

# Habitudes for Communicators

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Habitudes for Communicators by Dr. Tim Elmore helps leaders explore the art of engaging communication. He presents “habitudes” which are images that form habits and attitudes.

## 1-Windows and Mirrors

The PERSONAL message gets through.

An authentic communicator holds up a window to the soul by telling a personal story that relates to what listeners may be facing themselves. This helps listeners feel safe enough to examine their own lives as if in a mirror.

<i>Public Speaker</i>	<i>Communicator</i>
message first	listeners first
what do I have?	what do they need?
key = techniques	key = atmosphere
focus = content	focus = change in listener
style = polished (image)	style = personal (impact)
goal = complete the message	goal = complete the people

## 2-Number Three Pencil

The SIMPLE message gets through.

A number three pencil is too hard to use comfortably. Good communicators keep their message simple, clear, and focused. They avoid scope creep in their messages.

The Churchill Method:

1. Strong beginning
2. Simple language
3. One theme (no tangents)
4. Pictures (stories)
5. Emotional ending

## 3-House on Fire

The URGENT message gets through.

People are more likely to listen if they have a strong reason to do so. Say something to motivate people's fear, hope, or pleasure response. Give the WHY before the WHAT. Create a sense of urgency that stimulates both mind and heart.

## 4-Movies or Meetings

The ENGAGING message gets through.

Most people would rather attend a movie than a meeting. The reason is that movies engage with a story, conflict, action, and resolution. Include those elements when you speak.

<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Movies</i>
data and facts	drama and stories
words and tasks	action and purpose
obstacles to avoid	challenge and conflict
goals and measurements	resolution and overcoming struggles

The Literary Mind, Mark Turner

The stories with most impact are personal. In decreasing order of impact are: true & contemporary, true & historical, then fictional.

## 5-Find Your Mom

The NATURAL message gets through.

To be relaxed enough to deliver your message in a relaxed way, look into an audience for a friendly face and eyes. Most people fear public speaking and would rather be the person in the casket than the one giving the eulogy. It is important to find ways to reduce anxiety.

- Prepare extensively. Proper planning prevents pitiful poor performance.
- Memorize your first burst. Though it's not a good idea to memorize your entire presentation (makes for stilted rather than natural), it is helpful to memorize your first two or three sentences.
- Dress appropriately for the audience and wear comfortable clothing.
- Take two deep breaths as you approach the speaking area.
- Envision yourself being effective and connecting with the audience.
- Use visual aids. (Be sure to practice with them.)
- Arrive early to double check the room set-up and any equipment you plan to use. The idea is to reduce worry for you and distraction for your audience.

## 6-The Faded Flag

The CLEAR message gets through.

If you wave a red flag that is too faded, it won't convey the message you intend.

- Clearly state the application or call to action. Stick to the big idea so the message doesn't fade. All details should support the big idea.
- Be forthright with the challenge or price of taking action.

## 7-School Yearbook

The VALUABLE message gets through.

The first picture we seek in a year book is our own.

We all want to know where we fit in the story.

Members in your audience are always asking,

"What's in it for me?" Help them get an answer to that question. As you prepare a message, ask yourself:

- Why would members of this particular audience listen to this message?
- In what way will the message engage them at an emotional level? (fear, hope, pleasure)
- In what way can the message make a difference in their daily lives?
- In what ways will it be possible for each audience demographic to apply the big idea of the message? Are you interested in each demographic in your audience? How well do you know them?
- Will the message be concrete enough for them to take action?

## 8-Polka-Dotted Pig

The UNIQUE message gets through.

If you saw a polka-dotted pig among all the other animals, you would notice and remember it.

If your presentations follow the same pattern and style of delivery, they will likely not be attention-getting or memorable. Find some ways to make your message unique such as:

- Ask a MAVEN (person who knows a lot about different subjects) to think about the big idea of your message. Often, a maven will think of some unusual ways to approach the content or delivery of your topic.
- Use MYSTERY by introducing unanswered questions or unsolved secrets at the beginning of

your message. Build toward answering the mystery during the message.

Consider using the following:

- Metaphors to illustrate your big idea
- Visual aids to illustrate points [keys: variety, simplicity, readability-Pam]
- People to participate in making a point
- Video clips that illustrate a point [must be short and relevant-Pam]
- Live experiences to engage the audience
- Costumes or props
- Ways to engage all five senses [smell can trigger long-term memory, too loud interferes with the message-Pam]

## 9-Foyer to Basement

The INVITING message gets through.

First impressions are important. Realtors say that a buyer will form an opinion when they first walk into a house. As a speaker you have limited time to make a good first impression on an audience. Most listeners look for three things:

1. something personal about you as a speaker (a way to connect to you)
2. something to make them laugh (entertainment)
3. something that assures them that by listening they will get better or feel better-WIIFM

To connect with your audience:

- Know what you want to achieve with your presentation (objective-what do you want the audience to do as a result of hearing your presentation?)
- Know your listener (what are their likely needs, wants, interests)
- Choose the right approach for this audience and topic (humor, quote, question, intriguing statement, personal story)
- Use a "hook." (a concept or illustration that conveys the key point in a memorable way)
- Develop the subject around the objective and hook.
- Paint a picture (always use an illustration or story to help them see what you mean)
- Ask for what you want (give a clear call to action)

## 10-Facebook or TV

The INTERACTIVE message gets through. Facebook is becoming more popular than TV because people like to give their opinion and interact with others. Great communicators provide a way for audience member to interact. Some ideas:

- For a few minutes, divide into sub-groups to discuss a question or brainstorm a list of suggestions.
- Set aside time for a question and answer session.
- Create a game or activity for the audience that relates to the topic. [Get advice from a facilitator or instructional designer if you aren't experienced with learning activities.]

Today's audience is not looking for a lecture. They are EPIC (experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connected).

Learning is most likely to take place when you provide a combination of:

- active involvement
- social interaction
- self-reflection.

## 11-The Thomas Nast Principle

The IMAGE-RICH message gets through. Thomas Nast was a cartoonist whose political cartoons conveyed messages more effectively than words. Pictures stick in our minds better than facts. One reason is that most people are visual learners. Also, pictures engage the right side of the brain and stimulate emotions. Pictures stimulate our imagination and make it easier to store information in our memories. Give your listeners both a point for their heads and a picture for their hearts.

## 12-Bottled Water

The RELEVANT message gets through. Everyone on earth can relate to the need for water. The way we package it varies. Adapt the container to be relevant to the audience so you can make the message inside understandable and relevant to them. Though your message is timeless, the delivery vehicle should adapt to your audience.

## 13-The Encore Effect

The SURPRISING message gets through. An encore is a bonus beyond your expectations. Excellent communicators prepare to deliver an encore. They add something that is a surprise and of value.

### The Learning Journey

Incentive	Desire: I have a need and must gain a solution.	Create a dilemma in the mind of your listeners that makes them want to listen.
Dis-equilibrium	Resist: This is a situation that is not comfortable or familiar.	Allow for discomfort. Listeners may need to wrestle with the new information.
Schema	Connect: I must connect the unfamiliar concept to a familiar one.	Provide an analogy or metaphor that addresses the dilemma and explains the concept.
Emotion	Ignite: My neurotransmitters spark feelings and emotions.	Let listeners emote and feel what your ideas mean to them and how it changes them.
Social integration	Process: I need to interact and process my conclusion.	Allow listeners to interact with a few others and respond aloud.
Filters	Conclude: Dendrites in my brain screen out the illogical and produce ideas.	Allow listeners to interact to determine where they agree and disagree.
Active involvement	Act: My grasp increases as my experience collaborates.	Challenge them to actually practice and experience the new concept you've shared.

## 14-Seasons

The CHALLENGING message gets through. Just as we see signals that seasons are changing, a communicator must give us signals to guide us through the presentation to help us engage. Consider this process:

1. **ENGAGE:** Introduce a personal struggle that you believe will also be relevant to the audience. Create a dilemma in their minds.
2. **CONNECT:** Demonstrate how the struggle is universal (not just for you). Give a quote or statistics to show the widespread nature.
3. **PRESENT BIG IDEA:** Present the major concept or principle you will discuss that addresses the dilemma.
4. **PROVIDE SUPPORT:** Give statistics or illustrations to support your big idea and emphasize why your listeners might want to consider it.
5. **PERSONALIZE:** Using your knowledge of the demographics in the audience, show how the big idea applies to those demographics.
6. **ILLUSTRATE:** Tell a story that illustrates what life would be like if they applied the big idea.
7. **[GIVE CALL TO ACTION:** Directly ask the audience to do something. Give them a call to action. -Pam]

## 15-Golden Hour

The TIMELY message gets through. Just as there is a limited window of opportunity or golden hour to save an accident victim, there are limited windows of opportunity to communicate effectively. Timing is important.

The more prepared you are, the easier it will be for you to make some on-the-spot changes to fit the response of your audience.

- Be audience oriented and impact conscious. Read their faces. How are they reacting?
- Pause occasionally to let listeners think.
- Try something unusual to add punch to the presentation.
- If you are fully prepared and perceive an opening to be spontaneous, do so.
- Make eye contact with each key thought.
- Plan your sequence of thought to surprise your audience.

## 16-Skinny Chef

The CREDIBLE message gets through. Would you eat a meal from a chef who never eats the food himself? An audience prefers speakers who are authentic and transparent. As a presenter, give one or more examples of how you applied the big idea you are presenting. Listeners want to know that you practice the words you speak.