

SECRETS OF GREAT COMMUNICATORS

**Simple, Powerful Strategies for Reaching the
Heart of Your Audience**

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**Simple, Powerful Strategies for Reaching the
Heart of Your Audience**

Jeff Myers



Nashville, Tennessee

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SECRETS OF GREAT COMMUNICATORS

**Simple, Powerful Strategies for Reaching the
Heart of Your Audience**

Are You Ready for a World-Changing Experience?

KEY QUOTE:

If you can conquer your fear of public speaking
and communicating with other people,
there is almost no limit to the impact you can have
on the world around you.

—Jeff Myers

CONGRATULATIONS ON BEGINNING YOUR STUDY of *Secrets of Great Communicators*! Public speaking is a meaningful and fulfilling part of *my* life, and I hope it will become that for *you* by the time we've worked through this course together. I love public speaking and want you to feel the same. But I also must assure you it wasn't always like that for me. When I was a child, the mere *thought* of public speaking reduced me to tears. But I conquered that fear and have found a remarkable level of confidence, joy and success in living out my God-given gifts. In addition to having delivered more than 3,500 speeches, I have coached thousands of people in mastering the skills of great communication.

This six-step video coaching system will have you making a compelling speech in just a few hours, even if the thought of speaking in public scares you to death right now. Most speech programs focus on teaching what good communication is, but in my approach, we don't have time for that. Since I intend to streamline your way to great public speaking by addressing the issues and teaching the skills that will give you a life-long pattern of making an impact on people, this system focuses on

"Men are polished,
through act and
speech, each by
each, as pebbles are
smoothed on the
rolling beach."

—John Townsend
Trowbridge
A Home Idyl

learning and *practicing* key speech principles. Follow the simple instructions, do the exercises, and you will be amazed at how your skills improve. By the time you reach the last chapter, you will have organized and delivered an effective speech that you could confidently give to any audience. As the life of many a famous person demonstrates, you may be just the person God is looking for, regardless of how you perceive your skills now.

Great Communication Turns Ordinary People Into World-Changers

The year: 1775. The place: St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia.

Having suffered great misery at the hands of the British Crown, 122 Virginia colonial delegates met to determine a course of action. Patrick Henry, a 38-year-old self-taught lawyer, proposed that the colony prepare a plan for "embodying, arming, and disciplining" an army to stand against British tyranny.

As was the custom, Henry gave a speech defending his resolution. Without using notes, he delivered an eloquent address that changed the course of human history. Here's how he concluded:

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, "Peace! Peace!"—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

With Henry's electrifying words, the colony of Virginia passed the resolution, organized a militia, and began preparing for the war of independence from Great Britain.

Patrick Henry's words are among the most recognizable and revered ever uttered in a speech. Yet scholars who study the man are amazed at the sheer ordinariness of his life. He had no formal education. His family life was

unremarkable. He had experienced failure in business. He wrote no great philosophical treatises, and few of his writings or speeches are preserved for us today. *Yet Patrick Henry changed the world.*

The picture that emerges from Patrick Henry's life is that of a "regular guy" who loved God, loved his family, and loved his country. And this shouldn't surprise us—*God always seems to use ordinary people to make an extraordinary difference in the world.* He uses the likes of Patrick Henry, and he uses people like *you and me*. God wants you to become confident in speaking truth. He wants you to overcome your fears and unleash your gifts. He wants you to bring a message of grace and redemption to the world around you.

As you grow as a communicator, tremendous blessings will flow into your life. You will improve your social relationships. Your career options will expand. People will treat what you say as important, and as your credibility grows, you will experience new meaning and fulfillment in life. You will be equipped to take advantage of new opportunities. You'll rest secure knowing that your life counts for something. You will have something worth living—and if need be, dying—for.

Six Steps To Communication Success

Only six steps stand between you and confident public speaking. *Secrets of Great Communicators* will show you how to master each. Through this coaching, you will:

1. See your true potential as a great communicator.
2. Conquer your fear of public speaking.
3. Be equipped to organize your talk for maximum impact.
4. Find out how to understand and persuade your audience.

