

The Speechwriter

Newsletter of The UK Speechwriters' Guild



Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of The Speechwriter newsletter. The purpose of this publication is to circulate examples of excellent speeches to members of the UK Speechwriters' Guild. We do this by picking out openings, closings, one-liners and quotations and other topical extracts from newspapers and the internet to identify techniques, stimulate your imagination and provide models which you can emulate.

This newsletter appears quarterly and is available to anyone who is a Standard Member of the UK Speechwriters' Guild.

Contribute

We need your speeches. Most of the examples in this edition are taken from the Americans.

We want to raise standards in the UK. Please send examples of speeches to:

 info@ukspeechwritersguild.co.uk

MASTERCLASS

Therapy Techniques from Irvin Yalom

Speechwriting isn't just about crafting words. It's also about the relationship with the speaker. How do you draw the information out?

Psychotherapy offers a useful model for speechwriters because the relationship between patient and therapist is similar to that of the speechwriter and speaker. It's the job of the therapist to make the 'unconscious, conscious': it's the job of the speechwriter to draft a script that presents the speaker as their best self. Dr Irvin Yalom is an expert in group therapy. He applies the following principles in his therapy, which are useful techniques for a speechwriter.

1) Be in the here and now.

When interviewing the speaker, make the focus of the interaction relate to what is going on in the world at that moment. A dry recitation of the facts makes for boring therapy and a tedious speech. When you write the speech, the same rule applies, be sure to relate it to what is going on at that moment in the room at the time it will be delivered.

2) Reveal something about yourself.

If you want the speaker to tell a story that illustrates the point,

make a personal revelation of your own that is appropriate to show the speaker what you mean. Confidences beget confidences.



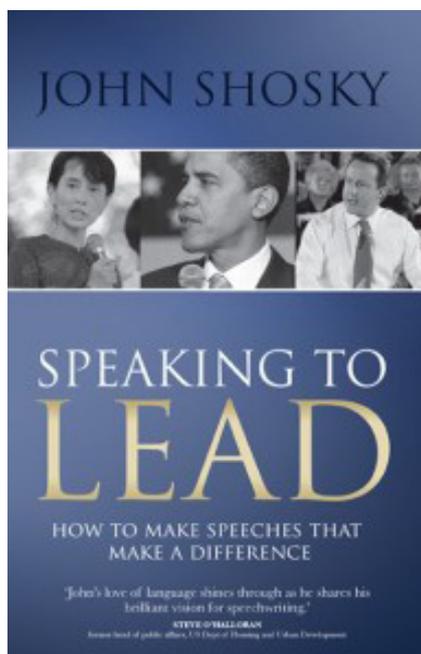
3) The theory of therapy is that human beings recreate their problems in every group they interact with. Foibles will out. The speechwriter filters obsessions or irrelevant preoccupations and digs for colourful phrases and insights.

The speech has a correct form, and it's the role of the speechwriter to respect that form, while bringing out the character of the speaker at the same time.

Yalom tells the most wonderful stories. The accounts of how patients acquire insight into their own problems are often funny and moving. Stories show how every detail in our lives can reveal an unexpected meaning or significance.

Healing in therapy consists of restoring or refining the patient's ability to communicate who they are to the outside world, so they can create better strategies to get what they need and want. Speechwriters help individuals fulfil their responsibilities effectively and make the message as persuasive as possible. All of Dr Irvin Yalom's books are worth reading as insights into how individuals use language to reveal and conceal, and how ideas influence how we express ourselves and manage our lives.

BOOK REVIEWS



Speaking to Lead: How to Make Speeches That Make a Difference

Published by Biteback (264 pages)
ISBN 1849540136 £14.99

John Shosky is familiar to many as the speechwriting columnist in Total Politics magazine every month. He is also going to be the keynote speaker at this year's UK Speechwriters' Guild Conference.

