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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE
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INTRODUCTION TO ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Professor Edwin L. Stevens

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Reviewed by: Dr. Marlin S. Reichley

Date: 23 September 1960

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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12 September 1960

CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION--Dr. M. S. Reichley, Director of Instruction, Industrial College of the Armed Forces..... 1

SPEAKER--Professor Edwin L. Stevens, George Washington University..... 2

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Reviewed By: M. S. Reichley Date SEP 23 1960

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

INTRODUCTION TO ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

12 September 1960

DR. REICHLEY: Gentlemen, the subject this afternoon is "Introduction to Oral Communications."

I know we all recognize the fact that a man may have a lot of ideas, a lot of knowledge, and a lot of experience;but unless he has the capability of effectively communicating that knowledge to others, he might as well be a hermit, say, living at the South Pole. Recognizing this fact, consequently, the College has established public speaking classes for all students.

The first class begins the second period this afternoon. Classes will be held on Monday and Wednesday throughout the year, with one class meeting on Friday. The entire student body is organized into 10 classes, with about 15 students in each class; and each class meets for 10 sessions. We will use this auditorium and another room, and will alternate so that you all get experience in speaking from this platform.

A memorandum indicating which course you will take has already been distributed; so I don't need to go into that. I might add here, though, that the assignment to a public speaking class was based on your oral presentation subject assignment area. We tried to put those who will be giving their oral presentations early in the course in the earlier public speaking classes.

To assist us in learning more about effective oral communication, we have been very fortunate in obtaining the services of two well-qualified professors--first, Professor Henry D. Roberts, who is consultant to the

Se cretary of the Air Staff. Professor Roberts, will you take a bow, please? And Professor Edwin L. Stevens, of George Washington University. They alternate in presenting this introductory lecture each year, and it happens to be the turn this year of Professor Stevens.

Professor Stevens is also the co-author of a book, which we are asking you all to read before you take the course, called "You Can Talk Well."

Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a man who has a most outstanding capability, as you will rapidly learn, in this area.

Ed, it's all yours.

PROF. STEVENS: Thank you, Doc.

General Mundy and Gentlemen: For some seven times now, I think it is, it has been my privilege to confront a class here at the Industrial College; and each time heretofore I have lectured or talked, or whatever the proper word would be. I thought this afternoon that, rather than lay out for many of you who have probably been already exposed to a variety of public speaking courses in your earlier days of college or in the military services, it might profit us to tackle this from the point of view that we assume that you have had a lot of exposure to it already; and, instead, turn, as quickly as you will permit us to turn, to a question period designed to answer for you any questions that we can about the task that will confront you during the course of the year on this platform or elsewhere when you have to stand up and talk in public to any kind of audience. I am fully aware that the experience background of this group gives you a long time experience

and a lot of work in the area; and I thought perhaps it might be much more profitable, rather than to lecture today, to try to answer for you any kinds of questions that you have on your mind about specific tasks, either in the oral presentations or in any other aspect of public speaking. I'm not sure that I'll be able to answer them all; but if I can't, I will perhaps relay some of them down to my good friend Hank, who is smiling knowingly here; and if neither of us can answer the question, then we can refer you to somebody else who perhaps can.

With that very brief introduction, who is worried about coming up here later this year to make an oral presentation? What is your worry? Can we help you in any problem? Are there any questions?

QUESTION: Is it expected that we will use notes in the oral presentation, or do we have to speak without notes?

PROF. STEVENS: I can't talk for the standard operating procedure of the College in toto. I can speak for Professor Roberts and for me with respect to our classes, into which you will go subsequently.

It's our theory that you learn to think on your feet by thinking on your feet; and consequently, in practically all of our sessions we try to have you work without notes. As you move from one of the earlier short, two- to three-minute presentations, up to, I think both of us run, eight to ten minutes, for your last speech, and then into your OP, which runs about twelve to fifteen, we think that if you can get the sense of being up here or in front of any group for two to three minutes with no notes whatsoever, that when you do confront the longer presentation, it will be an easy thing for you

to check back to a note card, a few key words, that will embrace what you plan to say.

I promise you from my knowledge of the institution that you will have plenty of opportunity to dry-run these presentations before you give them. So that in the sense of your total and thorough preparation, a few key word notes really ought to be enough to get you through your OP. And I know Professor Roberts, or Hank, as I will call him, and my own philosophy is that you do a much better job of communicating orally if you stand out here in the middle, without any reference to manuscript, with minimum reference to notes, and simply talk.

