

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 4

# **To the Moon ... and ... to the Stars Beyond**

*“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and in achieving our mark.”*

— Michelangelo

The objective of this chapter is to ask you to aspire to a scorching, high standard in PS&ST expertise. Remember, you are an ambassador for one or two of the world’s great professions. Nothing less will do. I also ask that you try your best to fall in love with PS&ST—whatever that means. Honor and respect that part within yourself (perhaps dormant now) that was born to speak, to share, and to tell stories.

Now that you have your commitment to PS&ST expertise in place—now that you have entries on your calendar (*a minimum two-year plan ... if you’re not there yet ... renegotiate with yourself*) and commitments on your checkbook (*you have committed resources, yes money! And have a budget in place. How do you know the amount is enough? It must hurt a little, something must be sacrificed ... after all, this is your investment in upward-professional-mobility*)—let me raise the stakes one more time.

I ask you to believe in yourself, to trust yourself, and start preparing now for a day that may come: a day when you will be called upon to write and deliver a speech of immense consequence.

I insist that you imagine this vividly. Through your imagination, you now know that a day will come, even if it is decades away, when you will be called on to write and give a speech of immense importance. You must feel this in your body. If you do not feel any anxiety and/or exhilaration in your body, you are not imagining hard enough. Ideally the anxiety must be “just enough” to propel you upward and onward. If the anxiety is excessive, this too can be a good sign: it may

be a sign that you already have an internal subconscious commitment, and this commitment is now finding its voice—and simultaneously setting off alarm bells—known in biology as the fight or flight response. More on this in a later chapter.

Your preparation toward this speech of immense consequence starts right now.

I am assuming you are in compliance with ALL requirements of the second paragraph of this chapter. If not, you can do better! If not, negotiate harder with yourself.

This chapter is about building the vision of yourself as a public speaker and storyteller. Look back at the quotation at the beginning of the previous chapter. Here is a variant of a similar quotation. Building the vision is as necessary as the action.

**“Vision without action is merely a daydream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.”** — *Joel A. Barker*

I ask that you block out some uninterrupted time, 2–3 hours, and absorb the speech that follows in this sequence:

1. Read through the speech slowly and thoroughly, and absorb it intellectually. Take your time—but no interruptions.
2. Read some commentary and analysis of the speech; for example, from Wikipedia.
3. Read the speech again, more mindful of its context and historic significance.
4. Listen to and watch the speech from the NASA website. <http://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/ricetalk.htm>
5. Read the entire speech again.
6. Select a portion of the speech that you like: A few lines are enough. Write them down in a way that makes reading easy. Stand up. Say these lines out slowly and loudly—as if you are speaking to an audience. Do not

look down while reading and talk at the same time. We will work on this together, later in the chapter.

I ask that you look upon the following speech as a gold standard, a standard that you must aspire to. If you do not believe that you will get there, that's OK. Just read the quotation at the beginning of this chapter again and keep moving forward. Four percent at a time: more of this approach in another chapter.

I think this is one of the most unique speeches in history. I do not think any speech in history has been more endorsed by PM&Es. I do not think that any speech in history fired-up more PM&Es. I wonder if any speech in history did more to ignite young minds to dream of engineering careers. I wonder if this speech should be given even more credit for what subsequently happened in Silicon Valley.

Some background from Wikipedia: *The “**Address at Rice University on the Nation’s Space Effort**,” or better known simply as the “**We choose to go to the moon**” speech, was delivered by then U.S. **President John F. Kennedy** in front of a large crowd gathered at **Rice University** in Houston, on **September 12, 1962**. It was one of Kennedy’s earlier speeches meant to persuade the American people to support the effort of NASA.*

“We choose to go to the moon” speech (Rice University)  
<http://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/ricetalk.htm>

Here we go. Here is President John F. Kennedy at Rice University on September 12, 1962.

*We meet at a college noted for knowledge ... in a city noted for progress ... in a State noted for strength ... and we stand in need of all three ... for we meet in an hour of change and challenge ... in a decade of hope and fear ... in an age of both knowledge and ignorance. The greater our knowledge increases*

*... the greater our ignorance unfolds.*

*Despite the striking fact that most of the scientists that the world has ever known are alive and working today ... despite the fact that this Nation's own scientific manpower is doubling every 12 years in a rate of growth more than three times that of our population as a whole ... despite that ... the vast stretches of the unknown and the unanswered and the unfinished still far outstrip our collective comprehension.*