"Where thou art obliged to speak, be sure to speak the Truth: For Equivocation is half way to Lying, as Lying, the whole way to Hell."

—William Penn
(1644-1718)

"Now Faithful play the Man, speak for thy God: Fear not the wicked's malice, nor their rod: Speak boldly man, the Truth is on thy side; Die for it, and to Life in triumph ride."

—John Bunyan
(1628-1688)
The Pilgrim's Progress

"Speech is a mirror
of the soul: as a man
speaks, so is he."

—Publius Syrus
(42 BC)

5. Learn how to effectively deliver your message to the audience.

6. Master the finer points of what makes great speakers great.

Secrets of Great Communicators also includes two beneficial appendices! The first provides you with dozens of outlines for all of the speech occasions in your life. Whether you want to introduce a guest of honor with flair or deliver a stirring eulogy for a departed loved one, you'll find the help you need right here. The second appendix recommends robust resources to help you take your speech-making ability to the next level—whether you want to use technology to “wow” an audience, develop and promote a seminar, or turn speech-making into a profitable business.

How *Secrets of Great Communicators* Works

Each step in the *Secrets of Great Communicators* system offers a five-point learning strategy that helps you discover and master each of the significant facets of speech delivery in a surprisingly short period of time. Take a moment to read through this overview so the outline for each chapter will make more sense.

Video Coaching

Since I can't actually be there with you, I'll coach you through each step in the communication development process using video programs taped with a “live” audience. By using the fill-in-the-blank outlines to record key points from each video session, you will retain 80 to 90 percent more content than by just watching. Be sure to fill in the blanks and write other comments of interest in the space provided.

Focus on a Great Communicator

I'll whet your appetite by sharing stories of ordinary people who became great communicators that had an extraordinary influence on the world. These people will inspire you and give you confidence to develop the particular skills that made them successful.

Coaching

The bulk of each chapter highlights the key points from the associated video coaching session and offers additional insights and personal encouragement as you apply each lesson to your own life.

Personal Application

Thought-provoking analysis questions draw your attention to the strategies you need to master each public speaking skill. You also will find enlightening worksheets strategically placed along the way. These tools will reveal your own communication style so that you can improve.

Speech Outline

Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 include speech outlines which provide you with tools to immediately apply each principle, step by step, in a way that draws out your own natural communication style. You will find instructions for writing a speech, an outline to follow in constructing your speech, and a sample speech to show how it might be done.

"Speak gently! 'tis a little thing Dropp'd in the heart's deep well; The good, the joy, that it may bring Eternity shall tell."

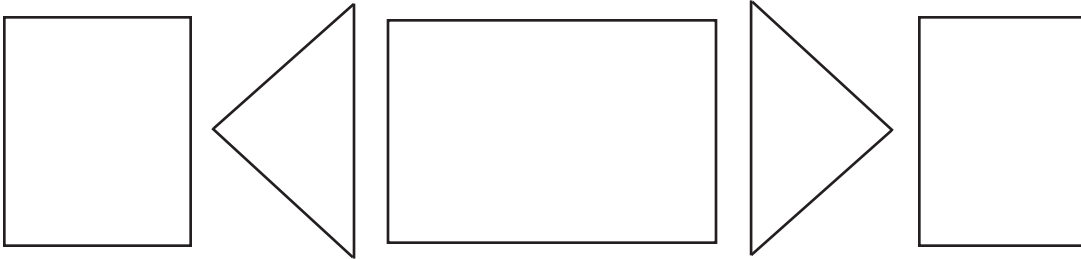
**—Attributed to:
G. W. Langford**

PUBLIC SPEAKING HELPS ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

(16 minutes)

How You Benefit from Learning the Art of Public Speaking

- You gain credibility and _____.
- You find more _____ and fulfillment.
- You become a better _____.
- You become more _____ of your gifts.
- You _____ the nature of your Creator.



