Showmanship FOR Presenters

49 Proven Training Techniques From Professional Performers

by **DAVE ARCH**

With an Introduction by Bob Pike, CSP

Also Includes

The Late Night Talk Show Training Guide

INTRODUCTION

Showmanship is the art of making the ordinary extraordinary

It's all around us!

Advertisers make ordinary soap, toothpaste and deodorant extraordinary so that we'll purchase their brand.

Talk show hosts take ordinary people and make them extraordinary so we'll watch their show.

Trainers make ordinary content extraordinary to help participants learn.

No matter what the application, the principles of showmanship remain the same.

If I brought the world's largest diamond into my training room to show my participants, I would probably not carry it in my pocket. It would undoubtedly be contained in a box or velvet bag. Before revealing the diamond, I would first set the stage by talking to my group about what they were about to see -- giving them enough information so they could more fully appreciate what I was about to show them.

Finally, I would slowly remove the diamond from its container, holding it up high, looking at it, pointing at it, moving it so its many facets caught the light, and then say something like "Isn't it unbelievable!"

Although this treatment seems normal for the world's largest diamond. . .

Showmanship is taking those same qualities of presentation usually reserved for the uncommon and using them with the common.

This book identifies forty-nine of those techniques and then shows how to apply them to your training -- turning the ordinary into the extraordinary!

And it all begins with you!
Showmanship always begins with the trainer!
So do the next chapters of this book!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Containing a collection of essays examining forty-nine principles of showmanship, this book brings to a conscious level proven techniques consistently used by famous entertainers.

Then this book transports those techniques right into the training room!

Showmanship ForTrainers divides into three sections. The book's first section emphasizes showmanship techniques that apply directly to the trainer as a person. The second section applies additional showmanship principles to the training content. And the final section examines those techniques that apply to the participants.

If you decide to read the book from cover to cover, you will find that each chapter builds on the previous in a logical flow.

However, by using the Table of Contents, you can enter the book through any essay of immediate interest. Then by watching for the **bold word(s)** in each essay, you'll be led to other chapters with complementary themes. Eventually the entire book can be read in this rather unique manner.

As an adventure in self discovery, you might choose to videotape your favorite late night talk show. Then by turning to the back of this book, *The Late NightTalk ShowTraining Guide* will transform that tape into a training video!

By using the suggested exercises and thought- provoking questions, the reader will both experience and examine each of the forty-nine techniques of showmanship.

No matter how you choose to explore the contents of this book, the greatest thrill will come when you first try one of these time-tested techniques in your own training room!

Then you'll discover what professional performers have known for generations.
You will experience the power of showmanship!

Dave Arch
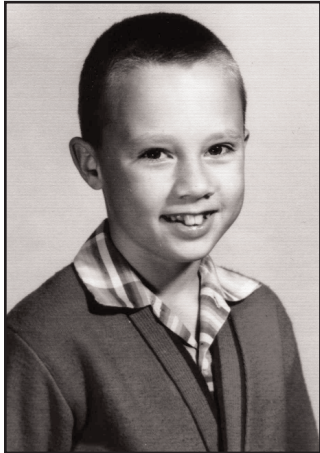
Sandler Sales System licensee, Dave Arch, best-selling author, internationally recognized speaker and conference presenter serves as the National Training Consultant for the Sandler Sales Institute and its 170 franchisees. Drawing upon twenty-five years of training experience and a twelve year background in personal and family counseling, Dave's sales training workshops are featured annually at national conferences.

He has authored a dozen resource books currently used throughout the training industry.

His accomplishments in the training field are honored in the 1996-97 *National Directory Of Who's Who In Executives and Professionals*, and his articles have been featured in *Training* and *ComputerWorld*. His pioneering work in web-based training delivery has been featured in *Yahoo!* magazine and the *TIME Magazine's* online website.

A partial listing of Dave's clients include McDonald's, Disney, AT&T, The National Education Association, The Internal Revenue Service, Kimberly-Clark, Norwest Banks, HealthSouth, Canada Postal Service, and the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company.

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ATTENTION MANAGEMENT
-Obtaining And Maintaining Participant Attention-

The next time you watch a performer, try and identify when the performer uses one of the following techniques from Darwin Ortiz's excellent book entitled *Strong Magic* .

These eight techniques take control of the audience's attention and then direct it to wherever the performer desires:

_____*The Presenter's Own Interest.*

It's very difficult to involve the audience if the trainer is not first interested in the subject. The trainer shows that interest by looking at the focal point. The audience follows the performer's eyes. The only exception to this rule is when you want them to look at you. In that case, look at them!

_____*The Presenter's Gestures.*

If I point at an object or other person, it is extremely difficult for the audience not to follow. It's one characteristic that separates man from animals. Point in front of a dog, and the dog looks at your finger. Point in front of a group and the group follows your point. Couple this gesture with the aforementioned glance and you have a winning combination.

_____*The Presenter's Words.*

If you look, point, and then use words to direct the audience you've now added the auditory to the mix and strengthened the impact even more.

_____*The Presenter's Movement.*

We watch that which is in **motion**. If you've been standing still for a while and begin to move, they will watch you. If you move an object, they will follow the object.

_____*Sound.*

We watch whatever is making sound.

_____*Contrast.*

We watch anything that's different from its surroundings. It might be different in color or size. If it's in **contrast**, we'll focus on it!

_____*Newness.*

We watch whatever arrived last. If it's the newest piece of visual on the scene, it has our attention. The longer it is in our sight the less attention we give it.

_____*Intrinsic Interests.*

Finally, we have certain topics, objects and people with which we have **intrinsic interest**. We will automatically watch if that topic, object or person is in view.

The best attention management techniques use a combination of these eight all at once. If I hold up an intrinsically interesting **prop** that is either very large or very small, look at it, point at it, move it, have it make a sound and then make a comment about it; I've just combined all eight techniques! The participants' techniques will be on that prop!

If in addition to using all these techniques, I also make sure to remove distractions in the surrounding scenery or in relation to the participants (i.e. **hecklers**), I will have maximized the effectiveness of those techniques!

Experiment with different technique combinations until you know with absolute certainty that you can obtain the focus of your participants anytime you need it.

You will have just added immensely to your own training confidence!

AUDIENCE ENERGY
-Managing A Limited Supply-

The next time you watch a comedian work with a live audience try and ignore the co-median and focus on only the audience. Pay particular attention to its bursts of laugh-ter. You will find that applause and laughter typically take the form of a bell shaped curve.
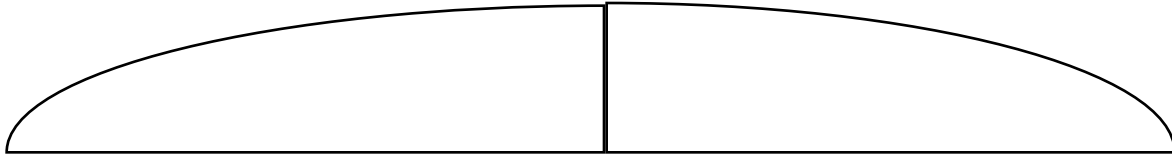
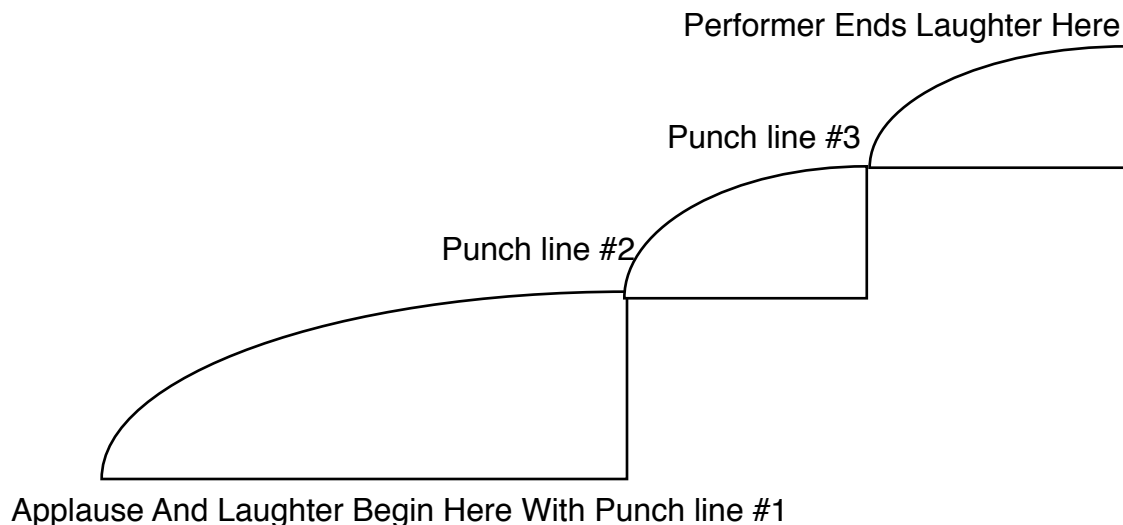Laughter Begins Here   Laughter Ends Here

The energy of the laughter begins slowly, gains speed, crests and then tapers off.

Now listen to the audience **and** watch the performer. Does the performer allow the audience to complete the full curve? Where does the performer jump in and "put a cork" in the group's laughter?

Skilled performers begin talking somewhere shortly after the crest of the curve -- stop-ping the audience from ever completing the curve.

Highly skilled comedians will even be able to "get on a roll." They build their jokes around a single set-up and several punch lines. Thus they will jump in shortly after the crest of the curve with yet another punch line. This will not only stop the release of the audience's energy but will actually heighten the energy -- bringing it to a satisfying con-clusion.

Performer Ends Laughter Here

Punch line #3

Punch line #2

Applause And Laughter Begin Here With Punch line #1

That's what comedians refer to as "getting on a roll."

In the book *Trick s ForTrainers, Vol ume 2*, I suggest a prize giveaway for trainers to use with a volunteer . . .

> "You have just won a brand new Cadillac (pause) windshield (pause)
> wiper (pause) blade (pause) box (pause) top!"

The participant receives a tiny piece of cardboard from the top of a wiper blade box! With the appropriate pauses, the trainer cuts into the group's laughter and brings the collective energy to yet another level.

Experienced performers (and trainers) understand that any audience brings only a limited amount of energy to a performance. This fact has nothing to do with the skill level of the performer. It's true of any group.

However, throughout the presentation, the skilled performer preserves and replenishes that limited energy supply.

By not allowing the audience to fully satisfy itself in relation to laughter and applause, energy is conserved and even heightened!

By returning to the first diagram and changing the word "punch line" to "discussion," applications to the training room become apparent! If you diagram the energy flow when you turn your participants lose on a discussion topic, you will find that their energy starts slowly, rises, crests, and then descends.

Stop Discussion Here

Discussion Begins   Discussion End
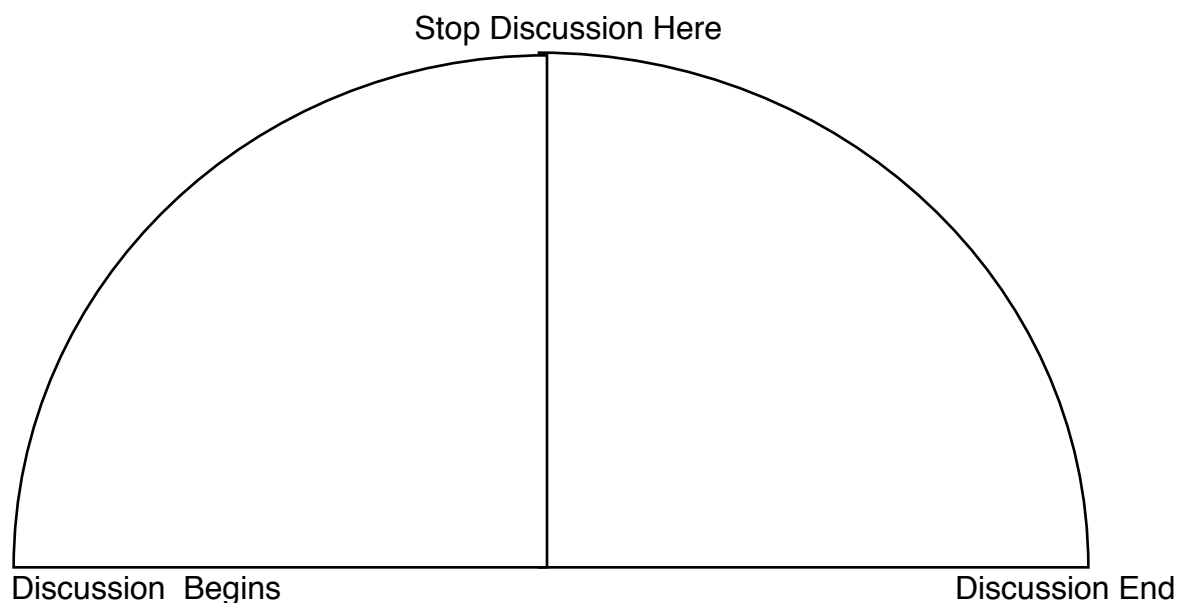
Jump in when you feel it crest, and you will not dissipate their energy! If you ever let them discuss until they are fully satisfied, you feel an energy drain in the room that makes future discussions more difficult.

If you feel that they could fully discuss the topic in five minutes, give them two!

Unfortunately, that bell shaped curve can also capture the essence of an entire training session. The participants might start strong, crest, and then watch their energy diminish until they almost leave the room by crawling out under the door.

However, it is possible to have the training session look more like the second diagram if involving content oriented activities and energizers are inserted at each energy crest. You then give the day a feeling of progression as it moves from one level to another!

End Of Session

An Involving Energizer

An Involving Energizer

Beginning Of The Session
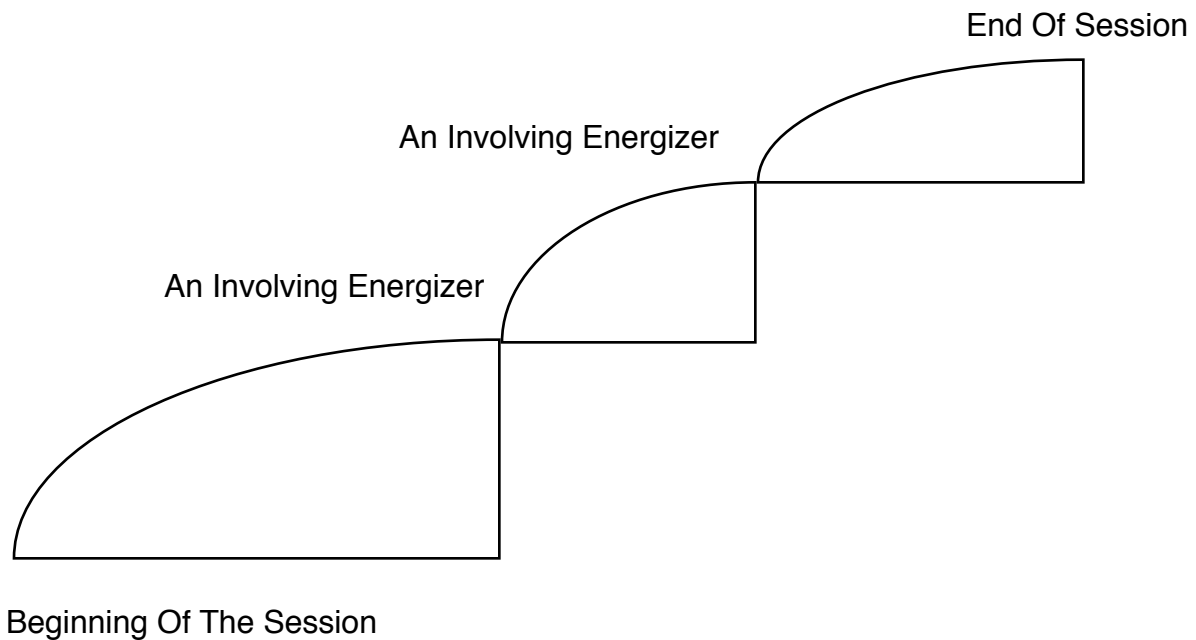
May this diagram increasingly reflect your own training experience!

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
-Involving Your Participants-

"Company Policies" . . . "Statistics" . . . "Company History"

Those topics furrow the brows of every conscientious trainer.

Although management wants those topics covered, the experienced trainer intuitively understands that participants usually bring very little felt need into those sessions.