*No man can fully grasp how far and how fast we have come ... but condense ... if you will ... the 50,000 years of man's recorded history in a time span of but a half-century. Stated in these terms ... we know very little about the first 40 years ... except at the end of them advanced man had learned to use the skins of animals to cover them. Then about 10 years ago ... under this standard ... man emerged from his caves to construct other kinds of shelter. Only five years ago man learned to write and use a cart with wheels. Christianity began less than two years ago. The printing press came this year ... and then less than two months ago ... during this whole 50-year span of human history ... the steam engine provided a new source of power.*

*Newton explored the meaning of gravity. Last month electric lights and telephones and automobiles and airplanes became available. Only last week did we develop penicillin and television and nuclear power ... and now if America's new spacecraft succeeds in reaching Venus ... we will have literally reached the stars before midnight tonight.*

*This is a breathtaking pace ... and such a pace cannot help but create new ills as it dispels old ... new ignorance ... new problems ... new dangers. Surely the opening vistas of space promise high costs and hardships ... as well as high reward.*

*So it is not surprising that some would have us stay where we are a little longer to rest ... to wait. But this city of Houston*



*... this State of Texas ... this country of the United States was not built by those who waited and rested and wished to look behind them. This country was conquered by those who moved forward ... and so will space.*

*William Bradford ... speaking in 1630 of the founding of the Plymouth Bay Colony ... said that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties ... and both must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courage.*

*If this capsule history of our progress teaches us anything ... it is that man ... in his quest for knowledge and progress ... is determined and cannot be deterred. The exploration of space will go ahead ... whether we join in it or not ... and it is one of the great adventures of all time ... and no nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in the race for space.*

*Those who came before us made certain that this country rode the first waves of the industrial revolutions ... the first waves of modern invention ... and the first wave of nuclear power ... and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space. We mean to be a part of it—we mean to lead it. For the eyes of the world now look into space ... to the moon and to the planets beyond ... and we have vowed that we shall not see it governed by a hostile flag of conquest ... but by a banner of freedom and peace. We have vowed that we shall not see space filled with weapons of mass destruction ... but with instruments of knowledge and understanding.*

*Yet the vows of this Nation can only be fulfilled if we in this Nation are first ... and ... therefore ... we intend to be first. In short ... our leadership in science and in industry ... our hopes for peace and security ... our obligations to ourselves as well as others ... all require us to make this effort ... to solve these mysteries ... to solve them for the good of all men ... and to*

*become the world's leading space-faring nation.*

*We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained ... and new rights to be won ... and they must be won and used for the progress of all people. For space science ... like nuclear science and all technology ... has no conscience of its own. Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man ... and only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theater of war. I do not say the we should or will go unprotected against the hostile misuse of space any more than we go unprotected against the hostile use of land or sea ... but I do say that space can be explored and mastered without feeding the fires of war ... without repeating the mistakes that man has made in extending his writ around this globe of ours.*

*There is no strife ... no prejudice ... no national conflict in outer space as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind ... and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation many never come again. But why ... some say ... the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why ... 35 years ago ... fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas?*

*We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things ... not because they are easy ... but because they are hard ... because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills ... because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept ... one we are unwilling to postpone ... and one which we intend to win ... and the others ... too.*

*It is for these reasons that I regard the decision last year to shift our efforts in space from low to high gear as among the most important decisions that will be made during my incumbency in the office of the Presidency.*

*In the last 24 hours we have seen facilities now being created for the greatest and most complex exploration in man's history. We have felt the ground shake and the air shattered by the testing of a Saturn C-1 booster rocket ... many times as powerful as the Atlas which launched John Glenn ... generating power equivalent to 10, 000 automobiles with their accelerators on the floor. We have seen the site where the F-1 rocket engines ... each one as powerful as all eight engines of the Saturn combined ... will be clustered together to make the advanced Saturn missile ... assembled in a new building to be built at Cape Canaveral as tall as a 48 story structure ... as wide as a city block ... and as long as two lengths of this field.*

*Within these last 19 months at least 45 satellites have circled the earth. Some 40 of them were "made in the United States of America" and they were far more sophisticated and supplied far more knowledge to the people of the world than those of the Soviet Union.*

*The Mariner spacecraft now on its way to Venus is the most intricate instrument in the history of space science. The accuracy of that shot is comparable to firing a missile from Cape Canaveral and dropping it in this stadium between the 40-yard lines.*

*Transit satellites are helping our ships at sea to steer a safer course. Tiros satellites have given us unprecedented warnings of hurricanes and storms ... and will do the same for forest fires and icebergs.*

*We have had our failures ... but so have others ... even if they do not admit them. And they may be less public.*

*To be sure ... we are behind ... and will be behind for some time in manned flight. But we do not intend to stay behind ... and in this decade ... we shall make up and move ahead.*