Five Ways This Series Will Help You

1. Help you _____ your fear of public speaking.
2. Show you how to _____ your talk for maximum impact.
3. Give you strategies for reaching the _____ of your audience.
4. Explain how to _____ your message with confidence.
5. Reveal the secrets of an _____ speech.

Discover How Public Speaking Will Help You Achieve Your Highest Goals

KEY QUOTE:

God has made you in His image,
and He wants you to be a communicator
who will reflect His image to a world that so desperately needs Him.

—Jeff Myers

Focus on Great Communicators: Ronald Reagan

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

- The first step on a life-changing journey.
- God chooses ordinary people to accomplish the extraordinary.
 - Push beyond terror and embrace boldness and creativity.
- You, too, have come to a royal position for such a time as this.
 - Successful communicators are chosen to be leaders.
 - When communication falters, the world suffers.
 - Speak up—with confidence!
- Six ways communication skills help you reach your dreams.
- Communication excellence is great—but there is a catch.

RONALD REAGAN IS ONE OF America's most beloved former presidents. He spoke articulately and with great wit, always reflecting the thoughts and feelings of his audience. Mr. Reagan began his career as a sports announcer, an unlikely start for a future president. But a screen test led to a long-lasting career as an actor, and on the sound stages of Hollywood, Reagan honed the secret skill that would propel him to worldwide fame.

Most speakers address an audience loudly and slowly, as if talking to an unruly crowd. On television, such speakers come across as arrogant and hot-headed. Movie actors, on the other hand, learn

**Words that shaped
the 20th Century:**

**"Speak softly and
carry a big stick."**

**"We have nothing to
fear but fear itself."**

**"We shall never
surrender!"**

"I shall return!"

**"Ask not what your
country can do for
you. Ask what you
can do for your
country."**

"I have a dream!"

**"Mr. Gorbachev, tear
down this wall!"**

**(Who said it?
Answers on page 12).**

to communicate in a calm, personal and even vulnerable way. Ronald Reagan applied this communication style to politics. He did not speak *to* people; he conversed *with* them.

Reagan's ability to explain conservative principles in everyday language was cemented in a 1964 address supporting Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign. The address, "A Time for Choosing," displayed Reagan's humor and graceful oratory. Although Goldwater lost, Reagan went on to become governor of California and in 1980, President of the United States.

As president, Reagan renewed hope by declaring that it was "morning in America." In one of his most dramatic speeches, he challenged then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the wall which imprisoned East Berlin: "Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." The wall soon fell, and with it toppled most of the Communist governments in Europe.

Critics dismissed him as unintellectual, but President Reagan had the last laugh. His leadership renewed the economy, ensured the demise of Communism in Europe, and transformed how Americans view the role of their government. These dramatic changes likely would not have been possible without Mr. Reagan's ability to communicate in a personable and down-to-earth manner.

The First Step on a Life-Changing Journey

Like most great communicators, Ronald Reagan did not set out to make speeches. He set out to make a difference—and his speeches reflected that passion. The first step in becoming a great communicator is to be convinced that being a better public speaker will help you make the difference God desires you to make. You've got to *want* to change. That's what Chapter One does; it opens your mind to the possibility that you, too, can learn to influence others in a powerful, positive way.

Did you know that only 5% of Americans say they would be willing to give a speech if called on to do so? That means 95% of us would refuse!

Imagine for a moment what it would be like to be among the 5% who are willing to speak publicly. These people get the best jobs. Their co-workers respect them. The boss views them as indispensable. They have influence in their church and in the community. They stand for truth at political gatherings. . . and people listen! These elite few quickly rise to the top.

So, by the end of this first step on your way to confident public speaking

- You will see how words can change the world.
- You will be convinced God has a remarkable plan for your life as a great communicator.