We're sometimes tempted to simply start those sessions with an apology. "I'm sorry that I have to put you through the next few hours. However, I guess we can all be glad that it's only once per year. Bear with me ok?"

Yet deep down we feel that there just must be a better way. Is there no alternative?

We watch the best of the late night talk shows keep their studio audiences involved with prizes, giveaways, and banter between the host and his guests.

But how can we hope to keep our participants involved in even our most dry topics?

Through the little known training technique of Forecasting, there is hope even for potentially dry content areas. Here's how this technique might be applied to each of those topics.

Company Policies

If you use the process of forecasting to train your participants in company policies, you begin the session by distributing a True/False worksheet to each participant. Challenge them to circle the TRUE items (i.e. the ones they believe are actual company policies). However, warn them that you've sprinkled the list with bogus policies!

PICK THE POLICY

Circle either the TRUE or the FALSE indicating whether you believe the statement is an actual company policy.

TRUE   FALSE   1. Employees are allowed ten sick days per calendar year.

TRUE   FALSE   2. Employees get their birthdays off every fourth year after working for the company five years.

For maximum enjoyment and energy, compose the list with true company policies, obviously false (and potentially humorous) policies, and those that sound like they just might be policies . . . but really aren't.

Have participants work together as table teams to complete their assignment . You then take them through the sheet while presenting the policies the company wants you to cover. By the time you're done, the participants will hardly know you've begun as you train in an atmosphere of fun and competition with the tables working to forecast the most correct policies.

Statistics

Using the process of forecasting in statistical training, the handout sheet you distribute works best as a two-column worksheet. The left hand column consists only of numbers with the right hand column being descriptive statements of those numbers. The right hand column is not in the same order as the left hand column. Challenge your participants to draw a line matching the number in the left hand column with the description in the right hand column.

STATISTICAL SURPRISE!

Draw a line connecting the statistic in the left hand column to the
correct description in the right hand column.

1. 950	1. The total number of workers in the warehouse.
2. 3	2. The total dollar amount paid in bonuses to employees last year.
3. 1905	3. The year our company sold its first product.

For maximum fun and energy, only put a number in the left hand column (i.e. 900). Do not indicate what the number signifies. Make them guess (i.e. 900 Ducks?; 900 People; 900 Degrees?)

After giving the group time to forecast, your session takes them through the worksheet -- giving the answers so that they can again see which table did the best.

Company History

With company history, the process of forecasting can be two-fold.   By dividing the identification of specific events from the chronology of those events, you can generate variety and greater interaction in the training session.

The True/False format works well for identifying the specific events (see the above section on Company Policies for more details). As suggested in that section, have your list composed of actual historical events, and some obviously funny and phony events -- sprinkling in some historical events that sound like they might have happened. . . but didn't.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Circle the following statements either TRUE or FALSE depending upon whether or not you believe they are actual historical events in the history of this company.

TRUE   FALSE   1. Walt Disney played a key role in the establishment of this company in 1926.

TRUE   FALSE   2. Our current offices were converted in 1986 from a fast food franchise.

TRUE   FALSE   3. The first sale was made on June 4, 1955.

After they complete the worksheets, guide them in the scoring of their table's work by giving the correct answers on the True/False worksheet.

As you move into the chronological section of the company's history, have the table members take some index cards and write on each card one of the true major events from the worksheet. .

Now have the table teams work on the table or floor -- placing their index cards end-to-end -- trying to accurately forecast the correct chronological order of those events.

While they're working on that task, you're busy stringing a rope across the front of the training room. You have also prepared larger versions of the index cards corresponding to the events on their index cards.

Armed with some spring clothes pins, you're ready to have tables take turns trying to pin your large cards on the clothesline in the correct chronological order from left to right.

If a team tries and gets some cards out of the correct order, don't give them the answers. Instead just indicate that one or more cards are out of order and then take them all down. Let another team try until finally a table gets it correct.

Prizes for everyone would be a nice touch!

Any training topic in which a list must be given has
the potential for being predictable, dry and uninvolving!
Those are exactly the topics in which Forecasting works best!

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
-Emphasizing Your Strengths-

What's your favorite television sitcom? Try to list below the leading character's person-ality qualities. Are they extroverted or introverted? A people person? Into details? Usually in a sitcom, characters are well defined even to the point of exaggeration.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now try and write below a description of your favorite late night talk show host's per-sonality.   What's he like? Who's he most like in terms of other people you know?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In both the case of the sitcom and the talk show host, you are not trying to describe the real person. Instead you are merely trying to describe the character that the performer is playing on television. You are attempting to describe their "persona."

Although the best talk show hosts are playing themselves, none of them are playing ALL of them self. They have chosen and accentuated those qualities from their **personality** that they have found audiences responding to the best and accentuate. There are many personal areas that no audience will ever get the opportunity to see.

A classic example was one late night host whose sense of humor tended towards the sarcastic. This could have been merely an extension of who he was. However, when the audience responded negatively to that part of his personality, he hid it. His humor lost that negative edge and became much more enjoyable. The audience could finally quit feeling sorry for the guests.

Although he may still be as sarcastic in his private life, he no longer shows this part of himself to the audience.

Whenever we as trainers work with our participants, we also are "in character."

Although we aren't presenting a character completely different from ourselves, we are utilizing **vulnerability** with certain aspects of who we are while hiding other qualities.

Which ones should we emphasize? Which ones should we hide?

By using our past experiences as a mirror, we will know the answer! Which parts of your personality have people responded to best?   This list can help get you started.

Outgoing	Technical	Risk Taker
Caring	Smart	Organized
Friendly	Warm	Spontaneous
Detailed	Productive	Stable
Creative	Team Player	
Positive	Action Oriented	

Just as you previously listed personality qualities of your favorite sitcom star or talk show host, you will eventually be able to list the traits of your own "training persona!" By identifying the strengths of your own personality, you will discover a combination unique to you. Soon you will be a one-of-a-kind trainer -- delivering content with your own unique style in an increasingly interesting and consequently memorable manner.

<div align="center">

Who are you as a trainer?
Use the space below to describe your own unique "training character."

</div>

_____

_____

_____

_____

CLARITY
-Sending A Clear Message-

Have you ever heard a talk show host tell a joke that you "didn't get?" What do you think went wrong?

In all probability one or both of two things happened. Either the host told the joke about something that required prior knowledge that you did not have (i.e. the identity of the person who was the joke's focus) or he didn't tell it clearly enough for you to understand the joke.

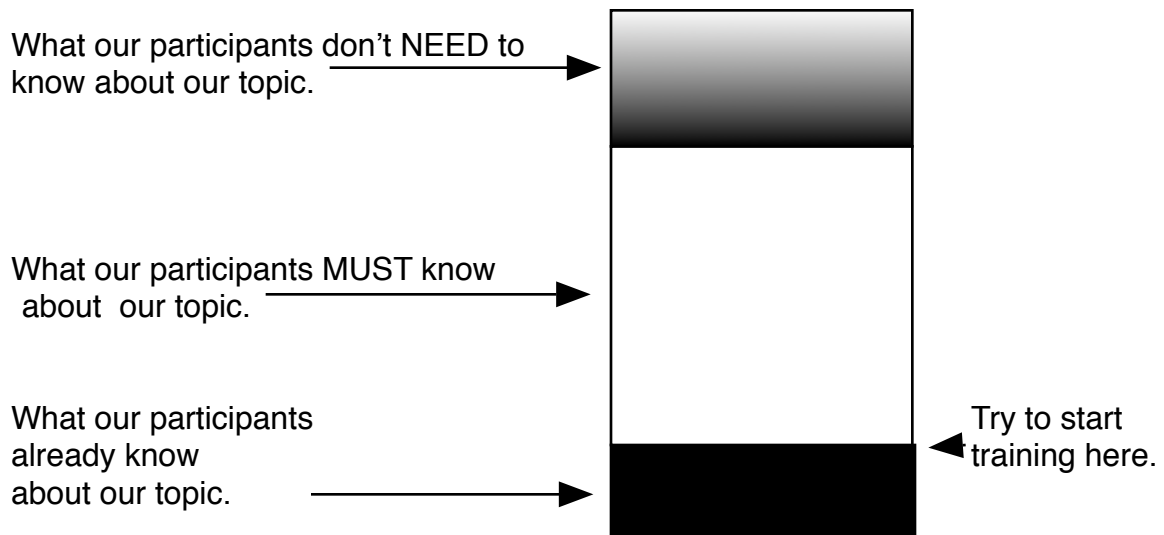No one likes a comedian when you can't get their jokes.

No one likes a trainer when you can't get their content.

Whenever our participants don't "get it," we have made the same mistakes as the comedian! Either we assumed that they had prior knowledge which they didn't have or we didn't present the material clearly enough.

Whether our content is simple or complex, clarity is essential!

Equally essential to the entertainer and the trainer, clarity comes in a three stage process.

Just as a performer must know his audience, we must first *k now our p articip ants* We must not assume that they know what we know. We must not assume what they know or don't know. That's where I most often get into trouble.

What our participants don't NEED to know about our topic. →

What our participants MUST know about our topic. →

What our participants already know about our topic. →

Try to start training here. ◄

Secondly we must clean up our content by ruthlessly *el iminating the non- essential s*

With no mercy we must answer the question:

> "What must our participants absolutely know in order to be successful
> in the area in which we're training?"

The longer we've been training in an area of content the more difficult it is to answer this question. The more we know about any area the more difficult it is to know exactly what is essential about that which we know.

If the above question is answered with complete honesty, much truly good material will fall by the wayside. However, this material can always be put it in print (see **Printed Programs**) -- making it available for those who want to go on and learn beyond the mere essentials.

Finally, we must organize the remaining content so that we *b egin where the p articip ants' k nowl edge ends* and take them step-by-step to where we want them to be.

Knowing our participants, ruthlessly eliminating non-essentials, and meeting our train-ees where they are will give any training session a pinpoint focus that will definitely in-crease its impact.

> Applying this three stage process to your own content
> helps your participants "get it!"

CLOSING
-Bringing Down The Curtain-

How do talk show hosts and actors end their shows?

Imagine this. . . you've gone to see the play A Christmas Carol. The cast has returned to the stage for the customary curtain call. They've received a standing ovation! The curtain comes down and you turn to leave. You've truly had a wonderful evening. Suddenly, the actor who played Scrooge comes through the front curtain and yells "Don't forget that in January we're going to present The Music Man."

What's your reaction to this announcement?

Trainers do this to their participants all the time! After an appropriate closing filled with the celebration of a successfull completed training, the trainer says. . .

"Don't forget to turn in your evaluations!"
"Don't forget that we're having training again next month!"

Plan your closing moments so that when you close you close!
Avoid all anti-climactic announcements.
Take care of those closing killers before moving into your closing!

COLOR
-Using It Wisely-

Look at the colors you find on a talk show set? List all that you find.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why aren't there any bright reds? Why not very much black?

What emotional reactions/images do the following colors create in you?

Bright Red _____   Light Green _____

Burgundy_____   Bright Green _____

Light Blue_____   Dark Green _____

Navy Blue_____   Violet _____

Royal Blue_____   White _____

Yellow_____   Black _____

Gold _____   Brown _____

Most people agree that the brighter colors draw attention to themselves. The blues are relaxing. Purple, burgundy, royal blue, and gold are rich colors. Browns and blacks can be "heavy" colors and must be used sparingly for **contrast** or highlighting.

Now let your mind visualize the walls, carpeting, and ceiling colors in your training room. What moods are generated by those colors? Are those moods the ones you want for your training?

_____

_____

_____

Then take a moment to visualize the walls of a theater and particularly the area immediately around the stage. What colors do you you see? Usually you'll picture rich dark colors of possibly gold and burgundy. Why don't we see more red and white striped walls in a theater?   Because we just don't go to theaters to look at the walls! The walls are colored tonot bring attention to themselves but rather to create a mood in the theater that will help us focus on **the stage**.

I once had a beautiful picture hanging in my house. In hopes of drawing people's attention to the picture, I had purchased the most ornate frame I could find.   However, when people saw the picture, they only commented about the frame's intricate carvings! They never once mentioned the picture.

I then purchased a more conservative frame. Although people still noticed the frame, they now commented on the beauty of the painting.

What applications does this experience make regarding the colors we wear while training?   Or the color on our transparencies and props?

One very famous actor applied it this way. He will never so much as be in a scene with anything red -- even a red purse! He knows that the brighter more stimulating colors have the power to distract from and literally upstage the performer! He won't compete with the color red!

Television also knows that colors can date us. Who can forget the rust carpeting and kitchen counter tops in The Brady Bunch television show? Remaining **current** requires that we keep our colors up-to-date.

I personally use the bright colors on my transparencies, flip charts, and props. Anything which is only seen for a moment and then put away gets the brightest colors I can find!

The richest colors are saved for what I wear.

The training room gets the more relaxing colors with some earth tones thrown in for depth and strength.

What colors are in your training room? What colors do you wear?
Are they generating the mood you want?

CONFLICT/RESOLUTION
-Dramatizing Content-

If you've ever started reading a book or watching a movie late at night and then found yourself unable to stop and go to bed at a reasonable hour, you already know firsthand the power of this common narrative technique. First there's the conflict and then there's the curiosity about the resolution.

Think for a moment how much of our life is spent being caught up in its involving power. It engages us when we watch the news, read the newspaper, watch a sitcom, a game show or attend the circus.

Who hasn't leaned forward in their seat as the trapeze artist misses the triple somer-sault -- bouncing into the net below. Then they try and miss again encountering the same fate. Finally, on the third attempt they successfully complete the maneuver to the exuberant applause of the audience. I'm confident that the applause would have been only a mere shadow of itself had the performer simply accomplished the feat the first time. The failed attempts heightened the conflict and made the resolution of that conflict so much more satisfying.

Hidden from the audience by a screen, that master showman and escape artist Harry Houdini would often escape from his restraints literally fifteen to twenty minutes before he would come out from behind the screen. Once he even sat back there reading the newspaper. One of his stagehands came and told him that the newspaper was making too much noise and could be heard in the audience. Houdini replied that then the band should then play louder. Like the trapeze artist, Houdini knew the power of building suspense through protracting the distance between the conflict and the resolution.

In the stage play *Frank enstein* the monster ominously threatens to return on his crea-tor's wedding night. The audience anticipates that return. In one of the final scenes of the play, the bride is getting dressed for her wedding and moves towards a large ward-robe closet to open the door and get her veil. You can feel the audience tense. How-ever, an interruption prevents her from opening the door. This same pattern of move-ment towards the wardrobe followed by an interruption occurs two more times. With each interruption, the suspense builds. The audience becomes convinced the monster lurks inside the wardrobe. Finally she does open the doors and . . .

 "Make them care and then make them wait" is the way Darwin Ortiz in his book entitled *Strong Magic* describes this important element of drama.

First the playwright made us care about the bride, Elizabeth. If we didn't care about Elizabeth, we wouldn't care if the monster jumped out of that closet or not. We too as trainers must also begin by helping out trainers care about us. We do this through

sharing our personality with them through identification and vulnerability. Then we will be in a much better position to make them care about our content.

The trainer has at least two directions conflict can be focused in the training room.

THE TRAINER

THE PARTICIPANTS
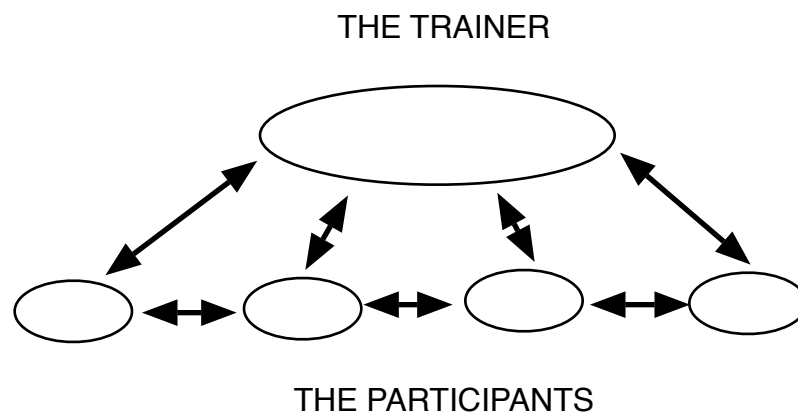
CONFLICT WITH THE TRAINER quite often involves curiosity about the trainer and/or their content. What's s/he going to do next? What is s/he really like? Why do they have that prop sitting in the front of the room? By making them care (curious) and then not relieving that tension until the communication of content occurs, we have tapped into this powerful formula for the training room.   By not giving anticipation adequate time to do its work, we rob the resolution of its power to impact.

