

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED
PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERT

CHANTI NIVEN



THE **7** SECRETS
TO CRAFTING
CAPTIVATING
SPEECHES

LEARN THE SECRETS THAT CAPTIVATING
SPEAKERS USE TO GRIP THEIR AUDIENCES IN
AN INCREASINGLY DISTRACTED WORLD.

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THE 7 SECRETS TO CRAFTING CAPTIVATING SPEECHES

By Chanti Niven

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Hi friend!

Hi, I'm Chanti Niven. While many introductions are dedicated to showcasing impressive credentials and accolades, I've always felt uncomfortable boasting about myself. My journey has been one of swimming against the currents, facing life's challenges head-on, and emerging with invaluable lessons. I'm not your typical teacher; I've spent my life challenging the status quo, constantly seeking ways to do things differently and better.

Rather than delving into my achievements, which you can easily find with a quick Google search or by visiting my website

(www.chantiniven.com), I'd like to share what truly matters to me.

Beyond the awards and high-profile coaching, what fills me with the most pride is the opportunity to help countless individuals break free from their fears and limitations. My greatest joy is witnessing their transformation, as they unlock their full potential and discover a voice that not only resonates with others but also lingers in their memory.

Ultimately, the most meaningful legacy we can leave behind is one that enhances the lives of those we touch.

The greatest legacy we can leave is one that improves people's lives.

Welcome to this extraordinary journey into the world of captivating communication! Inside the pages of this book, you'll uncover the seven simple yet incredibly powerful secrets that successful speakers wield to mesmerize their audiences, whether in presentations, keynotes, or everyday conversations.

My lifelong dedication to mastering this craft, combined with over a decade of teaching conscious communication, influential leadership, and personal branding, has led me to create this guide. If you're taking your first steps into the world of public speaking and grappling with the daunting task of crafting a speech, you're in for a treat. This book is your ticket to crafting captivating speeches that won't put your audience to sleep.

But here's the exciting part: this isn't just another theoretical guide. It's a hands-on, step-by-step system that empowers you to create your compelling presentation right now, regardless of the topic. And don't think for a second that this is only for beginners. Even seasoned speakers will discover valuable nuggets within these pages, serving as a

refresher on foundational concepts and offering unexpected insights to elevate your speaking game.

If you're hungry for more wisdom, consider diving into my book, "What Are You Saying?" available on [Amazon](#).

Are you ready to embark on this transformative journey? If your answer is a resounding "Yes!" – well, let's dive in and get started!

Secret #1 on next page/

Secret #1 - Keep it as short as possible.

Winston Churchill once said that a good speech should be like a woman's skirt. Long enough to cover the subject but short enough to create interest.

Have you ever been trapped in a never-ending lecture or presentation? The speaker just keeps on talking, and their sentences seem to stretch on forever. It's a common scenario, and you're probably not the only one struggling to stay engaged. As you look around, you notice the audience's interest waning. People's eyes glaze over, some start doodling, others fiddle with their phones, and a few brave souls sneak out of the room.

But why does this happen? Neuroscientists have uncovered a fascinating insight – our brains prefer bite-sized information. This is why we're drawn to music with consistent beats and rhythms, and it's one of the secrets behind TikTok's massive popularity. Our brains thrive on easily digestible "bite-sized" information. However, when confronted with information overload in the form of long-winded sentences, our brains switch to self-preservation mode, seeking distractions.

Even if you push through these monologues, you'll likely find it exhausting, and little of what's said will stick with you.

Consider one of history's most memorable speeches – The Gettysburg Address, a concise masterpiece with just 271 words, delivered in under three minutes. It serves as a powerful reminder that concise communication can leave a profound impact.

So, when you're the one speaking, avoid those never-ending run-on sentences. In today's world of dwindling attention spans, strive to keep your sentences short and sweet. How short should they be? Aim to fit them within a single line, or if needed, break them up using punctuation or well-placed pauses. To ensure effective pauses, you can use markings like one, two, or three slashes when drafting your speeches.

