

# REMEMBER THE ICE

AND OTHER PARADIGM SHIFTS



BOB NICOLL, MA



## **Praise for *Remember The Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts***

Communication is of the utmost importance in business, networking, and life in general and Bob Nicoll's *Remember the Ice* program demonstrates how powerful results can be achieved in all areas, simply by focusing on word choice. I highly recommend it to everyone.

—Ivan Misner, NY Times Bestselling author and Founder of BNI

*Bob is a great and effective networker. First his story about a salesman, who had posted a sign in his store asking people “not to forget” the ice in a 100°F environment. He was “not” selling his ice as everybody kept forgetting it as suggested in the sign. When Bob changed the message positively to Remember the Ice, the salesman made a big stride into his commerce of ice, and he was thankful.*

—Trinto Mugangu, Mugangu Foundation (FONDAMU), Kinshasa, DR Congo, Zaire

I have recently connected with Bob (on Ecademy.com) and am so very glad I did! There is great value in the communication work he is doing as well as the foundation he has started with his wife. He is warm and giving and I look forward to an ongoing exchange of ideas with him. Thanks Bob!

—Janet Ostrov, Send Out Cards, Saratoga Springs, NY

*Bob is a unique person who knows how to connect his enormous domain knowledge and life experience with business. He is polished, result oriented and passionately committed to “Remember the Ice” - a really special program for better communication that is magnificent and something you probably have never seen before. Keep up the great work Bob!*

—Marek Kulbacki, Braindating Inc., Wroclaw, Poland

Working with Bob over the past few weeks has increased my ability to have an abundance mentality in all that I do. I no longer view problems as stumbling blocks but as unique situations that require a different angle of approach. Bob has taught me that between stimulus and response, one has the freedom of choice, and that through the clarity of our articulation we can change the world around us.

—Adam Heafner, First Rate Financial, Anchorage, Alaska

*Now I have made some spare time to read it again and found out that you discover every time something new. Word empowerment that is exactly what it is about and I would recommend everybody to read “Remember the Ice”.*

—Andre Peeters, PSA Consult, BVBA, Braaschaat, Belgium

We met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia a few weeks ago (May 2008) and I immediately bought the *Remember the Ice* program! It has literally changed my life. I have written so many posts and comments about it! Soon, it will be available in the Portuguese speaking countries as well! Bob, you are empowering people everyday. That is because there is power in the clarity of the articulation!

—Helder Falcao, BNI Executive Director, Portugal and Brazil

*You probably read few testimonials about an Alaskan from a Texan, but Bob Nicoll is an exception. I just met Bob through a video at a BNI seminar in Houston, Texas and began communicating with him. He is the real thing. In addition to the great message through his book, "Remember the Ice", he walks the talk by giving back as a philanthropist. Bob is someone you need to know.*

*—Gail Stolzenburg, Texas High Achievers, Houston*

I just got back from a walk and had to sit down immediately to write about Bob. I'll backup a few years quickly because the story comes together in so many ways.

A while ago I attended a Mayo Medical conference in Orlando, FL. The topics surrounded the Laboratory Outreach programs across the US. Rod Forsman led the conference and told the story about "Remember the Ice". It was a great story in which everyone could relate to and of course nodded in agreement.

I recently joined a local BNI chapter and ecademy.com. Two nights ago I searched for local Alaskans on ecademy.com and came across Bob. We connected immediately and exchanged info. I have it on my to-do list to schedule some time to meet him when he is available. This leads me to the start of this testimonial.

While walking I was listening to back podcasts from BNI. #63 came up and guess who was on the broadcast? It was Bob Nicoll speaking with Dr. Ivan Misner about "Remember the Ice". Though long in writing this little story, it showed me how the power of networking and listening come together.

*—Guinness Collins, Team-Up Business Coaching, Wasilla, Alaska*

*In the Broadcasting community we tend to believe we are great communicators. We have never been so wrong. Bob Nicoll's Remember the Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts adds a whole new dimension to effective communication. Remember the Ice has improved my skills as a broadcaster, dramatically improving my end product. Today's fast paced business world demands the ability to effectively communicate your message, Shift your Paradigm..... Remember the Ice!*

*—Holly Knight, Sky Watch Traffic, Anchorage, Alaska*

I'm seeing phenomenal results personally and professionally by applying what I've learned from my friend, Bob Nicoll. He truly has a gift for explaining clearly, concisely and with great passion, exactly how to transform your life when you choose to eliminate common every day negative words from your vocabulary. It's more than that though because he goes on to give simple, easy to apply principles, along with concrete examples of powerful new word choices. Remember the Ice is so much more than some self help book or just another positive mental attitude program. It is a new way of life. A life you will love creating one new word choice at a time. Do yourself a favor and give yourself the gift of this book. You'll be glad you did. My mom always said "I can't never does anything". She was right and Bob Nicoll is, too.

*—Chaz Simmons, Service Printing, Anchorage, Alaska*

I knew within moments of meeting Bob Nicoll that his message was HUGE!! It is a life changing paradigm shift that will give new power to your communication and forever change the way you articulate thoughts and ideas.

—Mark Taylor, Executive Director, BNI Houston East

*Bob is an exceptional individual; to know how, and be able to turn disadvantages into better advantages is a powerful gift. Even more powerful, humble and giving, to reveal it and use it to better mankind. You are an inspiration.*

—Peter Wolfe, Cape Town, South Africa

As my high school students would say, Bob Nicoll rocks. As a teacher of writing and communication, I think Bob's message regarding the importance of word choice resonates with clarity, purpose and vision and shows how language can create positive energy in one's life.

—Sharon Winzeler, Raleigh, NC

*I had a cracking conversation with Bob and when you talk to him, you get a genuine feeling of inspiration. We spoke for some time but as soon as we finished I immediately put into practice the ideas that he talked about. His product really brings some simple but rarely recognised principles that can have a huge impact on both personal and business communication.*

*It's a pleasure to be connected to Bob and I look forward to working together with him moving forward.*

*I'll bring the drinks, you bring the ice.*

—Andre Dent, Global Syndication Manager, yourBusinessChannel, Glasgow, UK

What an inspiration!

I thought I was the most positive person I knew and then I read 'Remember the Ice' and realised I can be better! I've told everyone I know about it and I'm doing the exercises for an even more positive life! Thank you, Bob!

—Rickie Josen, Miss Jones Concierge, Birmingham, West Midlands, UK

*Bob Nicoll's concept, There is Power in the clarity of your Articulation™, has changed the way I think about what I say. I am inspired when I think about how much I improve my expressions and speech when I share things with people - it makes an impact on everything! Thank you for your brilliant contribution to life Bob! Sincere regards,*

—Todd Jones, Director and Developer of ROM GYM Alaska, Anchorage

Bob's material is extremely useful for all marketers and should be checked out. In our over-cluttered marketing world, the precision and clarity his work offers is a must-read and I wholeheartedly encourage you to do so. Checkout his Remember the Ice program now if you want to develop your marketing communication skills beyond the next level.

—Terry Kyle, Author/Editor,

*400 Latest & Greatest Small Business Ideas From Around the World*, London

*I met Bob recently at the BNI International Conference in Kuala Lumpur and was struck by the passion he has for helping others. I look forward to learning from him, - he speaks with great clarity and his words are powerful!! - And I will always remember the ice!*

—Jo Brett, VIS-AGE, Kent, UK

Bob is a FANTASTIC networker. He came all the way from Alaska, USA to attend the BNI (Business Network International) Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from May 28 to May 29, 2008. Go to his website [www.remembertheice.com](http://www.remembertheice.com). This guy is awesome and CAN make a HUGE difference in YOUR LIFE. Go for his talks, seminars, etc. Know him as a person.

—Ken Chin Shih Chaun, Managing Director,  
KCAT Services, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Even more importantly Bob understands what “it” is and can communicate it to others. There is clarity in the way Bob communicates. A clarity that few have. “Remember the Ice” is a groundbreaking program. The wisdom within it does not need to be gleaned through hours and hours of study they jump out at you like only simple truths can.*

*“Remember the Ice” is an instant Ram upgrade for your mind.*

—Dan Stepel, Principal Consultant, Stirling-Hathaway,  
London - Los Angeles – Johannesburg - New York - Shanghai, China

I met Bob at the BNI Ampang chapter in Kuala Lumpur where he gave a scintillating talk on the importance of ‘remembering the ice’. Bob will help you break down the English language into its component parts before sticking it back together in a way that will ensure you get better communication with fewer words. ‘Remember the Ice’ is just one item in his box of linguistic tricks. If you want to make your words count without counting your words, try out Bob’s programme.

The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate.  
JOSEPH PRIESTLY

*Remember the Ice*

BOB NICOLL

—Matthew Pigott, Publicist, MP-PR, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, UK

*Bob has an amazing way of sharing and teaching, and he does it with passion. I’ve gone through his CDs and DVD on Remember the Ice and his clarity in sharing the valuable lessons are just amazing. He makes it so simple and easy to understand and it was just a breeze for me to implement and practice them with my designers.*

—Evelyn Ang, Principal, Planco Group of Companies, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

It’s great to see you offering the world access to one of your powerful personal tools. What a great idea and one that will hopefully inspire people all over to choose their words more wisely. We are all empowered to accomplish great

things; we just need the right tools and knowledge of how to use them effectively to get there. This program is one of those powerful tools the wise will use to the benefit of themselves and, more importantly, everyone around them.

—Victor Ratz, Owner,  
Anchorage Messenger Service & SwitchBoard Alaska, Anchorage

*His charisma and energy inspires people. Whether describing something he feels passionate about; speaking at a business function or talking about his weekend, he helps people take action and moves them towards accomplishing their goals. His ability to shift the energy of the room, to gently nudge people past the current paradigm they typically align with, is a passion, and a gift.*

—Megan Gruhl, Organic Writer, Eagle River, AK

Hi Bob, I attended your lecture yesterday and just applied your ideas in an email. I changed the wording from: “I don’t know how our respective roles are defined ...” to “I’d like some clarification on our respective roles ....” It has only been a minute since I sent the email, so I am waiting on a reply.

However, I have gotten feedback -- from myself.

What I originally saw as a potential conflict of overlapping responsibilities instantly changed, in my inner awareness, into an opportunity to talk and work out mutually agreeable roles and responsibilities. My attitude of concern shifted to an attitude of imminent shared purpose and teamwork. It is easy to underestimate the power of your insights. It is easy to sit in a lecture and say, very nice, more positive thinking stuff. But I have to tell you, in making the effort to consciously apply the process; it feels like a major shift in me is taking place. I never expected it to be as internally significant. Thank you for this gift.

—Duane Sherwood, Technical Writer, Anchorage, AK

*Remember the Ice...*

*The concepts are working for me.*

*As the mother of two teenage girls and a young son, I find one of the most challenging areas of my life to be communicating effectively and consistently with my children as they change and grow, and as their needs and relationships with the world around them change and grow.*

*I have discovered that the practice of untying my verbal “(k)nots” has made communicating with them far more empowering for each of us.*

*It is very easy to slip a “don’t” or “can’t” or some other “(k)not” into a command or request, but it is a lazy and disrespectful way of speaking to anyone, and it’s no wonder my children would get defensive and respond negatively when I used them.*

*I find that the act of eliminating any (k)not from my speech is just the beginning; the trick is to replace it with something constructive that delivers my message clearly. In the split second it takes to flip through my internal thesaurus and choose better words, I allow myself to take a breath, remain calm, and check my reaction to whatever is in front of me.*

*My tone of voice automatically adjusts to one of reason and respect, and I regain control of the situation.*

*When I consider what is about to come out of my mouth, and avoid the (k)nots as if they were land mines, my role becomes one of a helpful leader rather than a ticked-off mother. I am able to set clear expectations, outline reasonable consequences, or suggest a course of action, depending on what needs to be communicated in that instance.*

*I have been untying (k)nots for several months now, and my children's responses have been very powerful. We function more as a team, diffuse and often completely avoid confrontations all together, and trust each other to listen and actually hear what we're saying. I often overhear my daughters settle arguments or arrange compromises by using empowering language choices, and it is such a breath of fresh air. My son is active and noisy and on the go constantly, but when I speak to him he slows down to hear my message and acknowledge it, even if that means taking the garbage out.*

*We still have all the drama and disagreements of any family, but now we also have these powerful and effective tools to help keep our lines of communication open and working.*

*This is one paradigm shift I plan to maintain for good. I'm looking forward to the next one.*

*—Bronwyn Ashbaker, Bronwyn Ashbaker Writing Solutions, Alameda,  
California*



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BOB NICOLL, MA

Creator of  
*Remember The Ice*

REMEMBER THE ICE, LLC

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*“Remember the Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts”* has been in the making for many years. As with any project of this size and scope, there are countless sources of inspiration and support that need to be acknowledged and praised.

From my early college days at Davis & Elkins College in the last couple of years of the great decade of the '60s until now, there have been countless moments of brilliant guidance and mentorship, friendship and support, solace and introspection.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to the following:

To Paul Abbott, my seventh-grade English teacher. You saw a “word artist” waiting to bloom inside this young 12-year-old who was a bit shaky about giving his first, five-minute oral report, the dreaded “How I spent my summer vacation.” You enthusiastically supported my talk as it blossomed into a 28-minute show and tell. Thanks Mr. “A”.

To my beloved Davis and Elkins College nestled in the beautiful Monongahela National Forest in Elkins, West Virginia. Thanks for the museum of memories.

To Joe C. Martin, my academic advisor. To Lance Pledger, an extraordinary long-distance runner who nurtured my desire to run the Boston Marathon -- twice. I thank all my soccer teammates for setting the pace and teaching me the meaning of “whatever it takes” on our way to those National Championships and our glorious run from 1968 to 1971. I need to mention some by name: Coach Greg Myers, fellow players Ed Walk, Nils Heinke, Bill Nuttall, Bill “Scotty” Smyth, and Abe Latjerman.

A special “band of brothers” thanks to Hank Steinbrecher.

The following transcript is my dedication to Hank when he was inducted to the National Soccer Hall of Fame in 2005. I was honored to be one of more than a hundred colleagues, and teammates that were invited to contribute to a special book for Hank’s induction ceremony, and it speaks to the deep gratitude I have for this great man. Thank you, readers, for indulging me for a moment:

*My Dear Brother Hank--*

*Congratulations on your upcoming induction as a Builder for the National Soccer Hall of Fame. You ARE so deserving of this honor. You taught me a long while ago to be humble, yet confident about one’s achievements. You have numerous; and indeed are worthy of such recognition.*

*It has been my honor to have been your teammate, friend and brother. I am choked with pride for you. I only wish I could be there to watch your induction ceremony. I will be with you in spirit as will hundreds whose lives you have touched.*

*I was reading some articles -- just today -- about when you left U.S. soccer. I had been on Google, and for some reason was moved to put your name in the search window. You were all over the page!! (Smile) I felt a sense of pride as I read about the accomplishments and contributions you made on an international level. I beamed as I thought of our early days back at D&E, doing three-a-day workouts in the “West by God Virginia” heat; how you took a brand-new friend down to the gym daily to learn how to play this great game -- you made me a respectable keeper. I know the success I had the year after you graduated was inspired by many of our late night talks about giving one’s all to a cause. To leave nothing on the field.*

*My brother, Hank; it is with love that I send my best wishes to you on your special day. I know your lovely bride, Ruthie, and your sons, Corey and Chad, will be bursting with pride and joy as you are recognized for a job truly well done.*

*You have breathed life into so many with your passion for a sport so loved worldwide. You have breathed joy into the lives of so many who have had the pleasure of knowing you. I am so appreciative of our brotherhood and your mentorship and friendship and caring.*

*Since that early afternoon introduction in late January of 1969, by the ping-pong table in the Student Union of Benedum Hall, my life has been impacted by a man with a huge heart, a friend with a passion for a wonderful game, and a respect and love for his fellow man.*

*Thank you mate,  
Thank you dear friend,  
Thank you brother--  
With love and respect and joy and best wishes,  
Bobby Nicoll*

To my mentors, Dr. Michael Yura and Dr. Ed Jacobs, in the Counseling & Guidance graduate program at West Virginia University, I am grateful for the breadth and scope of therapeutic approaches you shared with me during my master's program.

To being introduced to the work of Dr. Albert Ellis in *Guide to Rational Living* and *Reason & Emotion in Psychotherapy*. You laid the groundwork for my passion of linguistics, and your books taught me my basic ABC's of emotions. You also taught what the great Greek philosopher, Epictetus noted:

*"Man is not disturbed by events, but by the view he takes of them".*  
Epictetus (ca 55 - ca 135 AD).

Please excuse his use of a (k)not). In other words, blame of the thing for disturbing you is misplaced; your thoughts about the thing disturb you.

To Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby, Jr., for my post-graduate training and Certification in Rational Behavior Therapy, at the Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic, University of Kentucky Medical School. Your insights and concepts on The Psychophysiology of Words, The Process of Emotional Education and Re-Education, Cognitive-Emotive Dissonance and the basics of Rational Self Counseling are woven into my process of articulation on a daily basis. Your book, *Help Yourself to Happiness* is one of the finest and most easily understood works on self help, and a primer for understanding the above mentioned concepts. I also want to share the following notes from one of the Amazon.com reviews of the book:

*"This guide gives you exciting, real case examples that reveal how easily and quickly you can use laws of normal human nature to Help Yourself to as much Happiness as you are willing to have, at any time, in any situation of your life."  
"Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby Jr. is a most unusual psychiatrist; he is a normal people psychiatrist. That means he is a fully trained, board certified psychiatrist, but by choice he works mainly with normal but excessively unhappy or unsuccessful people. Yet, because they are normal, i.e. possess brains that are free of significant malfunctions, Dr. Maultsby's patients and readers of his books want and are mentally capable of achieving as much personal success, plus emotional and spiritual satisfaction, for which they are willing to work."*

It was a privilege and honor to train with you. Thank you so much, Maxie, for your mentorship, guidance, and friendship.

To Tony Robbins. I had the honor of working with you in Phoenix with your team and experienced two phenomenal weeks at your certification program in Kona in 1991.

It was a great experience and a springboard for this work I do today. Thank you, Tony.

I remind myself daily of the personal power I realized and internalized doing my firewalk under the Milky Way on that shimmering July night.

To the remarkable Norm Dominguez, CEO of Business Network International (BNI®) and Dr. Ivan Misner, the visionary founder and chairman. BNI® has been a part of my life since 1989, and I actively utilize the Givers Gain® philosophy on a daily basis. Both of you have had a profound impact on my life. BNI® created a space for authors like me to find what I needed to beget this book and nurture it, and to find the people I needed to help me accomplish my goal.

To my current BNI® members of the Crucial Links Chapter here in Anchorage. Your support and encouragement is very special to me, and I would be remiss if I had failed to mention all of you. You all are an exemplary demonstration of the Givers Gain® philosophy. I salute you and warmly thank you.

To Kelly Fisher, executive director of BNI® Alaska. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share *“Remember the Ice”* with the membership and for allowing me the space to hone my networking skills as your assistant director. It is a pleasure working with you on growing BNI® Alaska.

To Michael “Buzz” Buzinski. Many thanks for your guidance and your professional team at Buzzbizz Studios. You are a full spectrum media production studio, and this project is a testament to the talented web designers, graphic artists, CD/DVD duplicators, print staff and audio engineers that you have on staff. Your friendship is huge.

To John, Tim, Kelly and Paul, the “four horsemen” who paved the way for this work to be completed. Gentlemen, the world now knows the benefit of your generosity and support and belief and encouragement. I am humbled by your actions and gratefully share this sentiment.

To Jack Canfield for the inspiration of the cover photograph, and the opportunity to meet you and drink in your wisdom. You are “America’s Success Coach,” and I am proud to be one of your students.

To Carl Johnson for the cover photography. Carl, you truly do capture the essence in your award-winning photos, and I am honored you captured the essence for me.



To Chaz Simmons, Robert Schrooten and the staff at A.T. Publishing & Printing in Anchorage, Alaska. Thanks so much for your professionalism and timeliness for bringing this book to the public.

To Tonya Luiz, my editor. We are just beginning a journey that will bring more “Ice” to the world and perhaps shift a few paradigms in the world of communication. Your willingness to jump in at the request of my dear friend Bronwyn Ashbaker and help us finish this project is greatly appreciated.

To my fellow MasterMind members; Mark, Lisa, Lori, Kelly, Tim, Mary and Buzz. Thank you so much for allowing me to grow and for the tough love. I embrace all of you with a special hug and want you to know that you are a part of this book. (This is where you have your big smile).

To my parents, Jack and Emily Nicoll. Although you are watching from above, there is a love and care that surrounds me every moment. My joy is that you are smiling proudly as this message is spread. To my brother, Rich, and my sister, Gayle, whom I am certain thought many times, “Well, I wonder what project he’s working on now?” “Sometimes it’s hard to keep up with him, we need a scoahcahd.”

For those of you outside of New England, that is scorecard.

Thank you for giving me the space to nurture my dreams and for being there as we celebrate.

To my dear friend and confidant, Bronwyn Ashbaker. Your dedication to this project in the midst of your own busy full life; caring for three fantastic children, Chelsea, Courtney, and Ryan; and moving, and so many other adventures is still amazing to me. As a ghostwriter, you are phenomenal. The herculean task of writing this book based on our conversations still amazes me. It was a daunting task, and you handled it with grace and class. I know you know this, and I want the world to know this: This book is completed because of your supreme efforts, and I humbly and graciously THANK YOU! It is truly an honor to have worked with you, and I look forward to our next project.

To my bride, Nancy. I hold you so close to me daily as my inspiration and muse. Your absolute belief and trust in me makes me melt with a joyful smile on my face. You have been with me from our moment of connection on Match.com back in late October 2002. And yes, I am mentioning in my first book, in front of the world, that you had me wait those “four long days before you responded to my e-mail after I found your profile.” It was the longest four days of my life, and looking back now, the most anxious and most joyful to have experienced. The journey we share is a special one laced with love and care. Thank you my princess.

Finally, I thank you, the reader, and all of my friends and colleagues who have come to my presentations, trainings, and seminars, and most of all the original story of *“Remember the Ice.”* Your smiles and affirmative head nodding in agreement, and excellent questioning of my program have helped me to hone it, and for that I am grateful.

I give thanks to you all and welcome you to my world of:

*“Remember the Ice”*

Empowering word choices impact your life; use them to attract the life you want.

Dedicated to my wife Nancy who has believed, from day one that yes:  
*There is Power in the Clarity of your Articulation.<sup>TM</sup>*



*Flexibility is the key to power.*

Tony Robbins



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# REMEMBER THE ICE AND OTHER PARADIGM SHIFTS



# INTRODUCTION

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For more than 35 years, I have nurtured a passion for linguistics and empowering word choices. Since completing my Bachelors Degree in Psychology in 1972, and Masters in Counseling in 1974 I have focused my energies on studying the power of word choice: The Psychophysiology of Words.

I refined my skills working with leading personal growth and development leaders over the next 20 years while earning certifications in Rational Behavior Therapy and Neuro-Associative Conditioning Systems.

In my lifetime I have been a counseling psychologist, a business owner, consultant, a motivational speaker, a sales trainer, restaurant owner, financial planner and a top sales manager. In each role I have consistently found opportunities to tap into my passion: Helping people shift their paradigms with respect to empowering word choices.

In 2005 I reflected on the lessons I had been teaching, learning and sharing with the different people in my life over the years, and decided it was time to gather them together and share them with the public. I have been leading seminars and workshops, and developed a program with a workbook and companion CDs and DVDs. With this book I hope to reach out to more people so that readers like you can make use of the empowering tools that change lives.

*Remember the Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts* is a comprehensive program that teaches you the how and why of enhancing your communication skills with

family members, friends, co-workers -- anyone who is important to you. It will help you stay focused on your task and accomplish more goals because you are conveying your message, and articulating your thoughts in a clear, precise manner. You will eliminate confusion and gain confidence in your message and ultimately attract more of what you want.

Born in Boston, right down the road from Fenway “Pahk”, I have been a “die haahd” Sox fan from birth. Our family lived in Westwood, a little town about 20 miles southwest of Boston. Some of my favorite memories include sporting events because growing up around Boston I was afforded the opportunity to attend Red Sox games at Fenway, and several Celtics and Bruins games in the fabled Boston “Gahden”, and even went to some of the early Patriot’s games. Sports have been a major part of my life. I grew up watching the Boston Marathon. Later on I would run in it twice, (1969 and 1971) long before it became the large spectacle it is today. I also witnessed world record setting performances at the BAA Indoor Track & Field Games.

