

Great Communication, Part 1: Get Personal

There is really no situation much worse than finding yourself caught in a presentation or conference where the person speaking has something important to share, but remains clearly unable to share it. Those moments are a great reminder that, in order to reach someone with the message of the gospel, we first must be able to capture his or her attention.

As a church leader, you may be confident and used to speaking in front of audiences of all sizes. However, truly connecting with people requires more than confidence and experience. Great communicators have a plan for developing their message to present it in a compelling and engaging way.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [TED Talks](#), by Chris Anderson

For anyone who has ever been inspired by a TED talk...

...this is an insider's guide to creating talks that are unforgettable.

Since taking over TED in the early 2000s, Chris Anderson has shown how carefully crafted short talks can be the key to unlocking empathy, stirring excitement, spreading knowledge, and promoting a shared dream. Done right, a talk can electrify a room and transform an audience's worldview. Done right, a talk is more powerful than anything in written form.

This book explains how the miracle of powerful public speaking is achieved, and equips you to give it your best shot. There is no set formula; no two talks should be the same. The goal is for you to give the talk that only you can give. But don't be intimidated. You may find it more natural than you think.

Chris Anderson has worked behind the scenes with all the TED speakers who have inspired us the most, and here he shares insights from such favorites as Sir Ken Robinson, Amy Cuddy, Bill Gates, Elizabeth Gilbert, Salman Khan, Dan Gilbert, Mary Roach, Matt Ridley, and dozens more — everything from how to craft your talk's content to how you can be most effective on stage. This is the 21st-century's new manual for truly effective communication and it is a must-read for anyone who is ready to create impact with their ideas.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

It's one thing to give a good presentation that your audience seems to enjoy. It's quite another thing to create a unique, exciting, and memorable experience that has your listeners on the edge of their seats, and more importantly, ready to act.

Would you like to make a lasting impression on your listeners? What if you could design an experience that leaves them in deep thought, changes their worldview, or best of all, changes their lives?

In order to do something like that, you have to connect with your audience.

Knowledge can't be pushed into a brain. It has to be pulled in.

Before you can build an idea in someone else's mind, you need their permission. People are naturally cautious about opening up their minds – the most precious thing they own – to complete strangers. You need to find a way to overcome that caution. And the way you do that is to make visible the human being cowering inside you.

Hearing a talk is a completely different thing from reading an essay. It's not just the words. Not at all. It's the person delivering the words. To make an impact, there has to be a human connection. You can give the most brilliant talk, with crystal-clear explanations and laser-sharp logic, but if you don't first connect with the audience, it just won't land. Even if the content is, as some level, understood, it won't be activated but simply filed away in some soon-to-be-forgotten mental archive.

Five suggestions to make that vial early connection:

Make eye contact, right from the start. Scientists have shown that just the act of two people staring at each other will trigger mirror neuron activity that literally adopts the emotional state of the other person.

Show vulnerability. Willing to be vulnerable is one of the most powerful tools a speaker can wield.

Make 'em laugh – but not squirm. Audiences who laugh with you quickly come to like you.

Park your ego. The purpose of your talk is to gift an idea, not to self-promote.

Tell a story. We're born to love stories. They are instant generators of interest, empathy, emotion, and intrigue.

Chris Anderson, [TED Talks](#)

A NEXT STEP

To help you develop the concept of connecting with your audience, practice the following exercise the next time you are speaking.

A few moments before you prepare to step up to the podium or center stage to speak, pick one person in the room to focus on – for example, a young man in the middle of the room about halfway back.

Think about that man. What does he know and need to know in order to respond favorably to your message?

As you begin to speak, make eye contact with the man, and as you do, reach out toward him with an appropriate hand gesture. As your hand extends, your body will naturally follow. As you lean forward, your head will dip into a head nod, which will cause the man to nod back to you involuntarily. In order to maintain your eye connection with him, you will have to look up through your eyebrows, causing them to rise, making your features expressive.

When you practice the actions above while speaking, you are setting the tone for the rest of your presentation by making a connection to your audience.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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