

PUBLIC SPEAKING & STORYTELLING  
FOR PROJECT MANAGERS & ENGINEERS

Rashid N. Kapadia

# Necessary Bridges

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Project Managers & Engineers

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Rashid N. Kapadia

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With infinite gratitude I dedicate this work to ...

My parents, for their limitless love and their sterling examples. And for invaluable memories of contentment, erudition and equanimity.

My wife and son, for their limitless love and their selfless support. And for making us the blessed family we are.

I would also like to dedicate my work to ...

All engineers and project managers, past, present and future. Alas, too often, “the world little knows ... nor long remembers ...” the greatness of our professions.

All who bring passion and purpose to public speaking, storytelling and oratory.

All who set audacious goals, long to build necessary bridges and make the world a better place.

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# Preface

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*“It always seems impossible until it is done.”*

— Nelson Mandela

I remember being truly mesmerized, watching a scene from the movie *Invictus*. This is the scene in which the president of South Africa summons the captain of its national rugby team to his presidential office, and plants the seed of an idea: “Win the Rugby World Cup; our broken nation needs this of you. Together, we must all become ‘One Team, One Nation.’”

This movie portrays a portion of the multifaceted book called *Playing the Enemy* by John Carlin. It is one of the best sports books I’ve read, covering one of the greatest sports stories of all time; but it is much more. It is an inspirational self-help book. It is a book about a political genius who faced multiple impossibly difficult challenges, and who responded with, “It always seems impossible until it is done.” It is a book about an epic injustice and an epic reconciliation. It is a book about a leader, who perhaps more than anyone else on this planet, mastered the art of making friends and influencing people. It is a book about a superb public speaker. It is a book, which describes the most unlikely exercise in political seduction ever undertaken. And it is a book, which led to a superb scene in a marvelous movie.

*President Nelson Mandela (NM): Tell me, Francois, ... what is your philosophy of leadership? How do you inspire your team to do their best?*

*Captain of the Springboks Rugby team, Francois Pienaar (FP): By example ... I’ve always thought to lead by example, Sir.*

*NM: Well that is right ... that is exactly right. But how to get them to be better than they think they can be? That is*

*very difficult, I find. Inspiration, perhaps. How do we inspire ourselves to greatness, when nothing less will do? How do we inspire everyone around us? I sometimes think it is by **using the work of others.***

*On Robben Island, when things got very bad ... I found inspiration in a poem.*

*FP: A poem?*

*NM: A Victorian poem ... just words ... but they helped me to stand when all I wanted to do was to lie down.*

*But you didn't come all this way to hear an old man talk about things that make no sense.*

*FP: No, no, please Mr. President ... it makes complete sense to me. On the day of the big match, say a test, in the bus, on the way to the stadium, nobody talks.*

*NM: Ah yes, they are all preparing.*

*FP: Right. But when I think we are ready, I have the bus driver put on a song, something I've chosen, one we all know ... and we listen to the words together ... and it helps.*

*NM: I remember when I was invited to the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Everybody in the stadium greeted me with a song. At the time the future ... our future, seemed very bleak. But to hear that song in the voices of people from all over our planet made me proud to be South African. It inspired me to come home and do better. It allowed me to expect more of myself.*

*FP: May I ask, what was the song, Sir?*

*NM: Well ... it was Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika ... a very inspiring song.*

*We need inspiration, Francois, ... because in order to build our nation, we must all exceed our own expectations.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQhns5AwAkA>

I wondered why this scene moved me so deeply. I thought long and hard about it. Engineers all too frequently cannot leave great feelings, or well enough alone. They try to “figure it out.” You already know this. I wasn’t really satisfied with anything I initially came up with. That changed after I was exposed to the worlds of public speaking and storytelling.

After spending a few years trying to improve my public speaking and storytelling skills, I got a much better appreciation and understanding of why I was so mesmerized by the powerful *Invictus* scene. It is the same power that public speakers and storytellers everywhere attempt to harness.

I know I want to exceed my own expectations on a regular basis. Who doesn’t? But to hear and see it dramatized this way was a game changer.

Vikas Jhingran has written a book called *Emote: Using Emotions to Make Your Message Memorable*. In his approach (with his uniquely analytical articulation of the role of emotions in speech craft), he recommends that we start writing a speech after having made a clear decision of the “final emotion” we want to leave the audience with.

Well, the emotions that I was left with at the end of this scene would be a fabulous way to feel at the end of any speech or presentation—regardless of whether I was in the audience or speaking to an audience.