In the seminar *Techniq ues And Trick s For Trainers*, we have a closing ceremony on the end of the second day that features what we call "The Lighting Of The Pickle." The room lights are dimmed and a dill pickle is plugged into the wall and lights up just like a fluorescent light bulb! The experience is then used to illustrate a summarizing emphasis and bring closure to the two days. However, "The Lighting Of The Pickle" is first mentioned at the end of the first day. It is then mentioned again throughout the second day. Consequently, when it finally occurs, it receives the attention it deserves!

CONFLICT WITH OTHER PARTICIPANTS can involve competition. Who's going to win? What are they going to win? How are they going to win? Realizing the training power of this medium, Creative Training Techniques wisely has an entire two day seminar that examines nothing but creatively using games and graphics in the training room!

Wouldn't it be great to harness this captivating technique of drama and employ it to increase the content retention of our participants?

May our training sessions increasingly unfold like a well written novel!

CONTRAST
-Emphasizing The Importance-

We love contrast!

Contrast is the beauty of Winter changing into Spring into Summer and then into Fall. If you listen to the song arrangements on a CD, you will quickly recognize a pattern of a slow song followed by a fast song with a quiet song followed by a louder song.

Contrast is important for maintaining both our interest and involvement. Too much of the same lacks **variety** and loses its capacity to captivate our attentions.

A trainer can utilize both concrete as well as abstract contrast
to aid content communication.

CONCRETE CONTRAST concerns itself with an actual physical object in relation to its immediate surroundings. As we saw in the section on **attention management**, any object that contrasts with its surroundings in size, color, or shape will immediately become a focus of attention. A trainer can use this to their advantage in the organizing of the room and its **scenery** as well as the displaying of any **props**. When I turn on the overhead and project it onto a screen in a dark corner, I'm using concrete contrast. When I place a stark white piece of paper against a dark background, I'm using concrete contrast. When I utilize a **prop** that's either very small or very large, I'm again am using concrete contrast.

ABSTRACT CONTRAST in the training room includes such inanimate and subtle considerations as the tempo of specific training sections, as well as volume and pitch of sounds.

On the first day of the seminar I facilitate entitled *Techniq ues And Trick s ForTrainers*, the training moves at quite a rapid **tempo**. Then suddenly in the middle of the afternoon, I distribute copies of *Trick s ForTrainers Vol ume 1 ,*and each person quietly scans a section of the book in anticipation of presenting a short review of that section for other participants at their table. Classical **music** plays in the background, and the contrast of this section's tempo to the rest of the seminar is dramatic. However, this contrast is so enjoyable for the participants that I have allotted as much as forty-five minutes to this activity. Participants embrace the contrast.

So I recommend to you that. . .

As you build your training **routine**, consider using contrast for maximum impact!

COSTUMING
-Communicating Character-

Try this experiment the next time you watch a late night talk show!
Turn off the sound for at least half the show!

With no sound, you'll be able to focus your attention on the host's selection of clothing.
Check below all that you can learn about him from his clothes.

_____   Introverted?

_____   Extroverted?

_____   Wealthy?

_____   Detail oriented?

_____   Stylish?

_____   Aloof?

_____   Pretentious?

_____   Flashy?

_____   Folksy?

_____   Other?

Once you start making that list, it's amazing how much we do learn about a person's
personality from the way they dress.

Now repeat this same experiment for several different evenings to observe how much
he varies his attire.

You'll probably discover a definite pattern to his clothing choices!

Like an actor wears a costume to enhance the character they play, the talk show host
wears his clothing to strengthen the persona he has decided to project.
His costuming serves as an extension of his **character development.**

What do you think the following combinations communicate about the personality of the one wearing them?

Suit or no suit?

Double breasted suit or single breasted suit?

Long skirt, mid-length or short skirt?

Skirt or pants?

Skirt and blouse, dress, or suit?

Bright **color**, dark color or earth tone?

Sports coat or suit?

Tie or open shirt?

Short sleeve shirt or long sleeved shirt?

White shirt or colored shirt?

Plain shirt or patterned shirt?

This chapter assumes you've already defined the character you wish to portray. If not please turn back to the chapter on **Character Development** before continuing.

If you have already defined your training persona, you are ready to turn back to that chapter and reread the description you wrote. Then select your attire to silently support and complement your training character.

If people could turn the sound off on you as a trainer,
what would just your clothes reveal about yourself?

Is it the image you want?

CURRENT
-Remaining Youthful-

When is a late night talk show host too old to be a successful host?

Although I'm sure there is no magic age, there is an age if for no other reason than we as viewers are drawn to youthfulness.

However, I honestly don't believe that we're drawn to youth. There aren't many of us who crave to live our adolescence over again.   Nevertheless, we are attracted to those qualities *rep resented* by youth. We're intrigued by their energy and enthusiasm for life, their interest in all things new and current including their clothing and vocabulary.

And it has so little to do with one's chronological age. Everywhere we look, we can find "old" people in their thirties and "young" people in their seventies. It's not difficult to identify someone who's "dated." Their clothing, decorating **color** choices, **intrinsic interests** and vocabulary scream the subliminal message that they no longer have the motivation to remain current.

Of course, I'm not advocating the riding of every fad that comes along. Nor am I suggesting that as trainers we should act and talk like teenagers. I merely believe that it's a very short step in the minds of our participants from them seeing us in outdated **costuming** and extending that image until they believe we probably haven't kept up in the field in which we train either. We then quickly lose the needed **prestige** followed soon by a loss of their attention and eventually their trust.

What are your current interests?

Do computers and their applications make the list? If not it won't be long before you'll have difficulty talking intelligently with your participants about an area very much on their minds. If we say the same thing backwards, we have a good benchmark for seeing if we're changing with the times.

Can you regularly contribute to conversations among your participants
on topics that don't pertain to your content?

If not it may be an indication that this area needs some attention.

So. . .
Let's agree together as trainers to leave our bell bottoms at home
no matter how much we once liked them.
Let's move on!

FLOW
-Smoothing Out The Presentation-

I do enjoy watching ice skating.

The beauty of the skaters and the reactions of the crowd are wonderful.

I equally enjoy listening to great music. Again you have a performer interacting with his audience. They begin a song and smoothly sing it to the end.

However, listen to the audience when a skater falls. In unison everyone draws in their breath. There's no other sound like it in the entire world.

Or listen to the crowd when a singer forgets his words. A pained silence takes control.

We enjoy smoothness and recoil from jerkiness.

To give training the smoothness of the skater there will need to be attention given to both the Logical Flow and Physical Flow of the training session.

Most content has a sequential pattern to it. There is a beginning, an end and a middle. Determining that logical progression or LOGICAL FLOW of your content, you will smooth out training by eliminating unnecessary backtracking and jumping ahead.

However, there are also physical considerations in relation to flow. Oftentimes, if I'm doing an activity that requires moving tables and chairs, this might be a great time to do another activity with the tables and chairs moved rather than moving them back and then having to move them still one more time. Here I'm considering the PHYSICAL FLOW of my training session.

Adequate **rehearsal** will greatly help this aspect of physical flow. Pity the participants that have to sit through a session where the trainer is forever asking "Now where did I put that?" as they search for an overhead transparency, **prop**, or workbook page. There can be no flow in such a scenario. The training session only jerks along to the merciful end.

If we look back to the ingredients we listed in the chapter on **routining** and see how flow affects the smoothness of a late night talk show, we find the following list:

Warm Up
Introduction
Monologue
Banter

Talking Guests
Musical Guests
Closing

Now imagine for a moment if the show began with a guest interview and then moved into part of the monologue and then back to another guest interview and then back to some more of the monologue. Something would feel terribly wrong!

Fortunately, you'll never have to endure such a show.
Our participants shouldn't have to either.

GIVEAWAYS
-Giving The Unexpected-

A national sporting supply outlet began at a kitchen table in my home state of Nebraska with a husband and wife hand- making fishing flies and selling them through ads in sports magazines.

Their first ad read:

> # 12 Fishing Flies
> # $1.00
> Postage/Handling Included

This ad then included their name and post office box for mailing in the orders. Unfortunately, the orders did not come. The couple grew more discouraged with each passing month. However, before quitting they tried one change to their ad.

Here's the change:

> # FREE!
> # 12 Fishing Flies!
> $1.00 Postage and Handling

The rest is history!

This company now mails hundreds of thousands of sporting good catalogs each year literally around the world!

We love to receive anything FREE!

Talk shows use t-shirts, caps, dinner coupons, even canned hams. They create great audience energy with their distribution. The giveaways were genuine added value, since no one expected to get anything free when they came to the show (see **The Encore** and **Unpredictability** for a greater exploration of these themes).

However, two guidelines seem to be consistently applied by the talk shows in making giveaways most effective. First, it must be noted that seldom does everyone in the audience get one. This limiting of the number of giveaways seems to increase the value of each giveaway (see **The Ticket**). If you do want everyone in your session to receive something extra, this principle would indicate that it's better to use a variety of giveaways than to give everyone the same thing.

Secondly, the person receiving the giveaway typically does something to get it. On a talk show the person might need to participate in a stunt, answer a question correctly or play in a game. You might try having some giveaways for when the participant turns in their evaluation, answers a review question correctly or at the very least wins

in a drawing. Even this latter method increases the value of the giveaway.

Test these two guidelines with your own giveaways and experience the difference!

HECKLERS
-Trying Participants-

They come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes you can see it in their eyes. Sometimes they just sneak up on you.

I'm talking about those training participants who hate having you in control.

The techniques they use to wrestle that control from the trainer range from the brazen rudeness of reading a newspaper or visiting with their neighbor during the training session to the more subtle tactic of always asking questions or making comments.

What's a trainer to do?

   When heckling takes place, one or more of at least eleven possibilities might exist:

_____A Misinterpretation Of The Heckler's Intentions

   Some trainers insist on having absolute autocratic control of
   their training sessions. In this scenario, an honest
   comment or normal give and take between the trainer and a participant
   can be viewed as heckling. The trainer then assumes a defensive posture
   and the crisis escalates.

_____Low **Prestige** In The Eyes Of The Participants

   In this case trainees have not been made aware of the trainer's
   credentials, and they consequently do not treat the trainer with respect.

_____A Trainer's Lack Of Respect For Them self

   Self respect breeds peer respect. The trainer that has little respect for
   them self allows participants to walk all over them. It's a sad scene.

_____A Trainer's **Personality**

   Participants are not the only people with obnoxious personalities. Trainers
   can have them too. If the trainer treats participants in a condescending manner
   or with lack of respect, the trainer will eventually find himself facing a group of
      combative trainees.

_____Lack Of Adequate Training **Tempo**

If the course is moving too slowly, there will be an energy vacuum that someone will try and fill in an effort to alleviate their own boredom.

_____Lack Of Adequate Breaks

If the trainer doesn't provide enough breaks, the participants will.

_____Familiarity

"Familiarity breeds contempt" is a plaque to hang on every trainer's office wall. When you allow familiarity with your participants to get beyond an appropriately polite business level you will have greater difficulty maintaining control.

This has to do with the appropriateness of jokes you tell, topics you are willing to discuss and kidding you allow to be done by you and to you.

You may have difficulty defining the line before you cross it. However, after you cross it, you will know you've overstepped the boundaries. The quicker you can return to the other side of the line, the better it will be for both you and your group.

_____The Trainer's **Costuming**

Typically speaking the more casual the trainer's clothing the greater the difficulty in maintaining control of the group. Casual clothes silently signal an informal unstructured situation. This is exactly the opposite of a situation in which control is easily managed. A good rule of thumb is to try and be dressed at least as formally as your most formally dressed participant.

_____Inadequate **Audience Involvement**

If you are not giving your participants enough opportunity for self expression, they will create their own!

_____Inadequate **Rehearsal**

If the trainer fumbles instead of flows, he creates insecurity on the part of the participants that will eventually be acted out.

_____A Genuinely Neurotic Participant

> These are people who genuinely have a problem with anyone else having any measure of control. In my twenty years of training experience, I have experienced one of these types in about every one hundred participants.

<div align="center">Here's the good news!</div>

The trainer can unilaterally solve 90% of all heckling problems through some personal changes in style and approach. If you again look at that list above, you'll notice that fully ten out of eleven possibilities directly reflect back on the trainer.

But what about that truly problem some trainee?

Although there is no magical solution, here are some approaches I've tried:

Ignore them. Remember that attention is what they want. The first step is to avoid giving it to them. If your ego is not allowed to get involved, you might be able to ignore them until they tire of their antics.

Contain them. By working in small groups you can keep the heckler contained so that they don't infect the entire group. This method of dividing and conquering will help to minimize the damage. Oftentimes the peer group manages the person's tendencies to control.

Overwhelm them. This will only work for certain extroverted trainers. Intensify the speed of the training session and/or your own personality to where the personality of the offender is dwarfed. Oftentimes they will feel more secure and stop the interruptions.

Involve them. At the next break invite them to help with some upcoming activity. Frequently, if it's merely the moving of a table, they will feel more like they're on "your team" and will work with you in the remainder of the training.

Confront them. As the last resort, this step involves talking to them privately about the problem and seeking to get their cooperation.

<div align="center">A heckler should always cause a trainer to look in the mirror first
and in the direction of the heckler only thereafter.</div>

HUMOR
-Laughing And Learning-

This chapter has already been written.

You'll find its components throughout the book.

In the section entitled **Mistakes**, you'll read about the three parts to every joke.

The chapter entitled **Passion** tells how to find comedy material by taping yourself while ranting and raving about a passionate topic.

In the chapter on **Timing**, you can experience the effect that a pause has on the effective delivery of a joke.

However, it's in the chapter entitled **Personality** that you'll find the real secret to humor in the training room.

The best humor is always born from within. That's why often the retelling of a joke doesn't work even if you laughed when you first heard it. You retold the joke but couldn't incorporate the personality of the person you heard telling the joke. That makes the difference.

Truly great comedy occurs when just the right joke passes through just the right personality. And that's equally true of great singing, great magic, and great training too.

I believe that every person can create laughter in others. However, most of the time we're not on stage. Instead we're making a store clerk, spouse, or an insignificant other laugh. However, we don't pay attention when we make someone laugh. Consequently, we never learn what type of humor works best for us.

The next time your training group laughs at something you say or do write it down. It's like being a humor detective. You'll soon discover clues that you can build upon. Maybe they laugh at stories you tell about your kids, your relationships, or your childhood. A definite pattern will emerge.

And while we're speaking about our childhoods, don't overlook your childhood for great training stories. People love hearing about our early years. They know that it reveals so much about us. Think about events in your childhood that support your content. Look for stories that happen to just about everyone. We laugh when **identification** occurs.

Tell stories about yourself and on yourself. That type of humor strengthens your **vulnerability**.

Eventually by combining your own unique style of humor with vulnerability and identification with passion, you'll have a powerful combination that will bring you closer to your training group. And you will have effectively illustrated your content too! How efficient!

The next time you make someone laugh, try and determine why.
Therein lies the clues for finding your own style of humor.

IDENTIFICATION
-Linking Up With Your Participants-

Within the process of **character development,** we mustn't lose sight of the fact that whatever character finally evolves, it will be useless if the participants cannot identify with it. Movie makers know that there must be someone in the movie you can identify with or that movie will not involve you emotionally.

The best plays have a wide enough diversity of characters that everyone can identify with one of them. Who do you identify with most closely in Charles Dicken's classic play *A Christmas Carol*? Are you Scrooge, Bob Cratchett or Tiny Tim?

In our personal relationships, the people we feel closest to are usually the ones who have gone through similar life experiences. We can identify with them most closely.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the trainer is definitely in a relationship with his/her own participants. The closer the group can identify with the trainer, the closer the relationship will be.

Picture in your mind your favorite late night talk show host. What about that host can you identify with most closely? Is it the way he talks, the way he dresses, his interests, his hobbies, or his mannerisms?