You might be concerned about sounding robotic, but fear not. Vary your sentence length, infuse emotion, and embrace vocal variety. As a human, your voice naturally conveys emotion unless you've deliberately crafted an emotionless monotone (which, believe me, takes substantial effort). Give it a try – you'll discover that it's not as easy as it may seem.

Remember, not every sentence must fit within a single line, but the goal is to trim them down. Ask yourself, "Would this sentence captivate a teenager with ADHD?" If the answer is "Yes," you're on the right path. Avoid droning on – as the Brits say, go big or go home.

Secret #2 on next page/

Secret #2 - Use Vivid Language

As a child, visiting my grandmother was an absolute delight. It wasn't just because her Berry Pie filled the air with an irresistible aroma, but because she was a master storyteller. Grandma, or Lally as I fondly called her, was not only a professional writer but also an enchanting storyteller. I often wondered where she drew her stories from. Were they passed down through generations, or did her vivid imagination conjure them up? Regardless, her storytelling prowess had a profound influence on me.

I, too, have carried on this tradition. My children often reminisce about the bedtime stories I used to tell them. It warmed my heart when they would request, "Mom, share a story from your head tonight!"

Sometimes, I'd craft new stories, while other times, I'd recount the humorous escapades of their infancy.

But let's get back to Lally. Her stories held an unmatched charm due to her vivid narration. It was like watching a movie, but in the theater of my mind. Looking back, I realize she was a master of rhetoric, using colorful metaphors, extravagant hyperboles, and dynamic imagery to breathe life into her tales. I never wanted her stories to end, a testament to their captivating power.

And that's precisely what you, as a speaker, should aim for – to captivate your audience to the point where they never want you to stop. I've often been told that my hour-long keynotes felt too short, and I take it as a compliment. As a speaker, you're a messenger, and your stories are your most potent tools for engaging, educating, and inspiring your audience.

Think back to your favorite childhood stories. Revisit them to uncover why they held such a grip on your imagination. It's a rewarding exercise that I wholeheartedly recommend. If you have kids, read to them with enthusiasm, adopting different voices, accents, and facial expressions. Witness their faces light up as your story comes to life. If you don't have kids, volunteer to read to them. It's a powerful demonstration of storytelling's emotional impact and transformative potential.

So, why are stories so influential? The best stories use descriptive and vivid language that paints pictures in our minds. They allow us to visualize the narrative even when we're only reading or listening to words. Stories unfold in the theater of our minds, with speakers setting the stage and the audience adding vibrant colors.

Descriptive language immerses us in the story, making us active participants rather than passive observers. When you share emotionally charged stories that engage the imagination, they trigger the release of dopamine – the "happy hormone." It's the anticipation of a rewarding experience, creating warm, fuzzy feelings within us.

Moreover, storytelling's most powerful effect is the release of oxytocin, the hormone that fosters social bonding and empathy. It enables us to identify with story protagonists and other characters, drawing us deeper into the narrative. This creates an immersive experience, imprinted in our memories – a crucial skill for speakers.

To harness the power of vivid language, create mental imagery for your audience. Instead of saying, "I was depressed," opt for descriptive phrases like, "My heart was tired." Make the abstract concrete by saying, "Her hair was the color of lemons" rather than simply, "She was blonde."

Consider Mark Zusak's "The Book Thief" as a prime example of vivid storytelling. While I don't know anyone with lemon-colored hair, I immediately visualized the vivid hue. Simplicity is key – let your audience color between the lines, creating their unique mental pictures.

Visual imagery enhances retention, ensuring your message lingers in their memory.

Remember, every sentence doesn't have to be excessively descriptive unless you're performing at a poetry slam. Simplicity paired with inflection and vocal variety prevents robotic delivery. So, give it a try – let your words paint the canvas of your audience's imagination.

Embrace the magic of storytelling, ensuring your message remains etched in their minds. Challenge yourself to use descriptive language, asking, "Can they see it? Will they feel it?" As you craft your narrative, create an indelible mark that your audience will carry with them long after your story ends.