Thus, the heroes of the sporting world have always inspired me. World-class athletes tend to be extremely talented self-motivators. They are hyper-aware of the language and attitudes that encourage success and push them beyond their previous concepts of limitation. I believe those strategies are available to every one of us, and that the key to making them work for us lies in understanding the power of words and word choices.

I earned my BS in Psychology from Davis and Elkins College in 1972 and my MA from West Virginia University (WVU) two years later. I entered college with an undeclared major, but within weeks I realized that my fascination with sports motivation and an insatiable curiosity about what makes people tick was a perfect fit with the study of psychology.

While at Davis & Elkins College, I was a member of the NAIA National Soccer Championship Team of 1970, and runner-up in 1969 and 1971. We had also won the National Championship in 1968 as well. I embraced the power of sports motivation and began to focus on how different words and phrases worked on my teammates and me. I took note of how much more powerful positive reinforcement was than the put-downs and temper tantrums.

At WVU, the comprehensive curriculum introduced me to many counseling theories. I was really drawn to the Cognitive approach of Rational Therapy developed by Dr. Albert Ellis. As a post-grad student I was introduced to Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby, Jr. He expanded on Dr. Ellis’ concepts and developed Rational Behavior Therapy (RBT). I gained my certification in RBT in 1975 and have been enamored with the Cognitive Behavior Therapy ever since.

In 1987 I was introduced to *Unlimited Power*, the national best-seller by Tony Robbins. By 1991, I was working and training with him, and had the pleasure of being in his Certification Class in '91 when he finished his 2nd best seller: *Awaken the Giant Within*. When I returned to Phoenix, AZ, I began to look for ways to apply my new knowledge.

I was primed to begin to really focus on empowering word choice and how it can change lives and influence people. In July of 1991, I began testing out my *Remember the Ice* theories.

*Remember the Ice* is a simple concept. Anyone can do it. Anyone. And yet, the results are so powerful, they never fail to amaze me. Sometimes, when I hear about another person's experience, it takes my breath away. I always have to laugh; it's just so much fun to watch people's lives open up to great possibilities they were previously unaware of.

So many of us walk through life knowing somewhere in the back of our minds that there is something missing, that there has to be a better way. Well, here's the better way. It's self-empowerment that begins with the words you choose when you speak.

The cornerstone of Remember the Ice is this truism:

*There is **Power** in the **Clarity** of Your **Articulation**.™*

In this book, I will teach you how to achieve that clarity.

As I worked my way through college, graduate school, a couple of thriving practices, multiple seminars, workshops and certifications over the years, I renewed and strengthened my passion for studying Rational Behavior Therapy, the fundamentals of Rational Self Counseling, and language choices. I applied the theories, tweaked them a little, made them my own, and uncovered some of the most powerful tools available to mankind.

Empowering word choice is one key to your personal power. Rational self-counseling and empowering word choice are the keys to successfully navigating, controlling, enjoying and communicating with your world and all the people in it.

In a nutshell, empowering word choice, begat from a philosophy of Respectful Elegance, wrapped in Rapport and embraced by Congruency will lead you to attracting more of what you want. Empowering word choices impact your life; use them to attract the life you want. Fortunately, it's fairly easy to grasp the concept, and this book will teach you how to use it to your benefit.

There is nothing more exciting to me than watching people learn to use these tools and apply them in their lives.



# CHAPTER 1

## REMEMBER THE ICE: CREATING BETTER COMMUNICATION (K)NOT BY (K)NOT

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*There is power in the clarity of your articulation.<sup>TM</sup>*

Let me say that again: ***There is Power in the Clarity of your Articulation.<sup>TM</sup>***

I want you to take a minute to really think about that statement. It is both the center and the purpose of everything you will learn in this book. My goal is for you to embrace this truth, make it your own, and use the tools I outline here to achieve clarity in your communication.

This skill, in turn, will lead to more personal power than you even realize you can possess. And you already have the tools; you just need to learn how to use them.

How would you like to be listened to, and actually heard, every time you spoke? Confidence in your effectiveness as a communicator translates into confidence in every aspect of your life, from the boardroom to the backyard to the bedroom.

Your sense of personal power, confidence, and self-esteem are wrapped up in how well you are able to communicate your thoughts, needs, ideas and desires. When you articulate clearly and successfully, everything else falls into place. When the details fall into place, they make room for new or expanded ideas. Suddenly, all cylinders fire together, productivity skyrockets, results exceed expectation, and relationships become more intimate and rewarding.

At its most basic, the reason we communicate is to have our needs met. If you wonder about the power of clarity in your message, consider a newborn fresh to the planet. Within moments, he communicates hunger, exhaustion, and discomfort, and in such a way that he is fed, allowed to sleep soundly, and kept warm and dry. He does so without words, and yet he makes his meaning clear when vocalizing his needs.

The key to a newborn's success is the congruency of his message. It is absolutely vital for you to embrace this concept, and I will be talking about it throughout this book. The newborn's thoughts, needs, impulses, facial expressions, body language, and tone of cry are all congruent; they have the same goal and work in unison. They're all layers of the same onion.

As we mature, our needs get more sophisticated and intertwine with our desires. Our vocabularies grow by leaps and bounds, also becoming more sophisticated. But there is no need to lose the ability to be clear and straightforward in our communication. And yet, somewhere along the line, we do. We muddle things. We overcomplicate our message, and confuse the issue – and the other people listening to us – with some pretty common, pretty poor word choices.

We do it so often, and so automatically, that we fail to register the fact that we are doing it at all.

The first step is to recognize the problem, and then to enjoy the process of changing your behavior; I am fully confident that you will find doing it a breeze and a pleasure.

As you build your awareness and adapt to a new level of personal power, the tools I share in this book will continue to serve you wherever you go in life. Soon, you will discover that where you go in life is completely up to you; your word choices play a huge role in shaping your future.

*There is power in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> Embrace this truth, put it into practice, and change your life. It's time to enhance every single relationship and every single experience you have. Spoken communication is just the beginning. I will show you how to shift your old paradigms and open yourself up to a universe of possibilities.

Why is it so important to pay attention to word choice? It's important because as a society, we have slipped into lazy habits that confuse or undermine the things that come out of our mouths. As a society, we are getting more and more frustrated by our lack of ability to understand and to make ourselves understood.



Poor word choice is a serious obstacle to clear communication and diminishes your personal power. Imagine how much more power and confidence you would have in your life if you could consistently get your message across clearly. How empowering do you think it would be to know that your words influence and inspire, rather than confuse and annoy? I believe few people actually set out to confuse and annoy others. I believe most of us want to be clear and make sense. I believe most people just need to know how to do it.

The good news is that you already have everything you need. It's just a matter of understanding the how and why of organizing and using your words, and putting it all into practice.

The first lesson is about the word “not”, or as I like to write it: (K)not. I present it this way as a constant reminder that the word “not” ties your message in knots. I believe the word should be eliminated from our language.

If the word “not” ever had a good use before it became the standard method for muddling information, overuse has destroyed its meaning. The word is no longer effective. We have become desensitized to its meaning. It has been inserted so many ways and with such frequency to foster excuses and serve for laziness that we no longer think about why we use it, and most critically, we no longer hear it. It no longer registers. We no longer recognize its meaning in a sentence.

To demonstrate what I mean, I'd like to share the story behind the title of this book. “Remember the Ice” is a perfect example of the power in clarifying your message.

In a convenience store on Northern Avenue in Phoenix, Arizona, the manager had placed a couple of signs above his cash registers. Rick's intention was to encourage his patrons to buy more ice during the hot desert summer.

I lived across the street from this store and came to know him fairly well. One day when I stepped up to the counter to make a purchase, I glanced again at the two signs above his cash registers that read “DON'T FORGET THE ICE” and decided to ask him how his ice sales were going.

You may think this was a strange question, but I have always been intrigued by the juxtaposition of words. I am also intrigued by the outcomes of behavior and how the two are intertwined.

Rick replied that ice sales were slow; he was unable to move his inventory with any speed or consistency, and most of it just sat there. We were in Phoenix, in the desert, in the middle of summer where it was 110 degrees in the shade on a cool day.

“Can I make a suggestion?” I asked. “Do you have a couple of pieces of paper and a Magic Marker I could use?” He gave me the items and I quickly made two new signs for him to place above his cash registers instead. The new signs read:

“REMEMBER THE ICE!!!”

I left with a knowing smile and purposely stayed away for about three weeks. When I did go back to the store, I spoke with Rick about his recent ice sales.

He was having difficulty keeping up with demand.

“I have had to triple my order in the last three weeks,” he said. “Sales are great.”

I smiled and explained what I had done. “If I say to you,” I began, “‘Don’t think of the color blue,’ what color do you immediately think of?”

“Why, blue of course,” he replied.

“Of course,” I grinned. “Now, if I say ‘Don’t Forget the Ice’, what will you forget?”

“Hmm ... the ice!”

“Right.”

With a simple shift in word choice, Rick noticed a considerable increase in his ice sales. He shared the following with me:

“Bob, as the customers stand at the counter to check out, they look up, see the new sign – ‘Remember the Ice’ – and usually say, ‘By the way, add a couple of bags of ice as well.’ They pay for their items, pick up their ice from the freezer outside the door, and go on their way.”

I love this story. It reminds me just how powerful a shift in speech can be.

It may be trendy to say “Don’t forget this” or “don’t miss out on that” in your advertising, but why would you deliberately confuse your customers when you know a more effective way of drawing their attention to your product?

The problem with (k)nots is that their purpose is to invert a sentence and make it mean its opposite. They turn the message inside out and upside down, befuddling the listener. Pay attention to your message and use words that make your statement clean and clear; twisting it into (k)nots serves no purpose.

I have been a student of psychology and language choice my entire adult life. It is my passion, and I have spent the last 40 years learning, observing, counseling, and putting into practice the theories I was taught, tweaking and intertwining them as I honed them into the tools that I use and share every day to help people.

I believe that word choice is the beginning of everything. It is the key that unlocks what we are thinking, and the key that unlocks what we want to say. When you choose selectively, you place yourself in the process of examining what you really believe, how you really feel, what you really mean, what you really want, and how best to make your thoughts and desires understood.

The first step to constructing a vocabulary that supports this empowering mode of living is to identify and eradicate the words that cause problems, simultaneously replacing them with language that is strong, clear and powerful.

There are a lot of different ways we let ourselves confuse and overcomplicate our messages when we communicate. The (k)not is at the epicenter. It turns your message backward and inside out, inverts what you're saying so that your brain has the added task of translating the words to make the sentence revert to its original meaning. More commonly, the brain simply ignores or fails to register the (k)not.

Take, for example, the last time someone said to you, "I'm not hungry." Did you continue to offer them food, perhaps just a snack or something to drink? That's because your brain heard and understood the words "I'm hungry," which equates to the need or desire to eat. It takes a lot to convince someone to stop offering food once they've heard a guest or friend say something about hunger. However, the phrase, "I'm full" and especially "I'm really full" will generally stop the flow of food offers before they even start.

(K)nots are bad enough on their own. But they also sneak into our rhetoric in alarming numbers by attaching themselves to other words, creating the monsters that are featured on what I like to call my "Not, and the Hit List Six:

Not  
Don't  
Won't  
Wouldn't  
Can't  
Couldn't  
Shouldn't

We are so desensitized to “don’t,” or “do not,” that the (k)not flies right past us; it fails to register, even as a counter to the rest of the statement. All we hear is the idea that follows.

Do you doubt the truth behind this? The best way to see it in action is to watch the way children respond to it.

Standing in a bank line recently, I had the chance to observe, yet again, just how ineffective the word “don’t” is with children.

A little girl of about five or so was fidgeting and started eyeing the velvet rope guiding our line while waiting for a teller.

“Don’t touch that,” her mother ordered.

The child reached out and touched it.

“I said, ‘don’t touch the rope,’” her mother repeated.

Again, the little girl touched the rope, this time making it swing a little. What she was hearing was “Touch the rope.”

Deterred temporarily by the tone of her mother’s voice the third time she was told (k)not to touch the rope, the little girl waited a couple of heartbeats and then touched it again, and again, playing with it until it started to creak and swing rapidly, thus annoying the people around her.

By using the words “don’t touch the rope,” her mother had solidly planted and nurtured the idea of touching the rope in her child’s head. It became the dominant idea, and the temptation was too much for her to resist, despite her mother’s anger. Her mother kept saying “don’t touch” and the little girl kept hearing “touch.”

Now, if her mother had known about the uselessness of “don’t,” she could have come up with far more effective ways to keep her child from playing with the rope.

The most effective idea would have been to give the child instructions that included what she could do.

“Please keep your hands to yourself,” would have been a decent start. Handing her something to hold onto carefully would have been better.

She could be told quite simply and clearly to stop. She could be told to put her hands in her pockets or behind her back. She could be asked to hold her

mother's hand or purse or the keys. Failing that, her mother could distract the child entirely by engaging her in conversation.

I have seen this behavior pattern time and time again, and it never fails to amuse me. It also frustrates me. The remedy to the situation is always so simple, and would make running errands just a little easier for both parent and child, but there is a taboo in society about making child-rearing suggestions to strangers. Instead, I had to write a book. My hope is that you will invite me into your living room in the form of this book, and that you will find my observations and suggestions helpful.

Doubting the validity of my theory that using "don't" in a set of instructions will have the opposite of the desired effect, a friend of mine put it to the test while we were on the phone. Her 10-year-old son had been quietly playing with his Hot Wheels while we talked. He had been driving them on and around the couch as one of their cats slept soundly and undisturbed on the ottoman.

Engrossed in the game, the boy had been ignoring both his mother and the cat.

I heard my friend say to him, "Looks like you're having fun, but don't drive your cars on the cat." She then pretended to turn away, and sure enough, he glanced up to see if she was watching and immediately drove his car up the ottoman and over the cat.

This is a considerate child who rarely disobeys his parents. He was unable to resist what he heard as a suggestion to drive his cars over the cat. Later, he asked his mother why she had thought of such a thing. Why drive a car over a sleeping cat?

My wife and I can predict with frightening accuracy just how quickly a child who has been told (k)not to spill something will make a mess, while a child who is told to be careful will do just that. The child who makes a mess will generally burst into tears or otherwise show remorse; they had no intention of spilling, they just did what they thought they heard they were told to do.

Adults cause confusion with "don't" on a regular basis, even when talking to themselves. Have you ever said to yourself, "don't forget the keys," only to have to run back for those keys later because you forgot them? That's because in effect what you were telling yourself was "forget the keys." Next time, try saying to yourself, "Remember the keys."

I have another friend who makes sure she takes a moment to deliberately tell herself, "Remember that" every time she sets down her cell-phone to wash her hands in a public restroom because she grew tired of leaving it behind.

“Don’t” is an insidious little word that shows up everywhere lately, especially in catchy advertising and public service announcement slogans.

But there is a reason Nancy Reagan’s anti-drug use campaign slogan was “Just Say No” instead of “Don’t Do Drugs.” Think about it for a minute. “Just Say No” is a positive command, clear and uncluttered. It gives you something to do. “Don’t Do Drugs” registers as an idea to do drugs.

“Don’t speed” is just as bad, as are “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk.” How about, “Friends Get Friends Home Safely?” I have included a long list of some of the most common ways we use and ignore “don’t” at the back of this book. I have also included some alternate phrases to get you started. You will have fun coming up with your own once you get used to it.

The words we tie up with (k)nots are what I call disempowering words. As you continue to replace them with alternatives, you will find the process of selective word choice to be empowering.

“Will” and “would” are empowering words. They imply intention. When you intend, you open the world up to possibilities, especially when those intentions are good. But when those words become “won’t” and “wouldn’t” they confuse, undermine, or even try to reverse your intentions. When you set your sentence up to use a “won’t” or a “wouldn’t,” you set it up to support a negative inversion of an intention. Remove the (k)not in that intention – because that’s what the brain of the listener will do – and your negative inversion becomes a positive.

For example, say you have just done something that has caused you pain like hitting your head on the low ceiling as you descend a set of stairs. Your intention is to avoid repeating the experience the next time you go down to the basement. When you say to yourself, “I won’t do that again,” you are setting yourself up for another nasty knock on the head. Why? Because you have set up your sentence like this: “I will (negative inversion of what I want) do that again” but your brain registers “I will do that again.”

If you would like to change your behavior and spare your head, give yourself clear instructions that your brain will glom onto. Tell yourself, “I will duck next time” or “this is where I will duck my head” while looking at or picturing the offending ceiling edge, and see what happens.

If you tell yourself “I won’t let my guests hit their heads,” guess what? You will forget to mention it. Instead, tell yourself “I will warn my guests about this” and you will remember to.

I find it interesting that people in positions of authority often choose disempowering words and a lot of (k)nots to try to motivate others, and then wonder why no one steps up to the plate for them.

It's approaching the end of the month. Your sales team is responsible for meeting a group quota on top of their individual quotas. The team earns a reward if they exceed the team quota, and every salesperson is entitled to a bonus for every sale above their individual quota. For some members of your team, it could cost them their job to fall short.

You're sitting at the head of the conference table, looking at your team, proud of their hard work, but fully aware that it's going to take a lot more hard work and some overtime just to meet the team quota. The last thing you want is to lose any of your salespeople. Even if you liked them less than you do, finding and training replacements puts a strain on the rest of the team, making it that much harder to meet next month's quota.

They're starting to sag. They're discouraged, tired of being in the current month, and beginning to doubt if all their effort was worth it. You know you have to get them fired up. You have to inspire each person to go out and work that little bit harder and make those sales for the benefit of everyone on the team. This is where your word choice can make or break your chances for making quota.

Let's look at some of the possibilities, all of which I've heard more than once during my career in sales. I follow each one with the translation of what your team actually hears.

"C'mon guys, you won't make quota with this attitude."

Well, that's just whiny, and it sounds like "C'mon guys, you will make quota with this attitude." That's a mixed message. Your tone of voice says it's a bad thing, yet you're reinforcing the present attitude.

"Don't forget you won't get your bonus if you don't make quota."

Whoa! That's three (k)nots right there that your team has to untie. What they hear is "Forget you will get your bonus if you make quota."

You could try, "Remember you won't get your bonus if you don't make quota," and then they'll hear "Remember you will get your bonus if you make quota." But what's the point of sucking the energy out of your imperative with all those cumbersome (k)nots? If you want them to remember they will get their bonus when they make quota, just say it. All those (k)nots are weighing you down and slowing them down.

“Don’t slack off now, we’re almost there.”

I hear this sort of thing all the time, but I ask you, why on Earth would you try to motivate someone by telling them what (k)not to do? Now slacking off is stuck in their heads and you have a problem. Either they’ll go out there and slack off, or they’ll stew in resentment because you implied they would do such a thing after all their hard work.

“John and Sue, you have not hit your quotas for two months in a row. You won’t have a job unless you make this month’s quota.”

Fear has been used as a motivator since the dawn of time, but I find that positive reinforcement is a much more productive and powerful way to inspire someone to achieve. What John and Sue hear is, “You have hit your quotas for two months in a row. You will have a job unless you make this month’s quota.”

How about:

“We’re right there, guys. Just a few more days like you’ve been putting in, and that quota is history! Hello bonus! Keep going out there, keep working your magic, and we will have this one locked in, easy. If anyone can do it, it’s the people on this team. John and Sue, you’re a little behind but we’re going to get you there. Who’s got ideas? Let’s hear them, round the table right now.”

In this situation, you have decided to use words that reinforce to the team that you believe in them. By choosing to start with “we,” you have put yourself in the bullpen with them. You have made it clear that you have confidence in their ability to achieve their goal, and that doing so is something to celebrate. You have reminded them that they have to keep working hard, but their skills are enough to make it happen. You have made it sound inspiring. By reminding the people in the room that they are a team, you have united them to work toward the goal as one unit. You have also made it the team’s responsibility – and a fun challenge – to find a way to help the faltering John and Sue.

Where there’s a will, there’s a way. The opposite is true: Where there’s a “won’t” there’s no way.

It never fails. When I sit in on a meeting, no matter what the subject, if the people in the room are upbeat, positive, carefully constructing their message to be (k)not-free, identify themselves as a team, and are ready to take the world by storm, I get jazzed. I love witnessing how inspiring language can be, and how it can turn a seemingly insurmountable challenge into an achievable goal.

The word “wouldn’t” can be so confusing that I’d be surprised if most people realize it means “would not.”



“Wouldn’t you like some ice cream?” What kind of question is that? If you say yes, it means you have no desire for ice cream. If you do want ice cream, the correct response is no. I’ll show you what I mean: “Wouldn’t you like some ice cream?” breaks down to “would not you like some ice cream?” which is a weird way to say “would you not like some ice cream?” Well, if you say “Yes,” you are saying, “Yes, I would not like some ice cream.”

“Would you like some ice cream?”

“Yes, I would like some ice cream.”

Boy, that was so much easier. If you’re going to offer me some ice cream, please be as clear as possible. I like chocolate sauce and sprinkles; leave off the (k)nots.

“That confusion wouldn’t have happened if you had been listening, Bob,” you might say.

My brain would hear, “That confusion would have happened if you had been listening, Bob.” And then I would be practically speechless with confusion.

Replace what you say when you’re being lazy with deliberate diction. Choose the words you use carefully. Pay attention. Say what you mean without inverting a perfectly clear sentence because you think it’s easier just to throw in a (k)not.

It will take some practice, but you will find it an empowering tool right away. I love to get feedback from friends and clients who have just started to drop their (k)nots and replace them with words that are better suited for delivering a clear, constructive, powerful message.

The word “can’t” is a real problem. Any number of successful coaches will tell you that they refuse to let their athletes think, let alone say out loud the words “I can’t.” They understand how destructive and discouraging “I can’t” and “I cannot” are. They’re on the right track, but there’s more to it.

“Can’t” is a double-whammy. Used passively, it’s as confusing as the other (k)nots. “I can’t understand” sounds like “I can understand.”

While the word “can” implies ability, the word “can’t” in our society also implies refusal; refusal to try, refusal to accommodate, refusal to take part.

“I can’t do it.”

“I can’t help you.”

“I can’t be persuaded.”

Each of these statements is interpreted one of two ways:

“I can,” which is confusing.

“I can,” but I refuse to, which is irritating.

Just a few extra, better words will make a huge difference when you need to express your inability to do something without confusing or offending another person.

“I have yet to figure out how to do that.”

“I would like to help you, but I am unable to. However, I will find someone who can.”

“I have spent a lot of time researching this topic, and my opinions are firm.”

Choosing to speak this way leaves no room for doubt. It is empowering for you because there is no room for misinterpretation, and it is empowering for the other person because it replaces the dismissive “can’t” with information. This is a concept I call respectful elegance, and it is a mode of communication that you will develop with increasing proficiency as you continue to practice and invent ways to avoid using, “Not and The Hit List Six.”

Next on the hit list is the word “couldn’t.” It, too, implies ability. When tied with a (k)not it becomes confusing and irritating.

When someone who is trying to be helpful says, “I couldn’t find it,” and you find that it irritates you, it’s because it sounds like they were saying “I could find it (if I tried).” But since they have returned empty-handed, your subconscious concludes that they gave up too soon or failed to try hard enough.

How often do you end up going to find something yourself after you have been told “I couldn’t find it”? It’s an interesting phenomenon. Instead of registering that the object was looked for, un-found and must be somewhere else, you register that the object was looked for, but inadequately.

The same applies to “I couldn’t fix it.” The overriding impulse upon hearing that phrase is the one that drives you to try fixing whatever it is yourself – even if it involves pipes and you have no plumbing experience. After all, you were just told “I could fix it (if I wanted to)” so it must be fixable.

The word “shouldn’t” is a loaded gun. “Should” itself is one of my least favorite words. It carries the weight of judgment, of what someone thinks ought to happen or what ought to have happened “if only” things were different. Well, guess what? Things are just things, and there’s no use worrying or picking at the “if only’s” in life.

“Should” traps people in disappointment and bitterness. Whether your brain hears “should not” or “should,” this word is an enemy of clear thinking and clear speaking. It has little to do with intention; it has everything to do with projecting your judgment onto someone else.

Think about it. Here are some examples to help:

“You shouldn’t have done that.”

“You should know better.”

“I shouldn’t expect too much.”

Do yourself a favor and just kick all the “shoulds” out of your language. In fact, kick it out of your thinking and your life. You will be happier. Notice I said “will” instead of “should.” I have been doing this for a long time. I know of which I speak.

As you begin to untie each of the (k)nots on the hit list, you may falter at first, and feel like you’re forcing an odd issue. Stick with it; it’s worth it.

At first, you will search around in your head for a word to fill in the blank that’s left behind when you erase the offending word. You will start leaning on a set of words, throwing them into a sentence because they create the same meaning that the original word did.

Then, you will search around in your head for a different way to construct the sentence, reverting back to a clear, straightforward statement from the inverted one that was tied up in (k)nots.

Soon, these clear statements will be second nature, and it will be time for the next level of interacting with the components, including people, of your life.

As you build your awareness and develop a new way of communicating with the world around you – and yourself – you will start to notice transformations in the way you react to situations professionally and emotionally. Everything will get better. You will see it as clearly as you speak it.

There are several levels of communication and experience in this book. Untying the (k)nots is the first step on a road that will lead you to discovering the role that word choice plays in creating a truly enriched and enriching life.

To build a solid structure, we start at the foundation. *There is power in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> You know why? Because this skill will lead you to a place where you can bring the experiences you crave into your life, and reshape your paradigm into exactly what you desire.

The most empowering lesson in this entire book is that you already have everything you need within you. Now it's time to learn how to use your tools to change your life.

## *Bob-ism #1*

A “Bob-ism” is a bolt of articulation proofing you can use to remind yourself of the exciting journey you are experiencing. I remind myself of this “stuff” on a daily, and sometimes moment-to-moment, basis.

*There is Power in the Clarity of your Articulation.<sup>TM</sup>*









# CHAPTER 2

## LEARNING HOW YOU LEARN: PROCESS OF EDUCATION AND RE-EDUCATION (WITH THANKS TO DR. MAULTSBY)

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Before we go any further, I want to walk you through the learning process you're going through. You're being given a whole new set of tools, and you're going to be shown how to develop the skill sets required for using them.

These tools will take your communication skills to a whole new level, and enhance every relationship you have, including the one with yourself. It's surprisingly simple, and yet it's going to change your life. But to make the dramatic shifts that will change your life, you must go through a re-education process.

We all go through an education process when we learn a new skill and a re-education process when we shift an existing paradigm. The process is actually very exciting, especially when you are able to identify the stage you're in and recognize its value; it's important to understand the process so you can enjoy it.

Awareness is going to be the key to your success with "Remember the Ice." You picked up this book because you're curious, and you wanted to see if there really is anything to this idea that *there is power in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> You probably asked yourself, "Will this work for me like it has for so many others? Will the tools in this book really change my life?" Well, that's up to you.

I have been living, teaching and practicing the concepts in this book for 40 years. I learned the bulk of the theories and revelations about Rational Emotive-Therapy, Rational Behavior Therapy, Cognitive-Emotive Dissonance, Neuro-Lin-

guistic Programming and Neuro-Associative Conditioning systems at the feet of the psychologists and trainers who developed them.

My mentor, Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby, Jr., director of the Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic at the University of Kentucky's medical school, (1975) is the one who taught me to understand and embrace the concept of Cognitive-Emotive Dissonance. I am grateful for his mentorship and training.

I have seen enough to know that for this information to fail you; you must choose to disregard it. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but the ability to consider and then choose to reject something is a concept in this program.

My passion has always been about the role word choice plays in the effective application of all those theories; hence the fact that word choice is at the center of everything in this book.

Playing with the (k)nots in your language and figuring out how to untie them is the best way to begin. The focus required serves several purposes. While you are learning to eliminate confusion from your rhetoric, you're learning to choose words that create clarity. You are also learning how and why some words are disempowering, and how to replace them with words and phrases that are empowering instead. It's also a fun way to introduce you to the processes of education and re-education so that you can take the information laid out in later chapters and just run with it.

You are in control of how much you consider each concept, how frequently you use the tools, and how quickly you master the skills involved. There have already been and will always be learning experiences in your life that by their very definition require the process of education. Since you've been there countless times already, what is there to fear?

In a nutshell, the process of education includes intellectual insight, practice, and emotional insight, which all bring you to personality trait formation. Intellectual insight is a fancy way of saying that you understand the theory behind what you want to learn. Practice is the actual hands-on, or thoughts-on, manipulation of your new tool. Emotional insight comes when fumbling with the tool transitions to feeling comfortable with a new skill. Mastery of the skill, or being able to do it automatically, as if you have been doing it for years, is what we call personality trait formation.

Think about learning to drive a car. When I was a teenager I was thrilled, excited, nervous, and a whole set of similar emotions every time I thought about finally learning to drive a car. I made plans in my head like any kid my age, imagining all the places I'd drive to, who I'd take with me, and where I'd take my dates on Friday nights. Learning to drive meant one thing: Independence.

I knew that being able to drive was destined to change my life, and it was something I desired more than just about anything else in the history of my existence. But the desire to drive is a long way from actually driving, and, like everyone else, I had to go through the process of education before I could greet that life-changing destiny.

So I signed up for and attended the drivers' education classes in my community. Dutifully, I paid attention in class, took notes, read pamphlets and rule books, studying the theory of driving so that when I got behind the wheel of a car I would know what to do. I will never forget the movies they showed us – loaded with blood and gore – that were designed to scare us into obeying the traffic rules, just in case we needed extra incentive.

At the end of the class, I took the written test to prove I had gained the intellectual insight necessary to drive a car.

And then the glorious day came for me put the theories into practice. I slid behind the wheel of my father's car, heart pounding and hand shaking just a bit. I took about 10 full minutes checking gears, gauges, mirrors, seat belts, gears, gauges, mirrors, seat belts, over and over.

When I finally felt ready, I let out the clutch and started down the drive. As I maneuvered through the streets around my home, I was hyper-aware of everything going on around me. All of my senses were heightened, and my conscious thoughts were focused on what was going on inside the car, outside the car, right in front of the car, behind the car, across the field to the left of the car ... I took "paying attention" to a whole new level.

With each succeeding drive after that first one, I became more and more comfortable and relaxed considerably. The more I practiced driving, the more confident I became.

I think we can all admit that after enough years of driving, some of it becomes automatic, left to our subconscious mind to carry us through the motions. Instead of consciously reminding ourselves to check the rearview mirror every five to eight seconds, we glance over there automatically.

The act of driving and its components have become personality traits. All that practice formed habits that are now traits.

If you have had the same commute for long enough, you probably spend lengths of your drive almost on autopilot. Have you ever parked your car at work, only to wonder how you got there?

Now, have you ever wrapped up a conversation or given a presentation, only to wonder what happened between the time you opened your mouth and the time you closed it?

You have already learned how to communicate well enough to get you to where you are. Whether you are successful or struggling at work, at school, at home, or in your relationships, you are where you are because your communication skills have landed you there. Your current paradigm has everything to do with how you communicate, and here's the really interesting part: How you communicate has everything to do with how you think.

You may be an intern or a CEO, single or divorced, an artist or a scientist; regardless of your situation, your communications skills either open doors for you or close them.

Applying the tools in this book will change your life because *there is power, real power, in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> Learning how to do it is easy, but it will take awareness and practice.

The key to success with this program is being aware of your message before you speak. The more you practice, the more automatic it will become. Because we have been programmed to speak without weighing our options and considering the best way to deliver a message clearly, some of these tools will feel weird at first – but that's how you know it is working.

Every time you learn something new, you go through the process of education. When you decide to shift your paradigm, you go through the process of re-education.

Let's go back to the example of learning to drive a car. Fast forward a few years to a point where I have been driving for a while. I am a young man, finishing my senior year in college, and I have decided to travel before diving into graduate school.

I found myself in London, staying at a hostel with other youths. A couple of young women expressed a desire to rent a car and drive out to the country for the day, but they were wary of driving on the other side of the road. Having the confidence young men have in their ability to master anything in the universe (except perhaps women), I volunteered to be their driver.

When I slid behind the wheel for the first time in a foreign country, it was like being in my father's driveway for the first time all over again. My intellectual insight on this day came down to the fact that I knew that everything was on the opposite side; all the mechanisms in the car were on the opposite side, all the street signs were on the opposite side, and all the traffic I had to pay attention

to was on the other side. And there was a pretty girl next to me. I identified what I wanted to learn as new behavior, what I had to pay attention to in order to adapt to driving on the other side of the road. I knew the theory of everything I would have to do to swap over and drive safely.

The process of re-education has a couple of additional components that make it what it is. They're called converting practice and cognitive-emotive dissonance, and you will want to pay attention to them, because they explain why you feel what you feel when you shift your paradigm.

In this example, my converting practice was realizing that I had to change my behavior to accomplish my goal. I knew that if I continued to behave as though I was in the U.S., I would have major challenges; therefore, I had to practice something different, namely looking for the middle line over my right shoulder instead of my left.

Once again, I was hyper-aware of my surroundings as I pulled away from the curb. In the process of reminding myself over and over to check for that line over my right shoulder, make sharp left turns and wide right turns, and all the other things to remember I was experiencing some degree of cognitive-emotive dissonance. Doing something you're used to in a different way makes you feel weird. That hyper-awareness, anxiety and discomfort is cognitive-emotive dissonance.

To put it another way, it's the unfamiliar in what should be familiar. It's the tug-of-war you experience when you are doing something new and unfamiliar, like driving on the other side of the road, even though it is actually related to a previously familiar behavior, like driving a car.

The first several times you replace the (k)nots in your sentences will feel this way. You have already practiced speaking one way your entire life. Now you are being asked to flip it. You are going to speak, which is familiar, but you are going to do so without any (k)nots, which is the unfamiliar part. Your experience with cognitive-emotive dissonance will occur as you continuously "look over your right shoulder" for words that replace those (k)nots while still achieving the goal of communicating.

The process of re-education also includes developing new emotional insight. That will only come about when you have gone through the cognitive-emotive dissonance. If I had stayed in London and done a lot more driving, I would have developed new emotional insight about it. Untying (k)nots in your speech will become automatic; they will no longer even try to show up, and there you have your new personality trait: Clarity in your articulation. And remember, that's where the power is.

You must go through cognitive-emotive dissonance every time you shift your paradigm about a familiar behavior. A paradigm shift is nothing more than having a new interpretation of a familiar event or experience -- experiencing the experience and realizing that you now think differently about it.

I repeat: Eliminating or untying the (k)nots in your vocabulary will feel strange at first. You may even feel like an alien watching your own conversations, as if you were standing a little apart from everyone else, observing.

That's because you will be elevating yourself to a slightly higher plane of awareness. Most of our conversations are a combination of active or passive conversation and passive observation. Alert to (k)nots, you will be combining active conversation with active observation. It takes more energy at first.

Untying your (k)nots before they appear heightens awareness automatically. It also speeds up your thought processes, because even as you are engrossed in conversation, you have to be one step ahead of yourself. First, you have to catch the (k)not before it flies out of your mouth. Then you have to untie the sentence it tried to slip itself into – before that comes out, too. And then you have to reformulate your message to say what you meant without using the (k)not. All this has to occur in an instant, all while listening to everyone else's words at the same time and deciding how to respond.

It seems complicated, but before you know it, you will feel normal and natural. Once you go through the process of re-education, it will become a personality trait that is as automatic as tying your speech up in those (k)nots used to be.

It helps to have some easy replacements on hand that cover a lot of territory until you can think on your feet with greater comfort.

"Fail to" is a good temporary fix-it, as is "unable to." Replace "I don't understand" to "I fail to understand." Replace "I can't make it today" with "I am unable to make it today."

Later, "I fail to understand" will evolve to something more like "Could you please explain that another way?" or "I seem to be missing a key piece of information. Here is what I know; can you identify what I am misunderstanding?"

Can you see the evolution of speech, thought, and message?

"I am unable to reach" may become, "Could you please help me with this?" or "Could you please push that a little closer so that I can work with it more safely?"

With each evolution of speech, your message actually becomes clearer and more complete.

The key to success with this program is being aware of your message before you speak. The more you practice, the more automatic it will become.

The process of re-education is actually very exciting, especially when you recognize you're in the middle of it. It begins with intellectual insight and takes you through converting practice, cognitive-emotive dissonance, emotional insight and on into personality trait formation.

Cognitive-Emotive Dissonance is the fun part. On that day in London, I achieved several goals. I developed the ability and confidence to drive anywhere in the world, regardless of which side of the road I find myself on. I found my way to a beautiful area of the English countryside that I would have missed had I lacked the courage to try something new. And possibly best of all, I had a wonderful day with two pretty girls who thought I was their hero.

When I hear about some of the adventures people have because they recognized that fear for what it was and chose to embrace it rather than back away from it, it makes me want to go out and yell about it from the top of Denali. It is truly exciting to see people try new ways of looking at the opportunities that come their way, and just go for it.

I have seen people who were once so tied up in their (k)nots and self-doubt that they could barely make eye contact with a stranger suddenly take flight after using these tools. They evolve to conduct meetings, deliver speeches, and even elicit participation from large crowds of people at huge events, and do it all with complete confidence and joy.

It is nothing short of thrilling to see the power of word choice in action.

Your goal is to improve your communication skills. Embrace and enjoy the process of re-education that will have to occur in order to make it happen. Once you understand and embrace this precept, the way will be clear for you to advance by leaps and bounds.

But what if you're already an accomplished speaker, a great conversationalist, or an excellent writer? Even if you can honestly say that every message you put forward is received with complete understanding and enthusiasm, I think you will find some fairly revolutionary ideas within these pages, all of which will add a new dimension of enjoyment to your self-expression.

Consider how often you communicate in a single day. Whether you indicate with a friendly gesture for another driver to merge in front of you, text a quick message to a friend, hold a conversation in the break room or give a two-hour presentation to a building full of business professionals, the way you choose to deliver your message is extremely important.

Do you need to go back to school, haul out textbooks and study grammar all over again? No. But you will have to learn how to pay attention to what you say, and how to choose the best words to support your message. You may find yourself inspired to look for words that better suit what you're saying, and you may find yourself dusting off a dictionary or thesaurus, but there is no prerequisite word study needed to use these tools effectively to ramp up your proficiency.

As long as your message is clear, and the words are appropriate to your meaning, even a basic vocabulary will do. I have to warn you, though; words become a whole lot more interesting when you begin to really think about how you use them, and you might develop a passion for wordplay – or at least find them more fun to work with.

The beauty of this program is that anyone, with any vocabulary, can begin to use these tools and improve their skills immediately. It begins with understanding why it is necessary to untie all those (k)nots and just get rid of them. They only breed confusion and tend to be very disempowering, to you and to your audience.

There are a lot of disempowering words out there, and just as many ways to turn empowering words upside down so that their effect is disempowering. In the next chapter, I'm going to identify some of the most common culprits. They are so common that often people just let them go by, uninterrupted, because they fail to recognize how damaging they are. "Should" is one of those words, as are its "absolute" best friends.

You can choose to tackle one (k)not or one word at a time, or a group of them, or all the bad guys at once. It's up to you and how quickly you want to enhance your business and personal relationships, and how soon you'd like to enrich your life. Whatever you decide, you must remember that there is learning curve, and climbing it requires practice.

When you understand the process or re-education and begin to recognize the signs in your own experiences, you will be able to take great pleasure in learning. Be on the lookout for the uneasiness of cognitive-emotive dissonance as you practice your new skills. That's when you'll know they're working.



## *Bob-ism #2*

*There is Power in the Physiology of your Articulation.*







# CHAPTER 3

## EMPOWERING VS. DISEMPOWERING WORD CHOICE

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### DUMP THE SHOULD AND ABSOLUTES

The essence of communication is in the passing back and forth of information. Its basic purpose is to communicate your needs and desires, and ultimately get you what you want. Effective communication has the capacity to meet all your needs and desires. However, more attention needs to be made to the fact that the opposite is also true: Ineffective communication can and will prevent you from getting what you need and want.

Technically speaking, articulation refers to the adjustments and movements of your speech organs, specifically the ones that are used to produce or pronounce any speech sound. The art in articulating is simply making those sounds work together to make sense in your communication so that you can get what you need and accomplish your goals.

Articulating also refers to uttering sounds clearly in distinct syllables, using language easily and fluently; having facility with words. When a person is able to articulate, they are able to express, formulate or present with clarity and effectiveness. An articulate thought is one that is made clear, distinct, and precise in relation to what else is being said.

When I say “*There is Power in the Clarity of your Articulation™*” I am referring of course to the immediate effectiveness of being understood. But once again, that is just the beginning.

Your word choice has the power to persuade others to your point of view. What you articulate has the power to enlighten, enrich and inspire. It also has the power to demoralize, undermine and destroy. Those choices are disempowering and benefit no one, even you. Often the choices we make are automatic and unconscious, void of intention, either to lift up or tear down; they're just sloppy words like those (k)nots we talked about before that confuse your message.

If you doubt the fundamental importance of good communication, consider how it feels when you fail to make your point. Diminished, foolish, frustrated, angry, and embarrassed are a few common experiences among those of us who have struggled from time to time with trying and failing to say what we mean in a way that others "get." They all derive from a feeling of powerlessness.

Now consider how it feels when you complete a conversation with someone who has understood every word you said and was fully tuned in to all of the ideas you expressed.

Extreme frustration is the least of your problems when your thoughts and views are misunderstood or misinterpreted. Have you ever felt like you appear to be a complete fool or idiot to others because you just are unable to make them understand what you are trying to say? Or you have somehow confused yourself and everyone else in the room?

One of the basic goals of communication is to get what you want. There is nothing wrong with going after what you want, as long as you stay on the healthy side of normal greed and selfishness and avoid developing excessive behaviors for either. As an infant, you made noises to communicate your need for food or sleep. There was nothing confusing or self-conscious about your message. Loudly and clearly, you insisted "I want it, and I want it now."

Any tool that makes you a better communicator enables you to ask specifically for what you want and receive it. This in turn strengthens your confidence and boosts your self-esteem. You begin to recognize the potential for positive, productive outcomes in everything you do. I call that empowering.

Likewise, any words that muddle your message actually steal personal power from you. They are incapable of motivating, inspiring or uplifting; in fact, they weaken your confidence, chip away at your self-esteem and set you up to look for failure or disappointment from challenges before you even try to look for solutions. That is what I call disempowering. My "Not and the Hit List of Six" includes some of the worst culprits, especially "shouldn't."

Having begun to untie the (k)nots in your articulation, you will have already noticed the way you're almost forced to rephrase your messages constructively. That carefully considered construction has empowering results. You're already thinking about what you're saying, and you have just begun.

As with the other (k)nots, the easiest way to eliminate “shouldn’t” from your vocabulary is to reconstruct your sentences around its root word, “should.” However, unlike the root words in the other (k)not combinations, it’s important to take a good hard look at “should” so you can see it for what it is and dump it, too.

Yes, I said dump it. Dump the word “should” from your vocabulary, your dictionary, your thoughts and your feelings. It is one of the most disempowering words in existence. It actually represents a concept. You may think that “should” is a word of hope, but in my book it’s a word of bitter disappointments and harsh judgments.

Should is about wishful thinking. Should is about forcing your expectations onto a person or situation, and setting yourself up for bitter disappointment – or yet another excuse to be disappointed. Should is self-righteous, and has very little to do with reality. Anything that is other than what “should be” infers failure to live up to the “should’s” standards.

There is only one truth for “should.” It’s called the Scientific Should and it goes a little something like this: Everything in your life is exactly as it should be, because it is.

Take as long as you need to think that through.

There’s no point in saying “should,” especially in the past tense. In the past tense it’s a rebuke: “You should have done that differently” or worse, “you shouldn’t have done that.” There’s no way to go back in time to do anything differently, so to say it should have been differently is to harp on a problem that has no solution that can be worked out in the present. The fact is that what should have happened did happen. Nothing else could have been “the should”, otherwise, it would have happened instead.

Therefore, telling yourself or another person that events should have gone differently is disempowering and abusive.

Here’s the confusion that creates the problem: Instead of saying “I would like things to be different,” people say “things should be different.” Those are two very different messages. One is honest and admits that it’s one person’s desire. The other is judgmental and accusatory.

What is the appropriate response to a person who says, “You shouldn’t have done that”? What do you expect from another person when you say it to them? There’s only so much anyone can say, and that’s limited to “I’m sorry” and perhaps a list of explanations.

For example, let's say your son got caught up skateboarding with friends after school, and by the time he got home it was too late to do both his chores and his homework. You have a choice. You can reprimand him, make him feel ashamed and remorseful, and try to bully him into doing things differently next time. Or, you can remind him that he is an important part of the family, that his chores represent teamwork, and inspire him to do his chores.

Before you speak, you have to examine what you really want to say and really think about what you want to have happen as a result of your words.

"Why did you do that!?" you could say, even though you know the answer. He is, after all, a boy who likes skateboarding with his friends. "You should have come home first and done your chores and your homework before going back out. You should have come home earlier. You know the rules. You should think first next time. You're grounded."

Well, that's one way to put it, and at least you're expressing your anger. But if you want a change of behavior, drop the "shoulds" and try again.

"Listen, I know how fun it is to skateboard with your friends. Please remember that you're part of this family and we need your help to get things done. We all have chores, and we are each responsible for getting them done. You are no exception. You also have homework to do. I understand that you are tired now, but you are still responsible for getting both done before bed. Next time, come home earlier. If you make this choice again, we will change our agreement and you will be required to come home to do your chores and homework before you do anything with your friends."

In this example, you acknowledge that skateboarding is an activity he likes and that it's OK with you. Then you remind him that he's an important part of the team at home. You make it clear that he still has to do what is expected of him regardless of how tired his choice made him. Knowing that he'll be held accountable will help him choose an appropriate time to come home, which strengthens his sense of independence and responsibility. Then, you offer sound advice and follow up with consequences based on logic.

It takes more time and more thought to present your message the second way. However, it demonstrates respect for both people, which will echo in thoughts, words and actions. It also teaches and encourages maturity, accountability, independence and responsibility.

Letting another person know that you want them to make different choices is less about punishment and more about wanting them to make different choices, so why focus on punishing them with constant reminders of what you think they should have done?



The implied need for explanation puts one person on the defensive, making them feel like they are required to compose a string of excuses, reasons and justifications, which is a demeaning process. Having to explain your inability to live up to what someone else believes you should have done is the opposite of empowering, and it leaves you feeling either very small and like a failure, or angry and resentful and unsure why you're so resentful.

I saw this time and time again in my practice, and have witnessed it continuously since. I work very hard to keep the crass and obscene out of my messages, but it is appropriate and necessary to describe this disempowering phenomenon as "Shoulding all over the place." People do it seemingly "all the time."

They fill their lives and their relationships with their "shouldy" opinions, and then wonder why they experience so many disappointments in life, and why everyone around them lets them down.

Here's the tricky part: There are many, many ways to play "the should" game without actually using the word "should." I'll give you a handful of examples. The first two came up with mind-boggling frequency in marriage counseling sessions.

"If you loved me, you would buy me flowers every Friday."

"If you cared about our marriage, I would never have to see piles of dirty laundry."

"If you really wanted to make me believe you were a hard worker and wanted to keep your job, you would work overtime without pay."

These are unreasonable demands that present the person speaking as the victim of disappointment while the person whose feelings they're actually abusing is made to feel like a heel or a failure. Learn to recognize when someone is trying to should on you, and put a stop to it with some good, clear word choice.

"You know I love flowers," Daphne said accusingly to her husband, "If you loved me you, would buy me flowers every week."

Daphne's husband had a choice. He could respond with excuses or reasons for failing to buy her the flowers she had always wanted, and make a promise to begin the habit right away. This choice would really strip him of choice; if he ever forgets to buy flowers he'd be back to being the failure, who is unable to love his wife or refuses to show his love. It would also lock him into the obligation of expressing his feelings according to her beliefs, and rob him of the right to express his feelings his way.

His second choice, and the only way to handle the situation, was to refuse to dignify her accusation by jumping to his own defense. Instead, after exploring the subject, we came up with a truthful response that rejected her “should” but also respected her needs and his.

Daphne’s husband said calmly, “I do know you love flowers. I love you, and I love to see the way your face lights up when I surprise you with a bouquet. That surprise is part of my gift to you and to myself. To me, buying you flowers every week would take the surprise and the romance out of it. I will continue to give you flowers when I am inspired to buy them. When I do, it will be to express how much I love you even on the days when I come home empty-handed. I still love you just as much when I have no flowers with me.”

Daphne was satisfied. It occurred to her that his way of showing his love was much better than doing things according to her schedule. His words enabled her to see the gift of flowers differently, and she was able to shift her paradigm from feeling neglected to understanding she was actually adored.

The accusation that demonstrations of love are somehow tied into housework has caused a lot of pain and frustration in many, many marriages. Life is full of activities, unexpected visitors, errands and other curve balls. Throw children and their needs, toys, school events, sporting events and random spillages into the mix, and you have full plates for everyone in the house.

To put pressure on one person to prove their love by making sure the laundry is always done, or there are no dishes in the sink, the car always has gas in it, the lawn is always groomed or the house is always spotless is extremely unfair and selfish. In reality, maintaining perfection in a family home is an impossible goal.

Equating love with the ability to meet unreasonable expectations sets the other person up to believe they are failing you, your marriage and their own role as your spouse the first time they are unable to manage everything at once and see the disappointment or accusation in your face when you notice the dirty dishes or pile of laundry.

And yet, people do this to each other time and time again.

When Miranda’s husband, Jerry, said to her, “If you cared about our marriage, I would never have to see piles of dirty laundry,” she took a minute to breathe, let her initial anger response subside and considered carefully first what kind of result she wanted at the end of the session, and second how to choose the words to help get them there.

She recognized that Jerry was really saying, “You should bend over backward to make sure I’m never inconvenienced by my own dirty laundry to prove you love me. If I have to see my dirty laundry, you are a failure as my wife.”

Can you imagine how disempowering and deflating it would be to hear something like this? Miranda was responsible for washing the family laundry. Jerry left it to her to keep up with his dirty clothes as well as hers and their two sons. She kept the family in clean clothes, taking the time and making the effort to wash, dry, fold and put away the endless loads of laundry day in and day out. And Jerry was trying to make her feel like she failed to care about the marriage because he had to look at the evidence that dirty clothes exist.

I was there to help Jerry figure out why he associated piles of dirty laundry with disrespect for marriage or a lack of love, and then help him shift his paradigm so that he could let go and look at it differently. Working together, we were eventually able to achieve that goal, but the immediate need in this session was for Miranda to reject the role of wrong-doer for her own empowerment.

“Jerry,” she said, “I love you. I care about our marriage. I confine the dirty clothes to the laundry room out of consideration for you, but if you are unhappy seeing the piles of dirty clothes when you go in there, I would be happy to discuss giving the responsibility to you, or you can choose to stay out of that room. I choose to support our marriage and show my love for you in different ways; in my mind chores have nothing to do with it.”

Miranda and Jerry had different ways of defining a healthy marriage, and the challenge was to find a solution to the situation that would enable both of them to feel loved, empowered, respected and appreciated. To get things going, it was essential for Miranda to refuse to play the “should” game with her husband; that would have only set her up for cycles of failure, guilt, and resentment, and that would get them nowhere.

As an aside, I’d like to point out that people who declare that their spouse lets them down because they fail to complete a task the way they “should” are impossible to please in their present paradigm.

If the spouse made that task the priority and did it perfectly each time, the complainer would choose another task to point out what “should” be done differently to please him. In other words, if Miranda had bought into his “should” and figured out how to keep the dirty laundry hidden, Jerry would have declared that by leaving dishes in the sink or yesterday’s newspaper on the table or the kids’ shoes in the entry way, Miranda was failing to care about their marriage.

The problem in situations like this is in the perspective of the complainer, and the only solution is for the complainer to re-examine his beliefs, modify his perspective and shift his paradigm.

Each of these stories is an example of emotional blackmail, but this final one, although appallingly common, is intended to make the employee feel guilty for refusing to comply with an illegal request.

“If you really wanted to make me believe you were a hard worker and wanted to keep your job, you would work overtime without pay.”

Have you been confronted with this big pile of should? Basically, the boss is saying, “You should want to work overtime without pay for me. Hard workers who want to keep their job sure do.”

This employer is in the wrong, and it is painfully obvious. I say painfully because having to choose between what is lawfully yours (overtime pay) and looking like a slacker and a troublemaker is painful.

The only appropriate response is to say truthfully, “I am a hard worker and a valuable employee. My work speaks for itself. If there is a need for overtime, and I am available, I will work those extra hours for overtime pay.”

You may want to start looking for a different job with an employer who respects his employees and is interested in paying what is fair and reasonable for the hours given him, overtime or otherwise.

Here comes the hard part. Now it's your turn to take a good, hard look at yourself and see if and when you play the “should” game with others. Do you “should” all over other people? Do you “should” all over yourself?

There is a truth out there that only those who have learned to forgive fully understand: It's important to forgive others for your own sake, because when you forgive the other person, you're the one who gets to experience all the peace and joy. You may find this difficult to believe, but when you stop “shoulding” all over the place, you're the one who gets to experience the empowerment and liberation that comes from being free from the pain and disappointment of struggling to reconcile what you think should have happened with what really did happen.

For all the disappointment and confusion created by the should-ers of the world, I believe the absolute worst words are the absolutes. Absolutes imply that what you're saying is absolutely true, which means there is never a moment or circumstance when it is untrue, or that the opposite is true. The absolutes include “never,” “always,” and the abundant variations that attach themselves to the word “every.”

“You never do your chores.”

“You always screw up.”

“You let me down every time.”

“Everyone leaves me.”

“Everybody else is doing it.”

They’re all designed to convince you that you’re the odd one out, the loser, the failure, the weirdo, the left-behind, and/or the unworthy.

Let’s examine these statements one at a time so that we can uncover the lie and bring it out into the light.

“You never do your chores,” means that a chore has yet to be done by this person. There has been no single occasion in the history of her existence that she did her chores, and there will be no time when she does them. Never is, after all, a complete blanket of time. Is that true?

Be accurate; it’s required when dealing with truth and reality. “You have neglected to do your chores three times this week” is a good enough reason to bring it to her attention and demand a change. Using “never” wipes out the times when she has done her chores. It will make her feel unappreciated and that there’s no point trying to please you.

Here’s an opportunity to inspire her instead by saying something like, “I remember because I noticed how nice it was to come home and cook dinner in a clean kitchen the days that you did do your chores. It makes a huge difference in my day and makes me feel happy and appreciated.”

“You always screw up,” means this person has failed at every single thing ever attempted. This person has yet to do something, anything right. The screwing up is unlimited; they screw up in all ways and always. Is that even possible? Are they truly incapable of tying their shoes, writing their name, opening a window, or using a fork?

If you would like them to pay attention and follow directions so that the task will be completed successfully, say the words “I would like you to pay attention and follow directions so that you can complete this task successfully.”

“You let me down every time,” means “you have failed to come through for me ever in our entire relationship.” Really? There has “never” been a time when this person came through for you, no single deadline they have met or door they held open or photocopy they made correctly? That’s a lot of letting down. If you mean “you let me down and it hurts my feelings,” or “you let me down a lot recently,” or “your work has become sloppy lately,” then say that.

The “every time” part of the statement eradicates any and all times this person actually did come through for you.

It’s the same story with “everyone leaves me.” If a few people have left you in the past, either by breaking off a relationship or quitting your employment, or dying, then it’s true of them, but only of them. There are other people around. Whoever is close enough to you to comfort you while you say this may end up with hurt feelings. What are they anyway, chopped liver?

As for “everybody else is doing it,” that’s an out-and-out lie unless you’re talking about breathing or another body function necessary to survival. This one is used by people who have no good way to persuade you to do what they want, so they pull out the “there’s something wrong with you if you refuse to do this, too” lie to get you to do what they want.

Even if your intentions are good – as in when you tell a lover that you adore everything about them – there’s a falseness to the statement; do you really adore everything about them, even when they’re tired and cranky, picking their teeth or extremely gassy?

These words are disempowering to both parties. Imagine the pain on both sides when one person in a 10-year marriage cries to the other, “You never loved me!”

It deepens and underscores the pain of the person making the accusation, and it discounts, rejects and discards the expressions of love the other person made in that 10-year period.

Absolutes are abusive. They are untrue and disrespectful. Use them as rarely as possible, and only if they are intended to truthfully define an absolute situation. “I would never drown a bag of kittens” may actually be true. Although, if it was a bag of rabid, flea-infested killer zombie kittens that feasted on human flesh, you may find yourself throwing it in the river to save your family. You just never know.

All fun aside, absolutes are used in sweeping statements to make a point at the expense of reality. And they are usually bad, especially since, as you are learning, your word choice has the power to persuade others to your point of view. What you articulate has the power to motivate and inspire, to enlighten and educate, and to enrich the lives of those around you. It also has the potential to shatter another’s self-confidence, undermine their efforts, and retard their progress.

Be alert to the fact that the words other people choose when they speak to you have the power to influence you, too, so stay alert. Listen carefully, sort out what's being said, weigh it against your beliefs and values, and choose for yourself whether to absorb or discard their words. Be especially alert around verbally negative or abusive people. Refuse to let their words affect you. I'll show you more about this skill in the chapters "ABC's of Emotion" and "Circling the Situation." For now, the most important lesson to learn is how to identify those disempowering words so that you can eliminate them from your language, and so that they will no longer have power over you when others aim them in your direction.

While you're at it, remove your negative self-talk. Stop being verbally abusive to yourself. It's an autogenic cycle of self-hate and the sooner you cut that cancer out of your experience, the sooner you can get on with a healthy life.

If you had a friend or loved one who was a cutter, you would do everything in your power to persuade her to seek the kind of help that would stop the behavior and heal her psyche. And if you witnessed a friend verbally abusing his child, calling him stupid and worthless and belittling him, would you stand by and condone it? Would you intentionally abuse your mother, your child or your best friend? Then why do you permit yourself to abuse you?

There is power in every word you say to yourself. Use that power for good instead of evil.

The need to communicate is driven by the need to be understood. The need to be understood emphasizes the need to walk through this world with a sense of personal power, and the ability to make things happen.

It's time to realize that people have no control over circumstances; they only have control over their interpretation of the circumstances. Oddly, accepting what exists in reality enables you to change your perspective, become more empowered, and focus on creating what comes next. It moves you into position to start creating what exists in reality.

Improving your word choice can free you from a lot of painful paradigms. Conversely, remaining at the same level or ignoring your word choice can keep you trapped in all your existing paradigms, be they pleasant or miserable.

Let's take a look at what happens when you have poor or lazy communication skills. You know you're employing disempowering word choices when you can relate to any of the following:

No one understands me  
No one supports my goals

No one cares about what I want  
 Everyone else is thoughtless  
 Everyone else is stupid  
 Making a sale is beyond me  
 My spouse has no idea how I feel about them  
 My spouse has no idea how to give me what I need  
 My spouse always lets me down  
 My coworkers misunderstand me  
 My employer fails to appreciate me  
 No one at the office realizes how hard I work  
 Other people take advantage of me  
 I'm hopeless  
 I'm powerless  
 I'm a victim  
 I'm a great coach; it's the team's fault we lose all the time  
 I'm a great coach and we win every game, so why is nobody having fun?  
 I can get people to do what I want, but it's always a fight and they never seem  
 happy about it.  
 I have to be a bully to get people to do what I want  
 My kids are out of control  
 My kids ignore me  
 My kids have no respect for me  
 People look confused when I try to explain something to them  
 My employees fail to get me what I need when I need it  
 None of my employees knows how to listen

These paradigms are all examples of what it feels like when your communication skills are in desperate need of a makeover. Do any of them look familiar?

Ultimately, it all boils down to the same problem: You are unable to get your message across so you are unable to get what you want or need.

People inadvertently communicate ineffectively because they lack the understanding that they are causing their own problems by making confusing or disempowering word choices.

So now it's time to learn how to make sure your word choices are empowering. Why? Because empowered word choice will give you things you want, so choose your words carefully.

As you practice untying (k)nots, dumping "shoulds" and eliminating absolutes, practice replacing them with positive, life-affirming statements that speak the truth.



I have recently had the privilege of working with a group of wonderful people who have set themselves challenging weight-loss goals. It has been my honor to be able to offer them motivational tools that include positive self-talk and support.

One of the most common mistakes we make when we're trying to break old habits and develop new ones is that we constantly remind ourselves what (k)not to do. As we now know, that simply reinforces the desire to repeat the behavior you're trying to eliminate.

Why on Earth would anyone try motivate themselves or others this way? Why focus on what to avoid when it's by far more powerful to focus on what can be accomplished?

It is important to go into a life-changing challenge like this prepared with empowering statements that will reinforce the desire to develop the healthy behavior, statements that predict future behavior in a way that turns it into current behavior. Here are a handful of examples of how to start with a good statement and turn it into a great statement.

"I'm going to start exercising"	"I exercise effectively"
"I'm going to stick to the game plan"	"I focus on the game plan"
"I'm going to cut back on how much I eat"	"I push my plate away"
"I'm going to eat better"	"I focus on what I'm supposed to eat"
"I want to fit in smaller clothes"	"I picture myself in that outfit"
"I want to lose weight for that event"	"I see myself walking into the event at my goal weight"

Note that the statements in the right-hand column are declarations. They are clear statements to yourself that create foregone conclusions of your goals.

As you begin to use these tools more and more effectively you will find yourself focusing less on avoiding and more on achieving. You will begin to notice that you actually and physically move away from that which you want to avoid. In the case of replacing a poor diet with a healthy one, you will find yourself happily seeking out the restaurants and foods that support what you want and losing interest in the ones that no longer support your idea of who you are and how you behave.

Here's the really cool part. As you physically move toward what you want, you actually foster a pattern of attracting more of what you want in your life. It may even be as straightforward as finding more healthy foods that you really enjoy simply because you started visiting restaurants with more healthy options. When something like this happens, take a moment to recognize it for what it is: You are opening your own flood-gates to success, and creating the future you want for yourself.

It makes me so excited to see people overwhelmed by all the good stuff that comes their way when they use these tools that I can hardly stand it. I am constantly amazed and delighted to witness this kind of explosive growth.

*There is power in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> When you articulate empowering words clearly, that truth demands demonstration. There's no stopping it.

The beauty of this lesson is that you can apply it to anything in your life. The key, again, is to be clear and to be specific. Choose the words that state, "This is what I want to focus on." Be clear and specific about what you want to avoid, as well. It is necessary to identify the things that trip you up and retard your growth so that you can cut them away and clear them from your path.

You will be able to recognize that you're headed in the right direction for amazing transformation when you realize that you spend less time thinking about that which you want to avoid, and more time thinking about what you want to attract to your life.

I want to make a point here as we close out this chapter with the exciting new discovery that you can control your route to success through word choice with a very important admonition. It is essential that you treat yourself and others with respectful elegance, even when they are tying up their words with (k)nots and using disempowering and even disrespectful language. Respectful elegance is a mode of behavior and a lethal weapon. Have you heard of killing them with kindness? You will see what I mean in the next chapter.

## *Bob-ism #3*

*There is Power in the Congruency of your Articulation.*







# CHAPTER 4

## RESPECTFUL ELEGANCE

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The underlying pretext of this book is the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Treating the people in your life the way you would like to be treated just makes sense. So does speaking to them the way you want to be spoken to. Practicing the Golden Rule embodies the best of us, and is what I call a commitment to treating others and ourselves with a respectful elegance.

With that in mind, think about focusing on what you want to have happen in your life from the standpoint of caring for yourself and others. Begin with a permeating commitment to respectful elegance in your communication.

What is respectful elegance? The concept centers on respect, obviously, and reminds us to remain dignified, gracious and respectful in all aspects of our communication – including comments, observations, opinions, statements, questions and responses. It is a mode of behavior and a demonstration of the elegance of thoughtful word choice.

Close your eyes and take yourself back to childhood for a moment. Think about how it felt when it was time to clean your room. Did you like the way you were told to do it? Was it a punishment, a chore, or a way to get to do what you really wanted?

Did you fight with your parents, or resent them for making you do it? Or did you feel proud to be trusted with the responsibility?

How you felt about having to clean your room was directly related to how you were told to do it.

If your parents reminded you pleasantly and rewarded you by showing how pleased they were when you were done, chances are you felt good about cleaning your room.

If you were allowed to play with your friends or watch TV only after cleaning your room, chances are you got it out of the way quickly, and it became a habit like brushing your teeth before bed.

If your parents neglected to say anything about your room before you left to play with friends and then punished you when you came home, you were probably resentful, pouted and slammed doors and drawers while you cleaned.

If one of your parents got in your face and yelled at you to do it “or else” – followed by a litany of horrible consequences – you were motivated by fear. You probably cleaned your room every day with your heart in your mouth.

Which of these scenarios do you believe encouraged independence, confidence, a sense of responsibility and pride in a job well done? Although cleaning his room is rarely a delight to a child, the first two examples demonstrate respect for him as a whole person and are therefore empowering. The second two are disempowering; one shows a lack of support and the other is just plain bullying. Neither is effective in the long run, nor empowering.

As an adult, how do you respond to different forms of motivation? We have already discussed disempowering versus empowering word choices, and I hope that we are in agreement that empowering word choices are far better motivational tools. They are far better choices for any of the reasons you choose to communicate, whether it's to educate, persuade, celebrate, form a deeper bond with a loved one, or any of the other countless reasons out there.

*There is power in the clarity of your articulation™*, and if that clarity is framed considerably, the power increases exponentially. Untying the (k)nots was step one, then you learned to drop disempowering words. Now, let's take a look at the sentence structure, or context, surrounding those words.

I would like you to begin framing your words in expressions of respectful elegance. Start with “please” and “thank you,” “excuse me,” and the other polite phrases that demonstrate respect. Make sure you're using them; we lead busy, hectic lives, and it's common to forget to say these words in the hustle and bustle – even when we intend it in our heads.



Make a conscious effort to bring these words back into every appropriate situation.

For the next 24 hours, say “thank you” instead of “thanks.” You may be surprised by just how often gratitude gets thrown away on that quick shortcut. Some of us do it more than others, but most of us do it to some extent. As often as possible, use “Thank you” as the beginning of a sentence, rather than as the whole sentence: “Thank you for bringing this to my office” instead of just “thank you.”

Be mindful of your tone of voice. Your voice is part of the package. A well-turned phrase expressing gratitude and appreciation falls flat if the speaker is rushed or her tone is other than pleasant.

I’ll show you what I mean.

Take the phrase, “I’m sorry.” With your inner voice, listen to someone say it to a friend who has just lost a parent. You can feel the heavy weight of sympathy in those two words. Now, listen to a boy whose mother commands him to say it to his sister after a fight. Sympathy is the last feeling he infuses his “I’m sorry” with. He might say it quickly to get it out of the way or he may draw it out and lace it with as much sarcasm as his little voice can produce. He can be forced to say the words, but there’s no way he can be forced to use respectful elegance unless he feels it.

We’ll talk more about the concept of the whole package, or congruency, of delivering your message in following chapters. For now, keep an ear tuned to how your voice contributes to the idea of respectful elegance.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I want to say again: It is extremely important that you stop, think and take the time to choose the best possible words to express how you feel. This is especially crucial when you have very strong feelings about an issue that conflicts with someone else’s opinions. *There is power in the clarity of your articulation™*, so keep it clear. Demonstrate respectful elegance, and you will get the same treatment back, even if it takes a little time to bring the discussion down from an emotional precipice.

If you are angry, take a little extra time to figure out what you want to say with as much respect for everyone involved as possible while maintaining the integrity of your thoughts and feelings. When you have strong feelings it is extremely important to be understood, however, if you lose sight of how you’re coming across, you will lose your power.

Remember the adage: You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar. If you turn someone off or cause them to stop listening because you have let your angry emotions dictate your word choice and tone of voice, you lose your potential to be understood. Would you rather have the other person walk away thinking about the validity of your message, or thinking you're an unreasonable jerk?

There is no need to slip out of respectful elegance just because someone pushed your buttons. In fact, if you behave with respectful elegance throughout an impassioned confrontation, you will find that you have a lot more power than anyone else in the room. You will be the one who benefits from the exchange. By remaining calm and even-handed, you can influence the others around you to lower their defenses and join you in a rational discussion.

Basically, respectful elegance embodies the elements of polite behavior and good manners. Think of it in terms of holding a door open for another person, only you're extending the message in that gesture through all your communication and interactions with them.

Speak politely. Make eye contact. Listen without interrupting. Say "please" and "thank you." These are the obvious behavior choices we make countless times a day, but unfortunately, they are omitted far more frequently that we realize, and certainly more than we intend.

When you are in a position to designate a task, be it a chore at home, an assignment at school, or a project at work; be cognizant of the fact that you are making a request of another person. Regardless of the fact that it is part of their job or their duty, I can just about guarantee you will get much better results if you employ respectful elegance.

Assigning a task with respectful elegance translates into communicating your needs and expectations clearly and specifically. Beyond "please" and "thank you," being clear and specific are the key elements to demonstrating respect. Lack of either is disrespectful. If the task is going to create a conflict in the other person's schedule or priority list, let him know where you would like this new task to fall. Again, be clear and be specific.

When you are in a position of authority, it is your responsibility to communicate effectively. Effective leaders command respect, and they pay attention to how they make those commands. If you want respect from your employees, students, or children; be aware that they will reciprocate the respect you show them. You lead the way.

Leigh Anne was an extremely busy and talented young woman who suddenly found herself in need of an assistant. From the pool of applicants for the job, she selected Renee, a seemingly competent and efficient person with the right amount of experience and an interest in the industry.

However, after a few weeks, Leigh Anne was fed up. Renee failed to prioritize correctly. She had to be chased down for details she omitted to include in phone messages. The reports she submitted, while accurate, were sloppy and confusing; Leigh Anne found herself consuming valuable time trying to locate the information she needed to have at her fingertips. And finally, Renee had a problem getting tasks done in a timely manner. Often, Leigh Anne was left feeling unprepared and edgy before a meeting because Renee had delivered the information she needed with only minutes to spare.

Although she knew it to be necessary, Leigh Anne dreaded the meeting she was forced to have with Renee. It was time to shape up or Renee was going to be out of a job. Leigh Anne actually liked Renee as a person, and hoped that somehow, magically, she would be able to step up and perform her job the way she was supposed to.

Leigh Anne sat down with Renee and laid out each of the problems she had with her performance. Choosing polite words and a gentle tone of voice, Leigh Anne spelled out how Renee's failure to deliver what she wanted actually caused more problems. She pointed out that she needed an assistant who would be able to anticipate her needs and hoped Renee would catch up quickly now so they could function more like a team.

Renee burst into tears. Leigh Anne was alarmed and dismayed, and spent the rest of their time reassuring her that this was a second chance and that she had faith in Renee to rise to the challenge. Renee nodded and blubbered, and promised to do a better job. She swore up and down that she had never let down an employer before and that she refused to let Leigh Anne be the first. She wrote notes next to the list Leigh Anne had given her outlining the problems and left the meeting sniffing but motivated to turn it all around.

Having never been faced with a situation like this before, Leigh Anne sought out advice from a more experienced manager, her boss and mentor, John. Fortunately, he knew her well and had a lot of respect for her. He had watched Leigh Anne work diligently at her job for a couple of years, and knew that she could be counted on to take on any project pushed her way, giving it every ounce of the attention it deserved without compromise. Leigh Anne's attention to detail was legendary; somehow she knew every detail about every project she had ever worked on or knew where to find it.

John was fully aware that her greatest strength was also her greatest weakness; she was a perfectionist who found it painful to relinquish control or trust another person with any of those details. This meant she was too busy covering all of her responsibilities to figure out which ones to delegate, let alone instruct anyone on how to do them properly. It had taken some convincing arguments in the first place to get her to accept that it was OK to let an assistant take on the tasks that she had outgrown so she could focus on the skill sets she had worked so hard to develop.

He felt sure that Leigh Anne's complaints about Renee had more to do with her inability to delegate properly than it did with Renee's inability to take direction. John's challenge was to teach Leigh Anne to be a better leader.

At his request, Leigh Anne shared a copy of her list of complaints about her assistant. After reading it over he placed on the table in front of him and looked at her.

"I think I can identify the underlying problem," he said. "Let's go through each of these one at a time and see if we come to the same conclusion."

"Given time, the first issue may resolve itself," Leigh Anne began. "She's fairly new to the industry, so she has yet to learn which clients have higher demands and tighter deadlines. The problem is that I can barely afford a repeat of the episode last week when we failed to get those contracts messengered over. She spent the whole afternoon working on those event invitations instead!"

"Where do you think the confusion lay?"

"I have no idea," she sighed. "I mean, I did tell her they needed to be in the mail within the next several days, but they could have waited until Monday. The contracts needed to be in Joe's hands Friday afternoon. She should have done that first."

"Did she know that?"

Leigh Anne blinked. "They're contracts. Urgent contracts for one of our biggest clients. She should have known they take precedent over event invitations."

"How?"

"It's obvious."

"To you, maybe," John said. "But then, you've been here long enough to know where things fall in the pecking order."

Leigh Anne thought about that for a minute. She wrote herself a note. “I think I need to sit down with Renee and go over how we prioritize things here. She could have come to me, you know, to ask which to do first.”

“Why wait for her to come to you? When you give her work to do, especially if it’s something urgent, ask what else she’s working on and tell her whether this new job comes before or after it.” John added, “I think you will find that the five minutes you spend going over what’s on her plate will have big payoffs in the long run, especially if you do it regularly. She will develop your instinct for priority and make you look good.”

“I hope so, because the way she takes phone messages is making me look like an idiot.”

“How so?”

Leigh Anne showed him an example, “She gets the basics all right: name, date, time and where I can reach them, but that’s it. I have no idea what else is going on. Did they sound rushed, or anxious? Are they going into a meeting or can I call back right away? Did she offer to send them to voice mail? Was it just a confirmation call, and if so, what were they confirming?”

John laughed. “So, you want the kind of detailed messages from her that you used to take for me.”

“Yes! And I got to know so many of our industry contacts this way.”

“And you made me look good, like I’m on top of everything,” John said. “Have you told her what you want and why?”

“I do when I remember, but then she apologizes and says she was busy and she’ll get more information next time, but that rarely happens.”

John sat up. “Leigh Anne, if it’s important to you, make it important to her. Explain exactly what you need. Demonstrate if you have to. However you handle it, be proactive. Reprimanding her after the fact is just frustrating for both of you – and the client, apparently.”

“Well, but that’s just a little thing compared to her reports. I am at a loss for how to teach her to do them well and on time. According to her resume, she’s been doing this kind of work for years, but it takes more work for me to decipher her reports than it does for me to research the information myself.”

John took the sample from Leigh Anne's hand and looked at it carefully. "Are they inaccurate? This is pretty important; this information goes all the way up the ladder and it affects a lot of our purchasing decisions, as well as budget projections. The way you use the data is just the beginning."

"I know." Leigh Anne responded, nodding vehemently, "which is why I'm so concerned. Her facts are straight, but the report's a mess. It takes forever for me to find what I need. It must be equally frustrating for them."

"But the information is correct?"

"Yes."

"Just poorly organized?"

"And messy. The fonts are mixed up, some of it is all lower case, and the margins are out of alignment."

"How would you like it to look instead? Like they did when you produced them? Did you provide a template for her?" John asked.

"Yes and no. I mean, I showed her an example of an older report, but I wanted her to develop her own style, so I decided against creating a template. I really believe it's important for her to take ownership in these reports. But John, this is embarrassing."

"Her style is disorganized, yes. And it confuses and frustrates you, correct? Then go back to step one and recreate it with her. You set the boundaries and outline, and decide where she gets to have input. But you have to be clear. Have her create a template, or develop it with her if you need to, and make sure she uses it. Be specific about how you want the information to flow so you can use it." John regarded her carefully, "It's time-consuming at first, but this is very important. You need to make this your priority."

"That's the thing, John. Apparently it's already too time-consuming. Every single time I need a report I have to wait until I'm virtually walking into the meeting or dialing the number for her to give it to me. Then I feel like I'm playing catch-up the whole time. I'm unable to think ahead and anticipate questions or concerns. It's beyond frustrating; it's unnerving. If I have a 10 a.m. call, I need that report in my hands no later than 9, and if I'm going into a 2 o'clock with a client, I want to have it memorized by noon. That's just the way I operate."

"Has she ever given you a report late? Have you ever been late to an appointment or to jump on a call because you're waiting for something from her?"

“No, but five minutes before I need it is simply inadequate and unacceptable.”

“So you’re saying she is late.”

“No, she’s never been late, she just fails to be early enough.”

“If she ignores the fact that you asked for the report by noon and waits until just before 2 to give it to you, then that’s a serious issue.”

“Well, no.” Leigh Anne said, chagrined. “I never actually told her to get it to me that early. I gave her a list of the meeting times and which reports are needed for each one, and I guess I just expected her to know I need the reports in my hand at least an hour in advance.”

“So as far as Renee knows, she’s been consistently early? She’s beat your deadline every time?”

Leigh Anne understood. It was up to her to take the time to teach Renee how she wanted things done.

“It’s a matter of respect,” John said. “You have to earn it, sure, but first you have to show it. When you explain what you need, when you need it, and what you need it to look like clearly and specifically you’re respecting her need for clear instruction. Clear instruction shows respect for her intelligence and ability.”

“Leaving her to try to figure things out while I go about my business has been disrespectful,” Leigh Anne realized. “And I just made it worse by getting frustrated when she was unable to guess what I wanted. I set her up to fail. No wonder she got so emotional.”

Respectful elegance begins with word “choice,” however; it encompasses much, much more. While Leigh Anne was kind and polite to Renee in their meeting, she failed to take Renee’s needs into account. As soon as she began to look at the situation from her assistant’s perspective, she was able to quickly recognize how to give her the tools she needed to succeed. She made a paradigm shift that then led to Renee’s own series of paradigm shifts – she started to enjoy her job a lot more for a start – and the two became a successful and productive team.

Note that John employed respectful elegance, avoiding the temptation to lay blame at either door, talk about what “should” have happened, or dictate how things were going to change and opting instead to gently lead Leigh Anne down the path to her own conclusions.

Word choice is a powerful tool. *There is power in the clarity of your articulation.*<sup>TM</sup> There is power in outlining your needs clearly and specifically, and there is power in the turn of a phrase. Here are a few examples to think about, examples that you can use easily with amazing results:

To a child, horsing around near a curio cabinet full of china:

“Stop it! That’s how you break things.”

“Please calm down. That’s how things get broken.”

To a spouse who is pruning too enthusiastically:

“You’re cutting it back too much. You’re going to kill it.”

“Let’s move on. Too much cutting can do a lot of damage.”

To an angry co-worker:

“Keep it to yourself until you calm down or you’ll get yourself fired.”

“Take a break to think it through before you go back in there.”

Assigning blame is so natural, it just flows from us without a second thought, even when we’re being mindful about (k)nots and word choice. But note that when you do pause for that second thought, your turn of phrase turns on a slightly higher level. And voila, you have even more empowering communication. Assigning blame is disempowering, even if the end result is keeping that horse-playing child from breaking Great Aunt Sally’s china.

It’s virtually impossible to explain any of these concepts independently of each other, let alone introduce them as separate tools. They intertwine, enhancing and supporting each of the concepts, like pillars holding the entire structure in place. The final pillar is the physical aspect of communicating: Body language and physiology.



## *Bob-ism #4*

*What if I saw myself accomplishing it.....anyway?*







# CHAPTER 5

## PHYSIOLOGY AND CONGRUENCY IN YOUR ARTICULATION

HOW & WHY YOUR ACTIONS ARE WORTH THOUSANDS OF WORDS

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There is power in the physiology of your articulation. Believe it and understand it. Pay attention to it and practice it.

Physiology is the next part of the communication package that requires your attention, maybe an overhaul, definitely some fine-tuning at the least.

When you master the physical nuances that echo and support your verbal messages, you will find your entire skill set gelling together in an empowering and highly effective congruence.

Your physiology can strengthen or weaken your message in astounding ways. It can affect your mood and feelings about what you are thinking and saying, as well as the mood and feelings – indeed the entire perspective – of the person you are talking to.

An easy way to understand the role of physiology in your articulation is to think in terms of body language. Shaking your head back and forth indicates a negative response to what is being said; nodding it up and down indicates a positive; folding your arms across your chest indicates rejection or an unwillingness to listen.

Most of us can look at random pictures of faces from around the world and recognize the emotions without challenge; a smile means happiness, tears mean sadness. The size of the smile or the degree of pain in the eyes tells you more

about the intensity of the emotion. Is this the shy greeting of a curious but friendly person on the street, or the full-bodied laughter of a man suddenly and thoroughly amused? Are the tears shed that of a child going to school on the first day, or are they on the face of an orphan in a war-torn city caught in the wilderness of despair and loss? Even without visual cues from background settings, we can measure the depth of a stranger's experience in that moment by the set of the features and the congruence of thought and emotion on his or her face.

Likewise, if we pay attention, we can recognize when there is lack of congruence. Some are so common we have names for them: A smile that falls short of the eyes is known as a "fake smile" and tears that lack the support of genuine emotion are "crocodile tears."

As human beings, we dislike these false displays of emotion. It only takes one encounter with a person playing this game to embed a deep mistrust of their character in both our conscious and subconscious opinions of them. Audiences will take an instant dislike to an on-screen character if the camera reveals emotions have been faked behind another character's back. It is a visual clue for us to recognize that character as a "bad guy" with something up his sleeve.

The most common mistake I see people make on a daily basis is shaking their head "no" when their mouths say, "Yes." It's an unintentional cue that they're unwilling or unable to agree with what is being said. This is an example of lacking clarity in the physiology of your articulation. It's as confusing as the (k)nots are to your message.

Another classic stance that confuses your message is when you say you're listening while your arms are crossed. I equate it to physical sarcasm, and it leaves a nasty taste in the other person's mouth.

A picture is worth a thousand words because we are trained to tune in to all the subtle and less-than-subtle clues in a face, a gesture, a posture or a stance. Even when our conscious minds are distracted, our subconscious minds remain attuned to the physiology of the image.

There is power in the clarity of your articulation. Why go to all the trouble of choosing your words and turning your phrases on the pillar of respectful elegance if you ignore the signals your body language is sending out?

Just like the little boy who was forced to say, "I'm sorry" to his sister, your physiology and tone of voice will scream that you feel or intend the opposite of what is coming out of your mouth.

You have two choices: Try to fake your physiology to support your words, or make sure your word choice is a true reflection of what you are feeling and thinking.

Either way, your physiology will display the truth loud and clear, so my advice is to employ honesty.

The congruency of your thoughts, feelings and words is the key to the greatest power in your communication. Incongruence will likewise be your greatest demise. It is certainly a key factor among the reasons why so many attempts at communication fail. In other words: Faking it will get you nowhere.

Your physiology sets the stage in every conversation you have, every communication in which you engage. If your face reflects the overlapping congruence of your beliefs, thoughts and words, if you make eye contact and use open gestures, leaning forward slightly with a strong and stable posture, then your audience will understand on a gut level that you are genuine in and faithful to your message.

Have you ever listened to another person's message, mentally checked it for logic, reason, motive and sense, all of which it had in spades, only to still feel misgivings about it? Have you walked away from what seemed to be a solid encounter with a feeling in your gut that something was amiss?

Your "gut" is pretty smart. Somewhere in this other person's message were subtle physiological clues that they lacked honesty or faith in what they were saying.

And here is the biggest secret and most important lesson of this entire book: There is power in the congruency of your articulation – even more so than in the clarity of your articulation and the physiology of your articulation. Congruency is the sum of the other parts, and then multiplied by 10.

This is why congruent body language is extremely important to the message you want to convey.

There is power in the congruency of your articulation. When your beliefs, values, thoughts, physiology and words all support the same message, it is the most empowering way to communicate. It is so empowering that it is actually contagious. You can influence and even change the beliefs, values, thoughts, physiology and words of the people with whom or to whom you are speaking. Throw in anticipating good things, and you can move mountains.

Begin developing your skills in this area by practicing on yourself. Go ahead; test it out. Here's a little experiment that you can perform the next time you're feeling down in the dumps.

Take note of your posture. Your shoulders are likely sagging and your line of sight is probably somewhere below the horizon. In other words, looking straight ahead in this mood means your eyes are actually looking slightly downward at best. At worst, you're sadly contemplating your shoes.

In this moment of low energy and lower emotion, I want you to follow these steps in your mind:

Look up at the ceiling. Move your whole head and take your focus all the way up. Tilt your head, direct your eyes, and make a conscious effort to change your physiology from one of looking down to one of looking up. As you do so, the way you inhale will change; your muscles want oxygen to support the deliberate movement.

As you look up, consciously and deliberately prepare yourself to smile. Make the decision. Knowing that smiling is the next step, you will think to yourself, "Now I have to smile. How am I going to smile and be depressed at the same time?"

Breathe again. Now smile. A full smile, right up through your eyes. Use your face muscles.

Check yourself. Is it a grin? Is there a note of laughter in there? That's actually quite common. It is often such a relief to feel something other than sadness that a natural reaction to forcing yourself to smile at the ceiling is a light laugh. You will feel lighter, too.

This is an example of empowering physiology choice. How you sit, stand and lean – and even how you arrange the features on your face – affect the messages you give yourself before they affect the messages you give off to anyone else. Your own smile lightens your mood. Raising your line of vision even slightly above the horizon raises your outlook and optimism. Pulling your shoulders back and breathing deeply enhances your confidence.

In traumatic situations, the first step to getting a grip on events and healing whatever is out of whack is to help the people involved calm down. The first step to calming down is controlling breathing. Slow, even, deep breathing allows the blood to flow at a normal rhythm and the mind to focus on the tasks at hand. It eases tension, constriction and pain so that productive energy can begin to flow, whether that's coordinating a clean-up effort or beginning a physical healing process.

The simple act of controlling your breathing holds tremendous power. The other simple acts you can control in your physiology likewise hold tremendous power.



One of my favorite examples is the “I’m fine. I’m totally calm” said from behind clenched teeth. This is a double whammy. You’re so far from calm you’re clenching your teeth, and you’re so irritated by being asked that you’re gritting your teeth even harder!

I dare you to take deep breaths with your teeth clenched. You’ll burn your nostrils with the forces of all that air! The first step to drawing yourself out of this irritation is to deliberately open your jaw and breathe deeply and slowly several times. As the oxygen flows through your system, you feel that irritation slough away just enough to allow you the freedom of thought to construct a message that respectfully alerts others to your needs.

Imagine, if you will, that it is Friday night. You have had a long day at the end of a long week that is somewhere in the middle of a long month and an even longer quarter. There’s no real end in sight to the travails at work. But it is Friday night, after all, and you have arrived home in one piece despite the soul-sapping commute. You have kicked off your shoes, and maybe even changed your clothes. Dinner over and the kids off doing their own thing, you have poured yourself a glass of wine, wandered over to your favorite chair and picked up the book you’ve been looking forward to all day.

You are about 20 minutes into the best downtime you’ve had in forever when your spouse drops into the seat next to you and starts talking. The person you share your life and home with – the most important person in your entire world – is trying to engage you in conversation, but it’s the last thing you want.

You love this person so you want to make the effort to demonstrate respectful elegance, and you even lower the paper or the volume in a show of interest and willingness to divert your attention from what you would really rather be doing.

But, man, are you irritated! Half your mind is thinking ‘When am I going to catch a break and just get an hour, one measly hour, to myself?’ while the other half is thinking, ‘It is really important for me to make eye contact and to listen and to show how much I care by paying attention.’

I have news for you. That irritation is going to show up somehow, some way. A subtle message in your physiology will trigger an “off-kilter” reaction in your spouse – they know and love you so well that they pick up on your body language better than anyone else – and whether they realize it right away or several hours later, they will know something is off. You may end up arguing about trivial or past offenses while your spouse feels around in the dark for that missing bit of information.

So breathe in slowly a few times until you know what you want to say – and how you want to say it – and tell them the truth right then and there. You may be facing your spouse and making all the appropriate noises to indicate you're listening, but some other clue will tell on you. Your lips may tighten, your eyes flick here or there or even roll skyward more than usual, or you may have crossed your legs towards the other direction. Whatever it is, it will be a tell-tale sign that you are irritated by the interruption.

Avoid the unnecessary drama. Respect them enough to ask for respect.

“Honey, I love you. I have been looking forward to seeing you and sitting here with you all day. But now that we're here, I find that I need a little quiet time to regroup. I want to focus on what you're saying, but my mind is still in work mode. Can we catch up later when it's in home mode? Will you hang out with me while I read?”

There are so many opportunities to check your physiology when you communicate. It's polite to hold the door open for another person. But if you're exasperated or feel inconvenienced by the obligation, your body language will give you away, and that might be worse than omitting the gesture all together.

If you're going to hold the door open, try making it a larger opportunity for respectful elegance. Communicate genuine chivalry by making eye contact, smiling, saying hello, and stepping aside to give them plenty of room. Go that little step beyond a polite but often “throw away” gesture to one of value. Your physiology, or posture, throughout the exchange will boost their spirits and yours.

Among the greatest and most rewarding experiences I have had in my life was the time I spent with the company that brought the first professional football team to Alaska. For those of you who are unfamiliar with life in Alaska, weather makes it a challenge to have any kind of decent outdoor football season. Our population is so small and our distance from the rest of the country so great that until recently they prohibited us from participating in an interstate professional football league.

Up until 2007, football in the state went up as far as high school level and then stopped. There were no college teams, and many people had never seen a live football game involving grown men. Thanks to the growing popularity and availability of indoor football, an opportunity opened up for a small company to buy an Indoor Football League franchise and bring professional football to the Alaska.

I was the first salesperson hired on with this company. I was tasked with selling marketing “real estate” for a team that had yet to exist. However, such was the excitement and desire to be a part of this event that my job was far

less challenging than it could have been. It helped that I was congruent in every one of my sales pitches and approaches; I genuinely believed in what we were doing, and I genuinely believed in the potential for my clients to reap very big rewards from their participation.

We were all so excited to have football in Alaska that our clients were investing money and passion in the team before it even had a name.

I was part of a back-office team that worked consistently long hours, wore several hats and sacrificed much of our normal lives (like a regular dinner hour) to make this dream a reality.

Months before the players arrived, we had already given so much of ourselves that we would have taken the field personally to keep the team alive if necessary. Fortunately, I never had to don pads or a helmet. Though I had a successful college soccer career, that was a very different kind of football! The other salesperson was pregnant, and our office assistant was already one of the cheerleaders, so they were out. But I have a sneaking suspicion that the other two women in the office would have suited up for the sake of the team, given half a chance, right alongside the rest of the staff. In fact, once we had a women's flag football league up and running the next year, many of the staff and/or wives played. But that's another story. My point is that we all loved our involvement with the Alaska Wild and felt a deep connection to the team, the players, the coaches and our clients.

Although we were never able to take the field with the players, our hearts and souls were out there with them through every game and on every road trip. Their spectacular plays were our spectacular plays, and their spectacular losses – of which there were many that first season – were our spectacular losses. Early in the season, we all cried at the end of the first game we almost won when victory was stolen from us in the last few seconds.

It would be weeks before we came that close again. We were precariously close to the end of our season and feeling every ounce of the frustration of an 0-12 losing streak when our team won their first game.

As the final seconds ticked down on the game clock, I experienced pure torture. In indoor football, the game moves so fast that it can be won or lost in the blink of an eye. My heart was leaping in my chest with anticipation and fear. This could be the biggest moment in the history of football in Alaska, the biggest moment of celebration in our year, the biggest moment that had escaped our grasp for months – or the most gut-wrenching, sickening, soul-crushing moment of disappointment I had ever known.

Either way, my heart was working overtime.

Everything I had been working for and believing in for so long was surging into a single moment. Time slowed down, we dominated the field right to the final buzzer, my arms shot up, my head flew back, I fell to my knees and howled. The crowd in the stands erupted. If there had ever been any ounce of doubt among my clients that I was passionate about the Alaska Wild, it disappeared in that instant.

I jumped up and ran onto the field with the staff and threw myself into the celebrating team. There was no mistaking my excitement, and no mistaking the excitement of every person out there who had given blood, sweat and tears to that moment.

That was the most empowering moment of my sales career with the Alaska Wild, and it will continue to enrich every business dealing I have in the state. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that when Bob Nicoll says he is excited and passionate about something and will give 100 percent to making it a success for everyone involved, that's what he means. My clients know it because they have seen it. Those who witnessed me carried away on that tide of emotion know that behind what I say and what I sell is genuine congruence of beliefs, values, thoughts, feelings and actions.

Did I plan to reveal myself to that degree that day? No. Could I have behaved with more decorum in front of my clients and the rest of the arena? There's no way. That story is an example of an unintentionally dramatic display of congruence, but it was honest and real, and empowering.

You shape what others see of you. Ultimately, they choose whether to accept it or reject it. But if you back up your words with congruent body language, they will own it as strongly as you do.

I'll tell you what happened next, because it was a real testament to the power of allowing others to see really see you when you are absolutely congruent.

By the end of the season, the number of private and highly publicized challenges within this company were too numerous for me to ignore. I was unable to agree with some of the practices that had evolved, and decided to stay true to my values and strike off in a different direction.

Actually, the self-examination and conflict of values in this setting were the final kick in the pants I needed to create the "Remember the Ice" workbook, CDs and DVDs, and to finally put 40 years of teachings, practice, observations and demonstrations down on paper and into this book.

I wished the people who remained with the company all the best, especially those who stayed for the love of the dream despite personal discomfort and sacrifice. I would miss them terribly, but I satisfied myself with the pride and thrill of having been a part of something so big that it had become an important part of Alaska history. Even after I left, I challenged myself daily: Had I done the right thing? The pervading values and behaviors were so different from mine, and the mode of conducting business had become so foreign from my own that I was simply unable to approach new clients with that congruency of belief, value, thought, feeling and word.

In less than a year, the business changed hands and I was approached by the new leadership to see if I would be interested in helping them out by returning to my sales position. Are you kidding me?!? I was ecstatic! A chance to work for this team again, with a group of people I knew to share my values, dealing with clients I had come to know and like as friends? How soon did they want me to start?

Despite my absence of nearly a year, a large number of my former clients that had chosen to also separate their business from the company around the time I left actually took a leap of faith in me and jumped back on board to support the team.

These clients had each had their own reasons for moving on originally, but I believe it was the fact that they knew they could believe in my honesty and willingness to do whatever it took – ethically – to make the deal a win-win for everyone that brought them back.

Congruency in your articulation can take a lot of soul-searching. It definitely takes thought and attention. But it is worth it. You earn the added benefit of the personal empowerment that comes with being at peace with yourself because you are staying true to your beliefs and your values, and are able to demonstrate respect for others while you do so.

As with any skill that is worth the time and effort, learning to be congruent and adapt it to your nature so it happens automatically takes a little practice. Begin, of course, with your thoughts, beliefs and values. Are they in line with your message? Are they at the thrust of what you are sharing, the basis of your words? Do you own them?

Your physiology is extremely powerful. It will reveal the truth every time. It can even shape or change your own paradigm when it needs to, a valuable skill we will address in the next few chapters. Subtle unconscious shifts in your body language can transmit volumes of meaning to your audience. When your words contradict your physiology, the person you're speaking to will pick up on it. At best, they will be confused and annoyed. At worst, they will harbor distrust and suspicion of you.

We forget about body language so quickly and easily, and yet it is so basic to human communication that our subconscious minds pick up on it and take it seriously even when we fail to notice consciously.

If you leave a conversation feeling like you're in two minds about what was said, that's because your two minds – the conscious and subconscious – had two completely different reactions to the presentation.

If you have to talk yourself into believing or accepting something someone else said to you, there's your gut-check. Your gut, or your subconscious mind, observed body language, and listened to pitch, tone, breathing -- all the elements of communication that work with or against words to deliver a message.

Imagine the power of a message delivered with full congruence. If you have a child, you know the difference between a hug hello and a hug delivered with pure love, adoration, joy and ecstasy. For the duration of that hug, all those emotions make you melt. There's really no other way to put it. You melt.

The first time I realized the power of word choice, I was on the edge of sheer terror. It's a place just about every child and adult has been at least once in their lives, and most people avoid returning to that ledge of fear at all costs.

I remember it like it was yesterday. I was in seventh grade, and it was time to stand up in front of all my peers and deliver a speech. Imagine a 12-year-old boy, self-conscious and awkward just getting through the day, having to face a room full of pre-teens – a breed that can smell fear from 50 feet away. To make matters worse, the assignment was to stand in front of the class and speak coherently for five full minutes. Five minutes!

I was terrified, but little did I know, I had a secret weapon that would soon be revealed to me.

The subject of my speech was that old classic, that bane of so many kids' existence,

“How I Spent My Summer Vacation.” Well, it just so happened that I had spent two months touring the country with my family, and I was bubbling over with all the great adventures we had had.

My teacher, the fantastic Mr. Abbott, pulled me aside before my turn came up. He was a great teacher with a unique gift. Words were like magic in his hands, and he loved to teach us how to create pictures and evoke feelings with words. His passion and creativity made us excited to work the same magic.

Mr. Abbott asked me what I was planning to talk about, and listened for the excitement in my candor as I talked about some of the sites we had visited, one of which was Niagara Falls.

“OK, here’s your opening line,” he said. “Can you imagine going over Niagara Falls in a barrel?”

Something sparked inside me. I got it. Going over Niagara Falls in a barrel! That would be awesome! To a 12-year-old with an appetite for adventure, that would be the ultimate ride. Mr. Abbott had just taught me how to capture an audience.

Knowing how contagious it would be, and how it would replace my fear and nervousness, he had found the key to unlocking my excitement. I went up to the front of the class just bursting to tell them all about it. I had a scrapbook and a million stories, but most of all I had genuine enthusiasm, and I could kick it off with real attention-grabber.

My five-minute speech turned into 28 minutes. Mr. Abbott let me keep talking; the class was fully engaged, and we were all having a great time. I knew in my mind that my talk was exciting, because I was excited.

I have never looked back. To this day, I love getting up in front of people, capturing their attention, and sharing my passion.

There’s an art to public speaking. The key lies in believing in your message and being excited to share it with others. The more you tap into the elements that make your message congruent, the more empowered you feel and the less afraid or anxious. That self-confidence will show up in your physiology and resonate with your listeners.

Watch a really great actor or actress in a role they were “born to play.” You will forget that there’s a professional up there on the screen portraying a character; the professional has such great love for their craft that they bring everything they have to the table. A congruent performance is one that carries you away completely – and only later does it occur to you that you had been watching an actor play a part. It takes real skill to create congruency on that level.





## *Bob-ism #5*

*Thank you, for being.....*







# CHAPTER 6

## FRAMEWORK OF RAPPORT

### ART OF CONVERSATION

#### ASK SPECIFICALLY

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Conversation is a two-way street. Have you heard this before? Does it seem overwhelmingly obvious? The speaker speaks, the listener listens, and then the roles reverse. What makes a conversation truly satisfying is when the people involved elevate their speaking and listening to an art form.

If you dedicate yourself to improving your conversation skills, the rewards will be enormous. You will find that as your ability to hear, thoughtfully interpret and appreciate what is being said increases, your ability to be truly heard will also increase. Just like the ancients said: You reap what you sow. Put in the effort it takes to really pay attention and you will find that people respond to you in a way that exceeds your expectations.

Once again, I feel compelled to tell you this is an extremely easy, natural skill to develop. Each of us has the ability to tap into the basic knowledge we already have and hone our technique. No higher education required; just be awake, aware, and conscious of your word choice and body language. Pay attention.

Consider the difference between the exchange of niceties you make when buying a cup of coffee and the conversation you have over a long, leisurely lunch. In one scenario, you care about being polite. In the other, you care about making a connection.

In all honesty, we should care about making a connection all the time, because every interaction has wonderful potential. For a moment, though, pretend there's a long line at the coffee shop, and you're in a hurry. A brief hello and a warm smile are enough to convey your respect and appreciation; they are appropriate to the situation. In a meaningful conversation, however, you need to take the time to make sure all of your thoughts, words, body language and attention span are in congruence.

A conversation occurs within a framework of rapport. What you create within this framework is up to you. Respectful elegance creates a friendly, warm, safe, framework of mutual respect. Within this framework, you will be able to create satisfying, fulfilling, productive and enjoyable conversations. Once you have established an empowering framework of rapport, you can create surprisingly solid friendships in every aspect of your life, from school to work, from friends to family members, and from neighbors to lovers.

If you want to make the most of your interpersonal relationships, then do the work required to build empowering frameworks of rapport.

I hesitate to label your efforts "work." Perhaps that's an unsuitable description, but I use it because relearning your conversation skills requires going through that cognitive-emotive dissonance we talked about earlier, which can feel like work at first. However, I am confident that if you apply these lessons constructively and with attention to both the spirit and letter of the law, creating these frameworks will become second nature.

Talented communicators and conversationalists are rarely aware of what they're doing. They walk into a room and everyone seems to relax, or cheer up, or open up. They lighten the space, making those around them feel happier, more confident, and willing to risk more by participating more. The mood and quality of conversation immediately cranks up several notches, and the biggest challenge becomes an unwillingness to end the meeting.

Most of us know or have known people like this. We find ourselves drawn to them; we want their opinion; we want to bounce ideas off them; we seek them out to recharge our batteries. Do you find yourself stopping by a coworker's office or dropping in to visit a friend just for a minute or two, because you know you can gather your thoughts and leave more focused or feeling better about yourself?

If you stop to think about it, these are very powerful people in your life. Whether intentional or by their innate abilities as "people persons," they have created frameworks of rapport with you where you feel safe, appreciated, at times bright and brilliant, and at times mentored and forgiven.

Imagine the power you could have in your life if you could just get some of that magic. Well, guess what? You already have it. And the good news is there's no magic involved. It just feels that way, especially when you sit back and watch the results.

The art of conversation, or creating a framework of rapport, takes all of the tools we have already discussed – and I do purposefully use the absolute “all” here – and combines them in one integrated package. Speak clearly. Choose empowering words. Actively avoid the (k)nots and disempowering words. Construct empowering sentences. Employ respectful elegance. Check your physiology, and above all, be congruent.

Bundle it all together in a package and tie it up with this bow: Anticipate good things. “Anticipate good things?” you may say, “Sounds like wishful thinking to me.”

But I say to you, think about it. In an empowering framework of rapport, you can ask for anything. Anything. And what if your client, colleague, neighbor or child is unable or unwilling to fill your need? Here's another way having this kind of relationship is so great: Nine times out of ten, the other person will go to great lengths to find or suggest someone or something that will help you in their stead – and it will almost always be bigger and better than your initial request anticipated.

It's called “asking specifically,” and just like the earlier example with Leigh Anne and her assistant, Renee, it ties in with respectful elegance. Asking specifically is at once an exercise in respectful elegance and a benefit derived from establishing respectful elegance in your framework of rapport.

I experience this wonderful phenomenon just about every single day. Sometimes I make the request, sometimes I'm in a position to fill it, or help it to be filled. Either way, it is consistently successful, and the abundance of the return on investment is consistently amazing.

In my capacity as a co-founder and representative of the Life is For Giving Foundation, I had occasion to ask a generous gift of a business associate and friend who held a managerial position in a brand-name Anchorage hotel. Our current “Moment of Joy” recipient was about to celebrate a wedding anniversary, and we were hoping to make it as special as possible.

Moment of Joy is our top priority at Life is For Giving. It is a program designed to grant a “special moment” for an adult who is dealing with a terminal illness, allowing them to experience that Moment of Joy they thought might never happen. You can learn more about Moment of Joy and program recipients at [www.lifeisforgiving.org](http://www.lifeisforgiving.org).

Both members of the Ambassador Committee for the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Lena and I had known each other for about a year when I approached her with this request.

“Lena, do you have a moment?” I asked, “I want to share a story with you about our foundation and how we help adults with terminal illness have a “Moment of Joy” as they battle their illness.”

Instead of launching into my request and the story behind it, I chose to demonstrate old-fashioned respectful elegance and make sure she was able to give me the attention I was asking for. Note that my opening line was a form of asking specifically – for a moment of her time. Asking this way gave her the freedom to choose to listen right away or ask me to come back later.

I shared the story behind the foundation, which can also be found online at [www.lifeisforgiving.org](http://www.lifeisforgiving.org), and told her about our first Moment of Joy recipient, who happened to be my wife’s brother. I then shared the story of our current recipient, Lisa.

I told her that a tourist’s experience at a downtown hotel was on Lisa’s wish list, and that she and her husband, Nelson, were about to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

Having given her enough background information to be able to judge whether she wanted to be a part of creating this gift for Lisa, I then asked, “Would you be willing to consider arranging a donation from this hotel of overnight accommodations to Moment of Joy so that they can celebrate their anniversary here?”

After listening to my brief, but specific explanation, of what we were looking for and why, Lena’s reply was enthusiastic. She said she was sure she could organize something special.

The next morning, she sent me an e-mail – before 7 a.m. – detailing a plan that went far above and beyond my request. Lena had shared the Moment of Joy recipient’s story with her staff, all of whom were eager to exceed everyone’s expectations.

In short, they rolled out the red carpet. Lisa and Nelson’s complimentary stay was extended to include the entire weekend, beginning with an open check-in time on Friday. They were assigned a personal concierge and a courtesy van to take them wherever their hearts desired when they chose to break away from their suite overlooking the Anchorage skyline. The chef prepared special menus designed with Lisa’s favorite foods in mind, and the couple was treated to Sunday brunch at the hotel’s upscale restaurant.



To take the experience yet another step beyond simply wonderful, my friend allowed our recipient's husband to bring in personal items and photographs to help transform the space into a cozy echo of her room at home. The hotel welcomed their Moment of Joy guests with a fruit basket, anniversary card, and rose petals on the bed. They made sure there were fresh flowers in the room every day and made gifts of the luxurious bathrobes.

My request was clear and specific. Because of the framework of rapport Lena and I had already established, I was able to assume that my friend would at least be willing to hear me out and offer suggestions. I was able to make the request with the reasonable hope that she would be willing and happy to accommodate me.

In other words, based on that framework of rapport, I assumed the best from her; I anticipated good things. She, in turn, assumed the best from her staff, and they were able to create an experience that touched and delighted their guests, giving them wonderful memories to alleviate some of the pain.

I have no firsthand knowledge of Lena's relationship with her staff, but based on results, I think it's pretty obvious that she has an empowering framework of rapport with them, one that is built and modeled on mutual respect.

I believe the opportunity to embrace this couple and give them an experience that made their jaws drop delivered its own rewards back to my friend and her staff that were tenfold of their own expectations. Can you imagine the honest pleasure on the faces of each staff member as they greeted their guests that weekend, knowing they were part of something beautiful?

When you ask a favor of another person, you ask for a gift. But you also provide an opportunity for them to gift themselves with the pleasure of being helpful, and of making a difference in someone's life, no matter how small. People want to feel needed. It's empowering.

If I had hemmed and hawed when I approached my friend, I wonder what the results would have been. What do you think her subconscious response would have been if I had begun my request with, "I am afraid this might put you out, but would you ... ?" or "I am sure this is asking too much, but can we ... ?"

She would have had the same initial response that most people have when approached this way: Lena would have subconsciously judged the request by how much it would put her out. She would have been asking herself, "What is this big, awful thing he's asking and why is he putting the burden on my shoulders?" And her reaction would have been reasonable, natural and excusable. If I had asked that way, I would have been setting her up to have a negative reaction.

The weekend turned out to be wonderful, beautiful, and a pleasure for everyone involved. It gave a Moment of Joy to a couple who sorely needed it and who would truly cherish it.

But how did I know what to ask for? Lisa had to ask it of me first, and she had to face the challenge of asking specifically. It was a challenge because she was unused to putting a name on what she wanted, especially when it came to wanting something for herself. Lisa's was a common dilemma; she was so used to "doing for" all the people around her that she had forgotten the value of asking for something for herself.

There is value in asking for something for yourself. It empowers you, and it empowers the other person or people who help you. That's a very good, very healthy gift to give others.

Many, many people give constantly to others without asking for anything for themselves. They shy away from the idea of imposing on another person, or being an inconvenience, or appearing selfish and greedy. But here is what I want you to understand: When you use respectful elegance inside a healthy and empowering framework of rapport to ask specifically for what you need, there is no place for imposition and inconvenience. The other people will know that they are free and safe to say "no," but it is more likely that they will be pleased and proud to help you.

As for appearing selfish and greedy, if you allow others to know you and know your values, they will understand that selfishness and greed are out of character for you. If you understand that a request comes with equal opportunities for "yes" and for "no" responses, you are fine. There is a difference between making a request and making a demand. Rest assured that if you do start taking on those less-than-desirable qualities those who have a safe framework of rapport will call you on it. They'll do it with respectful elegance, too, so there's nothing to fear from reaching out and asking for help.

If you are one of those selfless individuals who puts everyone else first, I would really like you to consider this: When you refuse to ask others for help, you withdraw opportunities for them to grow and give, and you steal chances for them to feel the intense pleasure and pride you feel when you help others. Would you classify that as selfless or selfish? Based on what you have learned in this book so far, would you consider asking for help empowering for yourself and the other person, or disempowering?

I would like to borrow part of Lisa's story from the Life is For Giving Web site to demonstrate the good that can happen when you learn to ask.

“Lisa Bruce has been battling cancer for the last four years. She and Nelson, her husband of ten years, have been courageously fighting her illness while experiencing a number of financial hardships along the way. They are currently living in an older trailer that has some structural integrity issues, has black mold and a barely functional heating system.

“They are humble, caring folks that make the best of what they have.

“In the spring of 2006, Nelson became aware of the “Moment of Joy” program and expressed a wish for Lisa to have a special moment given to her by the **Life is For Giving Foundation** (LIFG). After several months, Lisa’s condition improved to where she felt comfortable enough to meet with Bob and Nancy Nicoll, co-founders of LIFG.

“On a Friday afternoon in late January 2007, we were able to meet with Lisa and Nelson. What a humble, caring couple. It was a very poignant meeting, as Nancy is a survivor of ovarian cancer and recently had breast cancer as well. She and Lisa made a strong connection and as the initial meeting came to a close, Lisa was asked to compile a list of wishes.

“She was very emotional about this prospect. Most of her life has been dedicated to giving to her family, husband and children. We persisted and convinced Lisa that having her think about something special and memorable for herself was both appropriate and, quite frankly, “the order of the day.”

“By the middle of the next week, Lisa had compiled a list of wishes:

- A trip to Hawaii ... while there, “if” possible, meet the cast of “Lost.”
- A stay in a downtown Anchorage hotel for a great tourist weekend.
- A day of pampering at a Day Spa ... nails, facial, massage.
- Denali Train ride to the Park to stay for the weekend and tour the park.
- Health club membership for swimming and or other things to help me get stronger; maybe Nelson too!!
- A Crystal Radiant Heater for the bedroom.

“The board of directors went to work and was able to provide a few of the wishes on her list. First was a wonderful day at the **Radiance Salon & Spa** of Anchorage. Owner Angel Kirk and her staff gave Lisa a full day of pampering on her special day.”

By the print date of this book, Lisa had received the hotel stay, the trip to Hawaii, and the spa day from her list. But there’s more. People came out of the woodwork to provide extras on a par with the hotel’s extra efforts, like the Anchorage bank that provided the couple with a debit card with enough money on it to cover all the meals in Hawaii.

Business associates and friends of mine created their own special Moments of Joy to add to the list, moments unlooked for. Lisa and Nelson were given complimentary tickets to the first **Alaska Wild** Indoor Football game, a momentous event in Alaska's history, and were whisked there in back in a classic, elegant **Seiji Limousine**. Gifts and "moments" were piled into their laps, and every last person who participated approached me to thank me for the opportunity to be a part of it all.

Lisa asked for a few special Moments of Joy. In return, both she and Nelson were showered with outpourings of love and graciousness, and dozens of people in the community were empowered by the chance to make a difference in their lives.

Within the established framework of rapport, you can ask for anything.

It provides a safety net of sorts that allows you the courage and security to ask specifically and respectfully for what you need. It allows for gracious acceptance of refusal from your partner, acceptance being the norm. It also creates an arena for expanded ideas.

This refers to favors from friends, developing business deals, and even relationship issues.

If you have established a framework of rapport with a casual friend, you can ask for a racquetball partner, ride to the airport or that extra ticket to the game. Your request will be greeted with pleasure because it is a pleasure spending time with you. You make sure your friend knows you listen to their opinions, appreciate their humor, and acknowledge their point of view. Everything about your body language conveys how much you enjoy spending time with them.

Your reward for this openness is a friend who enjoys spending time with you, even if it means giving up Wednesday evenings to regular racquetball games, or sleeping in on Saturday morning so you can be on time for your flight, or that extra seat at the biggest game of the season.

As anyone who has been in sales can tell you, there is a moment when you meet a prospective client for the first time that is touched with uncertainty. How will you be received? Is there potential for a personal connection, a mutually beneficial business relationship, possibly even a friendship? Will this person help you in your career; will you help him?

My answer always is, and always will be: Of course! There is always potential for all of the above. The trick is in opening the door to let it in and let it happen. If just one of you has strong rapport skills, you will quickly find yourselves comfortable with each other, and the door will begin to swing wide.

If you are adept at the art of conversation, you will draw your client into a framework of rapport. Thoughtful word choice that maintains the clarity in your message, attentive listening, congruent body language and appropriate responses will signal that you are a person worth doing business with.

Think about it. Think about the people you do business with in the many different areas of your life. Who do you enjoy working with? Why? I'm willing to bet your answers have a lot to do with how you feel about your experiences with them.

An easy example is when we play the role of a customer, perhaps at that coffee shop I mentioned earlier. Most of us are creatures of habit. Once we find a coffee shop we like, we will return to it repeatedly, and may even go out of our way to get to it. What makes one coffee shop better than another? What makes you choose between two coffee shops within equal distance of your office? What makes buying coffee less of an errand (I've seen some of those lines people wait in) and more of a pleasure? Frankly, it has a lot to do with how you are received when you walk in the door or place your order.

I had a co-worker once whose behavior demonstrated this very thing. Our offices were in a strip mall, just a few doors down from an eatery with an espresso machine. My co-worker would walk down every morning and order her usual. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, she started coming in with coffee from somewhere else, somewhere I happened to know added several minutes to her commute time.

When I asked her about it, she told me that the place nearby had mediocre coffee at best, but there was one barista there with whom she had struck up a friendship of sorts and who had made the walk down there a more complete experience each day. My friend admitted that part of overlooking the poor coffee was the shop's convenience. But when that barista left the business, there was no one left who bothered to learn her name, let alone chat with her, and the value of convenience went down considerably. When that happened, she finally sought out a new place with better coffee.

When you negotiate a sale or purchase, reach out to vendors, or initiate a business deal, the rapport you have with the individuals involved influences your decision to work with them. How you are treated, and how you treat them, makes a huge difference in how comfortable you are doing business with each other, how many concessions you are willing to make, and how much you are willing to ask for.

All other things being equal, or near enough, how you are spoken to, listened to, and responded to will tell you how you are valued.

Keep in mind that the way you speak to, listen to and respond to others never fails to tell other people loudly and clearly how much you value them.

Your framework of rapport is most important at home. If you have a consistently strong rapport that is open, honest, genuine and reasonable, you can even ask the impossible from your teenager: Help with the chores.

Consistency is the key here. And you have to go first. You have to be the calm, trustworthy, hard-working and respectful one. Consistently.

If you have been paying attention, when you ask your teenager to do the dishes, you will know how to ask so that you get the results you want.

“I have a lot of work to do. Would you please do the dishes tonight so that we can spend some time together?”

“I’m really looking forward to hearing about your game. If you will do the dishes while I clean up in here, we can hang out and you can tell me all about it.”

“It is so great to come home to a clean kitchen. It makes a huge difference to how much energy I have at night and how I feel about cooking dinner. Will you please do the dishes each night before I come home?”

Every contact you make with another person is an opportunity to create a mutually empowering framework of rapport. Imagine what your life would be like if you spent your day moving from one successful communication to another.

There’s an art to conversation. You could call it the art in articulation.

Conversation is a dance of give and take. You must be prepared to give your full attention and take in the other person’s words. Truly connecting with another human being when we’re sharing ideas, thoughts and opinions is one of the most important drives we have in society.

That connection is the key to productive, engaging, satisfying conversation. Without it, you go nowhere. You get stuck in the small talk zone, neither one of you finding a reason to engage in the meaningful exchange of information or explore common interests and common goals.

When you speak to another person, tap into every sense. Be wholly present. As my friend with the 10-year-old boy tells him, “You have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Listen twice as much as you speak, and you will be amazed by what you learn.”

Just as an artist brings the spectrum of colors he will need to the canvas when he stands in front of it to paint, bring all your tools to your conversation. Choose empowering words, listen intently, make eye contact, make sure your body language echoes what you are saying and thinking. Physiology plays a very large role in conversation, and congruency plays an even bigger one.

Being congruent in your thoughts, words, physiology and actions is essential to successful communication.

Respectful elegance in conversation means thinking, pondering, considering, speaking, listening and behaving as though your partner's message is important. Whether it's a funny story, a business proposal, gossip or a chance to vent about a bad day, here is your chance to fully express your concern and pleasure in being a part of their world.

Stepping out of the small-talk zone requires ramping up your skills. You have to bring it to get it, though, so be prepared for some more of that special kind of effort that feels hauntingly similar to work. Ramping up your skills requires re-learning, and as you know that means you're into some more of that cognitive-emotive dissonance.

Through conscious effort and practice, you can develop the art of paying closer attention to how other people respond to what you're saying. There's listening, and then there's hearing, and then there's interpreting. When you are congruent in your thoughts, words and actions, you are able to tune into the other person's thoughts, words and actions. With that, you are then able to interpret each component of their message on all three levels as well.

It's easy to get carried away and so thoroughly involved in what you're saying that you miss subtle cues from the other person.

It sounds more complicated than it is. Better interpretation comes from paying attention with all your senses. It's as simple as that. And yet, it's surprising how many people need to be taught how to do this. Or should I say "re-taught"? As a child, you interpreted the messages of adults around you like a well-oiled machine. You could read them like a book before you knew what a book was.

Small children watch faces intently with large, unblinking eyes. They search for visual clues to mood and purpose as they listen to tone and voice, and they soak up how warm or cold, relaxed or tense an adult's body is when they are communicating. They learn an entire language this way, sometimes two. Imagine what we could learn as adults if we paid that much attention in our conversations.

Of course, the most direct way to gather information is to ask for it. How often do you sit down with another person, start asking questions and find yourself comparing the task with getting blood from a stone? Some people just refuse to open up and share. But you may be surprised how often the problem lies in the questions you're asking.

Rapport-laden questions of interest will elicit mountains of information. A rapport-laden question of interest is an open-ended question that has something to do with the other person that they can relate to or that will serve as a jumping-off point.

If you're frustrated by "yes" and "no" answers, stop asking questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no".

"Do you like being in Alaska?" That's polite, but hardly original.

If this person has moved to the state recently, they have probably heard it a million times and have a pat answer they throw away easily.

"Yes, thank you" is a predictable and perfectly polite answer, and hardly interesting. After all, they're likely to be interpreting yours as a throw-away question. The question and answer, therefore, have equal weight.

Good conversation starters send the message that you are interested in their answer.

"What do you like about being in Alaska? Have you found anything about being up here that was unexpected?"

"I really like being able to ride my bike on the trails that run everywhere. I have never lived anywhere with so many beautiful trails. And there are always lots of other people using them. I had no idea moose were so big! I had no idea how dangerous they are. Someone told me that if I run across a male with huge antlers when I'm out riding that I should hold my bike over my head so I look like a bigger moose, and he'll leave me alone. Is that true?"

There are so many different conversations that can develop from that bundle of information that you may be left wondering how a full hour went by when you thought you'd just have a quick conversation standing at the mailbox with your new neighbor.

Imagine how much you could learn in a job interview. Consider the benefits of this kind of conversation with a potential son- or daughter-in-law. Would you like to be able to learn more about the people you are screening for a position within your department before or after you hire them?



The difference between the art of conversation and aimless gum-flapping is that one has a purpose and a pay-off, while the other takes you nowhere. Developing your conversation skills empowers you to create healthy frameworks of rapport. Healthy frameworks of rapport enable you to relate and connect to the other people in your world. Within an empowered framework of rapport you can build mutual trust, understanding in agreement, emotional affinity, and intense, harmonious accord.

People who have rapport in harmony with each other in the moment of conversation can almost anticipate each others' thoughts before they are verbalized.

The art of conversation comes down to using all the tools in your toolbox in one communication experience. Be there. Be alert. Be aware. Be present. Think before you speak, as you speak, and after you speak.

