

Talk Boosters:

*Methods I've Learned From
21 Years Of Preaching That
Can Take Your Talks To A
New Level*

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Introduction: The Miracle That Allowed Me To Preach

I want to start today by telling a little bit of **the miracle that God did in my life that took me from a shy kid whose main weakness was that I COULDN'T speak in public to a pastor who would now consider public speaking to be my strength.**

I am now asked to speak regularly at chapels for elementary to Jr. High age kids, I have done a spiritual emphasis week for another K-8 school, have been a guest speaker to youth groups, men's groups, and have been asked regularly to come and do a summer series at a nearby church.

I want you to hear this story because it will show you that God can use you at whatever level you start at and - if you prepare and gain knowledge of how to speak effectively - you can improve your speaking to levels beyond what you're at now to levels you might not imagine you'd ever be at.

My Fear And Inability To Speak In Public

Growing up, I hated public speaking. I couldn't do it! I found out somewhere around 3rd or 4th grade that I hated it when I stood up with a group of other kids in my class and sang "You're A Grand Old Flag" and could feel nervous as I felt like everyone was looking at me!

I hated public speaking so much that in Jr. High **I would take an "F" instead of even bothering to try and give an oral report.** When I was made to do it my voice would crack, my hands would shake, my eyes would water and because I knew everyone could see that happening it would kick up a notch! 😊 I would rather fail (or die) than to speak in public.

That's one reason I never planned on being a pastor – plus I thought I'd have to be some kind of fake person that I wasn't! 😊

The Miracle That Led To My First Sermon

My opinion and ability to speak in public stayed the same through all of Jr. High and into High School. When I entered Jr. College, I still couldn't speak in public without freaking out!

I was good with people one-on-one, just not in groups so I became a part of the "College and Careers" group at our church. I was the "greeter guy" who welcomed new people and helped connect them with others.

I did a good job a “greeter guy”, and liked it, until one day the leader of the group – a guy named Johnny - asked me and the other leaders on the team to each take one Tuesday night and to give the message to the group!

I almost instantly felt that sick feeling I used to get whenever I had to speak. I tried to talk Johnny out of the idea. I told him, “I’m NOT just being humble man. I really do don’t well if I have to get up in front of people.

I kept trying to get out of it, but it must have been God, because I actually let Johnny talk me into doing it! I prepped for the message and felt like I had something really good to share based on the different passage of scripture that Johnny gave to each of us.

But the more I thought about getting up in front of people, the sicker I felt.

I got so worked up that I was to the point of tears complaining to God about how I hated getting up in front of people and looking like a fool. I told God, “I don’t know why I let Johnny talk me into this!”

But it was too late. I couldn’t get out of doing it!

The night I was so freaked out that I couldn’t focus on greeting people. They tried to joke with me and I couldn’t even joke back – which is bad for people who know me! I couldn’t even focus on worshipping God, because I was so nervous!

I felt like the whole thing was going to be awkward and embarrassing if God didn’t do something!

Then a few minutes before worship ended I felt like God reminded me about the story of Moses. I didn’t remember all of the details, so I went and sat in the front row and looked it up. I must’ve looked so holy looking at God’s word during worship.

Little did people know I was in panic looking up this passage that I couldn’t remember at the moment where it was!

I found the story and saw that when God asked Moses to go speak to Pharaoh. He says “Well what if the Israelites won’t listen to me?” So God told him to use his staff and made it turn into a snake. Then God told him to put his hand in his cloak and it turned leprous and he told him to put it back in his cloak and it changed back. God says if they don’t listen to you after the first miracle do the second. If they still don’t listen, take water from the Nile and pour it on the ground and I will turn it to blood.

And do you know what his reply was to all of this?

Ex. 4:10-11

¹⁰ Moses said to the LORD , "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

He was basically saying, **"I'm not that good at speaking in front of people."**
Do you know what **God** told him?

¹¹ The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD ? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

I felt like God was giving that same answer to me for that night.

Worship ended and it was time for me to speak.

Johnny introduced me and said some nice things (which I can't even remember) and I got up there still feeling really nervous.

