

# **SPEAK**

## **5 Skills That Make People Listen**

### **TEEN EDITION**

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The Anchored Institute

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## INTRODUCTION

### Why This Book Matters

Here's something nobody tells you: the ability to communicate well might be the most valuable skill you'll ever develop.

Not because speaking is fancy. Because everything you want to accomplish—every relationship, every opportunity, every impact you want to make—depends on your ability to convey what you think, feel, and believe to other people.

#### REAL TALK

Want to get into college? Essays and interviews.

Want to lead? You need to inspire people.

Want people to understand you? Express yourself clearly.

Want to make a difference? Persuade others to act.

The problem is, nobody really teaches this stuff. You might get a speech class. You might write essays. But nobody gives you a complete framework for becoming someone whose words actually work.

That's what this book is for.

### The 5-Cs Framework

The best communicators all do five things well:

#### THE 5 Cs

- CORE — Know exactly what you want to say
- CONCEPT — Organize your ideas so people can follow
- CRAFT — Choose words that land with precision
- CHARACTER — Show up as someone worth listening to
- CURRENT — Adapt to today's digital, distracted world

Five skills. Learn them, and you'll communicate better than most adults. Master them, and people will listen when you speak, remember what you say, and act on what you ask.

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*"This isn't about becoming someone you're not. It's about becoming who you already are—but clearer, more confident, and more effective."*

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## MODULE 1

# CORE — Know What You Want to Say

### THE BIG IDEA

Before you can communicate well, you need to know what you're trying to say. CORE is about clarity—getting crystal clear on your purpose, audience, and message. Most communication fails because the speaker never figured out their point.

### Why CORE Matters

Have you ever sat through a presentation where the person rambled for five minutes and you still had no idea what they were trying to say? That's what happens when someone skips CORE.

### REAL TALK

The biggest communication mistake: not knowing your own point. If YOU don't know what you're trying to say, nobody else will figure it out.

### The Four Parts of CORE

#### 1. Purpose: Why Are You Talking?

Before you speak, ask: What am I trying to accomplish?

#### COMMON PURPOSES

- To inform — Sharing information
- To persuade — Getting someone to believe or do something
- To inspire — Motivating people emotionally
- To explain — Helping people understand
- To connect — Building relationship

Pick ONE main purpose. If you try to do everything, you accomplish nothing.

#### 2. Audience: Who Are You Talking To?

You wouldn't explain something the same way to your little cousin and your teacher. Different audiences need different approaches.

**Ask:** What do they already know? What do they care about? What might they resist?

#### 3. Message: What's the One Thing?

If your audience remembers only ONE thing, what should it be? This is your central message.

### THE ONE-SENTENCE TEST

Can you state your main point in one clear sentence?  
If you can't, you don't have CORE clarity yet.

## 4. Clarity: Is It Crystal Clear?

### CLARITY CHECKLIST

- No vague words — 'soon' becomes 'by Friday'
- No jargon — Unless your audience speaks it
- No rambling — Get to the point
- No buried message — Make the point obvious

### TRY THIS: Find Your CORE

1. Think of something you need to communicate this week.
2. Write your PURPOSE in one sentence.
3. Describe your AUDIENCE in 2-3 points.
4. State your CENTRAL MESSAGE in one sentence.
5. Check for CLARITY: Is every word specific?

## Module Summary

### CORE SUMMARY

- PURPOSE — Why are you communicating?
- AUDIENCE — Who are you talking to?
- MESSAGE — What's the one thing?
- CLARITY — Is it crystal clear?

## MODULE 2

# CONCEPT — Organize Your Ideas

### THE BIG IDEA

Once you know WHAT to say, figure out HOW to arrange it.

CONCEPT is about structure—organizing ideas so people can follow.

The human mind loves patterns. Give it patterns, and your ideas stick.

### Why Structure Matters

Imagine directions: 'Turn left, then after 5 minutes turn right, actually wait, first get on the highway...' Confusing. Now: 'Three steps. First, go north. Second, take Highway 5. Third, exit at Oak.' Same info. Totally different clarity.

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*"Structure isn't a straitjacket. It's a gift to your audience."*

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### Structures That Work

#### 1. The Power of Threes

The brain loves threes. Three points. Three examples. Three steps.

