

## Developing Your Ability To Communicate

The art of conversation can greatly enhance a person's ability to deliver a high quality speech whenever he is called upon to do so. The habitual use of language and manner of his expression in daily conversation will greatly influence a speaker's style in public address. The difference in conversation, public speaking and reading is, briefly, as follows: Conversation is dialogue and the simplest and most direct form of vocal expression. It is the beginning of speech culture and no effort should be spared to acquire ease and correctness in its use. Public speaking is monologue and the utterance is necessarily more prolonged to suit the circumstances of space and number. Such an occasion demands increased definiteness and deliberation in style. Reading differs from either of the foregoing styles, because of a certain formality of utterance required by the strangeness of the thought and its construction. The reader does not here utter his own thoughts but those of another, and in consequence the words and phraseology are not familiar to his lips. In his admirable book on "The Art of Conversation," Mahaffy names as subjective conditions to conversation: 1. Physical (a) A sweet tone of voice; (b) Absence of local accent; (c) Absence of tricks and catch-words. 2. Mental (a) Knowledge which may be either special (great topics, the topic of the day), or general (books, men); (b) Quickness. 3. Moral: Modesty, simplicity, unselfishness, sympathy, and tact. Conversation affords constant opportunity for improvement in speech. The student should criticize his own utterance and discriminate between pure and breathy tones, softness and harshness of voice, and correct and faulty enunciation. He should also cultivate intelligent variety in modulation and feeling. A good conversational style has a distinct charm and should be persistently cultivated. Hamilton Wright Mabie tells of a man of nervous organization who gained immense benefit by simply watching the modulations of his voice and persistently resisting the inclination to run into high tones. He had found not only relief for the vocal chords, but a steadiness and calmness of thought and feeling which made him conscious of the great blunder of wasting nervous strength by suffering the vocal chords to sympathize with an excited condition rather than keeping them under steady control. Practise the following with ease, naturalness, and variety of good conversation, avoiding loudness. Spoken with simplicity and sincerity, these passages will greatly enhance the art of a public speaker. EXAMPLES 1. Did you ever see a dandy fisherman? He has the correct suit on, his pole is a beauty from Conroy's, his line is of the best gut, his book is full of artificial flies, plenty of artificial flies, his fish-basket hangs behind him; and he is a fisherman. May be. Let us go to the stream. Standing with a knowing air, he throws his fly; but the fish do not rise at it; and he throws again, and again they do not rise. And all the while, a barefooted, coatless boy on the other side of the brook is catching fish as fast as he can pull them in. He has just a rough hook on a bit of string, and a worm for bait, but he gets the fish. HENRY WARD BEECHER. 2. As soon as Macaulay had finished his rough draft, he began to fill it in at the rate of six sides of foolscap every morning, written in so large a hand, and with such a multitude of erasures, that the whole six pages were, on an average, compressed into two pages of print. This portion he called his "Task"; and he was never quite easy unless he completed it daily. More he seldom sought to accomplish; for he had learned by long experience that this was as much as he could do at his best; and except when at his best he never would work at all. "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay." G. O. TREVELYAN. There are many other passages which can be used to good effect, but the above two sections make an excellent starting point for anyone keen to become a good public speaker.

## About the Author

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