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Have you noticed how the hosts diligently work to never mention anything that would cause their audience members to not identify with them (like their vast amounts of money or chauffeured limousines)? That would be death for their careers!
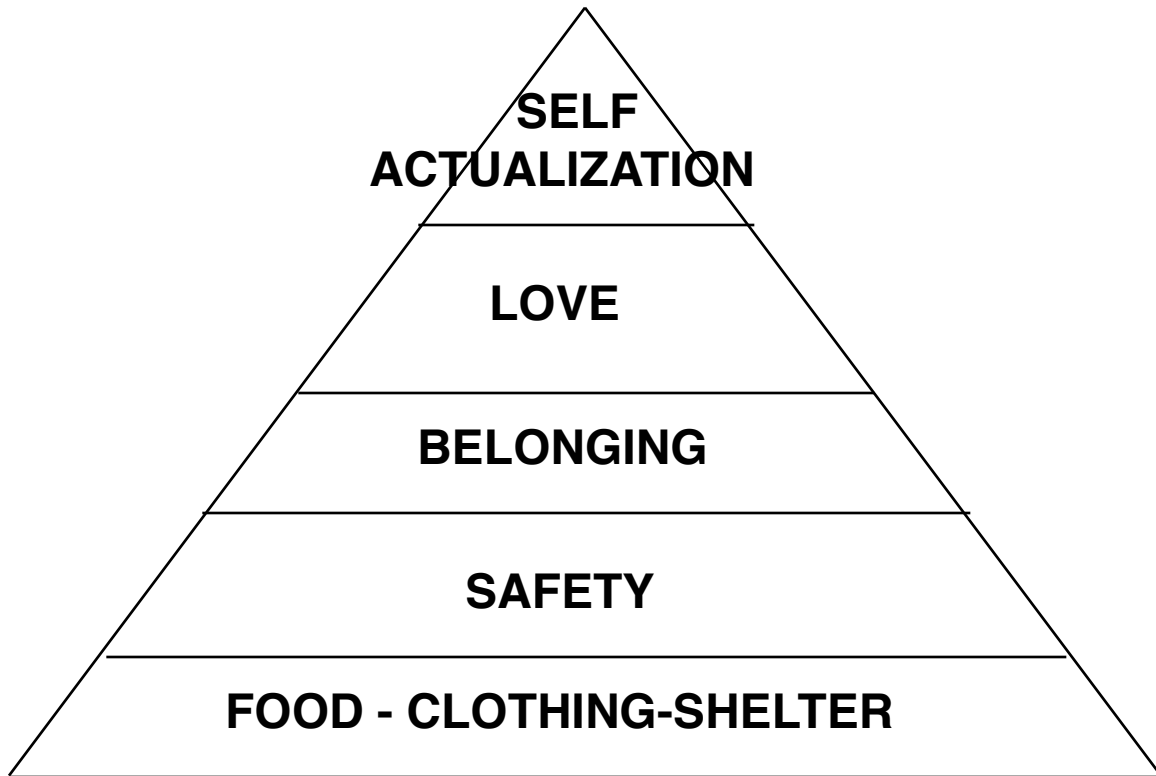
A good exercise might be to return to the description of your character from the previous chapter and see if it's a character with whom your participants will be able to quickly identify. Possibly it's time to go back and list some of your weaknesses. No one can identify with perfection. What fears and struggles to do you have that could actually bond you tighter to your participants? Add them to your list in the previous chapter.

When your participants quickly identify with you, the job of training is simplified.

INTRINSIC INTERESTS
-Building On The Present-

What concerns your participants more than your training content?

The psychologist Maslow gave us his hierarchy of need with some of that information.

```
                    SELF
                 ACTUALIZATION

                      LOVE

                   BELONGING

                     SAFETY

            FOOD - CLOTHING-SHELTER
```

He said that at the most foundational level each person is primarily focused on food, clothing, and shelter followed quickly by safety.

Then a sense of belonging precedes the need to be loved with self actualization coming at the very top of the rung. He believed that no person concentrated on one level until the previous level of need in the pyramid was satisfied.

At what level of the pyramid does the typical late night talk show typically function?
Why?
How do they address the needs of those levels below that usual functioning level?

At the risk of over-simplificiation, this pyramid helps us understand generational differences. The generation of the depression grew up concentrating almost entirely on making sure that deprivation never happened to them again. Most of their lives were spent on the first three levels of Maslow's pyramid.

Whereas those children who have grown up in relative affluence have had the luxury

of concentrating on those top three levels of belonging, love, and self actualization.

Any content can be presented at any of those levels. At the basest level, participants are motivated to take the training in order to keep their job and thus provide them and/or their family the food, clothing, and shelter of the first level.

In some companies where I've conducted in-houses, employees took most of the training out of a fear for their own safety. Usually the fear was not of physical safety but rather their emotional safety. Intimidation, guilt, and other oppressive tactics were the managerial norms.

Content presented within the context of belonging places a high emphasis on the inter-personal relationships and networking among the participants bridging into the level of love with all of its components (i.e. respect, **vulnerability**, and praise).

Finally, content presented within the framework of self actualization emphasizes the personal growth and the development of individual participants as well as the group.

<p align="center">At what level do most of your participants function?</p>

If they are feeling unsafe or vulnerable in your training room, you will waste your breath trying to approach them on the level of self actualization.

Likewise if they feel isolated and not part of the group, the wise trainer must address those issues before moving onto a higher level of approach.

<p align="center">At what level of the pyramid does your training room typically function?
How do you address the needs of those levels below that typical functioning level?</p>

MISTAKES
-Covering And Recovering-

You may want to program your VCR or DVR for this exercise.

Record any late night talk show monologue. Chances are very good that the audience will not respond well to at least one joke in the routine. Pay particular attention to how the host covers and recovers from the audience's rejection.

As you watch that tape, you'll notice that the delivery of a joke actually comes in three phases.

The set- up gets the audience ready for the punch line:

> "Have you noticed how much dogs hate it when you blow in their face?"

This is then followed by *the p unch l ine*

> "Why then when you get them in the car, the first thing they do is
> hang their heads out the window?"

And *the f ol l ow- through* the emotional tag completes the sequence:

In this scenario it might simply be the comedian shrugging his shoulders in bewilder-ment. Sometimes it's the comedian rolling his eyes or sighing. Oftentimes, the follow-through is non-verbal.

Every joke and every training exercise share these same three components.

In a training exercise, *the set- up* might be:

> "Let's talk at the tables about our most embarrassing moment on the job."

The p unch l ine usually comes when the tables begin doing the exercise and fresh **audi-ence energy** is being produced.

The f ol l ow- through comes as you react to the table groups beginning to do the exer-cise. Usually the trainer holds her breath until all the participants turn inward to the oth-ers at their table and begin discussing your topic. Then there is a releasing of the breath and a smile.

However, what if shortly into the exercise you find your group not responding positively to their assignment? What are you going to do? What do the best performers in the business do?

Go back and watch the video to see how the host did recover from the less than enthu-siastic response to his joke. I believe you'll notice the host using his follow -through to extricate himself from the predicament before quickly moving on.

He might say something like:

"These are the jokes folks!" or "Testing one, two, three, is this microphone on?" or speaking to the co-host, "I told the writers that this one wouldn't play!"

But that's it! He then moves on!

And don't believe for a moment that those tag lines were ad-libbed. Every comedian develops a stock listing of such bailouts.

What lines could a trainer use?

These have worked for me!

> "Well, that one didn't go anywhere did it?"
> or
> As you go over and write in your notebook, you say
> "Just reminding myself to never try that exercise again!"

No audience wants to see the performer (or trainer) wallow in a failed joke or training exercise. No one likes to see a fellow human in pain.

Sometimes we're tempted to apologize or explain that "this has never happened be-fore." Although it might make you feel better, it won't help your participants feel better.

> Shrug it off and move on!
> Your participants will thank you.

MOTION
-Moving With Purpose-

Magician's know that an audience watches what's moving. Consequently, a magician will always move the hand that he wants the audience to watch. He will strive to keep stationery the hand he wants the audience to ignore.

And it works!

A trainer also utilizes two types of motion. There is the motion that occurs while the trainer remains in one place.   And there is the motion in which the trainer moves from one place to another.

Watch a talk show and pay special attention to when the host moves and equally important when they don't!

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You'll notice that they move when transitioning from one segment of the show to another (i.e. the monologue to guest interviews). They also move closer to the camera when trying to intensify the attention control over their audience. Their hand gestures also provide emphasis or direct attention.

They don't move when they want the focus on someone or something else. Watch them during an interview and you will notice that they almost freeze while the other person is talking (until they want the attention to return to themselves).

Motion can be a powerful tool in **attention management** if not overused.

The trainer who habitually swings their arms, sways, or paces back and forth will soon find themselves unable to access the powerful tool of motion. Like the little boy who cried wolf too many times, the audience will no longer pay attention because when motion occurred in the past it did not signal any note worthy emphasis.

Videotape yourself while training!
It's the best way to make sure you're always moving with purpose!

MUSIC
-Communicating The Mood-

It's almost invisible, but if you listen for it, you'll find that it's crucial.

Besides a guest band or singer, how do talk shows use music? When do they use it?
What types of music do they use? What would be different if they didn't use it?

With those four questions, a strategy for music's use in training slowly evolves.

The shows obviously use music at the beginning of the show and at the end of the
show. Usually it's their theme music. It's usually the most upbeat powerful music used
in the show.

However, not quite so obvious is their use of music when they go to and come back
from commercials (trainers call them breaks). This music is usually not as powerful as
the opening and closing themes and often reflect the content just having been dis-
cussed. Sober content will not be exited with a polka!

You'll also find them using music to fill "dead spaces." When the host is walking back to
his desk, there's a tune to help him get there without losing the **audience energy** gen-
erated during the monologue.

What moods or scenes do the following types of music bring to your mind?

Classical _____   Country _____

Rock _____   Heavy Metal _____

Pop _____   Novelty Tunes _____

Jazz _____

Each musical style does convey its own set of images. Without saying a word, the type
of music you select sets expectations about your training in the minds of your partici-
pants.

Bob Pike has done a marvelous job with a difficult assignment in selecting a variety of
training music for both volumes of his *Powerf ul Presentation Music*assettes for train-
ers.

Each volume contains three audio cassettes. One cassette contains the broader higher
energy music perfect for **opening** and **closing**. Another cassette contains classical
type music to serve as background for discussions. While the third cassette contains
novelty tunes (goofy music) just perfect for breaks and games.

He has wisely stayed away from musical extremes which can prove controversial and typically don't wear as well as the middle of the road stylings.

When conducting daylong training, my own preference has been to utilize the higher energy music in the morning with a shift towards the goofier novelty tunes in the afternoon. Interspersed throughout are the more classical background sounds for gently filling the energy void when the group is discussing or personally planning.

Wisely utilizing music in your training
will have your participants singing a different tune!

OPENING
-Bridging To The Audience-

Why do talk shows all begin with a monologue?
Why not just begin by introducing the first guest?
What ingredients can you identify that give you clues to the answers?

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When I first began to dissect those opening moments, I watched dozens of opening monologues, I began to notice some patterns.   I was surprised to notice that 90% of the content in the opening monologue concerns subjects already on the mind of the audience. The comedian's writers seem to consistently shape the opening monologue's content by asking at least three questions. One of the first is:

" What topics are the audience already thinking about?"

The radio, newspapers, and televisions have been reporting stories that are on the minds of the audience. They already have the audience members thinking about certain people. The successful comedian builds his monologue around those stories and those newsworthy personalities. He begins his show by meeting the audience where it is rather than requiring them to come to where he is. Then the writers ask:

" What experiences do all the audience members share in common?"

Children, work frustrations, and grocery shopping all make topics that help create a sense of **audience participation** within the monologue. The host continues the process begun in the **warm up**. He transforms the audience from individual members into a single unit. Reminding them of commonalities do just that. Later the host will bridge the audience's thoughts to include his guests and other features. However, the opening monologue is not the time. It's simply too early.

" What can the host reveal about himself that will help the audience identify with him?"

This too is a shaping question asked by the writers. They know that if the host appears to be revealing something about himself, they will be building the show on one of the audience's strongest **intrinsic interests**. Nearly without exception, audience members want to know the answer to the question "What is this man like? Who is he *really?*" They will also be utilizing the powerful technique of **vulnerability** as they have the host reveal aspects of himself to the audience.

However, also I've noticed that unless it's with a tongue in cheek attitude, the hosts never self reveal about their exorbitant salaries or wealthy lifestyles. You won't hear much about their chauffeured limousine ride to the studio. They avoid revealing such aspects of who they are like the plague. Performers understand that when the audience feels like the host no longer shares an **identification** with them, the career is over!

Recently I attempted to build an opening that used all of those questions. The subject was customer service. A large national chain store had just opened up in the city in which I was speaking. In need of some forgotten supplies, I had visited the new store just that afternoon and within that brief visit, two clerks with quite differing attitudes had crossed my path. The **contrast** of those two clerks and their approaches to customer service made a wonderful opening story. All my participants had been quite aware of the new store's Grand Opening; everyone could identify with the experience of inter-acting with clerks during a shopping experience; and I was able to reveal myself as I talked about my response to the clerks. The participants were with me from the begin-ning. The talk show formula had worked for me just like it had worked on me!

> Try the "monologue formula" the next time you plan an opening!
> It has already proven it's effectiveness with millions of people!

PACING
-Feeling The Passing Of Time-

Although we all know that time passes at the same rate every moment of every day, it sure doesn't seem like it! The actual speed at which content is delivered is called **tempo**. However, the participants' subjective sense of how quickly the time passes is called "pacing."

Watch a late night talk show and take special note of which sections in the show seem to pass slowly for you. Which seem to pass the fastest?

What common denominators do you find in the sections that pass slowly (the times you're tempted to turn the channel)? The ones that pass quickly?

Every time I perform this simple experiment, I arrive at the same conclusions. Time passes the quickest for me when two components are in operation:

* The subject under discussion must be one that interests me.

*And I consequently find myself involved mentally, emotionally, and sometimes even physically.

Furthermore in training I've observed that the less my trainees have an **intrinsic interest** in the content, the more I must involve them physically with the content.

There are few greater feelings during a seminar than when someone looks at their watch and announces "I had no idea this much time had passed!"

Take a moment to look in the section on **audience involvement** for some very practical ideas on how to physically involve your trainees in even the driest content!

Pick up the pace by involving your participants!
They will thank you!

PASSION
-Energizing Your Presentation-

If vulnerability is the beginning of self revelation, passion is the power that moves it to the participants.

Watch the opening monologue of a late night talk show and try to identify the moments of passion in the host's communications with his audience.

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One author, who has written a course for comedians on how to develop **humor**, believes that one of the best ways to find new comedy material is just to have a session in which you rant and rave about anything you feel strongly about. Record yourself, play it back and take notes. She believes that the comedian's strongest material will always be found in the arena of the comedian's passion.

Sometimes the passion is anger, sometimes laughter, sometimes embarrassment. However it always involves the host releasing emotional energy in the direction of the audience.

And we love it!

We love it because the expression of passion is a component of emotional **vulnerability**. We are truly "going out on a limb" when we express our emotional feelings about a certain topic. We aren't sure how the group is going to respond and our attitude is that we don't care. We just have something we feel so strongly about that we must express it!

In every training session, I hope that you can identify some topic or idea about which you feel particularly passionate. Try and select at least one area for each course you teach. Then when you get to that place in the training content, give yourself permission to "go for it!"

No group ever leaves one of my seminars without understanding how strongly I abhor boring training sessions. Although some topics require a greater infusion of creativity, I firmly believe that with the resources available today, there is just no excuse for training sessions that put participants to sleep!

So you see I'm not necessarily talking about any topic of a controversial nature. It might be something that everyone agrees on, but you are going to reveal the strength of your feelings to the group!

<center>Watch the difference it makes!</center>

PERSONALITY
-The Indispensable-

Why do some prefer one comedian over another? Don't they all tell jokes?

Why do some prefer one late night talk show over another? Don't they all have guests, monologues, and music?

How about singers? Don't they all sing songs?

How about trainers? Don't they all present content?

*Personal ity*makes the difference!

When the process works as it should, a singer finds a song and processes that song through their own personality -- singing it in a manner only they could deliver. They literally share a part of themselves with their audience. It's magical! An audience knows when it's happening!

And an audience also knows when it isn't happening. In this sad scenario, the singer simply sings the song in a technically perfect albeit mechanical manner. Or worst yet, they try and sing it just like another singer has successfully performed it. They do not share themselves with their audience. Instead they literally hide behind the song. And its performance fails to satisfy the listener.

