



## **CONNECT: CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE (IN SEVEN SIMPLE STEPS)**

Whether you are giving your ice-breaker or competing in a speech contest, or speaking to an audience of one or one thousand, you should be focused on connecting with your audience. Using the **C.O.N.N.E.C.T. Framework** I developed to engage audiences, the first C in the mnemonic is to CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE to make it memorable.

Below are **Seven Simple Steps to Craft Your Message** and transform it into a masterpiece:

**1. Align your message with your audience's needs.**

Prior to your presentation, conduct a detailed audience analysis to identify the audience and determine their unique needs. Find out what moves and motivates them. Customize your message to address those needs.

**2. Structure your message to provide clarity.**

Audiences love surprises, but your speech needs to be organized so they can easily follow. At a minimum, your speech should be organized with a clear introduction, body with a series of points, and conclusion. When structured in a consistent manner, your message and supporting ideas will be clearly understood.

**3. Select stories to support your main points.**

Simple stories are the most important tool that a writer can use to make a point. Instead of just providing narrative, use relatable stories to explain your complex thoughts and emotions. Develop an arsenal of personal stories to engage the audience and allow them to feel connected with you and your message.

**4. Deliver a clear call-to-action within your conclusion.**

The audience will feel a sense of completion with a powerful conclusion that summarizes the key message. However, if you ask your audience to do nothing, that is exactly what they will do. To make your message memorable, end with a clear call-to-action that reinforces the stories and ideas you have already shared.

**5. Transport the audience immediately into your message.**

A powerful introduction grabs the audience's attention from the beginning and sets the tone for the rest of your message. A simple but compelling story in your introduction will spark their curiosity, and will generate excitement as they anticipate your message.

**6. Identify and establish the important characters.**

The people in your story make the story. Breathe life into these characters by describing them vividly, revealing their personalities, and giving them a unique voice. Don't forget to fully develop your character, since it is often the most important character in your message.

**7. Develop the dialogue between the characters.**

Instead of just providing narrative, dialogue is a powerful tool to pull the audience into your stories and keep them engaged. Use dialogue to develop the characters, reveal the key lessons, unlock the emotion, and uncover the humor throughout your message.



**Exercise 1: Align your message with your audience’s needs.**

What is the purpose or objective of your message? Who is your audience? What are their specific needs?

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What is the one message you want to share? Does this message achieve your purpose or objective?

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**Exercise 2: Structure your message to provide clarity.**

Main Ideas or Take-aways: What are the main points that support your message?

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Conclusion: How do you close your message? Is there a clear call-to-action? Does it identify next steps?

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Introduction: How do you want to introduce your message? Will it grab the audience’s attention?

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**Exercise 3: Select stories to support your main points**

Identify the stories or examples that support the main points in your message. Tell a story, make a point!

Point #1 \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #2 \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #3 \_\_\_\_\_

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