I made some joke about if I fainted, not to mess up my hair (I didn't like people touching my hair). Then I told them that I was nervous, but felt like God gave me this word for tonight and I read them the passage I just read you.

After that, I just told them I was going to trust God for that and bowed my head and began to pray.

I said amen and then something crazy happened.

For the first time in my life, in a setting like this, I wasn't feeling nervous!
In fact, I felt good!

I started talking and I felt like I could be myself for the first time in front of people like this. It was so crazy that I remember thinking while I was speaking, "I actually like this!!"

And I NEVER thought that before!

That night slammed open the door of possibilities towards me becoming a youth pastor.

I tell you that to remind you, that if God has called you to the ministry, then it doesn't matter where you start in your ability to speak. He can use you and anoint you where you're at.

In fact, let me remind you again that if you don't have God's anointing and what the old school preachers used to call "unction" (his power behind your words),

then no matter how good of a job you do speaking, all you'll be giving is a good speech!

You **HAVE** to have God's guidance and anointing as you prepare and present your talk!!

But there are some things you can learn to do to help your talks to capture your student's attention better. There are things you can do to become better at explaining God's truth and inspiring your students to action.

And one of the things I'm good at, is that when I get interested in something or want to be good at something, I do anything and everything I can to learn about it and master it!

I become obsessed (just a little) about it! ☺

Here are some of the things I do to learn and master something I'm interested in:

- I get my hands **on anything I can read, listen to, and watch** on that topic to learn all I can.
- I **practice** and **analyze myself**.
- I **observe** and **analyze** what others who are good at that topic are doing right.
- I **observe** and **analyze** what others who are BAD at that topic are doing wrong.
- And I do **one more important thing**: I **learn from**, and **grab insights** about this area **from OTHER areas – even no related areas!** I somehow start to see insights anywhere and everywhere! ☺

And then...

I take all of these things and **keep thinking about, keep applying, keep practicing** and **tweaking** things until I become as good at that thing as possible.

I did that when I started taking martial arts and I got my black belt. I did that with youth pastoring and I've done that with preaching.

And what I want to do in this e-course is to share with you all of these things I've learned over the 21 years of all this trial and error, success and failure so it can help you to take your talking up to the next level.

That is what the purpose of this "Talk Boosters" e-course is all about.

But one more thing before I start revealing the two most important parts of a talk, I want to tell you something that happened to me with my church last Sunday...

I began my talk and for the first time in a long time I felt really off. I didn't feel like I could get people's attention for at least the first $\frac{1}{4}$ of my talk.

Finally I was able to turn things around and I felt like I ended it well. But that just goes to show you, that no matter how long you speak and how much you prepare, sometimes you just have times when you're talk is off.

The only thing you can do is let it go and move on. You always have next week. Just let it keep you humble and trusting God for the power in your talk and you'll do fine.

And what happened to me leads us to what I want to start by teaching you in this first class...

1st E-class:

The two most important parts of a talk that connects and encourages action

In this first e-class, I want to share with you two of the most important parts of any talk that effectively connects with an audience and encourages them to take action.

I really believe that these two parts will effect how well your talk does above anything else.

Let me start by telling you a story that I heard...

In a seminary missions class, Herbet Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push.

After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave his engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for TWO years.

Finally ill health caused the Jackson family to have to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life.

For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting the power to work.

If you don't connect with your group at the very beginning of your talk, then you're going to have a hard time getting students to listen to your talk.

Ways to connect. Ways to think of effective intros.

1. **Connect with where they're at:** stage of life, mindset, priorities, etc. If they're hip-hop kids they will have a different mindset than kids who live country music. If you have all young Jr. Highers, then they'll think differently and you'll use some different stories and examples than you'd use for a group of mainly older high school students. Have your students (specific different ones that represent each sub-group) in mind when you come up with your intro. Think of what you could say or do that would get their attention and make them want to listen!

