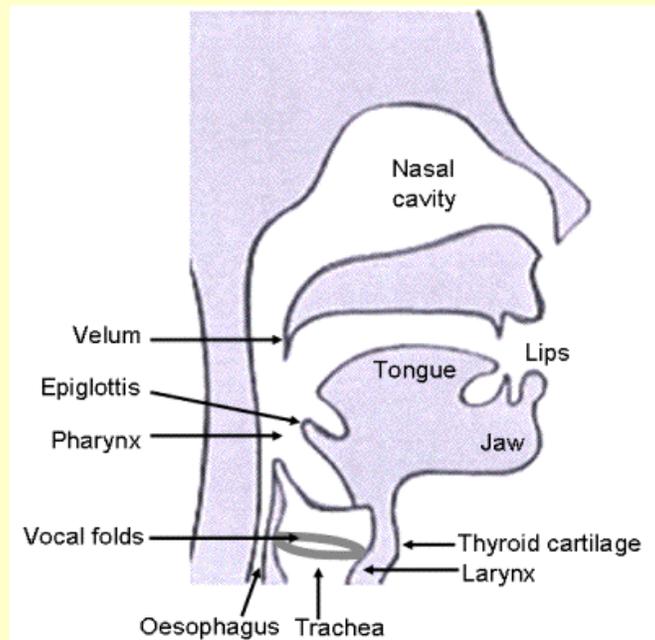
If any of these hollow spaces are tense or filled with fluid, the volume and tone of the voice will be changed. When someone has a cold, for example and the sinuses are clogged, the voice sounds flat. People may ask a sick person to speak up, which further strains the already sore throat. The voice loses volume and power if the sinuses are clogged.

The resonators can be hampered by tension as well. Holding oneself tense and breathing too shallowly or too deeply when talking lessens the reverberation and produces a voice that sounds small and pinched.

Articulation

The tongue, the upper surfaces of the mouth, and the lips shape the sounds of the vocal cords into words. By placing these mouth parts, called articulators, in different positions, one can make an almost unlimited variety of sounds. Some sounds, such as

p, *t*, and *s*, do not even rely on sound from the vocal cords. Others -- *l*, *m*, *n*, and the vowels -- give a different quality to vocal sound. We all know how to speak, but many of us become sloppy speakers, pronouncing words so lazily that one sound is scarcely different from another. Achieving better speech often requires closer attention to articulation.



Speech Disorders

Speech disorders reflect an inability to control one or more parts of the speaking apparatus. Speech therapists help speakers overcome such disorders through a variety of techniques. Some speech disorders have psychological as well as physical causes. Those disorders that are only physical may cause psychological problems if not corrected, since being unable to communicate effectively can be deeply discouraging. Many speech therapy programs combine physical training and psychological counseling.

Stuttering

Stuttering is a disorder that afflicts about 1 percent of the population. The speaker may be unable for seconds or even minutes, to utter a sound, or the first sound of a word may be repeated over and over again. Male stutters outnumber female by about four to one. Legendary figures such as Moses and the Greek orator Demosthenes were stutterers.

Stuttering usually begins, between three and five years of age. Often, the sufferer was fluent in speech before this time. Many stutterers outgrow their problem in adolescence, but for others it is a lifelong problem.

Despite many medical and scientific advances in the field, specialists do not agree on the exact cause of or the preferred treatment for stuttering. Physical and psychological therapies are usually combined. Most stutterers respond temporarily to therapy.

Stuttering is sometimes treated as a breathing problem. Special breathing techniques may be helpful. Often, stutterers are taught to slow down their speech, since the tendency to rush through words aggravates the problem. Stutterers may also be taught to keep their vocal cords in a constant state of vocalization by humming between words or phrases. This seems to reduce violent and frustrating attacks.

Cluttering

Cluttering is a speech disorder related to stuttering, but differing in that the speaker appears to be entirely unaware of the disorder. Cluttering is characterized by speech that is jerky, very fast, and difficult to understand. It appears to be a hereditary disorder rather than one that is due to such psychological factors as stress.

Lisping

Lisping, another common speech disorder, is the mispronunciation of such sibilants as s and z. It can be caused by physical factors, such as dental or hearing problems, or psychological disturbances. It is often difficult to correct.

Improving Speech

Most people speak without any particular problem, but some speakers are better than others. Nearly everyone could profit from improvement in their speaking ability. A person who communicates clearly usually has an advantage over one who does not.

