

Taking good advice, without question  
In 2004 I walked into the speaking profession  
And stumbled into the world of NSA  
Somewhat young, naïve, and ready to play  
Eager to please, without pretense  
And (bless my heart) not a lick of business sense

No expertise, no wise advice  
I wrote about people and the simple life  
Without a clue on how to sell 'em  
I wrote stories and got paid to tell 'em  
And so I had hopped from stage to stage  
Breathing life into characters from a page  
Happy as a claim – will work for free  
Just honored that somebody would want to hear  
me

And I looked around NSA and saw this sea  
Of people who knew much more than me  
Not sure who the top guns are,  
But I'll hitch my wagon to the nearest star  
I'm a sponge, tell me what to do  
I'm ready – I'm willing – to be just like you  
I took my talents and gifts and set them aside  
For a much bigger and better carpet ride

Forget the silly characters who'd come to be  
Ingrained in my identity  
And so I set out on a quest  
To study from the very best  
And find out what they possessed  
That made them stand out from the rest  
And even more what can I do  
To make myself just like you?  
And over time I came to be  
More like you and less like me

What is it? What is it? I'd look for clues  
That makes a speaker great – what do they do  
Is it something they've had since birth  
Can it be purchased – what would it be worth  
Does it come in a book – or a set of CD's  
A coach, a consultant, downloaded MP's  
Can you find it in a box?  
Can you find it under locks?  
Can you find it on a train?  
Can you find it in a plane?  
Can you find it here or there?  
Can you find it anywhere?  
What will bring them to their feet  
Every time we get up to speak?

And so I studied and watched and prayed  
To see just how the greats are made  
In the hopes that the chosen few  
Would show me how to become unforgettable too

And over time and over years  
These truths were whispered in my ears  
Six truths I share with you today  
That I'm sure I'm not the first to say  
But still truths all the same  
I've learned from watching and playing the game  
Six secrets to add to your own skill set  
To help give them something they won't forget

And so a list I started to make  
Add this and that - a little give and take  
Great tips, now here's some good advice  
All helpful and all quite very nice  
But one answer still kept passing me by  
The one big answer to my question why  
The heretofore, the wherewithal  
That one missing piece – that covers it all

And then it happened on a Tuesday in May  
When I walked into my OBGYN one day  
And saw this nurse whose name had failed me  
Who instead of asking what had ailed me  
Started gushing over me instead  
Like I'm the greatest thing since pre sliced bread

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And just from that short interface  
The puzzle piece slid into place  
In that one moment, the answer hit me  
Lord, if it had been a snake, it would have bit me  
It's not your words that they will take  
Nor the many points that you will make  
They won't go tell others how much you know  
It's not your PowerPoint that impresses them so  
What lasts the longest – what is real  
They never forget how you make them feel

And I remembered Mr. Cox, my Superman  
Not for what he knew, but for holding my hand  
And telling me it was going to be okay  
That I would do something great someday  
Now he's branded in my heart – unforgettable real  
Not what he made think, but how he made me feel

It sounds so simple – yet I would bet  
Many of us haven't learned that yet  
We're still focusing on what we want them to know  
Trying to deliver a better show  
Forgetting the most important part

Don't speak to the mind – speak to the heart  
For it is in this most treasured place  
Where things done here are not erased  
If you reach their mind, you've solved a strife  
But if you reach their heart, you've changed their life

And so from here, my six secrets flow  
But first there's something you should know  
These six ways for you to reach their heart  
Won't work without the most important part  
These truths can't be told for them to know it,  
For it to last – you must show it

You have the content– what you want to say  
But to be unforgettable – you must find a way  
To breathe life into that truth – and make it real  
So they don't just think – they feel

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#### STOP – ASK YOURSELF (TELL VERSES SHOW)

Do I tell people what to do in my speeches? Or do I show them?

Do I give them a list of things to do – and just use voice inflection to encourage them?

Do I tell them there's a problem, or do I show them?

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As speaker, I bring humor hope, a message far from grand  
My points are few, my message simple and not hard to understand  
I teach people to adjust their vision to see past the obstacles in life  
To form a healthy attitude and find the bright side to your strife  
I help renew their passion for who they are and what they do  
And teach them to be unforgettable to the people they're selling to  
I show them how to get along and form a stronger team

That can weather stress and change - no matter how diverse they seem

But I can't simply stand before them and tell them what to do  
I can't give them this long laundry list of things to add it to  
I must find a way to show them – a way to make my message real  
To reach into their heart – from how they think to how they feel  
And I have found that Secret Number One – proves valuable beyond measure  
In speaking to the heart – the STORY – is your biggest treasure.