Pay attention for several evenings to the musical guest section of a late night talk show and see if you can tell the difference between when a singer is sharing themselves with the audience or when that singer is merely singing a song.   Once you understand the process of a singer sharing themself with the audience, the difference is not difficult to detect.

With an understanding of the process, we can now change the words to joke, comedian, and audience, and the process remains the same.

If we use the words magic trick, magician, and audience, the process is unaffected.

The words content, trainer, and participants don't change the process either.

Training is a dynamic form of self expression!

With this understanding, it's not difficult to see that a trainer with an uninteresting/ unlikable personality will have great difficulty presenting any content in an interesting manner.

And a trainer with an interesting/ likable personality will have little difficulty presenting any content in an interesting manner.

The difference is the trainer! No high tech training system will ever be able to compete or replace a knowledgeable trainer with an interesting personality!

Now for the good news! I have never yet met a trainer that didn't have some aspects of their personality that others would find interesting.

Sometimes it was a special talent, hobby, interest, or an experience from their past. Sometimes it was a difficulty they had overcome or a character strength everyone admired.

However, many trainers take these aspects of their personality for granted and consequently never have capitalized on their most interesting/ likable qualities nor focused on their **character development**. Still others are afraid of **vulnerability** and continue to hide their strengths -- presenting material but never sharing them self with their participants.

As your own training increasingly becomes a form of self expression, both you and your participants will notice the difference.

What would others find interesting/ likable about you?
This next chapter helps you find the answer.

PLANNED SPONTANEITY
-Breathing Life Into The Room-

You've seen it before.

The late night talk show host will be sitting behind his desk when suddenly it appears as though he has received an inspiration. He'll talk to his director in a room way up high in the ceiling somewhere with a comment like:

"Hey. . . why don't we just go outside and see what's happening in the street?"

His director agrees, and immediately there's an entire camera crew out on the street!

Hardly spontaneous.

However, certainly spontaneously *ap p earing*!

And we love it!

Why do people enjoy spontaneity? Why does even planned spontaneity bring energy into a room?

I'm convinced that the principle behind this technique has been experienced by every trainer whenever they inadvertantly drop something in the training room, or stumble, or have the overhead bulb burn out. Participants are energized, look up and pay attention!

Are they just maliciously lying in wait for the trainer to mess up? I don't think so.

I believe that at the heart of the issue is the fact that our participants are far more interested in who we are than they are in our content. I believe that people are infinitely more interested in other people than they are in things.

When all goes well, and I'm smoothly moving through my content, my training class may get a chance to know my material but usually doesn't get a chance to know me.

However, when I stumble, drop something, or have a bulb unexpectedly expire, my participants intuitively know they will now have a chance to see more of the real me! What am I going to say? What am I going to do? How am I going to react? Inquiring minds want to know.

If this experience common to every trainer gives us a glimpse into the power of the spontaneous, the next most natural question is how can we utilize that power throughout our seminars even when things do go according to plan?

Through the use of spontaneously *ap p earing* events, that power can be tapped when we really need it -- anytime!

In the two day seminar I facilitate, a simple magic trick is taught to illustrate teamwork. Two pieces of yarn instantaneously join together right in front of the participants' eyes. Based on what we've just seen, I suggest that the trainer enters the room before the training group arrives and throws that yarn on the floor.

Later when it comes time to use the illustration, the trainer merely acts as though they've been hit with a sudden inspiration. Seeing the yarn out of the corner of their eye, they pick it up and go into the illustration.

They have just increased the effectiveness of that illustration 100%! They have given it the feeling of spontaneity! They have given it the feeling of life itself! After all life is very spontaneous.

Certainly the trainer could removed the yarn from their training table, briefcase or pocket. But it wouldn't carry nearly the power that it does when framed as a spontane-ously appearing event.

Whenever you're using a common prop to make a point, act as though you suddenly found it in the training room. Whenever possible tie your upcoming content into a spon-taneous comment made by one of your participants. Although you've told that same story many times before try acting as though it just hit you as a good illustration of the point you're making!

<div align="center">

You'll notice the difference!
And so will your participants!

</div>

PREDICTABILITY
-Initiating Your Own Training Traditions-

What do you know is going to happen on your favorite talk show every night?

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Why do you like knowing that about the show?

You just know that your favorite host is going to open with a monologue and you'd be disappointed if he didn't. You know that then he'll banter with the band leader and you'd be disappointed if he didn't. There's something to be said for traditions.

In my family we traditionally have an Easter brunch. We invite our friends in every year and join together for a meal. Each person brings something and we share in the meal together. It's a tradition and we enjoy the feeling traditions bring to us. It brings us security through stability.

Usually the late night talk show's traditions revolve around **routining**. There's a typical routine followed each and every evening. However, within the context of that routine an infinite number of possible variations still exist. **Variety** and **unpredictability** is never sacrificed in the midst of the predictability.

The seasoned trainer has developed a formula not unlike the talk show formula. They have tested it and proven that it works for them no matter what the content. When participants train with that facilitator, the pattern brings stability in the midst of changing content and individual components.

My own training has evolved into a pattern of a physically involving group activity quickly followed by an opportunity for them to share about themselves with others at their table. I then have a brief monologue in which I share myself with them in such a manner that it bridges into the content at hand (see **Opening** and **Vulnerability**). This formula has worked for me and although the activities change and the content of my opening monologue is different, the pattern has become a familiar tradition to those who take my training. It brings stability to those opening moments of the training experience.

What do your participants know is going to happen in every one of your sessions?

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Why do they like those traditions?

What new traditions might you like to add?

PRESTIGE
-Introducing The Trainer-

A world renowned marriage therapist sat in a restaurant unable to avoid hearing the conversation of the couple in the booth next to his. He knew that in their arguing they were making a common communication error that he had often written about in his dozens of best-selling books.

"Excuse me," he said to the couple. "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation." As he took a deep breath to share a piece of wisdom gained through over thirty years as a therapist, they both turned to him and with one voice said, "Mind your own business!"

Within days that same couple would be sitting in the therapist's oak paneled office spending $120 per hour to hear the very same advice that was being offered for free.

That's the power of an introduction!

Without an appreciation for the messenger's prestige, the most important message in the world will not be heard.

On some evening listen to a late night talk show just to hear how guests are introduced.

What does the host include?

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What's omitted?

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What are your credentials for speaking on your training topic? List them below.

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Most of us don't have the luxury of having anyone introduce us -- presenting our credentials. However, that mustn't stop us from getting that information to our participants. Content retention demands it!

Why not have your introduction printed with a copy placed at each place for your participants to read prior to beginning the meeting or have it included in your training manual?

Here's a sample of the one that I have used:

DAVE ARCH

A Sandler Sales Training licensee, Dave Arch, bestselling author, internationally recognized speaker and conference presenter serves as the National Training Consultant for the Sandler Sales Institute and its 170 franchisees. Drawing upon twenty-five years of training experience and a twelve year background in personal and family counseling, Dave's sales training workshops are featured annually at national conferences.

He has authored a dozen resource books currently used throughout the training industry. His accomplishments in the training field are honored in the 1996-97 National Directory Of Who's Who In Executives and Professionals, and his articles have been featured in Training and ComputerWorld. His pioneering work in web-based training delivery has been featured in Yahoo! magazine and the TIME Magazine's online website.

A partial listing of Dave's clients include McDonald's, Disney, AT&T, The National Education Association, The Internal Revenue Service, Kimberly-Clark, Norwest Banks, HealthSouth, Canada Postal Service, and the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company.

How would your introduction read?
Use the credentials you listed earlier to help you get started!

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PRINTED PROGRAMS
-Explaining The Unwieldy-

Have you been to the ballet lately?

Upon entering the theater, an usher usually hands you a printed booklet full of information about the program you're about to see. Those who attend plays receive the same type of pamphlet.

Have you recently read *TV Guide*? That's television's version of the printed program. Sometimes you'll only find guest listings for the talk shows while other times there might even be a feature article about the host.

The last time I attended the ballet, I took particular note of the fact that some people never even opened their printed program while others poured over them in great detail.

And I must confess that I've watched many hours of television without reading the program notes in *TV Guide*.

Then we must ask ourselves what purpose do these printed programs fulfill?

In this book's chapter entitled **Clarity**, special emphasis is given to the importance of having the trainer ruthlessly eliminate any "nice to know" content from the presentation. Clarity demands that the training session is only filled with those pieces of information that the trainee *must k now* in order to master the content.

However, there is much content on any subject that would fall in the category of "nice to know." That's the role of the printed program. You can enjoy the play or talk show without knowing the "nice to know." However, if you are so inclined, the extra information is there for you to assimilate.

Trainers need a vehicle that fills the role of printed programs!

By printing a paper with "nice to know" material from your content three benefits will occur. First, you will not feel as compelled to clutter your presentation with the non-essentials, since you know your participants have access to them in print. Secondly, you will have provided enriching knowledge for those participants who would like to go on further in pursuit of your theme.

And finally, that printed material allows you to build that very necessary **prestige** with your participants while avoiding the pitfall of overwhelming them with your content. Show them how much you know on the subject through your writing not your session.

Put your content in print!
Think of how much print has impacted you!

PROGRESSION
-Moving Forward-

"This isn't going anywhere!"

I've made that comment while reading books and while watching television. It's been heard to leave my lips while in an audience at a play or a movie. I've even been known to say it while listening to music. And it always indicates a lack of one vital ingredient -- progression.

Progression gives the participant a feeling that the program is moving forward. When the feeling of progression is absent at any juncture in the presentation, the audience has the sensation that it's standing still or at best wandering in purposeless circles.

Such a feeling discourages. If you're watching a television program, you turn it off. When a sense of progression is absent in the training room, our participants turn us off!

However, listen carefully to either the initial introduction of any late night talk show or to the host at the end of the monologue, and you'll discover the first of three secrets in how to develop a sense of progression.

By listing the guests and other features, the announcer and the host are both *p resenting the audience with an agenda*. What do you hear communicated about the program in those fateful few moments?

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As in the chapter on **Publicity**, expectations are being set not only in terms of guests and special features but also in relation to the overall tone of the show. "You're going to have good time during this process" is usually the unspoken communication from a late night host to his audience.

The announcing of the agenda is actually the process of setting goals for both the audience and the host. The host is declaring what he is planning to accomplish with the audience's involvement in the next sixty minutes.   When the goals have been accomplished, the program will be over. The audience and the host will have successfully completed what they set out to do. There will have been progression! There will be a sense of satisfaction in its completion.

Now notice how often the host repeats the agenda. Usually you'll find that before each commercial break the remaining components of the agenda are reiterated. This second secret adds to the sense of progression. It is as though the host is announcing

 "Congratulations! Some of our goals for the evening have been accomplished, and here is what remains." Checking back to the agenda at various stages of completion adds to the sense of progression.

Now imagine if suddenly a guest came on the program with no previous warning and began to talk about the terrible plight of the homeless in the world. The guest wasn't announced, and her presentation didn't fit the overall promised tone of the show. It happens all the time on the presentation of the movie Oscars. The evening has a certain glamor, agenda and overall **unity** of tone. Then the Oscar recipients use their moment in front of the camera to plug a favorite cause. Oftentimes it just doesn't fit.

Therein lies the second secret to creating the feeling of progression in our training room. *We must maintain unity.* Once the agenda is set, we must ruthlessly make sure that each component relates back to that agenda and helps accomplish the overall goals established in the agenda.

And the third secret is that then when the agenda is completed *we must move into **closing**!* There is nothing more frustrating to a group than that of sensing an agenda that keeps lengthening into what feels like an eternity!

Placed in the analogy of taking a trip, a sense of progression occurs when we:

<div align="center">

Tell the participants where we're going;
Go there using the most direct route; and
Stop when we've arrived!

</div>

PROPS
-Using The Tangible To Illustrate The Intangible-

Why do charities have "poster children?" Wouldn't it be just as effective to have printed fliers with the numerical statistics of how many have the disease and how many have been cured?

Of course not!

Years and years have shown that by using one poster child, the intangible nature of statistics is made very tangible.

It works in the training room too!

Whenever you must deal with the intangible, try and look for a prop to help make the intangible tangible!

When talking about customer service, why not use the following story?

A consultant was called to evaluate the reason why a certain candy store was losing customers while the one right across the mall was flourishing. She observed both operations and listened to customers talk when leaving the establishments.

Based on those observations, she learned the following. In the store that was failing, the clerk would put some candy on the scale and then take some away until it matched what the customer ordered. The customers left complaining about how the store took candy away from them. In the other store the clerk put a little candy on the scale and kept adding candy until it came up to the amount ordered by the customer. The people left that store feeling like the clerk kept adding candy to their order.

After listening to the customers' reactions, the consultant changed the way the failing store dispensed its candy. First the clerk would put a little candy on the scale and ask the customer if they had tried the new strawberry flavored candy yet. The clerk gave the customer a sample. While the customer was sampling that piece of candy, the clerk kept adding candy a little at a time until it came up to the amount originally ordered by the customer. The clerk would then put the candy in a nice box and place a chocolate turtle on top of the box as an added bonus.

The cost of the two pieces of candy was negligible compared to the perceived value given them by the customers. The candy store's business increased dramatically!

After telling that story, you're now ready to brainstorm with your group applications that might pertain to your particular company.

Finally, open a box of wrapped hard candies and give everyone in your training room one to keep in their pocket for thirty days. They are not to eat it. They must just keep it in their pocket to remind them of the story and the power of giving the customer that little extra. Other employees can check up on you at anytime. If you're found without your piece of candy on you, you owe them a cup of coffee.

You have just used a prop (the piece of candy) to make an intangible (effective customer service) very tangible.

An additional benefit of a prop can be seen by watching a late night talk show and taking particular note of the **Audience Energy** when a prop is introduced. Sometimes even though it's only a picture or an ad or an article, you can feel the audience leaning forward in anticipation of what is about to occur.

The section on **Attention Management** explains the dynamics of what occurs when a prop is introduced. The host was bringing something new into the environment. We always watch the newest component introduced into the surroundings.   It's automatic! If the host holds it up, shows interest in it, moves it, points to it, and then says something about it, we just can't hardly resist giving the prop our focus. Props are a great tool for focusing attention and increasing audience energy.

When the prop is unusual enough, we can additionally tap into curiosity -- that very powerful aspect of **Conflict/Resolution**. In the book *Tricks For Trainers, Volume 2*, there is a black and white wheel that becomes very colorful when spun. I removed the blades from the an old household fan and attached this wheel in its place. This sits in front of the training room from the beginning of the training and never fails to generate questions. When I later bring that curiosity to a point of resolution by demonstrating the wheel as an illustration of a content emphasis, the power of that prop has just been multiplied tremendously. By selecting an unusual prop and using it to build curiosity, the learning impact is heightened.

<div align="center">

Pick a prop!
Build curiosity!
Use the prop to illustrate content!
It's a winning combination!

</div>

PUBLICITY
-Building Expectations-

I have a friend who performs a mind reading act in which he appears to tell people in the audience what they're thinking.

At one place in the program he'll say to an audience member "You are going to receive a phone call from a friend this coming week. The friend will be calling to tell you some very good news!"

"How can you possibly make a prediction like that with the hopes that it will come true?" I asked him.

"'Self fulfilling prophecy' and 'selective recall' always work in my favor," my friend replied.

The relationship between these two psychological components are explored more fully in the audio tape entitled *Training Secrets From A Psychic* However, to quickly understand some of the implications, it is only necessary to realize that the performer has projected expectations about the future into the mind of the audience member by saying "You are going to receive a phone call from a friend this week." "Self fulfilling prophecy" means that the audience member will begin to look for that phone call until it's found! Before the performer made the prediction, the audience member would have thought nothing about such a phone call. However, now he's looking for it.

"Selective recall" means that the audience member will virtually ignore all other phone calls that don't bring good news from a friend and instead focus on that one phone call that fulfills the prophecy.

Now let's see what role publicity plays in shaping those two components.

Can you remember back to what first compelled you to tune into the Late Night Talk Show that is now your favorite? A comment by a friend? A newspaper or magazine article about the host?   A television commercial advertising the show?

What expectations did you have when you first tuned in?

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Do you remember if your expectations were initially met or were they disappointed? What expectations do you have now when you watch? What shaped these more recent expectations? How are they different and/or the same from the ones you first had about the show?

The more accurately pre-show publicity reflected the true nature of the program the less you were disappointed and the more you were able to retain your first expectations. The same is true in training.