Secret #3 on next page/

Secret #3 - The Power of Repetition

"I have a dream," a dream that still echoes through time. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s iconic speech delivered on August 28th, 1963, continues to resonate not just for its powerful message, but also for its masterful demonstration of conscious communication and audience captivation.

In the realm of democracy and freedom, Dr. King knew that words were the most potent weapon, and he wielded them with remarkable skill. His speech was a lesson in the art of repetition, with one key phrase anchoring the entire discourse: "I have a dream." These four simple words have transcended generations, etching themselves into history as a symbol of hope and equality.

Repetition, or what we can call the "Anchoring" or "Foundational Phrase," is a cornerstone of effective communication. To craft a memorable line that drives your speech's purpose home, you must first answer two fundamental questions: What is your purpose, and what do you want your audience to take away? Your speech isn't about you; it's about enriching your audience's lives.

Once you've distilled your core message into a succinct motif, you must strategically weave it into your speech's fabric. Repetition is the key to embedding it in your audience's minds. A motif becomes a powerful tool, especially when you seek to drive home a particular point or brand yourself or your company.

Consider Dr. King's speech as a prime example of how to masterfully employ these principles. His repetition of the motif ensured that his message would endure through time, a testament to his captivating communication skills.

Crafting an effective motif need not be overly complicated. In fact, simplicity is often the most memorable. Think of Nike's "Just Do It" or Apple's "Think Different." These taglines instantly evoke the products they represent.

Your motif is your personal brand, the one phrase your audience will remember when you leave the room. It's your chance to connect your content with your audience's emotions and needs. Even if it's the only thing they remember from your presentation, it should remind them of how they felt and what they learned.

Harness the power of repetition, as companies have done for decades in their marketing. Think of your motif as an emotional gateway to your audience's memory. What do you want them to think about? What feeling do you want to leave them with? In the end, it's the power of repetition that will etch your message into their minds.

Secret #4 on next page/

Secret #4 - Rhyme

“What?” I can hear you say it. “Please don’t tell me I have to make up rhymes now! That’s ridiculous. How can rhyme make my speech captivating?”

Public speaking made me nervous when I was in school.

Getting up in front of the class made me feel so nervous I’d lose sleep the night before. I don’t know if you can identify with that feeling of dread you get that feels like a heavy rock in your gut. I worked hard at the writing of a speech and memorized them word for word but between my brain and lips, things just didn’t jell.

Here are a few examples with embarrassing details.

“Saving whales,” I meant to say instead of “waving sails.”

And when one wants to talk about “battleships and cruisers,”

My audience will likely laugh at “cattle ships and bruisers.”

It shouldn’t be as hard as jumping a high hurdle

To say “hypodermic needle” not “cryogermic nurdle.”

And certainly one understands that a “well-oiled bicycle”

Will last a whole lot longer than a “well-boiled icicle.”

During school it seemed likely I'd been "wasting two terms."

Still, a whole lot better than "tasting two worms."

So compared to public speaking, writing is the "fun part,"

More dignified than expounding on the latest "pun fart."

I didn't write the poem but I can relate.

When I was a child, my dad always used to say: "I'll pay you cash, if you will just shut up for a few minutes!" If you think about it, it's kinda funny that once I was paid to shut up, and today I get paid to speak.

Today I'm a professional motivational speaker and I help others with public speaking but when I was a kid if I had to speak up in front of my class for a presentation, I would suddenly freeze up and stumble my way through my speech if I could get through it at all. My most painful memories come from those times.

For some reason, however, whenever I had to perform a poem in front of my English or Creative Writing class, I had no problem doing it.

Was it the rhythm? Was it the creative aspect?

It was definitely more fun presenting a poem than it was to present some lame part of history I'd crammed into my head the night before and forgotten by lunch.

Throughout my years and years of research into behavioral psychology, neuroscience, social psychology, and how it all integrates with the art of public speaking, I came across a phenomenon that suddenly made everything click into place.

In his classic book “Memory in Oral Traditions,” cognitive scientist David Rubin notes:

“Oral traditions depend on human memory for their preservation. If a tradition is to survive, it must be stored in one person’s memory and be passed on to another person who is also capable of storing and retelling it. All this must occur over many generations.”

