



The Raphel Report

**Observations on marketing,
advertising, sales and
promotions
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Speaking Rules!

In the book, “The List of Lists,” thousands of people were asked, “What is your greatest fear?”

Top of the list was: “Speaking before a group.”

The first time I was asked to give a speech I was petrified.

I felt the same as the lion at the Coliseum in ancient Rome. He was about to eat the gladiator save for something the gladiator quickly whispered in the lion’s ear. The lion rapidly ran away in fear. The Emperor asked the gladiator how he tamed the lion. “It was easy,” he said. “I told him that after dinner, he’d be expected to say a few words.”

I was not alone in my fear. Sir Laurence Olivier developed stage fright when he was 60 years old. Sarah Bernhardt, the famous actress, threw up before every performance.

For more than four decades I have given presentations to business organizations all around the world.

Usually someone comes up to me after my program and says, “I’d like to give a speech sometime but I’m uncomfortable. What should I do? How should I start?”

George Bernard Shaw’s advice, when asked, “How do I become a writer?” was, “Write!”

So if you want to be a speaker...speak!

Few speakers are born with speaking skills. Emerson wrote, “All the great speakers were bad speakers first.”

George Bernard Shaw was right. I learned the only way to overcome the fear was to speak!

The ways to become a good speaker are outlined in dozens of books. But nothing happens until...you do it!

Somewhere, sometime, you’ll be asked to give a speech to a local organization or a seminar to others at work.

Are there rules, directions, guidelines you can learn to be a good speaker?

Yes.

What I learned through the years I wrote in my newest book, “Speaking Rules!” that lists 52 rules for effective speaking (one for every week of the year).

It is not written for the professional speaker. It is written for someone who has to

give a speech for business or personal reasons to help you, as one speaker told me, “Not to get rid of the butterflies in your stomach, but rather to keep them in formation.”

In “Speaking Rules!” I share my knowledge, experience and stories with you. And now, when the occasion arises for you to give a talk to a local civic club, a business presentation, or a seminar to your colleagues, you can make use of the techniques I learned through the years.

A very important rule: **Listen to Successful Speakers.** In person. On video. On tapes. Hear how they speak. When they pause. Attention-grabbing phrases they use. What makes you listen to them all the way through because you’re afraid otherwise you’ll miss something important.

I’ve listened to many great speakers, but the best I ever heard was Bill Gove.

William “Bill” Gove died December 9, 2001 at the age of 89. He was Sales Development Manager of Minnesota Mining (the 3M company) when he left to be an independent motivational speaker more than 50 years ago. In his lifetime, he gave more than 5,000 speeches. He was the first president of the National Speakers Association and won every major speaking award in the industry.

I met Bill when we belonged to Speakers Roundtable, a group of 20 of the best speakers in the US.

When Bill entered the room, the conversation stopped and all eyes turned to meet him, the “speaker’s speaker.” He’d smile, greet us all by name, and immediately tell a story about what happened to him that day, captivating his listeners.

Some of his thoughts. . .

The messenger is more important than the message:

“Most people believe if you have a strong message you will win the day (much less the audience). Not so. If you have a great message but deliver it in a boring manner, no one will remember what you said. The speaker who is excited about his topic, enthusiastic in his delivery, varies the pace of his speaking – this is a messenger with a message that will be remembered.”

What would he do if he had to do it all over again?

“I’d spend less time thinking about what has to be done and more time doing it. Life is not lived at the level of, ‘I’ll think about it’ or ‘I’ll do it when I feel like it.’ Life is about doing what’s in front of you and doing it whether you feel like it or not.”

On learning to do things:

“Some things are easy to learn and easy to do. Like crying.

Some things are easy to learn and hard to do. Like speaking.

Some things are hard to learn and easy to do. Like tying your shoelaces.

Some things are hard to learn and hard to do. Like golf.”

Speak for your assigned time. And stop.

Bill said most speakers don’t have the ability to tell time. The sign of a pro is to finish right on time. He said he was able to do this in spite of the fact that he was “two years older than the state of Arizona.”