There are many books on speechwriting, but they go out of date. For example, Richard Dowis's *Lost Art of a Great Speech* is good, but John Shosky has written something just as comprehensive, but with up-to-the minute examples (the most recent being 18 April 2010 at President Kaczynski's funeral!). Dowis's book also only draws from American speeches, while Shosky bestrides the British and American political scene.

I liked the book because it has examples I haven't seen before.

It also covers pretty much all the principles that you're ever likely to apply as a speechwriter. It's easy going, anecdotal (I like the one when Mother Theresa spoke in front of a lectern that was taller than she was! She bombed.) It also draws from unexpected sources like songwriting. My only suggestion would be for a chapter on 'social speeches' as it's a style that is important for a politician to cultivate, and requires quite different techniques.

Poor Charlie's Almanack: The Wit and Wisdom of Charles T Munger

Published by Donning Co Pub (532 pages) ISBN 157864366X \$49
www.poorcharliesalmanack.com

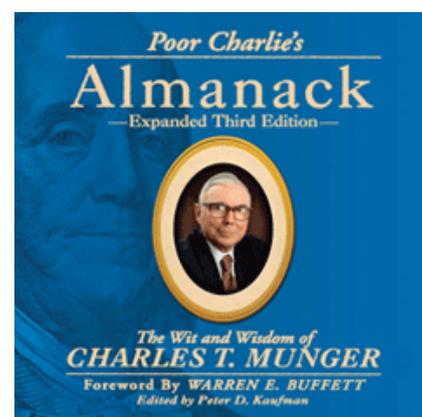
Poor Richard's Almanack was a yearly almanack published by Benjamin Franklin, who adopted the pseudonym of "Poor Richard" or "Richard Saunders". The publication appeared continually from 1732 to 1758. It was a bestseller for a pamphlet published in the American colonies.

Almanacks were very popular books in colonial America, with people in the colonies using them for the mixture of seasonal weather forecasts, practical household hints, puzzles, and other amusements they offered.

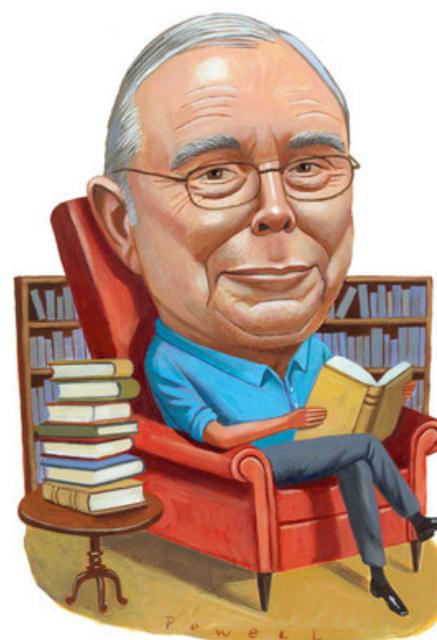
Charlie Munger, Warren Buffett's sidekick, has produced his own tome, packed with the sort of intellectual bric-à-brac a typical autodidact collects in his life.

Munger is in favour of a multidisciplinary approach to all problems. He quotes an example that you're average professor of poetry usually very unworldly. Why? Because he probably doesn't take other 'models' of the world particularly seriously.

Munger says we have to know lots about science, lots about arithmetic, lots about business, lots about history and lots about psychology. Studying these subjects gives you different perspectives, which give you the flexibility to think about problems in a sensible and pragmatic way. Woe unto you if you get wrapped up in powerful ideologies. They poison your judgement. He puts a high premium on getting rich slow, and avoiding misery.



For a speechwriter, there's lots of Munger's speeches, and lots of colourful stories illustrating his ideas. It's a great way to stimulate the mind and find analogies for putting across complex ideas.





CHARLES CRAWFORD

Who's the Audience?

A speech is all about two things. The speaker, and the audience.

It's normally obvious who the speaker is, and the occasion at which the speech is needed. But who is the audience?

