

“You, Inc. - The Art of Selling Yourself”

Harry Beckwith and Christine Clifford Beckwith
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Summary by Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

Foreward – Why I believe this work is so significant – **Bob Littell**

Why do some people just naturally seem to find success and have it so easy in life? Is it because they're better looking? You don't have to look around too far to see this isn't always true – except maybe in modeling and the entertainment industry where it certainly can make a difference. Is it that they are more intelligent? Once again, that helps in some fields but there's a big difference between '**IQ intelligence**' and '**Street-Smart**' intelligence which some might call **EI** (emotional intelligence – Daniel Goleman).

Could it be that they have really figured out – some without even realizing it – how to '**brand**' themselves in some unique ways which differentiate them and makes them a valuable commodity?

That's really what this book is all about and the Beckwith's share some great tips and ideas on ways to do just that. Where I don't specify whether it is Harry or Christine making the point, I'll refer to it as "**the B's**"

But the other thing about this exceptional book which makes it so valuable is the way it is written. This is a book that you can pick up ANYWHERE and read just a few pages, and you will find some pearls of wisdom that will make you more effective at whatever it is you do. . .especially in the **area of communication** – whether it's through **the written or the spoken word**.

And as usual, I don't Summarize the entire book. I give you a lot of the meat and potatoes, but hopefully tantalize you to want dessert which requires you to buy and own the book, in order to answer many of the questions I pose toward the last chapters of the book.

Chapter 1 – Sixteen Candles and Shrewd Waitresses: What People Buy.

Living Is Selling - The B's begin by reminding us that from our earliest childhood, we've all been '**selling**':

“You worked up a sales pitch to get your parents to take you to Disney World, raise your allowance, and extend your curfew. You pitched them on sleep-overs, a nicer bike, perhaps your first car. For that matter, you sold them on the accident that, ‘Wasn’t really my fault.’ And on a report card that seemed to suggest backsliding. And on and on.”

This helped you graduate to an adult selling career “when you tried to sell your college on admitting you, an employer on hiring you, and the car dealer on dropping \$500 from the sticker price.”

So are we ALL in sales? You bet and what this book is all about is helping you improve your ‘selling’ skills to make you a more effective salesperson and to “*make your life richer*”.

I love this quote of theirs –“*Life is a sale. And the path to success at both living and selling is the same.*”

The B’s describe unsuccessful sales people as those who, on a sales call, start out with their product and price and the company, and then at the end, begin to sell themselves. They suggest doing it just the opposite.

Here’s where I might throw in some of my own sales experience tips about reversing the sales process so that FIRST, you “**Uncover a person’s real needs**” (where do they hurt the most or where do they need help the most?) and you obviously do that by asking many probing questions. The second step which is the one most often left out – “**Create the desire to solve the need TODAY**”. If these two steps are done properly, the 3rd step – the presentation - is personalized about how your product or service can **fulfill those needs; solve those problems, or take advantage of those opportunities** which you have uncovered, and there is NO close per se. Whereas, for most inexperienced salespeople, they are taught how to glibly answer objections at the end. With a well-done sales presentation, the close is only a matter of choices – “*Would you like the blue one with the pink ribbon, or the pink one with the blue ribbon?*”

This said, I agree with the B’s that the presentation would be even stronger if you also begin by ‘**selling yourself**’ so long as it doesn’t come across too ‘**egoistic**’ which is a turnoff to most people. But we’ll cover this more later about ‘telling your story’ and the importance of showing this to several people to make sure it truly is YOU, and that it does come across well from their vantage point.

What You Really Sell - I found their next point to be one of the most interesting in the entire book. “*Life is more like high school than college*” meaning that ‘**popularity**’ and ‘**likeability**’ and other qualities that made someone popular or attractive are often the ones that also create success. But even if you felt you weren’t that popular or attractive in high school, the message really is that **there are ways to develop those traits** and one of the best ways they suggest is by helping others:

“If by using your skills you are able to help enough people, you will become secure and may become rich. . .Beyond that, however, the most critical thing you sell is literally yourself: your being. People buy optimists because they enjoy their company. They ‘buy’ people with integrity because people with integrity do what they say they will. Like Maytag washing machines, people with integrity can be relied upon.”

Sounds a lot like “NetWeaving” doesn’t it!

“Success and fulfillment come from developing all of you – starting in the deepest parts.”

What People Value and Nothing More Than Feelings - The Two End sections of Chapter 1 were probably of the most valuable to me – The B’s give a great example of why exemplary service at a restaurant still normally gets the same size tip as one with poor service. *“Repeated studies of restaurant guests show that people do not tip any more for efficient and prompt service than they do for flawed and slow service. . . Instead, people tip more when the waitperson makes them feel good.”*

Remember a waiter or waitress who actually sat down with you and talked, or touched you on the shoulder, or made you laugh? I’ll bet those were the ones who got an extra tip.