#### THREES IN ACTION

- Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
- Stop, drop, and roll
- Faith, hope, and love

#### 2. Problem → Solution

Step 1: Here's a problem (make them feel it). Step 2: Here's why it matters. Step 3: Here's the solution.

#### 3. Chronological

When telling a story or explaining a process, go in order. First, then, then.

#### 4. Compare and Contrast

Useful when choosing between options. Option A does this. Option B does this. Here's why one is better.

## **Making Ideas Memorable**

**Use Contrast:** 'This isn't about working harder. It's about working smarter.'

**Use Repetition:** MLK said 'I have a dream' eight times. Not an accident.

**Use Stories:** Beginning, middle, end. Character, conflict, resolution.

### **TRY THIS: Structure Your Ideas**

1. Take the CORE from Module 1.
2. List all supporting points.
3. Choose a structure: Threes? Problem-Solution?
4. Organize points into that structure.
5. Cut anything that doesn't fit.

## **Module Summary**

### **CONCEPT SUMMARY**

- STRUCTURE — Choose an organizing pattern
- PATTERN — Use threes, contrast, repetition
- LOGIC — Make sure each point flows to the next
- STORIES — Turn information into narrative

## MODULE 3

# CRAFT — Choose Words That Land

### THE BIG IDEA

CRAFT is where ideas become words.

The same message can be boring or brilliant depending on how it's crafted.

Word choice, rhythm, and delivery matter more than you think.

### Why Word Choice Matters

Consider: 'The thing was pretty good' vs. 'The speech electrified the room.' Same general idea. Completely different impact.

### REAL TALK

Vague words weaken everything.

'Very,' 'really,' 'nice,' 'good,' 'stuff' do almost nothing.

Replace them with specific, vivid words.

### The CRAFT Toolkit

#### 1. Be Specific

Vague: 'I improved my grades.' Specific: 'I went from 2.8 to 3.4 GPA.'

#### 2. Cut the Fat

##### WORDS TO DELETE

- 'Very' and 'really' — Find stronger words
- 'I think' — Just state the thing
- 'In order to' — Use 'to'
- 'Due to the fact that' — Use 'because'

#### 3. Vary Your Sentences

Short sentences punch. Longer sentences build toward a point. Mix them.

#### 4. Start Strong, End Strong

### STRONG OPENINGS

Hook immediately — No 'So, um, today I'm going to...'  
Start with a question, story, or surprising fact

### **STRONG CLOSINGS**

Return to your main point  
Call to action — What should they do?  
End with strength, not trailing off

### **TRY THIS: The Ruthless Edit**

1. Take something you've written recently.
2. Circle every 'very,' 'really,' and vague word.
3. Replace them with specific language.
4. Cut 20% of the words.
5. Read it aloud. Does it flow?

## **Module Summary**

### **CRAFT SUMMARY**

- SPECIFICITY — Replace vague with concrete
- CONCISION — Cut unnecessary words
- VARIETY — Mix sentence lengths
- OPENINGS & CLOSINGS — Start and end strong

## MODULE 4

# CHARACTER — Be Someone Worth Hearing

### THE BIG IDEA

People don't just evaluate your message. They evaluate YOU.  
CHARACTER is about being credible, confident, genuine.  
You can't fake this. It has to be real.

### Why Who You Are Matters

Two people give you the same advice. One you trust. One seems sketchy. Same words. Completely different impact. That's CHARACTER.

*"Character isn't something you put on for presentations. It's something you develop over a lifetime."*

### The Six Dimensions of CHARACTER

#### 1. Credibility: Can You Be Believed?

##### CREDIBILITY BUILDERS

- Know your stuff — Do the research
- Be honest — Admit when you don't know
- Show your work — Explain how you know
- Have a track record — Past reliability builds trust

#### 2. Confidence: Do You Believe Yourself?

**Shows in:** Steady voice. Still body. Unhurried pace. Direct statements.

##### REAL TALK

Nervous? Everyone is. Confidence isn't absence of nerves.  
It's acting courageously despite them.

#### 3. Composure: Can You Stay Steady?

When things go wrong—tough questions, tech fails—stay calm. Freaking out destroys credibility.