I was privileged --to expand this one more point--to be in attendance at the dedication of this building last Tuesday. And, sitting just about where you are, I saw the President of the United States come to dedicate this building. I think you will all agree with me that the most effective part of his talk was the part where he took off his glasses, got out of that manuscript, and reminisced about his days back with the Assistant Secretary of War in what he called the early thirties. It's my feeling, and Hank's too, that just about anybody, providing he is thoroughly prepared, and talking about something that he knows, can do a better job of communicating if he doesn't tie himself to a script, if he doesn't tie himself to too many notes.

That may sound like Simon Legree trying to impose upon you a regimen for a class period. But, as we always say as we spank the child, or at least as I do when I spank any one of my boys, "This will be good

for you."

That's a long-winded reply. I hope it is, however, to the point.

QUESTION: I am just wondering whether you encourage or discourage for the OP's the use of graphic material.

PROF. STEVENS: Again, not speaking for the institution, but speaking from the point of view of the oral communication aspect, we encourage the use of graphic aids. In both our courses I'm sure you will have two or three opportunities to use them. One specific assignment will call for them.

On the other hand, I have heard it alleged here at the institution that in past years some folks have overused graphic aids to the extent that it seemed to be simply a catalog, and the fellow flipped pages or flashed on vugraphs as he went.

If the vugraph or if the graphic aid can assist, in fact, if the word "aid" visually can be applied to it, I am sure that any one of us in this field would recommend its use. Sometimes, however, the graphic aids can detract from the presentation. And if there are too many, or if they are too capricious or too frivolous, we recommend against them.

Speaking for Roberts and for Stevens, then, yes; we encourage their use, but not too many. Use them when they fit, but don't just use them for the sake of using them.

Does that represent institutional policy, Admiral Patrick?

ADMIRAL PATRICK: On the traveling seminar teams we have quite a few graphic aids. If it's up to an hour, we may have ten of them as our

average. But if we get too many of them, it's just like you say.

PROF. STEVENS: It begins to call attention to itself. I can give you one illustration of a general rule about not overusing these things. Ten years ago, in this very institution, we had in one of my classes the assignment to use a visual aid, an audeo visual aid; and the assignment also called for speech of definition. The man was to take a technical term, define it, and use a visual aid to help make clear the meaning of the term.

This fellow, who was at that time a naval captain--I'll use his name. His name was Alexander. Some of you may remember him here--brought to class with him three little rubber balloons; and he chose to define the technical engineering term "elastic limit." Well, he began his speech by walking out to the members of the audience and he passed out these three balloons; and he said to them, "Blow up these balloons."

Then he came back to the front of the auditorium, which was up there in the old building, in room 382 or 360--whatever it is--and he began this exposition defining the term "elastic limit."

Now, ponder this for a minute and you will realize that three people in that audience were immediately out of the category of listeners. Have you ever tried to blow up a balloon and listen to a speech at the same time? If you have children and you get one of these little things over at the Zoo, take it home sometime and try to blow up a balloon and listen to the television as you watch and sit there in front of it. Three people were out of the category of listener with that visual aid.

But that was only the beginning. One of the balloons was given to a fellow who sat relatively where Tom Sills sits with respect to me; and he began to blow up this balloon. I don't know what the dog-goned things were made of, but whatever the elastic limit is that approaches infinity, that's the substance that these balloons had. This guy blew the thing, and you know, when you start a balloon and you get a certain shot of air and you've got something that looks like a bologney, and then there's that long finger-like thing on the end that doesn't seem to get blown up quite so fast, and this is narrow, maybe half an inch and the rest of this is two or three inches. Well, Tom, as he shot his balloon up toward the speaker, brought that thing out four, five, six, seven, eight feet until literally the little tip-like thing on the end of it touched the nose of the speaker.

Well, that was only the beginning. The fellow who was seated back shot his to the pairs of shoulders of the men in front of him. Did you ever sit in an audience and have a balloon come by your shoulder and try to listen to a guy on the platform?

But that was only the very beginning, because the man that was way back there, where Colonel Burnside is, was a full Marine colonel by the name of Lashwell, a former graduate of this school; and, like all good Marines, trained in everything that a Marine should be trained in, including, one, radio code signals; and, two, knowledge that if you take a balloon up to about seven or eight feet, and then take it out of your mouth, that loose mouthpiece that's there, and move it back and forth like that and let out a little air, you can get a noise not unlike a radio code signal--one of these

things that comes out of the Sputniks and the satellites.

So Lash began to send little dot and dash messages back there. I knew the signal code and I could read this thing. He sent: "Dit-a-dit, da-da-da, dit-a-dit," which for those who don't know the Morse Code is "S-O-S." And, gentlemen, that more aptly describes the plight of the poor speaker up here than anything that I could say.

To this day, a decade later, I have not the slightest idea of what was in that speech defining the term "elastic limit," because the visual aids were so districting that they contributed not one whit to understanding the term. That's what we're talking about when we say that maybe ten per hour is enough, but for golly sakes, make sure they fit the speech and don't distract from what you're calling attention to.