“Oral traditions must, therefore, have developed forms of organization and strategies to decrease the changes that human memory imposes on the more casual transmission of verbal material.”

What are these strategies?

Tales that last for many generations tend to describe concrete actions rather than abstract concepts.

They use powerful visual images (Secret #2).

They are sung or chanted, and they employ patterns of sound: alliteration, assonance, repetition (Secret #3) and, they most often include rhyme.

One of Rubin's experiments showed that when two words in a ballad are linked by rhyme, college students remember them better than non-rhyming words.

Such characteristics of oral narratives are, in effect, mnemonics — memory aids that people have developed over millennia “to make use of the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of human memory,” as Rubin puts it.

In other words, use rhyme if you want something to stick in your audience's mind.

Now, I must add a caveat here.

Obviously, I don't want you to rhyme every point you are trying to get across in your talk. Unless, once again, you are reciting at a poetry slam.

In fact, rhyme works best when you combine it with Secret #3:

Repetition.

Make your Anchoring Phrase a rhyme, and your audience will definitely remember it.

A good rule of thumb is to use around three rhyming phrases in your talk and not more.

Limited use of rhyme (including imperfect rhyme) can be a very effective tool in speechwriting. It provides emphasis and helps people to easily remember your key principles or statements.

A client of mine uses the term “Labeling is Disabling.” Even though you have not heard him talk, you get a very clear sense of what the talk is about. This motif that is also a rhyme effectively created a mantra that will stick in an audience’s mind.

Many great speakers use some form of rhyme in their speeches. Here are a couple of examples:

“Your attitude determines your altitude!” - Zig Ziglar

“Out of intense complexities, intense simplicities emerge. Humanity, not legality, should be our guide.” - Winston Churchill

One of my favorite speeches is the TED Talk by Shane Koyczan, “To this Day - For the Bullied and The Beautiful” Please watch it on YouTube. It garnered 1.2 million hits in the first two days and served to put Shane on the map. He uses Spoken Word Poetry combined with the poignant sound of a lone violin and imagery to deliver a profound and moving message. The beauty of his composition is only surpassed by the poetry of his words. Here is one of my favorite parts of his talk:

“Every school was a big top circus tent
and the pecking order went from acrobats to lion tamers
from clowns to carnies;
all of these were miles ahead of who we were we were freaks
lobster claw boys and bearded ladies;

oddities juggling depression and loneliness
playing solitaire spin the bottle
trying to kiss the wounded parts of ourselves and
and heal;
but at night while the others slept
we kept walking the tightrope
it was practice and yeah some of us fell.

But I want to tell them that all of this shit is just debris,
leftover when we finally decide to smash all the things
we thought we used to be,
and if you can't see anything beautiful about yourself,
get a better mirror,
look a little closer,
stare a little longer,
because there's something inside you
that made you keep trying
despite everyone who told you to quit.

You built a cast around your broken heart
and signed it yourself.

You signed it "They were wrong".

Because maybe you didn't belong
to a group or a clique,

maybe they decided to pick you last for basketball or everything.
Maybe you used to bring bruises and broken teeth to show and tell
but never told, because how can you hold your ground
if everyone around you
wants to bury you beneath it?
You have to believe that they were wrong!
They have to be wrong...
Why else would we still be here?"

When Shane recites these words, he pauses at the rhymed portions and emphasizes certain words. Example: "Maybe you used to bring bruises and broken teeth to show and tell but never **told**, because how can you **hold** your ground if everyone around you wants to bury you beneath it?"

The sparing use of rhyme both internal and external lends beauty and poignancy to his words. It gives us points upon which to anchor our attention. We experience his emotion in a far deeper way. You do not need to be quite as poetic as Shane in your speaking but you could definitely learn from his deft construction and delivery.

Another great example is the speech presented by Les Brown. He recited an entire poem at the end of his speech. It was a powerful way to end his passionate piece on winning.

