



Grant Pearson
Brown
Consulting Ltd.

The Presentation &
Business Development
Specialists

Advice *squeezed*
straight from the



Desmond Harney

*Happy Christmas, Hogmanay and
New Year from everyone at
Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd*

Hark the Herald!

Active Listening is a critical factor in successful Business Development (BD)

“Toutes choses sont dites déjà; mais comme personne n'écoute, il faut toujours recommencer”, said André Gide¹, a French writer and winner of the 1947 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Don't panic! Do not adjust your sets. Everything that follows will be in English, although the sentiment of the above quotation rings true in any language and across the many countries where GPB works. My past-imperfect schoolboy French translates it as: *“Everything has already been said; but since nobody ever listens, we must always start over again”*. André would certainly have advised you to pay attention to those “Herald Angels”.

Gide was described in his 1951 obituary² as *“France's greatest contemporary man of letters”*. He was considered an astute observer and commentator on the human condition. Think of him as a spirit-guide from Christmases past, for anybody interested in persuasive communication.

You may remember The Midland Bank referring to itself as “The Listening Bank”, back in the 1980s. Their strapline implied they were always listening and responding to their clients' needs. They deployed an animated listening griffin to bring their positioning to life, long before Harry Potter and his chums arrived. Yet the truth is that The Midland probably



Source: YouTube

didn't listen quite hard enough, didn't heed Gide's warning. Despite appearing to know how important the perception of Active Listening is, in business relationships and rapport-building.

“Thanks for the history lesson, Des, but what can we truly learn, from a 1980s cartoon griffin and Gide's century-old aphorism, that's of value today?”

Well, it would be that the need to listen has always been vital, surviving changes of fashion in financial services, and indeed all, marketing. BD is a multi-faceted process, which relies on effective listening in many of its key phases – just like life in general. Effective communicators Actively Listen whenever possible. We simply cannot afford to be seen to be amongst the many who aren't paying enough attention, who never truly, fully listen to others.

Do you, or your team, ever find yourselves having to “start over again”, after failing to land a potential new client or piece of incremental business?

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By Desmond Harney

Desmond looks at listening actively to the Herald, and not just at Christmas.

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By Alastair Grant

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Anna discusses the fear of speaking, not just in public.

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Are you resigned to seeking out ever-increasing numbers of potential 'leads' for the top of your leaky prospects pipeline? If so, Gide (and GPB) might hold some helpful clues as to why. It's impossible to quantify precisely how much time, energy and money is lost, every single day, by organisations ignoring Gide's warning – but it's a lot!

GPB's research and observation have identified Active Listening as fundamental to every step of the BD process, from early researching of prospects and market trends through to the final negotiation. I could write at great length on its impact in many of the BD areas. No, please don't groan at that prospect!

Suffice for now to say that if you aren't already Actively Listening to your clients, then somebody else probably is. Meaning that unless you do deploy Active Listening too, you won't optimise your potential to achieve that most desirable outcome: the status of long-term, trusted adviser.

Active Listening has powerful impact, for such a simple concept. So set aside any preconceptions and judgments, and instead pay full attention right up to the end of what's being said. Don't interrupt or argue, but do ask clarifying questions. Sometimes maybe paraphrase what you believe the speaker has said, in order to check and gain better understanding.

Eye-to-eye contact, nodding, plus other appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication signals can also be important components of Active Listening. These factors all give the speaker greater confidence that what they are saying is actually being valued and carefully considered by their audience.

After all, if you're not fully engaged when present with your contacts (whether that's face-to-face or on the 'phone) then why should they fully engage with you, and share valuable information?

In the BD process, we typically listen primarily for information or for signals.

We seek to understand and remember words accurately; just as we hope OUR audiences will do, when we ourselves are trying to communicate persuasively.

We also try to avoid the physiological barriers to Active Listening, such as hunger or tiredness. It's important to ensure we're well-rested and well-fed, whenever we think Active Listening might be required. After all, if you're feeling "*quanked*", "*forswunk*", or "*ramfeezled*" (and no, those aren't French words but some archaic³ British ones, meaning to be overcome with fatigue) then it's tough to maintain your focus on Active Listening, and all too easy to be left "*Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered*" - and dissatisfied with your outcomes.



Effective communication relies upon a proactive, two-way process. Your BD skills need to be at least as good as your core discipline skills, or you won't get the chance to prove you *have* those strong core skills. Active Listening is one of THE key factors in maximising your BD opportunities.