2. **Surprise/Shock:** I once started a talk by telling the story of a young student who loved scuba diving. One day he decided to go scuba diving on his own in a lake near his home. He was having a good time until he accidentally ended up getting his leg wedged in and stuck in some rocks. He tried all that he could to get out but he couldn't. His air was running low and he knew he didn't have a lot of time left. So he did the one thing he could think of... He took off his tank from his back and took out his diving knife and... he began carving a note into his tank – like it was a writing tablet. He wrote a note to his family telling them how much he loved them and a few minutes later... he ran out of air and died. Then I said, "Someone's last, dying words are something you can't ignore. You know they're not going to just give small talk. They're going to choose their words wisely because every word matters. Today we're going to look at the last words Jesus spoke and see what he had to say to you and me..."

The ending to that story is a surprise and shock to anyone hearing it. You (and the students) probably expected the guy to do something and get to the surface at the last minute. But when he dies your caught off guard! And then when I transition about how someone's last words are important and mention we're going to be looking at Jesus' last words it makes you (and those students) WANT to listen!

Stories are just one way you can use surprise and shock to grab attention. You could **do something**, or **show a video clip**, or **you could even have someone come up** as you're about to start speaking and interrupt you and say something (as you asked them before to do) to talk about "the interruptions of life". You're only limited by your imagination!

3. **Intrigue/Curiosity:** The famous old school author, Dale Carnegie, who was famous for establishing public speaking seminars around the U.S. and wrote the popular book "How To Win Friends And Influence People" gave a good example of someone using curiosity in their intro. It's in his book "The Quick And Easy Way To Effective Speaking".

He says, "Here is the way Mr. Powell Healy began a talk at the Penn Athletic Club in Philadelphia:

“Eighty two years ago, there was published in London a little volume, a story, which was destined to become immortal. Many people have called it ‘the greatest little book in the world.’ When it first appeared, friends meeting one another on the Strand or Pall Mall asked the question, ‘Have you read it?’ The answer invariably was: ‘Yes, God bless him, I have.’

“The day it was published a thousand copies were sold (back then this was a lot!). Within a fortnight the demand had consumed fifteen thousand. Since then it has run into countless thousands of editions and has been translated into every language under heaven. A few years ago, J.P. Morgan purchased the original manuscript for a fabulous sum and it now reposes among the priceless treasure in his magnificent art gallery. What is this world famous book? It is...”

You’re curious aren’t you? Want to know what the book was? It was Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol”!

The only thing about this story is it’s some of it’s old-fashioned words, but it STILL captures your attention!

If you told this story to students or even adults you might want to start and say...

“I want to tell you a story that I hear about a book written a long time ago that was an instant blockbuster and the funny thing is it’s STILL popular today. No, it’s not the Bible, but good guess! But I bet you’ve heard of it! Let me tell you the story about when it first came out and then I’ll tell you what book it is...”

And then you could tell the same story in your own word and just replace the old-school words with modern ones.

Then it would be a **perfect surprise intro**. In fact, you could **maybe use it for a Christmas talk about how Jesus came into this world** as a baby without any big publicity or attention, but what he did has changed the world in a huge way....

The **last way I want to mention for you to connect with your students** in your intro is...

4. Sometimes humor: Just don’t PLEASE be corny. I told a story I heard once as my intro about... “... a guy who was driving down a curvy dirt road and he saw another guy coming in a car towards him. A man was hanging out of the window yelling something and our guy thought he looked mad. It mad him mad. He thought I have a right to go down this road too! And so he rolled down his window and got ready to yell back at the guy as they passed. The man that was hanging out of the window sped by and yelled, “Pig!” And our guy managed to yell back at the last second, before the other man drove away, “Idiot!” And our

guy felt good about getting to yell something back, rolled up his window and drove around the next curve... and crashed into a PIG!!

“In our guys mind seeing someone yell out a window could only mean one thing: they were mad and wanted to start something! If he only would’ve been able to see things in a different way he would’ve been saved from an accident.

“Sometimes if we can learn to see things differently, then it could save us from a lot of pain too...”