“People value - pay more for – the way you make them feel.”

What do you do to make people **feel good** about you? **What COULD you be doing, which you’re not doing, which would make people feel good about you?**

Chapter 2 – From Kissing in China to Graceland: Planning and Preparing

- Christine is a breast cancer survivor – first diagnosed in 1994 - and one of the weapons she used in her own treatment was humor. She brings this up in a section on **goal-setting** as a reminder that often our goals come from where we are, rather than what we actually thought out and planned. As she said about becoming an accidental author, “I just kept following my passions and one night, two books popped up.”. . .”*Should you set goals? Perhaps, particularly if you need them to stir you to action. But if only goals stir you to action, set another goal. Find your motivation in something other than goals. Where should you look? Deeper.”*

The B’s go on to say this about goal-setting: *“But, we misunderstand goal-setting. . . First, you have set goals even if you’ve never written them down. You want to watch what you eat, run three miles with less effort, get closer to your father. . . But the value of goal-setting does not come just from the goals. It comes from the thinking that went into the planning.”*

Who Are You? - To understand your OWN brand, you have to ask yourself, “**WHO ARE YOU?**” Quoting an ancient advertising slogan, the B’s say: “*Your brand is the truth about you, well told.*” “*What is your story – the true story.*” And how can you tell it best? They also point out that you may need help in doing this from a close friend on the outside who can give you some independent perspective.

Jack of a Dozen Trades - This next section hit a little too close to home for me and gave me a lot to think about and made me reconsider some of the ways I ‘*tell my own story*’. “*People know that Jacks of All Trades are Masters of None, and people seek out masters. They trust specialists.*” “*What is YOUR specialty? (and have one.)*” After doing a thorough job of identifying WHO you are. “*What do you do?*”. . and “*What’s your story?*”. . the **second** question they suggest you ask is “*What difference do you – or what you are selling – make?*”

They make a meaningful distinction between simply ‘**differentiating**’ what you do, and “*how what you do makes a difference for others.*”. . “*Ask that question. Write down the answer. Show it to four people whose opinion you value. Demand they be ruthlessly tough with their answers.*”

Their **third** question is a REALLY interesting one. “*Are we a company that our competitors envy? . . If not, why not?*” In the past, I’ve asked the question, “*How remarkable are you?*” I think I like this even better. “*How enviable are you and how can you make yourself more enviable?*”

The Power of Stereotypes - Their **fourth** question has to do with stereotypes. “*Everyone stereotypes.*” The B’s quote the psychologist William James – “*The first thing an intellect does with an object is to classify it along with something else.*”

Over my financial services career, I’ve been in one of the most ‘stereotyped’ industries there are – **life insurance**. Remember in Ground Hog day – Bill Murray reliving every day regardless of what he tries to do to change it. Remember the ex-high school nerd - the obnoxious life insurance salesman - who keeps approaching him with the same dumb sales approach each time the day starts over and repeats itself?

The authors say, “*For convenience and survival, our brains evolved to organize data according to apparent patterns. . . We stereotype instantly. . . Accountant? Stiff. Lawyer? Arrogant. Engineer? Analytical. Author? Nonconformist.*”

Their advice: “*Before you try to make any sale, ask: How is this person likely to stereotype me?*”

What to Look For - In the next section, their opening statement is “*What situations in business make you uncomfortable?*” The B’s suggest that you “*Write them down. . . What is your feeling? . . Where did it start, and how long ago? . . Who can you talk to about this and get you past it?*”

Work the Weakness - Contrary to some who maintain that you should totally focus on your strengths and virtually ignore your weaknesses, they point out that, *“The situations that make you uncomfortable in business are those when you are at your weakest and most vulnerable. At these moments, you make your biggest mistakes, the ones that are inhibiting you from performing and feeling better. . .Attack these and your life will accelerate.”*

One of their main recommendations in addition to working on it until you’re tired and then work some more, is to *“find someone to push you the rest of the way – the equivalent of the workout partner upon whom most athletes rely to maximize their growth.”*

I used to be more on the side of focusing on your strengths and trying to minimize your weaknesses, but this quote has got me thinking the other way around:

“You can only improve your strengths so much, if at all. Even if you improve them, there’s a good chance no one will notice; slight improvements are hard to spot. What people do notice are your weaknesses; if you can improve those, your improvement can be dramatic, and visible to everyone. . .Find your weakness and work on them.”

Mentor – or Mentors? - Here’s another one of those standard beliefs with which they take issue – *“Do you need a mentor?”*

“No doubt many successful people have had mentors. (Many did not, something these discussions always overlook.) But knowing that the successful people had mentors does not prove the person succeeded because of their mentors. For all we know, they might have succeeded in spite of them. . .The reason that many successful people had mentors is that people destined to succeed attract all kinds of people, including mentors. They attract mentors, fans, followers, even puppies and kittens.” Here’s their secret.