At an after-dinner speech the speaker's job is to enhance the already warm glow among the replete diners. The audience in the room is the target.

It's a lot more complicated when drafting a speech for a Government Minister. Think of the different audiences a speech is addressing.

First and foremost, people in the room on the day. The speaker needs to engage, to win applause. A good speech's impact will be lost if the audience starts booing. The booing will be the message, not the speech itself.

Second, other political audiences.

The speaker will want to send signals to political opponents in other political parties - and to political enemies within his/her own party. Maybe a European or wider international political dimension too.

Third, the general public. Nowadays the countless TV and radio outlets and newspapers compete with bloggers, Twitterers and Facebookers. How to reach those audiences with key messages?

Fourth, business or academic/ intellectual experts. A short piece by an acknowledged expert pointing out howling errors in the speech will do the speaker quick damage.

Finally, the audience of history. How will this speech look in ten or fifty years' time?

A government speechwriter has to keep all these different audiences in mind.

Which means preparing several

different versions of the same speech:

- The version used by the speaker at the podium: large fonts, easy-to-read
- The advance version handed to the media under an embargo – shorter, core messages highlighted, contact details for further enquiries, some paragraphs of background to frame the story
- The version prepared for the audience on the day to take home: accessible and professional layout, no spelling errors
- Some key short soundbites for social networking outlets
- The version prepared for the government website: slightly more formal version, reformatted for ease of web-browsing
- A version to be sent to other media or expert/academic outlets at home and overseas, for possible use as an article
- An authorised version for the archives
- Finally, an unedited transcript may be made and retained, in case of controversy as to what exactly was said about a key point.

Making time for all this - and coordinating how it happens - needs to be a key part of the government speechwriter's dark art.

After leaving the FCO at the end of 2007 Charles Crawford set up his own website charlescrawford.biz. He will be speaking at the UK Speechwriters' Guild Conference 2010.

Extract from **The Presentation Coach**, by Graham Davies



In a century where executives frequently receive more than 100 e-mails a day, information on a screen can never be totally compelling. A presentation is real communication, with life and breath and flesh and blood. It is the human element that makes the difference. Only a live presenter can provide information with inspiration and impact. The words are merely ammunition ...you must be the weapon.

But there are too many presentations. Most of them are too long, whereas the human attention span has never been so short. I strongly believe that very few presentations should ever be longer than 20 minutes, no matter how brilliant the presenter. In fact, some of the most popular business presentations in the world are given at TED conferences (see www.TED.com). They have assembled dozens of the world leading thinkers in virtually every discipline to share their ideas, inventions and interpretations. The main reason that the presentations are so compelling is that they strictly enforce a time limit of eighteen minutes.

Knowledge and intellect are

useless without the power to communicate. There are certainly more communication tools available than ever before, ranging from PowerPoint to the marker pen. However, the best tool remains you. The main problem you face now is a lack of time: time to prepare and time to deliver.

A presentation is not about building a lifetime relationship. You should treat it like an affair that is short but memorable. It should have some great highlights, but be over quickly.

The prayer of the 21st Century audience is:

"Let me hear something new that makes listening worth the effort. Please don't let him make me yawn."

The mantra of the 21st Century presenter should be:

"Say it. Support it. Shut it."

Graham Davies is a presentation trainer. His forthcoming book *The Presentation Coach, Bare Knuckle Brilliance for Every Presenter*, is published by Capstone in August.

"The words are merely ammunition ...you must be the weapon."

INSPIRATION

Openings

As a kid, I spent my summers with my grandparents on their ranch in Texas. I helped fix windmills, vaccinate cattle, and do other chores. We also watched soap operas every afternoon, especially Days of our Lives. My grandparents belonged to a Caravan Club, a group of Airstream trailer owners who travel together around the U.S. and Canada. And every few summers, we'd join the caravan. We'd hitch up the Airstream trailer to my grandfather's car, and off we'd go, in a line with 300 other Airstream adventurers. I loved and worshipped my grandparents and I really looked forward to these trips. On one particular trip, I was about 10 years old. I was rolling around in the big bench seat in the back of the car. My grandfather was driving. And my grandmother had the passenger seat. She smoked throughout these trips, and I hated the smell.