So, how about a New Year's Resolution to do a lot more "Harking", by which I mean doing a lot more Active Listening, in 2019? Just pay attention and really listen. Show you are listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding and replaying back the important parts of what you think you've just heard. How hard can that be?

And since it's December, you could pass me some mulled wine and a turkey drumstick. On the basis of the improved rapport-building and incremental work you could now secure, by doing just these few simple things, you're probably good for it! *Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!* — as your spirit-guide might be heard to say.

By Desmond Harney

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1) "Le Traité du Narcisse" (The Treatise of the Narcissus, 1891).

2) The New York Times, February 19th, 1951.

3) Twitter page of Suzi Dent, from UK Channel 4's "Countdown" TV show.

Stickies that stick



For a presentation to be successful, the content delivered has to stick to the often Teflon-like minds of the listener. No easy task.

When we at GPB judge the success of a presentation we ask two questions, and they relate to content and delivery: First, was there a coherent and memorable message? Second how well did the speaker's delivery come across? Simply put, message and personality.

but to start with the conclusion first would be provocative and gain immediate attention: *"Ladies and gentlemen, I propose we put winglets on the 400 series. By doing that we can carry an extra 100 passengers. Let me explain how this is achieved...."*

This article focuses on a single issue, the memorability of the key messages. Will the listener remember these the next day, the next week?

This would seem to be a tough challenge as lots of anecdotal evidence shows that many presentations, whilst full of information, lack memorable messages sufficiently good for listeners to be able to talk about what they said.

There are many reasons why this might be so. Here are some common ones:

- Too complex
- Too much information from a multitude of PowerPoint slides
- Spoken too fast
- Irrelevant to the listener
- Listener is not receptive (Teflon)
- Abstract wording such that the listener cannot visualise what has been said.

We need "stickies" for all scenarios. A successful "sticky" enables a listener to remember a key point well after the event. The point STICKS in their mind. There are many versions of a sticky but many good ones use *mental imagery*, images that are created in the listener's mind. Of course, properly used, a PowerPoint slide may do the trick too.

A sequence of sticky things

The first sticky needs to be right at the start of a presentation, and its purpose is to persuade the listener that the presentation is worth listening to, a hook to draw them in.

An example might be the engineer who had to persuade the board of Boeing to put winglets on the latest version of the 747 Jumbo. A logical explanation leading to a conclusion would be conventional

Another example is about fly-tipping. *"Imagine a 6 foot fence around Hyde Park. Imagine that the whole of Hyde Park is filled with fly tipped rubbish to the top of that 6 foot fence. That is the amount of fly tipped rubbish that is dumped in London every week. Fly tipping is a problem that needs to be tackled."* Now, a slide could be made up to show Hyde Park filled with rubbish, but actually the listener will create their own image, assuming of course that they know London's Hyde Park.

How we remember things

There is much validated psychological research behind the conclusion that vivid images that are created in the mind by the listener tend to stick well.

The accepted view is that we remember things in two compartments: Firstly in words (*verbal imagery*), of concepts, sequences, and facts, and secondly in *mental imagery*, of sensory information (especially sight, sound, smell), holistic ideas, emotions, personal thoughts as well as images and symbols.

It's the combination of the two that leads to the most effective storing of important information in the human brain.

I first heard the '747 winglet' 'sticky' above some 20 years ago. The trick of using well-known objects as a comparison helps both understanding as well as sticking.

For example: *"a new indoor enclosed area for engine manufacturer Rolls Royce occupies two football pitches"* gives a better feel for size than describing it as about 1.2 hectares or 3 acres.

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Alastair Grant

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Stickies that stick.....continued

When describing the length of a 7,753km train journey I undertook from Vladivostok to the town of Perm, a few hundred miles East of Moscow, I asked the audience to imagine travelling from New York and ending up in Hawaii. Yes, Russia is a big place!

Use something more sticky

Analogy works well and the more vivid it is the better: *"Imagine you are holding an empty Coke can in your hand. It's not very strong. You can crumple that can in your hand. What you might not know is the skin of our aircraft is only 6 times the thickness of that coke can."*

Again a slide with a photo of a pair of coke cans will probably be much less sticky than the alternative mental imagery. Here is a pair of such cans - does this look sticky to you?