QUESTION: Sir, you alluded to it several times, but I wonder if you can give us an idea of how the course will evolve and what the scope of it will be and so forth?

PROF. STEVENS: You mean the speech course as such?

QUESTION: Yes.

PROF. STEVENS: Hank, can I talk for you on this one, or are we different?

PROF. ROBERTS: Let's see what you say first.

PROF. STEVENS: In the opening session in my course the students will make a brief speech in which they introduce themselves. This is primarily to give us an opportunity to see you in action, and to find out something of your speaking experience.

In the second session we probably will have a technical term, of the kind that I referred to earlier, and you are to assume that you're speaking to a lay audience. In the governmental gobbledegook, in the military gobbledegook, we frequently find that you tend to use language which is clear to you, but not clear to those who may not be in the same shop. And because this is a very real problem--to communicate across echelons of this sort and outside the organization--we tackle it early.

There will be a visual aid speech; and on that one I think that Professor Roberts usually likes to have a how to do or make speech, and I do too. It need not then be connected with anything that you do here at the Industrial College in the form of content within the course. If, for example, you fancy yourself to be a mixer of dry martinis, than which there is no than-whicher, we would suggest that before that speech you bring along your bottle of gin, or if in spite of all the security regulations to the contrary, you use vodka for your martinis, bring the vodka. If you military people and State Department people and Intelligence people put any vermouth into your martinis, bring the little bit of vermouth that you do put in, bring the shaker, bring the ice, and go through the process of actually showing how that's made.

Last year one of my students showed how to make pancakes. He was over in Auditorium A, that beautiful auditorium to which we referred to at lunch; and he got everything beautifully arranged for that speech. He plugged in his griddle and it warmed up during the rehearsal. But over on that stage in Auditorium A there apparently is one dummy plug; and when the good

captain came to his portion of the speech where he plugged it in for the real thing, he hit the dummy plug instead of the live plug. And as he developed his how to make pancakes, and put that spatula underneath, have you ever seen a spatula underneath--boom--what a mess!

But a visual aid talk is one of things that we very often have.

I don't know whether Roberts does it, but I do it--an impromptu speech. For this one we bring along 3 by 5 cards. Each man in turn will be invited to come to the front, pick up a 3 by 5 card, on which there will be a subject. He will turn that card over, study it for about twenty seconds, and then he will be expected to present a beautifully prepared and impeccably delivered speech. Some of you act from your reaction as if you don't think that's going to happen. But wait until the end of that session before you determine whether it can be done.

A very real problem in any speaking situation is the ability to tell a good story, not an off-color story, but one that really makes the point. I think both of us use the so-called ? approach, which you will understand when we explain it in the course; and we develop an assignment around story telling. I don't know whether Hank does this, but in order to make sure that the stories don't become the wrong kind, I always limit my stories to an audience that would be, oh, let's say, Baptist ministers' wives. If the story is clean enough for them, it'll be clean enough for the particular occasion in my course.

Hank, I suppose that's true with you too?

PROF. ROBERTS: I do not put that limitation on.

PROF. STEVENS: We have also a manuscript talk. We recognize, in spite of my answer to your query earlier, that sometimes you must write out your speech and then read it. And, again, the ability to get it down in black and white, and then to take it from the paper and communicate it, is a quite different ability from that of extemporizing. So we work on the preparation and the presentation of a manuscript speech.

We also have a longer talk, in which you begin to make some application in many cases of the actual materials of your OP. And if you want in our course to dry-run that, get suggestions for organization, get an initial reaction to what you are doing, the course is frequently used to get an initial impression for the preparation of that assignment.

I also have one or two talks in which there is a question period, and we make that just as nasty, as searching, if you will, and unpleasant as we can, on the theory that if you can handle yourself in that kind of question period, then the normal audience reaction in the question periods will be much easier for you.

There's one other thing that I throw in--I don't know whether Hank does or not--and that is a speech of introduction. We feel that this is a much-maligned, mayhem, brutally murder speech in American public life. Unlike the short and to-the-point job which Doc did here today, I so frequently here: "Ladies and Gentlemen: We are fortunate to have with us this afternoon a man who needs no introduction," followed by five minutes of what you've just said the guy doesn't need--"Our speaker is eminently qualified. He's this, he's that, he's the other thing. And now to present

to you--" Then the guy has to go over and read from his paper who this is.

So we have some strong notions about how this should be done and how it should not be done; and those will be presented and, we hope, exemplified in your job of introducing each other in the course.

QUESTION: During the last week end I read a book on how to talk. In it there was a suggestion, "Know your audience." Have you any suggestions on how to do that?