“The Will To Win

If you want a thing bad enough

To go out and fight for it,

Work day and night for it,

Give up your time and your peace and

Your sleep for it

If only desire of it

Makes you quite mad enough

Never to tire of it,

Makes you hold all other things tawdry

And cheap for it

If life seems all empty and useless without it

And all that you scheme and you dream is about it,

If gladly you'll sweat for it,

Fret for it, Plan for it,

Lose all your terror of God or man for it,

If you'll simply go after that thing that you want.
With all your capacity,
Strength and sagacity,
Faith, hope and confidence, stern pertinacity,
If neither cold, poverty, famished and gaunt,
Nor sickness nor pain
Of body or brain
Can turn you away from the thing that you want,
If dogged and grim you besiege and beset it,
You'll get it."

~ Berton Braley

Coming up with rhyme is actually easier than you might think. There are plenty of rhyme dictionaries/generators on the internet. Try rhymezone.com

Common rhymes you may recognize from what you've heard in everyday communication or from movies:

Make or break

Shop 'til you drop

Meet and greet

Nearest and dearest

Fender bender

Blame game

Hustle and bustle

Study buddy

Sky-high

True blue

Boy toy

Double trouble

I truly appreciate the artistic use of language that showcases the aesthetic quality of words that to me are as important in value as their literal meaning. Think about an item of furniture that is functional and plain versus one that is also functional but that is also aesthetically beautiful. Which one would you rather have in your home?

Rhyme enhances your speech through repetition of certain sounds, using creative word patterns, and pleasing sounds. It elevates the

audience's experience and understanding of your content by anchoring it into their memories. You don't want to present an entire speech in rhyme but you should include it to anchor certain phrases. Consider a familiar and well-loved song. If you can't remember the lyrics you most certainly will remember the chorus.

Go through your speech, look at all your main points and play around with your words. I bet you will soon find an appropriate rhyme that will stick in your audience's mind. At least try it.

Secret #5 on next page/

Secret #5 - Tricolons

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

— Benjamin Franklin

"You are talking to a man who has laughed in the face of death, sneered at doom,
and chuckled at catastrophe."

— The Wizard of Oz

"Can I get you anything? Cup of coffee?

Doughnut? Toupee?"

— Dick Van Dyke

Notice anything in particular about the above quotes?

If you've never heard the term "tricolon" before, it may conjure up a somewhat peculiar image. Do you think of three colons? What are we talking about? Three sets of intestines, three punctuation marks?

However, a tricolon is simply a rhetorical device that is a series of three parallel words, phrases, or clauses. The word Tricolon comes from the Greek, literally translated meaning "three" + "unit."

A tricolon in speech and writing involves any pattern of three, whether that be three words, or three sentences that in one way or another relate to one another.

Why is this so important?

The power of three! It is everywhere you look and then in places you didn't think to look. Three is the smallest number needed to create a pattern.

EXAMPLES

1,2,3

A,B,C

Omne trium perfectum

3 sides to a triangle (Structurally considered the perfect shape)

Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Faith, Hope, Charity

Body, soul, spirit

Past, present, future

Three wishes

Three Wise Men

Three Blind Mice

Goldilocks and the three bears

The three pigs

The three musketeers

The three Stooges

Snap, crackle, and pop!

Ethos, Pathos, Logos

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

Health, Wealth, and Happiness

How are you?

I love you!

I forgive you!

Go the distance!

Never give up!

3 parts to a speech.

Beginning, Middle, End

Stop, Look, Listen

Earth, wind, fire

Hear no evil, Speak no evil, See no evil

How many others can you think of?

If you were not already convinced of the power of three consider some other fun facts: The three Borromeam Rings are three rings that are interlocked. If any single ring is removed, the two remaining rings will fall

apart. This has been used as a symbol of “strength in unity” for centuries in many parts of the world.

There are three primary colors and these colors make up every other color on the spectrum.

Jesus was 33 when he started his ministry which lasted for 3 years. He died and was resurrected on the third day.