Crushed and intact coke cans

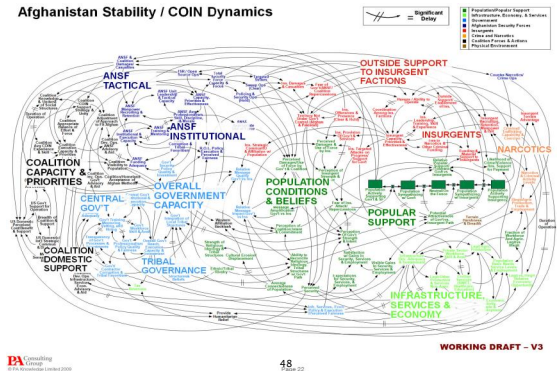
Slides may well be sticky: Pictures that focus on a particular point such as corrosion in a structure may get a high stickiness score. Charts of many sorts *can* work well, adding to comprehension and stickiness: graphs, histograms, pie charts, scatter charts, but often they are too complex, especially to those seeing the images for the first time.

Here are two simple tips: first remove all unnecessary detail, and second use the build facility in PowerPoint and similar packages.

Better still, if the slide is complex, describe it in outline first with a blank (black) slide up, using the 'B' key if you have a keyboard, and the button on the clicker if you have one of those, so the listener is already building up a picture and then show them the slide. Here is an example of a terrible PowerPoint slide,

which breaks almost every 'rule' in the book:

Afghanistan Stability / COIN Dynamics



The World's worst slide?!. Unsticky!

Then there are a whole host of other rhetorical tools that can be marched into battle to throw stickies, but not sticks at the listener. These have been covered in the winter 2013 edition, and a full list of Rhetorical Tools is available on the GPB website.

To many Australians a sweet dessert wine is called a 'sticky' as the liquid sticks to the side of the glass due to its higher viscosity.

Whilst you're munching through all that lovely food and drink over the Christmas holiday, and possibly having a 'sticky' or two, have a think about what you plan to say in 2019 to your first audience of the year, and how you can make your contents stick to their 'glassy' memory.

By Alastair Grant

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¹The slide above is from The Metro on 29th April 2010 under the banner: *"Shocked and awed by PowerPoint, the US top brass are fighting back"*.

The Persuasive Voice



The human voice holds enormous power and potential, but is often underdeveloped in spite of some easy and quick wins.

It is a resilient and flexible instrument that you have more control over than you probably realise. Your voice is also an important part of your identity. Unique to you, it remains so even when you change pitch, tone, volume, speed and rhythm. The words you use in combination with all or some of these characteristics can have a profound effect on your listeners.

Your voice can soothe, move, reprimand, deride, arouse...even send someone to sleep! It is sad that many of us cringe when we first hear ourselves on a recording. Over time we get used to and hopefully learn to accept our voice. Or we work to make small enhancements, so that we may even learn to love it.



Audiences do engage with speakers sometimes

Patsy Rodenburg OBE is an illustrious voice coach and author who has worked with many actors, politicians and business people over the years. In her book *'The Second Circle'*, she claims we are at our most persuasive in this 'second circle' when speaking in front of an audience. This state is neither too introverted (past-based) where you are barely heard, nor too extraverted (forward-thrusting), which can come across as invasive. She writes that second circle is *"the give and take of being present"*. By working on your breath, posture, voice, language, listening skills, focus, courage and trust, she claims that you can access this 'second circle' on a daily basis.

Although your choice of words may be perfectly balanced and your state optimal, if you are not maximising these aspects of

your voice and other characteristics, you are letting yourself down, and your words and ultimate objective may simply be lost.

Accents

Accents are often a characteristic people say they dislike about their voice, yet they are so much a part of our diversity and they enrich our culture.

My view (and GPB's) is that only when an accent is so strong that as listeners we would not be able to understand the speaker, does it need to be toned down.

The Scots are masters at moderating their accents. How often have you listened to friends or colleagues from Glasgow or Aberdeen talking to each other and not understood a word of what they said?

By contrast, when they are speaking to you or me, many of them will make adjustments. A Spanish friend of mine in Havana does the same. As a university Professor for several years, he knew he had to moderate his accent to be understood by his students. But that need not mean eradicating your vocal individuality. It's more about diction; adjusting your enunciation so that you are understood by more people.

Pitch changes

In my previous article, I discussed the average pitch height, pitch modulation and nasal resonance of two female US podcasters. Nasality was strongly present in one of them. While some nasality in a speaker is natural, high levels of nasality can be abrasive.