PROF. STEVENS: Did you all hear his question? He alleged or allowed as how during the week end he had read in the text that the speaker should know his audience, and his query then was, How do you get to know your audience? and, I presume, What should you know about them?

Well, speaking very generally about audience analysis, the more you can know, the better. If, for example, you know that you're going into a group which is like this one--with a great deal of background in speaking, with a military common denominator and many other governmental activities--all these things count.

The age differential makes quite a factor of difference. If you've got high school kids, for example, they'll attend to one thing which a more mature audience will not perhaps attend. The more, then, that you can know about the specific group in terms of talking its interest, and using examples which fit it, the better that speech is likely to be.

Wholly apart now from using a fantastic example, it makes a difference whether your audience understands English. Literally, if you were all Greeks, for example, and I talked only English and you could not understand English, I couldn't communicate. But in the sense, then, of knowing

what that group does speak--economically, politically, militarily, socially, and all these other factors--anything you can find out, the better.

Now, these are psychological things, if you will. It makes also a big difference, the physical setup of your room. I find, for example, that it's exceedingly tough to talk to any audience at this specific time of day. It's about one thirty to two thirty that I will be here; and whereas the Latin Americans are smart about this and officially go home and take a siesta, not we efficient Americans. Instead, we come into a beautifully appointed room of this type, soft, plush seats; we've been over to the Club and we've gone through two or three good sandwiches, and maybe some other of this wonderful meal; and we proceed to take unofficially the siesta that the Latin Americans are smart enough to go home and take.

Now, I'm aware that some of you here this afternoon are having a little bit of difficulty staying awake at this precise moment. And part of the audience analysis, then, is, What time of day, how many people, and all the other things that go into it.

Now, as you plan any presentation, you plan it in terms of making it to the specific group. And the more you can find out about them, the better.

We could cite many more specifics, but does that give you an indication of what you wanted to know?

QUESTION:

PROF. STEVENS: Yes.

QUESTION:

PROF. STEVENS: We hope you'll get to it.

QUESTION: It occurred to me that in our time here, so far as the people who have appeared so far on this stage--and I won't mention any names--there perhaps is something inherent in the nature of speakers who either are or have been college professors which makes it impossible for them to make a good speech. It seems to me perfectly amazing that people in this field could not speak more effectively. Is there anything in the make-up of this character or type that makes it impossible for these people to speak effectively?

PROF. STEVENS: Well, not blanketly to indict the members of my profession, the college professor, no. I don't think that you can say that all the members of any one profession are either good or bad. Like anything else that you could do in life, this is, in part at least, a skill. You must have something to say; and if you have something to say, you proceed from there to try to organize it in such fashion, knowing your audience--going back, sir, to your question--so that you can establish a connection betwen what you're talking about and the group to whom you're speaking.

Now, in the sense of practicing communication, you can practice this, just as you can practice putting the shot or putting the golf ball. And after you do enough of it in terms of developing a certain amount of skill, no matter how bad you may be at the outset, granted that you've got vocal equipment and that you have a bodily organic structure that permits you to make enough noise to be heard, granted that you have the endowment to begin with and they're not disordered in any fashion, this can be learned.

Indeed, at one time there was not a single person in this room who

could say one word. When you got to be about one year of age, you could say maybe about fifteen or sixteen words, unless you were very precocious. You learned oral communication as you grew up.

And if you talked in Mississippi, you talked with one kind of set of noises; and if you talked in Boston, you talked with another set of noises. And in terms of the sounds that you make, the environment in which you were reared conditions the way in which you will present yourself. Blanketly, it's my experience that southern folks generally are inclined to a softer and a slower presentation. It's not universally true, but New York City people are more likely to be rapid; and to have, if they come from a certain section of New York City, a Williamsburg or Greens Pernt type of accent. This grows out of the environment.

Sure. Anybody can learn this activity with practice. Yet, even at this level, I hear men again and again, year in and year out, say that they would rather face bullets, that they would rather go down in the deepest submarine that's ever gone down than come up on this platform and make a speech. They fear it; and partially, I suspect, they fear it because they have not had the kind of experience that forces them to do it.

This can be learned. And in all seriousness, speaking to you as a group, which may have individuals that have the same kind of reaction implied by your question—at least I'm reading it in--yet the college professor could be taught how to do a more effective job. And maybe there are some of us who need a great deal of work in that field.

ADMIRAL PATRICK: I would like to go back again to a little session

that we had as we came out of the faculty lounge, and I think this happens quite frequently. Could you tell me a little bit about how to get started when you get up there, because that's so very important and sometimes when I get up there, I try to speak so hard that I'm not sure I heard my first sentence.