Nonverbal aspects of speech

Communication theorists maintain that people communicate not only through words but through many silent elements as well. These include the way people dress, sit and stand, use their eyes, and respond to the actions of others. As for speech itself, it is just not the choice of words that matter, but the tone of the voice and cadence of speech as well.

Body language

People's attitudes and feelings are conveyed to others by the way they sit and stand. Experts have delineated dozens of small patterns that can reveal a person's level of confidence, attitude towards others, and purpose.

In an encounter between a man and a woman, for example, the man may straighten his back, arrange his hair, smile slightly, and glance at the woman out of the corner of his eye. The woman may respond with a smile, flip of the hair, if she approves of the man's approach, or avert her eyes and turn away if she does not.

Winks and waves, hand and eye movements, frowns and smiles, posture, scratching, fidgeting, movements of the head and hips, and the distance kept from another person all say something about a person and his or her attitudes.

Everyone is attuned to reading body language, even when not aware of it. In general, Americans respond most favorably to a strong, confident posture and a firm handshake. But the exact approach to others may vary widely from one region to another, and from one setting to another.

Eye contact and visual cues

The eyes are a speaker's most important tool after the voice itself. Eyes both receive and send messages. In the U.S and the U.K., looking someone in the eye is a sign of confidence and straightforwardness. Looking someone in the eye also gives a speaker an immediate idea of the effect he or she is having on the listener. Is the message getting through? Is the listener bored and restless? I have seen some people who will not look you in the eye when talking. This is rude and sometimes shows a person's dishonesty. I have seen many preachers staring at the ceiling or walls when preaching to people. Look people in the eye, and convince them of your sincerity, and most important, your message.

Gestures

In order to be visible at great distances, old-fashioned speakers used their hands and bodies, in broad, dramatic movements. A few gestures can enhance words. A speaker's hands can describe things -- the shape of a spiral staircase, the length of a fish that was caught, the height of a stack of papers on a desk, or even a signal to stop. To emphasize a dramatic point, a speaker might pound a fist on a table or point a finger at someone or something. A raised thumb might indicate that things are O.K., or positive. A downward thumb usually indicates disapproval, negative, or sometimes death. Two fingers in the air usually means victory, or a sign of peace. Such gestures are risky however.

A speaker's face is most important, especially when speaking in a small group. People will read a face to judge a mood, an attitude toward them, and sincerity. Amusement, anger, curiosity, or any number of other feelings can be expressed with only slight changes of expression. Learning to use facial expression will add more to speech than any contrived repertoire or hand movements.

Pitch, tone, cadence

The sound of a voice is another nonverbal aspect of speech. A speaker with a shrill or

nasal or monotonous voice may have little effect on an audience. By the same token, a skillful speaker can use positive qualities to give a message more impact.

Pitch is the level of the voice -- high or low or middling. It is partly determined by a person's vocal equipment. Some people have voices that sound shrill (if they are women) or effeminate (if they are men) may change the pitch by a whole tone. Shrillness is often related to nervousness. We tend to speak shrilly when we are nervous or upset. A person with a shrill voice should therefore try relaxing before beginning to speak.

Tone is the quality of the voice. Again, this will depend partly on vocal equipment, but tone can be improved. By reading something into a tape recorder or recording a conversation and then playing it back, speakers can note what qualities they dislike. If the voice is too nasal or shrill, they can experiment with modifying it to be more distinct and pleasing.

Finally, cadence is the rhythm and inflection of the voice, similar to melody in music. Some people have an annoying habit of using the same inflection over and over again. They may sound whiny or depressed or groundlessly cheerful all the time. Soon their listeners stop listening simply because of the monotony. Good speakers listen to their own speech and try to vary its speed and pitch to reflect mood or the message they are communicating. Variety of rhythm and cadence is an important quality of excellent speech.

Saying what one means

In deciding what to say on a given occasion, there are two things a speaker must consider; the listener and the subject of the speech itself.

The listener

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, "Of the three elements in speech making -

- speaker, subject, and person addressed -- it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object."

The speaker should be aware that listeners have their own concerns and problems. These color and prejudice everything they hear and see. Unless great care is taken, people will not understand everything the speaker is trying to say because they will filter it through their own perceptions. Because of this, it is useful to know as much as possible about an audience. Whether talking to strangers or friends, a speaker is constantly making choices in order to present the subject in the best possible light.

What speakers know about their listeners will help determine what kind of language they use, the mood they will adopt, and the approach they will take to the subject. As a speaker gains experience, he or she will make these decisions more and more deliberately.

