

Career Rx

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Speaking From Your Unchangeable Truths

There are times when we begin to reflect on who we are and where we are in our lives. This reflection usually occurs during a crisis or at midlife when we begin to think what value or life message we are leaving behind. Early in our lives, we begin to identify with our self characterization and establish our reputation. In the early stages, our family, teachers and friends shape our character and some would say that our persona is genetically handed to us. As we continue through life, some fill the content of their lives based on expectations, while others follow their vision of who they want to be. Some model themselves after an influential person in their life.

"Because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

~John Wooden

Regardless of how you take your journey, knowing your core principles or values is critical to your resiliency in life. Your principles provide the grounding needed to withstand life's many twists and turns. They help you work through the many challenges encountered.

When you are reflecting on your life, think about the overall message that you share. How you communicate the message – verbally and non-verbally. Your message is communicated through your posture, your facial expressions, and your overall body language.

Think about your message. The message that is received is largely determined by the receiver. Your audience shapes the message – whether you intended them to or not. It is your responsibility to verify that the "right" message has been received. We do this subtly by observing the receiver's body language, such as a nod of understanding, an emotional reaction or a verbal reply.

Think about how you craft your message. Do you share your message through your stories around the dinner table or holiday meals as your family did? Do you articulate your principles when communicating? Some principles may include the value of truth, importance of optimism, value of relationships, need for personal growth, importance of helping others, being just, focusing on problems - not people, and building a better future. Think about interviewing. As the interviewee, you are the storyteller weaving your relevant stories into the questions that are asked. Your stories illustrate your abilities and enable you to share your successes. Remember to keep your stories brief – get to the point. Allow your audience to participate in the creation of truth and engage your listener by making a connection.

Over the years, what stories have remained with you? Is it the stories that allow you to see an experience through a different lens, provide an "aha" moment or engage a cognitive or emotional connection? Stories that allow you to relate to the person's emotions based on your own experiences, or open your eyes to a new way of viewing a situation are powerful. Engaging your audience is critical. Make sure your story answers the listener's needs. Focus on what the organization needs and sell your value.

Communication never happens in a vacuum, rather in a rich and complex context. There is a confluence of history, culture and personality that your audience provides. It is the perception of the receiver that impacts how the message is interpreted. When you are interviewing, you have the ability to adjust "on the fly" in reaction to the listener's response. Use this to your advantage and shape your message accordingly but be true to yourself and your principles.

"The problem with communication is the illusion that it has occurred."

~ George Bernard Shaw

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Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.