A little book that’s really helped me to improve my introductions is a book called, **“Introducing the Sermon: The Art of Compelling Beginnings** (The Craft of preaching series) (Paperback) **Michael J. Hostetler**
http://www.amazon.com/Introducing-Sermon-Compelling-Beginnings-preaching/dp/0310307414/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1257905776&sr=1-1

In this book, Michael says there are **four contact points** that you should have in your intros:

1. **The Secular:** He says every sermon should start with the life experience of the listener. This means the **experience of life in the world, day-by-day, week-by-week.**
2. **The Biblical:** The second point of contact of the introduction is **moving the listener naturally to the Word Of God.**
3. **The Personal:** Every person who listens to the sermon is asking, **“What does this have to do with me?”** He says if you fail to personalize your message, then your preaching will have little effect.
4. **The Bridge:** This is the final connection point. This is the part of your intro that bridges your beginning into the rest of your talk.

I might not always use each of these contact points in the exact way that he suggests, but I – at least subconsciously – try and have these elements in my intro. There are really important!

In the book, he takes a chapter to teach you how to make each of these contacts effectively. It’s a short book, little book that’s only 86 pages. I’d really encourage you to get it.

I’ve already mentioned ways you can connect with your students in your intros, but let me give you some different elements you could use to make your intros grab attention. I’d call these “tools”

“Tools” you can use in your intro:

-Stats – Stats can bring confirmation to what you’re saying or bring attention to

the situation you're about to talk about.

-Quotes – Quotes can give you another way to get your point across and grab attention. Especially depending on who said them. Try using current people and/or people from the past.

-A skit – I have used skits as a way

-A game – I did this recently when I used an old game show called, "Let's Make A Deal" as an intro for a talk. We actually played the game for 20 minutes or so. Afterwards I explained how life is a lot like this game in two ways.

-A video clip – you can use free ones from YouTube, paid ones from Christian sites, clips from movies, TV shows, etc. I've used crazy clips from Youtube of guys and

-A story – A personal one or from someone else's life. This is the one I use the most often.

-A song – You can use a song current – or old to get attention and focus on a topic. Just be careful what you use. The lyrics shouldn't be crude or obscene. You shouldn't use something offensive to God to teach his word!

-Jokes – You can use a joke to get people laughing or thinking on a topic.

-Q & A – You can start a talk and get interaction and interest from your students by asking questions. I've started a talk "The Greatest Faith" with questions about who people thought was the greatest president, greatest football player, greatest basketball player, etc. Then I asked them, who they thought had the greatest faith in the Bible, besides Jesus. I then shared who I thought had the greatest faith in the whole bible by telling them the story of the thief on the cross.

EXTRA IDEA: You can use a combination of 1-2 of these things together.

Make this your "Introduction Toolbox". Write this on a list that you keep in a folder or on your computer. You can then pull this out or pull it up when you're wanting to think of a creative way to start one of your talks.

Where to find good stories for intros:

- **Books you read.** Write your own table of contents at front.
- **Websites** – <http://www.sermonillustrations.com>, <http://www.sermons.org>
- **Your own life** – If you noticed the way that I even started this chapter was with a story from my own life. I did I wanted to get your attention, draw you in and also help get you in the right mind-set that no matter where you're at in you're speaking skills, you can always get better!

Grabbing your students attention at the beginning of your talk is **so** important. If they tune you out at the beginning, you'll have a hard time ever getting them back!

The intro to your talk is one of the most important elements in the **whole thing**. **That's why I spend some of my most time trying to get my intro right or find the right intro.** You need to do the same thing.

Alright, so that helps you connect with your students, **but you need to more than just connect with them you have to inspire them to action!**

Business author **Tim Sanders** ("Love Is The Killer App") had a blog post that explains this (http://sanderssays.typepad.com/sanders_says/2007/01/give_your_speech.html).

In the post he says...

"In the greatest book I've ever read on public speaking ([Give Your Speech, Change The World](#)), author Nick Morgan declares that "**the only reason to give a speech is to change the world.**" This is the necessary point of view to give GREAT presentations. Nick studied the greats: JFK, MLK and even Churchill. They all believed this."

Then Tim says...

