

## THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

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*A monthly resource providing insight, opinion & practical information on life balance, creativity & perspective*

### **Simple is Powerful**

I look forward to a late afternoon workout, especially after sitting all-day and working on my computer. I tend to become myopic and need to spread out beyond the mirror to my left and the wall behind me. The smell of the damp leaves, the passing headlights of the cars as I attempt to cross the road, and the kindness of the post office worker all allows me to reconnect to the world. And as I focus on the leaves that have fallen on the trail in front of me, my mind begins to go into a semi-trance. Little by little, I think about the step ahead, one after another. This active mediation is when I get some of my best ideas. When I am not trying too hard. Creativity is like that. It needs the space to emerge.

As a speaker, I have wanted to come up with my own system. This is a way for speakers to become different, to go beyond the 'he's just another creativity speaker.' I have learned that when a speaker has a system, many more things are possible for my clients such as, gaining a fresh perspective, generating new ideas, sharpening the focus and creating more business. Sometime at the beginning of the year I stopped trying for my system. While I put the goal of developing a system into the 'Long Term Aspiration' section in my journal, I stopped trying to force a solution. It wasn't until late this summer that it happened, some 9 months later. Towards the end of the day after a speaking assignment, I searched the Internet for a local gymnasium and jogged over to the health club. It felt good to get my body moving and my mind out of a dark conference room with heavy drapes and only a wisp of outside light. Earlier in the day, I had put in my journal that I wanted to figure out how to increase the communication power of my customer.

According to one of my favorite books, "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill, he states, "The subconscious mind takes any orders given to it in a spirit of absolute faith, and acts upon those orders, although the orders often have to be repeated over and over again. ... Be on alert for these plans, and when they appear, but them into action immediately." I had put the desire for a system into my journal and was jogging past an art gallery that had displays of photography when it hit me. The photographs that are simple are the most powerful. When a photographer focuses your attention on the simple shapes of the triangle, square and circle, you have less to distract your eye. The result is that you can more easily 'get it' or get the powerful message that the photographer is trying to convey. One of the most widely viewed photographs of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is Steve McCurry's 1985 cover photograph for *National Geographic Magazine*. It is of a young Afghan girl with green eyes whose name is Sharbat Gula. You can read more about the fascinating story of how Steve rediscovered woman 17 years later at <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/afghangirl/>.

Sharbat's plain green background on the 1985 cover and her tattered red headscarf suggests movement in a counter-clockwise direction around her face. It's the circle of the scarf, the triangle that makes up her nose and the circles that are those piercing green eyes that convey simplicity and power. Steve's photograph is very simple, but so powerful in its many messages – resilience, pride, poverty, etc. What if you could communicate simple messages in your speaking? The results would be powerful! Being a professional photographer and a speaker gives me an added benefit when I am discussing how to use photographs in presentations. For starters, I always bring a camera with me when I am on a speaking assignment. Even when I am hired for a photography assignment I always take extra photographs for my personal archive. This 'in front of and behind the lens' practice led me to develop the Staash Perspective System (SPS). The SPS teaches that simplicity leads to more powerful communications.

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* brought the 'simple is powerful' point home. The author was railing against those people who overly use text in their presentations. There is often a mix of speaker's notes and main points on each slide. I have found it to be ineffective if there are more than 7 points to a slide. PowerPoint is usually not fun because speakers are relying too much on technology and not enough on themselves. A speaker is the message and the more passion he or she has, the more the audience will be engaged and remember what was said. When a proper amount of time is devoted to creating content and then practicing delivery, speakers reach what I call the 'quality quadrant' whereby they can continue to simplify their message. When speakers take the proper time to develop their programs and spend a majority of time in the quality quadrant, their messages become simple and clear. This will increase the message retention of the audience, because the audience will remember the right messages and not obscure ones.

Do you know that an average audience only remembers a fraction of the information presented after one week? This base line information is typically the emotion of the speaker and a few key points. If the speaker is passionate about what he or she is saying, then the audience will engage with this passion and more easily remember the simple points. Certain members of a speaker's audience will take action from the program because the simple, yet powerful messages will resonate (vibrate on the same frequency) with them. There is no need to be persuasive in speaking, only to simplify your messages to make them powerful enough for action. Remember, you need to allow the time for the simple messages to emerge, because simple is powerful!

### About Mark Sincevich:

Mark Sincevich works with individuals and organizations to increase their communication power so that they gain a fresh perspective, generate new ideas, sharpen the focus and create more business. He uses a unique photography angle in his creative keynotes, meeting facilitation and powerful presentation skills programs. Mark is the Founder and Chief Perspective Officer of Staash Press, a member of the National Speakers Association and the Executive Director of the Digital Photography Institute. He is the author of the recent book, *Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer* available at <http://www.staashpress.com/snap.html>. In between assignments, Mark can be found spending time with his family or writing in cafés with character. He can be contacted at 301-654-3010 or [www.staashpress.com](http://www.staashpress.com).

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