I have drawn much inspiration from the movie *Invictus*, and especially from using **the work of others**.

In *Necessary Bridges*, I have used **the work of others** extensively. I acknowledge with much gratitude all that is available to us on the road to exceeding our own expectations. I have meticulously credited sources. Whenever I have cited the work (or the words) of others, I have italicized them. In the unlikely event I have inadvertently omitted to cite a



source, I apologize in advance. The oversight error is entirely my own.

To the reader, if I have cited sources in a way that seems excessive, and occasionally disrupts the smooth flow of reading, or requires you to read too much italicized font, I ask your indulgence. It is an essential compromise: I ask your understanding.

Over many years as a project manager and engineer, it became clearer and clearer to me project managers and engineers were inadvertently compromising their professional and career advancement by not being “good enough” in public speaking and storytelling.

I committed to write this book because I inadvertently stumbled into a hole. I became aware of a gap, a mismatch; one that I could no longer ignore.

Briefly, these conclusions dawned on me: (1) there is a mismatch between what project managers know they need to excel at: and with what they commit to excelling at: and (2) there is a mismatch between what engineers think they need to know and learn: and with what they really need to know and learn. Put differently, this topic found me and in an inexplicable way commanded me to act! “Write a book, Rashid. Evangelize public speaking and storytelling to project managers and engineers. In time they will thank you for this contribution to our professions.” A bonus benefit: Writing a book on a subject helps the author become an expert on that subject.

The primary purpose of this book is to get project managers and engineers to commit to acquiring expertise in public speaking and storytelling. The secondary purpose is to provide (just) enough content (accompanied by exercises, examples and directions to other resources—i.e. the work of others) to keep the commitment strong and sustained over

years. There is plenty of marvelous content out there.

This book is NOT about technical presentations or presentations specific to the professions of engineering and project management. The content of this book is generic and exposes the reader to the basics of public speaking and storytelling.

This analogy may help explain my thinking. In the 1970s there was a revolution in which personal computers began entering our lives in a major way. Two dominant companies driving this revolution were Microsoft and Apple. Microsoft focused on providing really useful and ubiquitous products, but they were (in my opinion) not too concerned, perhaps even indifferent, to the design and the beauty of the products. Apple, on the other hand (in my opinion), was deeply concerned about the design and beauty of its products, perhaps obsessively so.

I see the Microsoft approach as one to which possibly engineers and project managers (at least of my age and background) default. Certainly that was my approach. I mean, “Who cares what it looks like as long as it works well?” It was only after the stunning success of products like the iMac, the iPod, the iPhone, the iPad, the MacBook Air etc., that the advantage of great design dawned on many of us.

I have come to believe that deciding to lavish deliberate attention and care on public speaking and storytelling can make the same difference to our professions that Apple’s “design is very important” approach made to the computer (and computer-based consumer devices) industry.

This book has been conceived and created more as a product to be used in combination with other resources, than as a stand-alone book. It has been developed as a guide book providing course work. It has been conceived as an incubator of and companion to a self-development project,

of minimum two years duration. It has been conceived with the intention that the reader will return to it multiple times over the duration of the self-development project, and read it along with other recommended books simultaneously. This is also called syntopical reading.

Indeed, here is a sample recommendation. I recommend that you procure a book called *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, and read that book in parallel with *Necessary Bridges*. You will extract much more value out of *Necessary Bridges* if you follow this approach.

It is my hope (dare I say vision), that someday in the not too distant future, project managers and engineers will routinely be thought of not only as smart and educated individuals, but as excellent public speakers and storytellers too; the way Apple products are thought of as marvels of engineering and are beautifully designed, too. Why? Because these are essential skills to move any human endeavor along. Public speaking and storytelling are essential skills to (using a line from Apple's Think Different ad) "*to push the human race forward.*" Public speaking and storytelling skills are lubricating oils that keep the machinery of engineering, project management and relationship management running super-smoothly. And engineers and project managers have moved — indeed, pushed — the world forward as much as or more than any other profession.

It is my hope that engineers and project managers increasingly communicate in a way that leaves everyone around them experiencing the same final emotion I felt at the end of the *Invictus* movie scene; inspired and committed to exceeding their own expectations.

It always seems impossible until it is done!

Chapter 15

# **Memorizing, Listening, and Connecting**

This chapter is about memorizing your speeches, listening to your audiences, and connecting with your audiences. It will be brief and will mostly consist of evangelizing these three topics, introducing the basics, and pointing to external resources for more inspiration and information.

