



“Talk < to Get >”

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I recently experienced a classic example of the power of being open to conversation.

Having spent around 30 hours travelling from Sydney to New York, my New York to London connection was cancelled due to snowstorms. Joining the long queue to the airline desk I experienced a dilemma of travelling alone – should I stay in the slow-moving queue or leave to explore other potential solutions and lose my place?

Fortunately, I struck up a conversation with the New York couple in front of me. While we chatted, they managed to get hold of the right phone number and actually spoke to a human being who booked them on a flight out the following day. My newfound friends allowed me to speak with the same guy and I was booked on a flight leaving the following day too. Still not happy to be losing a day in the UK (the trip was going to be a quick five-day catch-up with my parents), I was at least happy to know that I would be getting underway and, more importantly, I could leave the queue after only about 20 minutes!

This may not seem significant, but as a result of leaving the queue I was actually able to get on a flight with another airline that same day, so I only lost half a day of valuable face-to-face time with my ageing parents – an all too rare treat. During the process I had to re-visit the original airline to get my ticket released – and the guy who had been behind me in the queue was still only two-thirds of the way through after more than three hours, and still none the wiser as to how and when he was going to get out of New York!

Worth a conversation? Undoubtedly!

Talk less to say more

In the hours that followed my encounter with the helpful New York couple, I reflected on my good fortune and began to wonder what it was about our conversation that resulted in them being so accommodating, allowing me to use their phone to rebook my travel arrangements and to try to contact my New York-based friends.

It occurred to me that there was no significance in the actual words spoken but in the shared experience that connected our thinking and our actions. It was this combination that created a positive environment, in a stressful time, which enabled us to connect.

Traditional communication skills training will often focus on the significance of listening – ‘two ears, and one mouth’.

Listening is without doubt a key component of effective communication, but if you want to be on purpose with your conversations you need to be consciously aware. Aware of what you **Say | Think | Do**.

By **SAY(1)**, I am referring both to the actual words we use and to the way we say them, or our intonation.

Studies by Albert Mehrabian (*Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes*) have shown that the words and tone only account for about 45 per cent of the receiver's understanding. Your own experience surely validates this research.

I, for one, was always concerned about the ‘fire in the belly’ that candidates demonstrated when interviewing for positions with me. If they couldn't be passionate about themselves how on Earth would they be able to get excited about a budgeting system? Their technical knowledge and capability (the words they used) was of less concern to me because I knew this was easier to teach than what the visual clues told me they either had or did not have – energy, passion, commitment.

THINK(2) is about managing the 'ol' grey matter'. In many instances it is actually about *not* thinking rather than thinking. How often do we sabotage the opportunity for a purposeful conversation because of our busy minds? How often have we missed an opportunity to help a child, colleague, or friend simply because we weren't present to their conversation?

Still your busy mind and be conscious of your thoughts.

Are you aware of your limiting beliefs around the power of conversation? Do you open yourself up to the potential of conversations with total strangers?

In 2007 I made a decision to write a book on the art of conversation, and having done so I became far more conscious and proactive about engaging in conversations with people I had never met before. One such occasion was on a business trip to Melbourne. On the same day I had two intriguing conversations with the taxi drivers taking me to and from Melbourne airport. What are the chances of having an Iraqi driver both ways on the same day? Interestingly, they represented both sides of the Iraq regime during Saddam Hussein's presidency. I came away with much greater insight into the challenges and complexities of living through that situation and it became much more real for me to have had this glimpse into what it was like for people to survive in such an environment. I was humbled by the fortunate life I have led through the sheer luck of when and where I was born, and I was also reinvigorated about my decision to settle in Sydney and bring up my family in this great country.

For me, listening is a **DO(3)** part of conversation. One needs to consciously commit to active listening, it doesn't happen by chance, and it is more than just 'two ears'. We also need to demonstrate our listening by what we **DO(3)** with our eyes, gestures and body postures. The more our partners in conversation see that we are engaged in the dialogue, the more engaged they will become, the more we will trust each other, and the more on purpose we can be.

Be @choice as to how you engage all three

Like a lot of things in life, there are no hard and fast rules as to when to focus on any particular component. We all use all three in different 'mixtures' all the time.

If you truly want to have conversations that matter, then you need to be aware of how you are applying the modes of **Say | Think | Do**.

Conversations, by definition, are held 'between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information are exchanged' (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*).

A core value of having a conversation is the willingness to 'exchange' in the dialogue. One of my maxims is 'you need to give to get' – give of yourself emotionally and you will receive far more in return than you expected.

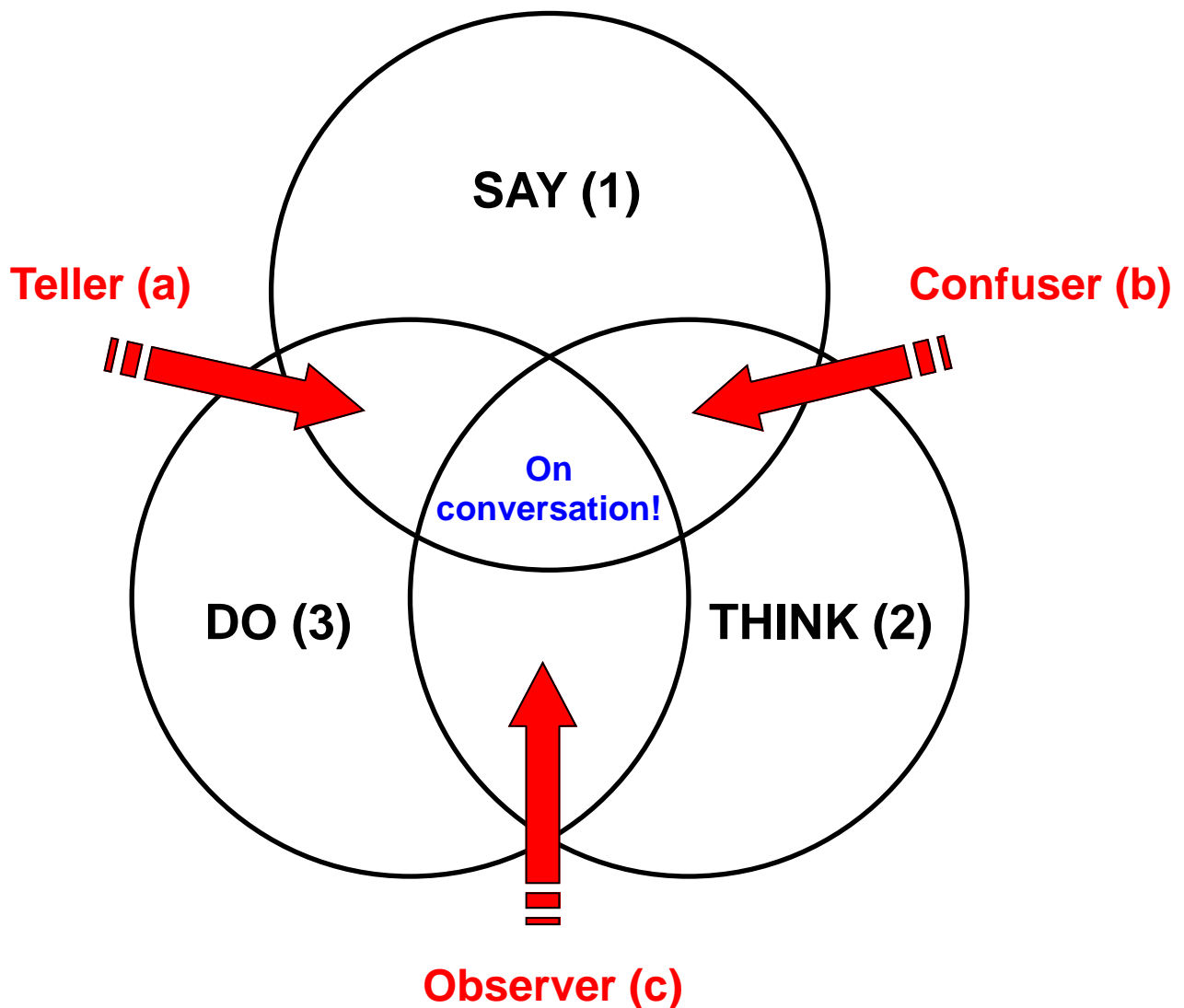
If you currently feel that your conversations are not proving as enriching as they could be, it may just be that one of these key pieces is not being utilised to its full potential.

You are just not **ON CONVERSATION**.

Teller | Observer | Confuser

If you are strong in the **SAY(1)** and **DO(3)** modes you may naturally be a **TELLER (A)**. You may be in presentation mode, or someone who just enjoys getting your point across; someone who doesn't worry too much about empathising with your receiver or the pre-conversation attitudes you bring into the dialogue. For **TELLER's(A)**, it is not so much about being understood, as it is about being heard.

