



Communicating for a Change, by Andy Stanley **Part 2**

How to communicate like their life depended on it

If you really want to get the most out of Andy Stanley's great new book, here is what I recommend. Read the book. Then read it again (at least the back half). Then, watch some Andy Stanley sermons so you can see how he teaches the way he says.

This would be a great book to study with your group leaders.

For easy links to Andy Stanley's books on Amazon, click here:

<http://www.joshhunt.com/mail168.htm>

Now *anyone* can afford to host a Double Your Class Conference!

I have recently change my policy on how to host a Double Your Class (or other) Conference. The new policy calls for charging outside churches \$20 an individual or \$100 a church to attend. This money will go toward advertising the event and will be split between the host church and myself. My plan is to use my part of the money to advertise events. At about 23 churches, the event becomes free for the host church. For details, see www.joshhunt.com/conference.htm

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Principle #4: Internalize the message

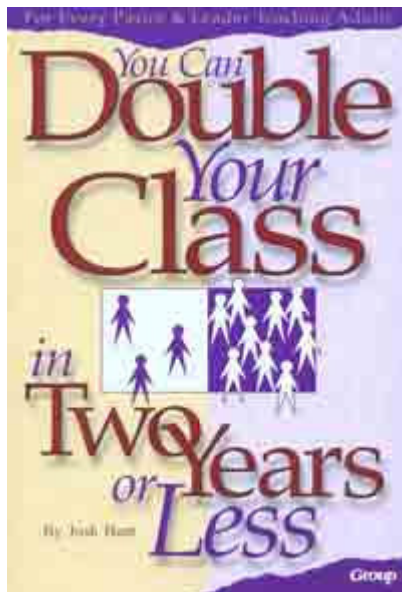
Before we can stand and deliver a message, we must own it. By own it, we mean you should be able to sit down at a table and communicate the message to a friend without notes. When you can tell your sermon, rather than preach it, you are ready to communicate. "I find something very disingenuous about a speaker who says, 'This is very, very important and then reads something from his notes. Constantly referring to notes communicates, 'I have not internalized this message. I want everyone else to internalize it, but I have not.'"

"How can I remember everything I want to say without notes?" Good question. The key is not to have too much to say. Specifically, have one thing to say. One thing. If you can reduce the message down to one thing, you have some hope of internalizing it within yourself and communicating it to your audience.

Here is an example. I could summarize my message to this: you can double your class in two years or less by inviting every member and every prospect to every fellowship every month.

Some have called this the "elevator pitch." Summarize the message in the time it takes the elevator to reach the next floor. If I had more time, I might add these sentences:

- A class of ten that doubles every 18 months can reach 1000 people in ten years. That is the power of doubling groups.
- Doubling a group in two years only means growing from 10 to 14 in a year. You can do this.
- One effective way of doing this is to give Friday Nights to Jesus--an informal time of Coffee Cake, Diet Coke, and Table Games. Invite your best friends, along with some absentees or prospects for the group. I have seen it happen more times than I can count that if I can get them to the party I could not keep them from class.
- If we love them, they will come, and they will come to love our Lord. Love at its best is simple. It is Diet Coke and table games and card playing and bowling pins and somehow in the mix off all that, people feel loved.



How would you summarize your lesson from last Sunday?

Andy Stanley recommends you reduce it to a well-worded statement summarizing the big idea. He often writes that on a card, and then holds it up and reads it. "I wanted to make sure I said this right, so I wrote it down."

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Principle #5: Engage your audience

If communication can be compared to taking people on a journey, then it is imperative that we actually take them with us. A principle that every world-class communicator knows is this: presentation trumps information when it comes to engaging the audience. Attention and retention is determined by presentation, not information. Presentation matters. A lot. How you say what you say is every bit as important as what you say.

Somewhere along the line we bought into the lie that good content was all we needed to engage an audience. Not so. We need both something to say and we need to say it well.

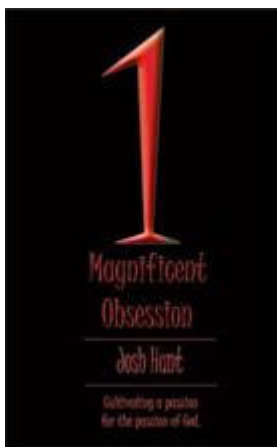
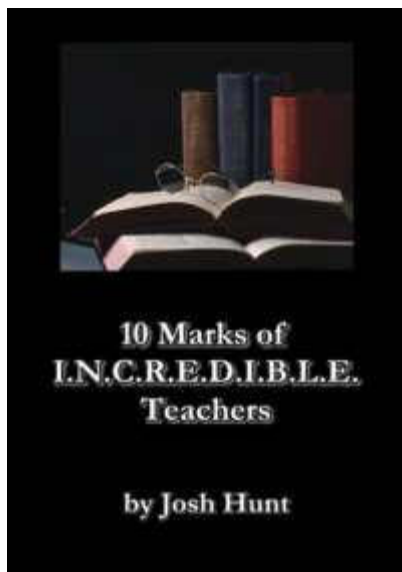
Think about your favorite restaurant for a moment. My guess is they serve beef, chicken and fish. So does every other restaurant, including a lot of restaurants that you don't like. It is not about what they serve; it is about how they serve it.