Even the world of design recognizes the significance and the power of the number three: The Rule of Three is a design principle that says that things arranged in odd numbers are more appealing, memorable, and effective than even-numbered groupings. Think that three is limited to interior design? Think again. Three is everywhere. Landscapers know the rule of three. In photography, the magic of three is the rule of thirds, which tells us how to compose a visually pleasing shot. Three appears in every aspect of our being. In physiology and anatomy, you see this number come up again and again. Need proof? Check this out:

<http://www.meddean.luc.edu/lumen/meded/grossanatomy/threes.html>

Divide a presentation into three parts: Opening, Body, Close

Introduce an idea with three key benefits.

Provide three steps to achieving a result.

Use tricolons to reinforce concepts.

Remember Secret #1 - Short Sentences?

It goes back to that same part of our brain that can only process information in small, bite-sized chunks.

A pattern of three has a rhythm to it, and if combined with Secret #4 - Rhyme, it becomes a delicious piece of easy-to-process, easy-to-remember food for our brain that it often likes to regurgitate.

Oh wow, that didn't conjure up a delicious image. If I had a great meal, I definitely wouldn't want to regurgitate it but I'd definitely think about it.

Ever had an annoying song or advertising jingle stuck in your head?

It probably had a tricolon in it.

The power of three is also often used to comedic effect with two items that set up a predictable path and the third deviating from it (called the "non-sequitur").

It's the basic joke structure of "setup-setup-punchline."

For the first two sentences, the story/the frame is set up going in one predictable direction. The third sentence — the punchline —

completely deviates from this direction and becomes something unpredictable and unexpected.

That's what makes it so funny.

Research has also shown that the limbic system at the center of the brain — which contains the amygdala, the hippocampus and processes our most basic emotions such as hunger and fear — is also triggered when we see or hear something funny.

This activity eventually stimulates the motor region of the brain to become active, and that's what produces the physical reaction of laughing and the vocal expulsion of sound.

On average, humans have this laughter reaction around 17 times a day, and although it's still being researched and debated, many scientists agree that we're the only species on the planet that laughs naturally.

The best part about all of this is that laughter is actually good for you. Researchers at the University of Maryland have linked laughter to the healthy function of blood vessels — something that can lower your chance of a heart attack.

Laughter also boosts your heart rate and the production of certain antibodies, which strengthens your immune system.

As a rule of thumb, I always work on some form of humor at the beginning of my clients' keynotes. You don't have to be a trained comedian in order to use this magical tool that will make your audience

instantly like you. An offhand comment about something that happened in the room before your presentation is sometimes all you need.

This is also why I incorporate techniques from Improvisational Comedy in my coaching. Improv allows you to use situations and moment-to-moment wit to your comedic advantage no matter where you are. If you really want to develop your wit, join a local Improv class.

Now, whether you already have humor in your presentation or not is beside the point. You can harness the power of tricolons no matter your content.

Again, I often coach my clients to use tricolons for their key points and phrases, because, after all, that's what you want to "stick" in your audience's mind.

At the beginning of this chapter, I actually used a tricolon on top of three tricolons. I used two well-known quotes that each consists of tricolons (setting up a direction), and then ended with a joke by Dick Van Dyke (deviation from setup).

But since this is not a book about writing jokes, it's still important for you to know the basic structure behind it, so that you can go through your speech and identify sentences that can be transformed into tricolons.

A WORD OF WARNING.

If you overuse tricolons (just like rhyme), your audience will become distracted or bored by that pattern, and you will lose all credibility.

Use tricolons for emphasis or humor. Not more, not less. The art of captivating is to use these devices like a seasoning. Use a little salt on a dish and it tastes good. Use too much and it becomes unpalatable.

Do not use more than 3-4 tricolons in a 5-7 minute talk.

I'm sure by now you can see the powerful effect tricolons can have on your audience. Yet they can become even more powerful when you combine them with Repetition (Secret #3).

Make your Anchoring Phrase a tricolon, repeat it throughout your speech and your audience will definitely remember it for a very long time.

A client and friend of mine, Rodney Johnson, actually took the power of tricolons and made it his own personal brand called "Trinspiration" — a series of keynotes and a best-selling book filled with 3-word inspirational quotes.

And yes, he trademarked it. Sorry.