In speaking to friends, a good speaker will try to be sensitive to their mood. Are they sad, happy, introspective, or outgoing? Their mood determines what can be said to them and when it can be said. There are times when a criticism or complaint will be taken in stride, but there will be other times when the same comment might ruin a friendship.

When talking to strangers, a speaker should consider their sex, age, social status, ethnic or regional identity, and politics. Small clues -- dress, accent, manners -- can be important. Every message must be directed to an audience, and different audiences respond to different approaches.

Giving a speech before classmates

I used to be very reluctant in giving a speech before my classmates in high school. Giving a book report in front of my classmates was always my greatest fear. Whether one enjoys the experience of standing before a group of one's peers or dreads it, giving a speech before classmates is a common assignment. Now, after becoming an

ordained minister, I teach and preach before hundreds.

Speakers can improve their chances of delivering a successful speech by following the advice given below:

Organizing Remarks

In order to speak clearly, one must think clearly. In all but the briefest speech, some preparation is necessary, and a big part of preparation is organization. I remember when I first started preaching as a young evangelist. I would stand in front of my mirror at home, and preach to myself. I would note how I looked, and how my delivery was. Ha.

Any talk has three sections, which we can think of as the beginning, the middle, and the ending. One old farmer said, "Give a point here and a point there and a lot of bull in between." Ha. For a formal address, these three sections are called the **introduction**, the **body**, and the **conclusion**. Some people keep on talking and do not know when to quit. This is especially true in the ministry. A preacher friend and I were attending a meeting where the main speaker was preaching on and on and on, and did not know when to stop. My friend wrote on a piece of paper and passed it to me which said, "Let us hear the conclusion the whole matter" (Eccl. 12:13).

The beginning of the speech must be calculated to capture the listener's attention. Unless a speaker can capture the listener's attention, the message will not matter. A speaker's opening impression is important in many kinds of presentations.

A favorite way to open a talk is with a joke. It works for many speakers, but joke telling can be disastrous if not done right. Joke telling or foolish jesting behind the pulpit is not recommended. A speaker using this opening must know the joke well and have the important lines down word for word. All speakers should avoid making a joke at anyone's expense. Ethnic, religious, political, and racial jokes and other mean spirited humor mark the speaker as insensitive or prejudiced.

Other possible opening strategies include a dramatic story introducing a theme, an informal appeal to the audience for sympathy or support, or a bold statement of the theme. At all costs, a speaker should avoid the introduction that begins, “My name is and I’m here to talk about”

The middle of a speech must explain the theme and establish it in the minds of the listeners. There are several useful patterns of organization.

Time. A series of events can be narrated in chronological order, as in a story.

Space. Events or attitudes in different places -- countries, regions, towns, or along a road or path -- might be described.

Topic. The various aspects of a theme can be discussed one at a time.

Definition. The subject can be treated as an extended definition. What is astronomy? What is security? What is health? A speaker can compare his or her subject with a related one, give its history, explore its connotations, or examine its causes or effects.

Cause. Organizing a talk from cause to effect or effect to cause can be particularly useful for argument or persuasion. For example: “The failings of my opponent are the reason we’re in a mess today.”

Logic. A speaker can proceed from a premise to a conclusion by reasoned steps. All points should be established with evidence.

Problem and solution. A speaker can follow these five steps: 1. Define the problem. 2. Analyze the problem through observation of facts. 3. Suggest probable solutions. 4. Discuss each proposed solution to gauge the results. 5. Determine the best solution.

The end of a talk leaves the final impression. A speaker wants people to remember the speech and to leave in a certain frame of mind. If the purpose is to entertain, the audience should leave feeling happy. If the message is serious, the speaker wants the audience to feel moved. Someone campaigning for office wants to secure their votes. A sales representative wants the audience to buy. Here are some effective types of conclusions:

Summary. A speech that has been lengthy and full of information should be summarized. The subject should be recapitulated briefly, point by point.

Abridgment. A paragraph-length statement of the main points of the speech is easier to listen to than point-by-point summary.

Restatement. The speaker states again the central idea succinctly.

Application. The speaker calls for immediate or future action, asks a challenging question, offers a service, or makes a prediction.

Many inexperienced speakers want more than one conclusion. In most speaking situations, this does not work. Often, if the speech leads to more than one conclusion, it has gone astray before reaching the end. Speakers should avoid coming to a false climax, where the speech seems to be over but is not. In a good speech, listeners know when the conclusion is approaching. One of the most frequent broken rules of speaking is, "Not one word too many."