I believe that, for some readers, chapter 6, “The Fittest Speaker, The Expert Speaker” could be the most important chapter in this book. I will now argue that this chapter could be the second most important one.

Much as I have evangelized PS&ST throughout this book, I will acknowledge that if you become an expert at memorizing, listening, and connecting, then you will be better served in life and profession than if you become an expert in PS&ST.

It is really, really hard to become an expert memorizer, listener, and connector.

If you commit to acquiring expertise in memorizing, listening, and connecting, then I suggest you will require more concentration of will, even more energy of soul than any other part that your PS&ST voyage will require of you. Do you recall this line from chapter 4? *We choose to do these things ... not because they are easy ... but because they are hard.* It is from JFK’s “We Choose To Go To The Moon” speech. Well, this would be the most appropriate time to draw all the inspiration you can from it.

And like everything that is hard and must be pursued with devotion, concentration of will, and energy of soul, the reward is correspondingly great.

Dear reader, I hope you commit to taking the voyage toward acquiring expertise in memorizing, listening, and connecting. You have been warned. It is much harder than anything else associated with PS&ST.

Memorizing, listening, and connecting are not absolutely necessary toward becoming an expert public speaker and

storyteller. I suspect that there are many world class public speakers and storytellers who are not experts in memorization, listening, or connecting; and they are simultaneously really good speakers and storytellers! But being able to deeply listen to your audience and deeply connect with your audience is an expertise that is supremely worthy of your pursuit. In my opinion this ought to be one of the highest aspirations of PS&ST. This is where the sport, the art, and the science of PS&ST transform into the heaven of service. Here's a Rabindranath Tagore quote I learned in my school days:

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.*

*I awoke and saw that life was service.*

*I acted, and behold, service was joy.*

## Memorizing

*“If we want to live memorable lives ...  
we have to remember to remember.”*

— Joshua Foer, *TED Talk*

I remember my jaw dropping when I started reading Joshua Foer's book, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*. It is one of the best books I have recently read. I suggest it should be compulsory reading for everyone who wishes to grow in life. If you have children, nieces, or nephews, gift each of them a copy. Worst outcome is that they will not read it. If they do, the benefits have the potential to be life-altering. Here is the key reason: “Our lives are the sum of our memories.”

Joshua Foer is a science journalist who made an extraordinary one-year voyage. As part of his science journalism job, he decided to cover a USA memory championship event.

Preparing for the event, he read a newspaper interview with Ben Pridmore.

In the book, *Moonwalking with Einstein*, he writes: *Ben Pridmore could memorize the order of a shuffled deck of playing cards in thirty-two seconds. In five minutes he could permanently commit to memory what happened on ninety-six different historical dates. **The man knew fifty thousand digits of pi.***

In the newspaper interview Ben Pridmore insists: *“It’s all about technique and understanding how memory works. Anyone can do it really.”*

Anyone can remember fifty thousand digits of pi? Anyone can do it?! Really??!

Joshua Foer attended the 2005 USA Memory Championship at Con Edison headquarters near Union Square in Manhattan. After the event he met some of the contestants and champions, and started talking to them. In his own words: *What I discovered as I talked to the competitors was something far more serious, a story that made me reconsider the limits of my own mind and the **very essence of my education.***

He asked one of the memory experts, a young grandmaster from England, Ed Cooke: *“When did you first realize you were a savant?”*

*“Oh, I’m not a savant.” Ed replied, chuckling.*

*Joshua Foer persisted, “Photographic memory?”*

*Ed chuckled again, “Photographic memory doesn’t exist. It is a detestable myth. In fact my memory is quite average. All of us here have average memories.”*

Joshua Foer had just watched Ed Cooke recite 252 random numbers as effortlessly as if they had been his own telephone number. How does one reconcile this fact with what Ed Cooke was claiming?

*Ed continued, “What you have to understand is that even*

*average memories are remarkably powerful if used properly.”*

Joshua Foer goes on to write: *Ed and all the other mental athletes I met kept insisting, as Ben Pridmore has in his interview, that anyone could do what they do. It was simply a matter of “**learning to think in more memorable ways**” using the “**extraordinarily simple**” 2500-year-old mnemonic technique known as the “**memory palace**” that Simonides of Ceos had supposedly invented in the rubble of a great banquet hall collapse in Greece in 5th century BC.*

Ed Cooke explained to Joshua Foer that the competitors saw themselves as participants in an amateur research program whose aim was to rescue a long-lost tradition of memory training that had disappeared for centuries. Once upon a time, Ed insisted, remembering was everything.