- You will understand how communication skills accelerate your learning and social development, allowing you to gain people's trust and expand your influence.
- You will recognize how communication skills extend your thinking skills, allowing you to think quickly on your feet.
- You will be convinced of six specific areas in which better communication skills will help you achieve your goals and realize your dreams.

It is time to break away from your fears and frustrations. It is time to *stop* thinking of public speaking as a mysterious gift and *start* seeing it as a skill *you* can master. A world of influence and fulfillment awaits you.

God Chooses Ordinary People to Accomplish the Extraordinary

The Bible tells of an ordinary girl who was given a world-changing assignment by God. Esther was kidnapped from her home and chosen as queen to the most powerful monarch in the world of that day, King Xerxes of Persia.

Shortly after the marriage, Esther's wise cousin Mordecai, one of the palace guards, discovered that the king had been tricked by his evil advisor, Haman, into sanctioning the cold-blooded murder of all of Esther's people, the Jews. Mordecai instructed Esther to do something that could cost

her her life: "To approach the king, implore his favor, and plead with him personally for her people" (Esther 4:8).

This was not what Esther wanted to hear. She replied that she had not been allowed to speak to the king for over a month, and that if she went to see him unannounced, the law required her to be put to death.

Mordecai, though, was unmoved: "Don't think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king's palace. If you keep silent at this time, liberation and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Esther 4:13-14).

Push Beyond Terror and Embrace Boldness and Creativity

Esther must have been terrified. How could a young girl stop a plot set in motion by the most powerful man on earth? Nevertheless, Esther replied, "I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Esther did go to the king, and her boldness and creativity in a time of crisis saved her people. She invited Xerxes to a special dinner which she used as an opportunity to invite him to a second dinner. The king was so pleased

"They called it the Reagan revolution. Well, I'll accept that, but for me it always seemed more like the great rediscovery, a rediscovery of our values and our common sense."

—Ronald Reagan

Answers from page 10:

Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Ronald Reagan.

with this attention that he became overwhelmed with affection for Esther.

Esther's appeal to the king was respectful but shrewd. She persuaded him that Haman had usurped his authority. Then she revealed Haman's plan to kill Mordecai, the man who had once saved the king's life. Xerxes was incensed at Haman's evil scheming and ordered him to be executed on the very gallows Haman had built for Mordecai. The Jews of Persia were saved.

Little else is known about Esther. She is not mentioned by ancient historians, and some commentators believed that Vashti, the queen Esther had replaced, regained the throne. It is also interesting to note that God is not mentioned in the book of Esther. Yet His presence and guidance in the affairs of Esther and her family could not be more obvious. God chose Esther for a remarkable and often terrifying set of circumstances in order to save His people. She ascended to a royal position "for such a time as this."

You, Too, Have Come to a Royal Position For Such a Time as This

Each of us has received a call from God to step forward and unleash the gifts He has given us for the benefit of the world. As you discover the secrets to communicating boldly and persuasively, you will find yourself better equipped to push through barriers that prevent you from making your

life count. In this first step of *Secrets of Great Communicators* you will learn from some of the best: Ronald Reagan, Martin Luther, and others—ordinary people who accomplished the extraordinary. It is your destiny as well.

Successful Communicators Are Chosen to Be Leaders

In 1517, a German priest and university professor challenged Catholic authorities to debate him on his questions regarding church doctrine. Rather than debate, the Pope condemned the man and directed Emperor Charles V to put him on trial for heresy.

It is hard to imagine today how suicidal it was to question the Church in that day. To be convicted of heresy and to be excommunicated was thought to revoke a person's salvation. If the Church were right, this priest would be condemned to hell. Rarely in history had anyone staked everything on the truth of Scripture—salvation by grace alone through faith.

The priest was Martin Luther whose bold challenge led to the Reformation and the establishment of Protestantism, affecting the lives of billions of people over the last 500 years.

