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Get Out Of The Communication Stone Age: Give Leadership Talks

By Brent Filson

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160 years ago, the newly invented electric telegraph carried the first news message. The message zipped 40 miles in a flash over wires from Baltimore to Washington, D.C.

The public was dazzled — except Henry David Thoreau. He wrote: "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."

Today, we live in a Golden Age of communication. We have the Internet. We have faxes. We have e-mails. We have streaming video. We have on-line audio. We have RSS feeds. We have logs and blogs.

Yet today Thoreau is as right as rain. When it comes to really getting our messages across, we're stuck in the Stone Age.

Here's why. The vast majority of business leaders I've encountered are repeatedly making a huge mistake in communication, a mistake that's screwing up their jobs and careers. They're stuck giving presentations and speeches. They're NOT giving Leadership Talks!

What's a Leadership Talk? Look at it this way: There's a hierarchy of verbal persuasion when it comes to business leadership. The lowest levels are speeches and presentations. They communicate information. The highest, most effective way of communicating is the Leadership Talk. The Leadership Talk does more than simply send information. It has the leader establish a deep, human, emotional connection with the audience. That's where leaders communicate for the best results.

Here are a few examples of leadership talks. When Churchill said, "We will fight on the beaches ... " That was a leadership talk. When Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you ... " that was a leadership talk. When Reagan said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" That was a

leadership talk.

You can come up with a lot of examples too. Go back to those moments when the words of a leader inspired people to take ardent action, and you've probably put your finger on an authentic leadership talk.

Mind you, I'm not just talking about great leaders of history. I'm also talking about all leaders everywhere no matter what their function or rank. After all, leaders speak 15 to 20 times a day: everything from formal speeches to informal chats. When those interactions are leadership talks, not just speeches or presentations, the effectiveness of those leaders is dramatically increased.

That's where business leaders communicate for the best results. You can order people to go from point A to point B. But the best way to get great results is to have people want to go from A to B. Instilling "want to" in others, motivating them ... isn't that what great leadership is all about?

Don't get me wrong. The Leadership Talk is not some kind of "feel-good" way of relating. It took me 20 years to figure out how to give Leadership Talks and write two books about it. There are specific processes one must manifest in order to give Leadership Talks. Usually it takes me two full days to teach people how to do it. Once they learn it, they can use it throughout the rest of their careers. The Leadership Talk is relatively easy to learn and it takes years to master. The point is that through it, you can take specific, concrete steps to motivate people to take action that gets great results.

For instance, before leaders can develop and deliver a Leadership Talk, they must first answer "yes" to three simple questions: "Do you know what the audience needs? Can you transfer your deep believe to others so they believe as strongly as you do about the challenges you face? And can you have that audience take ardent action that gets results?" If leaders "no" to any one of those questions, he/she can't give a Leadership Talk.

160 years ago the dots and dashes that chattered down the wires from Baltimore to Washington spelled out that the Whigs had nominated Henry Clay to run for the presidency.

Back then, Thoreau might have said nothing important was communicated; but today if you want to lead for great results, take Thoreau to heart. Communicate what truly IS important. Don't give presentations and speeches. Give Leadership Talks. Forge those deep, human, emotional connections with your audiences. Get them motivated to take ardent action for great results.

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The author of 23 books, Brent Filson's recent books are, **THE LEADERSHIP TALK: THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP TOOL** and **101 WAYS TO GIVE GREAT LEADERSHIP TALKS.** He is founder and president of The Filson Leadership Group, Inc. and for more than 20 years has been helping leaders of top companies worldwide get audacious results. Sign up for his free leadership e-zine at

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On St. Valentine's Day, Or Any Romantic Interlude, Woo Your Sweetheart With Chocolates, Roses ... AND A Leadership Talk

By Brent Filson

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Summary: Leadership authority Brent Filson asserts that wooing one's sweetheart can be done with a special kind of communication methodology which he has been teaching leaders worldwide for 21 years.

On St. Valentine's Day, Or Any Romantic Interlude, Woo Your Sweetheart With Chocolates, Roses ... AND A Leadership Talk
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On Valentine's Day, or any romantic interlude, lovers should woo their sweethearts with chocolates and roses — but also a Leadership Talk.

My experience in teaching the Leadership Talk to thousands of leaders worldwide for the past 21 years confirms that the Talk is a boon for leaders of all ranks and functions in their jobs and careers.

But I've also learned, to my surprise, that many leaders are employing the Leadership Talk effectively outside their jobs in their personal relationships.

Giving Leadership Talks helps leaders get a lot more results in organizations. Leaders see how much more effective as motivational tools Leadership Talks are than speeches and presentations.

Speeches and presentations communicate information. But Leadership Talks have you establish a deep, human, emotional connection with your audience.

That human connection is important in getting great results in your job; but it is also important in getting great results in your personal life — even your love life.

If you want to win or sustain the fondness of a loved one, a Leadership Talk may just make it happen.

Mixing leadership and love may seem like mixing apples and oranges. But great leadership and love share common elements. For one thing, when you are wooing your lover, you may be taking the lead. And for another, using a Leadership Talk, you're fostering a deep, heartfelt relationship — as great leadership often does.

Here are a few pointers on giving a Leadership Talk that you can put into effect this Valentine's Day or any other interlude for love. Before you speak, simply ask three questions: Do you know the needs of your lover? Can you bring deep belief to the relationship? And can you have your lover take action? If you say `no' to any one of those questions, you can't give a Leadership Talk.

The questions apply to lovers as well. To foster a deep, human emotional relationship, you must know what your sweetheart needs, the deep belief you bring to the relationship, and finally, the action you want your sweetheart to take.

However, the questions are not meant to be stumbling blocks to your Leadership Talk but stepping stones. If you answer `no', step back and assess your situation. Think through what you might say so that you can `yes' to each question. Then speak. Give a Leadership Talk. And, by the way, don't forget the chocolates and roses.

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