PROF. STEVENS: Yes, Admiral Patrick. I think stage fright, to use one word to describe this, is a fairly universal phenomenon. Yes. I was nervous. I think General Mundy was the one who--I will use Dizzy Dean's words--plugged that question at me as we came out of the doorway.

Sure. I never confront any audience, like this one at least--I think back sometimes after I've met a class eight or ten times, I walk in without much apprehension. But a new group, yes; I have tension, and I expect to have it, and that's the first answer to the problem.

It's a universal phenomenon. I know of nobody who, when he confronts a really important speaking situation, doesn't have some tension. The more important the speech to you, the more likely you are to tighten up.

Now, with respect to handling it, I think, Admiral Patrick, one thing is to recognize that this will occur. And, going from there, analyzing it in terms of not only its normalcy but its naturalness. It is caused by reason of certain bodily reactions that take place. You go to the Harvard Universith Physiology Department and their theory on it is that when a human being confronts an emergency situation, he needs extra energy to get himself through that emergency; and, consequently, from the adrenalin system he builds up certain chemicals which help him through that emergency.

Those of you with battle experience know what it's like. Anybody

who has played in an Army-Navy football game or in high school on that Thanksgiving type affair, knows exactly the kind of feeling, or who has come out on this platform on many occasions. It's a bodily reaction. We all get it.

And my point is, unless you get rid of that energy in a purposeful way, put it to work for you, it's bound to come out indirectly in negative reactions--coughing, fumbling, and fidgeting.

Now, I'll show you a few of the things that speakers actually do. One, they get into a good crap game--not this audience; I have misused my analysis here--they get into a good poker game. You fellows never play in a crap game. They get a good collection of coins. And all the way through the opening part of their speech they let everybody know that they got this collection of coins. Ever seen that? It's just a way of letting off energy.

Or, better yet, like the college professor who was referred to, they sometimes get into this sort of thing (demonstrating); and as they go back and forth running off their energy, combining this with the two o'clock hour, that siesta period, they literally hypnotize their group. I had some of you worried about how quickly you would go to sleep when I do that.

When I was an undergraduate in college at Rutgers University, I had a Greek professor who went the other way. William Hamilton Kirk, a magnificent man, eighty-five when I had him. And I'll swear, he wore suction cups on the soles of his shoes. He could lean farther forward without actually falling than any man I have ever known. And this was his

way of letting off energy.

When I don't have ladies in the class, I sometimes refer to this distracting position as the urinal stance. When I do have them in the class, I sometimes use the same expression.

In short, what you're doing is calling attention to your mannerisms instead of to what you are saying.

How do you get rid of it? Well, Admiral, one thing you can do, in the early part of your speech, is to design some kind of gimmick which will force you to do something to get rid of that tension in a purposeful way. A simple example--a visual aid. You walk out and you hold up something. The mere fact that you walk, that you hold, occupies some of that energy, or dissipates some of that energy.

One of the very best examples that I have ever seen of a man who uses this technique beautifully is Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. How many of you have ever seen Bishop Sheen talk? Can I get a rough reaction? O.K. I will guarantee that every one of you who ever saw him speak use this--he walks out, and after a moment or two of initial warm-up, he proceeds from the center of the platform clean across the stage to whatever is over here in the way of a blackboard, writes down on the blackboard the subject and the main points that he's going to cover, puts down the piece of chalk, and before he says another word, walks all the way back to the center of the stage.

Now, please, if you quote Stevens on this example, do not say that Stevens says that Bishop Sheen does this because he's nervous. I don't say

that. I do say this: Were Bishop Sheen nervous, how better could be cover it than by this beautiful walk, by this physical activity, which is coordinated and purposeful and will lend something to the speech; and then he comes on back and develops his talk from there on through.

One other minor point: If you talk a little more forcefully, with a little more volume, at the start of your speech, you are more likely to use up that energy quickly. Most people tell me that it's that initial talk, Admiral, the first couple of minutes, and after that they're O.K. What they have said in essence is: "After I use up my excess energy by doing something for a couple of minutes, I calm down." And what I've tried to suggest is that if you purposefully do something in the early part of your speech, you're more likely to bring that mind and body into concert fairly quickly, instead of protracting it for four, five, or six minutes.

The psychological part of it takes much longer to develop, but here we fear things; and most of the time the things we fear don't happen. And, secondly, even when they do, we can overcome them if we just keep on plugging. Even when we feel exceedingly embarrassed in front of an audience, because we've blanked out, or forget, most of the time the audience is not aware that you are in trouble and then, almost universally, when they are aware of it, that the speaker is in trouble on the platform, their reaction is not one of "Hot dog. See that poor devil," but "Gee, that's awful" and you can almost in an audience feel the kind of empathetic response that they suffer as the speaker himself is suffering. And if you can remember that, that the audience is likely to be with you at such a time and not against

you, that may help too.

