



Communication **SUCCESS**

BEGINNINGS

VIDEO 5: DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGES

KENNEDY:

Hi, and welcome back!

In this video, we're going to work on the messages that make up your talk.

You've done a lot already. You've worked on your purpose, thought about your topic, and outlined your strategy. That's important stuff.

Now it's time to work on your messages. Communication is based on the exchange of messages and your talk is no different.

I always advise my clients to create what I call a message hopper. Basically a digital or analogue place to collect and store your messages. You may start doing this now for this specific talk, but I encourage you to continue using it for future talks, becoming a Message Collector.

I do this now. If I see an interesting story or piece of data or, as you can probably tell by now, an inspiring quote, I pop it into the message hopper to be used later.

So what types of messages should you collect? Here are a few suggestions.

Facts. A fact is something that's provable or proven.

Data... Such as numbers, words, measurements, observations or just descriptions of things.

Comparisons... Of facts or pieces of data to show their differences and similarities. These can be objective or subjective.

Projections... imagining the future. Or showing where data might lead.

And finally, stories. Stories are so important. As humans, we love stories and we understand information much better when told as a story.

Start collecting messages like these related to your topic. When you have enough, preferably more than enough, you move to the next step... Organization and prioritization.

There are two types of messages. There's primary messages, which are your declarations and conclusions.

And then there's secondary messages, that support your primary messages.

Primary messages are what you build your talk on. They are what I call “motivating conclusions.” These are messages your audience will walk away with.

Secondary messages support these conclusions. But what tends to happen is that speakers love talking about their secondary messages. They believe that the more support... the stronger the conclusion, which is not the case. In fact, it's the opposite. The stronger your conclusion, the less support you need.

I like this quote by like this quote by G.K. Chesterton: “The human brain is a machine for coming to conclusions. If it cannot come to conclusions, it is rusty.”

What often happens is if you don't give your audience clear conclusions, they're going to come up with their own.

And, unfortunately, they are usually not the same conclusions as yours.

You'll find that your primary messages remain consistent from talk to talk. However, depending on the audience and context, you'll use different secondary messages to support your primary messages. I'll give you an example.

Maybe your audience is filled with engineers. You'll probably use more facts and data to support your motivating conclusions.

Working with a marketing team, however, and you'll likely want to build more comparisons, projections, and definitely share creative stories.

So, for a five-minute talk, how many messages should you have?

The answer is... Just the right amount.

That might mean just one conclusion, or could mean 5. As for secondary messages, depending on the situation, your audience and your credibility, you may need several, or you may only need one or two to support each conclusion.

Here's an exercise I like to do with my clients...

Imagine that you're scheduled to talk for the last five minutes of a meeting, but for some reason, your boss comes up first and she talks and talks and talks.

You're just about out of time. But you still have 30 seconds to get your point across, enough time to stand-up, deliver your primary messages and sit down. Everyone will know exactly what you wanted them to know.

It's now time to begin work on the message development process. This is a really fun part of your talk where you can be creative and look for facts, data, comparisons, projections, and stories to support your motivating conclusions.

Think out of the box on where you can collect these messages for your hopper.

Use the Messages Tool to develop your primary and secondary messages that bring your topic to life.

Collect your messages over the course of a few hours, or maybe it will take a day or two.

Once you're ready, we'll move on to what I call the Experience Arc, where we'll focus on the order of your messages.

Thanks and see you again soon!