

Notes From “How To Get Your Point Across In 30 Seconds or Less” by Milo O. Frank

By Richard Dennis

(Caveat: Frank tells some terrific, illustrative stories in this book; not enough space to add them here.)

MY 30-second promo for this book:

A few years ago, I was in Houston to give a presentation to several hundred people at a convention. At 5 am, I was out in the hotel parking lot practicing. Walking, talking, yelling, singing, crying, laughing, gesturing. That’s how I practice. Suddenly, I saw 2 policemen coming at me from different angles. Have YOU ever been in a position where you wished you knew the *exact* right thing to say *right now* - but you've got no time to figure it out?

Thirty seconds is the key. That's all the time you need to get your point across, in any situation. Your 30-second message causes you to

- focus your thinking
- focus your writing
- focus your speaking
- keep conversations on track
- prepare any form of communication more rapidly
- be more logical & concise
- shorten interviews & meetings
- facilitate listening
- reinforce conversations & presentations
- be more effective in any interview or meeting
- use questions & answers to make your point
- heighten your confidence, and
- get better results in your business & personal life

Why 30 seconds? Because they do not care about you. They ‘ll make a decision about you in the first 7-10 seconds. And their total attention span is about 30 seconds.

You want your listener to give up thoughts of sex or money or whatever is going thru their head ... and pay attention to you. You've got 30 seconds. TV commercials do this all the time - make their whole point in 30 seconds.

Watch TV news. Stories get about 30 seconds to set up, 30 seconds for the story, & maybe 30 seconds for the analysis. The story itself is called a "sound bite." If they can't get it down to 30 seconds, it's not going to air. You need to think in terms of 30-second messages. Use it all the time.

Focus on a single clear-cut objective. You must know what you want. If your objective is not clear to you, you have no chance. Make a decision & go with it.

- Why am I going there?
- What do I want to achieve?
- Why do I want to have that conversation?

- Why do I want to write that email?
- Why do I want to meet with this person?
- Why do I want that interview?
- Why do I want to address this meeting?

Do you get 2 or more same answers? That’s your focus.

1. Prepare what you'll say or write to achieve your objective. Check after you're done to see if you're aligned.
2. Be prepared. Know your listener and what THEY want. You know your objective. Who can give it to you? Go only to the person who can get it done.
3. Get to know that person well. Learn all you can about them.
4. Know what that person is going to want from YOU. Address the decision-maker's needs & interests.

Before you work out your 30-second point, know exactly who you will be talking to and the one thing that person wants above all else, that will get a favorable reaction. **Figure out the right approach** - the single thought or sentence that will best lead to your objective.

Ask yourself:

- What am I talking about?
 - What's the basis of my gameplan?
 - What's the heart of what I will say?
 - What's the single best statement that will lead me to what I want?
 - Can I comfortably build a case around this statement?
 - What other vital statements will relate to this one?
 - Will this relate to the needs & interests of my listener?
- If more than one answer is the same, you've found your approach.

Three Basic Principles:

1. Know what you want.
2. Know who can give it to you.
3. Know how to get it.

What else can you add to make your 30-second message more interesting, complete, & successful? (Here is my favorite sentence in Frank’s book):

“What allures, entices, tempts, tantalizes, fascinates, captivates, enchants, attracts, bewitches, catches, hypnotizes, makes you remember and gets you to buy a product, stay tuned to a show, or keep reading a book”

Answer: It's a hook.

- Variety headline: "Hix Nix Stix Pix"
- Newspaper editor’s telegram to Cary Grant: “how old Cary Grant?” Reply: “Old Cary Grant fine. How you?”
- The chapter titles of *Success In 10 Steps* are hooks.

To find a hook, ask

- What's the most unusual part of yr subject – 1 sentence?
- Most interesting/exciting part of yr subject – 1 sentence?
- Most dramatic, 1 sentence?
- Most humorous, 1 sentence?

Criteria to check your sentences against:

- Does the hook lead to your objective?
- Does the hook relate to your listener?
- Relate to your approach?
- Will hook excite/interest your listener?
- Can hook be sentence #1 in 30-second presentation?

Statement or question? (Question is better.) If it's a question, it's got to be answered in your 30-second presentation.

Example. Choose which first sentence will work better:

1. We must develop qualified leaders.
2. Do you really care who replaces you when you retire?

(I do, because developing qualified leaders can mean greater security for all of us in terms of our pensions and the value of our stock after retirement.)

Humorous anecdotes & experiences are good, so long as they relate directly to your objective and your listener and lead directly to your point. Your hook can be an object that will get their attention. Keep a hook list.

The 3 K's of communication:

1. Katch 'em
2. Keep 'em
3. Konvince 'em

Two Types of Close for 30-second presentation:

1. **Demand for action** - ask your target to perform a specific action (e.g., "write down 3 ideas for accomplishing this objective, and we'll talk about them tomorrow.")
2. **Demand for reaction** - This may be a better strategy at times. ("I'm just going to take these actions myself.")

The main part of your 30 seconds tells who, what when, why, where & how:

- Reinforce and/or explain your objective.
- Relate to your listener.
- Align with your approach.

Hook: "How would you like to die young at a very old age?"

PAINT A PICTURE

"Imagine yourself alone and starving. You're on a cement street surrounded by cement buildings. The buildings have no doors and no windows. The street is endless. There's no hope. That's what an abandoned pet, a dog or a cat, faces when it's turned loose in the city."

1. Paint a picture
2. Relate to your own & your listener's experience
3. Touch your listener's heart

Choose the more vivid picture:

1. Deficits will badly affect the economy.
2. Deficits will spread a subtle, devastating poison through the economic bloodstream.

Use the clearest, simplest language. Don't confuse people. (Every week, I get emails from people who want some-

thing ... and often, after reading the email, I still don't have a clue what they want. Why should I spend my time trying to figure it out? – RD)

THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON YOU

The better you present your product - YOU - the more successful you will be.

Non-verbal communication:

1. facial expressions, including eye contact
2. posture, gestures, & movements
3. tone of voice
4. physical appearance & clothing

- Smile.
- Smile at the start.
- Smile at the finish.

Your goal is to be yourself:

1. Be prepared
2. Don't memorize
3. Personalize
4. Care about what you are saying

Speak the last few words softly to emphasize what you are saying. Use a pause at the appropriate time to make your listener wonder what's coming next.

ONE OR A THOUSAND

Focus on variety. In a speech,

- smile
- gesture
- move forward
- change your position
- speak loudly
- speak softly
- speak rapidly
- speak slowly
- pause
- ask a rhetorical question
- be humorous
- be dramatic
- be emotional

Put variety into your words & movements. Tell a personal anecdote that relates to the audience & makes you human. Tell about an early failure to highlight your current abilities.

Voicemail

Tell why you called and give a GOOD reason for them to return the call. Your call will ONLY be returned if the caller feels it will benefit THEM.

30-seconds for emails, too, and for any written presentation.