



Professionally Speaking Ease

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Professionally Speaking Club #4665

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You Are Your Product by Burt Dubin

Books. Audio albums. Video demos. CD-ROM. Interactive education instruments. Training-in-a-box. Learn anytime, anywhere. At your own pace.

Much is written, most of it true, about the importance of developing your product line. For BOR, back-of-the-room sales. For your catalog. For passive income. Let's take a look at another aspect of product development. Let's look at the fundament. Let's probe the foundation of your product development. Let's look at you. At your core. At your essence. At your state of being. At your perspective. At your sense of your accountabilities.

You know that for a structure -- whether of steel and concrete or of wood and stucco -- to withstand the elements, a sturdy foundation is required. There must be a foundation that is solid, stable, rooted in the earth as it reaches toward the sky. Let's examine the structure of your speaking business for a moment:

I've been studying my fellow speakers for close to 20 years. With the eye of an anthropologist. With the approach of a research specialist. With heart. With empathy. With love.

A few of us are brilliant marketers. Look at the dazzling success of the luminous figures who come to your mind. On the other end of the scale, some of us produce nothing more than a demo tape.

You are your product. Let's look at the most important aspect of your product. **Let's examine the keys to your impact on productivity and profits.** (That's what decision-makers want, right?) Let's look at how you affect hopes and dreams, and possibilities. (They are what audience members want you to illuminate, right?) **Let's look at your authenticity:**

- **How real are you as you address your audiences?**
- **From what depth of know-how and caring do you speak?**
- **How much timeless wisdom is involved in your phrasings, your stories and examples?**
- **How deeply do you look into industry conditions, competitive considerations, and, if applicable, market-share concerns?**

How many audience members and top executives do you interview as you prepare your program? How far do you probe beneath the surface of responses to your questions? To what degree do you balance the concerns and interests

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of the sponsors of your program, (They pay your fee), the decision-maker who hire you, (S/he wants to look good because of this choice,) and your audience members (whose concerns may be entirely different)?

You are your product. A few years ago, Simon and Garfunkel wrote a song. In it are these words: "Like a bridge over troubled waters, I will ease your mind..." These troubled waters are the world-wide social, economic and political chaos in which we all find ourselves.

You, with what Naomi Rhode, past-president of NSA, calls, "The privilege of the platform," have the opportunity to ease the minds of each of your constituencies. You can do this as you weave your verbal tapestry of education and insights, of stories and metaphors, of participation and involvement.

We're in this together, all of us on this earth. We have our lives to live, our children to raise, our significant other to love, or to find, our careers or businesses to grow. And we get to do all this in the center of a maelstrom surrounded by dizzying changes, tumult, threats, upheavals, and clashes of cultures and values. Terrible consequences and unprecedented disaster await us one trigger finger away, right around the corner. The potential bad guys are extremists with nothing to lose.

Even the crazy changes in world weather patterns contribute to the uncertainties and insecurities that have become symbols of our times. Surrounded by all this, we have our one chance to make of ourselves what we will.

You are your product. Your ability to sort out this unrest, this wild ferment, this ubiquitous

agitation, is needed more than ever now. How do you bring order to the multiple interests of sponsors, decision-makers and audience members now? How do you guide them to make sense of their worlds? How are you to help them master their challenges today?

These people, all of them, find themselves on wild and stormy seas stuck on a ship they no longer can control. They perceive themselves to be far from any port. Compounding matters, they are not at all certain of their compass readings. And, they are even less sure of where their safe harbor may be.

They look to you for wisdom, guidance, hope, light -- and a bit of fun. I offer you no answers, only questions. And your attitudes, thoughts, words and actions, in response to these questions, are important. They're important now, more than ever. Because now, more than ever, you are your product.



To think is easy. To act is hard.
But the hardest thing in the world
is to
act in accordance with your
thinking. - Johann von Goethe,
1749-1832,
German Poet, Dramatist, Novelist



PRESENTATION TIP

Numbers, Facts and Figures

Even if you're an economist, a financial advisor or a CPA, using too many numbers in your

presentations can confuse your audience and cause their eyes to glaze over.

No matter what your topic, visual aids keep your participants' interest. The audience needs to see what it hears and, even better, to do something with what it sees and hears. That keeps interest high and promotes retention.

Use visual aids such as overheads, slides, charts, flipcharts, graphs and whiteboards. Round off the numbers when you can and use them when you need to make or verify a point. Unless specifically 95.43 percent is important to remember, almost 100 percent works just fine. *****

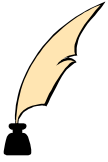
* QUOTES OF THE WEEK *

The Power of One - Author Unknown

- One SONG can spark a moment
- One FLOWER can wake the dream
- One TREE can start a forest
- One BIRD can herald spring
- One SMILE begins a friendship
- One HANDCLASP lifts a soul
- One STAR can guide a ship at sea
- One WORD can frame the goal
- One VOTE can change a nation
- One SUNBEAM lights a room
- One CANDLE wipes out darkness
- One LAUGH will conquer gloom
- One STEP must start each journey
- One WORD must start a prayer
- One HOPE will raise our spirits
- One TOUCH can show you care
- One VOICE can speak with wisdom

One HEART can know what is true

One LIFE can make a difference.