"The measure of a good presentation has to do with the changes in behavior that it creates. If your presentation convince someone to do something different the next day, you changed the world -- and rocked the mic. If you simply made people laugh, dumped copious amounts data or bullet pointed your way to the end, you did not change the world and the presentation will not have long lasting impact."

We all need to judge our sermons based on this criteria: did it change behavior/action?

Without a change in the student's life, the sermon is just a speech given to entertain.

He goes on to give **3 simple questions which he calls the "change the world" acid test.** These 3 questions could really help our sermons to have more results.

- 1. Did I give them motivation to do something?**
- 2. Did I give them clear action items?**
- 3. Did I make their new behavior easy to adopt?**

We all as pastors/leaders need to ask these 3 questions more often!

The you need to use in every talk if you want to **increase your chances of students taking action** on what you're talking about...

The thing that every talk you give needs to aim towards this is...

An **inspiring, encouraging** and even **challenging... CONCLUSION!**

You need to connect with your students, but you also need to get them to take ACTION and APPLY what you're talking about.

Do you want to know why?

Someone once said, "**Unused truth becomes as useless as an unused muscle.**" Think about that for awhile.

I want to tell you about *something that can so easily deceive our students* (and us too if we're honest)...

Biblical knowledge without action deceives us and makes us think that we've tried something when all we've done is heard it.

Truth that is never applied is *only information*. Truth that **is** applied becomes knowledge. **Because the fact is, you can never really understand a truth until you LIVE it.**

Let me tell you a story from my own life...

I took martial arts for about 4-5 years and I learned that the one way to really understand a move was to DO it!

I could see someone do the move and THINK I know it.

I could even practice the move in the air and think, "OK I got it now!"

But, it was only once I put on the sparring pads, had someone coming at me -- and I had to defend myself -- that I really understood the move!... Or I found out you DIDN'T! ☺

This is so important I'll say this again: **your students can never really understand a truth until they LIVE it!**

Do you REALLY understand this?

If you do, then you'll realize the need for everyone of your talks to have a "Call to Action" or conclusion. That's what every talk needs to move your students to action. That's what every talk needs to build and aim for.

Jesus talked about this need in his "Sermon On The Mount".

He ended his sermon with a call to action/conclusion that was a story about two guys.

Remember it? One build his house on the sand and one build his house on the rock. And what happened? When the storms of life came, only the one who built his house on the rock still had a house standing.

Do you remember what the difference in these two guys was?

Did one hear better teaching/preaching?

No! They both heard the same truth. But there was one key difference...

They were different because one DID something (lived out) the truth that he heard. He applied the truth. That was what put his house (his life) on the rock. That was what allowed him to make it through the storms!

But guess what?

Continuous Application

There's one last thing I want to say and that's this...

We need to get our students to apply truth and not only that, but KEEP APPLYING that same truth in our lives if we want to see REAL results.

To try something once is not much better than NEVER trying it at all.

How many of you have seen any **major results** in your life from **only doing something once**? For example...

How many people **lose weight** by dieting for one day? (*Except on the infomercials!! 😊)

You can only become good at something by doing it over and over again.

You're only going to see results from the things *you focus on and keep doing!*

If you want your students to **grow to the next level**...

If we're going to **experience new things** and **see results** like we never have before...

...then we're going to have to encourage them to continually apply the same truths in our lives!

The “Secret” To Making Your Talks More Powerful & Exciting?

Students (and us again) can become bored of even the most powerful truth – if it isn't applied, but we'll never become bored of truth that is applied!

If you want to know a “secret” to making your talks more exciting and powerful, then here it is...

Get your students to live them out and your talks will become more powerful and exciting!

The Only Difference

They say the largest locomotive in the New York Central system, when it's standing still can be kept from moving by a single one-inch block of wood placed in the front of each of the eight drive wheels!

But the same locomotive, moving at 100 miles per hour can crash through a wall of steel-reinforced concrete that's five feet thick!

It's the **same** train!

When standing still 8 one inch blocks can stop it. When moving at 100 miles an hour a steel-reinforced CONCRETE wall that's FIVE FEET THICK can't stop it!

The only difference is **MOMENTUM** -- action!