QUESTION: Following up that last statement you made, What is your practice in opening a speech to an audience that you know are waiting for you; in other words, they are hostile to you?

PROF. STEVENS: Well, this really gets into an exceedingly involved concept of the audience analysis factor which was raised earlier.

If, for example, you are aware that they are so hostile that to express your point of view at the outset will get you as it did John Henry Wallace in the deep South in 1948--rotten tomatoes and rotten eggs --then I would suggest that you not make the speech at all.

If your reaction is that this audience is loaded to the extent that they are captive and have to be polite, then you still have the problem of trying to get them to some kind of sympathy with you as an individual. And there are a great many occasions when a man can, by an appeal to any one of the things that make us human beings, establish some rapport on that score.

Dr. Harry Overstreet, whose name I am sure is familiar to all of you for his wonderful late book on "What we Must Know About Communism," wrote a wonderful little book 35 years ago, way back in 1924 or 5, called, "Influencing Human Behavior." And his point in that book, taken in one of the series of points that he makes about public speech, is the so-called "Yes response" technique. If you can get an audience to say "Yes" to a

series of simple propositions--"Is your name Such-and-such? Are you an American?" et cetera--then you are more likely to get some kind of attentive and responsive hearing when you do move into an area with which they disagree. So that is an attack.

And, lastly, recognize that very frequently an audience will simply tune out when it hears a point of view which is antithetical to its own. They simply sit and don't listen.

My wonderful father, who was born in that section of upstate New York where to be anything except white, Protestant, and Republican was to have been born into original sin, back in the days when a guy named Roosevelt used to be President of the United States--do you remember him?--would not permit the radio to be tuned into a speech made by F.D.R. in our home. The only reason I found out there was a guy named Roosevelt was that I heard him in a ? one time.

On the serious side, lots of folks will simply not listen; and if you have that kind of an audience, really there's not very much that you can do. If, however, you think you can get a hearing, don't waste time getting to your point, state it, and do the best you can to develop cogent reasoning around your position, and hope for the best.

CAPT. BURKY: I am disappointed when a supposedly expert speaker starts by apologizing for his lack of knowledge of the subject and says, besides, that it is so broad that he could not even attempt to cover it in 45 minutes--then goes ahead and speaks anyway. Please tell us what a speaker's attitude should be toward his assignment.

PROF. STEVENS: Yes. I have strong feelings on that.

First, he should not apologize, either for himself or for his subject. I have heard some, apparently like you, who will take fifteen minutes to explain why thirty minutes is not enough time to cover the subject. Those fifteen minutes might more properly be spent developing the subject.

And the second point, with respect to your attitude, this very frequently suggests so completely negative an approach that the audience is tuned out before you begin. You only began, Captain Burky, with one reference to "I'm not qualified to discuss the subject. My boss was supposed to come. He couldn't make it, so he sent poor little old me. I didn't have time to prepare it, and I don't know enough about it even if I did have time to prepare it," et cetera.

Hank always likes to suggest: "I've got a little head cold here today. As a matter of fact, I'm a little hung over" and other such sentences, all of which are so negative that, to me, they should be left out.

After an introduction, which can be any one of a variety of things, get to the point of your material and develop it, and use all thirty minutes, if you can, if that's your time limit, to develop the one or two points that you want to make.

I cannot, however, guarantee that that won't occur here on some other occasion.

QUESTION: My question has to do with the use or non-use of the rostrum.

PROF. STEVENS: Yes. And I think you will find that Roberts and I will take you away from that thing, which I call the lecturn and not the rostrum, by the way; and make you speak from out here three or four times, on the theory that if you can familiarize yourself with the platform, with no crutch, that it's a very easy thing to learn to use when you turn to it.

There are occasions, yes. Certainly, if you are using a manuscript, you want something to lay it on. If you have rather heavy notes, and you are not at all ashamed of the fact that you have notes, you put them on the desk. And you don't do, as I have seen some speakers do--come up here and have them sort of palmed, try to fool you that they're not using notes.

And, lastly, yes. A great many auditoriums are so set up that this thing is out here in the middle and you just naturally go to it and talk from behind it. If, however, you feel that you can leave it, don't hesitate to walk from behind it out to the side of the thing. Come on out here. You can speak without any problem of this kind. But I do think that if you do get into this sort of position, that it doesn't become negative. This is almost too relaxed (demonstrating). This reminds me of the ancient Greeks, who used to lie on the couch and cut roast beef with one hand as it was handed to them and drink with the other. You get too informal about the thing.