Practice makes perfect

Once a speaker has organized and prepared a speech, the presentation should be practiced. Nobody enjoys listening to someone reading straight from a stack of papers, so speakers should either memorize a speech completely or be so familiar with the contents of a speech that a few notes written on cards will be reminder enough of what is to be said. When not glancing at their cards, speakers should be making eye contact

with their listeners.

As I mentioned before, rehearsing in front of a mirror can be a useful way to practice making eye contact, test the usefulness of one's notes, and detect any difficulties or nervous habits that might detract a listener. After rehearsing alone in front of a mirror, it is a good idea to rehearse again before a small group of friends or family if possible. This will enable the speaker to become used to talking in front of other people and also to receive constructive criticism that may improve a speech.

Finally, speakers should consider their appearance and their own wellbeing. Clothing should be neat and comfortable; hair should be arranged so that it is not getting in the way. Feeling rested and at home with any charts they will use is important as well.

Speakers who have organized their thoughts, rehearsed their speeches, and prepared themselves and their materials carefully are likely to give a presentation that is enjoyable for both themselves and their listeners. Such a presentation will be a true success.

Conversation

A Chinese proverb tells us, "A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books." The French essayist Michel de Montaigne wrote, "It is good to rub and polish our brain against that of others."

Most of the speaking people do is conversational, the give and take of everyday life. Very few take conversation seriously as a source of learning and entertainment. In order to enjoy and profit from conversation, first take it seriously enough to learn how to do it well. Conversation differs from formal speaking in several ways. First, it is a *dialogue* in which two (or more) speakers take roughly equal parts. Second, remarks for a conversation cannot be prepared, since the direction of the talk can scarcely be predicted ahead of time. To be a good conversationalist one must be able to improvise. Finally, conversation requires two indispensable skills -- listening and speaking.

The three principal rules for conversation are:

1. *Do not talk too much.* Good conversation is the exchange of ideas. Do not bore people by trying to say everything.

2. *Listen.* Good conversationalist do not use the time when others are talking to prepare their next comment. They are always ready to ask questions and learn from the answers.

3. *Be considerate.* Good conversationalists do not mock other people's beliefs, no matter how strongly they may disagree.

Improving speech habits

In informal situations, people usually do not have to be careful about how they speak. They may not always say things with precision, but their friends know what they mean. With strangers or acquaintances, however, bad speech habits can be a serious handicap. People make all sorts of judgments about others from the way they speak. Bad speech habits may cost someone a chance for a job or a promotion; they may keep people from doing things they really want to do or even keep them from getting to know a very nice person. Unfortunately, bad speech habits are often learned before the difference between good and bad is understood. One's first speech patterns come from families, and these are often reinforced by friends. Rooting out these habits can be very difficult.

People cannot expect to improve their speech by talking only with friends and family members whose speaking habits are not up to par. Spending more time with people whose speech is good is more helpful. Asking them for help with grammar and pronunciation can lead to improved speech habits.

Grammar for speech

Grammar for speech need not be as strict as written grammar. For example, many authors will write, “It is I,” or “That is he.” But in speech, the same writers are likely to say, “It’s me,” or “That’s him.”

Here are some more common spoken errors -- mistakes that may lead strangers to misjudge a speaker’s intelligence or education:

Subject-verb agreement. “I don’t” and “You don’t” are correct, but “He don’t” and “It don’t” are incorrect. Instead, “He doesn’t” and “It doesn’t” should be used.

Adjectives and adverbs. Many adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective. The adjective form is used when the word modifies a noun and the adverb form when it modifies a verb or an adjective. For example, it is correct to say, “They had a *real* fight,” and “The fight they had was *really* big.” Expressions such as “*real* big” or “*real* good” are incorrect.

Mistakes in the use of adjectives and adverbs are common in the comparative forms.

Incorrect: more louder, most loudest,
more curiouser.

Correct: loud, louder, loudest
curious, more curious,
most curious

Negatives: Many people use double negatives.

Incorrect: I wouldn’t never do that.

Correct: I wouldn’t ever do that.
I would never do that.

Two negatives can be misleading. For example, “I’m not going nowhere,” could

mean “I’m going somewhere.”

Pronouns: A pronoun is a word that can be used in place of another noun. Instead of using a girl’s name, for example, a speaker may use the pronoun *she*. There must be agreement between the form of the noun and the pronoun that replaces it:

The boys....they

The king....he

The woman....she

A major problem with pronouns arises over their *antecedents*, the nouns to which they refer. Using the same pronoun to refer to more than one person confuses the listener. Repeating the names of the people being discussed can avoid confusion.

Unclear: When Harold’s son came home, he was happy, (Who was happy?)