Roger Love, who has worked with the singing voices of many actors, including Jeff Bridges and Bradley Cooper, also works with the speaking voice. I like the simplicity of Roger's explanation during an interview with publisher Paul Feldman, of the National Association of Sales Professionals (NASP).

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Lynda Russell-Whitaker

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The Persuasive Voice... continued

Roger explained how to minimise nasality when breathing out to produce speech:

"it's almost impossible to speak nasally when you bring your stomach in because it pushes more air out and then more sound comes out of your mouth instead of trying to get out of your nose."

Try holding your nose closed when speaking, to judge how much nasal resonance you use. Without getting too technical, his explanation is the simplest way to hear and adjust your nasality.



Visual artist & director Ersinhan Ersin speaking at The Next Web Conference 2018

Pacing and pausing

Another area to be mindful of is pace. Some of us speak too slowly. Others speak too fast, which reduces articulatory movements, especially of the tongue, and results in the short forms of various vowels, for example 'uh' and 'ih'. This in turn reduces comprehension. Again, think about your audience members. Presuming your presentation is in English, are most of them fluent in English?

If so, you have the luxury of speaking at a slightly faster pace. If not, you might want to articulate more carefully, which means slowing it down. You can also help this by using simpler words and pausing for longer between phrases.

Pausing at the end of an important point also allows your listeners to process the information. A longer pause also creates even more emphasis; this is useful for dramatic effect.

US Presidents Obama and Trump have both used this device often, pausing for several seconds, usually after they have made a key point. Trump's syntax is similar to that of a preacher; using short sentences combined with vivid rhetoric (some might say 'rhetorical tricks').

Pitch Modulation and Range

Most of us love to hear a well-modulated voice and I firmly believe this is not a difficult element to improve. We don't need a huge Pitch Range to incorporate modulation, about 1 to 1.5 octaves should do it. In that way we avoid sounding monotonous to our listeners. Practising with children's stories, poetry and dramatic texts are enjoyable ways to improve your pitch modulation. Too often, only volume is used for emphasis when what we really want is a combination of pitch, rhythm, pausing and volume to keep our audience most engaged.

As with the contrast of theatre and screen acting, an adjustment has to be made when speaking on a podcast compared to public speaking. For example, certain consonants (particularly the plosives - p,t,k and b,d,g) become very harsh with amplification. And one needs far less projection in such an intimate setting.

Fluency

Lastly, disfluencies. Whether you are a host or guest on a podcast, your interview is usually recorded, so disfluency errors can easily be edited out. But if you are speaking in a live setting, be conscious of your 'pet' disfluencies. It's much better to use a pause and keep that 'umm/err', 'so' or 'obviously' silent, than to voice it, commonly at the beginning of sentences.

We have created an exercise to help with this, and many of our clients have learned about it through our 1-1 sessions or group workshops. It's our version of the BBC Radio 4 programme "Just a minute". If you've got a minute, we can tell you all about it.

By Lynda Russell-Whittaker

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Afraid to talk



There is a common word in our line of work, Glossophobia, literally meaning the fear of speaking. It seems to be getting worse, why is that?

There has undoubtedly been a revolution in communication which seems to escalate as months and years pass by.

Long gone are the days of sending faxes, and we have all noticed the visible movement away from sending physical letters in a stamped envelope. It's got to the point where getting one has become both something special and at times even something rather scary, whether you recognise the handwriting on the envelope or not.

more people of all ages, but especially millennials, are communicating socially by WhatsApp and its fellow social media Apps, rather than text message and both seem to have undoubtedly superseded talking on the telephone.

This change has blurred into work messages now; for example I found it particularly intrusive when a previous work peer would send WhatsApp messages round.

This also begs the question whether we are now expected to be continuously 'on', both at work and in our own social circles.

I have an 18-year-old family member who communicates with his peer group, almost entirely via his headset when he is gaming. Despite that, he and his friends are focused on their chosen subject matter - Warcraft 2 or the like - at least he is using actual words.

The majority of my friends and family communicate through WhatsApp, and there are multiple groups as well as individuals that use this method over and above email, as it is easier and quicker to share. It is also more secure.

My personal feeling is that it is very difficult to communicate meaning, feeling and certainly intonation in a typed message - no matter the number of emojis you stick at the end of a hard to deliver sentence. Added to which, there are so many of them that emoticons alone have started to become a form of language, taking us way back to a form of communication used thousands of years ago - the ancient Cuneiform writing using icons.