“So the way to attract a mentor is to display those traits that will lead you to success anyway. Will a mentor lead you there? Probably not. Will a mentor help you in some smaller way? Probably. . .Don’t seek a mentor. Instead, focus on doing things that might attract people, including mentors.”

Ironically, this is exactly what we’re doing with training young MBA students right out of school to set up NetWeaving ‘hosting’ meetings with successful business people 10, 20 and 30 years their senior with the student just sitting in to listen. If that doesn’t attract potential mentors, often two at a time, I don’t know what could. And I believe the authors would cheer this concept. They close that section saying:

“Having a mentor is overrated; having several is not.”

The Key to Success - Another great line in conjunction with overcoming *weaknesses* was, “*Your strengths will take you only as far as your weaknesses will allow.*” They introduce the concept of ‘if only’. “*Everywhere you see people who could be so successful, and then you add the two magic words: If only.*” Here again they suggest that you might be fortunate enough in your life to find someone who will help you not only identify and shine a light on your ‘if only’s’, but also force you to face up to them and then help you overcome them.

Do you know your ‘if only’s’?

Seek Tough Love - This next section contains a valuable recommendation on a way to secure constructive criticism because most people will sugar-coat their answer when you ask for it. When the survey asks, “*What are we doing wrong?*”, it ‘*invites harsh criticism. Because most people hate to be criticized, and pained by it, they resist answering.*’ The B’s suggest a much better way to ask, “*What could I do to be even more effective?*” Another variation might be “*I think this might work, but I value your opinion. What might work even better?*”

People Decide, Then Think. Along these same lines as Malcolm Gladwell in “*Blink*”, the authors suggest that, “*People rarely make decisions as a product of long deliberation. They may take weeks to announce a decision but often make the decision in minutes, even seconds.*” Here’s the sentence I love. . .and agree with. . . “*People do not gather data to make a decision; they often gather it to justify their decision.*”

This is all leading up to their point that “*First impressions are lasting*”. . . “*The first impression with startling frequency, is also the final decision.*” Therefore they recommend: “*The first thing to plan for is your first impression.*”

People Buy you with Their Eyes - Here’s another one of my favorite quotes, “*People think with their eyes*” and “*People hear what they see.*” . . . “*The visual overwhelms the verbal.*” They support these statements with a true story about a bank attempting to show that they had the information to help people make better financial decisions and the visual was of a mountain climber studying maps and weather charts prior to starting his climb. Words supporting that were repeated three times. But what the viewers saw when asked what the commercial was saying , “*It was about strength. The bank is communicating that it is strong.*” Why? For less than 4 seconds, there was a shot of the man rock-climbing. “*We think with our eyes.*” That should make you think twice, maybe three, or four times about what your visuals actually say to people. One thing this is going to make me do is ask more people what the visuals I use really say to them.

In their recommendation to ‘dress for success’, they stress not to overdo it. “*Understate, don’t overstate.*”

Visuals and Stereotyping. Here the authors suggest that by using some visual clues, you can actually trigger the right stereotype where you want people to place you into. “*Does your appearance reinforce the stereotype you wish to promote?*” They end this

section with a bit of a reverse stereotype example – dressing up in the reverse of the stereotype. As an example, a wild and zany ad agency who instead of dressing ‘casual’ only on ‘Casual Friday’s’, dresses up in suits. . .only on Friday’s. They wanted to communicate like construction workers; they’re wearing work clothes during the week to show, **we work hard.**

Investing in You. Here they reminded me of a parallel story of mine where I sacrificed comfort and a more certain outcome in order to save some money. In Harry’s case, the hurried and cheaper alternative resulted in a lost sale, and in my case, a bruised relationship which probably cost the sale. Often as they say, “**Pay more now, reap more later.**”

Think Outside Your Box – Another example of their contrary-to-popular belief thinking, the B’s preface that: because “*You are methodical or mercurial; you are lateral or linear; you tend to be inward, or outward. But from birth, you are who you are. It’s a pretty good box. Most important, it is yours – the box in which you have operated forever.. . .Don’t try to think outside your box; it’s too hard. **Instead, grow it.**” . . .”*To become more creative – always a good idea – don’t try to think outside your box. **Instead, grow it. Bring new things in. If you read Vanity Fair, read In-Fisherman. If you read “People Magazine, scan “The New Yorker”.****

Education’s Overlooked Rewards – When high school junior and senior students take ‘practical courses’ that omit some other more rounded knowledge outside their specialty, the B’s suggest it leaves them unprepared to meet and be able to converse with persons out in the real world from other disciplines and other interests which they would have picked up had they had a broader education exposure.

One of the most valuable parts of NetWeaving involves teaching younger just-out-of-school grads how to ‘host’ meetings to put two people together who are older, more successful and talented people with unique sets of knowledge and skills who would benefit meeting each other. By the ‘newbie’ host getting to sit in and listen to the conversation - the knowledge and wisdom being shared by two persons being connected - the young professional can pick up information which might be even more valuable and more relevant than he or she would have picked up back in high school. Just a different way of looking at it.

Chapter 3 – Hogs, Apples, and Writer’s Underwear: Communicating

This chapter is particularly useful for anyone who is trying to communicate with someone whether it’s through the spoken, written, or I guess ‘texted’ word.

How to Play the Shift – The B’s point out a historical shift from “*everything being done face-to-face, then a shift to some of it being done by phone where still our ‘presence’ mattered: an authoritative voice, by definition, conveys and reinforces authority.*” . . .to a place where “*Today, e-mail, airplanes and globalization have caused a shift. More of our communications are written, sent across hundreds of miles. As a result, the*

*authoritative **written** voice has started to replace the importance of the authoritative physical presence.”*

And of all the forms of communication which have become most commonplace, email has almost become the ‘spoken’ word. As the B’s say, “*With e-mail, clarity becomes more important as time has become more valuable – not least of all because staffs have shrunk.. . .Ambiguity is expensive; it forces us to go back and forth, often several times, to clarify our meaning and move to the next step.*”

*“More and more, power comes from the words of the communicator, and the most potent words are those that are expressed succinctly and vividly. Those who can express themselves in words that cannot be misunderstood have more power, and more value. **The future belongs to Communicators.**”*

Selling to the Overwhelmed – Do you feel overwhelmed? I do. The B’s give a great example of this which just happened to me the other day. Go into a super grocery store and look at the toothpaste section. For one single brand, there are pastes with whitener, tartar control, breath-freshener, baking powder, tube and pump. I stood there for several minutes trying to decide which was most important to me. “***We are overwhelmed.***” In order to make an impression and to communicate well, “***Simplify and clarify.***”

The Real First Rule of Communicating – They say this is: “*Communicate so that you cannot be misunderstood. . . .Clarity inspires trust. . . .Make yourself clearer; and people will think you are an expert.*”

Simplify – This is one section I needed to read closely because I plead guilty.

“You outline your proposition at length, covering every angle, making an overwhelming case. . . . You went too far. . . . The detailed point-by-point elaboration squelches everything. You provide so much detail, and now the listener feels perplexed. Your proposition is complicated. Because we speak and hear imperfectly, your excessive detail actually has confused your listener; some parts seem contradictory. And there are so many options.”

What do they suggest: “*Make it simple. Constantly edit your story.*”. . . “*You cannot say too little in such a situation. For one thing, if you advance one strong argument, you will get your listener’s attention and she will ask for more. Her specific questions will tell you what she wants to know, and spare you the wasted effort discussing anything else – and confusing the listener more.*”

Here’s another point that is very important: “***Space***” – not outer, but space in both the spoken and written word. “*Advertisers know this. Perhaps the greatest ads of our era, for the Apple iPod, are filled not with words, but with white space.*”

“Decades ago, Rudolph Flesch discovered that readers were not just attracted to words, but to the breathing room between sentences and paragraphs. Long sentences should be

*followed by short ones, and large paragraphs should be followed by short ones, he decided. . . Follow Flesch's prescription. Try to reduce your average sentences to eleven words. If you must write a large block of copy, try to place a short one in front of it and behind it. . . "While speaking, practice your pauses." **Watch your white space. Silence talks.***

The Writer's Underwear – simple point but important. Don't try to be clever in your communication because in most cases it's more thought to be inappropriate when something simpler would have sufficed. The B's point to derivation of communicate which is "commune" which implies a "sharing with one another." **"Don't talk to, talk with: Communicate."**

The Brand Called You – The B's make a great point about plotting your 'brand': ". . . too many people believe they can weave a tale. They believe in magic, or that brands are produced through cleverness and deception." . . ."Great brands. . . are authentic. They have endured because people have learned they are credible and have come to trust those brands to be what they say they are; great brands have integrity."

Metaphors – The B's recommend that to be effective, sometimes a picture or image IS worth a 1,000 words. A metaphor can be in 'words' as they recall the story of how Apple coined 'desktop publishing' to overcome their image of being more a toy compared to a PC which helped find 'solutions'. They mention other great examples of 'metaphors' which inspire a visual image: *The Tipping Point, Blink, The World is Flat, Crossing the Chasm.*"

Can you think of metaphors to describe you, your business, or your company. . .or what you are selling whether it's a product or service?

Don't make me laugh – The B's point out that often people agree with the cleverness of your humor or gimmick when deep down inside, they think it stinks. Their point is simple, **"If you worry, 'Is my idea professional?.' It probably isn't."** In my early days of sales, I sent out a direct mail letter to a group of doctor prospects with a DOLLAR bill inside saying hopefully this will make my letter worth reading. Didn't get a single reply and one doctor sent it back saying I needed the dollar more than he did and he was right.

Touting Your Credentials – The B's pose, *"Do people place more faith in the expert with the more impressive credentials – the 'better' school, higher degree, longer list of articles in respected publications? They don't. They place faith in the person who communicates most clearly."* Whether you totally agree with this or not, you probably agree that you can overdo it with your bragging and can make it a turnoff. **"Be careful in complimenting yourself."**

Don't Pitch Weave – This piece of advice is very much in line with what I advise people to do in totally reversing their 'elevator pitch'. Instead of saying, *"I'm a financial planner with XYZ and I help people create and implement a plan to save and invest*

enough monies so they can retire comfortably.” What about instead, ‘**start with a story**’.

“Many people spend more time planning a vacation, or a dinner party with hundreds of details than they do planning for their present and financial futures. They really need someone who can help them put that same level planning and detail into their financial lives, but do it in a way that they can understand and appreciate. I had a client a few years ago who (give story example). . . .” **Tell Stories**

What’s “A Good Story?” – The B’s say *“All good stories have a hero, and two other key elements you should incorporate in yours.*

1. *A serious challenge*
2. *The hero dealing with the challenge and learning something as a result.”*

I was pleased to see that my above example of story-telling in lieu of the more traditional ‘elevator pitch’ met both criteria.

One more important tip they give: *“Your key sentence in every presentation is your first. Your first sentence must make your listeners eager to hear your second; your second must make them as eager to hear your third. . . .Expressed another way, the first fifteen words are as important as the next fifteen hundred.”*

Also don’t give too much away. *“Too often a presenter reveals her ending. Like audiences for movies, listeners to presentations lose interest in a story when they know its ending.”*

The Second Trick in Storytelling – The B’s call this **“The next lead”**. As you get farther away from the beginning, a reader/listener’s interest usually starts to fade and so the B’s say you should understand this – **“You need a jump-start”**. . . **“The Next Lead resembles the first.** *You might think of it as the classic infomercial gambit that works so well, so much so that people spoof it: “But Wait. There’s More!”* Read many of stories in the “Wall Street Journal” sometime and watch how they are artful at keeping your attention by providing a **“Next Lead”**.

Work the Message – The key point they make here is **“Find your message, keep it simple, and repeat it often.”** Remember YOU are a brand and all great brands have a short succinct message which they repeat over and over again.

The Talent of the Clarifiers – Want to feel bad about something you’ve written? Read it out loud. The B’s quote a classic Mark Twain apology for the length of a note he wrote: **“I’d have written a shorter letter but I didn’t have enough time.”**

It’s true, shortening a letter, email or document is usually much tougher than just rambling on.

Next time you write something, ***“Read it aloud; revise it again.”***

Making Yourself Clear – The B’s suggest a simple technique for shortening a document or letter or email. ***“Cut every document in half.”*** Watch how that forces you to be clearer.

Your Last Step – Read everything you write aloud. Said it before but it’s important to say it again: ***“Your ear will pick up the mistakes that your eyes missed. Your ear will read the document the way your recipient hears it too.”*** . . . ***“After you write something, be sure to hear it.”***

Chapter 3 – Two Key Skills: Listening and Speaking

How to Be Fascinating – Simply put, ***“Listening makes you captivating”***

The Ears Have It – The B’s say, ***“We don’t value people who listen because they will respond with answers. When a friend listens to our issues, for example, we do not value that she responded with a suggestion. We value that she cared enough to listen.”***

I believe I heard it from an Earl Nightengale tape, before Ruth Ann Marshall, former president of MasterCard International, quoted her mother saying – ***“You have two ears and one mouth. That means you should listen twice as much as you speak. “Listen. Actively and often; always.”***

The Easiest Way to Lose Someone – You know the saying, ***“People really don’t care how much you know. What they really want to know is how much you care.”*** That’s very much in line with their points in this section. Here’s a great piece of advice they offer:

“When you listen to someone, pause a full second before replying. It signals that you have listened. If you start speaking immediately, you create a perception that you have been waiting for the person to stop so you could get to the important part: your words, your thoughts.”

Our Misunderstanding About Listening – They make a great point here that we consider **talking** to be an ‘active’ process whereas most of us think of **listening** as a ‘passive’ process. One way they suggest to make listening an ‘active’ process is by forming images as you’re listening. That because ***“We do not remember words well. We remember images.”*** . . . ***“Listen actively, in pictures.”***

One More Step – The B’s add a physical element to active listening in pointing out that you should put your entire body into the listening process: ***“When you engage your body in engaging the speaker, your mind engages more, too.”***

Listen to What Isn't Said – The B's make it clear that what we hear from someone is usually only **"10 percent of the story"**... *You cannot merely listen. You must observe. Life is not words; it is actions. How do they act?"*

The Heart of Every Presentation – Whether it's a scientific talk about microbes, or a business talk about valuation, the BEST talks are still motivational: *"A poor teacher describes; a good teacher explains; an excellent teacher demonstrates; a great teacher inspires."*

The Role of Eloquence – The B's distinguish between being eloquent and inspirational: *"The eloquent speaker impresses us, but does not move us to act. We are not moved because the speaker appears not to be. If this does not truly matter to the speaker, we decide, why should it matter to me?"*... **"Don't impress them; move them."**

In Your Eyes – The B's stress that *"At every moment in a business relationship, you are doing just what that term suggest: relating."* As a speaker or presenter, they admonish: *"You are not relating to a person if you are focused on a page, reading from a presentation. Nor are you relating if you are focused on a screen, reading from PowerPoint. Or looking at one side of the room, but rarely the other. Or looking at a few people, but not at everyone. Each time you look away, you invite the listeners to look away, too."* Here's an interesting point they make: *"Students of body language learn that only pathological liars can look a person in the eyes when they lie."* **Look them in the eyes. Constantly.**

How to Give an Excellent Ten-Minute Speech – Simple they say: *"Write a twenty minute speech. Cut out the weakest half, the weakest stories, the unnecessary words – your least favorite half. Then cut out a minute, and give a nine-minute speech."*... *"Best of all, your audience will be thrilled you finished a bit early. They will decide that you are organized, succinct., confident, and respectful of their time."* **In speaking, as in so many things in life, less is more.**

Why Speeches Must Be Short – Hadn't thought about this before but as the B's point out, *"Because people have less time, and have learned they can get valuable information in minutes. They also have been conditioned by television. Every twelve minutes a commercial allows them to take a break. This has conditioned them to twelve-minute bites."*

Jokes – As you might guess, the authors are not big fans of jokes unless you are truly a professional and years of experience at telling them in front of large audiences. And they point out that for every joke you tell, you usually upset some portion of the audience. The one sort of joke which they say always works is the one on yourself. And as they also suggest *"...look at your life. Most of the great modern comics are observational; they merely look around and see how profoundly silly, absurd, funny, or merely human we - and they - can be."*

The Perils of PowerPoint – The B’s make a convincing case that the biggest danger of PowerPoint slides is that “*We assume that if a presenter reinforces a message with a slide with key words, we remember the message better. We don’t, because words aren’t visual.*” I’ve tried in my own PowerPoint presentations to include as many ‘visuals’ as possible, but after reading this book, I’m going to go back and figure ways to insert more . . .with fewer words.

Visual Aids, Yes. Memory Aids, No – In a rather revealing case example, an audience was questioned immediately after a talk which was loaded with slides that “*faded and dissolved, spiraled and cut-and-pasted, and displayed striking bar graphs and pie charts in a dozen bright colors.*” Asked several of the key questions from the presentation, they barely could recall 30%. And yet studies show that the use of ‘visual aids’ results in 70% of the information retained. The problem is that this information was not ‘visual’ but simply information. And what was even worse, the speaker had a difficult time recalling much of his own information.

In my opinion, the bottom line on slides is:

- use them sparingly with as few ‘words’ as possible and with as much ‘visual imagery’ as possible.
- Ask people what your slides mean and when they say they were confused by XYZ, change it. I have had great constructive criticism from a number of people about my slides and almost without exception, I’ve changed them as a result.

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For much of the rest of the book, by posing questions (with page references) I will hopefully encourage you to purchase the book which you would want to own anyways.

Chapter 4 – From Robin Williams to Dr. Jekyll: Relating

The Lesson in the Democrats’ Folly – What did the Democrats finally learn with nominating Clinton which the Republicans had already figured out, with Reagan being the prime example? P. 138

Every Sale Is Emotional – The B’s suggest that although we share 98% of our human genes with Chimpanzees, we tend to forget that our emotions are still evolving. If you accept this, then you shouldn’t be surprised that “*Emotions do not operate separately from reasoning; they often dominate them.*” ***Reach the head through the heart.***

What People Crave Most from You – How does understanding the movie – The Godfather – help us understand what we all really crave and when the reverse happens, why we react so strongly? P. 139

The Key Moment in Every Relationship – You can probably guess what it is? *“It’s the very first.”* . *“Master your welcome: the way you greet others, the way you answer your phone. Check your e-mail auto-response, too, because it frequently acts as your greeter. Does it sound welcoming, too?”* **Master the welcome.**

All We Need is Love – Why do writing and speaking provide some of our very best learning experiences? P. 141-142? How can you understand what deep down inside all of us want? *“We want to feel loved, no matter how much we hide it.”*

The Importance of Importance – How did some slight name misstep by the recruiting coach of Ohio State cause Ben Roethlisberger (quarterback of Pittsburgh Steeler and victorious in Super Bowl XL) to choose another school? P. 146.

What Do People Want? – Is it skill? Hint: That is their minimum requirement. Is it commitment to excellence? The one-word answer begins with a ‘c’ and believe it or not, it’s NOT ‘convenience’. P. 147

The Race Goes to the Fast – In a large study among professionals in a service industries that charged fees, ‘fees’ ranked 9th in what was most important to clients. Technical skill ranked 8th. Not surprisingly, what ranked first was *“The individual’s demonstrated interest in developing a long-term relationship with me and my company.”* But what surprised everyone was what ranked second and as a clue, it had something to do with ‘speed’. P. 150.

Everything You Need to Know About Integrity – *“Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”* – Mark Twain

The Other Knowledge That Matters Most – This one I have to feature because it is so closely aligned with the 2nd and 3rd skill sets of “NetWeaving” – first, learning how to ‘position’ yourself as a ‘no-strings-attached’ resource for others so you develop the reputation as the ‘go-to’ person. And secondly and in line with that, constantly be on the lookout for persons who are exceptional at what they do, and make him or her part of your Trusted Resource Network.

The B’s version of this reads like this: *“Position yourself as the solution to almost everything, and everyone will see you as the solution for nothing. People want specialists.”* But if you establish yourself as the ‘go-to **source**’ as one law firm in Minneapolis has done – *“They’re the firm that will find [the right] people – the right firm – if they aren’t the one”*, you will be the talk of the town.

How to Lay an Egg – What huge mistake did a ‘speaker’ who was speaking on ‘speaking’ make which instead of getting closer to her audience, caused a greater distance

to be created? HINT: She bragged about how much money she had made as a speaker, but she never told them WHAT? P. 156.

Common Ground – “*Birds of a feather do flock together – and peck at birds whose feathers look different.*” What do former Marines selling to other former Marines, and Delta Gamma Sorority alums selling to other DG alums, have in common? HINT: Probably this is the BIGGEST single advantage for becoming familiar with all the Social Networking sites. P. 157

Adapting and Adopting – The B’s words here pretty much give these tips away. “*To comfort your prospects, they must feel similar to you and an early signal of similarity is tempo. If your prospect travels at thirty-five miles per hour, you must slow down to mimic his pace.*” **To establish common ground, mimic your listener’s pace.** P. 159-160

Relating Magic Words – “*Welcome*” . . . “*The person’s Name*” . . . “*The names of the person’s children*” . . . “*I’ll get the check*”.

What P&G Knows: Five Minutes Early – A group of clients telling their consultants what they wanted from their consultants and it’s virtually everything mentioned in the book up to this point – but with one addition – being prompt: “. . . *it’s what the consultant’s prompt arrival communicates: this is the most important thing for me at this moment.*”

The Extraordinary Power of the Ordinary – “*Ninety percent of everything is just showing up.*” But to be extraordinary, the B’s stress you must show up . . . **BRILLIANTLY.** Add another concept, being a “*Reliable Performer*”. Sadly we are living through the undoing of what was perhaps the best example for decades of a ‘reliable performer’ – Toyota. It will be interesting to watch how they try and dig out and if it will be possible for them to regain their once almost unique position. ***Above all, people choose the reliable. Be there.***

The Ordinary in Action – You’re in a big meeting with a potential client and you forget to bring a pen, so you ask to borrow one. In their example, that cost this salesman the sale. Not only ‘**show up**’, but “***show up and make sure you have everything you need for the meeting.***” P. 166

Jekyll, Not Hyde: Being Predictable – You’ve heard the authors repeat the words – ‘comfort’ and ‘comfortability’ as being critically important criteria for making people want to do business with you. But closely aligned with comfort is ‘**predictability**’ “. . . *people feel most comfortable with people who behave in consistent, and therefore predictable, ways.*” Pp. 168-169

Look Out for the Bulldozer Drivers – Your rise to the top, or close to it, can often fall short due to the Bulldozer Drivers. Read this section to find out who they are and why you should not only look out for them, but occasionally, make a box lunch and sit and eat with them. Pp. 170 – 172

The Power of Sacrifice – If you read these two pages and don't think of "NetWeaving" and "Pay It Forward", I'd be disappointed. Pp. 172 – 173

Chapter 5 – Flying Wigs, Snakes, And Demons: Attitude and Beliefs

Beliefs Work – The B's describe an interesting experiment marketers have used to prove a point. Taste A which is your favorite beverage; then taste B, the new beverage. You say nice things about B but you like A much better for a number of reasons. Only problem is that A & B are identical, just in different containers. Their point is that "*We are what we believe.*" And in the same way, "*You are, then, what others believe you to be. And you are to them, in large part, what you believe yourself to be.*" The best salesman are "*the ones who genuinely believe, utterly and absolutely, that theirs is a superior product.*" Pp. 177-178

Do What You Love – Knowing that much of what this book may conflict with what you've heard to be conventional wisdom, should it surprise you that they disagree with the statement, "***Do what you love and the money will follow***". They concede this is often the case, but certainly not always. But they go on to say that doesn't matter. ***You should do it anyway. "Doing what you love works."*** . . . "***Do what you love, and the pleasure of doing what you love will follow.***" Pp. 178-179

But I've Heard This Before – Is this true. Yes you may have heard it before, but ***chances are you never acted upon it***, so hearing is not doing. ***Am I acting on that knowledge?*** P. 180

Three Steps Forward – You know this saying 3 steps forward 1 step back. The B's say we've soured on all those many claims but it is true, that it will make a big difference if we look at them differently, "***Your great strides forward follow your long steps back.***"

Our Misunderstanding – If you're in sales, you will want to read this one carefully. It's about WHY people buy and in many ways, it's what the book is all about. It's all about YOU. Pp. 182 –183

Life Is What You Make It – Wrong. As the B's point out, "***You cannot control your life, but you can control your responses.***". . . ***Life is not what you make it. It is how you take it.*** P. 184

Make Yourself Uncomfortable – I had to include these quotes which you've probably heard before, but they bear repeating: Friedrich Nietzsche – "***That which does not destroy me, makes me stronger.***". . . "***A crisis is just an opportunity***" (or I've heard it that "***a problem is an opportunity for creativity***"). But here's my favorite: "***a failure is just a success, the details of which have yet to be revealed.***" ***The first rule: Make yourself uncomfortable.*** P. 185

But I Am Uncomfortable – FINE. Just keep going and get more uncomfortable. P 186

Isn't Easy the Whole Idea? – Life IS hard – as the B's remind us from "The Road Less Traveled". *"Half efforts do not produce half-results. They produce no results. Work – hard work, continuous work – is the only path to results that matter."* P. 188

Choose the Dots, Not the Lines – Want to know where computer fonts of all different varieties came from? How about a Calligraphy class at Reed College in Oregon. Your dots may just turn into your passions as they did for Steve Jobs. Pp. 189-190

The Problem with Money (Other than Not Having Enough) – Is what? It's never enough. Pp. 191 – 192

Firing, Being Fired, and Other Joyous Events – Whether you are 'firer' or the 'fireree', it's never fun but the B's make an interesting point for those who have chosen an industry or even position for the wrong reason or reasons. Pp. 193 – 194

A Business Classic – Why would an expert on business concepts and book store owner say that his favorite business book was not even in that section, but back in the Children's section – "*The Little Engine That Could*". Pp. 195-196

The Power of Peter – Who is the most 'confident' person you know? And as the B's caution, remember that 'con' is part of the word and there are some with false confidence. But also remember that "*Belief is a force multiplier.*" Pp. 198-200

Confidence and Greatness – This section had a great impact on me because it stresses that entire civilizations can be built by these, but they can be also destroyed. Kenneth Clark's PBS Series on "**Civilization**" is a classic. Just reading their short description of it inspired me to order it. Clark is quoted as saying: "*I said at the beginning that it is lack of confidence, more than anything else, that kills a civilization. We destroy ourselves by cynicism and disillusion, just as effectively by bombs.*" I wish our political leaders on both sides of the aisle would understand this.

Those Who Laugh – Here's a great story about what the Italians call *sprezzatura* which might be translated as *nonchalance*. What could be funny about a bald woman and a golf threesome made up of Jack Nicklaus, Raymond Floyd, and Tom Weiskopf and what's the moral of the story? Pp. 203 – 205

Comparing Yourself to Others - Here's a good message from a story by Alex Karras the former football lineman for the Detroit Lions who years ago appeared on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. Pp. 206-207

Be Yourself (There's No Alternative!) – Great advice to end my summary, but you still have two more interesting chapters to read on your own.

"You cannot be someone else. You can only pretend. The problem in pretending, however, is that you encounter only two types of people on

earth. Those who see past the ruse, and those who do not.

Those who see past it then question the person's character and integrity, and they withdraw from him. At best they endure the person but they never accept him, because they cannot. The person has not presented them with an authentic person they can accept; the true person, whom they could accept, is hiding behind his costume.

*The second group, small if not tiny, fall for the ruse. There's a simple reason: they foolish – literally, people capable of being fooled. But people who can be fooled once can be fooled repeatedly. They are capricious and unreliable – just the people you want to avoid.” **Be yourself. It is easier to remember, for one thing, and works dramatically better.***

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed reading this summary as much as I have enjoyed writing it. I hope you will also definitely want to buy the book and have it for reference. I call this one a ‘bathroom’ book since it’s one of those books which you can just pick up any time – anywhere – and read a few pages to remind you of some important points you may have forgotten.

I’m very much looking forward to sharing observations about several topics which we’ll discuss at our actual “**Don’t Need to Read the Book**” book club meeting. Bon Voyage!