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Edition

PUBLIC
SPEAKING

George Rodman

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THIRD EDITION

George Rodman

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To my wife, Linda, and my daughter, Jennifer, who have given me more happiness than I thought possible.

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Preface

There are many public speaking textbooks — so many, in fact, that the first question for an author or reader is, “Why another?” After all, most of the books (including the last edition of this one) are well written and pedagogically sound, and the content of the course is relatively straightforward.

More than anything else, a desire to reach the student governed the changes in this new edition. Many of the concepts are expanded and clarified, and many new student examples are included.

I also tried to tailor the order of material to a student’s receptivity at each point in the semester. For example, students first enter a class with certain expectations about how the course will add to their knowledge. The overview of speech preparation in Chapter 1 organizes the student’s existing knowledge and adds a preview of the various new concepts that later chapters develop. An anecdotal approach drives home the points while it holds interest. Now the student is ready for more theoretical considerations, so the second chapter deals with listening, the human communication process, and rhetorical criticism all at once. (These three areas, which are usually dealt with as separate fields of inquiry, fit harmoniously into the beginning student’s gestalt.)

This edition has been extensively rewritten with an eye to updating, clarifying, and expanding the most important material. The following major changes have been made:

1. The first chapter is now built around the story of how Candy Lightner, the founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, prepared and presented her first press conference.
2. The “focus” chapter has been rewritten to stress topic choice and development.
3. New chapters cover audience analysis and speaking for the electronic media.
4. The chapter on persuasive speaking has been revised to clarify the differences between a strategy to convince and a strategy to actuate.

Each chapter begins with a formal outline and ends with a short summary and questions/assignments, which can be used either for class

discussion or formal written assignments. Other questions and assignments are in the Instructor's Manual.

The Instructor's Manual is available from your Holt representative or from the Communications Editor, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 383 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. A taped self-study course to accompany the text and exam questions on floppy disk are also available from the author, Department of Television and Radio, Brooklyn College of CUNY, Brooklyn, NY 11210. The self-study course could be placed in your library or media resource center for students who need extra help outside class. The exam questions on floppy disk can be used by any instructor who has access to an IBM-compatible personal computer.

As always, this new edition is a team effort. I wish to thank the professionals at Holt, Rinehart and Winston, including Anne Boynton-Trigg, Lucy Rosendahl, Jackie Fleischer, Patricia Murphree, Lester A. Sheinis, Kristin Camitta Zimet, Robin B. Besofsky, and Louis Scardino. The changes in this edition are based on the suggestions of reviewers for all three editions of this book, for which I thank them. The reviewers for this edition are Sandra Ketrow, University of Florida; Mary Osentowski, Richland College; Olaf Rankis, University of Miami; Kay Robinson, Barton County Community College; Gwenn Schultze, Portland Community College; Donald Springen, Brooklyn College. Special thanks are in order for Ron Adler, who has helped me to clarify many concepts.

Brooklyn, N.Y.

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PART ONE

**Introductory
Overviews**



Speech Preparation

- I. AN OVERVIEW OF SPEECH PLANNING
 - A. The Background
 - B. Getting Started
 - C. Preparing the Speech
 - D. Delivering the Speech
 - E. The Aftermath
- II. THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE SPEECH
 - A. Choosing and Developing a Topic
 - B. Analyzing and Adapting to the Audience
 - C. Investigation
 - D. Supporting Material
 - E. Organization and Structure
 - F. Language
 - G. Delivery
- III. SUMMARY

Because you begin making speeches early in your public speaking course, you need to know about the process of planning a speech right away; but because the principles of message planning require a depth of understanding, you must explore them in detail. We are going to try a compromise here. We will overview the entire process of creating a speech briefly in this chapter, and develop each major component of that process in detail in later chapters.

An Overview of Speech Planning

The best way to make such an overview meaningful is to relate it to an actual speech, one that was given in “the real world” under circumstances at least as difficult as the ones you face in giving your first classroom speeches. There are literally thousands of such speeches we could use, everything from a politician’s election-year plea to a minister’s latest sermon; but the most interesting speeches tend to be those presented by “regular people” who are trying to bring about some form of change. Particularly interesting are those speeches given by someone who is trying to correct some injustice so long-standing that people take it for

granted. Most interesting of all is one of these speeches that has actually brought about change.

One such speech was given in August of 1981 by a California housewife named Candy Lightner.

The Background

On May 3, 1980, while Candy Lightner and one of her twin 13-year-old daughters were out shopping, her other twin daughter Cari was walking with a friend along a bicycle path near her home. It was a lovely spring afternoon, and Cari was on her way to a church carnival. She would never arrive, however. She was struck and killed by a driver who had been drinking for most of the morning. The driver never stopped.

The driver who killed Cari was eventually arrested. Not only had he been drunk at the time of the accident, but he had a long list of drunk driving violations. Worst of all, he had been out on bail for only two days following another hit-and-run drunk driving offense. The police told Candy Lightner that, because of the state's lenient drunk driving laws, the man who killed her daughter would probably never go to jail.¹

"I was so angry," Lightner said later, "that I wanted to kill. But I decided to do something constructive instead."² What she did was to establish Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), an organization dedicated to finding solutions to the drunk driving problem.