For example, sometimes I need to tell them that to lead as one most wise  
They must take the time to see life through the other person's eyes  
But these are words – and only words – that fall on tired and busy ears  
I have to show them in a way that they'll remember it for years

And so I tell them the story of Crazy Man Harry.

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Suddenly I realized every story, very character I'd cast aside  
Were no longer something outdated – something I must hide  
But really my greatest treasure – for there is no greater glory  
Than that which can be found in a well-written, well-told, and well-placed story

I know what you're thinking, "Duh, tell us something new,  
We're all out here using stories – some of us better at it than you!"

To which I answer, "Yes, you're using stories, and some of you quite well,  
But are you using stories as an added extra or do you let them show instead of tell  
The magic doesn't happen when you're just spouting information  
But when your truth speaks inside the story – your point hits its destination

And they sit captivated and encouraged, engaged and entertained  
Your message has hit their heart – and here it will remain  
And they will leave that day, forgetting most of what you said  
But that story never fades - it plays over and over in their head  
For years, until they call again, with one thing on their mind  
“Will you please come back and tell us that story – we need to hear it one more time”

But as speakers we must be greater than that story or stories that define us  
We must be more than who we are, how we got here, and what came behind us  
If you really want to reach them – want to really hit their core  
Don't just tell your story – you have to take it one step more  
For the magic in a speech – that moment of shining glory  
Comes when you turn the corner – and you start to tell THEIR story  
And when you do this, you will find the things you hear them say,  
Change from “good job” and “great performance” to “you changed my life today.”

So make your stories short, to the point, and filled with power  
The simple moments you see in life around you, every minute every hour  
You don't have to climb Mount Everest, find a starfish, or survive some tragic hell  
Just find stories that bring your truth to life, and learn how to tell them well  
And if you take the time, and put the work into it, I will bet,  
That you will give them something beautiful – they're not soon to forget.

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#### STOP – ASK YOURSELF

- Are you using stories to do the work? Because you should be. Your speech should not be a series of points accented by stories – but a series of stories accented by your points.
- Do you realize that your information is not what sets you apart? That the only thing that makes you you – your speech your speech – what sets you apart – the only

thing we HAVE to make it real – the reason they choose US to deliver that information – is the STORY!

- Do you spend the time that you should on your stories? Have you cut every unnecessary word? Have you made your stories feel like something different than the rest of your talk?
- Do you tell their story? Do you even know their story? How do you tell their story when you've never met them? How can they hear you tell your stories and hear their story at the same time?

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Which brings me to secret number two,  
Quit trying to be the speaker who  
Is perfect, and polished, and tweaked to perfection  
With all of the answers to every question  
The expert, the one with it all together  
Who comes out on top no matter the weather

Yes, credibility has a place  
Yes you're to act with knowledge and grace  
Yes, you are the one who stands out in front  
Bringing to them what the clients want  
Yes your presence commands respect  
And they will be impressed by your intellect  
But I have found these things only reach their mind  
Until something more impressive comes behind

If you want to make an emotional connection  
They must see past your perfection  
For it is only when you start to peel away  
That person they see before them today  
Show them who you were and where you've been  
Allow them to see the vulnerable person within

It is here they see themselves in you  
And think, if she can do it, I can too  
It may be those credentials that got you in the door  
But it's your vulnerable side they'll remember more  
It may be your perfection that they will toast  
But it's your imperfection that connects the most

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#### STOP – ASK YOURSELF - HUMILITY

- Where is the human side of me in this speech? Do I show them who I am and what I know, and forget to show them that once I was in their place too?

- America loves the rags to riches story – the poor immigrant kid who becomes a millionaire – the homely cell phone salesman who can sing like an angel – we drool over these kinds of stories – the poor kid from the wrong side of the tracks who wins American Idol – the prostitute who marries Richard Gere – we love these stories. Your audience loves to hear where you were. Give it to them.

