

# **A.R.I.O**

**ALL ROLLED INTO ONE**

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
THAT SET YOU APART**

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To my loving wife and our three children who remain the greatest accomplishment I will ever achieve. You are and will always be the only meaning to my world. I love you more each day.



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## Introduction

## **Let the Learning Begin**

You might be asking yourself, “Why read a book on communication skills?” Well, let me share a story about what is at risk and what you have to gain.

During the summer of 2008 I read a newspaper article about a high school principal who was “let-go” for plagiarizing part of his commencement speech, which was presented by a former student seven years earlier. It turned out that the former student was on staff and sitting in the audience. The school board had no choice but to make an example of the principal to reinforce to the student body that plagiarism would not be tolerated at any level.

You might be thinking that you never have to give speeches in your profession. Maybe it is your manager who is always out in front “talking it up” to committees, clients, and the media. But what would happen if you had to step in and the spotlight was directed at you? Certain death or tremendous opportunity?

Would you rather have the ability to speak clearly, persuasively, and logically at a moment’s notice, or would you prefer to fumble for words and

ramble about irrelevant facts that do little to support your point?

You have the choice to be prepared with a basic arsenal of communication skills. Imagine having the skills to set yourself apart from the crowd because you will be able to think on your feet, be persuasive and engaging, and be dynamic every time you have the opportunity to address a group of people of any size.

What you hold in your hand right now is over two decades of in-the-trench-experiences from one-on-one client meetings to paid speaking engagements. I promise, if you invest less than one day reading this survival guide, you can become an effective communicator who will engage, entertain, and move people to action. The choice is yours. You can either ignore this opportunity by putting down this book, or you can turn the page and begin a journey that will lead to a better and more rewarding life.

***“The mind, once expanded to dimensions of larger ideas, never returns to its original size.”***

- Oliver Wendell Holmes



## Chapter One

# Motives, Needs, and Wants

You made the right choice by turning the page, but did you come here with a sense of commitment or of confusion? Perhaps the thought of getting fired sunk in enough to cause you to dig a little deeper; that is exactly where you should be right now. This chapter will help you to discover and to understand your *motives, needs, and wants* when it comes to developing your communication skills. Let us begin by answering 3 questions:

What **motives** do you have for becoming an effective communicator? Money, authority, success, family?

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What **needs** do you have to satisfy? Overcoming a natural fear, being able to think on your feet, perfecting your presentation skills?

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What do you **want** to do with your newfound skills? Career advancement, professional speaker, increased sales, community leader?

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Let's discuss the idea of ***motives***. "*What's in it for me?*" Most people use their communication skills to successfully accomplish their goals on a daily basis. Think about that for a minute. Think about all those daily interactions you have with people and how much more you could accomplish by being a more persuasive and effective communicator. Getting more people to agree with you is a wonderful motive to have.

Your motives go even deeper when you think about all those daily opportunities you encounter face-to-face, on the phone, on the Internet, and even while commuting in your car.

Think about the last time you came to a four-way stop where the other drivers had that confused look on their faces. Picture everyone waving his or her hands like crazed maniacs as if to say, "Hey, you go

ahead. I'll stay here and be a witness on the accident report." This happens all the time when people try to talk with one another.

In this case, the intersection is the open air in which our words are carried and the cars are the people either engaged (or disengaged as the case may be) in the conversation. Think about the last time you were in a group setting and how many times someone was interrupted. Maybe even by you?

***"I'm sorry, you go ahead..."***

***"No that's all right, you go ahead..."***

***"No you..."***

Do you see these cars creeping into the intersection? Just think of how nice it would be to avoid these verbal collisions in our everyday life? ***Conversational courtesy*** ranks in the top ten skill-sets people need to possess in order to achieve their fullest potential. Ronald Regan is known as the Great Communicator. Barack Obama is known as the Great Orator. George W. Bush... well, you get the idea. God bless him.

When it comes to *your* motives, are you digging deep enough to realize what is in it for you? Everyone can benefit in multiple ways from improved communication skills. Clearly defining your motives now while you read this book will have a direct impact on how far your newfound skills will take you. Even if you stop reading at this point, you have pocketed one golden nugget for years to come: conversational courtesy is invaluable.