I also thank you for the comment about my intelligence. I came out into this Donna this morning, and, like many of you, walked not a great distance but enough so that, knowing I had to go elsewhere and couldn't get any change, it was one of the things, General Mundy, that had me nervous. I'm glad to know that this ?

QUESTION: The military seem to use many ingenious devices for cue cards. You will find mirrors along the foot of the stage and so forth. What are your feelings on these?

PROF. STEVENS: You are calling them cue cards. I call them "notes." I have no objection at all to notes. I do think, though, that it's with ill grace that you try to conceal the fact that you have them.

I have watched television now for upwards of a decade, and I don't believe there are more than one or two men in the whole business who can fool you about whether or not they are reading a script. If, like me, you were fortunate enough to see the two political conventions--and I'll keep this non-political--both the Democrats and the Republicans, speaker after speaker, went through the fol-de-rol of posture and all that sort of thing, trying to indicate that they were speaking without notes or without script. And I don't believe they fooled anybody.

So, if you use them, I think that you don't have to go to a lot of indirect--I am not quite sure of what noun to put in here--artifices. If you have notes, use them.

Yes. The so-called cue cards and any one of a number of a variety of other note devices that you use as a visual aid--you'll see countless

examples of it before you're through this year. And it's a very effective technique. It helps you, and it very often helps the audience. But it can be overdone.

But a guy who has problems of myopia, or as you get toward my age, the other problem, you've to hold the thing way out here, and sometimes you get into all sorts of trouble.

The Vice President of the United States--and I'll just say it indirectly here--I consider to be one of the most effective communicators that we have--even went so far on one closed-circuit broadcast as to read the little top notes that were on the script. "Speed it up," he said, or something of that type. "The program is lagging down here." This was a little note.

I'm sorry I don't have one on Kennedy; but if I watch him long enough, I bet I'll get one.

QUESTION: Sir, I have heard some speakers who quote at length from authorities and others who give a thirty or forty-minute speech and never quote any authorities. Do you have any comment on that?

PROF. STEVENS: A quote is simply one of the ways that you have of adding interest or adding a bona fide approach to what you are discussing.

Now, an authority--the fellow who knows more about it than anybody else--probably doesn't have to quote. But if he is discussing something where he refers to other people, then it's an effective tool. And a quotation, aptly used, can not only add authority, but it can also add interest.

When Stevens, for example, brings in the name of Bishop Sheen,

or brings in the name of Winston Churchill, or the name of Nixon or the President or any one of a variety of other people to whom I have referred, those names add interest.

Every study that was ever done indicates that human interest comes from humor. So that when you do cite references, they have a certain attention-getting and a certain interest-adding factor. This, however, can be overdone. And if you extend the quotation so it's hard to tell where the man begins and quote ends and the man begins again, there are certain problems.

So, if you use quotes, make them end. Don't make them too long. And by all means, when you do quote somebody, give credit to the quote. If you quote it without an attribution, wholly apart from the moral problem involved here, there's actually a legal aspect to it, and you may get in trouble on that score.

Yes, I think a good quote--Hank, wouldn't you buy that?--can be an effective tool in adding interest and getting attention?

PROF. ROBERTS: If you limit it, as you have.

QUESTION: What is your advice on the use of gestures?

PROF. STEVENS: My old teacher used to say: "There are thirteen rules for making gestures." I don't remember the first twelve, but the last one was, "Never make a gesture. Gestures should make themselves."

Now, as you get a certain affinity on the platform, you will tend to use gestures. Again and again, as a classroom device--and I suspect this will actually be told on some of you--so watch out for it--a student will

say, "I can't use these things" and I always say, "What did you say?" "What do you mean?" He will say, "I can't use these things." And then I have a guy explain to me, using gestures all the way, that he can't use gestures. If I take his mind off the fact that he is gesturing and he begins to accept the fact that he is communicating, he's all right.

Too many of them, obviously, begin to call attention to themselves. I have a possibility now of getting Mr. Kennedy into it. Mr. Kennedy has rather a sharp gesture, the only one I've seen him make. Incidentally, there was another Democratic President some time ago--wait a minute. I've misphrased this thing--there was another Democrat, who was a President some time ago, who had the same problem. Remember the other Democrat who was always going that way (gesturing)? If you're President, you should vary your gestures. You've got to change the thing. Ever thereafter Mr. Truman did, and it became --- (loud laughter).

I stopped trying to teach gestures about twenty years ago. Way, way back, when I was coaching an intercollegiate debate at Rutgers, I had a kid who was in his first debate. And at one place in his speech he said, "On the one hand" and I thought "Hot dog. A point. On the one hand. Hold your arm up." And then, of course, the opposite, on the other hand. "Do that." And this was, as I say, a long, long time ago, way, way back. I have never done it since, because, under the kind of tension that has been referred to here today, this lad came out and he got to that section "On the one hand" and he proceeded to develop that point for whatever time it took him-- forty-five seconds or a minute--"On the other hand" and he

got the other hand out there. All of a sudden he saw these things, and that's what brought them down.