Some modern cuneiform icons?

Is it this shift to constantly available and ease-of-use communication that has made email our go-to *Modus Operandi*? Is it that much better than picking up the telephone or even talking to colleagues or clients face to face?

It is certainly noticeable that more and



Anna Easton

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Afraid to talk... continued

I have begun to investigate why people use messaging more and more, over and above talking directly.

It would appear that the overriding reasons are: speed, conformity (with the social norms of other members in a social network), and privacy.

The most worrying reason is probably the writer's perceived freedom to 'say' something negative or hostile. This might be either socially unacceptable to say face-to-face, or it might be too embarrassing to say over the phone, or that others might be likely to hear....

It may also demonstrate cowardice on the informers part by which they can gain themselves the title of 'email warrior' even though the content can so easily be sent on elsewhere multiple times and instantly.



A typical day for someone with a phone?

I have even had someone tell me that she found it 'aggressive' to receive an unannounced phone call, and so from then on, I always message someone to find out first if it is ok to call, in this case, necessitating a pre-message so as not to be intrusive.

You will notice that a good proportion of people on public transport wear headphones—which may suggest a sign that they are not wanting to talk. Does this resonate with you?

The classical definition of 'Glossophobia' is 'fear of public speaking', but you will notice on a look back at my subtitle that I left out the work 'public'.

The removal of 'public' is there to capture what seems to be happening now. As so much communication is in the form of messages and even icons, there also seems to be an effect on our ability to speak to each other, not just the 'usual' of being uncomfortable with a stage and very large audience, but also the simple act of speaking to one another in private.

But there is good news! In schools around the UK, they are doing what we did not tend to have in school-days gone by - they teach the children to stand and present in class on a regular basis. This is also happening more and more in universities.

So perhaps we are just living through an era where a simple chat has been undervalued.

We can all do our bit to bring back the ol' talking thing - so my suggestion for a New Year's Resolution to you all is this: go and chat to a colleague instead of sending them an email.

By Anna Easton

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“You forget I studied visual communication, so my use of emojis comes through the lens of academia.”

Fun quote from Time Out's column 'Word On The Street'. Edition 2,5211, 18 December 2018.

The Triple Ps of mastering the fear of public speaking



Ghandi, the great leader of Indian independence, froze during his debut case as a young lawyer in Bombay, as he rose to cross-examine a witness for the first time.

"I stood up, but my heart sank into my boots. My head was reeling and I felt as though the whole court was doing likewise. I could think of no question to ask." he wrote¹.

Having handed on the case to a colleague, he hastened from the courtroom in humiliation.

When I first read this, I was surprised that such an eloquent leader, whose words had persuaded and mobilised millions of people, often suffered from stage fright, or as Ghandi called it *"the awful strain of public speaking"*.

It made me wonder, what happens to us - in our bodies and minds - when we become nervous? This seems to be it:

Once your brain receives messages that you are in danger, Adrenaline is pumped into your bloodstream. Noradrenaline activates the 'fight or flight' response in your brain, and Adrenaline does the same in your body. It increases heart rate, dilates your pupils, breaks down lipids into fat and suppresses other non-emergency processes like digestion...all to prepare and help you survive the perceived danger.



An angry bear produces fight/flight

'But why do I do that when it's just a

simple speech!'" I hear you scream. Well, evolutionary biologists tell us that your brain's limbic system, the body's way of responding to very primitive threats, developed long before the cerebrum or neocortex. Although the threats have changed from our hunter/gatherer past, the limbic system is still very useful for many of today's threats.

While your conscious mind can clearly differentiate between an attack by a grizzly bear and giving a pitch, your Limbic System reacts in the same manner to both situations, since they are both interpreted as DANGER.

So how do we overcome this inherent animalistic condition? The answer is: Prepare, Prepare, Prepare or what I'd like to call **"The triple Ps"**.

P 1: Prepare your content

What is your presentation's main purpose? What do you know about your audience? What do they know about the topic? Are you aware of Aristotle's three appeals? What are your key messages? What about the use of rhetoric?

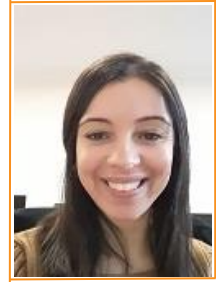
Mapping out and building your story is crucial to your presentation's success. Making sure that you are *content with your content* (Speak up #57) will make you feel competent and boost your self-confidence significantly. You get both by knowing that you have got a great story to tell. The questions I pose above will quickly get you there.