Our participants form expectations about our training before they ever enter the training room. Due to those expectations, they come looking for certain qualities (self fulfilling prophecy) and oftentimes ignore all other components to insure that their expectations are met (selective recall).

This phenomena can work for us or against us. If someone enters your training room believing that they are going to have a terrible time, they probably will and will even be able to enumerate specific examples as to why it was a terrible experience. They might even become one of the **hecklers**!

However, if they come believing that it's going to be a great time of learning and growing, they will probably find it to be so and will even be able to specify ways in which it was a profitable experience.

Publicity made the difference. Your pre-training publicity (both printed and word of mouth) forms the expectations and builds the anticipation!

<div align="center">
What expectations does your training publicity generate?
Are the expectations positive?
Are they realistic?
</div>

REHEARSAL
-Putting The Pieces Together-

Do you remember when you first learned to drive a car with a manual transmission? Push in the clutch, move the stick, let out on the clutch while stepping on the gas. The car would then jerk forward often sputtering to a stop.

With more and more practice, you eventually performed all of those steps automatically and could finally give your attention to the traffic and what other drivers might be doing.

Think for a moment about what components a professional singer must coordinate at the same time. There's the melody, the words, the volume, where they stand, where they move, and what to do with the microphone. That's without thinking about the audience and what they might be feeling. The very best singers practice everything they can without an audience until they can do the mechanical necessities without thinking. Then when they're in front of an audience, they can give themselves to the audience. Ultimately, that's the purpose of rehearsal.

A singer who has not spent adequate time in rehearsal will appear to be "singing to them self" with the audience merely a group of on-lookers.

Magicians struggle with the same problems. If a magician wants to make a handkerchief vanish, he must first learn the mechanics.

 "First, I make my hand into a fist, then I poke the handkerchief into the top of my fist, then I execute the secret move to make the handkerchief disappear, and finally I open my hand to show that it's empty."

Pity the audience where the performer has not mastered the mechanics. The audience will feel like voyeurs -- looking in on someone painfully and mechanically going through a magic trick step by step. Due to his necessary focus of attention, the magician will be unable to "connect" with his audience. There will be no relationship with the audience due to the preoccupation of the performer.

Play directors understand the components of successful rehearsal and consequently divide practice sessions into read-throughs to work on lines, blocking to work on **motion** and stage movements, rehearsals to roughly put the two together, and finally dress rehearsals to see the finished product like the audience will see it.

The hope is that by the night of performance, the mechanics will have been mastered so that the performers can give focus to the audience and where those audience members might be at any given moment.

Trainers experience this same process when beginning a new course. There's so much to remember. There's so much to do. Unfortunately, connecting with the participants often comes way down the list of priorities. As the trainer masters the course content with all of its mechanics, there develops a freedom wherein the trainer can finally inter-act at a deeper level with the participants. The learning experience becomes richer for all.

Rehearsals speed up this process. When the trainer is willing to spend some private time in the training room walking through the process, they will be able to connect with the participants earlier in the course's evolution.

For myself the first rehearsal (and possibly the most important one) happens in my mind. As I sit with my course outline in front of me, I visualize myself in the training room moving through each stage of the course. Where will I be standing, how will the people be reacting, where are the props that I'll be using?   In this rehearsal, myriad of details surface. I don't want to forget them so I busily take notes in the margins of my outline.

After that exercise I then enter the training room to arrange my accessories for the course. I enjoy doing this the night before. I put materials out **backstage** to help me remember the order and flow of the course. Just a glance to one of my tables helps me recapture the flow of the course.

Finally, I physically move through my more troublesome sections. These are the ones that are either very complicated due to the number of components or intricate as to its **routining**.

Then I'm ready to give myself to the most important components in any training room -- my participants.

<div align="center">
Try rehearsing your seminar!
You'll enjoy the freedom it brings!
</div>

ROUTINING
-Plotting Your Course-

I view training as an art. I believe it's a narrative art form. The organization of the training session is very much like the carefully crafted plot of a good book or the routining of a well scripted movie, play, or show.

What is the overall routine of a late night talk show?
Doesn't it contain quite a little **predictability**?

Warm Up
Introduction
Monologue
Banter
Talking Guests
Musical Guests
Closing

It's as though the producers of the shows have found a formula. Since they follow that formula every evening and the public keeps watching, it must be working!

What can we as trainers learn from each of the components?

THE WARM UP occurs outside the eye of the television audience. However, a guest comedian and/or the host comes out and works with the studio audience before the television cameras are turned on. The **warm up** is primarily designed to unite the individual members of the audience into a group and then create a team spirit between the host and the audience.

Here the trainer meets and talks with participants before the official beginning of the session and even has a brainteaser activity for small group interaction prior to beginning the class.

THE INTRODUCTION properly frames the host in the **prestige** he deserves. This helps build expectations in relation to the content of the show and the proper respect for the one who is going to manage that show. There is also the initial **unveiling** of the show's agenda through the listing of guests and special features.

In lieu of someone to introduce the trainer, credentials might be simply printed and placed on each table or with the materials. However, for maximum receptivity to the content, the trainer's credentials must be communicated. Pre-training **publicity** will help build anticipation and set realistic expectations among the participants.

THE MONOLOGUE then is the official **opening** of the show and further builds a bridge between the television audience, the studio audience and the host. It gives the host a chance to communicate his **personality**, express **vulnerability** and **passion**, and bond to the audience through their **identification** with him. This is also the section in which the agenda is first shared by the host with the audience.

In the training room, this is the opening of the training session. It must give room for the trainer to self express as well as bridge the participants mental focus from where they are to where they will need to be in order to maximize content retention.

THE BANTER section of the show takes the ingredients of the monologue and extends them out now to other members of the staff and/or the audience. Sometimes individual members of the audience are physically involved in **audience participation** during this section. Sometimes it's simply the host bantering with his co-host.

The trainer might have participants create their own table tents or some similar icebreaker in this section of the training. Physical audience involvement is crucial in this phase of the session.

THE **TALKING GUESTS** would most closely correspond to the content section of the training class. The host of the talk show has chosen the interview technique to communicate that content. After the host has the audience members comfortable with each other (Warm Ups) and comfortable with himself (Monologue and Bantering), he is ready to move into a section with less direct audience involvement. Guests are invited on stage to participate in an interview with the host. On the average this section does not come until nearly forty to fifty percent of the show has already been completed. Relational activities between the host and the audience often take a full 50% of the show's schedule!

The trainer is now ready to communicate content in a wide variety of methods. Since this isn't a talk show, interview is not the only technique at the trainer's disposal.

THE **MUSICAL GUESTS** supply nice **variety** and **contrast** -- providing the audience with an opportunity a relaxing mental break just before closing. Although it has the very least audience involvement it usually only lasts for five minutes or less.

Providing adequate mental and physical breaks helps replenish audience energy as well as giving the trainer a chance to regroup.

THE **CLOSING** then gives the host a chance to bring closure and entice the audience with what is scheduled for the next evening's show. The music is usually celebratory in nature.

As the training session comes to an end, bringing down the curtain with a sense of finale brings a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment to both the trainer and the participants.

Although such a structure provides for much **unpredictability** and **planned spontaneity**, it's equally obvious that much thought has gone into its arrangement.

May we be as thoughtful in organizing our training sessions.
The next chapters focusing on
progression, **flow, variety**, **contrast** and **tempo**
will give us the tools to do just that!

SCENERY
-Generating Visual Support-

If I asked you to describe the background set of your favorite late night talk show, could you do it? How detailed could you get? What **color** do you remember?

Try to describe the background and then go back and watch the show to fill in the details you might miss.

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What does the background add to the show's success? How does the background support the host? Do you find anything about the background distracting?

Now mentally transport yourself into a theater. You're watching the classic play *A Christmas Carol*. The first scene is a street scene outside the office of Ebenezer Scrooge. There are store fronts and lamp posts filling the stage. The first scene concludes.

The stage then goes dim and suddenly you're inside the office of Ebenezer Scrooge. There's Bob Cratchett sitting at his desk. Hey, wait a minute! Why didn't they take away the scenery from the first scene. The store fronts are still there too!

The third scene has you inside Bob Cratchett's house. You just want to scream! They've left the store fronts and the office scene and just put the house set in front of the whole mess. This is getting ugly! "Take away the other scenery and props!" you want to yell at whoever will listen.

Fortunately, you'll probably never have to sit through such a production so devoid of good stage management. However, many trainers make their participants sit and watch equally distracting scenery.

However, for just a moment let's take a brief detour for a simple warning. We mustn't push the analogy of the training room being like a theater too far. The training room must never become a room where participants come to passively watch a trainer perform. **Audience involvement** is mandatory if learning is to occur.

With that important point in mind, it still is paramount that when the participants' attention is focused on the front of the room, the background maximizes **attention management.**

If you're not doing a seminar on how to quit smoking, please move that big red No Smoking sign from the front of the room to a side wall behind the peripheral vision of your participants.

During each break, already used visuals and props should be hidden from view. If they are not going to be referred to again, put them away to make room for the new! Even if they are going to be returned to, **unveiling** them again often gives them a newness that will only enhance your attention management.

Finally, consider for just a moment the phrase "change of scenery." Recently, I was facilitating a two day training in-house involving thirty trainers from within a single company. We were into the second day in the afternoon when we have "request time." The participants request a demonstration of any of the openers, closers, energizers, or review techniques from the *Trick s ForTrainers* books. We had accumulated quite a list of requests. However, I was sensing the group's energy level dropping rapidly.

We all stood up and went outside for request time. After that "change of scenery," they reentered the training room refreshed for the remainder of the seminar! What could you teach outside or in any different surrounding to help maximize retention by providing **variety** in your training room scenery?

> Take inventory of the scenery that stands behind you when you train.
> At each break change something about the scenery.
> You'll feel the difference!

SCRIPTING
-Putting It Into Words-

"Every trainer I've ever known eventually worked from a script."

Usually the script is never put into writing. However, when teaching the same material over and over again, a script inevitably evolves. The reason for such a process is easy to understand. The very nature of language implies that there is a better way and consequently a worst way to say what we want to say.

For the trainer clarity, character, and class involvement lead us to that better way.

CLARITY

This factor is most easily seen in the giving of directions. When only blank stares greet our explanations, we modify. **Clarity** demands that we refine what we say until we are able to communicate our content as clearly as possible. As we saw in the chapter on Clarity, the process involves removing all non-essential material and then meeting our participants where they are.

CHARACTER

There are so many ways to say the same thing. The decisions made after reading the section on **Character Development** determines which way we choose to express ourselves.

If I'm introducing a section in which I'm about to express my **passion** on a given subject, I might say:

"With your permission let me express my feelings on this matter"
or
"I feel a pontification coming on."
or
"I'm getting ready to step up on my soap box!"
or
"Be warned! I'm about to let it all hang out!"

Take a moment and try to visualize what type of trainer would use each of those introductory statements. What clothes would they be wearing? What type of personality would they have?

Which statement comes closest to the way you'd say it?

Listen the word choices of a late night talk show host. Compare one host to another. What do their selection of words tell you about their personality? Educational level?

If our word selection doesn't match our training persona, **unity** is disrupted and trust is undermined.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

Finally, there are better ways to explain our content when our goal is to generate greater **audience participation**.

First, we must be sure that we are speaking to the educational/sophistication level of our audience. Consider the talk show host and try to determine at what grade level he typically speaks. At what grade level do you speak to your participants? Our partici-pants' involvement with our content requires that we neither speak beneath them or over their heads. Oftentimes this requires the trainer to have several different presenta-tions for the same content.

However in addition to the educational level as a consideration, the experienced trainer has come to understand that there are better ways to more dramatically involve your participants in what you have to say.

As an opening to the two day *Techniques and Tricks for Trainers Seminar*, I relate the story of a state fair pitch man I saw during my childhood.

That story can be told in at least three different ways. And they are not all equally in-volving.

The least effective *Non-Involved Listener Approach* begins with "There once was a man at the state fair who. . . "

The more effective and more personal *Passive Observer Approach* begins with "I once saw a man at the State Fair who. . . " At least here the trainer is about to ex-press **vulnerability** through self revelation.

The most effective *Active Participant Approach* begins with "Come with me to the state fair. Look there's a man over there who. . . "

Through careful attention to scripting, the final level has brought the trainees right into the story as actively involved participants!

> When clarity, character, and class involvement dictate how we
> say what we want to say, content retention increases!

SECURITY
-Lowering The Emotions-

A psychologist friend of mine enjoys using the following diagram to depict insecurity:
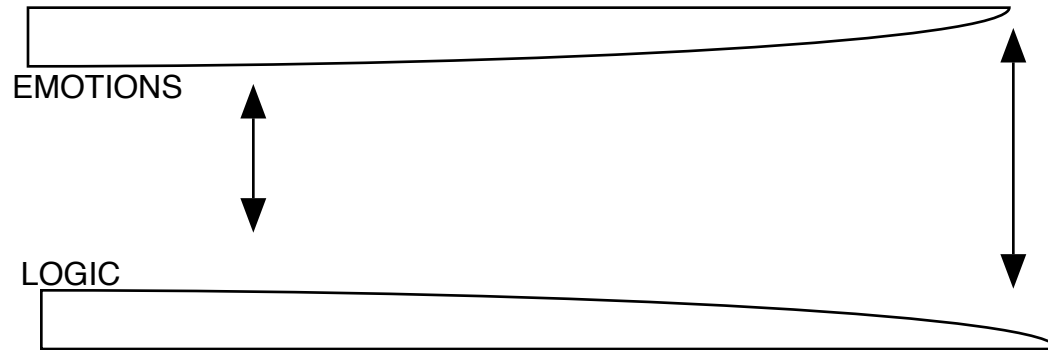
EMOTIONS

LOGIC

You can feel the power of this diagram by imagining someone coming to within inches of your face and angrily shouting your name.

You can feel your emotions rise and proportionately your capacity for logic decreasing. If in this condition you were suddenly called upon to figure a simple math problem, it would be more difficult to do in the light of your increased emotional state. When I'm emotional, I don't think as well.

On the other hand, security looks more like this:
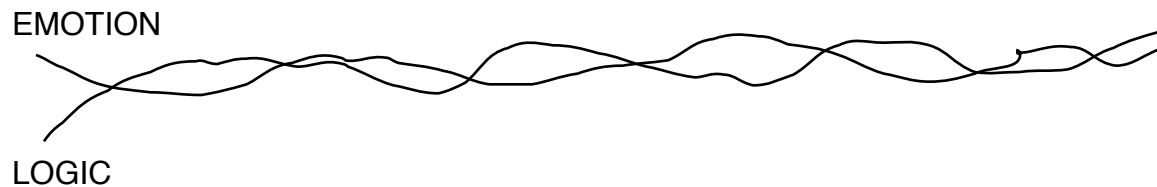
EMOTION

LOGIC

The emotions have come down allowing the logic to come up. The two components now are free to intertwine with each other throughout the learning experience. The emotions inspire the logic while the logic acts as a control on the emotions.

Whenever I walk into a new setting, my insides look much more like the first diagram than the second one. What will people think of me? Will they like my contributions? How do I compare to the others? are all questions that arise in an untested situation. If I'm to truly give myself to what's happening in this new environment, I will need help in order to get feel like the second diagram.

There are three components that bring me there, and they all involve stability.

The stabil ity of the l ead is foremost. My emotions must relax with him/her. If the leader is insecure, they keep my emotions from relaxing. The secure leader is a person who is in command of both their content knowledge and presentational details.

Adequate **rehearsal** causes them to project confidence.

The stabil ity of the peopl e around me is the second. My emotions must relax with them. A non-threatening icebreaker or project gives me time to test the inter-personal environment to make sure that I'm safe from being hurt.

And *the stabil ity of the agenda* is the third. I must know the general direction of what we're going to be doing so that my emotions can relax with what's to come. **Unpredict-ability** must only occur inside the confines of agenda **predictability**.

I am unable to truly learn (ie. give myself to the content) until I am secure in the learning environment.

Talk shows use several techniques to bring this necessary security to their audience:

> *Adequate **rehearsal** maintains the security of the host.
>
> *A **warm up** gets the audience comfortable with the host and vice versa.
>
> *Announcing the agenda several times in the **opening** moments of the show helps everyone know what's to come.
>
> *Utilizing the same general format each evening also creates a sense of familiarity with the show.
>
> *An opening monologue enables the host to initially acquire the audience's trust through his own **personality**, **vulnerability**, **identification** and **passion**.