Ed and Joshua’s conversation led to Joshua contemplating becoming a memory athlete himself. Ed offered to coach him.

Joshua Foer accepted the offer and the challenge. He trained with diligence and determination. He worked with the expert on expertise Anders Ericsson. Remember him from chapter 6? Joshua Foer researched memory deeply. He committed to being an expert student. And he **won the 2006 USA Memory Championship!** This is a truly amazing story.

Please plan on watching this TED Talk sooner, rather than later.

Joshua Foer: “Feats of memory that anyone can do”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua\\_foer\\_feats\\_of\\_memory\\_anyone\\_can\\_do#t-7141](http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_foer_feats_of_memory_anyone_can_do#t-7141)

The talk ends with this sage advice. *I learned firsthand that there are incredible memory capacities latent in all of us. But if you want to live a memorable life, you have to be the kind of person who remembers to remember.*

In my opinion, there are two key insights to grasp on the road to a better-trained memory.



- We remember (1) routes and (2) powerful visual images best. To remember anything, put the components on a route. This is called a “memory palace.” Next associate the individual components with outrageous images. We saw Joshua Foer do just this in his TED Talk.
- Convert Baker (a name) to baker (an image). This is a creative and fun process, not a memorization and tedious process.

Here’s a personal story. Shortly after I read this book, I was at a PMI-Houston Conference, and attended a memory-training breakout session. The instructor challenged the attendees to remember a random list of 15 items. He asked for a volunteer to recall the list aloud. I volunteered to try. To my utter shock (and I am being neither modest nor gracious) I remembered every item correctly, in correct order. The whole room started clapping—implying that I was very smart. I certainly am not very smart. I certainly do not have a special or trained memory. I was simultaneously bewildered and having a revelation! This was an eye-opener for me. I do not remember remembering a 15-item list from memory for decades, if ever. What I did was place each item systematically in a location of my childhood home, and create a strong visual with each item. The instructor asked how I remembered the list and I mentioned I read the book *Moonwalking with Einstein* recently and decided to try out the memory palace technique. He was familiar with the book and concurred that all memory training is based on similar approaches.

This boosted my confidence significantly. I decided to try and use this approach for memorizing my speeches. I report to you that it works very well. Go for it. You can do it!

I serendipitously discovered a huge bonus benefit associated with a memorized speech. When I have a speech memorized,

I am able to say each sentence looking straight into the eyes (and heart) of an audience member. This ability of saying one sentence to one audience member, the next sentence to another, the third to yet another audience member, takes the speech to a completely different level of communication. It is a marvelous feeling. And it gives you the ability to listen to your audience and to draw energy from them.

Once you start speaking this way, you may never want to go back to any other way.

Here are some common questions.

1. Should we memorize a speech?
2. Is it worth the effort?
3. Is it necessary/essential to memorize a speech?
4. Does it really matter to the audience if we have the speech memorized?

I do not claim to have either correct or definitive answers. I recommend that you experiment and decide for yourself. My recommendation: Experiment boldly.

Let me make a few comments:

1. It is OK to read from notes. It is not OK to “look-down-and-read-and-speak” simultaneously. If you have to read, then pledge to yourself that you will always use the Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method described in chapter 4. This is the minimum you owe the audience. It’s not about you! And make the same promise if you are using slides with lots of text. If you simply have to look at the slides as a mnemonic, then at the very least do not speak when looking at the slides. Take a mental snapshot of some text, turn and face your audience, pause, speak (conversationalize) to one person, and then repeat the cycle. This is deeply uncomfortable for you the speaker, but it is much, much better for the audience. So accept the discomfort by committing to serve your audience. It’s not that tough. All it takes is practice. You can do it!

2. If you chose not to memorize your speech, then you will compromise your ability to draw energy from your audience, to really listen to your audience, or to more fully connect with your audience.

3. If you chose not to memorize your entire speech, but you are willing to memorize parts of it, then commit to this. Memorize the very first sentence and the very last sentence. If you can take on more, memorize the first two sentences and the last two sentences. And if you feel that you can take on still more, then memorize the entire opening, the entire closing, and the transitions. And if you can take on still more, then memorize the quotations and any planned “magic moments.” These are the moments when you connect deeply with your audience, or are your core messages, or punch lines, or profound insights, or important lessons.