P 2: Prepare your delivery

Just like a sculptor carving a masterpiece, you need well-honed skills to deliver your story. Some of your most important communication tools are your vocal and visual delivery.

Imagine what happens when singing "Once in Royal David's City"; you emphasise the word "City" first time then "David's" the second time.

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Hasnaë Kerach

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



The triple Ps ... continued

The emphasis and meaning of the sentence change; you probably altered pitch, pace or volume. Do consider using these tools when preparing your delivery. Doing this won't only keep your audience more engaged and focused, but it signals competence, confidence and control to your listeners and to your brain, thus decreasing your nervousness and stress.

In addition to your voice, make sure your visual expressions are congruent with your words. Don't start your story with "I'm pleased to be here" while you are frowning and your eyes are nervously twitching. Why? Because Faces don't lie!

What you can do, however, is SMILE! Research² has shown that genuine smiling decreases stress as it releases Endorphins, which are the body's natural pain relievers, along with Serotonin, which is associated with feeling good. Please note that the key word here is GENUINE. So please go ahead, and throw a big genuine smile at your audience, which will tell them that you are pleased to be there.

Learning how to use your visual and vocal tools will increase your confidence considerably.



Pleased to be here, genuinely

If you are nervous about your story or delivery, our scientific measurement of the content, and vocal/visual parts of your persuasiveness will help. Clients find this objectivity really helpful both as a baseline measurement and as a progress report.

P3: Prepare your mind and emotions

According to *Science Daily*, researchers have found that writing helps decrease anxiety and stress levels³. It also helps

students perform better in exams and presentations. Unloading your worries on a piece of paper helps you free up brainpower that is normally occupied by nervousness and anxiety before a key event.

Allocating just 15 minutes to express your emotions and thoughts in writing about an act of public speaking will help you to step into 'observer mode'. This will bring your unconscious fears, beliefs and thoughts under the scrutiny and spotlight of your reason and intellect.

A second tool is to shift your focus from those fears to your message, the purpose of your engagement, and the difference you wish to make. Your presentation is not just about you, it is about your message and those people who have taken the time to listen to you. Gandhi found a passion for his life's work that was so great it overrode all his fears, including the fear of public speaking.

Slow breathing (5-6 breaths/minute) is another coping mechanism that can help you when you are nervous. Slowing down your breath rate stimulates your body's Parasympathetic system, via the relaxation response. This uses the body's equally powerful and opposite Sympathetic system to counteract the emergency 'fight or flight' response.

Finally, it is worth noting that none of the Triple Ps is a quick fix on its own. However they are a powerful combination, and once mastered thoroughly they will unveil the persuasive communicator that you really are.

By Hasnaê Kerach.

1. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by Gandhi, Mohandas K. First English translation from the Gujarati, by Desai, Mahadev, in 1927.
2. Psychological Science, Kraft.T and Pressman.S, (Univ. of Kansas) August 2012
3. Source: Science Daily, 13th January 2011.

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Crackers at Christmas!



The Brexit negotiations have not gone well for either side, but especially for the UK. We seem to have gone crackers.

If we are to consider ourselves even half-baked professionals in the fields we claim to operate in, we cannot let this turbulent moment in time pass without commenting on a major event going on at this very time. Yes it's the Brexit negotiation.

But I don't want here to take sides, or even to try to explain the arguments that are whooshing around the UK and EU Parliaments. No, I want to see what we can all learn from observing a negotiation that has patently gone horribly wrong.

Set realistic and clear goals

My starting point is the very close 52-48% vote in favour of the Brexiteers, on 23rd June 2016. It came after campaigns based on emotion and logic, with promises on both sides that we the 'Voting Public' have since realised were not really true. Whatever trust had previously existed in our leaders, it was seriously eroded. The initial idea of leaving the EU 'smoothly' was going to be nigh on impossible.

There were two main Brexit campaigns, (Vote Leave and Leave.eu) and no clear description of what Brexit would mean. PM Theresa May's "Brexit means Brexit" was emphatic but did not really help people to grasp what the future held, and now that we do have an inkling, there seems to be a continuum of options between 'Brexit in name only' and 'Full Brexit', with various named comparative country deals, but with '+' signs added for tailoring, all lying somewhere along that line.