#### 4. Congruence: Does Your Manner Match Your Message?

Saying 'I'm excited' with zero energy = incongruence. People detect it instantly.

#### 5. Conviction: Do You Actually Believe This?

If you don't believe your message, figure out how to—or don't say it.

#### 6. Connection: Can You Reach People?

##### CONNECTION BUILDERS

- Make real eye contact
- Acknowledge their perspective
- Be genuinely interested in them
- Respond to what's happening in the room

##### TRY THIS: The Video Check

1. Record yourself giving a 2-minute talk.
2. Watch with sound off. What does your body say?
3. Watch with sound. Is there congruence?
4. Rate yourself on the six dimensions.
5. Pick your weakest. What would improvement look like?

## Module Summary

##### CHARACTER SUMMARY

- CREDIBILITY — Can you be believed?
- CONFIDENCE — Do you believe yourself?
- COMPOSURE — Stay steady under pressure
- CONGRUENCE — Manner matches message
- CONVICTION — Do you actually believe this?
- CONNECTION — Can you reach people?

## MODULE 5

# CURRENT — Adapt to Today's World

### THE BIG IDEA

Communication today happens in a different environment. CURRENT is about adapting to screens, speed, and distraction. Ignore CURRENT and you'll be ignored.

## The Modern Challenge

### THE ATTENTION BATTLEFIELD

- Infinite content competing for attention
- Average online attention span: 8 seconds
- People scan before they read
- Trust is lower than ever
- AI generates content instantly—human authenticity is rare

## The CURRENT Toolkit

### 1. Compression: Get to the Point

#### REAL TALK

Old way: 'Let me give background first...' (Zone out.)  
New way: Point first. Background after. (If needed.)

### 2. Curiosity: Hook Them Immediately

#### CURIOSITY HOOKS

- Questions that demand answers
- Surprising facts
- Open loops — Start a story, don't finish yet
- Stakes — 'This could change your life'

### 3. Consistency: Same You, Every Platform

Instagram, texts, in person, presentations, video calls. Your character should be recognizable everywhere.

#### 4. Conversational: Sound Human

##### CONVERSATIONAL MARKERS

- Contractions — 'Don't' instead of 'do not'
- Direct address — 'You' not 'one'
- Natural flow — Write like you speak
- Personality — Let YOUR voice through

#### 5. Connection at Distance

**Video tips:** Look at camera (not screen). More energy than in-person. Good audio matters. Ask questions.

##### TRY THIS: The Platform Challenge

1. Take one message you need to communicate.
2. Write a full version (200+ words).
3. Compress to 50 words.
4. Compress to 15 words.
5. What survived? That's your CORE.

### Module Summary

##### CURRENT SUMMARY

- COMPRESSION — Get to the point immediately
- CURIOSITY — Hook them in seconds
- CONSISTENCY — Same character across platforms
- CONVERSATIONAL — Sound human
- CONNECTION — Reach through the screen

## CONCLUSION

### Putting It All Together

#### THE 5 Cs — YOUR SYSTEM

- CORE — Know what you want to say
- CONCEPT — Organize it so people follow
- CRAFT — Choose words that land
- CHARACTER — Show up as someone worth hearing
- CURRENT — Adapt to today's world

You won't master this overnight. Communication develops over a lifetime. But you can start today.

#### THE 5-C CHECKLIST

- What's my CORE? (One sentence.)
- What's my CONCEPT? (Structure.)
- How's my CRAFT? (Specific, strong words?)
- Who am I in CHARACTER? (Credible, confident, genuine?)
- Am I CURRENT? (Adapted for platform and audience?)

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*"The goal isn't perfect technique. It's authentic mastery—becoming someone whose words matter because your character matters."*

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Start now. Start small. Keep going.

— Gary W. Boyd, PhD

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Gary W. Boyd, PhD, is the founder of The Anchored Institute, creating evidence-based resources for human flourishing.

With decades teaching communication, leadership, and critical thinking, Dr. Boyd helps students become effective communicators. He believes communication is one of the most valuable—and neglected—skills in education.

He also created The Anchored Mindset, EVIDENCE apologetics, and LeaderPrep leadership training.

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