*The growth of our science and education will be enriched by new knowledge of our universe and environment ... by new*

*techniques of learning and mapping and observation ... by new tools and computers for industry ... medicine ... the home as well as the school. Technical institutions ... such as Rice ... will reap the harvest of these gains.*

*And finally ... the space effort itself ... while still in its infancy ... has already created a great number of new companies ... and tens of thousands of new jobs. Space and related industries are generating new demands in investment and skilled personnel ... and this city and this State ... and this region ... will share greatly in this growth. What was once the furthest outpost on the old frontier of the West will be the furthest outpost on the new frontier of science and space. Houston ... your City of Houston ... with its Manned Spacecraft Center ... will become the heart of a large scientific and engineering community. During the next 5 years the National Aeronautics and Space Administration expects to double the number of scientists and engineers in this area ... to increase its outlays for salaries and expenses to US \$60 million a year; to invest some US \$200 million in plant and laboratory facilities; and to direct or contract for new space efforts over US \$1 billion from this Center in this City.*

*To be sure ... all this costs us all a good deal of money. This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961 ... and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined. That budget now stands at US \$5,400 million a year—a staggering sum ... though somewhat less than we pay for cigarettes and cigars every year. Space expenditures will soon rise some more ... from 40 cents per person per week to more than 50 cents a week for every man ... woman and child in the United States ... for we have given this program a high national priority—even though I realize that this is in some measure an act of faith and vision ... for we do not now know what benefits await us.*

*But if I were to say ... my fellow citizens ... that we shall send*

*to the moon ... 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston ... a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall ... the length of this football field ... made of new metal alloys ... some of which have not yet been invented ... capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced ... fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch ... carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion ... guidance ... control ... communications ... food and survival ... on an untried mission ... to an unknown celestial body ... and then return it safely to earth ... re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour ... causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun--almost as hot as it is here today--and do all this ... and do it right ... and do it first before this decade is out--then we must be bold.*

*I'm the one who is doing all the work ... so we just want you to stay cool for a minute. [laughter]*

*However ... I think we're going to do it ... and I think that we must pay what needs to be paid. I don't think we ought to waste any money ... but I think we ought to do the job. And this will be done in the decade of the sixties. It may be done while some of you are still here at school at this college and university. It will be done during the term of office of some of the people who sit here on this platform. But it will be done. And it will be done before the end of this decade.*

*I am delighted that this university is playing a part in putting a man on the moon as part of a great national effort of the United States of America.*

*Many years ago the great British explorer George Mallory ... who was to die on Mount Everest ... was asked why did he want to climb it. He said ... "Because it is there."*

*Well ... space is there ... and we're going to climb it ... and the moon and the planets are there ... and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And ... therefore ... as we set sail we ask*

*God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.*

This speech still takes my breath away!

Trivia: According to the PBS documentary (American Experience series) "Silicon Valley," by the mid-1960s NASA was buying 60% of Integrated Circuits produced in the US and driving growth of seminal companies like Fairchild. Fairchild become something like a seedpod that just scattered new companies all over the valley; and that's what really started what we call the modern Silicon Valley.

After you have finished steps 1 to 5, (initial read, background and context update, read again, watch and listen, read again) let us continue to step 6. Take all the necessary time with step 6. Seldom will the benefit to effort ratio be higher for you in your public speaking voyage.

Select a portion of the speech that you like: a few lines are enough. I have selected these lines from the Wikipedia article: *Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again. But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas? We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.*

I came across a very good public speaking technique in a book called *Speak Like Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln: 21 Powerful Secrets of History's Greatest Speakers* by James C Hume. I truly wish I had come across this technique at the

very start of my public speaking voyage, and not have had to wait four to five years for this gem. Frankly I am puzzled that I never came across it before, or why it is absent from the other books and products I have.

I recommend that you plan on purchasing this book and plan on eventually reading it syntopically with *Necessary Bridges*. Chapter 12 is called “Power Reading.” Here is the technique summarized.

*Never, never, never let words come out of your mouth when your eyes are looking down.*

*You must be looking at your audience when you are speaking.*

Hume calls it both the *See-Stop-Say technique* and the *Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method*.

Here is the technique broken down into steps:

1. Look down at the line you’re about to read out and take an imaginary “snapshot” of the words you see.
2. Bring your head up.
3. Pause.
4. Looking at an audience member (or an object in your room if you are practicing alone) “conversationalize” what you have just memorized. Say it to the audience member as you would if speaking to only one person.
5. Look down again and “snapshot” the next chunk of words.
6. Look up.
7. Pause.
8. Look at another audience member and conversationalize. and so on.