Let's dig deeper into your ***needs***. Unlike motives where you focus on what is in it for you, your needs should focus on individual attributes that you need to gain, such as overcoming your fear of public

speaking or the ability to think on your feet. It is widely known that most people fear public speaking more than dying. That being said, it is very likely that you will need to overcome this natural fear. *But what else do you need?*

Do you find yourself in confrontational situations where you need to think on your feet? I am not referring to talking your way out of a fight, though that is always a wise choice. **Confrontational situations** are merely the exchange of ideas, points of view, and general attempts at persuasion. Talking your way out of a speeding ticket and defending your need for a raise or promotion are perfect examples. Convincing your children to do what they are told and getting your spouse to work around the house instead of golfing are a few other examples. Everyone encounters confrontational situations; the greater your skills are, the happier you will be.

Do you find yourself giving prepared presentations to different groups? Sometimes it can be a formal presentation directly related to your job. Other times it can be part of the civic activities in your life. There is a unique combination of abilities that will clearly help you stand out from the competition. Think back to the first time you sat in on a presentation and were bombarded with dozens of slides in a PowerPoint presentation. Can you picture the text flying in from all corners? Can you hear all those cute sound effects? Do you *even remember* what the topic was about?

People suffering through over-indulgent presentations usually walk away feeling what is known as **Death by PowerPoint**. In most industries, content-poor presentations carry a terrible penalty: FAILURE! You can avoid this by becoming an effective communicator who understands the pros

and cons of using PowerPoint successfully, as I will explain later in this book.

Do you find yourself leading meetings or conducting training sessions because of your subject expertise and *not your speaking skills*? Unfortunately, employees are often asked to step in and run a meeting or to conduct a “session” about their area of expertise regardless of their communication skills. Sometimes you are lucky. You only have to present to a small group of fellow co-workers, and the damage is manageable. Sometimes, however, you might find yourself walking into certain disaster when you are given the perk of going to a conference on the company’s dime. You think, “How great is this? I don’t have to be in the office! Let’s see what’s in the mini-bar...” as you review your PowerPoint presentation.

Then morning rolls around and somewhere between your second cup of coffee and that blueberry muffin, you realize just how important being an effective communicator really is in your life now that 500 people are expecting you to entertain them for the next hour (or longer). These are common needs of working professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and quite possibly *needs* you will place in your top ten. They are by no means the “be-all, end-all” of the many needs you may have to become an effective communicator.

Even if you already feel comfortable speaking, are you really at the top of your game? Would improving your speaking foundation help you or hinder you? Even Tiger Woods has a golf instructor, which probably explains why he always seems to be at the top of his game. Are you a Tiger?

Digging deeper into your needs is where we will discover your *wants*: those two or three non-

negotiable items you want to obtain by applying your improved skills as an effective communicator. I call these goals ***Summits of Success™*** - points in your life that you reach only to discover what greater heights you can still achieve.

At the beginning of this chapter I asked you to list your Needs, Wants, and Motives for reading this book and developing your communication skills. Let's double check what you came up with and see if they are similar to the following examples.

Perhaps you are ***motivated*** by money as you try to satisfy your ***need*** to become more persuasive because you ***want*** to be on top. Maybe you are ***motivated*** by being a respected authority that ***needs*** to perfect your presentation skills because you ***want*** to become a professional speaker?

Take a few minutes to look back at what you wrote down, and decide if they truly reflect you. Whatever combination unlocks your potential the secret is to make sure that the combination is all you: all your motives, all your needs, and all your wants, *All Rolled Into One™*.

***“Whatever you are, be a good one.”***

- Abraham Lincoln

## Chapter Two

## The Topic of Topics

Let us assume you took a few minutes and re-worked your answers regarding your Motives, Needs, and Wants. If not, please do; I'll still be here when you get back.

Now that you have a couple of ideas worked out, we can take it to the next level by discussing *what you should be discussing*. The topic of topics is a unique challenge, especially for people giving presentations as professional speakers, seminar presenters, or other occupations requiring this highly valuable skill set. I want to impart to you the golden rule of professional speaking, **“Never talk about something that you are not passionate about!”**

The vast majority of people in any audience will gladly tolerate an occasional digression while speaking passionately about your subject when compared to listening to a presenter read the text in a PowerPoint presentation or off a teleprompter. You need to promise yourself that you will do everything in your power only to cover topics that you are genuinely passionate about discussing.

*If* you are assigned a topic, find a way to get excited about it yourself. In doing so, you will also discover ways that your audience can get excited. Not