Whatever else a person thinks about Jesus, they need to understand this. In the time Jesus was alive, people loved him or hated him. They were not neutral. Nobody fell asleep.

How do you do this? People engage easily when they are convinced you are about to answer a question they have been asking, solve a mystery they have been unable to solve, or resolve a tension that they have been unable to resolve.

But, what if they are not interested? Simply put, you have to manufacture interest. That is your job. If you give answers to questions that no one is asking, the information will likely fall on deaf ears.

Tips for engaging the audience. Andy spends a page or



two on each one of these, but let me summarize these to bullet points here:

- Check your speed. Generally faster is better than slower, but there is such a thing as too fast.
- Slow down in the curves. Make sure everyone knows when you are going from point one to point two. Oh, I forgot, Andy is not big on points. Anyway, when you transition from one part of the talk to the next.
- Navigate through the text. In this section, Andy shares some practical and insightful ideas on how to make the text itself more engaging. Buy the book!
- Add something unexpected to the trip. Predictability is the death of learning. Surprise them.
- Take the most direct route. It is better to be clear than creative.

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Principle #6: Find your voice

The goal is to communicate as well as the best of communicators, not to communicate like the best of communicators.

One thing Andy warns about at this point is listening to too much of one speaker to the exclusion of other speakers. In this MP3 era, it is important that we all listen to a variety of voices and eventually find our own.

It is also important that you don't use your style as a cover up for boring. Boring is not a style. It is just boring. Confusing might be a style. But, it is still confusing. "Style" can be a combination of bad habits.

In this chapter Andy tells a couple of stories of opportunities he has had to coach some world-class communicators. He doesn't mention any names, but you

get the impression that if he did, we would all know who he is talking about. I found myself thinking, "Wow, what would it be like to have someone like Andy Stanley to coach me?"

How would you like to have a coach that was guaranteed to make you a better communicator listen to and evaluate some of your teachings? The best of communicators do this regularly. That is why they are the best. They have extraordinary talent and they work really hard at it. Sam Shaw used to ask me regularly, "How can I be better? How can I improve?"

Would you like a communication coach to help you? Here is an idea: be your own coach. Listen to a recording of your own teaching. Guaranteed you will discover countless ways to improve. If you really want to improve, watch a video. If you really, really want to improve, have your pastor, Minister of Education of some other person knowledgeable in communication to watch it with you.

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Principle #7: Start all over

Sometimes we get stuck. Sunday comes, but the lesson never gets here. The big idea doesn't materialize. What do we do.

Step #1: pray. No kidding. Pray hard.

Step #2: four questions.

Question #1: What do they need to know? In light of my study this week, in light of what I know of my group. In light of my prayer time and what God is saying to me. In light of all of that, what do they need to know. Summarize it down to one sentence. One big idea.

Question #2: Why do they need to know it? In just about every teaching we do well to say, "This is why this is

important." What will happen if they discover this truth and this truth really gets a hold of them? What is at stake? What happens if they don't?

Question #3: What do they need to do? What do you want them to do in response to what you have said? Be specific. Be creative. You don't have to ask for some big, monumental change. Oftentimes, a baby step in the right direction is better.

For example. Suppose you are doing a teaching on prayer. The bottom line could be, "So, pray!" A better approach might be to challenge the group to set their alarm 7 minutes earlier just for this week and spend seven minutes with God before they start their day this week.

Question #4: Why do they need to do it? Do a little vision casting. I might say, "Imagine a church where every group leader embraced the vision of 2 Timothy 2.2--of doubling a group every two years or less. What would it mean for that church? What would it mean for the teachers? What would it mean for the world? What would it mean for the next generation who grew up in a church like that?"

Question #5: What can I do to help them remember? How can I say it in a way they have never heard it before? How can I say it in a way they will remember? How can I be creative? What props might I use? What questions might I ask? How can I make it stick?

The #1 predictor of the growth of any church is the preaching ability of the preacher. The #1 predictor of the growth of any class is the teaching ability of the teacher. There are only so many variables that affect the quality of the teaching:

- How much God-given talent you possess.
- The literature that you use. (Has only a modest affect in my estimation.)
- The amount of time and effort you spend on the lesson.
- The amount of time you spend evaluating your teaching.

- The number and quality of training you participate in.

If you are committed to being the best teacher you can be, I want to ask you to join me in making a life-long commitment to improvement in your teaching. And the baby-step toward that dream is to read and study Andy's excellent book, *Communicating for a Change*.

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