Before she founded MADD, Candy Lightner had little interest in politics. She was not even registered to vote, and she had never spoken in public—in fact, like most people, the thought of public speaking terrified her.³ But Candy soon discovered that speechmaking was going to be necessary to keep her organization alive. For one thing, the people with the power to make a difference, such as her state legislators, would not pay much attention to her because she did not seem to have much popular support. The governor of the state repeatedly refused to see her. Others told her that her cause was hopeless. Lightner, in her frustration, knew it was time to speak up. She knew that her first speech would have to be a press conference to publicize MADD and its aims.

Getting Started

When Lightner decided to organize MADD, she started "reading everything she could get her hands on about drunken driving." She sought not only all the books on the problem in the library, but everything related to it in current newspapers, in magazines, and on radio and television. When she began to realize the enormity of the drunk driving problem, and how little was being done about it, she began to contact anyone she could think of who might know about the problem or how to correct it. Her contacts included judges, attorneys, political officials, and victims.

When it came time to give her speech, she also made some tele-

phone calls—to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for current statistics on the problem nationwide, and then to the California Highway Patrol, for information on the statewide problem. Finally, she called the state attorney general’s office, to find out why local legislators were not making more effort to tighten up lax drunk driving laws.

As part of her research, Lightner did a lot of thinking about her own case and about how she could express her anguish to a group of strangers.

Preparing the Speech

By the date scheduled for her press conference, Lightner had done enough research to speak for hours. However, she had promised a ten-minute statement, so she had to decide how to focus her topic. In order to focus her topic she had to think about her *purpose* in speaking. She knew her general purpose was to tell the public about MADD, of course; but she had to choose a specific goal, a statement of what she really wanted to accomplish—not in her lifetime, or even in the next month, but with this *one* ten-minute speech.

Upon reflection, Lightner was able to state the following purpose:

After listening to my speech, my audience will write news stories concerning MADD’s purposes and goals.

This purpose statement acted as a focal point for all further work on her speech.

Next, Lightner directed her attention to the *content* of her speech. With the help of some friends, she began to formulate a *prospectus*, a list of points she thought she might like to make in the speech:

1. Thousands of people are killed every year by drunk drivers.
2. Drunk driving laws enable many of the violators to return to the streets to kill again.
3. Legislators are ignoring the problem.
4. The parents of children who are killed or crippled by drunk drivers want something to be done about the problem.

There was more. By the time Lightner was done with her list she had several dozen points that she thought she might like to make; but she knew that she had to limit her press conference to a specific, newsworthy event. After all, the press is trained to look for specific, important information that has human-interest value. If she did not get the press’s attention, the press would not get the public’s attention for her. She decided to announce that her organization was starting a petition to ask the governor to appoint a task force to solve the drunk driving problem.

Once she had homed in on the topic of her speech, the main points began to take shape:

- I. Drunk driving is a serious problem.
 - A. More than 25,000 people a year are killed in alcohol-related crashes nationwide.
 - B. More than 2500 a year are killed in California alone.
- II. This problem is not being adequately addressed by the state.
 - A. Drunk drivers have nothing to fear from the system.
 1. Courts sometimes are not notified about suspended licenses.
 2. There is inadequate enforcement of drunk driving rehabilitation programs.
 - B. Legislators do not act.
 1. The Criminal Justice Committee of the Assembly kills all reform bills.
 2. Defense attorneys who make money defending drunk drivers are also against reform.
- III. The governor can help solve the problem by appointing a task force to find solutions to the problem.
 1. The governors of Maryland and New York have started such a task force in their states.
 2. The governor recently took the time to save a dog—aren't children just as important?
 3. The task force should be mandated to come up with solutions that will get the drunk driver off the road.
- IV. We must show our support of this task force by signing a petition.

Lightner used her outline as a guide in writing her speech, but as the speech progressed she changed her outline to follow it. The writing process went on like that, from the outline to the speech and back to the outline again.

As she wrote the speech, Lightner had to figure out what she could say to prove those points, and to make them clear and interesting to her audience. She chose statistics and examples carefully, and she thought her arguments out logically. She even decided to read a short article from *Newsweek* (an article about her governor saving a dog's life) to make one of her points.

Those points would make up the body of Lightner's speech. She still had to consider how to begin the speech and how to end it, because the introduction and conclusion are, in many cases, the most important parts of the speech. For her conclusion she needed a good summary statement, something that the press would remember. Because her petition made a strong summary statement, she decided to read it as her conclusion. For an introduction, she needed to get her audience's attention, so she decided to tell her own story of how she had lost Cari to a drunk driver.

Lightner got together with a few of her knowledgeable friends to compose the speech. One of her friends was a free-lance journalist who



Candy Lightner and her daughter Serena at MADD's first press conference.

had a feeling for **what** would affect an audience of journalists. Her other friends made **suggestions** about organization, language choice, and strategy.

When the rough draft of the speech emerged, Lightner began to practice it. She practiced by herself, and then in front of her family and friends. She even tape-recorded the speech to see how she sounded. Each time she practiced the speech, she made adjustments, fine-tuning it for effect. She experimented with different styles of delivery: from memory, from notes, and from manuscript. She decided to present it from a manuscript so she could be absolutely sure of the wording of everything she said. After all, if things worked out, she would be quoted in the newspapers and on radio and television. She wanted to make sure the media got it right.

Delivering the Speech

Finally the day arrived. It was less than four months since Cari had died, and Lightner had the chance to do something about it at last. She arrived at the press conference site at the state capital and gave the following speech: