

**A Comprehensive Look at Original Oratory**

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## 1. Rules

Oratory is a seven through ten minutes memorized speech on a social topic. No more than 150 words can be quoted.

## 2. Why Oratory?

Oratory is the crown jewel of high school public speaking. National finalists are on YouTube. More than any other speaking event oratory lends itself to be performed in front of a large audience. It is a writing and delivery intensive speaking event.

The long-term deliverable for a student are learning college level writing techniques, developing and/or honing creative writing skills, and learning how to integrate nonverbal communication skills with spoken words. Interviewing and presentation skills are also developed as a result of performing an original oratory. Like any other speaking event, oratory, can develop self-esteem and confidence in the student.

## 3. Topics

How to find a topic: ask yourself the following questions:

- What are your pet peeves?
- What inspires you?
- What song lyrics can you recite right now?
- What lyrics have made you think?
- What movie “spoke” to you??
- Who do you respect/look up to and why?
- Did a teacher or coach say something you have taken to heart?
- Who do you dislike/despise/loathe/abhor/abominate-and why?
- What news stories have you come across recently that made you stop and pause/react/feel something?
- What would you like to change? What about you have you been trying to change? What about you have you changed? What about you can’t you change?

Before settling on a topic, consider the following:

- Will there be audience interest in this topic?
- Am I interested in this topic?
- Can I find enough supporting material?
- Is there too much material for this topic?
- How does this topic relate to other topics?
- Does this topic play to my strengths?
- Is this topic overused?

## Other considerations:

### CHOOSE EMOTIONAL CONCEPTS

- We NEED to be less grounded in the real world.
- We NEED to be good followers.
- We NEED to be less nit-picky about our heroes.
- We NEED to compete but cooperatively.
- We NEED to follow our common sense.
- We NEED to say no.
- We NEED to admit that we do not know.
- We NEED to say no to second chances.
- We NEED to see things from multiple points of view.
- We NEED to avoid the pack mentality.
- We NEED to be courteous.
- We NEED to embrace the geek in us.
- We NEED to unclutter our lives.
- We NEED to look below the surface.
- We NEED to realize that impressions count.
- We NEED to stop stressing over stress.
- We NEED to be ourselves.
- We NEED not give in to the dumb-it-down mentality.
- We NEED to believe that “it can happen” to us.
- We MUST stop giving unearned gifts

### 1. CHOOSE SEMI-EMOTIONAL TOPICS THAT ARE OPEN TO HUMOR

- Information overload is a problem because.....
- Resume fraud is a problem because...

### 2. AVOID VERY SPECIFIC CONCRETE TOPICS

- The danger of child safety seats
- The hazards of a chemical in dishwasher detergents

### 3. CHOOSE WHAT ALLOWS FOR EXAMPLES AND PERSONALIZATION

- do you and can the audience connect

### 4. NARROW A TOPIC INTO A THESIS.

- Avoid “laughter is good/”
- Say: “Laughter can jolt us out of depressed states, physical and emotional.”

### 5. RENAME THE CLICHE

- a. Being an individual (cliché); letting your voice be heard (renamed)

#### 4. Oratory is a persuasion speech.

You want to be able to move your audience through an array of emotions throughout your speech ending the audience in a state of catharsis. If you can give your audience an ah-ha moment you truly have them in the palm of your hand.

The **BIGGEST** secret to persuading an audience is to choose a topic that the audience is already in agreement. Procrastination is bad and responsibility is good are examples of concepts that an audience with a variance in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, and gender are all likely to agree.

This type of writing and topic selection is called audience-driven speaking. It is of the utmost importance that you are passionate about your topic. It is equally important that your audience is loosely in agreement with you. Trying to persuade your audience to vote republican or to ban abortions are ineffective topics for a couple of reasons. One, they are too controversial; but more importantly, they are not audience driven topics. You cannot convince me that an audience that varies widely will agree with these topics.

#### 5. Sample Topics

**Effective topics:** Failure, optimism, appreciation, diversity, charisma, friendship, judgement, censorship, success, attitudes, power, manipulation, reality, conformity, maturity, illusions, criticism, accountability, unity, popularity, laziness, competition, pride, injustices, heroes, habits, service, hate, fantasy, addictions, stress, guilt, procrastination, education, risk, goals, mistakes, honesty, passion, knowledge, rebellion, phobias, control, fear, self-esteem, cooperation, honor, anger, communication, potential, individuality, apathy, morals, forgiveness, laughter, trust, values, respect, extremism, greed, originality, achievement, materialism, age, loneliness, conservatism, liberalism, brainwashing, sensationalism, challenges, commitment, losses, deception, acceptance, vanity, perfectionism, rights, style, time, appearance, obsessions, superstitions, relationships, energy, compulsions, culture, ignorance, life, quality, simplicity, burnout, cruelty, authority, sensuality, egos, influences, reaction, dreams, stereotypes, freedom, transitions, disorders, abuse, motivation, ambition, family, courage, ancestry, distortion, class, manners, dependability, youth, motivation, ambition, luck, retribution, superficiality, gluttony, appreciation

**Ineffective topics:** Abortion, capitalism is bad, the Republican party is better than the Democratic party, Death penalty, gun control, suicide, child abuse

**Exceptional topics:** quitting can be a good thing, winning is actually losing, underdogs do not exist, hard work is overvalued, people are depressed because they have lost touch with their primeval self, war is a necessary element of life

What makes the effective topics effective? They have been used before or they can be used in a manner which will not offend audiences across multiple variants. Ineffective oratory topics have the ability to offend up to fifty percent of any given audience. When an audience believes they are being sold something through your speech that they may personally not believe in or accept, they will stop listening. Also, their bias may affect your outcome in competition.

Exceptional topics are a topics that takes a generally held belief and gently suggest that perhaps we should see things from a different point of view. Defining your terms is very important. I commend students who choose an exceptional topic because they require more work to become an effective speech. Language and evidence are especially important when working with an exceptional topic. You run the risk of turning off the audience, but if careful you can give the audience an ah-ha moment, which will mean you truly have persuaded them to view things from a different point of view.

## **6. Write a Thesis**

Once you have selected a topic, you need to write a thesis. A well-developed thesis will take an original stance on a topic. Procrastination is bad, is a nice start. Procrastination is the leading cause of people's inability to obtain their goals, is better. The second thesis takes a unique stance on the topic of procrastination; and, it forces the writer to develop speech in such a way to support the thesis.

## **7. Selecting an Outline**

The most effective outline is: problem (effect), cause, solution. The problem section answers the question what? What is wrong? Assume the audience doesn't know. Procrastination is leading the world into a state of damnation. After this section of the speech the audience should be well aware of the problem. Even more so, they should be concerned, perhaps on the edge of their seats. It is recommended that this section starts off with small inconsequential examples of how procrastination is bad and build to larger more unsettling examples. Now you have the audience where you want them!

The cause section answers the question why? Why do we procrastinate? This is a section that may only contain one or two reasons but should also contain a few examples or pieces of evidence.

Lastly, the solutions answers the question how? How can we stop procrastinating? This is your opportunity to provide hope for the audience. It is time for the relief, the crescendo. All of the tension that has been built can finally be settled in this section and the conclusion. If done successfully the audience should be left feeling a sense of satisfaction that is often associated with an epic-style film. After-all you have led them through an array of emotions.

## **8. Attention Getting Devices (AGD)**

An AGD is the opening of an oratory and should be used in an persuasive-esque speaking. It is your hook; or, it is your advertising slogan. It could be a theme that is used throughout your speech. An AGD can be a quote, a clipping of a nursery rhyme, song lyrics or a joke. More specifically it is a clever or interesting way to introduce or even tease your topic.

I cannot stress enough the importance of an AGD. This is your moment to shine! You have seven seconds to make a good first impression. You have ten seconds in the beginning of your speech before an audience decides whether to tune out or not. An AGD is your chance to make the good impression and convince the judge that your speech is worthy of their time. No pressure!!

The most successful oratory speakers will tie their AGD back into their conclusion. Most often the AGD-tie-in will be the last thing the speaker says. In comedy it is called a call-back. You are reminding the audience of something clever, funny, or interesting that was previously said. To conclude of this note is strong! It is also called tying the bow around the package. You have handmade your oratory, you have gift wrapped it, and the AGD is the bow tie that wraps the package.

## **9. Road mapping**

Road mapping is when a speaker tells the audience where he/she is going. Simplistically this is done by saying, "I am going to describe the problems, causes, and solution involved with procrastination." My suggestion is to look for a more clever way of doing this, ie, "what happens to \_\_\_\_\_ when he/she procrastinates, why would he/she do such a thing? And how can we help him/her find the way to a more successful lifestyle." There are far more clever and interesting ways to do this but I hope these simple examples will get you headed in the right direction (perhaps the pun was intended).

## **10. Research**

You have chosen your topic, and hopefully you are motivated. Now where do you get examples and evidence that convinces the audience that you have found a problem with society, but don't worry, you also know a possible solution?

Here are some places to look:

- Quotes
- Movies or television
- Song lyrics
- Current events
- Statistics
- Academic magazine/journal
- Recent poll
- A philosophical idea
- Famous painting or art
- Drama/theatre
- Sports
- Foreign traditions or customs (keep these on the positive)
- Nursery rhyme
- Fables/myths
- Fictional book/children's books
- Cartoon
- Junk magazine (Cosmo)
- Personal example
- Biography (famous person)
- Pop culture
- Poetry
- Joke (nonoffensive)
- Advertisement
- Popularly held belief, phraseology, or cliché

These suggestions will hopefully get your mind going. Google is your best friend. Google your topic and see what comes up! Ask friends, relatives, and your coach/es about your topic. Generate ideas and dig in!

I strongly suggest that you choose no more than two examples/evidence from any of the above sources. It tends to make a judge think that you are not thoroughly researched on your topic. Consider that a quote, statistic, or personal example may go a long way in selling your case to the judge. But also keep in mind that entertainment and persuasion go hand in hand, so find some entertaining ways of making your point. Otherwise your oratory sounds like an informative speech and not a persuasive speech.

### **HARD EVIDENCE**

#### ***FACTS:***

Things that did happen

- 85 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN THE EXPLOSION

- IN 1992, LITTLE JOE PAISANO WAS BORN TO MARIA AND GIOVANNI
- IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.....
- DATES

## **STATS**

- BASED ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FAIR POLLING
- ACCORDING TO A HARRIS POLL, 85%
- STUDIES SHOW THAT 46% OF
- 1 OUT OF 4 PEOPLE SURVEYED

## **SOFT EVIDENCE**

### **TESTIMONY**

It is best to add the person's credentials

- A STATEMENT BY AN EXPERT IN THE FIELD
- A STATEMENT BY SOMEONE WHO EXPERTLY RESEARCHED THE FIELD
- A STATEMENT BY SOMEONE WHO IS A VICTIM OF THE PROBLEM
- A STATEMENT BY SOMEONE WHO IS A FIRST HAND WITNESS TO THE PROBLEM

### **EXAMPLES**

- SHORT ONES
- EXTENDED ONES
- FUNNY ONES
- HYPOTHETICAL ONES
- QUASI- SERIOUS ONES
- SERIOUS ONES

### **REMEMBER**

Most judges like the soft stuff; but you can't forget about including the hard stuff—the facts and stats

## **11. A Sample Oratory Outline**

- AGD
- Thesis
- Signposting or road mapping
- Problems
- Causes
- Solutions
- Conclusion
- AGD tie in

Keep in mind the above outline is very simple. A strong oratory will transition from each point cleverly, and using examples etc. to illustrate points.

### **An example of a more flushed out outline:**

- AGD
- Thesis: procrastination is bad
- Signpost
- Problems (what): procrastination leads to being late, unfinished assignments, disappointing people and increased stress
- Causes (why): Laziness, habitual, learned behavior, poor prioritizing
- Solutions (how to fix): Better personal organization, valuing and making better priorities, become more other oriented (think about how your actions make others feel)
- AGD tie in

By flushing out the outline as illustrated above I now can look for specific examples, quotes, stories, etc. that illustrate each one of my specifics within the body of the speech. An example, quote, or statistic directly supporting your thesis in the introduction is also highly valuable.

### **12. Other Organizational Details:**

Keep in mind that not all topics fit the above style of organization and in the back of this booklet there are other organizational strategies offered.

Get Writing!!

### **13. Food For Thought:**

A study conducted in the 1960's at UCLA concluded that 93% of all communication transactions are nonverbal. So what does this mean...

*Let's face it: A well delivered decent speech sells better than a shabbily delivered excellent one. Vocal variety is a must. Read here what you need to do with your voice in order to mesmerize your audience with your excellent camp text*

**Paralanguage is the use of inflection and modulation to convey meaning.**

The rule of thumb is to use CONTRAST. If the whole world turned "orange" we would see nothing, as everything would be one color; only by seeing white against red or yellow against blue can we see either color. So, in order for an audience to "see" and "hear" what we are saying we must have sufficient contrast.

What are the variables?

**PITCH** High to low (high when piercingly excited; low when calm and relaxed—with lots of variance in between)

**VOLUME** Loud to soft (loud if you want to audibly arrest an audience; soft if you want to lure them in to feel what you are feeling)

**RATE** Fast to slow (fast if you are talking about something inherently exciting or if you are telling a something which quickly builds to a climax; slow if you are deadly serious, if you are establishing the bottom line)



**STRESS** Word emphasis. Highlight words (either by raising pitch and volume or by stretching it or by doing something else that draws attention to it)

**QUALITY** Pulling sound from the entire chest cavity, producing full volume and resonance, to pulling sound from the throat, producing a lesser volume and resonance (in the first case to take over a room; in the second case to show how an emotion paralyzed you)

**PHRASING** Pausing after a few words to pausing after many words (in the first case to make the point slowly so that it sinks in; in the second case to build to some climax)

**ARTICULATION** Fuzzy (bad) to crisp (good)

**SYLLABLE DURATION** One second per syllable to a few per syllable

### Listener-Learner

Keep in mind that there are four kinds of learners, thinkers, and listeners. Applied to the forensic judging audience, the most audience pleasing oratory will have more examples and testimony than anything else, but will also have stats and facts, practical and personal application, and bottom line as well as long term thinking.

## Learning Styles- As Applied to Listener Satisfaction in Oratory

### CONCRETE RANDOM LISTENERS

- make intuitive leaps; likes open possibilities, and rich environment-
- want to know: what does it mean in the long term
- want to hear effects, illustrations-humorous or serious; wants rich language
- 30% of IE coaches thought and listened this way; 21% of debate coaches

### ABSTRACT RANDOM LISTENERS

- are people persons, who evaluate while experiences and who are concerned with feelings
- want to know: why they should care about the problem; why you do?
- want humor and stories, personal examples and involvement
- 42% of IE coaches thought and listened this way; 10% of debate coaches did

### CONCRETE SEQUENTIAL LISTENERS

- prefer hands on approaches and practical material; they like an easy process
- want to know how the solutions will work
- want practical applications, solid solutions, and tight organization
- 17% of IE coaches thought and listened this way; 33% of debate coaches

### ABSTRACT SEQUENTIAL LISTENERS

- prefer what is substantive and rational; looks for organization; fosters the intellect
- want to know what the evidence says
- want facts and stats, expert opinion, logical order and exact language
- 1% of IE coaches thought and listened this way; 36% of debate coaches

DO NOT ALIENATE ANY OF THESE LISTENERS. HAVE SOMETHING IN EACH CHUNK OF YOUR SPEECH THAT CAN APEAL TO AND DRAW IN EACH TYPE. But have more examples and testimony than facts and stats.

#### **14. Some creative writing techniques to consider using when writing your speech (a little goes a long way):**

- Hyperbole: excessive exaggeration “I have been waiting here forever”
- Colloquial language / slang: “I ain’t , Y’all”
- Emotive language: adjectives or adverbs that are related to emotions to elicit emotions
  - I love puppies the cold weather makes me feel sad
- Onomatopoeia: words in which a sound is represented
  - Whack boing thud
- Personification: human characteristics given to something that is nonhuman
  - Sad chair
- Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds
  - The man was tan and he was the meanest in the land
- Alliteration: linking words by repeating the sound of the first word which is usually a consonant
  - Waves wished wistfully amorous activities
- Rhetorical questions: questions that do not require or expect an answer
  - What is wrong with this picture
- Metaphor: saying things are the same
  - Life is like a rollercoaster
- Simile: describing one subject compared to another even though they are not related
  - Linda is as thin as a toothpick
- Antithesis:
  - Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country
- Effective use of sarcasm
- Consonance: repetition of consonants at the end of the words
  - Their maid spread the word of their deed
- Repetition: repeating a word or a phrase to produce a pattern or structure that strengthens the effect of a passage
  - When I find you, I will catch you, when I catch you I will cook you, when I cook you I will eat you
- Rhyme:
  - If it doesn’t fit you must acquit
- Rhythm: creating a rhythm to a passage
- Parallelism: giving two or more parts of the sentences a similar form to create a pattern
  - Wounds caused by knives will heal, wounds caused by words will not heal
- Syllogism: form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn whether there is validity or not
  - All dogs are animals, all animals have four legs, therefore all dogs have four legs
- Analogy: a comparison between two things typically on the basis of their structure for the purpose of explanation or clarification

## **15. Humor (in its own section):**

The easiest way to explain humor is that it is always about the surprise! The surprise is most likely to come at the end of the story or phrase.

*The most common form of humor in an oratory is a pun or an alliteration*

Alliteration: instead of saying a couple was having an affair, you can color up the language making it playful. Amorous activities

Pun: A man uses soiled underpants as an excuse for why he was speeding. After telling the story, you would say, "that stinks." The double meaning of stinks is what makes that humorous/and or witty.

Cacophony: most commonly known or used as the hard K sound in words

Pickles and crackers are funnier words than preserved vegetable or dried bread

An exaggeration: I am a very old lady. I am 192 \_\_\_\_\_ months old. The underline indicates the necessity for a pause, more specifically a pregnant pause. The pause gives the audience enough time to think that you are going to say 192 years old. When you say months because you are 16 years old,  $16 \times 12 = 192$ , you have misguided the audience and therefore surprised them.

Classic left turn: I went out on a date last night. I thought we were having a good time, but she acted like the food was awful. Finally I worked up the courage to ask, "would you like to order something else mom?" Most people would never assume that as you are telling your date story that you were talking about a dinner date with your mother. The last word is where the misdirection occurred and it surprises the audience. More times than not, the audience laughs because of the surprise.

## **HOW TO USE HUMOR IN PRESENTATIONS**

### **TEN Dos & Don'ts of Using Humor in Speeches**

1. Do use humorous stories and jokes that relate directly to the topic of your speech.
  2. Don't laugh at your own story or joke.
  3. Don't offend. For example: a person without a limb may not think a one-armed paperhanger joke is funny.
  4. Do make the story or joke clear and to the point.
  5. Do relate the story or joke to the audience.
  6. Do speak audibly.
  7. Don't repeat a story or joke that flops.
  8. Don't repeat a story or joke that works. Once is enough.
  9. Do tell a story or joke about yourself.
  10. Do use the name of living persons in a story or joke to which the audience can relate.
- "Requirements of a Good Toastmaster" The Complete Toastmaster by Herbert V. Prochnow

## More on Humor

- self deprecation (poking fun at yourself) is fine—it humanizes you, allowing the audience to see your vulnerable average joe/jane side: “and so the girl stranded him at his own prom—so much for my life story.”
- humorous quotations from a comic, from an author, from a news commentator, from a TV show or film
- twisted quotations: “it is better to have loved a short, than never to have loved a tall” (in a speech about discrimination against shorter people); good things come in small packages—and some are laced with poison
- clever analogies (an off the cuff comparison to something else for a useful and funny effect); “that is like saying that the Grand Canyon is a dimple on Brad Pitt’s --
- face;” “my fascination with it is not unlike what a man feels as he is about to be neutered by a beautiful doctor: he is generally unnerved, yet strangely attracted to the idea”; “the snow was as white as Michael Jackson’s skin.”
- jabs at current event (referencing current events with a cynical eye): maybe Martha Stewart can give us the inside scoop....just ask Janet Jackson how she feels about the boob tube; that is like asking Britney Spears to speak at a commitment ceremony.
- allusions: taking a funny line from a well known movie or show: “don’t have a cow, man”; “I’ll be back”; “just when I think I’m out they pull me back in”; “...an offer he can’t refuse”; “we’re gonna need a bigger boat.”
- simple one word-or several word--commentaries: after describing an unsavory event, you can pause and simply say “lovely”...”life is beautiful”....yummmm (turn head, change facial expression, say the line with a sarcastic or ironic tone)
- understatement (drawing humorous/sarcastic attention o something but making it seem less that what it is: after describing an horrific problem, say: “just one of life’s bumps, I guess.”
- jokes: short and germane
- clichés (old adages): using them not seriously, but with irony: saying “an apple a day DOES keep the doctor away” if you just spoke about a patient hitting her predator-doctor with an apple, knocking him out, just as he was about to take advantage of her
- portmanteau words (smashing two words together): fantastic and fabulous become “fantabulous.”
- irony (a visit to the unexpected): the 6 month old brown-haired, blue-eyed cherubic baby boy, looked at his mother, opened his mouth, and spoke his first words: “what’s with Bush’s Iraq policy?”
- and let’s not forget CLEVER WORDING/WIT (the best of all!)

# Oops!

## *Some common mistakes made in Original Oratory*

### CONTENT

- Try to stay away from **absolutes**. I would say never use absolutes, but that would be contradictory. I don't care how sure you are that "Glitter" deserved an Oscar, someone, somewhere, can argue otherwise.....although we all know they would be a fool to do so. Replace instances of always and never with sometimes or often. Rather than all or none, use some or most.
- **Transitions** are essential, but don't need to be overemphasized. In other words, don't beat us over the head with them. If you have a vehicle, come back to it throughout the speech, but only reiterate the metaphor when you are coming to a new point. Transitions can be subtle and still very effective.
- Remember that this is a **speech**, not an essay. This fact is often overlooked and oratories need to be written to be spoken. I'm not advocating using improper English, but there are certain colloquialisms more common in speaking than in formal writing.
- **Sign Posting** is an area that can also be subtle and still effective. Simply listing your points is not a good idea. This isn't an extemporaneous speech. No judge wants to hear what your "following three contentions" are. Come up with a clever way to inform the audience of the structure of your speech, whether it is problem, cause, solution, or problem, cause, effect, solution , etc....
- **Sources** should be both relevant and recent. A perfect example for your argument that was in the first ever published American newspaper probably won't help much. Similarly, an article from a week before the tournament that doesn't support your point that well isn't useful just because it is recent. Try to strike a balance between the two. Find sources that are applicable and within the past few years.
- Make sure your speech has a **thesis**. Make it clear what you want the audience to think about during your speech. The thesis does not necessarily have to be one single sentence, but don't make it a paragraph either. Something like, "With so many mistakes commonly made in Original Oratory, a handout that recognizes these mistakes and offers alternate techniques, can help reduce errors in the event."
- Balance each section of your speech. Great oratories have a good combination of **humor, analysis, anecdotes, examples, and statistics**. Most speeches tend to lean towards one or two of these areas more, but the best ones contain a good balance of all of them.

## DELIVERY

- The biggest mistake in delivery is the ability to sound **natural**. The key is not trying too hard to sound “right.” Everyone knows about the “oratory voice,” but that only occurs when people try too hard for emphasis. If you speak naturally, like you would in everyday life, the emphasis will come out on its own. Try reciting your speech to your friends. Do it sitting down, at the dinner table, or some other casual setting where you feel natural.
- **Eye contact** or lack thereof is the other biggest mistake in original oratory. Once again, it is about balance. Don’t make a judge want to put on a sweater because they are cold from watching an oscillating fan speak for 10 minutes. On the other hand, you don’t need to win a staring contest with the kid in the second row of the room either. I guarantee he will look away first...because he will be frightened. Think about what you are saying and your eye contact will follow. Say one idea to one person, the next idea to someone else. If you are moving, talk to someone in the direction you are going, and then move back towards the other side once you are settled.
- When it comes to **gestures**, a little goes a long way. Gestures should have a purpose, not a metronome. Don’t gesture every 4<sup>th</sup> line just because that seems like a good time interval, gesture because you want to emphasize something. They should be controlled but not robotic. Let your hands complement your speech. They are an aid to your face and voice.
- **Facial expressions** are the biggest tool people forget to use. You can tell a story completely with your face without saying a word. Let the audience see what you are talking about, not just hear it. In your eyes, we should see the passion you have for your topic. In your face, we should see changes in emotion as you move throughout areas of your speech. If we do, our emotions will follow. Not only does it make your speech more genuine and natural, but it helps us understand and care about what you are telling us.
- We are human, well most of us I think. The point is we make mistakes, and a common mistake in oratory is not forgetting your lines, but the way to handle a mistake. If you slip and **forget a line**, don’t apologize to the judge and the room. Don’t repeat the line you just did to try and help yourself remember. Take a second, think to yourself, and move on. It is much better to wait for a few seconds to hear the rest of the speech, than to hear an obvious declaration of your mistake.

Ultimately, be **personable** and **likeable**. Make the audience want to listen to you. Too many orators attack and accuse their audience. Always include yourself in this “societal” problem by using us instead of you. Don’t tell your audience they are doing something wrong; rather make them look at an issue in a way they haven’t thought of before. A good speaker could make an audience want to hear about the daily habits of spider monkeys if they so desired, and I hope they don’t.

# **THE WORD ON ORIGINAL ORATORY**

## **THE BEST TOPIC**

- One that makes us feel good; one we can't disagree with
- One that reworks an old topic
- One that takes a different angle toward a typical one
- One that we might never have thought of
- One that is more ideational (concepts) Than concrete (seat belt safety)

## **THE BEST VOCAL DELIVERY**

- Has passion and conversation
- Has sub textual decisions: speaker has decided ahead of time what s/he is thinking and feeling and recalling as each line is delivered
- Has variety: Fast, slow, loud, soft, pitch changes, syllable stretching, interesting sounds, important words are stressed
- Has external v. internal contrast: an emotional response to the reporting of facts

## **THE BEST PHYSICAL DELIVERY**

- Has a steady stance: now swaying, rotation, shifting, rocking
- Has a steady hands-at-sides demeanor: "STILL" is good
- Has purposeful gestures: grapefruit/box
- Has dramatic gestures: (reliving events with full body expression- seeing an accident; dribbling a ball)
- Has gestures that are defined: extend them, freeze them, return them
- Has body talk and facial animation and both express thought, feeling, desire, memory, and both are congruous with words
- Has movement- walking- during transitions

## **THE BEST EYE CONTACT**

- Does not pan the audience or allow eyes to slick or dart-seduces the audience instead
- Directs on phrase to one person's eyes before directing the next phrase to the next person's eyes
- Does not look at floor or ceiling or empty desks
- Changes eye expression in the pauses
- Changes eye/facial expressions from one person to another
- Shows subtext: desire, feeling, thought, memory
- Shows concern about the audience's understanding

## **THE BEST STRUCTURAL**

- Utilizes some vehicle: a metaphor that begins, weaves device throughout, and ends the speech: we all need to find the scarecrow, the lion, and the tin man in us, or lacking a metaphor is very clear
- Has clear/clever transitions from point to point
- Has a clear intro, body, and conclusion demarcation

## **THE BEST WORDING**

- Is conversational-not bombastic
- Is lean, not verbose or wordy
- Is active, not passive
- Has rhetorical devices: alliteration/consonance, parallelism/analogy-simile-metaphor/anaphora
- Has clever/funny wordings/reworking's/updating of clichés

- Has personalizes/ personal voice
- Has an emotional feel somewhere-especially the end

### **THE BEST INTRO**

- Gets attention with humor, drama, personal story, long illustration, few short examples, a startling statement, a funky quotation from a celeb, author, poem, lyric, play
- Indirection- misleading the audience into believing you are talking about one thing when you are actually discussing something else.
- Humor-joke cartoon, but nothing offensive
- Hypothetical situation
- Rhetorical question
- Clever device- foreign language, mime, forgetting speech, begin with the end, having the audience help you look for something you; Suspense segues to the topic and motivates us to listen
- Arrest the audience somehow
- Personalizes- ties the speaker and therefore the audience to the topic offers a preview of what is to come in the

### **THE BEST CONTENT**

- Has a mix of hard and soft evidence
- Has more soft evidence
- Has sourced book titles
- Has a series of threes: three examples with accumulative effect; three statements with same; three facts with same moves from mild instances of the problem to major catastrophic ones
- Utilizes emotional explanation

### **THE BEST PERSUASIVE STRUCTURE**

- Utilizes Monroe's motivated sequence
- Getting attention
- Establishing a need: there is a problem that
- Offering satisfaction/solutions
- What we need to consider/embrace/rethink
- What we can personally do
- What needs to be done
- Offering a visualization
- Example of someone who overcame their problem
- A final emotional plea for change

### **USEFUL PERSUASIVE STRUCTURES**

- The problem exists
- Subdivided into areas where it exists
- Imitations of harm woven through the examples
- Subdivided into how it is manifested
- Ending with a series of three horrors
- Ending with on big bang of horror
- Sometimes much of a speech can be used to prove that things are causes and then the speech should indict these
- The problem can be solved by/alleviated with
- The solution works: visualization



## **THE BEST CONCLUSION**

- Revisits the topic
- Sometimes rehashes the main points
- Emotionally and rhetorically offers hope
- Refers back somehow to the attention device
- Perhaps seeing it in a new light

## **C YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS IN OO**

- Catch their attention
- Connect The AGD to the main; germane to the topic
- Clarify the thesis and avoid a generic idea
- Concern the listeners about the topic, motivate them to listen, it's happening all over nicely incriminate them, we are all more involved than we think, easily scare them, intellectually stimulate them, link yourself to the topic
- Concede part of the topic. You are not solving for everything
- Cut to your main points
- Clinch the intro by ending interestingly
- Classify the problem areas
- Corroborate the significance and harmful impact of the problem
- Claim the reasons why the problem exists
- Cure the problem and eliminate the causes by offering solutions
- Comfort us by offering a visualization of someone who has triumphed by following the solutions given
- Conclude by summarizing the topic of main points
- Clinch by persuasively inspiring the audience to reach the goal

## Additional Resources

### 1. Additional outline strategies:

Each of the following outlines have commonalities. Experiment and find a structure that works for you.

#### Combination of Motivated Sequence and Serrett's Structural Climax Approach

- AGD, present the specific purpose
- Explain the problem: including existing conditions, causes and harms; also, build to a climax so that the highest emotional point proceeds the solution
- Present the solution
- Conclusion: reaffirm the central theme and build to a higher emotional plane.

#### Five-Step Formula

- Make contact with the listener AGD and preview
- Justification: prove the topic is worthy of consideration
- Subject text: present the central thesis
- Establish belief: unfold the central thought through examples and exposition

#### Monroe's Motivated Sequence

- AGD
- Need step: provide a problem exists and show the significance
- Satisfaction step: present a solution
- Visualization step: Negative show that the situation will worsen without your solution. Positive: show that the situation will improve with your solution.  
Negative/positive combination: show the negative aspects and then the positive.
- Action Step: tell the audience what they can do to help solve the problem.

#### Wheel, Turn or Flip Outline

- Outrageous or humorous intro
- Wheel or Turn... This is no laughing matter
- Horror stories to prove the extent of the problem. This should take about 33% of the speech time and include debate style harms
- Present the solution. Have a social and an individual solution
- Conclusion presents the consequence of the listener's failure to act

#### Personal Problem Outline

- Intro and roadmap
- Justify the importance of the problem with examples of the problem and the impacts
- Personalize the problem. Show how it affects you.
- Reinforce the significance of the topic
- Present actions to be taken
- Summarize with tie-back to intro

## Dewey Problem-Solving Method

- Intro and thesis
- Define and discuss problem. Present proof of the problem and show the impacts and ramifications of the problem
- Suggest solutions
- Evaluate solutions showing advantages and disadvantages of each
- Advocate a best solution
- Conclusion, tell the audience how they can help with the solution

The following is a fleshed out Pyramid style to writing an oratory. This strategy has been used to successfully nationally qualify students and even win nationals in the MN area.

### **Guide to Original Oratory**

Original Oratory has to follow the oooooohhhh, ahhhhhhh flow:

Ooooohhh: feel the seriousness of the problem: first: mildly annoying nature, and then its increasing gravity

Ahhhhhhh: we need to see a way out of the problem: first, with suggestions that calm us down and point our behavior in the right direction; then, with an examples of those who overcame the problem by employing the suggestions

The OO Audience Journey:

1. Uninvolved curiosity
2. Alertness and awareness of a potential problem
3. Agreement that the problem exists
4. Appreciation of the seriousness of the problem
5. Anger or even outrage that the situation is allowed to exist
6. The urgent desire for a solution
7. Reassurance that a solution exists and satisfaction that things can be made right

Proposed Structure: The Five Pyramid Method

Developed by Joe and Pam Wycoff (Apple Valley High School, MN)

Why do we use upside-down pyramids? We start out with a broad topic but we focus at a point or thesis!

### **Pyramid 1: Introduction**

- Attention Getter: grab out attention with a story, illustration, quote, humor, hypothetical questions
- Link: Link the Attention Getter to us and your topic
- Common Ground: What does it have to do with me?
- Significance: Cite an authority to support your thesis
- Thesis: What's your point?
- Preview: Outline/signpost your speech
- Transition: End intro and start first body with clever punch

## **Pyramid 2: 1st Main Point**

- 1st Main Point
- Explain it: how, where, or why
- Support it (authority)
- Analysis, commentary, harm
- Summarize it
- Transition

## **Things about Pyramid 2:**

- This is the lightest and most casual body pyramid
- Utilize humor
- Use facts, cite experts
- Reach out to your audience so that they can identify with your problem
- Pyramid 3: 2nd Main Point
- 2nd Main Point
- Explain it: how, where, or why
- Support it (authority)  
Analysis, commentary, harm
- Summarize it
- Transition

## **Things about Pyramid 3:**

- This is more serious than Pyramid 2
- Reach out again
- Use facts, cite experts

## **Pyramid 4: 3rd Main Point**

- “Just Talk”
- No quotes or experts
- Tell a story (or your story)

## **Things about Pyramid 4:**

- This is the climax of your Oratory
- You either tell your personal story or a heart story about somebody else
- This is 100% serious; no humor, jokes, or statistics; JUST TALK

## **Pyramid 5: Solution**

- What’s your solution?
- Talk about examples of success
- What’s the threat of inaction?

## **Things about Pyramid 5:**

- Be very careful with solutions
- You WILL have people who do not agree
- Be reasonable, be realistic, be inspirational
- Tips for Conclusion:
- Link back to Attention Getter
- Talk heart to heart- INSPIRE YOUR AUDIENCE

- Add a quote? It's up to you
- Urge us to act
- End creatively (linked to intro for full circle)
- What does the audience like?

Delivery: Someone who looks confident, who has high status delivery, who has a winning smile, whose eyes reach into the soul of the listeners, who has passion, who looks mature, who is in control of his/her words, body, voice, audience, who looks spiffy

Content: A speech that keeps them interested, that makes them go oooohhh-ahhhhh, that makes them go through a sequence of emotions, a topic that is intriguing, varying support, clever language, a personal and emotional connection Have something for everyone!

1. Have examples, stories, personal touches for the goo-goo ga-ga judges
2. Have facts, statistics, and cite sources for the intellectuals
3. State "the bottom line" for those who don't need fluff but just want it handed to them on a plate
4. Have "testimony" from those who need to hear from voices of authority

## **2. Example introduction and speeches**

**WHATEVER**  
**By Jared Weiss**  
**South plantation hs**  
**NfL finalist 1999**

So there I was, sixteen years old and equipped with a license to drive.  
 My birthday present, a brand new, fully loaded, sunglow-red,  
 Vette---chevette--lay dormant in my garage for many months, awaiting this glorious day.

When I got behind the wheel I had only one thing in mind, I was ready to go from 0-60 in just five minutes. As I strapped on my seat belt and my collector's edition Evil Kanevil Driving Glasses, I felt myself going faster and faster, as if I were at the whims of my roaring speed machine. But then, I heard a small voice inside my head, a voice saying, JARED! STOP! Don't you know that according to the National Transportation Safety Board Annual Report of 1995, there were approximately 22,461 Americans who died as a result of unsafe drivers, and in 1997 the Federal Automobile Commissions reported 7,000 teenage fatalities on the road, and Ms. November enjoys long walks on the beach and sensitive men, don't you understand! You know better! The voice inside my head likes periodicals!

And all I could think to myself was! Whatever! My inner geek needs to shut up!

Virtually all of us know better. We know more than ever before about the dangers we face, and we know how to avoid them. Yet, lately in our society our response is simply: Whatever! We ignore the statistics, advice, and common sense, which should be pointing us along the road toward a healthy life. To fully understand this destructive mentality, we must first identify what is wrong with the philosophy that supports it, what causes it, and learn how we can say "Whatever!" to whatever.

"Jock Rash, the Rock and Fuzzy Mirrors"  
**Yasmine Mashhoon, Albuquerque Academy**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2001 NFL Nationals in Original Oratory

My fifth grade classroom was a freak show. There was a boy who dressed like John Wayne every day and called the other kids, "you blankety-blank pilgrims." But he would then cry when anyone every looked at him. A girl whose nose was slightly crooked, and another girl whose forearm was misshapen.

When my classmates questioned me about my curious nasal structure, I explained to them that had they run around smashing into walls when they were two years old, their noses would probably look the exact same way. This amused them as they later went on to christen me, "The Beak."

The principle attraction of the class freak show, however, was Sharon. After a difficult delivery Sharon was born with her arm badly disfigured. The translucent skin was stretched tight over veins and what little muscle there was. It lacked the normal shape of an arm, and the flesh was a lighter orangish-pink. At recess kids would always gather around Sharon and ask if they could touch her arm. Behind her back they called her "The Freak." And at lunch someone would always ask, "Sharon, could you put your arm under the table, we're eating."

If the poet, T.S. Elliott, is right, that April is the cruelest month, then for some children every month can be April.

We've all grown up since the fifth grade, but somehow not much has changed. We have developed such a fascination with freaks, people who have different appearances or characteristics than the accepted norm that we've extended the term to apply not only to people but also to behavior that strikes as unusual. Our interest has heightened to such an extent that we have twisted the media into our own continuous freak show. So the industry posed itself the question of how best to keep us occupied with matters of small intrinsic value and came up with the following solution: Anywhere that the public turns to keep itself entertained, we will reintroduce the freaks that kept them so enthralled at school when they were younger. So, they did. And they did it in such a pervasive manner it led journalist, Carl Bernstein (?) to proclaim, "the media is a freak show."

So, today we will examine three kinds of freaks inherent in the media: jock rash, the rock and fuzzy mirrors. Welcome to the freak show. Please try not to point, stare, or throw anything at me while I'm speaking.

#### **"Victorian's Secret"**

**Megan Bartle, Apple Valley High School**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place, 2001 NFL Nationals in Original Oratory

A few years ago Dr. Richard Lucking of \_\_\_\_\_ University conducted a listening study that involved over 1500 participants. The study showed that we effectively listen 40% of the time and daydream 60% and of that 60%. More than 80% of the time we spend daydreaming about one particular subject, uh-huh, yes, sex. So, if I look out and see any of you off somewhere I might not now who, but I will know what you are thinking.

Today such daydreaming might not be such a big deal, but at the turn of the twentieth century during the Victorian Period it may have well as been a crime. You see, women conducted themselves as ladies and the pimps and players as we know them today (a-hem), were gentlemen at least on the outside.

Medical textbooks of the times warned that sex before the age of 25 would \_\_\_\_\_ strength, shorten life and cause certain body parts to shrivel up and die. Pretty picture!

You see, the Victorian Period was a time of restraint, class, decorum and modesty, skin equaled sin. All legs were covered including table legs to insure the propriety of good manners and good taste. Well, legendary song writer, Bob Dylan, once wrote, "The times they are changin'," for nowadays nothing is covered. We let it all hang out -- literally.

Author Gore Vidal once said, "Never turn down a chance to go on television or have sex." Well, today lucky for us we can do both at the same time (laughter) because today instead of skin being a sin, skin is in. It has become America's driving obsession -- more positions, more partners, more perversions, more often.

National Public Radio Correspondent, Susan Stamburg (?), noted that something has changed in our culture. We have become a sex-obsessed society, and the sizzle of sex is sometimes sparking where it shouldn't.

Our obsession is revealed in two ways.

First, we fixate on sex and become desensitized in the process. And secondly, we legitimize sex and make it acceptable in areas where it doesn't

**AMERICA'S GOOD OLE GAME  
JOE JONES—HOLY GHOST PREP  
NFL NATIONAL FINALIST 1995**

The gauntlet was thrown. Combatants glared into each others' eyes with a look that could burn stone. Each opponent close enough to feel—and smell—the other's soured breath. The crowd, hushed—waiting, to witness war.

The scenario? David and Goliath? No. the latest episode of American gladiators? Not exactly. A game of scrabble? You got it. Armed with only seven tiles and the English language, beleaguered opponents can butt heads for up to four hours to become “master of the Crossword World.”

Now, every Thanksgiving, I'm convinced that the reason all of my relatives flock to my house is that they wish to play America's Good ole Game with the reigning family champion: me. And every year, egos are bruised, arguments are started, and grudges are held because—well—I always win. Now on it's face value, my obsession with scrabble may appear depressing and pathetic—and it is! However, fortunately, it also serves to illustrate a growing problem that has become prevalent in today's society.

Now at this point in my speech earlier in the year, I went on to define this problem as our society's obsession with competition. And I advocated eliminating competition from nearly every aspect of our lives. But a couple fo weeks ago, I stopped and said to myself, “Self, you're writing a speech against competition, for competition.” I mean, that's like giving a speech against drinking to a room full of drunks...in a bar. And ten having a drink yourself. And there it was that I rethought my position and changed my speech.

Ladies and gentlemen, competition has expanded our horizons—it has put humans on the moon, made American cars drivable again, and given us better products. Without competition, there would be no means of measuring quality. After all, it took being walloped by the whopper for the mcburger line to become somewhat more dabble. So you see, it's not competition itself that's evil but what has fragmented society and destroyed lives is our failure to compete correctly. Let me explain.

The word competition is derived from the Latin word competore meaning literally: to go after the same goal at the same time as someone else. Now that seems pretty clear-cut, right? Yet it's in the goal where our error in judgment lies. You see, we erroneously believe that our goal should be winning. Why or how become questions of little importance. Sadly, all too often, we win for winning's sake alone simply being first. We lower our standards and we sacrifice excellence because either A: we will compromise our integrity or B: we will distort our perceptions. This desperate race to be winners turns us all into losers.

**GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER  
Dan Alesandro  
1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE PA STATE 1996**

It is a dark night in 1945; even the full moon cannot illuminate the blackness. Howitzer shells bombard the city of Berlin. Russian troops are closing in on every border. Deep below the city, in a dank stone bunker lit only by a dangling bulb, Adolph Hitler sits on a wooden bench, gun in hand, ready to apply the "final solution" to himself. Just then, Steve Dallas, Bloom County's Quick Draw McGraw, grabs Hitler by the shoulder and says, "Adolph. . .put. . .the. . .gun. . .down. We'll sue somebody. Now say it again." To which Hitler responds, "I'M A VICTIM TOO.'

Ahh! Poor Adolph! Let's face it: he was a man ahead of his time. It's a pity he lived in 1945 instead of 1995, because today he might actually get away with such a ridiculous claim. And why not? It almost worked for Philadelphia Eagles owner Leonard Tose, who sued an Atlantic City Casino for allowing him to gamble away his fortune-- he was a victim of "Trump's card". It almost worked for a Rose Cippolone of North Carolina, a 40-year chain smoker who sued a tobacco company for causing her cancer--she was a victim of an "Unlucky Strike." And it almost worked for my little sister who dropped a 126 box of crayola crayons. . .into our Baby Grand. When my parents colorfully confronted her, she claimed it was partially my fault: after all, I bought her the box. She, too, was a victim. . of Big Brother's generosity.

It used to be that a victim was someone who was mugged in the park, or bumped at the intersection -- an innocent person unknowingly prey to another's evil designs or fate's fickle ways. In this traditional sense, the three children from down South who were drowned by Susan Smith, their mother, were innocent victims; the tens of thousands of Japanese who have lost either life or livelihood as a result of the earthquake are helpless victims. Yet the new "victim" I question is one who claims the status because s/he has engaged in reckless behaviors and/or criminal conspiracies and just doesn't want to own up even if s/he fesses up

Writes author Robert Hughes in his bestseller *Culture of Complaint: A Passionate Look Into the Ailing Heart of America*, we have become a nation of this new type of victim, no longer responsible for the choices we make, no longer accountable for the actions we take or the effects they have on individuals in particular and society in general. In his words, "What ever the folly, venality, or outright thuggish ness, WE ARE NOT TO BE BLAMED FOR IT."

What initially strikes us as an exercise in folly--my sister, a victim of my generosity--or venality--Mr. Tose, a victim of the blackjack table--soon becomes a matter of grave concern, because when the actions in question are criminal, the consequences can be dire, if not deadly.

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE**  
**STEPHANIE ADULOJU**  
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

I bumped into my friend, George, the other day. Now he is a babe magnet if ever I've seen one. I mean, he gets lucky even more than, well, me! And he had what now—15 sex partners in the last year. Get this though: George never used a condom; doesn't think he has to. You probably wouldn't be surprised if I said George was a strapping, young 21-year-old alpha male who just didn't care. But what if instead, I said that George was 71.

I know...you're probably never considered the sexual prowess of George from the senior center or his ability to get nana in the sack. But you Need to think about it. AIDS is now spreading among the older population at a faster arte than among the younger generation. And according to the April 4<sup>th</sup> 1998 [American Family Physician](#), incident cases of sexually transmitted diseases, like gonorrhea, Chlamydia, syphilis, herpes, HPV, hepatitis, and HIV have increased in individuals aged 50 years and older more than 106% in less than 10 years. Ron Stall for the Centers for Disease Control stated, "80,000 individual over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with AIDS. That's a Vietnam War and a half, yet we do not have one national intervention program targeting this population. How can we look these people in the face?" Clearly, this age group can no longer be ignored. We can, and should, do something to help. I know this is a tough topic to think about—grandmas and grandpas having sex. But one of the best tools to diffuse this kind of tension is humor, so we'll have a little fun thing along the way.

In order to understand this often overlooked dimension to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, we first need to take a look at the contributing factors. Then, we'll examine the impact on this generation. And finally, we'll see what we all can do to make a difference.

**BATTERED MEN**  
Eileen E. Monaghan  
Saint Joseph's University

Tracy had everything – a great job, a nice home n San Francisco, and an abusive spouse. The abuse soon became so serious that Tracy called the police, and even went personally down to the station to file a report. But when Tracy spoke to the police, their response was "Why don't you just go home and work it out on your own." Can you imagine? The police taking domestic violence so lightly? Yet for Tracy and thousands of other men who are victims of domestic violence, that is the only help they get.

There is a famous statistic: Every 15 seconds a woman is abused. But another statistic always seems to be left out: every 14 seconds, a man is abused. According to the [Bangor Daily News](#) of 10/27/00, while half of all victims of domestic violence are men, there are virtually no avenues for these men to find help – instead, they face disbelief, laughter and humiliation. For years, Congress has saved the lives of thousands of women by funding shelters, supporting communication campaigns, and enacting tough domestic violence laws, and rightly and so. But men get none of this. None.

Look, I'm not trying to take anything away from women. Female victims of domestic violence absolutely need all of the help we can offer. But most people refuse to believe that male victims need the same protection, or even exist.

Today, you're going to hear some statistics that are hard to believe, and meet some victims from whom you've never heard. To break the silence, we must first, reveal how the problem of male battering is very real, second we'll uncover why we don't take this victimization seriously, so that we may finally begin the healing process and help its victims.

**HAKUNA MATATA**  
MIKE ZECCA-HGP  
NCFL FINALIST 1995



I have a sock drawer. In it...are socks. Each pair is neatly folded and then placed in color coded piles. The piles are then placed in alphabetical order. And if I find a navy blue sock in the royal pile, heads will roll. As you can see, I worry about the tiniest details. So when we were on a Forensic trip hundred of miles from home and the van keys were lost, guess who got to look for them. After crawling through hotel hallways, inspecting elevators, questioning doormen and searching everybody's pockets-twice, I told my coach that the keys were gone. We were stuck, in Connecticut. He looked at me, smiled, and told me they were in his back pocket the whole time. I was not amused.

Maybe I should take a lesson from The Lion King. In case you missed it, I won't ruin the plot. I'd just like to mention our furry little hero Simba. Along the way he meets two new friends who teach him an African phrase, "Hakuna Matata." This is obviously a nice phrase because Elton John wrote a song about it. This being the same song I could not get out of my head. And as I sang it to myself for about the 50<sup>th</sup> time, I began to think about the words. I realized Hakuna Matata is not just for cartoons.

Too many of us spend too much of our time worrying. A Gallup poll in a September issue of Health magazine reports that 40% of Americans worry often during the day. 30 % have occasional bouts with worry, and 3% of Americans are chronic worriers. We've become a society of worries, says Psychology Today, and it's obvious why. With the recent bombing in Oklahoma, people are afraid to enter large buildings. There are actually fewer cps on the streets now than 20 years ago, says a December issue of Newsweek, and it's easier to buy an assault rifle than a prescription cold remedy. I know girls who won't go to the mall-not because they're with me, but because they're afraid of purse-snatchers and car jacking.

This is not to say we should always worry about worry. It is a natural and essential human emotion, says Dr. Ellen Sneider, of Yale University. Psychologist Douglas Kleiber agrees. He feels that to be happy, we need to feel a little stressed. It's human nature to thrive when challenged. It's obvious that, when put to use, worrying can be a healthy and helpful emotion.

But too often it ends up hurting us, when the worry is manifested in two ways. First when we worry about what we can't control, and second when we obsess with what we can. In the first case we put ourselves through senseless stress, and in the second, we permit the problem to worsen. In both scenarios, we substitute worry for living. As Ben Franklin wrote, "Worriers die at 25, and aren't buried until they're 75."

**The Case of the Stupid Case**  
**Tony Di Rienzo HGP**  
**Ncfl finalist 1995**

Hello, and welcome to this edition of the PEOPLE'S COURT. Today, Judge Wopner will be hearing the Case of the Stupid Litigation Case—in which the people of the United States are suing this program for all of the silly cases, which are dealt with every day. The people have finally settled in their places, and court is about to come to order.

Now, most people are familiar with the PEOPLE'S COURT, and I'm sure from time to time all of us have caught ourselves laughing at the sheer lunacy of some of the cases, which make it to Judge Wopner's bench. But I'd like to suggest here today that the state of America's legal system is anything but a laughing matter.

Nevertheless, we have become almost obsessed with a SO SUE ME attitude. For instance, when my mother went to her high school's thirty-year class reunion, she received an interesting welcome from one of her classmates. A woman, whom my mother didn't recognize and who probably didn't recognize my mother, walked up and without any formality of greeting launched into the statement: "My husband is a lawyer." Now, my mother, being a particularly hard woman to impress, responded with a touch of sarcasm, "My husband's a doctor. Let's exchange names. Maybe your husband can sue my husband." According to my mother, the silence which followed was absolutely deafening.

When it comes to the sue me syndrome, however, such is not the case. Anyone who reads a daily paper or catches the evening news knows of lawsuits involving students litigating against teachers for not teaching, patients who request elective surgery and then target the surgeon when they're upset with the results, and—my favorite-- people who are negligent in their use of a product and then sue the manufacturer for not protecting them against themselves. The whole phenomenon is summed up on the bumper sticker that reads, "Hit Me, I Need the Money!" Sadly, over the past five years that slogan has taken a less and less comic one in this country with each passing day. According to a Harris Survey, between 1985 and 1989 confidence in our legal system declined 14%. During that same time what has been labeled as "questionable litigation" increased 19%. The phenomenon isn't going away by itself, but perhaps by examining its extent and possible causes, we can begin to uncover some possible options for relief.

**It's Time...to Rewind**  
**Christopher H. White**  
**HGP**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> NFL NATS 1990

*Times have changed. And we have often rewind the clock. In olden days, a glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking. Now, heaven knows, anything goes. Good authors, too, who once knew better words, now only use four letter words, writing prose. Anything goes.*

In 1934, a gentleman by the name of Cole Porter wrote a song entitled, "Anything Goes," in which he brought to the public's attention how traditional standards had changed. Of course, that was over fifty years ago, and maybe back then, there really wasn't a need to take his message seriously.

Today, however, "Anything Goes" has become much more than a song title; it is now an all-encompassing mentality. Complete open-mindedness has gradual become the ultimate value. Now granted, open-mindedness isn't necessarily bad, but other values – ones learned long before 1931 – must come ahead of it, for being open-minded about everything can be empty-headed. Yet, the notion of "anything goes" is gaining popularity, and though some may see it as a way of expanding our freedom, lets look at it for what it really is: an attitude which will eventually tear our society apart.

We can see the "anything goes" mentality in all shapes and sizes. Three areas most influenced are our sense of ethics, our stance on crime, and our emphasis on self-expression. As a result, we have in many ways lost our capacity for outrage.

### **"The Man, the Bench and the Burger Joint" Gabriel Bevilacqua, LaSalle College High School 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, 1994 NFL Nationals in Original Oratory**

This is a story. This is a story about a man, a bench and a burger joint, a tale of intrigue, suspense, thrills, chills, action, romance, truth, justice, the American way and one very special fast food restaurant -- a place with golden arches, Happy Meals, paper hats, fillet o'fish and McNuggets fit for a king or at least a president, and where above all else what you want is what you get which is pretty cool, especially if, you know, that's what I've ordered. (Laughter).

What else are they going to give me?

Should I be expecting somebody else's Extra Value Meal?

The thing is, we expect so little of fast food service that McDonald's has centered their entire worldwide ad campaign around the promise that if you order a Big Mac we're probably going to give you a Big Mac. (Laughter).

But, the problem isn't just fast food. The problem is us. We just don't expect things to be right any more. This is the story of our acceptance ethic.

In essence, we can understand our acceptance ethic as the tendency to tolerate our problems because we're convinced they can't be solved. Put simply, instead of expecting more, we accept less, and as a result we acquiesce in one of three distinct behaviors. We either surrender to stereotypes, we sacrifice standards or we conspire in a solidarity of silence.

Now, historically we haven't been the first people to surrender to stereotypes. Plato held that people are made of gold, silver or bronze. And there is nothing you could do to improve your metal.

John Calvin claimed pre-destination, while our Spanish friends have always kicked back with a sigh and a que sera sera.

But we all do the exact same thing.

I give you lesson number one of competitive speech and debate. No matter where you go and no what you do the Awards Assembly will never start on time. (Applause).

We all know the Japanese just make 'em better, that girls can't do math, boys can't write poetry. We expect our justice system to be a travesty and we expect our government to be red-caped.

Nobody listens to the words of our elected officials because, well, they never tell the truth anyway.

Now, we can snicker at these stereotypes, but they are more than just generalizations.

A 1993 Harris poll reveals that only 39% of us believe the media. Three out of four think that all lawyers are cheats, while only 19% trust their local congressperson. We admit we'd sooner believe that Dr. Kevorkian was going to be on MTV -- unplugged (laughter), than we would trust news people to give us directions while paradoxically we do trust them to report the news, interpret justice and make our laws.

We seem to have surrendered to the moral pessimism of the classical poet, Homer, who morbidly opined, "It is not possible to fight beyond your own strength even if you strive."

Or in the words of modern day sage, Homer Simpson, "Yah, well, you know, what are you gonna do?" (Laughter).

And it's Homer's words that best sum up the second part of our acceptance ethic: our sacrifice of standards.

On TV, NYPD Blue has gotten huge ratings while shattering profanity taboos taking the networks from the occasional damn or hell to -- well, words you still can't say in oratory. (Laughter).

Initially we were outraged, but we've since overcome our once steadfast principles. What can you do when the show's just so popular -- and plus most people talk like that anyway.

In our big cities car alarms and mace canisters are standard issue while no radio signs dot our windshields advising would-be thieves to go rob somebody else's car, this one just isn't worth it.

And as we re-adjust our lives to this new reality we all do what Senator Patrick Moynahan has dubbed in academic the terms defining deviancy down. In other words, we don't really approve of our problems; we just don't think we can combat them any more. And so, we re-define standards to make room for once stigmatized behavior not because that behavior has become acceptable, but because it is unavoidable.

Consider our schools. Fifty years ago American teachers were asked, what were the greatest problems they faced in the classroom. They responded with: talking out of turn, running in the corridor and the scourge of many a school system -- gum chewing.

Today's teachers answer: alcohol and drug abuse, guns in class and teenage pregnancy.

And how do we respond? We tolerate. We adjust. We have our students sign contracts promising to call their parents for a ride if they do get drunk. We install metal detectors at the front gate. We distribute condoms in health class.

And the result, well in the words of U.S. News and World Report columnist, John Leo, "Menaces aren't confronted. They are simply adjusted to, and become part of the system."

And it's this constant, unthinking adjustment that constitutes the third and most pernicious part of our acceptance ethic: when our problems are ignored and instead swallowed up by a great solidarity of silence.

According to the Index Of Leading Cultural Indicators, my generation has witnessed a 560% in increase in violent crime. AIDS is now the second leading killer of teenagers in the City of Philadelphia topped only by homicide. And 82.9% of all black children born in 1980 will be dependent on welfare before they reach their 18th birthday.

These statistic should enrage us, but they don't. Instead, we simply shake them off as acceptable losses. It's only slightly ironic that while 50 million Americans refuse to accept it, Elvis Aaron Presley really did die in 1977. These same individuals have no problem with dealing with people sleeping and dying on our streets.

Lawyer/writer, Patricia Williams, in her book, The Alchemy Of Right And Race tells of her experiences on the New York City subway where she and a fellow traveler stood witness to a homeless man's anonymous death on a subway bench. She writes, "Then I looked into the face of another man who had seen what I saw both of us still walking, never stopping for a moment. We followed each other up the stairs and three blocks down Broadway until I lost him in the conspiracy of our solitude. Thus the man on the bench died twice, in body and in the spirit I had just murdered."

There are an estimated 3 million homeless individuals in America today. Yet, we rarely, if ever, see them. They are faceless abstractions, no more alive than a billboard or street sign. Our acceptance ethic makes the man on the bench invisible.

Once again, in Homer Simpson's words I ask you: "What are we gonna do?"

Admittedly, we have some serious problems, but we will achieve nothing so long as our acceptance ethic leads us clear past the man on the bench. Therefore, we must adopt a new ethos, a new lifestyle, an attitude where we expect more instead of accepting less.

First, we have to change our thinking. We have to understand that there exists no law of nature that says that kids are always going to bring guns to school, or that certain people have to sleep on the sidewalk or that the Awards Assembly always have to start two-and-a-half hours late. (Laughter). And when we begin to challenge these assumptions we take a crucial step in overcoming our problems.

More importantly, however, we have to be willing to stand up, speak out and break the solidarity of silence.

In 1987 a man by the name of Randy Shultz (?) wrote a book entitled, And The Band Played On in which he detailed our nations' indifference to the AIDS epidemic. While the band played we listened and thousands died. But Shultz (?) and other activists refused to accept this tragedy. Despite our apathy and our acceptance, they spoke out, and they succeeded because through their efforts AIDS is now an issue, a danger that cannot be ignored, and a problem that will not be accepted.

This is a story. This is a story about a man, a bench and a burger joint. This is our story. In our story the man and the bench are nothing more than background, while the spirit of the burger joint defines our world.

Our story doesn't have to work this way. We each have the power to re-write the story if, to borrow from McDonald's, we're willing to accept McLess and expect McMore. (Laughter).

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the end, but if we expect more, if we demand better, this is only the beginning.

**“Jock Rash, the Rock and Fuzzy Mirrors”**  
**Yasmine Mashhoon, Albuquerque Academy**  
1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2001 NFL Nationals in Original Oratory

My fifth grade classroom was a freak show. There was a boy who dressed like John Wayne every day and called the other kids, "you blankety-blank pilgrims." But he would then cry when anyone every looked at him. A girl whose nose was slightly crooked, and another girl whose forearm was misshapen.

When my classmates questioned my about my curious nasal structure, I explained to them that had they run around smashing into walls when they were two years old, their noses would probably look the exact same way. This amused them as they later went on to christen me, "The Beak."

The principle attraction of the class freak show, however, was Sharon. After a difficult delivery Sharon was born with her arm badly disfigured. The translucent skin was stretched tight over veins and what little muscle there was. It lacked the normal shape of an arm, and the flesh was a lighter orangish-pink. At recess kids would always gather around Sharon and ask if they could touch her arm. Behind her back they called her "The Freak." And at lunch someone would always ask, "Sharon, could you put your arm under the table, we're eating."

If the poet, T.S. Elliott, is right, that April is the cruelest month, then for some children every month can be April.

We've all grown up since the fifth grade, but somehow not much has changed. We have developed such a fascination with freaks, people who have different appearances or characteristics than the accepted norm that we've extended the term to apply not only to people but also to behavior that strikes as unusual. Our interest has heightened to such an extent that we have twisted the media into our own continuous freak show. So the industry posed itself the question of how best to keep us occupied with matters of small intrinsic value and came up with the following solution: Anywhere that the public turns to keep itself entertained, we will reintroduce the freaks that kept them so enthralled at school when they were younger. So, they did. And they did it in such a pervasive manner it led journalist, Carl Bernstein (?) to proclaim, "the media is a freak show."

So, today we will examine three kinds of freaks inherent in the media: jock rash, the rock and fuzzy mirrors. Welcome to the freak show. Please try not to point, stare, or throw anything at me while I'm speaking.

So, let us begin with jock rash. Or should I say a rash of jocks?

In September I watched the Olympics on NBC. The network tried hard to spiff up their delayed coverage by adding in human interest features about celebrity athletes. If you watched any of them you probably noticed that they all had one thing in common. In order to be in a profile an athlete had to be ill, to have overcome an illness or to have had a tragedy in the family. NBC knew that ordinary stories of hard work and success would be too boring for the everyday public. But athlete tragedies and illnesses would be far more interesting.

Our freak show found a new star after NBC was compelled to air a profile on Australia's swimming sensation, Ian Thorpe. Now, the Thorpedo was model athlete who had worked hard to succeed but who had never had a debilitating illness. So, NBC panicked --- they found a family sickness that they could use, only it wasn't in Thorpe's family. You see, the Network was so desperate to make the Aussie into an entertaining freak that they finally discovered Ian Thorpe's older sister's ex-boyfriend's young brother with cancer.

So, now Ian Thorpe, who has never been seriously ill has a persona with which everyone can sympathize and whose older sister's ex-boyfriend's younger brother with cancer is now an inspiration for everyone on the Australian swimming team.

The jock rash extends far beyond the Olympics. What about Dennis Rodman, Marv Albert, John Rocker, Ray Lewis, Mike Tyson whom I can talk about at length, but I wouldn't want to chew your ear off (laughter).

If you watched the National Conventions this year then you probably know about our second freak -- the Rock.

When the bell rang in Philadelphia at the Republican National Convention who came out of the blue corner, but - a professional wrestler. What's wrong with this picture? Let's take a moment to reflect, shall we? It's a convention whose purpose is to rally support for the Republican Presidential candidate and instead of discussing substantive issue such as the Clinton Presidency or reproductive rights (laughter) we saw a large sweaty man in a white suit from the World Wrestling Federation bestowing such words of wisdom as "lighten up, everyone." (Laughter and applause).

But, think about it -- who better to influence people to vote and pick the next president than a man who, according to conservative activist, Elvren Bozell (?), regularly uses obscene and profane language and has been known to take metal chairs, a shovel and a sledgehammer to opponents, a strategy we later saw in Florida. (Laughter).

But even recently another large rock has found itself at the center of the media spotlight. Temptation Island. From the Fox Network who is responsible for bringing us such memorable programs as Who Wants To Marry A Multimillionaire and When Small Rodents Attack -- 5 to the new realities whose contestants were voluntarily trying to seduce or to be seduced, the premise of Temptation Island which reviewer, Lee Ann Potts called, Survivor Meets Baywatch, was the three seriously committed couples who were reluctant to mosey on over to the altar traveled instead to an exotic island with 26 scantily clad men and women who had been hired to try and tempt to couples into cheating on their partners.

When the Fox Network arranges for someone to seduce someone else, that would technically make them a, and let's all say that with me now, pimp (laughter).

So, what do these freak shows say about us?

In the award winning Broadway show, "Fuddy Mirrors," playwright David Lindsay Abair (?) introduces us to our third and final concern. What the mother in the play calls the fuzzy mirrors of a fun house. She says fuddy mirrors because what she sees in those mirrors is distorted just as what we see in the media every day is twisted by our perception of what is freakish and what is not. But at the heart of the play is the character, Claire, who suffers from a form of psychogenic amnesia. Every day Claire forgets what she knew the day before.

And so it is with us. We forget the lessons we learned in the fifth grade. We forget what it's like to be the one in the fun house mirror.

I was sitting in English class recently when my teacher told us a story about his days as a student at the University of Nebraska. One day he said he was standing in the lunch line at \_\_\_\_\_ Quadrangle and was in a particularly humorous mood. So, in order to entertain his friends and the girls behind them he was doing his best -- or should I say worst -- impression of a mentally challenged person. He was successfully distorting his face, voice and body when he looked up for a moment and his eyes caught onto those of a member of the kitchen staff. He describes how he felt those eyes pierce right through him, and she said, "How would you feel if you really were that way?"

My teacher was immediately ashamed, and he didn't say another word.

Now, looking back he described how the incident was a turning point in his life. He made a personal decision at that time to stop supporting the freak show, standing in that line all those years ago he was ashamed that he had been imitating someone different than he, and he was ashamed that he found that entertaining.

The freak show will never close unless we are all ashamed and aware of what we've become. It isn't until we realize that it just isn't funny anymore, until we call for an end to this mindless entertainment that the freak show will finally pack and leave town. And until they do, ladies and gentlemen, somewhere some innocent little girl will be known to many as simply, "The Beak."

### **"Victorian's Secret"**

Megan Bartle, Apple Valley High School  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place, 2001 NFL Nationals in Original Oratory

A few years ago Dr. Richard Lucking of \_\_\_\_\_ University conducted a listening study that involved over 1500 participants. The study showed that we effectively listen 40% of the time and daydream 60% and of that 60%. More than 80% of the time we spend daydreaming

about one particular subject, uh-huh, yes, sex. So, if I look out and see any of you off somewhere I might not now who, but I will know what you are thinking.

Today such daydreaming might not be such a big deal, but at the turn of the twentieth century during the Victorian Period it may have well as been a crime. You see, women conducted themselves as ladies and the pimps and players as we know them today (a-hem), were gentlemen at least on the outside.

Medical textbooks of the times warned that sex before the age of 25 would \_\_\_\_\_ strength, shorten life and cause certain body parts to shrivel up and die. Pretty picture!

You see, the Victorian Period was a time of restraint, class, decorum and modesty, skin equaled sin. All legs were covered including table legs to insure the propriety of good manners and good taste.

Well, legendary songwriter, Bob Dylan, once wrote, "The times they are changin'," for nowadays nothing is covered. We let it all hang out - literally.

Author Gore Vidal once said, "Never turn down a chance to go on television or have sex." Well, today lucky for us we can do both at the same time (laughter) because today instead of skin being a sin, skin is in. It has become America's driving obsession -- more positions, more partners, more perversions, more often.

National Public Radio Correspondent, Susan Stamburg (?), noted that something has changed in our culture. We have become a sex-obsessed society, and the sizzle of sex is sometimes sparking where it shouldn't.

Our obsession is revealed in two ways.

First, we fixate on sex and become desensitized in the process. And secondly, we legitimize sex and make it acceptable in areas where it doesn't belong.

Famed 1910 activist, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, once declared, "My dear, I don't care what they do so long as they don't do it in the streets and frighten the horses."

If only we were as discrete today.

Today sex is everywhere and Americans can't get enough. In fact, our fixation on sex could be compared to Russell Crowe's fixation on, well, himself.

Magazines at the checkout counter give us advice on how to please him, how to please her, how to please the group. Why, even Dr. Ruth is bringing her expertise to the Golden Book Series with a little kid's pop-up book entitled, Who Am I? Where Did I Come From? Just imagine those sandbox discussions. Quite frankly, there better be some family discussion because there will be a lot of family viewing.

Eight-three percent of all R rated movie ads are shown on television during the so-called family hour. Most of us might not find that very shocking, but then again, what do we find shocking? Really, very little. Maybe that's the reason why 40% of teenagers have had sex by the age of 15 as compared to only 5% 25 years ago. Maybe that should shock us. But then again, maybe it won't. Because today as my second point proves, sex has become legitimate in any area.

While the Victorians would have said no good girl would ever invite a man into her home after an evening out on the town, no good boy would ever enter. But that was then, wasn't it?

Today sex is come on in and out in the open. Says author Rogers Scruten (?) writing for the National Review, "As of today sex is legitimate in any area." Why even Forbes Magazine offers a scantily clad Brittany Spears on its cover, the economic expert that she is (laughter).

Commercially there are over 200 adult cable stations alone. And today the trendy teen store, Gadzooks (?) says that the number one selling T-shirt this past year was one that read "Porn Star In Training." Where would you train for that? But maybe these T-shirts are only symptomatic of a much larger trend.

Dr. Ann Carney Cook (?) of Dallas, Texas says that today more and more pornography has become a legitimate form of expression for young adults age 14 to 22. And before we write this off as some weirdo trend of the Gadzooks let's examine education.

The prestigious Wesleyan College in New Hampshire offers Pornography 101 where students analyze Hustler magazine and as a final project create their own porno. This is, of course, strictly an educational self-discovery project.

Some people might be asking so what? What's the big deal about making sex a big deal? After all -- during the Victorian Period who knows what was happening underneath those tablecloths?

And maybe they're right.

Sex has been around forever and will continue to be a mysterious driving force in what brings people together. But can it go too far?

Now, I don't really care if Hugh Hefner wants to romp and roll with his seven blonde roommates, but I do care about other things. I do care when I hear that 15 year old girls are getting breast implants because they believe it will make them happier, more successful. And their parents approve because as one mother put it, breast implants will improve my daughter's quality of life. I do care when the hallways at my high school look unpleasantly trashy and I'm not talking about garbage on the floor. I do care when I read that Viagra is so in demand that it is being sold by the thousands over the internet without a doctor's prescription or an awareness of the health hazards.

The harm in the 21st century is that sex has converted from a social problem to a problem in our personal lives.

According to Steven Alcarter (?) in his book, Stability, because we fixate on sex people become merely bodies, bodies without souls, bodies that can be easily discarded. This is when sex becomes not only a medical hazard, but an emotional hazard, as well. Although a condom may protect a person from sexually transmitted diseases, there is no condom to protect the heart.

So, what do we do about our driving obsession? I would like to say it's as easy as one, two and three, but it's not. Mind-sets are never easy to change, but I do think that we can begin to re-orient our thinking about sex.

First we can't treat sex as some commodity, something to be bought, sold, paraded, and traded because when we buy into sex we truly legitimize it.

Secondly, we must remember that sex and love are not synonymous.

I remember watching the movie "Bull Durham." In it Susan Sarandan plays a woman who dates only the most talented of the baseball players. When asked about one particular date Susan responded, "I couldn't even get laid."

When the movie first aired on TV, Susan's line was edited. This time Susan said, "I couldn't even get loved." The word 'love' has four letters, but it should not be treated as a four-letter word.

Finally, we must begin with ourselves. Our own life, our family's lives, the lives of those we care about. And although I know I can't influence much of the world and Hugh Hefner seldom calls me, I can influence my 15 year old sister, Whitney. It's about not being afraid to set an example that positively affects those around us. And I am by no means anti-sex. After all, I realize we were not brought into this world by a giant stork or something. And sex at the right time with the right person can be beautiful, magical, even spiritual.

But our obsession goes too far when it claims victims.

Hopefully, we will realize this so that when people look back on America at the turn of 21st Century, they will remember a period that learned restraint, class, decorum and modesty and the Victorians' now uncovered secret.

I'm sorry -- you caught me daydreaming for just a minute.

**A League of My Own  
1<sup>st</sup> place 2003 NFL Nationals  
Lydia Nelson  
Sacred Heart High School, Massachusetts**

Hello.

I have a little secret. I'm not pretty. No, no, it's true. Oh, don't feel bad. I've known I was not pretty for a long time now.

It was the first day of seventh grade. There I was, head drooped, shoulders slouched, hair hanging over my face, when suddenly out of nowhere, someone screams, "Hey Marla, I could stick your face in some dough and make gorilla cookies."

I froze. Who was Marla and why was everyone looking at me? Intrigued, I conducted a little research and discovered that Marla Hooch is a character from the baseball movie, A League of Their Own. Marla is short, chubby, mousy looking, tomboyish, raised-by-her-father, hair-in-her-face, no self-confidence, constantly-passed-over because she is not pretty.

I have been likened to Marla Hooch? Believe it or not, there is a very social problem that comes from this asocial degradation. I like to call it, "The Ugly Duckling Syndrome" or UDS. You like that? UDS is simply defined as being blind-sided by appearance, rather than

acknowledging abilities, qualities or talents.

That you understand why we have let vanity distort success, we will start by "hitting" the "foul" problem that causes misrepresentation of achievement, then "lineup" the causes that create this "error" of success, and finally "pitch" a solution to measure our successes by new standards.

A baseball scout watches Marla in an impressive batting practice. Afterwards, she's called over to meet him, but when she peers out from behind her hair, the scout immediately jumps back, makes a face and says, "I can't use her. You know General Omar Bradley? Too strong of a resemblance."

This attitude is the very problem with achievement. Success is measured by appearance and society rewards beauty. Role models on TV are sexy. The cast of Friends, newscasters, and - thanks to Cher's pioneering efforts - most stars go under the knife or the Botox to remain young and hip in the world's limelight. Cher - if that woman has one more facelift she won't be able to blink.

So, let's look at Hollywood. How many fat, ugly stars are there? Okay, Danny DeVito and Drew Carey don't count because they're funny. But, arguably, who has been more successful, John Goodman or Ben Affleck? Denzel Washington or Mike O'Malley? Who's Mike O'Malley? Exactly!

Truth be told, I will never be a super model, movie star or even a broadcast journalist because I suffer from UDS.

Now, Marla does manage to make the team, however, she's forced to attend charm and beauty school. Her instructor urges her to play a lot of night games. Causes of this demeaning declaration lie in stereotyping and stories. As with Marla's instructor, proficient professionals are incapable of linking the two qualities of athletic talent and attractiveness in this Ugly Duckling Syndrome.

Berscheid, Walster and Dion - not Warwick - discuss the "halo" effect - not Jesus - which means when one is attractive, people assume he has other good qualities. Their research indicates that attractive people are found to be more sensitive, kind, sociable, interesting, outgoing, strong, poised and intelligent than unattractive people; therefore, they are trusted more and gain higher positions in society. The implication being, I'm not only fat and poor, I'm also a criminal. Kick it!

UDS gains a new twist when we assimilate adolescence with this beautification blunder. Doctor Alvin Poussant, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, explains that children are taught to differentiate between attractive and unattractive people at an early age through storybooks and fairy tales. Pretty princesses are rescued by Prince Charmings who have slain the evil, ugly, wicked witch - that's me. These stories become indoctrinated in young, easily influenced minds.

Do you honestly think Prince Charming would have wrestled his way through one-hundred-foot thicket of briar and scaled a two-hundred story tower to save - Roseanne? She'd probably be sleeping for another hundred years, or two, or ten.

Okay, society's hangup with outside perception leads to self-esteem issues, too. In sixth century Greece, the disfigured were blamed for various evils, such as famines and plagues, and were publicly beaten and burned to death. (I really dodged a bullet there, didn't I? Phew!) But this public degradation did not waste away with the falls of the Greco-Roman empires. Are we really surprised when websites like DropDeadUgly.com, a dating service, prompts one to rate the repulsiveness of some people ("Yes, umm, that's disgusting."), or where books like How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less top bestseller lists?

Throughout the course of the movie, Marla's inner qualities are gradually revealed. She is a team player, an exceptionally strong athlete, a loving friend and wife, and an intelligent woman. Although she lacks beauty, she possesses an inner attractiveness and her diligence and persistence lead to a successful life. Marla's story concretely plants us in efforts of solution, so let's change this duckling to a swan.

Doctor Jay Strack said in the September 9, 1996 issue of Desktop Devotions, "Time changes things. Styles change, as do expectations, salaries, communications systems, but some things have no business changing. Character qualities are never up for grabs. Times must change, but character never."

One day in elementary school, I was patiently waiting outside for the bus. There I was - chapped lips, chubby cheeks, bad posture, wind-blown hair - and my bus pulls up, and a kid seated in the way back pulls down his window and yells, "You are the ugliest girl I have ever seen!" While it's true that throughout the course of my oratory I have made myself the butt of many jokes, I have learned to laugh at myself or at least society's perception of me, but no matter how hard I try I just can't find that one funny. You see, I went to school that morning with a new dress, new coat, new shoes - feeling pretty. What I discovered was I was pretty - ugly.

In our world, we have allowed physical attractiveness to make success a one-size-fits-all definition, forcing square pegs into round holes and completely eliminating the aspect of character. That boy on the bus didn't know me, but because he was repulsed by my physical appearance, he never took the time to know me for who I really am. But, I'm asking you to strike out these stereotypes. Let's



redefine the definition pulling us off the road to revulsion, detouring us to a place where the Ugly Duckling Syndrome is only a fairy tale.

Leadership expert John Maxwell says that over a lifetime one person can influence ten thousand people. So, if three people here today change their definitions of success to include who someone is on the inside, that's thirty thousand people right there.

For the past few minutes, Marla and I have "singled" out some problems, "batted" around some causes and, finally, "scored" a solution to change the world from an ugly duckling to a beautiful swan.

Marla's not one of my nicknames any more. You know, I miss that. She taught me that success is what I make of it, who cares if I'm not Britney Spears. Ugly people can make it far. We just shouldn't wear, short, pleated, Catholic schoolgirl uniforms.

So, to all the cross-eyed, uni-browed, slack-jawed, double-chinned, hairy-backed, intelligent, caring, terrific people out there, I say U-P-U - ugly people unite!

And while I might not make it to the cover of Vogue, if you give me the chance, I know I can make it to the cover of your heart because I'm in a league of my own.

### **Kidstuff**

**1<sup>st</sup> place 2003 NCFL Nationals**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> place 2003 NFL Nationals**  
**Sarah Gauche**  
**Apple Valley High School, Minnesota**

It was a hot summer day and we were playing for keeps. My brother and I were surveying the world from twenty feet above the ground in our special lookout tree. We were vigilant as we waited for "Senor Monster" to spring up from behind the water tower across town. As members of the spy team, it was our duty to notify our special forces on the ground - the other kids at day care - of any suspicious activity. Suddenly, we heard a voice. It was our mothers. It was time to go home and time for the wonderful world of mystery, magic and make-believe to end. Playtime was over.

And now, even though it's ten years later, this statement is still true. Unfortunately, for too many of us playtime is over, for America no longer knows how to play. And this is true for the little kids and the "big kids" - the children and the adults. Author Matt Schudel agrees. In his article entitled The Kidnapping of Play, he states that Americans have lost sight of what play really means: Imagination, creativity and a sense of playfulness. And in its place, we've either put pretend play or no play at all.

So, let's take a look at these two worlds and examine, first, the programmed play world of children, and, second, the prohibited play world of adults.

Now, today's kids aren't allowed to play - they're instructed; they're organized and compartmentalized. You can forget about going outside to play. Instead, schedule a play date. Even though Dutch historian Johan Huzinga believes that "supervised play" isn't really play at all, more and more this is exactly what kids are getting. We have clubs and classes, leagues and teams, soccer, T-ball, gymnastics. One Los Angeles community even offers finger painting lessons.

Hello! Don't you just do finger painting?

Real play is freedom from constraints. "Lucy-goosey, pie-in-the-sky" freedom to create a world that has its own characters, its own language. Now earlier you may have thought that "Senor Monster" sounded pretty dumb. As a matter of fact, now that I am so much older, he sounds pretty dumb to me, too. But at that time, to my brother and to me "Senor Monster" was real, and more importantly he was ours - our own creation.

Today, American has three percent of the world's children and sixty percent of the world's toys. Toys that often do everything for us, except inspire us to create. Ironically, Doctor Tricia Greenhaugh believes that it is not toys, but the absence of toys that inspires real play. Now, I'm not saying that adult guidance isn't critical in the development of a child, but when fostering free play isn't a priority, we end up trading our imaginations for somebody else's.

Now programmed play is definitely part of the adult world as well, but I think that there's an even larger problem facing the "big kids," and that's that play is often not allowed. And that's our second world, the prohibited play world of adults.

While many adults know how to "play it cool," play it safe, play the stock market and play doctor, few know how to extend the play in

the child's world to the playfulness that is critical in the adults. It's an inline, online, bottom-line world out there, so in this zone, play is often prohibited. The book, *The Playful Self*, states that evidently modern society sees the words work and play as being diametrically opposed. Work and play seem to have the compatibility factor of a surveillance camera and Winona Ryder.

Author Rebecca Abrams states that ever since Freud preached the notion that all play ended at childhood, we have been led to believe that adults who are genuinely playful are off-task, unproductive daydreamers who need to "get focused." Well, maybe Freud should have played a little more with his friends and a little less with his mother.

Play, in the adult world, isn't so much an activity as it is a mindset: playfulness. And it is neither childish, nor trivial, but according to Abrams a fundamental social good that stimulates mental health, creativity and happiness. Brian Sutton Smith, the dean of Play Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, agrees and he reminds us that the opposite of play isn't work, it's depression.

Now, I'm not saying that our lives should be one continuous game of Silly String or Hacky Sack, but it does seem as though our definition of play has been obscured, that we've turned it into something else.

The video games have become a multimillion dollar industry, and one of the hottest current sellers is *Grand Theft Auto*, where you can score big points for killing a prostitute. *Road Kill* offers you bonus points for nailing a doe and her fawn. Hey, kill a prostitute, kill animals - wait, wasn't that Jeffrey Dahmer?

Don't get me wrong. Just because you play video games doesn't automatically qualify you for the next episode of *CSI*, but it does seem as though our definition of play has been distorted. *Sports Illustrated* writer Rick Riley believes that fans who, and I quote, "Tear the hell out of a city, not because their sports team loses, but because their sports team wins, are, in their own minds, only playing." Turning over cars, looting stores, burning things is "playing around." Riley believes that this play gone bad is an American mindset, and that whatever happens, when people let off a little steam, should be understood and, worse, tolerated.

Didn't the guys who brutalized Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming say that in the beginning they were only playing?

Nearly ten years ago, author William Oscar Johnson published a report stating that repressed natural play in children often materializes later in life, in sometimes disastrous forms. He called this, "unspent war-like energy," and said that when we don't learn how to play, or when we don't learn the rules of play, we end up associating mayhem, violence and unruly behavior as normal adult "play."

So, isn't it time that we turned play around?

First of all, let's remember what play was meant to be and where it comes from. It comes from a creative mind and spirit that allows the little kids and the "big kids" to bring good-hearted fun into their daily world. To loosely paraphrase philosopher Descartes, "I play, therefore I am."

Second of all, let's go. Get up and create, imagine, explore, think outside of the box, or the book or the room or the directions or the board meeting, and don't think that playing isn't serious work. Philosopher Nietzsche once said, "There is nothing as serious as a child at play." So, focus on your fun.

And there are benefits, the book, *Building Blocks*, states that there is a direct correlation between the seriousness that children show while playing and the work ethic that adults show later in life while working. Director Steven Spielberg says that many of the great ideas he has put on film were creations that he dreamed about while playing as a child. Even Senator John McCain, a prisoner of war during Vietnam, said that he was able to endure torture and isolation because he was able to play "make believe" in his head to create a world of beauty, bounty and harmony that made his real world survivable.

Third, let go, loosen up, take a chance and laugh. Take a chance and even love.

In her poem, Diane Loomans writes,

If I had my child to raise again,  
I would build esteem first, and the house later.  
I would finger paint more,  
And point the finger less.  
I would do less correcting,  
And more connecting.  
And I would stop playing serious,  
And seriously play.

So, regardless of your age, remember that some of life's greatest lessons are learned on that playground, or in that tree, or in the boxes that the swing set came in. You see, in the end, it's all kid stuff. And from now on, let's play, for keeps.

**Sareena Crawford**  
**2014 Oratory NFL Qualifier first runner up.**  
**This speech won multiple tournaments throughout the season.**  
**Kearns High School, Utah**

All people- African, European, American- worry about being different. But I've learned, that the traits we'd rush to get rid of, are the very ones that others desire.

-Frieda Pinto

In a world of many dilemmas, there's only so much we can do. Some of them, can be an easy fix. One, of which, is this daunting dilemma of diversity. A word who's meaning is extremely, out there. To each and every one of us, it is a different meaning. Me, well, I learned about diversity on the streets... Where being red, blue or green, didn't mean a thing. You could have curly hair, or a grouchy personality. Everyone is equal on the Sesame Street. You could be a big bird, and still have plenty of friends, or live in a trash can and you could still fit it! Being unique, in this world of wonderful puppets always seemed so cool! That was until we noticed, that in the real world diversity, doesn't rule.

Now let's stop and think a moment, what being different really is. What does it mean, to be different? Being unique, is what makes the world go 'round. It's what makes you who you are, and I who I am. Imagine, if we were all the same, how boring that'd be! Constantly, we hear how good of a thing diversity is, which I agree with, but sometimes, we feel it's not! We feel it's the thing that's making us not fit in! But, perhaps this dilemma isn't purely diversity. Yes, that fits into it, but the real problem, that we all have, is not being okay with who we are. The dilemma that we're facing, is hating ourselves, rather than not being afraid to be who we are. Do we ever stop and think what makes us ravishingly rare, or only coarsely contrast?

We are far too distressed with the bad in our appearance, or voices, or anything for that matter, that it leaves no room to be infatuated with the good in being ourselves. Far too often we become ashamed of how we look, rather than admiring how our imperfections and perfections set us apart, just like John Legend sang, rather than said." 'Cause all of me loves all of you. Love your curves and all your edges, all your perfect imperfections." This is not only a catchy love song to dedicate to that special someone in your life, but also a perfect representation of how a lot of people are. John Legend is saying that he loves everything about her, her perfect imperfections, but how much do you want to bet, that she doesn't see them as perfect? We worry about the media classifying us as a "bad unique." because all we want is to fit in socially, just like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said. "People are afraid to be different. Their great concern is to be accepted socially." The real leader in diversity, the person who really got it, isn't a girl with fourteen years under her belt, it was a man, who for his want for equality and love of diversity, has his own holiday. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may be the first person to come to mind when someone speaks the word 'diverse' and that's acceptable. A man who's courage still inspires us today. He fought for equality and made diversity seem, amazing. Now some people may think, I can't relate to him, because he is a 'black hero' well, just like Morgan Freeman put it, "Dr. Martin Luther King is not a black hero. He is an American hero." Diversity or being ourselves, is still alive, because it's beautifully amazing. We hear it constantly but still strive to be normal. Though, all of our "normal" is different because we're different people.

Too often, being ourselves is misconstrued as being, "weird". Which everyone's interpretation of also varies for the same reason as "normal" does. Being different will always be the best, and most natural form of normal, and that's beautiful. To see this, let's look at a few things, race, physical appearance, our own unique personalities, and how being different, has shaped our country as a whole.

We need to help students, and parents cherish and preserve, the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community- and this nation.

-Caesar Chavez

Race is something that can break us if we let it or bond us if we give it a try. Something that plays along with this, is, although it was something that can be seen as hurting our nation, was the recent Ferguson case. Many claim that this was a hate crime based on race, and that is something that we're letting break us. However, with the outbreak of this, we saw some people, even in the state of Utah, had rallies against the innocent verdict, those rallies saw no color, a person of every color showed up.

Personally, I know about race bonding us, because I come from a family that is ethnically diverse, and for the longest time, I didn't know was considered different. As a child, I never knew white and black existed, I didn't know race was actually a thing. Growing up in a, "mine, yours and ours" family, I saw no difference. Having Caucasian sisters and extended family on my mom's side, and African-American brothers and extended family on my dad's side, race wasn't anything except a shade. With this, I didn't and don't care about color, just character. When I started school, I didn't see races or colors, just candidates for friends, for love. Now that I've grown, I still see it the same, but a little more added on. I don't think we should focus just on someone's race, but that we should welcome the diversity. We need to be proud of our race, because it's part of us, We shouldn't be scared to admit that we aren't the average joe when it comes to this, because all of our races, each and every color, is beautiful, just like humans in general. With different races, comes

different cultures that can be shared with others. When putting various cultures together, we begin to form amazing people, places, and even great countries. With each race and culture, comes beauty, who's that? Each and every one of us. Everyone is beautiful in their own way. I know a lot of the times, when we look in the mirror, it's hard to think that about ourselves but it's true. Marilyn Monroe was extremely insecure about herself, but she is considered to be one of the most beautiful women of all time. What should this tell us? That, even though we have insecurities and flaws, we're still unique, and beautiful. Not only Marilyn Monroe, but so many other women and men are constantly complaining about themselves. Whether it's weight or a wrinkle, they always have something bad to say. I come from a family of big heads, but rather than fret, we just become more grateful when we can find a hat to fit it all, because every feature we have, makes us who we are, no matter how large.

There are so many different walks of life, so many different personalities in the world. And no longer do you have to be a chameleon and try and adapt to that environment- you can truly be yourself.

-Hope Solo

With our looks, our own personalities are really what set us apart. Robin Williams once said that, "No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world." So like I said, imagine if we were all the same, how boring that'd be! My friends and I are all extremely different, but have same interests. One of the best things in the world is putting tons of different personalities together and seeing how they work. I love meeting people different than myself, because a lot of the time, they become the best of friends.

Unlike appearance, even if you look similar or the same as someone else, they don't act exactly like you! I have these two friends who are twins. Their doctor says they are 99.6% identical. Though, one of them never stops talking, and the other one, if you don't know her, you won't get a peep out of her. So even though they look almost exactly the same, they're opposites. Perhaps that's an example of why opposites attract, because they know, that without their opposite there'd just be a bunch of people running about with the same thoughts and feelings as everyone else, which would get old quick. So next time you get judged for your personality, think about how boring it'd be without you. How in this world, there's no one quite like you. Don't be a chameleon, let your amazing personality shine.

Diversity and each and every one of us being ourselves, has done so much for our country as a whole. A country of immigrants, brought into one big melting pot. Some of us mixes, others not. That's not what's important here though, it's how our cultural mixing had made amazing things. By sharing our cultures we've made unique and amazing arts. From the radiant rhythm and the baritone blues, to the classics of funk and even hip- hop, too. From Edgar Allen Poe, to Maya Angelou. Our reinvented foods, and even The Hunger Games, too, have shown how our country is great, when we let ourselves be who we are. Our differences are something that unites as a country. One where we're allowed to be different, allowed to express ourselves. Where we can sing and dance. Where we can share our thoughts and be ourselves.

So, let's remember what Frieda Pinto said, about how we're all so scared to be ourselves, but that's the only thing we can be. How we all would rush to get rid of some things, but those things are what others want! Let us not be afraid of being ourselves. Let's make our world, just like those wonderful puppets, and get back on the streets. We need to stop being afraid of sharing our culture and being proud and happy about the way we look. How we should not hold back our personalities or any part of us. It doesn't matter, all people- African, European, American- should be proud of being diverse, because being different, will always be the best, and most natural form of normal, and that's beautiful.

**Sareena Crawford 2015 speech**  
**The Comfort Zone Complex**  
**Kearns High School, Utah**

“I do not like them in a box. I do not like them with a fox. I will not eat them in a house. I do not like them with a mouse. I do not like them here or there. I do not like them ANYWHERE!”

This small piece of Dr. Seuss’ Green eggs and ham shows us that as more choices are added to our theoretical menus, we tend to stick to “what we know”. Whether it’s classical music or chocolate chip ice cream, human beings have a closed mind set a comfort zone complex. This inability to creep out of our comfort zone, can hold us back from what we need to accomplish, taking a risk, or seeing life as an adventure. You see we begin our journey of being single-minded in infancy and childhood. Our young lives being filled with mashed peas that smell like feet, but also apparent anecdotes of things varying from unbearable embarrassments to inexplicable entities, that soon causes us to create our comfy comfort zone. These stories beginning to form into someone we know from the popular Disney movie Inside Out, named Fear. Fear is depicted as being what keeps Riley safe, but she also holds Riley back and causes more stress than she already has as a new girl whose recently moved. Making it hard for her to make new friends, continue hockey which she loved, and even keeping from her being happy.

According to New York Times One of the main things that neuroscience shows us, is when we are afraid, the risk-taking portion of our brain is inactive. Which means trying that new flavor of ice cream won’t be happening any time soon. Most of us claim that we’re not closed minded about anything, some even saying “I’ll try anything once!” But if we look at what constitutes this form of being stubborn we’re all guilty in our own way. We’ve all been too afraid to try something new and sometimes, we aren’t even sure why. A great example of this is a simple doctor’s visit.

Maybe you had the rhino virus, or something more serious. Think of those tedious boxes you had to cross out and some, you purposefully skipped for something we know as pride. You may wonder, what does this have to do with anything? Well, things like this are the problem. Our fear, our pride, our stubbornness are all synonyms in this instance. Not being able to let go of those things are keeping us from seeing and enjoying the world as it is. A place where there are endless possibilities and opportunities. I have felt the sting of being outside a peer’s comfort zone.

In elementary it always seemed easier to make friends than it is now. But that was not the case when in the fifth grade I went to ask a girl to play and she said, “You’re black.” I never knew something as simple as two words could have such an effect. She was uncomfortable and afraid of a difference that I have no control over and that determined our relationship, strictly classmates.

As reported by Dr. William H. Doherty a marriage therapist, studies and research conducted by the United States estimates that 40-50% of marriages end in divorce. Of all these many reasons to get divorced, the third in the same report is finances. Finances can be an extremely scary and stressful thing especially when needing to collaborate, compromise, and communicate with a partner. Among being able to share your funds, you have to be able to trust your spouse. If you’re not able to do that, or not keeping financial secrets, not coming out of your comfort zone will cause you to go to court.

However, some people don’t even let it get that far, not allowing themselves to even date a person for many reasons. Some of us have heard it in the way of, “You’re not my type.” But types are just another inability to come out of our shell and keeps us from feeling not only what we deserve but what others deserve. If my parents would have had a type concerning race, then my brothers and I wouldn’t be here, and that’s what people don’t see. If they just give someone a chance they could see that there’s so much more to a person than a haircut or height.

For some people the inability to do something seemingly uncomfortable can have the highest cost. Harry Randall Truman was an extremely stubborn man. He was born in 1896 and insisted that everyone who thought that Mount. Saint Helens was going to wipe out the area was nothing but a bunch of wimps and held his ground. He was going to show that “volcano” who was boss. He knew that he was right and nothing would go wrong, stayed in his home.... And died on May eighteenth along with fifty seven other people at the hands of something that he claimed was just a “mole hill”. We need to get to the bottom of what causes these acts before we end up buried 150 ft under “what could’ve been”.

Like I mentioned earlier, our upbringing may have play a large role, but that’s not the only thing to blame. The cause for our inability to get out of our comfort zone also comes from peers and even those we trust the most, the media. Sorry to say, but your favorite character Lilly from Modern Family makes stubbornness seem trendy.

Birds of a feather flock together. Your social circle could be a major contributor to your attitudes towards taking risks. These beliefs and attitudes can shape us for the rest of our lives. Studies conducted by multiple students and doctors show that when children and

teens are being simply watched by friends their behavior changes drastically. Not to mention when they tell us what to do. It is natural to have a fear of heights and dying. I'm not saying that you should jump off a cliff in the name of adventure, but I am saying why hold yourself back from having amazing experiences.

A man by the name of James Taylor, not the singer but a war veteran got diabetes at a young age. He like many other men had pride and when his feet that he couldn't feel got swollen he swore that it was nothing more than from a fall and didn't need to go to the doctor. However, his daughter pestered him until he finally agreed to do so, still swearing that it was just from a fall. Coincidentally the fall did make it swell but a bigger problem was still there. When the doctor finished x-rays and inspections they found out that it was more than a swell from a fall but an infection in the bone. In the end he lost two toes, but kept his life... If he hadn't had gone in the infection would've spread to his legs and eventually so far that even leg amputation wouldn't have done anything. Now whenever there's a problem he knows he has to go. James, unlike Harry got out of his comfort zone and trusted a doctor before he ended up buried as well.

And that my friends is a true step in the way of the solution. It's nearly impossible to get away from the media, peers or even your family, no matter how much you wish you didn't have to listen to your mother-in-law complain about your mis-matched dishes, but we don't have to let them influence the way we take risks or simple things like a shorter hairstyle, which isn't as big a deal as many make it out to be.

Instead of letting fear rule us we need to suppress it. Not having standards concerning physical and even certain personality traits could be the way to find "The one" and make divorce less likely. We don't have to listen to everything our peers say, because news flash, like the media they're not always right. To solve this we have to look at what we can get out of this, like better friends, better vacations, better menus and us even being better people. In the words of Sam-I-Am "Try them, try them and you may!" is no better solution to say.

By working through fear, embarrassment, and pride, we can learn to take calculated risks. Stepping out of our comfort zone can open so many doors!

So what does this mean for us? Do we leave this room thinking nothing else of it or keeping it in the back of our mind? No, we start to do what we were taught not to do. We rid of those apparent anecdotes and push away those inexplicable entities. We start to compromise not only with others but among ourselves not only to see better or even new horizons, but to continue life. Just because something seems scary doesn't mean you have to be weary. Just because something is new, doesn't mean it will hurt you. Just because something is green doesn't mean it's a bad thing. If you try it you may see, that you should've always listened to me.

So once again, "Try them and you may I say. I like green eggs and ham. Thank you Sam I am. And thank you.

I was Sareena Croward's oratory coach in 2014 and 2015. After editing her first speech (2014) multiple times, she completed the 2014 National qualifying tournament in third place. Considering she had competed in novice tournaments throughout the year, this was quite an accomplishment. I have never met a harder worker and I knew that she was willing to strive for improvement.

The two biggest flaws with her first speech was that it had too many quotes. Remember you can only quote 150 words in your speech. She was too close to the 150 word limit and may have even exceeded the limit. There were also very few moments in which she was able to add personality to her speech. She often received praise for her Sesame Street story in her first speech because her delivery was filled with personality.

Moving into 2015, our big goals were to ensure that her second oratory contained minimal quotations and that there were more moments of levity or drama, so she could let her personality shine.

**Kiara Fortner  
2015 Kearns High School  
Definition-Defense Squad**

Batman: the famous hero of Gotham. Masculine, mysterious, macho. Professional tough guy. Defender of the innocent. And driver of a shiny, plastic, and pink Barbie convertible.

Let me explain. A few years ago, I babysat my neighbor's three-year-old daughter Hope. One day, I gave her some old junk my brothers had outgrown: plastic dinosaurs, coloring books, stuffed animals. But there was something she became infatuated with the moment she saw it: a Batman action figure, courtesy of a McDonald's Happy Meal. And it did make her happy. So much, in fact, that

she immediately retrieved a pink toy convertible from one of her Barbie play sets and set Batman in the driver's seat. Goodbye, Batmobile. Hello, Barbie Dream Car.

However, my little brother, Giovanni, didn't approach the situation with the same attitude. When he saw Batman's slick new ride, he plucked the action figure out and told Hope she couldn't leave him in there. His reason? "Batman drives the Batmobile, Hope. He can't drive a pink car." When she looked at him, clueless, he added, "Batman's a boy, and pink is for girls."

But Hope didn't waste time arguing with my brother. She simply snatched her action figure back and said, "I don't care." And that was the end of that.

Now, to a three-year-old, this may have seemed like a legitimate arrangement: tough, manly Batman in a pink convertible. But if this was the case, I'm sure DC wouldn't sell as many comic books, and Christian Bale wouldn't be nearly as rich as he is now. But why not? Why are eyebrows raised, heads turned, and questions asked when men dare to like pink? When women like math or science? Well, the answer is in the question, in the confusion it causes: Men who like pink? Women who like math? These people are people who dare to step outside of the boundaries society sets for them from the moment they're born. People who bend, break, and belittle gender stereotypes. People who define themselves outside of these stereotypes possess bravery worthy of any superhero.

To understand these gender stereotypes, we'll hop in our respective Batmobiles and Barbie dream cars and explore the harm they cause, their origin, and, of course, what we can do to free ourselves of their villainous clutches.

To see our problem firsthand, flip open your comic books and let me set a scene. A dark alley in the midst of a busy city. One o'clock on a foggy Friday night, and the world is asleep. Batman and Wonder Woman have become a crime-fighting, DC dyad. Suddenly, they see their greatest opponents. It's Stephanie Stereotype and The Generalization Gentleman, forcing an innocent bystander to wear pants when he really wants to wear a dress. The action starts, and good versus evil clashes. Bang! Zap! Crash! Kapow! Soon, Wonder Woman and Batman immerse victorious. The villainous duo is hog-tied and defeated. Let's take a moment to unmask them, shall we?

The Generalization Gentleman, the male stereotype. He's tough. Calculating. Aggressive. Dominant, ruthless, stoic. He lives for power and destruction. He spent his childhood crushing anthills and playing sports. He marries out of obligation, not desire; he considers his wife to be a ball and chain who ties him down. He protects, he hunts, he discusses. His catchphrase is the mantra of manhood: "Man up. Be a man." His partner in crime: Stephanie Stereotype. She's delicate. Emotional. Romantic. Fragile. Submissive, talkative, compassionate. She obsesses over her appearance and buys expensive cosmetics to soothe her wavering self-esteem. Her catchphrase is the female anthem of insecurity: "Does this make me look fat?" She nurtures, she nests, she gossips.

But, of course, life is not a comic book. Gender stereotypes don't take the shape of pesky villains, and they can't be eradicated with a punch or two from a superhero. But while these villains are fictional, they're the products of facts. And the main fact is this: gender stereotypes exist. They exist, and they're painfully familiar. They exist in the workplace, where women are expected to be nurses, receptionists, and secretaries, while men are expected to be doctors, plumbers, and construction workers. They exist on television. Shows like *Malcolm in the Middle*, *The Honeymooners*, *Family Guy*, *The Simpsons*, and *Leave it to Beaver* portray mothers as crotchety, cranky women who nag their husbands into mowing the lawn, fixing the roof, putting the toilet seat down. The men of the household are depicted as lazy and annoyed, barely able to burp out affirmations after a hard day's work.

They exist in the people around you, who may perpetuate or suffer from these stereotypes. Like my brother, Giovanni. When he told Hope she couldn't have her Batman action figure drive a pink car, he didn't want to hurt her feelings. He was preaching what he'd been taught — that he, as boy, should not like pink. And neither should Batman.

So whether it's been through work, television, or the people around you, you, too, have been taught these stereotypes. You and I have been told that the world comprises of Batmen and Barbies. This is a lie. Humanity is made up of people. People who care like Barbie and can fight like Batman. People who enjoy Barbie's pastel colors but, at the same time, like Batman's darker hues.

When we stereotype people by gender, we slap a label onto their forehead and refuse to see what's underneath. Who is underneath. We see them as a Barbie or a Batman, and not as a person who is capable of being a little bit of both. We become blind to the individual, and when we do, we rob them of their individuality.

And so why do we have these stereotypes in the first place? These pink and blue colors we paint people with? Well, a study was once conducted that discovered the reason why, called the Baby X experiments. In these experiments, people were shown the type of video your grandma likes to watch on YouTube: a baby reacting to a jack-in-the-box popping up. But here's the catch: the participants weren't told whether the baby was male or female. When they thought she was a she, they described her reaction as upset and scared. When they thought he was a he, they dubbed his reaction as angry.

Same baby. Same reaction. Same footage. But different traits described. The researchers discovered something that still holds true today: we associate different traits with different genders. We expect women to be scared or upset when faced with a surprise, while we expect men to be mad.

We expect her to be Barbie, and him to be Batman. And we expect neither of them to be who they actually are: individuals.

So how do we find our solution in the midst of these stereotypes that stifle our self-expression? These restrictive roles that rob us of our individuality? These crippling conceptions that keep us confined? How can we be ourselves when the world wants us to be no more than our gender stereotype?

Harvey Feirsten once said, “Accept no one’s definition of your life, but define yourself.”

There’s our answer, in ten small words. We can define ourselves. We can define our gender, and not have this definition encompass millions of people, but just one. If my definition of being a girl includes jeans, sneakers, and books, than that’s my definition. Another girl’s definition of womanhood might include lipstick and dresses and compassion, while another woman’s may contain combat boots, basketballs, and tattoos. A man’s personal definition of being a man could center on the floral aprons he bakes in, the football he watches on Sundays, and the kindness he shows to his friends. And Batman’s self-definiton could include owning high-tech gadgets, fighting crime, and, if we wants to, riding around in a shiny pink convertible. His definition should not be written by anyone else, and nor should yours.

I can see a world where we allow our sons and daughters to define themselves, free of gender stereotypes. Where boys can cry and girls can speak their minds when they’re upset. Where we accept people as they are, definition and all; boy or girl, or somewhere in the blurred area between pink and blue. Where you can define yourself, without the villainous duo — Stephanie Stereotype and Generalization Gentleman — holding you back.

A world where a new team of superheroes — Batman, Wonder Woman, Superman, Spiderman, Black Widow, Hulk, and all the rest — band together to join the Definition Defense Squad. Maybe Barbie will even tag along. Picture the squad illustrated in a comic book, a bubble above their heads as they shout the battlecry of the self-defined: “Be a gender bender. Be a freedom-defender. Be a long-time contender in the war on conformity.” But most of all, be your gender definition. Not your gender stereotype. Thank you.

### 3. Valuable Links

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|---|---|
| <a href="https://youtu.be/D6lsiUwSmLc">https://youtu.be/D6lsiUwSmLc</a> | Ashwath Kumar 2014 National champion  |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/yHcRk2DyxiQ">https://youtu.be/yHcRk2DyxiQ</a> | Andrea Ambam 2014 National champion   |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/RNXyp2QwYTo">https://youtu.be/RNXyp2QwYTo</a> | Nader Helmy 2012 National champion  |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/YvEhcsnmqm4">https://youtu.be/YvEhcsnmqm4</a> | Nader Helmy 2011 National champion  |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/Ks-_Mh1QhMc">https://youtu.be/Ks-_Mh1QhMc</a> | Amy Cuddy, <i>Ted Talk</i> , nonverbal communication                            |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/GZfj2Ir3GgQ">https://youtu.be/GZfj2Ir3GgQ</a> | Kacey Musgraves, <i>Merry Go Round</i> , example of creative writing techniques |

I would pay attention to her use of the word Mary/merry. Clever double entendre stuff.

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|---|--|
| <a href="https://youtu.be/pdz5kCaCRFM">https://youtu.be/pdz5kCaCRFM</a> | Blues Traveler, <i>Hook</i> , example of creative writing techniques |
|---|--|

Popper’s creative writing in the last half of the song should be of particular interest to the students. He packs a lot of meaning and rhyme into a very short piece of writing.

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|---|---|
| <a href="https://youtu.be/tP5yA3RwzOk">https://youtu.be/tP5yA3RwzOk</a> | Flobots, <i>There is a War Going on For Your Mind</i> , creative writing techniques |
| <a href="https://youtu.be/C2-5mDyCKac">https://youtu.be/C2-5mDyCKac</a> | Brian Regan, <i>You Too</i> , example of humor use                                  |



[https://youtu.be/BdHK\\_r9RXTc](https://youtu.be/BdHK_r9RXTc) Reggie Watts, *Ted Talk*, example of humor and nonverbal comm

Reggie uses nonsensical dialogue in the first half of his talk, yet the audience figures out he is a very clever buffoon. He also exhibits a lot of nonverbal communication techniques to sell his unique humor.

<https://youtu.be/0nFkQ4cOhME> (2015). How to memorize fast

<http://www.wikihow.com/Memorize-Quickly>

#### 4. Worksheets

## Topics

**Small group work: effective topics (3)**

**Small group work: ineffective topics (3)**

**Small group work: exceptional topics (2)**

**Individual work: my potential topics (list as many as possible)**

## Outlining

**My topic:**

**Possible AGD:**

**Basic thesis:**

**Advanced thesis:**

### **Problems**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Causes**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Solutions**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## Research

Directions: List the problems, causes, and solutions that you have created in your outline. Next to each problem, cause, and solution, write a relatable quote, statistic, personal example, etc.

More examples of possible sources of researched examples can be found on pages 6-7. The number of researched examples has been narrowed from 8-6, because not all of your examples of problems, causes, and solutions may have easily researched examples.

Remember you can find more than one example for the same problem, cause, or solution. However, no more than two types of the same evidence. I.E. personal examples, or song lyrics.

Attach your printed or written examples to the back of this worksheet.

AGD

Thesis

Problems

1

2

3

4

5

6

Causes

1

2

3

4

5

6

Solutions

1

2

3

4

5

6

## AGD: Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham*

**Thesis:** Human beings have a closed mind set a comfort zone complex. This inability to creep out of our comfort zone, can hold us back from what we need to accomplish, taking a risk, or seeing life as an adventure.

### Problems

- 1: won't try new food
- 2: won't make new friends/relationships
- 3: too afraid
- 4: could die
- 5
- 6

### Causes

- 1: stubbornness
- 2: fear
- 3: pride
- 4: peer pressure to conform
- 5
- 6

### Solutions

- 1: get over pride and take a risk i.e. dr. visit
- 2: don't always conform (mother-in-law)
- 3: keep an open mindset when choosing a partner/friends
- 4: compromise
- 5: get over your fear
- 6

*Sareena Crawford's 2015 Oratory is an example for how a student would fill one in using their own topic and finding their own research.*

## AGD: Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham*

**Thesis: basic (take a risk). Advanced:** Human beings have a closed mind set a comfort zone complex. This inability to creep out of our comfort zone, can hold us back from what we need to accomplish, taking a risk, or seeing life as an adventure.

### Problems

- 1: won't try new food                      won't try ice cream
- 2: won't make new friends/relationships                      You're black personal story. Marriage therapist quote.  
He parents personal example
- 3: too afraid                      Fear character from movie, "Inside Out." *NY Times* neuroscince
- 4: could die                      Harry Randal Truman

5

### Causes

- 1: stubbornness                      Harry Randal Truman Lilly from "Modern Day Family"
- 2: fear                      Just analysis
- 3: pride                      Just analysis
- 4: peer pressure to conform                      Birds of a feather flock together

5

### Solutions

- 1: get over pride and take a risk i.e. dr. visit                      James Taylor
- 2: don't always conform (mother-in-law)                      Just talk
- 3: keep an open mindset when choosing a partner/friends                      Parents story call back
- 4: compromise                      Mother-in-law
- 5: get over your fear                      Les Brown quote

An Example of shrinking notes as a memorization technique. I am Using Sareena Crawford's 2015 speech.

I will not eat green eggs and ham ... this small piece... we have a closed mind set... apparent anecdotes of things varying from unbearable embarrassments to inexplicable entities, Disney's movie "Inside Out," introduces us to fear.

Ny Times tells about the neuroscience... we won't be trying ice cream. We are afraid and a simple example of this is a Dr. visit. Whether you have... My elementary school experience.

Dr. William H. Doherty a marriage therapist, studies and research conducted by the United States estimates that 40-50% of marriages end in divorce. when needing to collaborate, compromise, and communicate with a partner. "You're not my type."

Harry Randall Truman was an extremely stubborn man. He was born in 1896 and insisted that everyone who thought that Mount. Saint Helens... character Lilly from Modern Family makes stubbornness seem trendy.

Birds of a feather flock together. Your social circle could be a major contributor to your attitudes towards taking risks. These beliefs and attitudes can shape us for the rest of our lives.

James Taylor... diabetes... amputation... James, unlike Harry got out of his comfort zone and trusted a doctor before he ended up buried as well.

Step towards solution... mother-in-law complain... "Try them, try them and you may!" is no better solution to say.

Just because something seems scary doesn't mean you have to be weary. Just because something is new, doesn't mean it will hurt you. Just because something is green doesn't mean it's a bad thing.

I do like green eggs and ham!



Green eggs and ham  
Closed mind set  
apparent anecdotes of things varying from unbearable embarrassments to inexplicable entities  
“Inside Out”  
Ny Times  
Elementary school experience  
Dr. William H. Doherty  
Harry Randall Truman 1896  
Lilly “Modern Family”  
Birds of a Feather  
James Taylor diabetes  
Step towards solution  
Try them, try them  
Just because something seems scary doesn’t mean you have to be weary. Just because something is new, doesn’t mean it will hurt you. Just because something is green doesn’t mean it’s a bad thing.  
Green eggs

Green eggs  
Apparent anecdotes  
“Inside Out”  
Ny Times  
Elementary  
Dr. Doherty  
H.R. Truman  
James Taylor  
Try them, try them  
Scary-weary Rhyme  
Green eggs