At that age, I'd take any excuse to make estimates and do minor arithmetic. I'd calculate our gas mileage - figure out useless statistics on things like grocery spending. I'd been hearing an ad campaign about smoking. I can't remember the details, but basically the ad said, every puff of a cigarette takes some number of minutes off of your life: I think it might have been two minutes per puff. At any rate, I decided to do the math for my grandmother. I estimated the number of cigarettes per day, estimated the number of puffs per cigarette and so on. When I was satisfied that I'd come up with a reasonable number, I poked my head into the front of the car, tapped my grandmother on the shoulder, and proudly proclaimed, "At two minutes per puff, you've taken nine years off your life!"

I have a vivid memory of what happened, and it was not what I expected. I expected to be applauded for my cleverness and arithmetic skills. "Jeff, you're so smart. You had to have made some tricky estimates, figure out the number of minutes in a year and do some division." That's not what happened. Instead, my grandmother burst into tears. I sat in the backseat and did not know what to do. While my grandmother sat crying, my grandfather, who had been driving in silence, pulled over onto the shoulder of the highway. He got out of the car and came around and opened my door and waited for me to follow. Was I in trouble? My grandfather was a highly intelligent, quiet man. He had never said a harsh word to me, and maybe this was to be the first time? Or maybe he would ask that I get back in the car and apologize to my grandmother. I had no experience in this realm with my grandparents and no way to gauge what the consequences might be. We stopped beside the trailer. My grandfather looked at me, and after a bit of silence, he gently and calmly said, "Jeff, one day you'll understand that it's harder to be kind than clever."

What I want to talk to you about today is the difference between gifts and choices. Cleverness is a gift, kindness is a choice. Gifts are easy - they're given after all. Choices can be hard. You can seduce yourself with your gifts if you're not careful, and if you do, it'll probably be to the detriment of your choices.

Commencement speech to Princeton's Class of 2010 by Jeff Bezos Amazon CEO delivered on May 30, 2010.

My Lord Mayor, ladies and gentlemen.

It is humbling to speak here tonight conscious of the long line of distinguished Chancellors who have preceded me.

I have been looking back at some of their speeches for inspiration, and was particularly struck by what Austen Chamberlain said here at the Mansion House:

"Lord Mayor, the lot of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not altogether a happy one.

He has few friends, and the few he has are those of whom he should most beware, for their approach is the most insidious, and their indignation if he refused their claims is the most marked and the most violent."

Then I realised that he was the Chancellor in the last Liberal Conservative coalition.

Of course some have made comparisons with another former Chancellor, Lord Randolph Churchill, who took office in 1886 when he was 37 years old.

But he offered his resignation to his Prime Minister just four months into the job. To his shock and surprise it was accepted.

That's not a mistake I'm planning to repeat.

So rather than quoting Randolph Churchill, I'd like to begin with the words of his rather more successful son Winston.

For it was here at the Mansion House that he delivered one of his most famous lines:

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"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

He was talking to a country weary from three long years of war.

But his words could be said of the current situation as we approach the third anniversary of the beginning of the financial crisis.

Speech by George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mansion House, 16 June 2010

Substance

Over the next few years we will put in place a framework for financial stability to parallel that for monetary stability. We need both. As we have seen, one without the other is not enough. Just as the role of a central bank in monetary policy is to take the punch bowl away just as the party gets going, its role in financial stability should be to turn down the music when the dancing gets a little too wild.