Avoid tying your messages up in (k)nots and choosing disempowering words. Make sure your word choice is empowering and that your sentences are structured around supporting those words. Pay attention to your body language, eye contact, and overall physiology. Say what you mean, and mean what you say, and above all employ respectful elegance when you say it. Ultimately, congruency of all of the above is the art in your articulation.



## *Bob-ism #6*

*Why would you ever attempt to motivate yourself or someone else with the opposite of what you want?*







# CHAPTER 7

## GOOD NEWS: YOU GET TO CHOOSE HOW YOU FEEL

### ABC'S OF EMOTION

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By this point, you are able to see how improving your communication through better word choice is an empowering way to enrich your life.

Changing your life and elevating it to a new level where you feel confident, valued, able to manage your emotions, behavior and relationships, and able to accomplish all of your goals requires the ability to create and control your own paradigms. When you are able to identify your existing paradigms, you can then shift them to serve you and your purpose better.

A happier, healthier and more fulfilling life begins inside, within your thoughts and the way you look at the world. Your beliefs and your values dictate your word choice, which, when done thoughtfully, strengthens your communication skills, and you become able to share those beliefs and values in a constructive and productive way. That's empowering!

You choose words to express your thoughts, feelings, needs and point of view. Good word choice enables you to express yourself clearly, so that you can educate, motivate, influence and celebrate the people in your life. Strong word choice produces strong results; empowering words produce empowering results.

But what if your thoughts, feelings, needs and point of view are keeping you in an unsuccessful paradigm? Word choice can help shift you out of where you are trapped, but you will have to start at the root of it all: What's going on mentally and emotionally?

In order to make any successful changes on the outside, you must examine where your feelings come from on the inside.

In the 1950's, Dr. Albert Ellis introduced a breakthrough concept widely known today as Rational Emotive Therapy. He developed a very easy, very simple explanation of how this works, where our emotional reactions come from, and how it is in our power to change. He literally made it as easy as A-B-C. In fact, it's called the ABC's of Emotion.

This is how it breaks down:

A: refers to the event that took place

B: refers to your thoughts about the event, which encapsulates your beliefs, values and opinions

C: refers to your feelings, or emotional responses that are logical and sequential to your thoughts about the event

A leads to B, which leads to C. C is a result of B. B traps you in your paradigm, and is also the key to breaking out. Your feeling at C is the result of B. Remember Epictetus? (People are never disturbed by things, but rather their view of them.)

You have no personal ability to influence or change the event, but you do have personal ability to examine your thoughts, opinions and beliefs about it. When you change your thoughts, opinions and beliefs about an event, you change your emotional response to it. If you do so by consciously employing empowering tools, then you can replace damaging paradigms that hold you back and stunt your growth, and replace them with empowering paradigms.

In the 1970's, Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby, Jr., rounded out the ABC's with a D and an E. He expanded Dr. Ellis's theory and developed Rational Behavior Therapy. He took it a step further and hypothesized that if you go back to B and identify the faulty or disempowering thinking that leads to strong negative emotions, then you can change that thinking and thereby change the emotions that manifest as a result of your responses to A, the event. In D, he gives us the tools to dispute the original faulty or irrational. The new, more empowered emotions he labeled E.

In his ground-breaking book, *Help Yourself to Happiness* (1975), Dr. Maultsby outlines the basics of Rational Self Counseling and demonstrates the step-by-step process of the ABCDE model for working on one's issues. His insights and concepts on The Psychophysiology of Words, The Process of Emotional Education and Re-Education, and Cognitive-Emotive Dissonance are woven into my process of articulation on a daily basis.



I highly recommend you read *Help Yourself to Happiness* as it is one of the finest and most easily understood works on self help, and a primer for understanding the above mentioned concepts.

This is the process of re-education we talked about earlier, and here is the classic example of the ABC's of Emotion that so clearly demonstrates the entire concept in a nutshell.

A: A man is laid off from work. That's the event. There is nothing he can do about it. It just happened.

B: He has been raised to believe that a man who doesn't have a job is a slacker, a loser, and a burden on society. He thinks he has lost his ability to earn the money needed to pay the bills and feed his children. In his opinion, he is less than a man because he no longer has a job.

C: He is deeply shaken. He feels depressed. His shame turns his self-esteem to rubble. He is anxious and afraid that he will be unable to pay his bills and his children will starve.

The only way for this man to find his way out of this hopeless paradigm of failure and self-loathing is for him to progress through D and E.

D requires the man to re-examine B, his thoughts, about A, the event. First, does being laid off from one job mean he will be a burden on society for the rest of his life? No. Does being laid off from one job mean he has lost the skills and talents he brought to the job in the first place, or the skills and talents he acquired while working there? No.

He has a choice. He can choose how he thinks about being laid off, and what he thinks about being laid off. What if I told this man that being laid off was a golden opportunity to pursue another line of work within his career, or a whole new career, and that if he still had that job he would be unable to do so? His thoughts about the event would begin to change. He would be able to start looking at it as a gateway to new opportunity, rather than as the end of all opportunity.

Once he changes his perspective, how he then feels about being laid off also changes dramatically. Suddenly, he is filled with hope, open to new ideas, and able to recognize the different opportunities that begin to come his way.

The toughest and most challenging part of making that transition to E, the empowered emotions, is honestly and thoroughly examining your thoughts and beliefs about an event.

This trip through the re-education process will look familiar by now. Changing your beliefs about what an event means to you is going to drag you through cognitive-emotive dissonance. But at least with the understanding you have gained from this book, you will be able to recognize and embrace the process.

When I practice and teach the ABC's of Emotion, I focus on word choice as the key to getting from B and C to D and E. I believe the key to rational self-counseling is empowering self-talk, and empowering self-talk only occurs after you have eliminated disempowering words from your vocabulary.

Congratulations! Now you have all the tools for empowering self-talk you will need to bring you safely and steadily through this process. You have learned how to choose empowering words that strengthen and inspire you. You have learned the how and the why of the importance of steering clear of the (k)nots, shoulds and absolutes. You have developed the habit of respectful elegance and know how to create a healthy framework of rapport. You anticipate good things.

In this book, in this moment, I am handing you the opportunity to take all of those tools in your new skills toolbox that you have been using to nurture relationships with other people, and use them on yourself.

I challenge you right here and now to search your mind for the one event or situation in your life that is driving you bananas, crazy, around the bend with frustration, grief, self-hatred or anger. Choose one and tackle it. Apply what you have just learned about the ABC's of Emotion – check yourself to make sure you are being thoroughly honest – and see what happens.

Remain seated in your chair, or propped up in your bed, close your eyes and walk yourself mentally through A, the event; B, how you think about it; C, how your thoughts about A makes you feel. Then, flip it over and throw down with the big D. Consider other ways to think about the event, especially if those ways are uncomfortable, unfamiliar and slightly terrifying.

Now, once you're looking at the event through the eyes of a you with a different opinion, test out how that feels. Go on. Poke at it. Turn it over in your mind. Notice how your heartbeat and breathing have changed – slower? – faster? Do you like the taste of a new emotional reaction? Are you intrigued by the possibilities of looking at events with a different attitude.

The only reasons you have for old beliefs are that you were raised with them, you developed them to cope with trauma, society has imposed them on you, or another person has imposed their will on you. None of which are necessarily evil, but are they yours? Do you own them because they were handed to you, or do you own them because you thoughtfully, considerably and consciously developed them?

No one is inside your head with you. You have the complete and absolute freedom to think anything you choose about everything in your life. You choose to see the icy road as something to fear or something to accept with peace of mind. You choose whether another person breaks your heart or whether you see yourself as free to find a love shared. You choose whether you will dread Monday morning or whether you look forward to waking up to a fresh week full of renewed energy and purpose.

Monday morning! My heart goes out to Monday morning. But we'll come back Monday morning in a minute.

For now, think about this. If no one is in your head judging your beliefs, imagine what you can learn about yourself if you let your thoughts really reflect who you are at your core. Imagine what you can create for yourself without the hindrance of what you think you "should" think. It's never a good idea to should in your own brain.

Your current paradigm is a reflection of what you believe to be true. Everything within your paradigm – and I mean everything – is there because you brought it into your experience through your thoughts and your beliefs.

Have you ever noticed that good things always seem to happen to people who look for good things in everything that happens? That's a very simple example, but there is no need to for this concept to be complicated.

You create your experiences. Your word choice creates responses and reactions that you have the power to manipulate, whether you are aware of it or just blunder through your daily communications. Blundering, by the way, is a choice.

Now when something out of your control happens, you know that your thoughts and your feelings about it are in your control. Your paradigm is based on your thoughts and opinions about what has happened. In reality, you are still in control. You never stop being in control of your paradigm, regardless of the exterior wrapping.

Outward appearances are just so much window dressing, unless your thoughts and feelings are congruent with your choices, then your material trappings reflect who you are inside.

A person who believes the family is the center of the home will consciously or unconsciously provide a warm, comfortable environment where the family is naturally drawn together, whether they live in a tiny apartment or on a sprawling estate.

If you want a peaceful home where people speak kindly and treat each other with respect, you are responsible for creating it by setting the example and nurturing these traits in others. If, however, you say you want a peaceful home but are irresistibly and consistently drawn into noisy domestic dramas, you may want to take a look at why you keep making those choices. Either your actions fail to match your intentions, or your intentions are other than what you believe them to be.

If you keep reacting to the stimulus that upsets you but you have no idea why, or your reactions are inappropriate, it's time to examine your beliefs about what's triggering you, and re-evaluate those beliefs so that you can change your reactions, change your message, and maintain congruency in both. If you are embroiled in a heated situation, careful word choice is just the beginning of the solution. Word choice will only be effective if it is congruent with your beliefs and values.

A paradigm shift can be small and almost unnoticeable, or huge and unmistakable. Either way, it's based on your perspective, which ultimately means you are in control because your paradigm is your interpretation of reality. If you can reinterpret your reality, you can change it. And if you can change your reality, you can change your future reality.

Your current paradigm for each moment is your take on reality in that given moment. And it can change in a moment.

Now let's look at Monday mornings. Remember them? Society feeds us the notion that Monday is a drag. In print ads, TV shows, even comic strips, you know it's a Monday if there's ugly weather, cranky people, burnt toast and a host of other irritating mishaps. Only football fans are supposed to like Mondays, and that's only during the season and after the day is over.

But if every message you got from magazines, sitcoms, and movie trailers for the next week celebrated Monday with depictions of happy people, blooming flowers, bright colors and cheerful noises, you would start looking forward to Mondays with zest and vigor.

A paradigm shift can take time and conditioning, or it can take the blink of an eye.

One night my friend was jerked awake by a crash somewhere in his new house. His heart thumping in his ears and his eyes straining in the dark, he slid out from the warmth and safety of his bed, reached for something heavy to wield as a weapon, and made his way carefully downstairs. A million fears chased around in questions in his head: Who was there? What were they after? Would he have to fight? Did they have bigger weapons? Would he be able to protect his family?

He swallowed, steeled himself, and threw on the kitchen light switch, ready to swing with all his might at the threatening intruder.

Broken shards of pottery were strewn all over the floor. Interrupted from her grooming on the counter where the vase had once stood, the family cat blinked back at him. Obviously, she had cleared a space for herself on that counter, and the crash that had woken my friend was the result.

My friend laughed. In an instant, fear had turned to relief. As soon as he had enough information to change his understanding of the event, he shifted out of the paradigm of fear, anxiety and being ready for a fight, and right into a paradigm of warm, familiar life with a cat.

The paradigms in which you choose to move and breathe really depend on your commitment to the claim that your beliefs and values have the exclusive right to be right. Are you open to looking at things from a different direction so that you can define and achieve your goals? Do you have to be affected by a challenging economy, or can you approach those challenges as opportunities for innovation in your products, services, and marketing materials?

To quote the Greek philosopher Epictetus (ca 55 to ca 135 AD), “People are not disturbed by things but rather their view of them” (Again, please excuse his use of a (k)not). In other words, blame of the thing for disturbing you is misplaced; your thoughts about the thing disturb you.

Many people avoid changing their paradigms by crawling into tight, dark holes of denial. I hate to tell you this people, but denial and avoidance fail as coping mechanisms; they create their own paradigms and trap you there until you face what you have to face.

With the ABC’s of Emotion and the tools you will pick up in the next chapter, Circling the Situation, you will see that facing what you have to face is empowering, enriching and really, truly makes you stronger.



## *Bob-ism #7*

*Empowering word choices impact your life;  
use them to attract the life you want.*









# CHAPTER 8

## CIRCLING THE SITUATION THERE ARE NO OPPOSITE SIDES

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Intelligent word choice can enlighten others to your point of view and enable you to see theirs. It can help you influence behavior, motivate, encourage and empower. It is an excellent tool for both problem solving and problem avoidance.

I use the ABC's of emotion as the foundation for my deepest belief about shifting personal paradigms. I call it "Circling the Situation."

Imagine an object at the center of a wheel. If the wheel has eight spokes and you stand at the first one and look at the object in the center, you will see the sides of it that face you. If you move to the second spoke, more of the object will be revealed to you, while some of it will move out of sight. Move again to the next spoke, and you will have yet another, slightly different perspective. Circling the object reveals its different aspects to you; you see its qualities according to your point of view.

The same is true for any fact, issue, or idea. Changing your opinion is as easy as shifting your point of view. Even a slight change in perspective can lead to huge rewards. When you develop the skill to mentally circle a situation, you open yourself up to endless possibilities.

The negative emotions that come with being stuck in one perspective melt away into nothingness; you realize that you have choices about how you see – and therefore how you feel about or react to – what's going on. You also find

yourself seeing the good and potential in others and jumping to conclusions less frequently. Holding grudges becomes a thing of the past, and the sweet ability to forgive enters your experience.

Circling the situation allows you to step outside the box of limitations where your existing paradigms have you trapped.

It's important to note that I use a circle here because circles have no sides, and neither do facts. I repeat: Circles have no sides, and neither do facts.

The price of gas is a fact. It is high to the consumer, fair to the merchant, low to the supplier. The price of gas in the United States is outrageous to Americans and Europeans. It's outrageously high to Americans who have always paid less than Europeans, but it's outrageous to Europeans that Americans complain about the price of gas when prices in the U.S. continue to be much lower than they are throughout Europe.

The key to shifting your personal paradigms lies in the understanding that there are no sides, wrong or otherwise; there are just facts and perspectives.

A fact has no charisma, variable strength, or personality of its own; it's a fact. How you feel about it, or your perspective, lends the fact character, depth and intensity in your mind – but it has none of its own. A fact is a fact.

If it is 32 degrees in Anchorage, you can infer that water will freeze. That's all. It would be pointless to try to convince someone from Miami who has just flown in to visit that it feels anything other than cold. But to someone who has just flown in from Barrow, where temperatures are consistently below zero, 32 degrees will feel refreshingly warm. Their opinions affect their experiences, but neither their opinions nor their experiences affect the fact that the temperature is 32 degrees.

In the late 1970's, after graduate school and several years in private practice, I took a position with Union County Counseling Services, the local Community Mental Health Agency in Anna, Illinois, where I focused on Rational Self-Counseling & Rational Behavior Therapy to serve my clients.

I had given a lot of thought to how I set up my office. I wanted it to reflect my beliefs, and to serve as an environment for open communication and steady growth. First and foremost, I made sure to include an area with comfortable seats that was separate from my work desk. If I was going to help the people who came to me, I wanted them to feel at ease and to understand even on a subconscious level that I was in the trenches with them, as opposed to making suggestions from the other side of some cold desk that put me in a different physical space.

There was enough room for a coffee table within the cozy sitting area, and indeed a nice rectangular one was offered for my use. But I rejected it based on the shape; rectangles have sides. I refused to give the appearance that I sat “on the other side” from my clients and most importantly, I wanted to break down the belief that issues have sides in the first place.

We approach the issues in our lives from our unique perspectives. To say that an issue has sides is to limit possibilities. Sides never overlap, never meet in the middle, and never have more than a few dimensions. Human situations – human issues – are complex. Perspectives do overlap, overshadow, bend, twist, meet in the middle then diverge radically. And they have unlimited dimensions.

Rather than bring a rectangle into the space, I fashioned a coffee table out of the top of a round cable wheel. It was the perfect shape for explaining what I mean by circling a situation. Having no sides, the table enforced my belief that there are no sides to the issues that confront us, wrong or otherwise; there are just facts and the perspectives from which we examine them.

My round table was a teaching tool.

Judy and David were among the very first couples who came to me for marriage counseling in this office, and they quickly became a powerful demonstration of how circling a situation can lead to more open communication and greater intimacy.

Judy walked into my office fed up with her husband. Dave trailed behind, very much the spineless wallflower Judy saw him to be. She was full of complaints about him. To hear her tell it, Dave was nothing short of pathetic. The more she spoke about him and his inadequacies, the more he withdrew. He virtually wilted on the seat in front of me.

After listening to her for a while, I leaned forward and asked, “Judy, do you think there is another way to see him?”

“No,” she said. “He’s an idiot.”

What Judy failed to realize, and what I gradually learned, is that without her around, Dave was a different man. Moving through his day on his own terms, he was like Tarzan, full of confidence and charisma, and master of his territory.

But Dave was tired of Judy’s constant criticisms and would shut down whenever she was around. He conserved his energy for when he was away from her.

Judy was limited by her narrow vision of Dave. She was stuck judging him by standards that were set long ago and made no allowances for changes in circumstance or personal growth. There was no room for forgiveness of little quirks; everything was a huge problem. She was there to “fix” Dave, whom she defined as the problem, and thereby fix their marriage. Dave just wanted to fix the problems, whatever they were, and move on.

My challenge was to open her eyes to a new way of looking at her husband.

The first step was to encourage them to shift their language from “problem” to “situation.” Labeling something a problem infers that there is only one way to look at it, only one way to solve it. If two people look at it differently, it will never be solved. However, if something is labeled a situation, the invitation is open to multiple opinions, cooperation and compromise. There is more potential for forward movement in a situation than there is in a problem.

Judy and Dave had different opinions about their respective skill sets. They called this a problem. To Judy’s way of thinking, there was only one solution: Dave needed to change.

But once I relabeled their differences as a workable situation, they were open to ideas.

Judy needed to be receptive to the idea that there was more to Dave than met her eye. So I began with another of my favorite teaching tools, one that demonstrates that even the problems – situations – that appear to have only a few possible solutions actually have far more than at first assumed, and that assuming there is only one possible outcome to or definition of a situation is a big mistake.

In the middle of my round table I had placed a Soma cube. Measuring about three inches on every side, these puzzles are made up of seven interlocking pieces in different juxtapositions. Once broken apart, there are more than 200 ways to put them all back together to reproduce the cube.

I picked up the puzzle and quickly broke it apart, scattering the pieces on the table. I then invited Judy to rebuild it.

“I can’t,” she said.

“Sure you can.”

She crossed her arms, much like she did when I tried to get her to see Dave in a different way, “It can’t be done.”

I picked up the pieces, one by one, and rebuilt the cube. She sniffed. I broke it apart and did it again, a different way. I then proceeded to rebuild the cube five or six different ways, all the while talking to her about solutions being there whether we saw them without help or needed someone to show us.

“When you take the time to learn how to approach a situation from different directions,” I told her as I finished locking the last sequence of pieces together, “and spend the time practicing, you will be amazed by the way your mind opens up to other possibilities.”

I shared with Judy and Dave that the Soma cube was a great example of the process of re-education.

“But I can’t do it,” Judy protested.

“Of course you can,” I said. “First, you have to decide that you can learn how to do something new, and that you want to learn how. That’s new intellectual insight.”

My language appealed to her, and she picked up the pieces.

“As I walk you through the theory of rebuilding the cube, notice that it starts to make more sense the more times you do it.”

In demonstrating this process of converting practice, I was showing her that repetition is the mother of skill.

She nodded, keeping her eyes on what she was doing.

“Handling the pieces for the first time and experiencing them actually fitting together felt a little weird, right? That’s cognitive-emotive dissonance, the cool but scary part of relearning a skill. But notice that the more you do it, the more comfortable you become. It’s your major sign that you’re learning something new.”

Judy’s experience with the Soma cube was very similar to learning to drive on the other side of the road. She was then going to go through the same process to learn to look at her husband a new way.

She grinned, and I could tell that her brain was starting to click. What was a mystery moments ago was becoming something manageable. Suddenly, she slid the last piece into place and put the finished cube triumphantly on the table.

“Putting the pieces together gave you a new emotional insight. You felt the new feeling of success. You know how to solve the puzzle. You know that it is possible. That is now part of your personality, and you will never look at the pieces of a Soma cube the same way again.”

Judy glowed with pride. It was a major accomplishment. What had been impossible to her five minutes ago was now a task she could complete.

“It’s time to take this idea and apply it to your situation,” I said. “Judy and Dave, you learned one way of communicating with each other, and obviously it stopped working for you a while ago. Now it’s time to re-learn, or re-educate yourselves. It’s going to feel a little weird, a little foreign, at first, because you’re adapting old behaviors to a new way of thinking, but just like mastering the puzzle, when everything clicks it will all become second nature.”

Finally, Judy was open to learning new techniques for communicating with Dave.

I put the cube back in the center of the table and told them both to stand up.

“Look at the cube from where you’re standing,” I said. They did. “Now move to your left and look at it. Looks a little different, right?”

I continued to move the couple around the table, a little at a time, driving home the way the cube looked slightly different each time their perspectives changed.

It took hardly any time at all for them to catch on to what I was saying. The cube itself looks different from different angles. Break it apart and you can start to see how the elements that make up a fact have different shades, shapes and angles. If you turn the pieces in your hands you can begin to imagine the variety of ways they fit together with other pieces to make a cube.

Next I had Dave stand still while Judy walked slowly around him. As she did so I pointed out that since there are 360 degrees in a circle, they had 360 different views of each other. If he turned in unison with her, he would then see her in 360 different environments. At one point she had the window behind her, at another point she had the painting on the wall, and so on.

As Judy walked slowly around her husband, I drew her attention to just how many different ways she was seeing him physically, just in that setting. There are 60 degrees within each of the 360 degrees of a circle. That multiplies out to 21,600 minutes in a single circle. Breaking it down further, there are 60 seconds in every minute of every degree of a circle. That multiplies out to 1,296,000 seconds.



If she kept her eyes on Dave while walking around him, Judy would move through nearly 1.3 million ways of seeing him.

To expand the concept, I threw myself into the picture.

“What if I stand still over here while you move in circles over there? Now, what if I move in circles, too?”

There are as many solutions to a situation as there are ways to look at it. The underlying belief system here is that there is always a way to manage, improve or even resolve a situation.

A fact will always be a fact. One plus one will always equal two. However, there is no limit to the number of things you can use to add up to two, including forks, bicycles, cats, iPods, cereal bowls, and so forth. One of each plus another one of each will always equal two of each.

Without this understanding, people have a tendency to minimize their search or stop looking for alternatives once they think they've found a resolution, or once their initial ideas have been blocked.

The ability to believe in more than just the obvious solutions stretches your mind to another level, and opens it up to innovation. When you open yourself up to the multitude of different ways to look at, see, feel, touch, smell, hear or think about a fact, you expand your mind to embrace limitless possibilities. And then the fun begins.

Remember, when you label something as a problem, your mind gets stuck. If, however, you think of it as a situation, you know from the get-go that there are nearly 1.3 million different ways to look at it therefore a win-win solution is within reach.

Judy was realizing there were a lot of ways for her to think about Dave. With more work specific to their issues, she took a chance and allowed herself to change her perspective, a little at a time. In response to her change in attitude, Dave began to open up around her again and behave more like the confident, dynamic man he was. Being surprised and pleased by how attractive she was beginning to find him again, Judy responded with more generous support and positive reinforcement. And as they continued in this cycle of risk and reward, they learned they could trust each other when vulnerable. As the bond of trust strengthened their levels of intimacy deepened, including sexually, and they both bloomed as people.

The dramatic changes between Judy and Dave took place in about eight sessions.

Our opinions about other people are based on two things: What they present to us and who we need them to be. But these are merely opinions, and heavily biased ones at that. A dangerous drug lord looks like a doting daddy to his child, and the most heinous war criminal was once someone's innocent baby.

Dave's friends and co-workers saw him as a fun-loving, confident, warm and gregarious guy. Judy was unable to see him this way until she recognized that she had been trapped inside a paradigm that kept her looking at him from the same old points on the circle. Once she recognized that there were other ways to see him, she opened herself up to the possibility that there was more to him than she realized, and allowed herself to start looking at him a different way.