At his trial, Luther was asked to recant the doctrine he had taught. But he countered: "I implore you by the mercies of God to prove to me by the writings of the prophets and apostles that I am in error. As soon as I shall be con-

vinced, I will instantly retract all my errors, and will myself be the first to seize my writings and commit them to the flames. . . . Since Your Most Serene Majesty and Your High Mightinesses require of me a simple, clear, and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the council, because it is as clear as noonday that they have fallen into error and even into glaring inconsistency with themselves. . . . I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise.”

Like all of history’s great communicators, Luther recognized the creative power of words and knew how to reach deep into the heart of his audience. Challenging prevailing beliefs, attitudes, and values, his sermons and writings shaped the course of history. By forcing people to stop and think, Luther made the Reformation a defining moment in history.

When we look at the life of Martin Luther, we see the truth about the nature of influence: *those who communicate effectively are chosen to be leaders.*

The great communicators of history were once young people who faced decisions about the course of action they should take for their lives. In choosing to communicate with others, they chose the high road, and their influence lives on through their words.

During your life, you will face many decisions affecting not only your future, but the future of your nation. As

you prepare for these challenges, effective communication will help you gain influence and make a difference. And not a moment too soon—because the world is in big trouble.

When Communication Falters, the World Suffers

We live in tough times. Political leaders up to the highest levels have become corrupt. Irresponsible national spending has burdened future generations with massive debt. Entertainment companies churn out movies and recordings that encourage the lowering of moral standards. Criminals go unpunished while innocent citizens lie awake at night in fear. The moral foundation of our nation is openly mocked in university classrooms and halls of justice.

In the chaos, people are becoming increasingly apathetic and ignorant. Educational tests are rewritten every year to accommodate the lack of knowledge. Teachers stop teaching traditional values for fear of attack by “political correctness” police.

The ability of people to communicate effectively is at an all-time low. One study demonstrates that 75% of young people couldn’t even give a basic set of directions to a nearby location. Neighbors hardly know one another, and few take the time to talk to or to care about those around them.

**“I refuse to exploit,
for political
purposes, my
opponent’s youth
and inexperience.”**

—Ronald Reagan

(when questioned in
the 1984 campaign
about concerns over his
advancing age)

"My young friends, history is a river that takes us as it will. But we have the power to navigate, to choose direction, and make our passage together. The wind is up, the tide is high, and the opportunity for a long and fruitful journey awaits us. Generations hence will honor us for having begun the voyage."

—Ronald Reagan

When the people of a nation stop communicating, they lose the common purpose that made them great. Their cities become moral ghost towns. People live aimlessly because they have no cause for which they are willing to die. The cry of the populace is, "Just leave me alone." Perhaps the ultimate hell is that the wish will be granted.

It is not unlikely that our own nation will collapse not through an explosive roar, but through a deafening silence. This silence must be broken in our generation. We may never get another chance.

Speak Up—With Confidence!

You may be saying, "I agree that we must break the silence, but how? How can Christians reach others for the kingdom in a world such as this?"

John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word." The Greek word for "Word" is *logos*, which means "a thought expressed." God spoke the universe into existence through the person of Jesus Christ. The *mind* of God was expressed through the *Word* of God.

Is it not ironic that in the postmodern world, when the "logos" is rejected, people lose the ability to communicate deeply with each other? Don't you see this happening today?

- Rather than shopping at the corner market, people roam the aisles

of "mega-stores" hardly making eye contact with others.

- Neighbors move from the front porch to the back deck, from the parlor to the TV room.
- Music becomes a means of isolating the self from others rather than drawing people together in common understanding.
- Political groups stop cooperating for the good of the nation and resort to vicious personal attacks.
- Unable to express their true feelings to loved ones, folks rely on greeting cards manufactured by professional writers of emotion.

Because God is a communicative God and because we are made in His image, we must learn to use words to create, to encourage, to build community, and to reach out to those who are isolated by the fallout of a fallen world.

Perhaps, with the Word as our model, our response to cultural decline is to break the silence by learning all over again how to express the grace that we ourselves have received from God. As we will see in the next section, expressing grace very well could be the missing ingredient in developing a deep sense of meaning and satisfaction in life.