If this is your natural mode, recognise that you may polarise people and that your ability to influence others who don't share your point of view will be limited. Allow yourself time to observe a little more and **THINK(2)** about how you can raise the power of your conversation.



Don't perceive yourself as a natural conversationalist?

Spend more time **THINK**ing and **DO**ing than actually **SAY**ing anything?

Comfortable being in the audience but don't choose to participate in the actual dialogue?

You're an **OBSERVER(B)**, not to say that you aren't interested in the conversation, or even that you aren't getting great value from being part of it. It is just that you are not contributing to the content, the **SAY(1)**. If this is your choice, fine, but be aware that the consequence is that the other party/s may interpret this as disinterest or disengagement. It might just mean you don't get to borrow the phone and have to spend an extra three hours in a queue to get what you want. Harsher judges might just see observers as rude and choose not to converse with them over time.

Given the power of the visual observations we consciously and unconsciously make while in conversation, those of you who are not aligning your **DO(3)** with what you **SAY(1)** and **THINK(2)** are a **CONFUSER(c)**.

Research suggests that if there is any conflict (or disconnect) between the three factors of what is said, how it is said, and how we see it being said – then we will believe what we see. This is a big one when it comes to the development of trust in relationships. If our actions are not in alignment with our words then people's 'BS detectors' start twitching big time. You need to be aware of the subliminal messages you may be sending out.

The relationships we enjoy with our children, friends, colleagues, customers and families are what define our experience during our journey of life. If you are not getting what you want from those all-important relationships, take stock. Look in the mirror and ask yourself what it is you **SAY | THINK | DO** that is getting in the way,

So, are you On Conversation!

I hope you've learned something from this e-book. But more importantly, I'd like it to spur you into action – because, of course, “to know and not to do is not to know”.

If you read this report and do nothing, that's just as bad as not reading it at all. In fact, it's **worse**, because you've wasted your time!

So please **take action**, and start **now**. You might find a **Personal Behaviour Agreement** (www.justaconversation.com/personal_behaviour_agreement.html) useful to commit to what you plan to **Start | Stop | Continue** to do your conversations that matter.

Sign up to my free Newsletter

I suggest that you sign up to my free e-mail newsletter at www.justaconversation.com (if you haven't done this already).

It's free, and full of great ideas to help with conversations in your private and public life.

Can we help you?

Success is Just a conversation™.

Whether it is; with our children, business colleagues, clients, friends, or even ourselves - the conversations we choose to have are fundamental to our success in life.

Just a conversation™ is in the business of changing peoples attitudes and behaviours to the conversations they choose to have in order to improve performance.... in sales, leadership, or the relationships (both personal and commercial) that we enjoy.

If you think we might be able to help you please start a conversation, simply complete an online enquiry form (www.justaconversation.com/enquiry.html) or call us on (612) 9326 6803 or email sales@justaconversation.com

and remember it is all..... **Just a conversation™**.

I look forward to having one with you soon.

Regards,

Hugh

PS: Turn the page to hear some of the things that people say about the service that we offer:



Talk < to Get >

"Thanks Hugh. Your contribution was outstanding and well above my expectations. So thanks again for your commitment to making a difference."

Greg MacDonald, General Manager, Lloyd Morgan

"Thanks for yesterday. The training course was fantastic! I got a lot out of it, and wish I would have done something like this 5 years ago. My colleagues might never appreciate how much future time and energy this course has saved them."

Daniel Butt
Portland Group

"Hugh and his team are always enthusiastic and dedicated to helping us.....The genuine commitment of Hugh Gyton to ensuring we get maximum value has surpassed our expectations."

Steve Jones

"A huge strength of Hugh Gyton's team is the very professional individual coaching and mentoring. They listen to our briefs on individuals, hone in on specific issues and follow through to get results."

Neil Pollington
General Manager, Toll Express

"We're not a company that blows hundred of thousands of dollars on training; training has to deliver real benefits. Hugh and the LMA team delivered outstanding value for money, and made sure we met our objectives."

Trish Wills
HR Manager, Cap-XX

"It is the best investment I made this year and I encourage you to follow Hugh's recommendations."

Sharon Williams
Managing Director, Taurus Marketing

"We have reduced customer complaints from five to one per month and staff disputes from six to two per month."

Andrew Grant
Group Managing Director
HAL Group

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