Speech by Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, Mansion House, 16 June 2010

This coalition throws up difficult problems of parliamentary etiquette, and I am the first to have to tackle them. Should I refer to my Liberal Democrat colleague as "My Hon. Friend," but that is a term reserved for members of our own parties? How about "my honourable partner"? The word "partner", however, nowadays implies an even greater degree of intimacy than friendship, which is clearly what the Daily Mail fears, so I will stick to "my honourable ally."

The Loyal Address by Rt Hon Peter Lilley, Queen's Speech Debate, 25 May 2010

There is an Indian proverb about a merchant on a train with two baskets – one open, the other covered. In the open basket there are crabs from the sea shore.

But the passengers cannot see what is in the covered basket. The only clue to its contents is a few feathers poking out from the weaving, and a soft cooing sound.

On enquiry, the merchant confirms that the covered basket contains doves.

He explains the cover is necessary because whenever they have a chance to escape to freedom, they fly away.

The crabs though, he explains with a frown, ensure no one can aspire beyond the pack. Once one starts climbing out, the rest pull them back – hence no need for a lid or a cover. I often feel that Kiwis – here at home at least, are the crabs with the impulse to pull everyone back into the basket.

Speech by Alan Freeth, CEO, TelstraClear, Wellington, New Zealand, April 20 2010

Although I have indeed come enthusiastically and willingly, you, as parish clerks, know that not everyone goes enthusiastically and willingly to church, especially the young. I once knew a woman who every Sunday had to argue with her son to get him to go to church – not an uncommon occurrence. One Sunday the son was proving particularly stubborn and refused to leave his bed. 'Why don't you want to go to church?' pleaded his mother.

'Because its boring, because I don't believe half of what is said there and because I have no friends there. Why should I go?' he replied.

'Because it is your duty to go' said his mother' and besides you are the vicar!'

Speech by Tom Peryer at the Dinner for the Installation of the new Master of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks, 15 July 2010, Merchant Taylors Hall, Threadneedle Street, London

Endings

The big things I have been talking about matter a lot, but seemingly smaller things matter, too. Be curious, be gracious, be hopeful; love your neighbour, take a nap outside on a summer afternoon, read a detective novel now and then, go to the movies, vote in each and every election, never be embarrassed to put your hand over your heart and join in when the band strikes up the National Anthem, write thank-you notes on actual paper – you know, the dead-tree kind. And above all, remember, in hours of joy and darkness, that we have been promised that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds until, at the last, we find our journey done and our eternal home.

Speech by Jon Meacham, Editor, Newsweek, Baccalaureate Address at The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, May 15 2010

We can and must rebuild our economy. We can and must do it in a way that looks to the long term, that attracts and cultivates enterprise and industry. We can and must work together to make this happen. This is a relationship that I believe can and will work, and I hope you do, too.

We don't know all the answers, but we can work together to get them. To quote Winston Churchill, who took a while to decide if he was a Liberal or a Conservative, 'I'm an optimist. It doesn't seem too much use being anything else.'

Helen Alexander - CBI President to the Newspaper Makers, 8 March 2010

Reusables

Arthur Miller said that his play, "Death of a Salesman"... came from images...

"The image of the ageing... and so many of your friends already gone... and strangers in the seats of the mighty... who do not know you, nor your triumphs... or your incredible value. Above all...perhaps the image of a need greater than hunger or sex or thirst...the need to leave a thumb print somewhere on the world... the need for immortality and by admitting it...the knowing that one has carefully inscribed one's name on a cake of ice on a hot July day."

We tell ourselves stories in order to live...We interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the "ideas" with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience.

Joan Didion, The White Album

Rabbi and his wife were cleaning up the house. The Rabbi came across a box he didn't recognise. His wife told him to leave it alone, it was personal. One day she was out and his curiosity got the better of him. He opened the box and inside he found three eggs and £2,000. When his wife came home, he admitted that he opened the box, and he asked her to explain the contents to him. She told him that every time he had a bad sermon, she would put an egg in the box. He interrupted: "In 20 years, only three bad sermons, that's not bad." His wife continued, "and every time I got a dozen eggs, I would sell them for £1."