In my experience, the greatest benefit of memorizing a speech is that it frees you up to pay evermore attention to your audience. You now have mental resources available to listen to them, to sense their response, to capture their attention, and to draw in their energy. All too often, when we are not optimally prepared with our speeches, we do not remember what we said, and we certainly have no idea of what the audience took away. All our attention was directed inward. This is not the optimal way to serve our audiences.

Now let us transition to listening.

Oh, one last thing, before I forget. I strongly recommend that you procure and study the book *Moonwalking with Einstein*. Commit to an analytical reading of this book. Get the elementary reading and inspectional reading out of the way and then do a very thorough reading of this book. Good luck!

## Listening

*“Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime  
of listening when you’d have preferred to talk.”*

— Doug Larson

Directing attention to the importance of listening was one of the serendipitous benefits I got from my PS&ST voyage. I sense this is another area in which a lot of new knowledge is emerging.

I remember being intrigued and fascinated when watching Julian Treasure’s TED Talks. It was the same feeling I had when reading Sandra Zimmer’s *It’s Your Time To Shine*, or Vikas Jhingran’s *Emote* for the first time. Here’s a trailblazer. Here is new knowledge (at least for me) that is outside the usual PS&ST material I come across. I think it is really important for public speakers and storytellers to know all this.

At a convenient opportunity, when you can block out about 45 minutes, I ask that you listen to all these Julian Treasure @ TED Talks with an open mind, like a sponge, absorbing all you can. Please put this into your project plan.

“Five ways to listen better”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_5\\_ways\\_to\\_listen\\_better](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better)

“How to speak so that people want to listen”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_how\\_to\\_speak\\_so\\_that\\_people\\_want\\_to\\_listen](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen)

“Sound health in eight steps”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_shh\\_sound\\_health\\_in\\_8\\_steps](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_shh_sound_health_in_8_steps)

“The four ways sound affects us”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_the\\_4\\_ways](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_the_4_ways)

sound\_affects\_us

“Why architects need to use their ears”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_why\\_architects\\_need\\_to\\_use\\_their\\_ears](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_why_architects_need_to_use_their_ears)

As communicators, we can perhaps compare PS&ST to throwing a ball. Our responsibility is to throw the ball. It is the audience member’s responsibility to catch the ball. How we throw the ball makes a huge difference. Knowing the catcher’s catching ability increases the odds that the ball will be caught. Do you agree?

These five talks have made me more aware of the catcher’s needs, abilities, and habits. I hope they do the same for you.

After listening to all of Julian Treasure’s talks, it became clear to me that there is also a third element: The environment in which the ball is being passed.

When considering the listening aspect of your speech or presentation, do not be unmindful that your best efforts and intentions can be hopelessly compromised by you not being sound-environment savvy.

Listening skills are getting more and more attention as relationship and performance enhancers. I do not intend to go over them here. There are plenty of good books and training material available for this. I recommend you consider getting one or more of these.

I’ll include a recommendation. *Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace)* by Chade-Meng Tan. Specifically, I will recommend you do the listening EXERCISES in chapters 3 & 7. I particularly like this book as it contains a lot of insights, even deep wisdom, while maintaining a playful, practical, and humorous overtone. And I particularly like the fact that the author is an engineer.

You are probably familiar with these terms; passive listening, active listening, mindful listening, cognitive listening, empathetic listening, etc. I now believe there is one more type of listening that is even harder than any of these. The ability of a speaker to listen to an audience.

Most of us, most of the time, cannot remember what we said in our speeches, especially our earlier speeches. With practice and commitment (and yes, stage time, stage time, stage time: thank you, Darren LaCroix) we get more comfortable and have a fairly good recall of what we said, but we do not really know how the audience received it. This is the next level. If you know how each member of the audience received and absorbed your speech, then you have mastered what I think may be the most difficult of all listening skills. This is more practical and achievable with smaller audiences.

An advantage of attempting to master this type of listening (i.e. listening to your audience deeply even as you are speaking) is that it will probably catalyze the learning of all your other listening skills as well.

This is not as esoteric as it sounds. This too requires practice and commitment.

I got exposed to this concept (listening deeply to your audience) through the work of Sandra Zimmer and Lee Glickstein. Through their books I came to accept that this is a skill that can be attained practically. Lee Glickstein's book is called *Be Heard Now! Tap into Your Inner Speaker and Communicate with Ease*. It is an unusual and splendid book. It has my recommendation for you to procure.