Six Ways Communication Skills Help You Reach Your Dreams

In a complex and competitive world, people with excellent communication skills have a tremendous advantage over those without them. Most jobs—even so-called “unskilled” positions—require public speaking, and even companies hiring for jobs which focus primarily on technical skills increasingly hire candidates who possess strong communication abilities over those who do not. The Department of Labor asserts that seven out of ten jobs require good speech skills. Without clear communication, the world’s systems do not operate properly and cause great hurt. So, if you are willing to unleash your gifts and communicate dynamically with the world around you, six marvelous changes will occur in your life.

1. You Will Find a Stronger Sense of Purpose.

A fear common to a great many people is that they will not discover the purpose for their existence. They give up, convinced that life is meaningless, hopeless, and boring. Your life—and mine—should not be like that. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance” (John 10:10).

Purpose emerges, in part, through action—we find our sense of purpose through trying lots of things. A person who knows how to communicate well and is willing to speak publicly will discover abundant opportunities. I have seen young people who develop communication skills start Bible studies, organize community activities, testify before legislatures, appear on television, conduct radio interviews, participate in press conferences, speak to community groups, and run political campaigns.

Through communication activities, you can develop a vision for the world around you, and ultimately for the things of God.

2. You Will Become More Aware of the World Around You

In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul calls us to “do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility to consider others as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3-4). As you learn to communicate with greater impact, you become more sensitive to those around you and more aware of the significance of everyday events. Your heightened senses actually increase your intelligence and make you aware of possibilities you otherwise might never have dreamed exist, and the possibilities make the world more intriguing than ever.

3. You Will Become a Better Learner

Limited by the narrowness of their self-perceptions, unsuccessful people

“There is a flickering spark in all of us which, if struck at just the right age, can light up the rest of our lives.”

—Ronald Reagan

"Government must not supersede the will of the people or the responsibilities of the people. The function of government is not to confer happiness, but to give men the opportunity to work out happiness for themselves."

—Ronald Reagan

get stuck in a rut. Successful people, on the other hand, aggressively seek out opportunities to learn, to grow, and to improve their effectiveness.

Communication skills can really help you shine. Learning to communicate well verbally strengthens both your reading and writing skills. Stronger reading and writing skills, in turn, allow you to take in more information and to make better use of it. One study of college students noted that those who display the greatest mastery of words exhibit a higher level of scholastic ability than their counterparts, regardless of their department of study. Similarly, research with children shows that those who are given the opportunity to communicate orally and who are encouraged to use language as a tool to satisfy their curiosity develop a stronger foundation of language learning which ultimately helps them become better communicators. "My language is the limit of my world," wrote philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. As you expand your communication ability, you will be amazed at the world of opportunities that open up to you.

4. You Will Become a Better Thinker

Have you ever found yourself in a conversation in which you did not know what to say? Have you ever thought of a retort or argument to use—three hours after the discussion was over? Good communication skills help generate structures in your mind to promote creativity. That means you

become adept at "thinking on your feet," quickly and accurately understanding a situation and formulating a response to it. Wouldn't it be great to always know the right thing to say? Wouldn't it boost your confidence if you knew you could improvise on your feet and give a great presentation? Communication skills move you down that road of self-assurance.

5. You Will Develop Greater Poise in Social Situations

People expect good communicators to know how to act in a socially appropriate manner. If your behavior is awkward and embarrassing, or if you are unsure of how to communicate your thoughts clearly, you are seen as unintelligent by your teachers and bosses. On the other hand, polished communication skills open doors throughout life. In his book *Top Performance*, Zig Ziglar reports that 85 percent of the reason a person gets a job, keeps it, and moves ahead in that job is *people skills and people knowledge!*

In my own life, I have noticed that the better I articulate my thoughts, the more people tend to view me as a leader. They take stock of what I say, and they say good things about me when I am not there. They also think of me for greater and greater opportunities. In short, they *trust* me. As your communication skills improve, you will find the same thing happening to you.