SPEECHWRITER PROFILE

Matthew Maxwell Scott is in-house speechwriter for the CBI, and a Conservative councillor in Wandsworth.



What is the role and purpose of the CBI?

It's 'The Voice of Business,' speaking for some 240,000 businesses that together employ around a third of the private sector workforce. Its mission is "to help create and sustain the conditions in which businesses in the UK can compete and prosper for the benefit of all."

What is a typical audience for a CBI event?

Senior people from CBI member companies, plus MPs, public officials, representatives from other lobby groups and the media.

How many speeches do you write each week?

Around two or three speeches or presentations, but our latest views on the state of the economy and the government go into a rolling stump speech that evolves all the time and can be tailored to a specific audience.

What is the average length?

Around 20 minutes is standard. There's the occasional 'lecture'

too, but that's just a euphemism for a long speech, normally 30 to 40 minutes. I tend to warn event organisers that any longer is unwise if they value their personal safety.

How do you manage the speechwriter-speaker relationship? Any tips?

I try to be open, and encourage any feedback, positive or otherwise, so the professional relationship can develop. Flattery also helps.

What's the biggest speech you have ever delivered yourself?

One I gave in the final of the primary to become a candidate for the Greater London Assembly. It went well, but the favourite thumped me on the first round of voting and that was that.

How do you make a subject like climate change interesting?

From a business perspective, this isn't always easy. Al Gore and George Monbiot can use polar bear-themed hyperbole or sketchy threats about our children's wellbeing to hold an audience's attention. I have to make action on climate change sound like long-term business sense, because it's only then that things actually happen. Product innovation is a good way in as long as it doesn't veer into a Tomorrow's World nonsense of tin-foil suits and food in tablet form.

Were there any experiences in your youth that pointed to your future career as a speechwriter?

I enjoyed writing and I spoke a lot. Eventually, the two worlds collided.

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Who is your favourite public speaker?

I used to quite enjoy the work of Phillip Howard, the chap with a megaphone at Oxford Circus who implored passers-by to be winners, not sinners, but they gave him an ASBO and he's not there anymore. In his absence, I'd say William Hague or Jeffrey Archer.

How do you make sure the delivery matches the quality of the content you write?

I try and hear speakers' voices in my head when I'm writing so I'm less likely to write something that will sound alien coming from them. Watching them deliver speeches helps this and is good discipline, even if there's the risk that they fluff a perfectly good joke and a little bit of you – and everyone else - dies.

If in doubt, keep the message and the language simple and the sentences short.

Can you define what the 'Big Society' is all about in less than 20 words?

It's people power: individuals and communities getting the services they need without some Whitehall panjandrum standing in the way.

You're getting married later this year. Have you written your groom speech yet?

No, but I've been warned that expectations are high. I've got a good finishing line – other than the one toasting the bridesmaids – but I can't tell you what it is because that might spoil the moment.

What's your most useful reference book?

Brewer's is good, but I find Google and Wikipedia do a lot of my work these days.

How do you stimulate your own creativity?

Patiently.

What is your best joke?

An emergency curry joke:

Q. What's the difference between dhal and tarka dhal?

A. Tarka's a little 'otter.

The 2nd Bournemouth Leadership and Communication Conference

17 September 2010, Bournemouth UK



The UK Speechwriters' Guild has selected a group of wise, entertaining and controversial speakers to offer expert insights, stimulate thought and share experience on the subject of how to improve the clarity of communication in public life.

In a year when the style of political debate in the UK changed forever, learn how to adapt to the new challenges and master the new skills.

Who should attend?

Politicians, speechwriters, lobbyists, civil servants, charity professionals, PRs, academics, public speakers, trainers, communication experts and freelance writers.

For more information:
www.ukspeechwritersguild.co.uk/conference/

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