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As a performer, if you looked closely you'd see  
 How over time it became all about me  
 Listen, watch, see this, it's new  
 Let me tell you what I can do  
 It had to be all about me you know  
 Because without me there was no show

Which brings me to Secret Number Three  
 The one I call HUMANITY  
 It took me years to learn this part  
 That my performance wasn't what touched their heart  
 It wasn't about flawless execution  
 My skillful art of elocution  
 How hard they laughed or how smooth I talked  
 Whether my butt looked cute whenever I walked

No, over time I started to see  
 Changing lives had very little to do with me

What brought them to their feet and made them cheer  
 Was when I said the words they so needed to hear

I'm not the first to say, and I won't be the last  
 But this advice still holds true and fast  
 How much you know? Does not compare  
 To how they feel when they know you care  
 The times they react the most to me  
 Is when I think more about them and less about me  
 Now don't get me wrong, it still stands true,  
 That you must be good at what you do  
 You must always strive to raise the bar  
 In what you do and who you are  
 But still in everything you do and say  
 Show them THEY are the reason you're here today

Over time even the best performance fades  
 And they'll lose sight of the points you made

But what touches the heart still remains  
 A person never forgets when their life is changed

So in all you say, and all you do  
 Make this about them – and not about you

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#### STOP ASK YOURSELF – HUMANITY

- Do you make your speeches about them? What about your website? What about your promo materials? What about your sales calls? Can't it be said with conviction, that we shouldn't be telling people what we can do – but listening to their needs and telling them how we can fix them?
  - How do the words and stories of your speech SHOW them that you care? Of course just telling them is not enough. You've got to show them that this is about them.
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I was the kid they picked on and teased  
 With the frizzy hair and the knobby knees  
 I wasn't pretty, smart, or fast  
 In everything I came in last  
 Most of my life the joke's been on me  
 Until over time I began to see  
 That humor would become so much more  
 Than this shy wallflower had bargained for

I never dreamed humor would turn out to be  
 Such a vital part of me  
 That being able to make people laugh  
 Would serve so well on my behalf  
 That laughter would turn out to be  
 The greatest joy and blessing in store for me

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Not only to get me through the day  
 But to connect with people in a positive away

When money's tight and times are tough  
 When the client says humor is just fluff  
 I want to grit my teeth and scream  
 Because they do not know what humor brings  
 To refuel a soul, to ease the pain  
 To remind them that they can smile again

To show them there is a way out  
 To show them what healthy thinking is all about  
 To inject fun in the day and alleviate stress  
 To handle conflict under duress

Because when you make them laugh with you  
They're ready to take the journey too  
And something about making them laugh has a way  
Of making them trust and listen to what you say  
When they laugh they enter a very warm and safe place  
And that experience they connect with your face

You may not be the type for gags and jokin'  
Your funny bone has long since broken  
You may not stand a chance in hell  
Of delivering a joke or limerick well  
And that's okay – but there's no reason why  
You can't make them laugh – you just have to try  
Watch where you get a laugh – take note when  
And then make sure you do it again  
Use pictures, silly gestures or a funny saying  
Come out of your shell, and do a little playing

It doesn't really matter what you do  
If they laugh – they've connected with you  
It doesn't matter how you did it  
A laugh is a laugh no matter how you get it  
And when they laugh, they will walk away  
Loving how they felt that day

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#### STOP ASK YOURSELF - HUMOR

- Am I fun?
- Have I injected some humor and fun into my presentation?
- Does my website show that I will be fun?  
Even if the content is serious – everybody likes the fun speaker

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Ah passion -secret ingredient – to each of us  
unique  
Of radiating energy on the platform – the art of  
owning what you speak  
That of which is hard to measure – hard to quantify  
Passion can't be learned – it's not something you  
can buy  
It's awfully hard to practice - hard to calculate and  
weigh  
You have it or you don't – if you don't buy it, neither  
will they

I love the stage, I love the lights, I know it's here  
where I belong  
But some days it just feels like work – some days  
I'm not as strong  
Sometimes I leave that stage and know I cheated  
them of my best  
Because I shifted into autopilot or let something  
else possess  
My thoughts and my attention – let anxieties fill my  
head  
Thinking about tomorrow rather than being there  
with them instead

And I can not help but think that in these moments I  
grow weak  
The audience can sense it – it's apparent when I  
speak  
And the passion that I have – is hidden – out of  
sight  
And I have missed my chance to be someone  
else's light  
And I owe them more than that – I owe them the  
very best that I can be  
I owe it to them to find that passion that once  
burned so bright in me

I owe it to them to practice – and then practice it  
once more  
I owe it to them to be present – here and accounted  
for  
It's staying in the moment – get their attention and  
lovingly hold it  
It's telling that signature story – like the first time  
you've ever told it

It's reminding yourself each day, what it is you do  
this for  
Telling yourself this audience is not just the same  
as the one before  
It's checking your speech, your words, your  
gestures – everything you do  
To make sure the passion you feel inside is always  
coming through