You may feel awkward, stupid, embarrassed, but public speaking is never about you: It is about the audience, and this way they are absorbing what you are saying. The pause gives listeners time to digest what you have just said. And

in case you didn't yet know, the pause is the most powerful tool in all of speaking. Pauses are what make a speech sound conversational. While a speech is most certainly not a conversation, it must nonetheless sound and seem conversational. Hume sums it up this way. *The pause may feel and seem awkward or jarring to you, but to your audience you'll be sounding like Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, or Ronald Reagan.*

An interesting observation—Hume points out that this is more of an eye-hand skill than a mental one. People who are good at sports pick up this the easiest. And just like sports, this has to be practiced a lot to acquire expertise.

Now it's your turn to read out the lines you have selected from the speech. Before starting you will have to modify your notes to this format. This is EXERCISE #4.

READ & MEMORIZE—TAKE A MENTAL SNAPSHOT

*Its hazards are hostile to us all.*

LOOK UP AT AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

PAUSE

SAY IT CONVERSATIONALLY—ALOUD

*Its hazards are hostile to us all.*

LOOK DOWN ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE FINISHED

SPEAKING

READ AND MEMORIZE

*Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind*

PAUSE

*and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again*

PAUSE

*But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal?*

PAUSE

*And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? ...*



AND SO ON

*Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? ...*

*Why does Rice play Texas? ...*

*We choose to go to the moon ...*

*We choose to go to the moon in this decade ...*

*and do the other things ...*

*not because they are easy, but because they are hard ...*

*because that goal ...*

*will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies  
and skills ...*

*because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept*

*...*

*one we are unwilling to postpone ...*

*and one which we intend to win ...*

*and the others, too.*

If you have gone through this chapter sincerely, and spoken out loud, using the Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method, you have taken your first necessary steps toward PS&ST expertise. More importantly you have got a taste, a strong sense of what public speaking is about. If you felt strong sensations, feelings, anxieties, embarrassments—in your body—while going through this, welcome to the world of public speaking. It happens to all of us. We are not that different.

Trivia: if you should ever visit Space Center Houston, you can see, and perhaps even stand behind, the very podium that President John F. Kennedy used for this speech.

Final note on this speech, again from Wikipedia: *Douglas Brinkley, a professor of history at Rice University, wrote in looking back on the speech on its 50th anniversary that: Kennedy's oration was front-page news around the country. Pundits saw it as another Ted Sorenson-penned speech drenched in terrestrial aspiration. But **for all of its soaring***

**rhetoric**, the Rice address was **grounded in pragmatism**. Kennedy made the case to taxpayers that NASA needed a US \$5.4 billion budget. Kennedy also did a tremendous job of connecting the moonshot to Houston in ways that thrilled locals. “We meet at a college noted for knowledge, in a city noted for progress, in a state noted for strength,” he said. “And we stand in need of all three.” **What Kennedy did so brilliantly that day was frame the moonshot as being instrumental for U.S. security reasons.**

Someday fellow engineer, fellow project manager, you may well have to make a case for more money for your project, or for your team, or for expanding your ventures, or even for security reasons. If you can masterfully combine soaring rhetoric and grounded pragmatism this way, and make your case; then your boss does not stand a chance, even if he or she does not have the funds.

*... and do all this ... and do it right ... and do it first ... we must be bold!*

Here’s my *fifth wish* for you, “When it comes your time to masterfully combine soaring rhetoric with pragmatism: may you always do it right, and most of all, may you always be bold!”

That reminds me of a story of negotiation from my own home. My wife routinely out-negotiates me with pretend meekness. I even wrote a humorous speech on this. Its title—what else? “Out-Negotiated.” Once, decades ago, when our son was very young, she asked out loud to no one in particular, if she could buy something. Our tiny-tot son’s counsel, “Mum, if you want a dog from Dad ... ask for a horse!” That boy’s going to be an awesome negotiator!

Dear PM&Es, when you need to raise funds for your ventures from your bosses or investors, PS&ST expertise can be your great lever.

As I have been writing *Necessary Bridges*, my wife Anahita, an outstanding Toastmaster, has been reviewing it. Her comment: “Way too much testosterone in this chapter. What about the women engineers and women project managers? They may not tune into this ‘Moon’ speech the way you guys do. Give them another speaking exercise.” Obediently, I shall comply.