I have included a part of this book as my pre-speech-preparation notes. I refer to them very frequently and it helps me to remember.

- *It's all about Relational Presence.*
- *We have to forget about being good, and remember to be*

*ourselves.*

- *They do not care what you know until they know that you care.*
- ***The key to connecting with any audience is not knowing how to give to them—but knowing how to receive support from them.***
- *Message is important—but the depth of our commitment to that message, and our relationship with our audience is even more important.*
- ***Develop capacity to listen while speaking, to both my audience and myself. Key element of success is listening with no agenda. Listen attentively with soft and available eyes.***
- ***It is our receptivity that draws people to us.***
- ***Energy going out and energy coming in are both really the same ... it is connection.***

This too is from *Be Heard Now*:

### **3 x Basic Steps to Connecting With Any Audience.**

1. *Stand with your feet planted into the center of the earth—and listen to your audience before you begin speaking.*
2. *Speak clearly, from the heart, in short sentences. Say every sentence into the eyes and heart of a human being in the audience.*
3. *Spend 5–10 seconds of quality time with each listener before moving on to another.*

It is my hope that I have adequately evangelized the option of listening deeply to your audience. I hope at some point on your PS&ST voyage you will get there. This part of the voyage will require concentration of will and energy of soul. Good luck! You can do it!

## Connecting

I'll keep this section very brief. Connection is the most ineffable, most visceral, and most immeasurable of all the experiences I have had on my PS&ST voyage.

I believe there is a universal hunger for connection, which has roots in some form of ancient neural programming. I am speculating that it is an evolutionary bequeath that we are grasping at, and only beginning to decode. I will not be too surprised if some time in the future “survival of the fittest” will be upgraded to “survival of the best-connected.”

I am guessing that every family, every community, every group of people—be it a state, a country or a continent—feels (and yearns for) some sort of connection.

Coming unapologetically from a rational and engineering background, I remain optimistic that we will increasingly understand the origins and mechanisms of connection, will be able to increasingly harness its bounty, and we will be more able to measure it.

Here are two statements I have not come across before and think to be accurate and relevant.

1. PS&ST are connection enablers.
  2. PS&ST are “flow” enablers.
- (More in the next chapter.)

For me, these are two ultimate goals associated with my PS&ST voyage. I will strive to be an expert PS&ST, knowing that as a result I will be an expert and effortless connector. I will strive for PS&ST expertise with the goal of being able to get into the flow state when communicating.

Neural resonance (the term I was introduced to by Daniel Goleman's work, and discussed in chapter 8, “Ending Your Speech”) is the best way for me to understand connection.



The ultimate objective of every speech, every presentation, every story, and indeed every communication, should be neural resonance. I have never heard of this as being the ultimate objective of PS&ST, but I believe it should be. It certainly is mine.

A day may come when neural patterns of speaker and audience can effectively be monitored and measured. If that happens, (PM&Es will be at the forefront of that effort) I am speculating that the more similar the neural patterns, the greater the neural resonance, the more successful the speech will have been judged to be. Put differently, I suspect that correlation between neural resonance and successful PS&ST is high.

So, dear PM&E, please consider making neural resonance the ultimate objective of your PS&ST voyage. Perhaps, the greatest benefit you get from your PS&ST voyage is an upgraded ability to connect instantly and effortlessly with your audiences, indeed with all who are a part of your lives—on and off stage.

Here is my *twelfth wish* for you. May your PS&ST voyage culminate in you becoming an expert memorizer, an expert listener, an expert connector and an expert at generating neural resonance.

## About the Author

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Rashid N. Kapadia, a marine engineer and project manager for decades, discovered the transformational power of public speaking, storytelling and oratory after joining a Project Management Institute (Houston) sponsored Toastmasters club.

He also discovered, to his surprise and dismay, that too many engineers and project managers seriously underappreciate—even shun—these transformative skills.

Having always seen himself as an ambassador for his storied and challenging professions, he has made it a personal mission to evangelize PS&ST to engineers and project managers around the globe.

# Connect

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To book the author to speak at your event or to learn more about his work and how he can help you, please visit [NecessaryBridges.com](http://NecessaryBridges.com) or [rashidkapadia.com](http://rashidkapadia.com).

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As an engineer & project manager for decades and a public speaking & storytelling aficionado in recent years, Rashid N. Kapadia has made it a life mission to bridge these two estranged worlds.

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