6. You Will Relate Better to Others

Communication skills connect us to our environment. People who “link-up” with their environment find it easier to relate to others and, therefore, enjoy smoother social interaction. Dozens of studies show that people who communicate well—regardless of social status and physical appearance—are more attractive to others.

“Being popular” may not be a major goal in your life. But consider this: people who are highly regarded by others are more influential. They can get people to work together. They can organize things. They can make progress toward their own goals and ultimately make life better for themselves and those around them.

Have you ever been frustrated over being unable to persuade a person of something important to you? Have you ever been discouraged at the state of things, wishing you could create change? Now is your chance to develop the skills to help you do just that.

When all six of these factors are taken together, communication training unleashes your potential and generates enthusiasm. Yet, there is a downside.

Communication Excellence is Great—But There Is a Catch

When you consider all the benefits that flow from developing good communication skills, doesn't it quicken your

pulse? God has created you with incredible potential! *Secrets of Great Communicators* offers the tools you need to start traveling down the road to communication success, if you are willing.

But before we go further, a word of warning is in order. There are many things I, as your coach, cannot do for you. For instance, I cannot make you read or apply the energizing material contained in this system. You will need self-discipline and a willing mind to do that. Moreover—and this is a great concern—I cannot guide you into the proper use of your powerful new skills.

When you are armed with potent communication skills, people will begin to follow you and do what you say. They may place power in your hands. Yet you must be aware that there is danger in this power. Adolph Hitler was as great a communicator as Ronald Reagan, perhaps even better. However, he employed his communication skills to manipulate and deceive the masses. Memories of the hideous bloodshed he spawned still haunt us today.

As long as people have sought to improve their communication abilities, it has been understood that someone must *desire to do good* in order to properly apply good gifts. Anything short of proper motives is manipulation and deceit. King Solomon said it this way:

From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is satisfied; he is filled with the product of his lips.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue,

“The American dream is not that every man must be level with every other man. The American dream is that every man must be free to become whatever God intends he should become.”

—Ronald Reagan

"I know that it is often difficult to stand up for one's beliefs when they are being harshly challenged. But as one who has seen many challenges over a long lifetime, I can assure you that personal faith and conviction are strengthened, not weakened, in adversity."

—Ronald Reagan

and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:20-21)

It is true that we live in difficult times. Yet, difficult times can bring out the best in those whose hearts are committed to God. The Apostle Peter declared, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Yes, you too have come to a royal position "for such a time as this." Your investment in improving your ability to communicate will expand your capacity to shape events and influence the world toward truth and righteousness.

Before you go on to Chapter Two, take a few moments to journal your responses to the seven thought-provoking questions in the following pages. They will help cement these lessons in your mind and build a stronger foundation for the succeeding steps.

WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGICAL NOISE?

Every public speaker knows what noise is. A cell phone ringing, a siren, or crashing dishes can break the attention of an audience and destroy the most dramatic moment of a speech. Psychological noise—distraction or “noise” in the mind of an audience—does the same thing.

Exhaustion, sadness, uncertainty, a feeling of being overwhelmed—all of these shut down an audience’s ability to listen to and apply what a speaker says.

Successful speech-givers learn to arrange the environment (temperature, light, sound quality) to make it easier for the audience to listen. They also become adept at identifying with the feelings of the audience and focusing its attention on the issue at hand.

- What are some examples of “psychological noise” that have hindered you from listening to a speaker in the past?
- In what areas of life could public speaking help you develop your gifts and talents?
- Look in the concordance of your Bible, and write down three Scripture references related to speaking, the use of the tongue, or how words are used. What do these verses say about the proper use of communication skills?

- Write down the names of two people (besides the ones listed in this chapter) who use or have used their communication ability to influence the world. What did they achieve, and how did their communication skills help?

- What are some problems or issues in our society about which you might be motivated to speak out?