UK Prime Minister Theresa May steps out again in Brussels for one more go.

The lack of a single clear definition of the type of Brexit that was on offer (a simple summary tick-list would have helped the voters and the negotiation) behind the vote in 2016 has resulted in deep confusion and fog ever since, and made the UK PM's job an impossible one.

Have an acceptable alternative

In any negotiation, you have to have a strong alternative plan, often called BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement) that you are happy with. Indeed you should feel so happy that you go in to negotiate feeling good, strong, resilient and able to deal with whatever muck the other side might throw at you. This BATNA is usually to walk away (no deal) or walk towards an alternative partner and do a deal with them.

There were (and still are) suggestions that the UK could just leave with 'no deal' and start afresh from the position derived from the World Trade Organisation's trade agreement. If I understand the WTO alternative correctly (it's not easy to know this), it would mean the UK applying the same tariffs and taxes to all imports, wherever they come from, and that we would charge 0% in both cases, i.e. we would become a Free Trade state. Those against such a move compare it metaphorically to falling off a tall cliff.

The idea that the Brexit deal was going to be easy to settle was madness, as there was no time where the UK side had a clear or single idea about what they wanted.

The best outcomes are those commonly labelled 'win-win'. (Ed. We find the notion that both sides can 'win' odd, but it is the industry lingo). There is another even better outcome, a 'synergistic win-win', which is most relevant where the two parties each have a problem to solve, where the parties can solve each other's problems, and where they plan to have an ongoing relationship (as we have with UK-EU). The problem here is that the EU does not think it has a problem!

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Ewan Pearson

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts





Crackers at Christmas... continued

Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific voice, visual and content analysis reports, which are unique to GPB. We then provide voice and visual coaching, and content advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as:

- Voice, Visual and Content Analyses,
- Prospect Relationship Management (PRM),
- the Information Iceberg,
- Client s' Rights Act,
- Feature, Benefit Impact (FBI),
- Buyers' Criteria Analysis, (BCA), and
- Our Q&A Methodology.

Lessons one and two: know clearly what you want and ensure you all agree what the best alternatives would be.

David Davis was not up to it

For Brexit we first put David Davis (our first of many called the '*Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union*') in to bat with Michel Barnier. David turned up to his first meeting with Barnier with no notes, and seemingly thought he and his team were round at Barnier's place for a chat over tea. Barnier had prepared thoroughly and laid out some tough rules and timings with cold authority. Davis did not seem to have a clue how to respond.



Barnier seems to wield the power of the whole of the EU

Davis resigned after 2 years in role over differences with May's Chequers deal. We then got Dominic Raab (4 months), then Stephen Barclay. I can't say how the newbies have done, we just have not seen much from them. What we do have is an exit bill [the *European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018*] that was poorly negotiated, with terms agreed at the negotiating table that were not acceptable to Parliament.

So Theresa May seems to have taken over, pulling her bill with less than a day to go, after recognising it would be defeated. She raced back to Brussels only to be told '*non*' in a very embarrassing public display of unity from the other EU members. We seem to have gone completely crackers.

Lesson three: Choose your best negotiators and ensure they know what they are allowed to negotiate.

Two years is not enough

The whole Brexit deal went wrong when Theresa May triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on 29th March 2017. That was the day that the UK set a clock running against which they had to sprint, over a two year timeline for the exit process. The EU Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, got an immediate advantage by dictating the stages in which the exit process would occur, and weirdly, the UK did not counter with any other plans.

We just have not given ourselves enough time (notwithstanding David Davis et al wasting it) to negotiate such a big deal as Brexit. Michel Barnier laid out the timetable and we've stuck to it. But as with all negotiations, deadlines can be extended, and that may yet happen....

Part of the problem was that we set off at a glacial crawl, making no progress for months, and doing what so many parties do in the early stages of a negotiation, which is to spend time as if it was infinite. Now that we are in the last 100 or so days of the two-year negotiation period, time has become much more valuable, and there is a real sense of panic, leading to a whole host of stressed moves, such as pulling the vote, quickly followed by holding a Conservative Party leadership challenge. What a mess!

Lesson four: Set realistic timelines and deadlines against which you have to perform, and use all the time you have efficiently.

The (only) good news to us about these Brexit talks is that it's a very public case study, so we can all learn masses about how to negotiate more sensibly.

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