It's checking to see if your message still resonates  
and rings true  
Or if there's something more pressing that bubbles  
up inside of you  
But more than anything – the most important part  
Is checking to make sure that fire still burns within  
your heart

If you want to have an impact – if you want to make  
them feel  
You must find a way to keep it fresh – authentic –  
and keep it real

Get out of your comfort zone – don't be stale, but be courageous  
Because no matter how you define it, passion is contagious

And when passion ignites passion – when the fire of hope is lit  
You have created an experience, they won't easily forget

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### STOP ASK YOURSELF - PASSION

- Are you still telling the same speech you wrote ten years ago? Five years ago? Two years ago?
  - Watch yourself on video – do you look excited?
  - What are the things that you make a point to do to show passion? How does one show passion on the stage? Passion is not necessarily high energy – so what is it?
  - Think of other speakers who have influenced you – how do you know that they are passionate about their subject when you watch them?
  - Are you still excited about your topic? Or are you just doing that because it pays the bills? Nothing wrong with paying the bills. But is there a way you can inject some new excitement into what you do?
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AUNT BITSY TAUGHT ME ABOUT PASSION – BUT SHE ALSO TAUGHT ME ABOUT COURAGE – THE COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT – TO BE WHO I AM – NOT TO PLEASE THE WORLD AND FIND A WAY TO CONFORM TO WHAT THEY WANT ME TO BE – BUT TO BE ME AND FIND A WORLD THAT WILL ACCEPT THAT.

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Growing up, I was the oddball, the puzzle piece that didn't fit  
You wanted outcast, sign me up – you wanted weird, well, I was it  
On the grand stage of my childhood, I was the ficus tree stage right  
The one who would have been pretty if not for the horrible overbite  
I was the kite stuck in the tree, the dog poop on the beach  
Normal was a place that always hung outside my reach

And for years I just keep looking and searching for a way  
To be like everybody else – so that nobody could say  
Who's that girl who is so different – now she's the one that doesn't fit  
Well I was tired of being different - I wanted none of it  
And over time and with great determination I tried really hard to be  
Just another fish – in this sea of normality

And every now and then I'd catch glimpses of the girl I'd cast aside  
The wacky one with stories who like to talk in rhyme  
And I'd whisper don't come out – please go away  
You won't fit in the world I'd come to know as NSA  
It's too different –won't sell –customer won't buy it  
Be safe – be like others –too risky, no don't try it  
I'm a sponge – in sea of greatness – tell me to be  
So I can become more like you – and less like me

Then I saw this woman standing out among the crowd  
You couldn't help but see her – her hat was bright purple – and she was loud  
And she stuck out like a blown up Santa in a Christmas Day Parade  
And years later it's her that I remember her, and the impression that she made  
And it occurred to me quite simply, with startling clarity it came  
How can we be unforgettable – if we are all the same

Thousands, thousands of speakers topics all align  
One sheet against another – set up down a line  
What will make me different? How will they ever see?  
Something that convinces them to take a chance on me?

Our clients do not want to see – more of the same  
They don't want you to be a clone of a bigger name  
They want real, they want unique, out of the box and comfort zone  
They want you – your talents, gifts and all – you and you alone

And now I want to dance – and now I want to shout  
The chains are coming off – I am finally coming out  
The box is finally opened – I will set her free  
From this day on the speaker you will see, is who I want to be  
This is our moment – this is our time  
If I want to dance, I'll dance, if I want to rhyme then I will rhyme  
And if you say thanks but no thanks, it's not what you had in mind  
That's okay – get out of our way, we'll just move on down the line

Complacency is over - it's time to raise the bar  
To look into a mirror to see if you like who you are  
And if you don't, then change it – if you're living in a box  
It's time to have the courage to break out and unlock all those locks  
Nobody notices normal – in this world, you must stick out  
Be true to who you are - that's what keeping it real is all about

And don't be worried or discouraged – that what you have just will not do  
Every single thing you need – has already been gifted to you  
You just need to find the courage to stand strong against the tide  
To trust in your message and the messenger who's hiding deep inside  
And the last secret is your uniqueness – your authenticity  
No go out there and find the speaker that you were born to be

**NOW GO OUT THERE, AND BE UNFORGETTABLE. AND IF YOU NEED ANY HELP, YOU JUST LET ME KNOW.**

### **Six Secrets:**

- Humor
- Story
- Humility
- Humanity
- Passion
- Authenticity