You'd be surprised at what walls come crashing down in the lives of your students when they begin taking action!

That's why your talks MUST have a "call to action" aka conclusion. Have I convinced you yet? ☺ I hope so!

So what's that mean you should **do** as a preacher?

You need to constantly ask yourself these questions:

- **So what?**
- **What should we do about this?**
- **What should we stop doing?**
- **How should this change our lives?**
- **What does this matter to my students?**
- **What do I (or more importantly God) want them to do about this?**

You need to ask these questions from the time you **first pick the passage you're speaking on through** your **whole preparation of your talk!**

The answer to these questions should inspire you to come up with the best intro you can, so they can know this truth and what it should mean to them.

It should affect **what, when, and how** you present **the whole rest of your talk.** (I'll get into working on the rest of your talk in the other e-classes.)

But you need to ask the above questions, because they help you to figure out how and what you will say to finish out your talk!

Why You Need To Have A "Call To Action"

- People in general **can't always see the clear connection** from what you've told them and how it applies.
- People need someone to **give them some "action steps"**.
- People need someone to **challenge them.** We don't always like it and might even buck against it, but usually (at least internally) we'll say, "You're right. I do need to..."
- People need someone to **inspire** them to action. A talk that is given by someone who has a "call to action" in mind can get students to do amazing things!

What You Need To Have In Your "Call To Action"/Close

- You need to **wrap up any unclosed ideas, truths, or thoughts** that you brought up in your thoughts.
- You need to **connect any unconnected ideas, truths, or thoughts** that have been clearly connected.
- You need to **give clear "Call To Action"** and tell them what they should (WE is a better word to use when telling a group what to do)
- Give practical steps.
- Tell them the **first step** to take right now or **tomorrow.**

Tools You Can Use To "Close Your Talks"

It's a good idea to grab your group's attention at the end of your talk like you did at the beginning. But instead of bridging it into your talk you want to use the **conclusion to bridge your talk** (the truth of God's word you shared) **into their lives.**

You want to bring those thoughts into the "now that you know this, you (we) should..."

How do you do that? Most of the tools you used in your intro can be used in your conclusion, but these ones in particular: (I won't give examples for each. Just for one or two

- **Stats**
- **Quotes**
- **A skit** –
- **A video clip** – I used dad pushing son in wheel chair in race as picture of how helpless we are and the need to let God push us in life.
- **A story**
- **A song**
- **Q & A**

Close:

Your talks need to have a call to action/close.

They give you purpose and incentive to give your talk.

They give the students and reason to listen.

And they give them a clear explanation of what you want them to do.

Without a “call to action” or close you talk is just information or entertainment.

That’s nice but not enough. Especially for us who God has called!

Tim Sanders was right in his blog. The only reason to give a talk is to change the world – or at least change the people God has given you to lead!

You must ask "What do I want people to do?"

Everything you say in your talk needs to build until this is the **logical and/or compelling response**.

If you can capture their attention at the beginning you’ll have a high chance of keeping them listen to what you have to say.

If you give them a clear “call to action” you’ll have a lot higher chance of them living out what you’re talking about.

And that will automatically make your talks more exciting and powerful, because you WILL be changing lives!

To Do:

Focus on these two things in your talks for the next few weeks until our next e-class.

Use that **tool box of things you can use in your intros**.

Use the ways to connect: **surprise, connecting with where they’re at, etc.**

Have a “Call To Action” and what you want them to do for every talk these few weeks.

Make sure you clearly tell them what to do at the end.

In the next E-class #2: Wed. 12/2 or Thurs. 12/3

Overall Topic: A universally powerful tool to share truth and knowledge.

Some of what I'll cover:

- What you need to "sprinkle" throughout your talks to get students attention.
- A **new way I've structured some of my talks** that has helped me to give some of the best talks I've done in 21 years of speaking

- The lesson **Rick Warren learned from working on "The Prince Of Egypt" movie** that can help your talks to capture and hold your students attention
- **A lesson from Pixar that can help you in how you put together your talks**
- Other ideas & thoughts

I hope you can be a part! It will cost you either \$10 or \$5 if you already bought my ebook