You don't have to be good to start, but you do have to start to be good.

--Larry

Winget--

More people have missed the opportunity to grow and advance themselves simply because they feel they don't have enough skills or knowledge for the job or other challenge that comes along. Some have missed their chances because they thought they **might** fail and didn't want to face family and friends who would jump at the chance to say "I told you so".

If this sounds like you. I am here to say WAKE-UP! Get a clue!

No matter how much schooling or experience you have, you are never going to know everything there is to know. You are your best teacher. Jump in with both feet and do your best. Ask questions and be open to learning. Always learning more while doing the job or tackling the responsibility given to you.

Regrettably that was a lesson I had to learn in both arenas. Don't miss out on those wonderful chances and experiences. Life is made of up of falling flat on your face. It's the only way to learn and grow. Take the fall, you'll be better for it.

--La Wanna Parker--
Have a great day. lw



Avoiding the 7 Rabbits of Highly Defective Hound Dogs

By Roger Reece

You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, just a cryin' all the time. Who hasn't heard Elvis belt out that rock and roll classic, but did you ever consider the hidden meaning behind those words? Clearly this was a song about the long-term effects of a negative attitude, and the hidden implication is, put your hound dog out of his misery!

The Hound Dog Effect

A negative attitude has a way of giving your face and body a whole new look. I call it the hound dog effect.

Your eyes, mouth and overall posture begin to droop, and before long you start looking like a Bassett Hound. The next time you feel disappointed or discouraged, look in the mirror and you'll probably see a touch of hound dog in your eyes. Fortunately, it's a temporary condition for most people, and will disappear as new opportunities and experiences bring a new perspective.

I'm Fine, Under the Circumstances

For others the hound dog effect has become a chronic condition. Ask a chronic hound dog how he or she is doing and even the rote response, I'm fine, is generally followed by under the circumstances. Chronic hound dogs have a way of staying under life's circumstances, shrouded by gloom and cut off from any vision of new possibilities. Murphy's Law has become their motto: Whatever can go wrong will go wrong. In essence, when the hound dog effect is allowed to become a chronic condition, you develop a highly defective personality.

Chasing Rabbits

It all begins with chasing rabbits. Hound dogs are

attracted to negative thoughts, which like rabbits often run rampant through our minds. Without a hound dog to chase them, these thoughts tend to disappear on their own, but when the hound dog within you rises up, it can't help but chase every negative thought that crosses its path.

Elvis sang, You ain't never caught a rabbit and you ain't no friend of mine. Hound dogs never actually catch the rabbits they chase. Like the term chasing rabbits implies, they simply get sidetracked from achieving their goals and instead, become mired in the depression of negative thinking. No one wants a hound dog for a friend. Negative thinking and depressed attitudes are like infectious diseases, and most people avoid hound dogs like the plague.

How can you combat the hound dog effect in your life? Learn to recognize rabbits when they enter your mind and don't chase them. Rabbits are easily recognized because of the negative places they lead you to when you follow them. In fact, most negative thinking can be avoided by simply ignoring the seven most common rabbits:

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Hound Dogs

1) I'm Tired. This rabbit will try to sidetrack you from putting forth any extra effort to achieve your goals. Follow it and I'm Tired will lead you to a whole nest of rabbits where you'll learn to make a habit out of rationalizing your laziness.

2) I m Scared. You'll generally run across this rabbit any time you venture outside your comfort zone. If you chase it back into your familiar places, you'll learn to replay all your worn-out habit patterns like broken records, and you'll begin believing that it's better to be safe and sorry than to stretch to the point of discomfort.

3) I Can't. This rabbit will cause you to give up on any new pursuit at the first sign of difficulty. I Can't will help you to accept defeat and failure and build them into your self-image.

4) I Won't. Chasing this rabbit will take you down a narrow tunnel where your mind will begin to close to new ideas. You'll learn to make no your first response to any request or suggestion. I Won't will lead you far away from creativity and spontaneity, and will leave you in a state of unwillingness to pursue

even your own dreams and goals.

5) It's Your Problem.

You'll learn a new vocabulary chasing this rabbit. That's not my job and You made your bed, now sleep in it, will become familiar phrases as you wander further and further from compassion and empathy toward total selfishness.

6) It's Your Fault. This rabbit will lead you into the mode of casting blame. You'll soon find yourself blaming your parents, your boss, your company, the government and everyone who makes the mistake of touching your life.

7) What's the Use. All the other rabbits will eventually lead you to this one. Highly defective hound dogs are usually spotted chasing this rabbit until they finally run out of steam and give up on life.

If you can recognize these seven rabbits and control your urge to chase them, you'll be well on your way to neutralizing the hound dog effect in your life.

Area 52 contest

March 17, 2005 at the Vagabond Hotel on Arden Way at 7:00 p.m.

Please come out and support our contestants.