You can't teach this thing. It has to come out of your own being.

QUESTION: You made some comment about the long speech -- the four-hour lecture. Are there any special ideas that you can give us on those longer talks?

PROF. STEVENS: The one big point that I would make is that a long speech, to use your figure, is simply a collection of short units. We made this point with regard earlier to the idea of getting you out here to think on your feet. There really is no such thing as 60 minutes of material which is not ? That is, you have in a 60-minute talk--I think Hank suggests and I would certainly buy some figure around three or four or five--main ideas which you can hope to get through--not much more than that. If you get three or four or five big points through, the balance of your talk is composed of support for these main ideas, and that support comes in the form of little units--a story, a graphic aid, a quote, any one of a variety of statistics that can be brought to bear on the subject. And the greater the variety of the supporting material, which really is relevant to the point, the better the interest in that one-hour lecture will become. But don't think that a string of beads, again to use Overstreet's phrase, a whole string of ideas, can be used one after another. A 60-minute talk centers around one important idea, backed up by three or four points that you want to make about that idea.

One last reference: The President of the United States annually is

required to report on the state of the Union. If you go back and read Mr. Eisenhower's message in the spring of 1958--I guess it would be--after Sputnik in the fall, and after what we call the recession or whatever it was, in that same period, he went to the Congress and said: "I come to report on the state of the Union, and the state of the Union is good. Militarily and economically we're pretty well off." Two points. And then he talked for thirty minutes on the military position and the economic position of the U.S.A. vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. That was the whole talk--one minute. But he balanced that with statistics, with comparisons, with the state of our art on satellites, on missiles, and so on; and he talked about the economy with a whole lot of supporting material. But there were only two main ideas in that roughly 30-minute report.

An hour's talk can always be boiled down to two, three, four, five points, roughly, around a central idea, buttressed and supported by a myriad of small units.

QUESTION: Some speakers use a lot of "ers" and "ahs." Have you any suggestions as to how to overcome that tendency?

PROF. STEVENS: Yes. The practice, of course, is the first one--the universal recommendation of the charts. Reading aloud from good literature--and I would include in good literature the Bible or anything at all that gets into the area of classical literature, would be fine. And, thirdly, deliberately calling attention to the individual grunt or groan by somebody in

your environment.

Do you still have four people in an office here in the new building? Three? O.K. If you have an office mate or two, who during the course of your conversation can call these to your attention, to the extent that you have to drop a ten-cent piece into a little kettle on the desk every time you utter one; if you have young children in the home, every time at the dining table that you grunt or groan in evening conversation, you have to put a ten-cent piece--kids love to do this sort of thing--this will very quickly either break the habit or break you. I suspect you'll find that it helps. You cannot [redacted] lick a fault like this, though, until you deliberately set out to do it.

And then the last aspect is, not to have to think about it, but to get the fluency without the grunts and groans. As long as you have to think about it, it's a problem. It's when you get over that phase and are able to do it with the fluency that you've licked the thing.

I'm sure Professor Roberts calls attention to these. Don't you, in your sessions, if there are any? I know I do.

QUESTION: Professor, how would you have handled this key situation if there had not been a series of questions asked by the students?

PROF. STEVENS: I'm not sure that this will meet with the approval of the authorities of the institution, but I would have walked out that door, gone down the stairs, and you could have gone back to your rooms. There are some of you who now regret that you didn't follow that. This is the first time I've tried this, incidentally. I hoped that it would get some

questions. If it hadn't, it could have been cut off very quickly.

Doc is signaling me from the wings. I guess he has an announcement or something. I'm through if you're through.

DR. REICHLEY: One thing that Ed mentioned was introductions. Back about two or three years ago we had a number of awkward situations, but I think this was one time when I really felt like crawling under the sheet.

We had a faculty member come up here to introduce the speaker, and he walked out, and, as Ed said, he gave a very flowery introduction. There wasn't a better man in the world. And he comes down to the final sentence: "And now it is my pleasure to introduce--" and he gave the name of the lecturer of the day before.

Well, we had the stairs leading from the platform right down to the audience at that time. The faculty member went down and sat down, and he never realized until the break, when we called it to his attention, that he had introduced the wrong man. Fortunately, it was a good friend of the college; so he went right ahead with his talk notwithstanding the error.

Since you will meet with both of these gentlemen for ten sessions, and since this was in the form of a question and answer period, I don't think we need to go any further. So, to distort a saying by Disraeli, I will close the session by saying, We will leave now, but the time will come when we will hear you. Thank you very much.

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