Please go through steps 1–5 with Hillary Rodham Clinton’s Remarks to the U.N. 4th World Conference on Women Plenary Session on September 5, 1995, in Beijing, China. Then practice speaking out loud with this segment—as in step 6. The Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method—remember? This is EXERCISE #5.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/hillary-clintonbeijingspeech.htm>

*These abuses have continued because ... for too long ... the history of women has been a history of silence. Even today ... there are those who are trying to silence our words.*

*But the voices of this conference and of the women at Huairou must be heard loudly and clearly ...*

*It is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food ... or drowned ... or suffocated ... or their spines broken ... simply because they are born girls.*

*It is a violation of human rights when women and girls are sold into the slavery of prostitution ... for human greed ... and the kinds of reasons that are used to justify this practice should no longer be tolerated.*

*It is a violation of human rights when women are doused with gasoline ... set on fire ... and burned to death because their marriage dowries are deemed too small.*

*It is a violation of human rights when individual women are raped in their own communities ... and when thousands of women are subjected to rape as a tactic or prize of war.*

*It is a violation of human rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 ... is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes by their own relatives.*

*It is a violation of human rights when young girls are brutalized ... by the painful and degrading practice of genital mutilation.*

*It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families ... and that includes being forced to have abortions ... or being sterilized against their will.*

*If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference ... let it be that human rights are women's rights ... and women's rights are human rights ... once and for all.*

Trivia: American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches, ranks this talk at #35.

For a contemporary commentary on gender differences, check out Daniel Goleman's book *The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights*. One conclusion is: *The analysis reveals that while in general you find gender differences among the various competencies, when you only look at the pool of star performers (people in the top ten percent of business performance) those differences wash out. The men are as good as the women, the women as good as the men, across the board.*

This is another validation of the argument that PS&ST expertise will enable your upward-professional-mobility. A serendipitous and bonus benefit of expertise in PS&ST is the increase of EI. To put it bluntly, to be successful at PS&ST you must know what you and your audiences are feeling—at all times. It's what really matters—only those lacking in EI will argue otherwise. We engineers will undoubtedly argue a lot!

If you're a stubborn engineer who makes and constantly wins this "feelings don't count" argument, I predict you may, later on, get left further behind—and while I hope this never, ever happens, you may, without figuring out how, end up

amongst the ranks of the CBT (cynical, bitter, and twisted). How are you feeling right now? Offended? Outraged? It counts: Doesn't it? Your feelings count. Period. I respect you too much to pretend otherwise. I want the best for you (and for our professions) too much to pretend otherwise. I hope a day comes when every single CEO has an engineering background. If it doesn't, it's our own fault.

In light of this, it is a good idea to practice both these speech segments **aloud**, preferably standing up, using the Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method, regardless of your gender. Don't diminish or restrict your PS&ST aspirations along gender lines. Don't "not-pay-attention" to your own feelings.

If you are now—or envision yourself ever being a high-up executive—this reading technique (Churchill/Roosevelt/Reagan method) could be your distinguishing competency, perhaps even a career saver. But you must start practicing like an athlete—starting now. Increasingly, the higher up you go, you will have to stick to a script. If lawyers are involved, you will likely be "hard-constrained" by a script.

If you read and speak while looking down at your notes, you've lost your audience and you probably do not even know it. Or worse, you do not care too much that you have. That's terrible. You've got to connect and conversationalize. Period.

Well Ms./Mr. Wannabe Big Shot Executive, I admire and respect your aspirations. And Ms./Mr. PM&E who may not care for this kind of over-ambitious thinking, I admire and respect your authentic choices, whatever you wish for, and hope very hard that one of them is to commit to becoming an expert PS&ST, and eventually its evangelizer.

The objective of this chapter has been to get you to aspire to greatness in PS&ST, to set a scorching, high standard for yourself for the voyage ahead.

Don't underestimate the vision thing in the pursuit of

excellence. Do not place practicality and action on a higher (or lower) pedestal than vision thing. Visualizing where you want to be is an equal partner in the process that leads to expertise

I hope this has been achieved. I hope you have your sights on the moon ... and on the stars beyond. I hope you are reaching for a world, where once and for all, human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights. Don't think dog, think horse; don't think million, think billion!

If you can figure out ways to fall in love with PS&ST simultaneously—more power to you!

And from Michelangelo to all of us: Beware of the greater danger!

Let me close this lofty “vision thing” chapter with a question from Marianne Williamson, “Who are you not to shine?” Seriously. Please answer the question. “Who are you not to shine?”

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, “Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?” Actually, who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people will not feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone and as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” — Marianne Williamson*

## 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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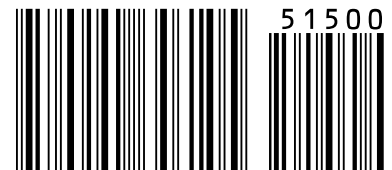
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