<div align="center">

Those same techniques keep participants secure too!
Try a few the next time you train!

</div>

STAGING
-Positioning For Impact-

Imagine that you are at a Shakespearian play. One actor is on stage presenting his lines. "To be or not to be. . ." he says in a powerful voice. Look at the stage diagram below and picture the actor delivering his lines in each of the six stage areas enumerated below.   In your opinion, which area on the stage would help the actor deliver his lines with the greatest amount of force? The least?

|		
A	**B**	**C**
D	**E**	**F**

AUDIENCE

If you imagine the actor saying his lines in cell C and then again in cell A, you can feel the amount of power cell E gives to a performer. Cell E (downstage/center) is the strongest of the cells in coming right "into the face" of the audience. It is the stage position utilized most by solo performers.

Since the very nature of the television camera is that it can make any position into downstage/center, television is not the best medium for judging the relative strength of stage positions, . However, in a live performance of a comedian you will notice that only very rarely are the upstage cells of A, B, and C even utilized excepting in the case of entrances and exits. Then usually they are merely walking through squares A, D, or B to get to E. The strongest entrances in countries where reading is done from left to right is from the audience's left to right.

In order of strength from most to least powerful, the order of the cells are E, D, F, B, A, and C.

We put objects we want to "fade into the background" into cells A, B, and C. We put objects of emphasis into cells D, E, and F.

What does all of this say to us as trainers?   Here's how I utilize this knowledge in structuring the front "stage area" of my training room.

Props Table		Screen
Two Flip charts	Display Table	LCD Projector / Prop Trunk
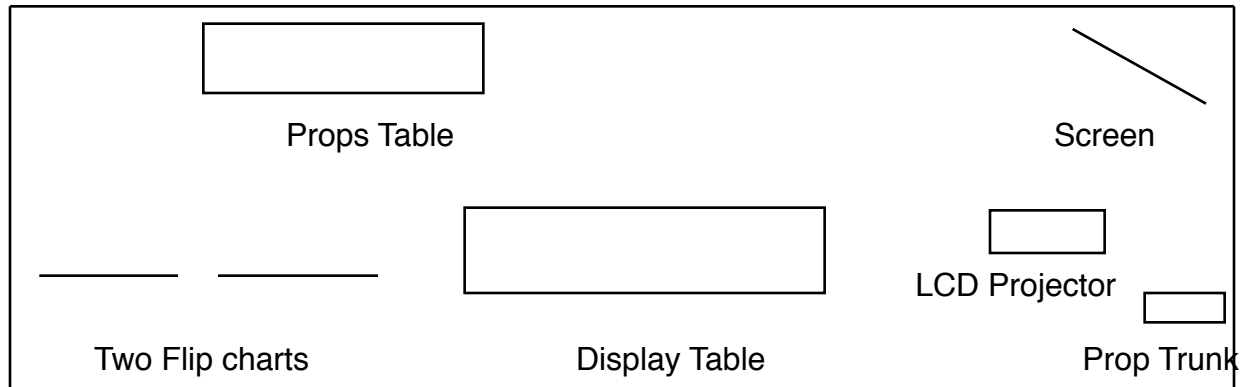
PARTICIPANTS

It was Bob Pike's own *Creative Training Techniq ues Handb ook* that first introduced to me to a similar arrangement. If I were right handed instead of left handed, I would switch the the Overhead Projector, Screen, and Prop Trunk with the Flip charts and **Props** Table. As often as possible, my training stage is always at the end of the room opposite the entrance/exit door. I don't need the competition of the group seeing people coming and going.

The Display Table holds materials that I will use before the next break. The Props Table holds those materials that I will use later in other sections of that day's training. The Prop Trunk is a locked footlocker packed full of training props that I use during a "request time" section of the seminar. Due to the fact that I'm a firm believer in trainers having a "**backstage** area" (off limits to participants), there is only one easy way to get behind the Display Table between that table and the overhead projector.

For 70% of my training I present downstage center in *f ront* of the display table. This positioning creates a greater sense of **vulnerability**.   Sometimes I will even bring one of the flip charts over into that area for adding greater impact to the visual. However, the impact of downstage center is lost if the trainer overuses the area and doesn't supply **variety** in his/her **motion**. I try and not stand in the downstage center area when the participants are working on a project. Then when I walk back into that area, it signals a beginning.   Oftentimes by moving to another area, the contrast and change will supply the needed emphasis to the point being made in that area.

Diagram your own stage area!
You'll be amazed at all you learn!

TEMPO
-Feeling The Speed-

Tempo -- the actual speed at which a trainer delivers content

This definition stands in contrast to the section on **Pacing** in which we focused on the participants' subjective sense of the speed at which time passed in the training room.

Watch a talk show host move through the various segments of his program and notice when he works the fastest. The slowest? Why? Listen particularly to the speed at which he conducts various interviews.

When the audience members are giving him little or no positive energy as feedback to an interview, watch how quickly the host terminates the interview and moves onto something more interesting for the audience. Then also notice how he slows down and "milks" those interviews which provoke strong **audience involvement**.

A wise trainer also varies his/her actual speed of delivery for at least three reasons:

THE LEVEL OF AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT is the first. As was noted in the chapter on **Mistakes**, when something isn't working, move on as quickly as possible. When something is working, slow down to maximize impact and retention.

CONTRAST is the second reason to vary content delivery speed. If you were to attend a concert and listen to an hour of music, you would need some of it fast (to keep you awake and energized) and you would need some of it slow (to give you a break and time to relax). Our participants need the same. Notice how the segments of a late night talk show contrast with each other. See the chapter entitled **Contrast** for a more detailed examination of this important training component.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE GROUP is the third consideration in varying the speed of delivery. Some groups require a quicker presentation than others. Just as individuals have different personalities, a person doesn't need to train very long before noticing that training groups have distinctive personalities too. When the overall personality of the group could be described as decisive with a "cut to the chase" orientation, the wise trainer delivers rapidly.

When the group is characterized by a steadiness and overall cautious approach, a slower delivery usually more closely matches the mood of the room.

Without giving tempo much consideration, a trainer will typically delivers content at the speed most comfortable for his or her own personality. However. . .

All content can be presented at a variety of speeds.
Trainer flexibility as to the speed of delivery always produces more effective training.

THE BOW
-Projecting An Attitude-

The next time you see an entertainer "take a bow" try and determine what the performer is saying through the assuming of such a posture.

"I know I'm good! I'm glad you finally figured it out?"
"Thank you for paying me lots of money. Now get out of here so I can go home?"
"You're welcome?"

As a possible clue, consider another situation in which people bow.

As a gesture of honor and humility, kings and queens receive bows all the time. It originally was an attempt of the subject to keep their head lower than the head of the monarch.

So when performers bow before their audiences (in other than a perfunctory manner) they are saying:

" I k now that I am no b etter than y ou .
Theref ore, I am honored that y ou woul d tak e time f rom y our l if e
to watch what I do and l isten to what I have to say"

Any other attitude hurts the relationship between the performer and his audience (or the trainer and the participants for that matter).

Only with "the attitude of the bow" does the performance get placed in its proper perspective. In the final analysis, training too is a *gif t* brought by the trainer to honor his participants.

And this book has been my gift to you!
May you apply its principles to your content. . . and then take a bow!

THE ENCORE
-Adding Value-

A friend attended a famous Las Vegas performer's stage show for the very first time. He came back to report in glowing terms how the performer had said, "This show is running overtime but since you're such a great audience, I'll do one more song!" The crowd went wild!

After two or three numbers, the performer glanced at his watch again and said, "The showroom manager must be fit to be tied with how far overtime we've gone now!"

After two more songs, the performer finally said, "We're so far overtime now. . . I guess it just doesn't matter anymore!"

The crowd stood to their feet in applause!

The next time my friend returned to Las Vegas there was no question about it. He had to go back and see this generous performer again!

Imagine his surprise when this famous entertainer used the very same lines to lengthen his show. He finished this show at exactly the same time as the first show my friend had seen three years before!

Nevertheless (or possibly because of this), this showman fills Las Vegas showrooms night after night year after year! He has learned to use the power of an encore without even waiting for the audience to ask for one! He used a form of **planned spontaneity**.

The tactic he used made every audience feel special! It gave the show an air of **unpredictability**. Each person felt lucky to be a member of the audience that specific night! The performer knew how to give each performance a sense of immediacy -- giving his audience members unexpected added value.

That's what we love about encores! The performer is giving us a song we wouldn't have received if we hadn't been there that night standing to our feet and applauding wildly.

Although late night talk show hosts don't do encores, with their constantly changing guest lists and special features, they too work to make every audience member glad he/she is at the show that evening.

Where does this powerful piece of showmanship fit into the training room?

Here are some ideas I have used:

> *I have a special activity in my training bag to pull out on the spur of the
>   moment when I have a very responsive training group!

> *When someone makes a comment, I often tie my next planned activity into that
>   comment as though the person gave me a spur of the moment inspiration!

> *I also have a supply of inexpensive **giveaways** (even copies of training
> articles) to duplicate and distribute in response to questions from a specific
> training group!

This last ideas has proven itself so popular that I now carry a file of articles into every training session!

When a group knows that I went the extra mile to duplicate the article during a break for distribution just in response to their questions, I have just tapped into the power of an encore! I have just given them added value!

The next time you train . . . try an encore!

TIMING
-Pausing For Punch-

The old time entertainer in an attempt to give advice to the younger novice asked the question "Do you know what I believe to be the most . . ."

"Timing!" the young student aggressively interrupted.

Obviously, the student knew the word but not the concept.

"Timing" is the amount of space between either two events, two spoken phrases or a spoken phrase and an event.

Watch the monologue of a late night talk show. Notice the time interval between the comedian's set-up of the joke, punch line, and body language. What if the host had been flailing his arms throughout the joke? What if he had put a longer interval between the joke's set-up and punch line? Shorter?

How would it have affected the audience's response?

Try it yourself in the form of an experiment. Use the joke "What did the duck say when he bought a stick of chap stick in the drug store?" Follow up with the punch line "Put it on my bill!" First tell the joke with no pause between the question and punch line. Don't even breathe between the two.

Now try it again counting to ten between the question and the punch line.

Finally, tell the joke one more time and count to three between the set up and the punch line.

You'll feel the difference. When there's no breath between the two components, the response from the audience will be minimal. You haven't given them time to process your question before you moved them on to the punch line.

When you count to ten between the two components, the audience will have ceased to care by the time you've delivered the punch line. The longer you make an audience wait for the punch line (or any resolution in the **conflict/resolution** formula), the stronger the punch line (resolution) must be.

When you count to three between the set-up and the punch line, you have found just about the right amount of pause. The audience has time to process your question and still cares about the punch line when it's delivered.

Two weeks ago I was late for a keynote address. I raced around the stage area to set up and then maintained that set-up speed throughout the first half of the address. There was hardly a pause. As I raced through my presentation, the audience sat there stone faced. I soon realized that I was giving the audience no time to process what I was saying. I was giving them no time to respond. When I slowed the second half of the program, the audience soon became involved. My timing and **tempo** had greatly improved.

Good timing can only come by doing the training again and again. That's also why it's frequently the first thing to get rusty when we haven't trained some certain material for awhile.

In many ways training is like a conversation. We must give the other parties opportunity to get involved and contribute or we soon become a bore. Oftentimes the contribution is merely laughter, a sigh, a groan or applause, but we must give participants the opportunity to respond.

> If you videotape yourself and watch for your own timing,
> you'll experience this chapter first hand.

THE TICKET
-Limiting Availability-

What makes a ticket so valuable? People wait in line all night just to be there when the box office opens! Then if they don't get one, they'll pay premium prices to "scalpers" standing outside the arena the night of the show!

What role does the fact that there's always a limited supply add to a ticket's value?
What would be different if you knew there was an endless supply?

Scarce tickets become valuable because we know that everyone will not be able to own one! We will be special! Our friends might envy us!

There is a bakery in my hometown that operates on Main Street out of their home. Although I have never stopped there, I am getting closer and closer to making the stop. These people always have a SOLD OUT sign in their window by noon on any given day. For all I know they might only make three rolls per day. However, I do know that people who drive by can't help but wonder what they're missing!

When I travel to conferences with my books, I know that once the supply of books gets down to the last ten, we're sure to sell out. As each book is sold, we simply mention that they purchased one of the last ten. Others then come over and want to purchase that which is almost gone! There's a sense of immediacy generated and a greater perceived value given to the remaining books.

Recently I addressed a group of new car dealers getting ready to launch a state wide advertising promotion. Every dealer had been mailed two "Gold Kits" for a certain model of car. These Gold Kits contained gold name plates, trim, and a hood ornament. It sold to the dealer for less than two hundred dollars. They could apply these accessories to cars on their lots.   The only rule was that there must never be more than two cars with this kit on the lot at any given time. When this single rule was followed, statistics proved that those two "gold cars" sold quickly. Then the dealer could apply the kit to two more cars and generate even more sales. The Gold Kit made a car special. Making sure that no more than two cars had the kit at any one time made those cars appear very limited indeed.

This same technique of showmanship has applications to the training room too!

When using **giveaways**, you can increase their value by not having enough for everyone. Then automatically causes each giveaway to have a greater perceived value.

You might consider ways in which people might qualify for your training courses (prerequisites, etc.). If that were a possibility, it would give those who attend your courses greater **prestige**.

UNITY
-Making The Pieces Fit-

Try this multi-phase experiment the next time you watch a late night talk show.

PHASE ONE

Watch the first half of the monologue with the sound off. Try and determine what the host is like by only observing his clothing, gestures, and other body language. Make a list of his perceived qualities (i.e. introverted/extroverted; flashy/conservative; rich/poor; caring/unconcerned; comfortable/ill at ease; involved/aloof; sophisticated/down home; etc) .

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PHASE TWO

Taking the list in hand turn up the sound and turn your back to the screen. Listen to his voice for the remainder of the monologue. Does his voice, word choices, and content selection cause you to add any **personality** qualities to your previous list? Delete any?

PHASE THREE

Finally watch the remainder of the show with your new list and see if he does or says anything in the remainder of the show that contradicts any of those personality qualities you've already listed.

You will undoubtedly find great unity between the host's clothing, mannerisms, walk, voice, and vocabulary.

It's that unity that has helped make him a star!

On the other hand, have you ever heard a DJ on the radio and then were shocked when you saw them in person? "They sure don't look like their voice," you maybe said.

The radio can tolerate great incongruency between a person's appearance and their voice. Television and live presentations can not.

I once saw a magician who came on stage and performed a very sophisticated silent magic act -- producing doves, cards and coins to the strains of classical music. He wore a black tuxedo and really looked the part of the magician. Following his silent act of manipulation, he reached into his pockets, began to talk -- making balloon animals for children in the audience. I felt the audience squirm as he began this section.

I believe that due to the difference between his sophisticated manipulations and his down home balloon work with the children, the audience felt that one of these two vastly different performing personae must be false.   Once that thought enters an audience's mind, it always begins to affect an audience's **security** and trust in the performer. As a result, the group doesn't let go and enjoy the performance as much as they would if they trusted him more. I believe that for the sake of this important issue of unity, that magician should not try and combine the two performance styles of sophistication and children's entertainer. Possibly he could have different shows featuring each of the performance styles or by rethinking his **character development**, he could develop a performing character broad enough in **personality** to embrace both styles of performance.

If we are to obtain and maintain the trust of our participants, these are six arenas in which we must present ourselves with unity:

CHARACTER
Which of your personality qualities do you want your participants to see?

COSTUMING
Do your clothing selections match the description of your character?

SCRIPTING
Do your word choices correspond to the description of your character?