Secret #6 - Contrast

“A lie can get halfway around the world before the truth even has a chance to put its pants on.”

— *Mark Twain*

Here’s another Bonus Secret that all successful speakers use, yet few will admit. Whenever you want to use a quote and you can’t remember the author’s name, just attribute it to Mark Twain. At least that’s what I say and it always gets a laugh. If you are a feminist, give it to Helen Keller. Don’t shoot me for saying it. I’m just joshing. Playfulness is an important tool in the speaker’s arsenal.

Getting back on topic. This quote has actually been attributed to many historical figures, all the way from Winston Churchill to Franklin Roosevelt’s Secretary of State, to the omnipresent “Anonymous”. Want to hear something funny? Some of my own expressions have been quoted but never giving me credit. One of my stories has even made it onto an Urban Legend list. Do you have any idea how frustrating that is when I know the story to be true? People change some of the facts and regurgitate them without knowing where they originally came from. This is the power of the spoken word. Here’s a challenge for you. Create

something that others copy. Don't take credit. Just wait until it comes back to you. Note how long it took.

The reason why I chose a quote to illustrate Secret #6, is because it is not only funny in a "sad-but-true" way, but it also uses Contrast so effectively.

Contrast in speech and writing is similar to most people's understanding of contrast in color. Your TV and your computer screen very likely have a setting called "Contrast."

What does it do?

It sharpens and emphasizes the difference in color tones.

For example, if you were looking at a screen where half was black and the other half was white; when you turn up contrast, black will become darker, and white will become brighter. If you turn contrast down, obviously, the opposite will happen.

In speech and writing, we use contrast to sharpen and emphasize differences, as well.

Marianne Williamson actually used the contrast example of "light" and "dark," as well as "inadequate" and "powerful," in her legendary poem "Our Deepest Fear."

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.”

— Marianne Williamson

Did you notice how many Secrets she used in just those three sentences? It’s no mistake that hers is one of the most quoted poems in the world.

Contrast works best when you have two opposing forces: Light, Dark, Warm, Cold, Earth, Sky, Truth, Lie, Love, Hate... the list is endless.

The reason why this works so well is simply that it goes back to the ancient storytelling principles of Good versus Evil, that are hardwired into our brain.

Any two opposing forces create conflict, which in and of itself is still the most captivating storytelling tool to this date.

Why do superhero and action movies continue to be so popular all around the world?

Because conflict and contrast are universal. Every human being understands it on a primal level and we want Good to triumph over Evil. Well, at least most of us do.

This is not to say that you have to put a compelling story into your speech that has flying jumpsuits and explosions, but you can use contrast very effectively if you simply look at where you have two

different (preferably opposing) “things,” put them in the same sentence and emphasize their difference.

Yet another caveat.

Just as too much contrast on your TV screen is going to oversaturate the colors and make the picture look unnatural, too much contrast in your speech is going to make it and you look inauthentic.

It’s going to come across as too rehearsed and planned. Once again, use it sparingly for your important moments and sentences.

The opposite applies, as well.

Too little contrast on your TV screen is going to wash out and dull the colors. Too little or no contrast in your speech is going to make you uninteresting.

True, you could make a keynote captivating even if you never used contrast. But why wouldn’t you, when it’s so easy?

Here’s another great example.

“What good is the warmth of summer,
without the cold of winter to give it sweetness?”

— John Steinbeck

Secret #7 - Use Antimetabole/Chiasmus

Last, but certainly not least, probably my favorite Secret of them all.

Antimetabole, pronounced: AN-ti-mə-TAB-ə-lee:

The dictionary defines it as: “the repetition of words in successive clauses, but in transposed grammatical order. It is similar to chiasmus although chiasmus does not use repetition of the same words or phrases.”

What?

Antimetabole and chiasmus are very closely related, and some experts even use them interchangeably. However, both the terms still exist to refer to two distinct literary devices. According to scholars, when a sentence is repeated by reversing it, so as to convey an idea or stress a point, it is called chiasmus.

What?

Antimetabole is not very much different from chiasmus, only that in an antimetabole the words and grammatical structure are also reversed, because just reversing the meaning is not enough.