How you communicate is a demonstration of your perspective, point of view, and outlook.

Shifting a paradigm requires the ability to see a situation from more than one point of view. Without the willingness to do this, your only choice is to stagnate. Unless you want to be stuck where you are, you must be prepared to step a little to the left, moving around the circle to test out other ways to see the situations in your life.

When you are able to clearly and objectively examine your thoughts and feelings, consider multiple points of view and actively choose to change your perspective, you will find that you will be able to create what you want. At first, these paradigm shifts will have pleasantly surprising outcomes. But soon you will be able to identify, predict and control what you want to have happen. You will learn how to make room and then how to bring into your experience that which you desire.

Again, the key is in your word choice. When you master these skills, articulating your desires will be tantamount to speaking your future.

## *Bob-ism #8*

*To help you get focused, untie the (k)nots,  
and experience more of what you want.*







# CHAPTER 9

## THE NEXT RIGHT THING HOW TO USE THE TOOLS YOU NOW HAVE

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So now you have acquired all these empowering tools for changing your life. What are you going to do with them? You can shift your paradigms now, so it's time to figure out what to shift them to.

In this final chapter you will learn about the importance of doing the next right thing. That is, shifting your paradigms so that you are an even more productive, contributing, participating member of society. You have the ability within you to make a difference. You can create anything you want for yourself, and now I would like you to consider the power in creating good for the world around you.

A simple paradigm shift can change your reality, allowing your mind to entertain new ideas and recognize possibilities that were previously hidden because they had no way in before you opened your mind.

First, let me start with speaking your future. Remembering that you are in control of the paradigm you create, I would like you to focus your energy on creating an experience in the future that you want. Make sure you use all the tools in your kit, especially your understanding of word choice and being specific about what you want.

Which do you believe to be a more powerful statement, "I want to go to Japan some time" or "I will go to Japan in March?"

You have to begin at the beginning, at your first intention. “I will” is by far more powerful than “I want,” but here comes the tricky part. You have to identify and ask for the details, and you have to be specific.

If you come up to me and say “May I please borrow some money, Bob?” I will check my pockets for change and give you what’s there. It might be as much as a dollar. However, if you approach me and say “Bob, this is my situation ... May I borrow \$1,000?” Then it’s a whole different ball game.

If you need \$1,000, ask for \$1,000. Be clear and specific. If you crave peace and kindness in your home, tell yourself and everyone who will listen that you crave peace and kindness in your home. And then make sure you paint a specific picture of what that looks like to you and what you need to achieve it.

“I crave peace and kindness in my home. When I speak to my husband I will choose empowering words and employ respectful elegance. I will begin right now to build a framework of rapport where both of our opinions are respected and we can share them safely with each other. I will nurture our new-found ability to circle each situation and will stop and go through the ABC’s of Emotion before lashing out at him.”

Speaking your future actions will plant that seed in your head, and then it will begin to grow. You will soon be unable to resist acting in ways that lead you to those practices, and before you know it, you will have modeled then created peace and kindness in your home.

Work diligently to create and maintain congruency when you speak your future. You want to go to Japan. That’s a nice wish, nice enough that you tell yourself “I will go to Japan in March.” But you are still a long way from being specific. Explore what pulls you to Japan. Meditate on it. Picture yourself there. What will you do? What will you see and how will you feel? Keep refining your vision as you speak it until it clicks completely and you know in your core that your message about the future is congruent.

“I will go to Japan in March. I will go to Kyoto to witness the blooming of the cherry trees. I picture myself standing in the midst of rows of trees in full pink bloom. My heart beats in my ears to the beat of the city in the distance. Spring is warm and soft like the cherry blossoms.”

That sort of specific vision becomes a yearning, the desire to experience that vision places the idea at the forefront of your thought and you begin to ask for and accumulate the physical things you need to make it happen. You download images of cherry trees in bloom, read tourist reviews about Kyoto, start comparing air fare and hotel prices, and calculate how much money you will need to make it happen.



At work you tell anyone who will listen about what you are going to do, and plaster your work area with pictures and plans. You formally request two weeks off at the end of March and look forward to finding ways to save money every day, putting every little bit you can away safely. Working toward this goal is a pleasure.

When you get to Kyoto, you will find yourself under the cherry trees and you will absorb the moment on a breath that stills time. You will hear your heart beat in your ears and you will exist in that moment in pure experiential mode. And you will know you can create any future you choose.

You can apply the same method to a goal to close 10 deals by the end of the month, or raise \$10,000 for a charity, or earn a degree.

It is critical that you speak your future powerfully. Be clear. Be specific. No “ifs”, “ands” or “buts” allowed. Accept that what you say, think and feel about it is true for you, and watch yourself make it happen as you speak it to yourself and everyone around you. If you need help, ask for it from every source imaginable. Help comes cloaked in many disguises, and even your humblest of neighbors has friends, family, unique knowledge, interesting ideas and that precious commodity: Being there to hear you say it.

Changing your own future is just the beginning. I believe that with great empowerment comes great responsibility and great respond-ability. Empowered word choice will give you what you want. Choose your words carefully.

A friend of mine who is an entrepreneur in the fitness world refuses to waste a moment of his time on anything negative. He has calculated that he gets 86,400 seconds every day. That’s it. Once they’re gone, they’re gone. Comprehending this fact, he makes a point of maximizing the impact of each and every one of them. He helps people empower, enhance and strengthen their bodies for better health. None of the seconds he spends doing this is a waste.

He chooses to make a difference in the lives of others this way and it brings him great pleasure. He has an acquired set of tools and knowledge required for physical fitness and motivation. One day he looked around and realized that there were specific needs in his community for his skills. He responded by gathering his skills together and offering them to those who needed them. He runs his business ethically and honestly, but most importantly, he has chosen to create for his clients an environment that promotes self-confidence, pride in achievement, safety and respect. His clients respond to him and to his genuine interest in helping them to healthy lives, and it pays off more than he had imagined it could.

We all get 86,400 seconds every day. Some of us choose to maximize more of them, some less. You have the right to utilize them as you see fit. When they're gone, they're gone. It's up to you to capture them and use them to get what you want out of your day and ultimately out of your life.

There are people out there who walk aggressively through their seconds with a chip on their shoulder. They believe the world owes them something and it better give it soon.

If you are one of these people, please stop and pay attention. The world owes you nothing. You owe the world. It is a privilege to be here for however many seconds we get. When the seconds of our lives are gone, we're gone. There are no do-overs.

Since it is a privilege to be here, it just makes sense that you have a responsibility to be a contributor, and these are the only seconds you get to do so. What kind of mark you intend to make here? How are people going to remember you?

When you figure out what you want to leave behind, what you want to contribute to the world, your new empowered communication skills will allow you to make that mark in a powerful way. Your mark can be as big and wide spread or small and narrow focused as you see fit, but keep in mind that the more you give the more you will get back.

To be effective, the contributions that you create with your word choice must be guided by the philosophy of doing next right thing. Life is a series of sequences. When you choose to empower another or make a positive paradigm shift, you're doing the "next right thing." The consequences will be phenomenal. Please know that this one right thing is just the launching point for the next and the next and the next. It just keeps going.

To accomplish anything you must be willing to be fully engaged and participate on a regular basis.

Doing the next right thing will quickly become like breathing, first because it will stop being an action you're always aware of; second because you will begin to feel the need to do it almost as much as breathing; and finally because like breathing, there is no way to do it halfway or part time. Breathing requires inhaling and exhaling. Try to skip exhaling for a few minutes and get back to me.

Doing the next right thing is simply continuing the process and the pattern of empowering yourself and those around you.

My wife Nancy and I have collaborated on one of the ways we want to leave a legacy to the world. We co-founded *Life is For Giving Foundation*; an organization we created to make a difference in the lives of people confronted with terminal illness, and to help support local non-profits in their efforts.

The concept for *Life is For Giving Foundation* was the result of an epiphany I had years ago as the result of an intensely emotional self-help seminar, at what turned out to be the tail end of a dark, challenging time in my life. I had accumulated many reasons to ask for forgiveness, and I had to face up to the fact that I had to do a much better job of forgiving as well.

Things had started so well. I had friends and family who loved me. I had been a member of a championship college soccer team for three solid years. I had found a subject I was fascinated by, kept me fully engaged, made my mind stretch in new directions, and even gave me a career that I thoroughly enjoyed. When I opted to take my life in a different direction and explore the strong entrepreneurial side of my personality, I found an abundance of choices laid out at my feet.

My association with Business Network International (BNI®) began in 1989, when the organization was still called The Network. BNI® is a networking organization for business professionals that supports and educates its members on the art of word-of-mouth referral marketing. It is the world's largest organization teaching business networking, and has a very simple, yet profound, philosophy: Givers Gain®. What goes around comes around.

As happens with BNI®, a fellow business person recommended that I look into it. After one meeting, I was hooked. Here was a way for people from all kinds of businesses to connect with each other, forge partnerships, give and receive referrals, and learn how to grow their businesses through those connections.

I was so enthusiastic that I soon began to work with the Executive Director of BNI® Arizona, Norm Dominguez. He is currently the CEO of BNI®, and answers directly to the founder and creator of BNI®, Dr. Ivan Misner, but in 1989 he was busy developing and overseeing chapters throughout Arizona. I came on board to help set up new chapters, and we began a friendship that has lasted 20 years.

My job was to get out there and meet people, introduce the concept of this incredible networking organization to them, develop connections and help establish active chapters across the state. I got paid to do something I believed in and was born to.

For three-and-a-half years I started every business morning with a high-energy, productive and motivating BNI® meeting.

I moved from the state in 1993, and temporarily ended my association with the organization. Boy did I miss it. I missed the people, the meetings, the values and the amazing connections we all made.

In the absence of action that turned out to be an outlet for my true self, I began to make bad choices and take on negative personality traits. It was a dark time.

Even as I was faced with the consequences of my bad choices, I would keep going, keep trying to use the concept of word choice I had been toying with, and kept seeking out forums in which to use it, understand it better for myself, and test it out against or in union with other theories out there.

Eventually, I renewed my relationship with BNI®, and jumped right back on the leadership team. In my heart, it was like I had never missed a beat. It was like coming home; I was back where I belonged, doing what I believe in, building opportunities and helping people embrace them. I refuse to dwell on the millions upon millions of seconds that slipped by in the years between, but I'll tell you what: I'm happy to be back.

My renewed involvement with an organization I completely related to triggered something else in me. All of a sudden I had an irresistible pull to take two separate but related desires and make them real. I knew it was time to stop talking about this foundation Nancy and I dreamed of and give it life, and I knew it was time to take the work I'd been doing on the power of word choice skills public.

If I truly, genuinely wanted to make a real difference and begin a long chain of doing the next right thing that would change peoples' lives for the better, then this was how I was going to do it.

Nancy and I took the plunge and created the Life is For Giving Foundation. It is based on the principle of Givers Gain®, a key BNI® concept, and focuses on providing opportunities for people to give of their time, skills and gifts to assist others in improving their circumstances.

I chose the name deliberately as an example of powerful word choice. You can read it as Life is For Giving or as Life is Forgiving. Either way, it speaks the truth of our beliefs.

The act of giving, by definition, means to make a present of, a donation, to put in the possession of another for their use. Life is about understanding and demonstrating forgiveness, whether in a spiritual or secular sense. These are the core motivators of my life, and through word choice and introspection, Nancy and I were able to visualize, speak and ultimately make real the foundation that represents us to the world.

Through the Life is For Giving Foundation, we continue to do one next right thing after another. Better than that, it turns out that this humble little foundation has enabled many other people to do one next right thing after another, first by participating in our cause and then because now they have caught on to how rewarding it is to help make a difference and have continued to search out ways to reach others.

I had a kit full of word choice tools that helped me get what I wanted everywhere I walked in life. But what changed everything for me was when I finally fully understood the concept of doing the next right thing. I realized that I needed to apply it in order to make some pretty powerful paradigm shifts of my own, so I did.

As soon as I made doing the next right thing my life's work, the opportunities to help others do the same just flooded my world.

The tools in this book have been fully vetted by me; I have had to use them in my own life to counter the unhealthy and disempowering paradigms that trapped me in cycles of depression, divorce, dishonesty, an inability to be congruent in my messages, and some other pretty self-destructive behaviors. I'm here today to tell you that the moment I decided to do the next right thing, one after the other for the rest of my life, everything began to turn around. I shifted out of my unhealthy paradigms and found myself living within newer, better, more appropriate and more empowering ones.

I had been using the tools that I have put together in *Remember the Ice ... and Other Paradigm Shifts* to state my message clearly, influence others, create fantastic business deals, and guide events to go my way for many years, but had yet to figure out how to take it to the next level. I knew there was more to this amazing, empowering concept. And then I realized the next level I had been mulling over in my head is all about using this power for good.

As you come to the end of this book and reflect on the tools you have access to, and the choices you have control over, it is my sincere hope that once you realize your power you will make that leap to the next level.

Use your new tools to go beyond ending those pointless arguments with your spouse. While that's a great result, it's just the beginning. Take it to the next level.

You will know you are there when you have increased intimacy and deep devotion in your relationship.

Closing on a win-win business deal is another productive result of creating a framework of rapport with a client. The next level occurs when you develop a partnership that produces new, innovative, industry changing collaborations.

Doing the next right thing always takes you to the next level.

*Remember the Ice ... and Other Paradigm Shifts* gives you the tools, now it's up to you to take them in hand and create the life you want.

## *Bob-ism #9*

*Why would you ever begin any sentence with the phrase “I can’t”, when you are endowed with the ability to DO anything you put your heart and mind to?*









# APPENDIX

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What do I do now? What are my new words?

We have already identified “Not and the Hit List Six” as the words to eradicate first from your vocabulary. As I speak about Remember the Ice to audiences around the world, people will inevitably share other words they would like to see added to the list.

We have:

Empowering Alternatives

Not  
Don't  
Can't  
Won't  
Wouldn't  
Couldn't  
Shouldn't

I am excited about this program.  
I do see the power in my clarity.  
I can articulate my thoughts better.  
I will stop and think about my word choice.  
Would you like to join me?  
You could really see the difference in her.  
I want to be more accountable for my actions.

A few of their suggestions to add:

Try  
Impossible  
But

I can do it.  
What if I gave it a sincere effort?  
I like this, and I will work at it daily.

These are a few examples of making the shift from disempowering language to an empowering alternative. As I explained in chapter one, the (k)nots tie up your message in confusion.

**Don't forget the ice.** This phrase confused the customers into forgetting to buy ice. Rick wanted to have a better result, so I offered him a more empowering, reframed request: **"Remember the Ice."** It worked. His ice sales soared, and his customers got what they wanted as well.

In the next several pages I have included examples of poor word choices that I have heard on TV, over the radio, and in all kinds of conversations. I have compiled them for your review. See if you recognize any of them. Are you guilty of making these choices?

Do yourself a favor and grab a pen and a notebook, sit down and have some fun reframing the statements. You will smile as you realize the significant difference in the word choice and your own physiology, and sense the congruency of your message.

The key is to keep in mind what you desire to have happen, what you want to attract, and what you would relish as you recreate these statements. Focusing on empowering word choice will lead you to having more of what you want.

Empowering word choices impact your life; use them to attract the life you want.

Identify the confusing or contradictory message in each of the examples in this chapter, reframe the desire, then enjoy your journey into a realm of more powerfully articulated messages, leading you to better personal results as well as better teamwork with those you work with.

As you go through the examples I provide, remove each (k)not and read the statement without it. The confusion in the message will jump off the page. Ask yourself if that confusion is what you're going for. As you as you realize it is something you would like to avoid, decide to reframe it.

Let's take the first one on the list and discuss it for a moment.

Here is the scenario. You, your spouse, and your two children are traveling in the family car on a summer vacation. It is hot! Temperatures have been soaring over 90 for the past several days. Your trip has been a comfortable one, in the cool confines of your family sedan. Suddenly the AC stops working. You are unable to get to a service station for several miles, and it is now getting warmer in the car.

Now you are forced to use the 4-80 air conditioning of the old days (that's four windows down at 80mph). Things quickly become extremely uncomfortable. The car is muggy and the heat is wearing on your nerves. Your children, Jason and Haley, are doing their best, but just how long can young siblings keep it together? Your nerves are frayed; the air is now and the kids are nagging each other.

You know the scene.

"This is my side of the seat! Move over! Mom! He's putting his leg on my side."

"Mom, she is trying to take my stuff! Keep your hands off!" – Followed by some pushing and poking.

"MOM!"

You turn around and look at them sternly, saying in a determined voice, "Don't you ever do that again. I mean it."

As you say this, you know in your mind that you want them to stop, sit still, behave like angels, and get along with each other famously. Your basic intent is for them to stop pushing and poking each other, and to behave nicely. You want to tell them that yes, it is uncomfortable, and yes; we can, as a family adapt; and yes, the next town is only 25 to 30 minutes away; and yes, relief will be at hand.

Unfortunately, your stern request: "Don't you ever do that again. I mean it." Becomes: "Do that again. I mean it."

Wait a minute; I thought you wanted them to stop the particular behavior. Now let's consider an empowering alternative that will get you what you want.

"Jason. Haley. I have asked both of you to be considerate of each other. I know it is hot, and you are uncomfortable. I want you to stop poking each other and hitting; and I need you both to stop now. Thank you. Please do as you are told and we will make the best of the situation."

The empowering alternative creates an outcome that you and your children will enjoy more. It also opens up opportunities to reward them for good behavior. Who knows? Perhaps if they follow through and act as requested, there may be a chocolate dipped ice cream cone in their immediate future.

Okay, now it's your turn. Read the following statements all the way through, quickly please.

Don't you ever do that again. I mean it.

I don't want you making a mess.

What if I can't make it?

I can't see myself ever reaching that goal.

I don't want to deal with it.

Don't you think I want what's best for you?

I can't understand you.

I'm sorry I'm not what you wanted.

Don't spill the milk.

Can't you see how that affects me?

I won't be able to make it.

I shouldn't have done that.

Don't drink and drive.

Don't do drugs.

Don't go away.

Don't miss out on this special event.

Aren't you going to go to the fair?

I am not going to do that ever again.

You aren't much help here.

Wouldn't you like to see that again?

Don't you see?

We don't care if your car is not paid for.

They don't want you to return.

I don't just want to ask my kids to help.

Don't you see?

It's not normal to act this way.

Can't you do better than that?

Don't run red.

I don't believe what I just saw.

They're not going to say anything I haven't heard before.

He didn't want him to play three days in a row.

Don't forget.

I don't think I can do this anymore.

I wouldn't worry about it.

It wasn't an issue.

She doesn't know what she is talking about.

I'm not supposed to be talking with you.

If I didn't know any better.

They just don't understand the importance of the meeting.

Don't you think it will work?

Don't laugh

They didn't do that.

It doesn't get any better than this.

I don't feel that way.

Don't miss it.

Don't smoke.

It is not uncommon to find that in a man.

Don't give him too much trust.

Don't throw him a high outside pitch.

Do not pass.

Do not enter.

Taste buds don't lie.

You have to promise not to embarrass me.

Don't think it's the end of the world.

Don't get me wrong.

You won't find a better product.

You shouldn't do that.....

You are not going to believe what happened to me.

You don't have to be perfect.

If you're not in the zone, you're not in the game.

Please do not leave trade instructions on the voice mail, they will not be executed.

We won't be able to reach our goal.

You can't prove it.

I'm not bitter.

Don't touch that dial.

You shouldn't take it with alcohol.

What you don't know can hurt you.

I can't get enough of NFL Monday Night Football.

It's not a major thing.



Don't stop.

Don't crash.

Don't let your guard down.

I don't think I can take much more snow.

Don't give up.

Don't quit.

Don't over cook the meat.

Don't forget to turn off the stove.

You don't need to worry about that.

Do not get out of the vehicle.

Don't forget to write.

I am not interested at this time.

Don't staple your payment to the bill.

There won't be any abuses with this program.

We will not be getting back together.

I don't know what I would have done without them.

I am not going to call her.

It's March Madness. Don't miss a minute.

Don't wait until the last minute to enter your bracket picks.

Don't be one of those that missed out.

Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

I just don't want you interfering.

Please do not top off the tank.

Do not drive on the shoulder.

Don't you think you deserve better?

...and they just keep showing up and showing up and showing up...

Now think about some of the phrases you use in your daily life. Reframe them and get ready to use them the next time you speak. Enjoy!

I hope you have found this word choice exercise helpful, insightful, and paradigm shifting with respect to your future word choice. By identifying how you used to be wrapped up in (k)nots and experiencing confusion in your self-talk, you can move toward a more powerful, compelling and articulate form of communication.

When building a new house, the seasoned builder knows the importance of his framers. These folks are the ones building the infrastructure of the house. You are the re-framer of your word choice. You are building the infrastructure of your basic communication skills.

All communications can be improved by improving word choice. The selling of a product or service, parenting children, working through sensitive issues with loved ones, or other every-day conversations with your friend, boss, teacher, parent, or customer, can be improved by this technique.

You can design your outcomes. Embrace change. Enhance relationships, and Shift your Paradigms!!!

*There is **Power** in the **Clarity** of your **Articulation**.™*

Empowering word choices impact your life; use them to attract the life you want.

Bob Nicoll  
Eagle River, Alaska

Use the following pages to write out your empowering alternatives to the examples in the appendix.

Be creative.

Think outside-the-box.

Have fun.













# REMEMBER THE ICE, LLC

*There is power in the clarity of your articulation.™*

Get in Touch with the Chief Paradigm Shifter

Bob Nicoll has spoken before a wide range of audiences from 1 to over 10,000. These include individual consultations, various service organization luncheons, Chambers of Commerce, major network marketing conventions, youth leadership conferences, and sales organizations. He has travelled internationally and will be taking the message of Remember the Ice, globally.

He can assist in rewriting your sales literature, website content, etc. from a 'Remember the Ice' perspective. When your written word is as clear in articulation as your spoken word, your results are more effective, compelling, and meaningful.

Bob is available to consult with you for an entire work day. Hire him to shadow you and provide in-depth consultation as you go about your full day. He will assist you in using the concepts of Remember the Ice to help you achieve better results in your conversations, sales meetings, consultations, and more.

Talk with him about this exciting opportunity.

For more information about scheduling Bob as your speaker, or having him present a program or training for your organization, you can reach him:

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## Praise for *Remember The Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts*



Communication is of the utmost importance in business, networking, and life in general and Bob Nicoll's Remember the Ice program demonstrates how powerful results can be achieved in all areas, simply by focusing on word choice. I highly recommend it to everyone.

—Ivan Misner, NY Times Bestselling author and Founder of BNI

I met Bob at the BNI Ampang chapter in Kuala Lumpur where he gave a scintillating talk on the importance of 'remembering the ice'. Bob will help you break down the English language into its component parts before sticking it back together in a way that will ensure you get better communication with fewer words. 'Remember the Ice' is just one item in his box of linguistic tricks. If you want to make your words count without counting your words, try out Bob's programme.

—Matthew Pigott, Publicist, MP-PR, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, UK



...What I originally saw as a potential conflict of overlapping responsibilities instantly changed, in my inner awareness, into an opportunity to talk and work out mutually agreeable roles and responsibilities. It is easy to underestimate the power of your insights. It is easy to sit in a lecture and say, very nice, more positive thinking stuff. But I have to tell you, in making the effort to consciously apply the process; it feels like a major shift in me is taking place. I never expected it to be as internally significant.

—Duane Sherwood, Technical Writer, Anchorage, AK

## About the Author

Bob Nicoll has a passion for linguistics and empowering language choices. Since completing his Bachelors Degree in Psychology in 1972, and Masters in Counseling in 1974 he has focused his energies on studying the power of word choice: The Psychophysiology of Words.

Bob has been a counseling psychologist, a business owner/consultant, a motivational speaker, a sales trainer, restaurant owner, financial planner and a top sales manager. His passion is helping people shift their paradigms with respect to empowering word choices.



**Remember the Ice...and Other Paradigm Shifts** is a comprehensive program that teaches you the how and why of enhancing your communication skills with family members, friends, co-workers -- anyone who is important to you. It will help you stay focused on your task and accomplish more goals because you are conveying your message, and articulating your thoughts in a clear, precise manner. You will eliminate confusion and gain confidence in your message and ultimately attract more of what you want.

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