VOICE
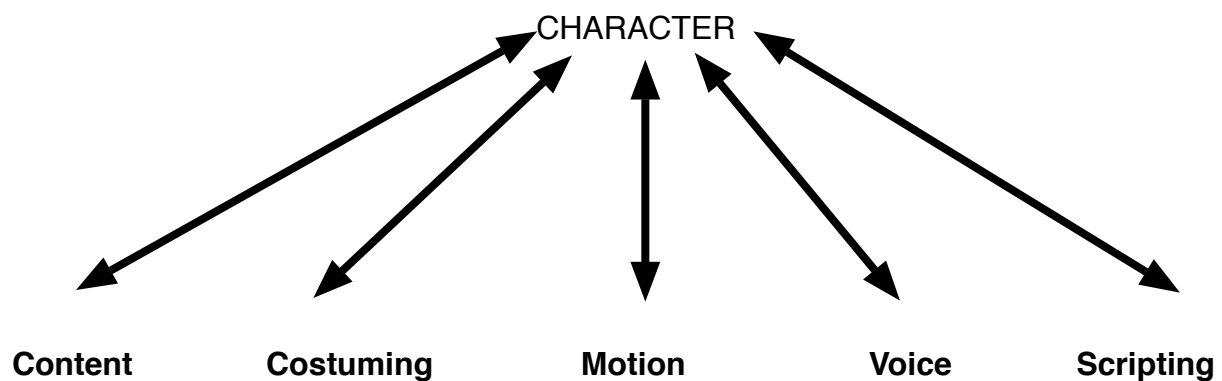Does your voice support the character you've chosen to be?

MOTION
Do you walk and gesture in keeping with the qualities you've chosen to project?

CONTENT
Would someone with the character you're seeking to portray
believably train in your content area?

Here's how this process looks in diagram form!

CHARACTER

Content   **Costuming**   **Motion**   **Voice**   **Scripting**

The five aspects of content, costuming, motion, voice, and scripting (vocabulary) all
support your training character -- projecting your persona with a unified and conse-
quently trustworthy image.

How can you best judge your own unity of presentation?
Videotape yourself during a training session and run the experiment from the beginning
of this chapter with you as the subject!
Any lack of unity will quickly become apparent!

UNPREDICTABILITY
-Using Surprise For Impact-

When I was taking college classes, I spent a good deal of time doodling on pieces of paper while the professor lectured to the class. One of my doodles looked like this:

It was my visual depiction of boredom. If we label the lines, it looks like this:
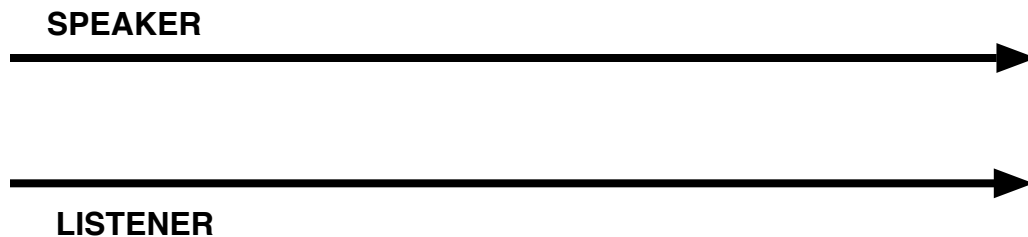
SPEAKER

LISTENER

The listener hears the nature of the topic, anticipates what the speaker is going to say, and the speaker says exactly what the listener predicted! Two parallel lines reaching on into eternal boredom!

From time to time I did get to hear interesting speakers. I diagramed their presentations like this:
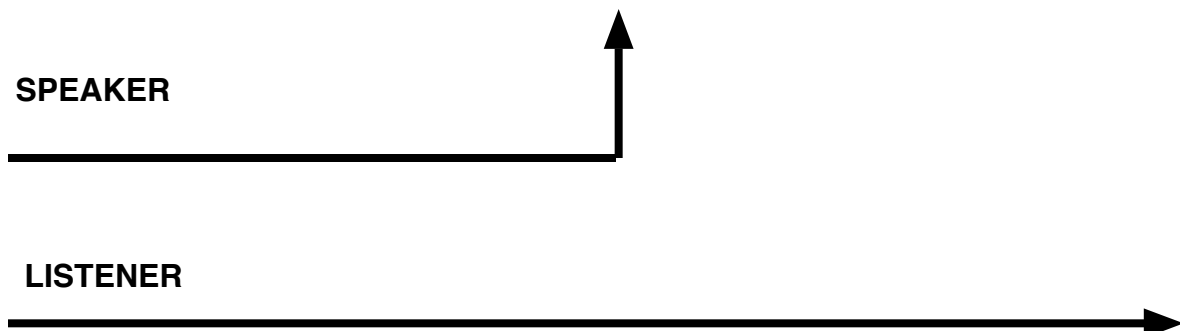
SPEAKER

LISTENER

Here the listener tries and anticipates the speaker (we all do). However, the speaker takes a turn that the listener had not anticipated! We love it!

It's the heart of every great joke!

Do you remember when you first heard the joke "What's black and white and red all over?" You thought and you thought. When someone finally told you the answer was "a newspaper." You thought back to the question and understood that the words "red" and "read" had tricked you and you laughed your heartiest kindergarten laugh!

However, the second time you heard the joke, you didn't laugh. It had become predictable. The lines had once again become parallel. Until someone came up with the new punch line of "a sunburned zebra!" Then you laughed again!

This is what keeps comedy writers in business.

To watch Bob Pike use his *Trainer Bingo* in a large unsuspecting group of trainers is indeed a lesson in the power of unpredictability. Each person receives a bingo card and begins to play what appears to be a regular game of Bingo. Bob calls the numbers and people are crossing off different ones on different cards. However, the specially designed cards make it possible for Bob to call one number that will cause the entire room to "bingo" at the same time! When they all jump up and shout "bingo," the energy of unpredictability needs no further discussion.

We pay millions of dollars to have skilled performers treat us to unpredictability in movies, plays, and comedy monologues around the nation.

Let's use this powerful force in our training rooms too!

Use the following questions to better understand the expectations of your participants:

      How do your participants expect you to open your training?

      _____

      When do they expect you to go to break?

      _____

      How do they expect the room to be arranged for their training?

      _____

How do they expect you to be dressed as their trainer?

_____

What do they expect you to serve or not serve for break refreshments?

_____

What audio visual aids do they expect you to use or not use?

_____

How do they expect you to close your training session?

_____

What could you do differently in any of the above areas to create an energized atmosphere of unpredictability?

_____

Unpredictability successfully used always generates disequilibration among your participants. And that's a good thing too! By keeping the group "off balance" never knowing exactly what's coming next, you help maintain teachability in the classroom. **Predictability** breeds unteachability.

Watch the late night talk shows to understand the balance and find just the right amount of unpredictability. Each show has found a tried and proven format that works for them in the light of their host's personality and strengths. They follow that format formula every night of the week!

However, within that **routining** they also have ample room for unpredictability every night of the week!

So do you!

UNVEILING
-Lifting The Curtain-

The sculptor has finished the work. The new piece of art is about to be unveiled. A hush falls over the crowd as the covering is removed.   People gasp as they see the finished work for the very first time!

We love the removal of coverings!

We love unveilings!

What does an unveiling silently communicate? Doesn't it tell us that we are about to see something valuable and out of the ordinary? After all we don't throw a covering over our kitchen table and unveil it before every meal.

I'm convinced that when someone comes through a curtain from **backstage** to begin a performance, they are actually being unveiled much like that sculpture with all of the importance associated with any unveiling.

Could the famous host just be sitting in the audience at the beginning of the late night talk show -- walking from the audience to the stage? Sure! Would we like it as much? Not a chance!

We love unveilings!

What could you "unveil" in your training process?

Unveil your material. Rather than distributing your printed workbook materials to people as they enter the room or even having already at their place. Make the distribution of that material a ceremony! Bring the material forward and ceremoniously present it to your participants only when you're ready for them to have it. Even then only give them those materials they absolutely need for that particular part of the class. Why not cover your material with a bed sheet or large tablecloth until you're ready to distribute it? Treat your printed materials with value and you'll be amazed how quickly the group picks up on your attitude.

Unveil your content. Rather than having a workbook that is so complete that anyone could know your content by simply reading the workbook, have blanks that need to be filled in as you go along. Have entire pages in outline form only.

Unveil your transparencies. Don't flash the entire transparency on the screen at once. When appropriate, use a piece of paper to cover some of the information and then ceremoniously remove the coverings as you reveal more and more of your main emphases.

Unveil your props. Every time a training group returns from a break they should see something different in the front of the room (**The Trainer's Stage**). Some of the materials they had seen should be put away (because you're done with them) and new materials should be out (because you're about to use them). Many trainers unfortunately set everything out at the beginning of the session and wait to put everything away until the end. Silently that communicates that there really isn't anything very special about any of it!

Unveil your flip charts. Don't have an important flip chart in front of the participants before you're ready to use it. Instead prepare it ahead of time -- flipping the prepared sheet over the back of the flip chart. Then you can ceremoniously flip it over to the front when you're ready for all to see it.

Unveil your room. Whenever there is room for your early arrivers to congregate outside the room, open the doors no more than thirty minutes before the training begins. When people have a chance to sit in a room for forty-five minutes or longer principles of **attention management** tell us that the room is no longer fresh. Your participants want to see in the room so build anticipation and keep the sight of the room fresher longer!

<div align="center">

Next time you train, try an unveiling!
You'll immediately feel its power!

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VARIETY
-Breaking Boredom-

Reflect for a moment on a late night talk show.
Try and isolate all the ways in which they seek to introduce variety
into what is a rather firm nightly format.

Here's the list I made.

LOCATION. The **scenery** changes. Sometimes they're inside the studio, sometimes outside. Sometimes they're on the stage and sometimes they're in the audience.

MUSIC. Moods are created and dismantled as various **music** styles, tempo, and volumes are interspersed throughout the show.

SPECIAL FEATURES. These include the monologue, skits, **props**, **audience involvement**, film clips, **giveaways**, dialogues, demonstrations, and guest interviews.

LIGHTING. Sometimes its full bright and sometimes it's subdued. Sometimes it has **color**. Sometimes it's pure white.

TEMPO. Whether the speed of delivery is fast or slow, the **tempo** fits the content and typically sits in **contrast** to the other sections of the show surrounding it.

A trainer has all of these components and more at their disposal too!
How many do you use in your training?

WARM-UP
-Breaking The Ice-

No late night talk show would think about going on the air without a warm-up. A trainer mustn't consider doing so either.

Pat Hazell, a friend of mine, has worked as a warm-up act for many of the current television comedies. In preparing this book I called him for an interview about his experiences in this line of work.

He tells me that fifteen minutes before the start of a show he would step out in front of the audience and welcome them -- seeking to accomplish two goals:

>   *Transform the audience from feeling like a group of individuals
>   into feeling like a single unit; and

>   *Cause the audience to feel that they were part
>   of the team that was about to make the show a
>   success.

He would begin with some small talk and jokes believing that sharing the common experiences of laughter and interaction caused the audience to feel like a unit.

Then he would introduce the main star of the show. As the star talked with the audience and shared some **vulnerability**, the audience began to feel more and more like part of the team with the host and the rest of the cast.

Unfortunately, there just aren't enough training warm up acts to go around. The trainer must do his/her own. However, if the trainer merely starts the training session on time, it's too late.

Here's what I try to do. Fifteen minutes before the official opening of the session, I walk around the room and meet the early participants individually. Then when I have about five minutes until the start of the session, I place a project or brainteaser transparency on the overhead for table teams to work on together -- offering a prize **giveaway** for the tables that successfully complete the assignment.

I'm amazed at the difference this warm up makes! I no longer have that loss of energy that comes when early attenders arrive and just sit around reading the newspaper with nothing to do. When the official starting time arrives, I'm now finding myself facing a group of trainees that at the very least is sympathetic with me as I begin the training session. At the very most the initial inertia has been overcome and we're rolling.

If I find myself among a group of participants that seem cold or distant, I'll grab a box of rubber bands fifteen minutes before the official start and begin to distribute them from table to table. People will invariably make some comment about shooting the rubber bands, and I'll banter back. Then when I begin the session by having them take their rubber band and learn a magic trick, we're off and running!

I now finally plan my warm-up as thoroughly as I plan my session!
Give it a try!

THE LATE NIGHT TALK SHOW TRAINING GUIDE

TOPIC	DISCOVERY QUESTIONS
PRE-SHOW CONSIDERATIONS	
PUBLICITY	Before you turn on the show, make a list of what you expect from the show. From what sources did you generate those expectations?
PRINTED PROGRAMS	If you wanted to learn more about the show, the host, or the guests, where would you look?
PREDICTABILITY	What elements are the same in the show nearly every evening? Is this good?
REHEARSAL	What parts in the show do you imagine they rehearse? Why not rehearse all the parts?
THE TICKET	Why do you believe people are willing to stand in line for hours to get a ticket to be in the studio audience? What gives that ticket value?
THE SHOW'S SETTING	
COLOR	What colors do you see in the set design and the host's clothing? What colors don't you see? Why?
BACKSTAGE	Why does a show have a "backstage?" Why is it a big deal to get to go "backstage?"
SCENERY	Try and describe the talk show's background scenery from memory. Then watch the show and fill in the details. What does the scenic background add to the show?
THE SHOW'S HOST	
PERSONALITY	What about the host's personality makes you like this talk show over another?

TOPIC	DISCOVERY QUESTIONS
Character Development	List the host's main personality qualities along with what you see that makes you believe each quality is true.
Current	What about the host makes you believe that he has remained up-to-date?
Costuming	Turn off the sound so that you can concentrate only on the host's clothing. What do his clothes tell you about what he's like as a person?
Scripting	What do his choices of words tell you about himself as a person? At what grade level do you believe he speaks?
Unity	Compare the personality traits you listed under Character Development, Costuming, and Scripting. How similar are the lists? Different?
THE SHOW'S OPENING	
Warm Up	Why do you believe the host meets with the studio audience before the formal introduction?
Prestige	What would be lacking if the host came out with no introduction?
Unveiling	Why does the host walk out from backstage? Why doesn't he just sit in the audience and walk onstage?
Opening	What key components can you identify in the opening monologue?
Identification	How does the host help the audience identify more closely with him?
Vulnerability	In the opening monologue try and identify instances in which the host becomes emotionally vulnerable to the audience.
Security	What techniques do you see the host use to help the audience feel secure?

TOPIC	DISCOVERY QUESTIONS
Passion	When do you see the host express strong emotion during the opening monologue? What does this expression of passion add?
Motion	Turn the sound off and watch the host's movements on stage. Watch his facial expressions and the use of his body language. What observations do you make about the way he uses his body to communicate?
Humor	What do you learn about who the host is through his humor?
Timing	In the telling of his jokes listen for pauses before the punch lines. What difference does timing make in the success of failure of the joke?
Mistakes	When the host has a joke that doesn't go over, what observations do you make by observing how he recovers?
Hecklers	If someone begins to shout out comments from the studio audience, how does the host respond in order to not lose control?
Clarity	What techniques do you notice the host using to make sure that his jokes are clear enough to be understood by the majority of the audience?
Intrinsic Interests	How many of the jokes in the opening monologue were about topics already on the minds of the audience members?
Audience Energy	Listen to the host interrupt the laughter and applause of the audience. Why does he do that?
THE SHOW'S CONTENT	
Staging	How does the feeling of the show change as the host positions himself in different places on the stage?

TOPIC	DISCOVERY QUESTIONS
Pacing	Which parts of the show seem to go fast for you and which parts go slower? Why?
Routining	How would you list the parts to the typical routine followed by the talk show? Can you determine why they follow that same order night after night?
Progression	Did the show feel like it was "going somewhere?" Why or why not?
Flow	How smooth did the show seem to go? What gives a show that feeling of smoothness?
Variety	How did the show's producers keep variety in the show?
Contrast	In what parts of the show did you feel the most sense of contrast in speed of delivery, content, or volume?
Tempo	When did the host speed up the show and when did he move it at a more leisurely pace? Why?
Conflict/Resolution	What techniques did the host use to "make you care and then make you wait?"
Planned Spontaneity	When did you see the host act like an activity was a spur of the moment inspiration, but you knew that it probably wasn't? What was the audience's reaction to such apparent spontaneity?
Unpredictability	How did the host "keep you guessing" about what he was going to do next?
Audience Participation	List the different ways the host kept the audience involved throughout the different segments of the show.
Props	When the host utilized a prop in a comedy segment, what did that prop add to the show?

TOPIC	DISCOVERY QUESTIONS
Music	Take note of the different times music is used in the show. In each instance what did the music contribute?
Giveaways	What did the host use for audience giveaways? Why did the audience get excited about them?
Attention Management	When the host wanted the audience's attention focused, what techniques did you see him using? List as many as you can.
The Encore	Why are you glad you watched the Talk Show on this particular evening? What happened "extra" that you wouldn't have probably seen if you had watched another evening?
Closing	How did the host close the show? Why?
The Bow	When the host bows, what's he trying to tell his audience?