In the light of these facts, it can be deduced that all the antimetaboles are chiasmus, but not all instances of chiasmus are antimetaboles.

Still, what?

Alright, it's probably easier if I give you an example.

“Ask not what your country can do for you.

Ask what you can do for your country.”

— President John F. Kennedy

This is probably the most famous antimetabole in history. It says so much, with so few words. That’s the power of the awkwardly named antimetabole.

In essence, this Secret is simply reversing the order of words from the first sentence with the order of the second sentence.

Here’s one you’ve definitely heard before:

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

— Mark Twain

You probably didn’t even know that Mark Twain came up with this phrase, did you? In truth, I don’t actually know who said it, but it sounds like something Mark would say, right?

The point is that an antimetabole is one of the easiest, and yet one of the most captivating Secrets that you can use in your presentations.

Why?

Because it can combine several Captivating Secrets into one.

1. It's usually used in short sentences
2. It often describes something visual or vivid
3. It repeats two keywords
4. It almost sounds like a rhyme, because it has a certain rhythm to it (some speakers actually make their antimetaboles rhyme)
5. It's often used to emphasize the contrast

When you use antimetaboles, something clicks in your audience's mind instantly. It's a nicely wrapped, complete, bite-sized chunk of valuable information, that encapsulates the essence of your entire talk.

Ideally, that's what your antimetabole should be: the essence/core/heart of your keynote.

Sometimes it's really difficult to find. Other times it's easy.

"I always save the best Secret for last, because the last Secret is always best."

— Chanti Niven

That one was easy. Now, it's your turn. Go through your speech and find its essence.

What do you want audiences to remember? What value do you want them to take away from you? What's the one thing that summarizes your entire speech?

Again, you are almost creating a mantra here, so that when your audience members go home, and they remember your antimetabole (even though they probably don't even know what that is), they remember exactly what it is you want them to do.

As with all of the Secrets, please use antimetaboles sparingly. You can see how this can be the most powerful, most memorable sentence of your entire presentation. Place it wisely. Repeat it but not so often it loses meaning. When you present it, emphasize it and make it stick.

There you have it. The 7 simple yet highly effective secrets that successful speakers use in their presentations, their keynotes and overall communication.

Now that you're aware of them, I encourage you to watch some of your favorite speakers. You're going to notice the 7 Secrets popping up everywhere because they have been tried, tested, and proven to not only captivate an audience, more importantly, they leave audiences with a positive impression of the speaker and their content.

Of course, there are more than just 7 Secrets for creating a captivating keynote, but these are the top ones that we always recommend first.

If you do nothing else but use these seven, you and your speech are going to stand out and leave an impact anywhere you go.

I hope you have fun using the 7 Secrets and find them to be an invaluable asset to improve and spice up your presentations.

Now Is Your Time To Take Action

You now have seven ingredients for creating highly captivating speeches that people will want to listen to.

I recommend you keep this book as a reference and refer back to the 7 Secrets as you write your content and build your brand as a speaker.

You may also want to go back through this book from time to time at different stages of your personal and career development. You'll find that depending on where you are at in your growth, you'll understand the 7 Secrets in a different way.

I'm going to leave you with just one last concept I like to call the "Momentum of Application."

This is basically the idea of taking anything new you learn and applying it in the real world as fast as possible, while you have the momentum of fresh knowledge on your side. In my opinion, this is the best way to do things because it forces you to learn fast and also get results fast.

Now is your time to take action.

Thanks for reading, and hope to chat with you again soon.

Chanti Niven

P.S. If you liked what you learned in this ebook and you want even more in-depth and advanced training for public speaking, effective leadership, and conscious communication, then I highly recommend you check out our diverse [programs and services online](#). Whether you want to learn how to generate authentic confidence in under 2 minutes; how to triple your conversion rate every time you “sell” to a crowd; or if you simply want to get over your fear of public speaking, we can help you get the results you want, attract the right people for your career, and become more influential in your industry. If this sounds like something you’d find helpful, then click the link to learn more about me, and about Captivating Speakers.

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