Clear: Harold’s son was happy to be home. Harold was happy that his son was home.

Past tenses. When talking about past events, it is important to use the right verb forms. Verbs have three forms: the present, the past, and the past participle (for example, *go*, *went*, *gone*). The simple past form is used by itself.

I *went* to school.

He *cooked* dinner.

She *worked* this morning.

George *fed* the fish.

A verb with *has*, *had*, or *have* must use the past participle:

Incorrect: I *have went* to school.

Correct: I *have gone* to school.

Incorrect: They *have fell* down.

Correct: They *fell* down.

They *have fallen* down.

Other grammatical faults:

Wrong

hisself
I ain't
I been
I done
irregardless
nowheres
out loud
out of the door
overly
over with
supposing
theirselves
them people
them things
this here
thusly
unawares
we ain't
youse

Right

himself
I'm not
I've been
I did
regardless
nowhere
aloud
out the door
over
over
suppose
themselves
those people
those things
this
thus
unaware
we're not
you

Pronunciation

Some people judge speakers on how they pronounce certain words. People who

mispronounce those words might be judged as harshly as if they attended a formal banquet in blue jeans.

<i>Words</i>	<i>Incorrect pronunciation</i>
ask	ax
athletic	athaletic
because	becuss, becoss
did you	didja
fifth	fith
fixing	fikken
good-by	guhby
government	gummint
height	heighth
hundred	hunnert
interesting	inneresting
library	liberry
mischievous	mischeevious
often	off-ten
ought to	oughta
strength	strenth
want to	wanna
width	with

Other common speech faults

Most people are impatient with their speech. Instead of saying what is really on their minds, they may fall into the habit of using interjections such as “you know,” “you know what I’m saying?” and “understand?”

Instead of striving for clear explanations and for vivid, descriptive, original language, people often substitute profanity, jargon, and clichés. These proclivities often indicate

lack of thought. By using the same words over and over, people lose the ability to really express their feelings and their conversation loses meaning.

Some people use offensive language for emphasis. This practice is not only rude, but it also robs those words of any power they might once have had. If people known never to use profanity get angry enough to use it, their hearers understand the depth of the anger being expressed. Those who use profanity in every other sentence make no impression at all no matter how angry they are. Besides, using God's name in vain is a sin, not to mention it shows one's ignorance of the English language.

Cliches are words and phrases that have been used so often that they have lost their meaning. Some examples are "fit as a fiddle," "slick as a dog," and "high as a kite."

Jargon is special language used in a particular field. While jargon may serve to make someone seem like one of the crowd, it often conceals a lack of thought. Most ideas can be expressed in plain English.

Most people also distrust silence. They fill the pauses in their speech with little nonsense sounds like "uh" and "um-m-m" as well as "you know." These mutterings do not add to understanding.

To identify speech habits, people must listen to themselves. Once a problem is recognized, they should work to correcting it. When uttering tired words or phrases, stop to consider whether there isn't some better way of expression.

Another serious problem in speech is talking up or down to people. If someone tries to sound more expert or informed than he or she really is, people will not be fooled. Listeners resent speakers who talk down to audiences they think are less educated. Speech should be at a level that suits both the speaker and the audience.

Above all, speakers should mean what they say. The sincere speaker is the

persuasive one. If a speaker is not sure of his or her own message, others will not believe it either.

Good speakers are alert for other people's nonverbal signals. Tone of voice, pitch, even eye movements can tell important things about other people's attitudes or intentions. A speaker's interest (or lack of it) in others is visible in many small ways, and may have an important effect on successful speaking. Ineffective speakers change the subject when people bring up their problems. They "listen with one ear" when others are speaking. These habits hurt their ability to communicate. Good speakers know that communication is a two-way process, and that speakers who do not listen to others often fail to communicate their own ideas effectively.

Speech in Careers

Speaking is especially important in certain professions. For example, trial lawyers must be particularly adept at speaking since it is their job to persuade judges and juries to see things their way.

Speech is a teacher's principle tool. A professor may lecture for as much as ten to twelve hours each week, and spend twice that time in preparation. Elementary school teachers must learn how to explain new concepts to young children in terms that children will understand.

Clergymen also, rely on speech, both from the pulpit and in small groups. Clergymen who preach to large groups often are given professional speech training.

Speech is a major concern in the acting profession. Actors receive professional instruction in such areas as breath control, refinement of pitch, and extension of vocal range. They study dialects and accents and learn to imitate every conceivable type of speech.

A radio broadcaster or television news announcer is also a profession where good speech is required and necessary to address the public in a professional way.

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