

1-1-1924

Lesson No. 22, Values and Relations

North American Institute

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Recommended Citation

North American Institute, "Lesson No. 22, Values and Relations" (1924). *Effective Public Speaking Courses*. 23.
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EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

LESSON No. 22

VALUES AND RELATIONS



NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE
CHICAGO

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VALUES AND RELATIONS

It is desirable at this point that a stop be made to look back upon the principles and processes thus far discussed. The thought will occur that a pretty large field has been opened. No small number of suggestions and cautions, methods and principles have been laid down and their application discussed, but there yet remains something to be said concerning the most important and the really constructive principle back of them all. In this connection, think of what the college president meant when he said in addressing a body of students, "What the world needs is not more men and women to pass through college, but men and women who can see relative values." The principle of relationship existing between or among all things has been casually mentioned from time to time in these discussions, but more thoughtful consideration upon the matter cannot go

amiss. This principle of relationship demands that the writer and speaker shall know the exact relationship that each thought sustains to every other thought in his discussion.

It has been said that "no man liveth unto himself," and, in spite of the fact that there are those who live as if this were not true, the man who really knows life knows that it is true. It is equally true that no thing or thought exists unto itself. It has a connection with and a bearing upon one or more other things or thoughts. If there seems to be an unrelated existence it is simply so because we lack the knowledge to understand its bearing upon other affairs. Professor James says a "miracle is merely something more to be known." All around us we can point to those developments which yesterday in our ignorance we called miracles. Verily, today this same affair is a matter of common experience. There are those today so ignorant that the telephone would appear as a miracle, but to the scientist it has no such character. So suc-

cess in life, whatever the sphere, is dependent upon our ability to recognize the true relations of our inheritance and environment. Carrying the thought one step farther, constructive speech building is dependent upon an exact knowledge of the value and the relationship of the ideas one is attempting to express. Observation, analysis, discrimination, and judgment will be the keys with which to unlock the doors of difficulty which must be opened before we can reach success.

In addition to the need of a trustworthy understanding of the subject matter in its values and relations, there must be learned the many instruments which speech uses and the value of each, and the manner of use; there must be learned the kinds and methods of delivery; there must be learned the nature of audiences and occasions, and all the various values and relations which they carry within themselves, apart from the thought that is to be given to them.

With reference to the first point, that relating to a knowledge of the material or matter, it can readily be seen that all

other questions are dependent upon this. If one's knowledge is faulty or his measurements of the value of that knowledge are faulty or the discrimination in the relationship of the matter is faulty, all that follows will be weakened thereby. There is no more fundamental care to be taken than that every effort be made to know and understand thoroughly the material being dealt with, to know it exactly, precisely, accurately, with a true recognition of its place in the midst of other material, its proportional worth and relationship. To see things in true proportion is intensely important; to place too much emphasis upon the wrong idea is to invite tragedy at times. If all that has been said is true, then it will be recognized that the chief matter of concern is to establish correct processes of thinking.

Recognition of the values and relations of thought will aid much in securing the properly arranged and proportioned speech form. The style in which thought is clothed is not a quality given it arbitrarily. A bit of thought has a dramatic

form because it is essentially dramatic in nature. Thought is expressed in the poetic form because it is essentially poetic. The style of the essayist is as it is because of the nature of the thought he is to express and the mode of absent treatment, as it were, which he must use. The oratorical style is as it is because the thought expressed is in the main different from that which the essayist attempts, and because the orator has his audience now in person before him.

So in the smaller units of form or style the same law holds true. Granted that there is an understanding of grammar and a working knowledge of laws of rhetoric, one cannot go far astray in the sentence structure if there exists a perfect understanding of values and relations of the thoughts he wishes to express. As thought values and thought relations vary, so will the sentence structure vary. A sentence is a simple sentence because the thought to be expressed is simple, and is not so involved with other thought as to demand another type of sentence structure. A

complex structure is so because the thought relationship is such as to demand such a mode of statement. A sentence is compound in structure because the thought cannot be accurately and correctly expressed in any other type of structure. A sentence is loose in structure because the thought to be expressed can best be shown forth by this type of sentence, and a study of the suspended or periodic sentence, as it is sometimes called, will reveal the fact that this kind of sentence secures effects which no other sentence secures, so that when the effect brought about by a suspended sentence is desired, this structure must be used, inasmuch as no other type will secure the same result.

This idea is to be applied likewise to the development of the paragraph. These cannot be placed in any order in which they may happen to come into the brain. Nor can the sentences of the paragraph arrange themselves in a haphazard manner. A well-constructed paragraph is a miniature essay or speech, according to the type of composition under develop-

ment. It must have its subject, and the whole paragraph must develop this subject and no other. The subject of the paragraph is generally found in the sentence called the topic sentence. Sometimes the topic sentence is the first in the paragraph, sometimes it is imbedded in the middle, and sometimes it appears toward the close. The order of the sentences must be carefully scrutinized, to see that one follows another, according to the natural development and relation of the thought.

And again, the order of the paragraphs in the whole speech must be a point of careful study. If one has seen to it that his outline has been logically developed, then his order of paragraphs is likely to be free from serious fault. Finally, the length of the paragraphs must be considered. This point will be decided by the relative value of the various divisions of the thought. Those divisions which are the least important will be given the shortest treatment. But even this last statement is not unaffected by conditions other than the actual value of the thought

itself. The nature one audience might possess would demand that one set of ideas be treated at considerable length, while the nature of another audience would demand that an entirely different group of ideas be given the larger space.

So we are led to the following observation: the same thought is not always considered in the same attitude, from the same point of view, or with the same purpose, and, therefore, the exact shadings and relations of thought will vary with these differences of attitude and the point of view and purpose. The form in which the thought is to be expressed will, after experience, fit itself easily and excellently to the nature of the idea.

When the elements of delivery are considered, it is discovered that the same principle is again operative; if the sentence form in which the speech is cast is decided by the essential nature of the thought, it is more strikingly true that the final oral form through which thought is expressed will be determined by the character of that thought. In the elements of

emphasis, time rate, phrasing, and tone color, there can be no other determining factor except the kind of thought and type of audience. So as one prepares either his exercises for practice or a real speech, discriminatingly, the inquiry into the actual values and true relations of the things he wishes to say must be made.

It is probable that less attention is given to a thorough study of adaptation of the oral expression to the thought and the audience than to questions of thought and style. There seems to be an idea prevalent that any form of speech that has volume and much action is forceful. The idea that really great speech is the result of the masterful application of definite laws seems to have been missed these days, or if not missed at least not heeded. No one would attempt to paint without instruction from one who is more or less of a master. Few are foolish enough to attempt to reach artistry in music, or sculpture or even architecture, without securing training from recognized masters. But many

will enter the field of public speech with complete faith in their own sufficiency.

High attainment in this art makes the same demands of study and practice which any other art demands. While it may be true that on occasion a speech may be delivered with no change of thought or composition from that with which it was before given, yet very seldom will it be true that the speaker will have to deal with the same values and relations in two different audiences. This being true the oral form of his address will differ as he recognizes these differences of audiences. A type of emphasis that might be exceedingly effective on one occasion will be the very kind of emphasis that is to be avoided before another audience. Matter that might be given in a tone of accusation with one audience will need to be given with a tone and temper of persuasion before another audience. The writer has a speaker in mind at this moment who gives a most valuable and pertinent address. He has heard this address on several occasions. With one audience it will succeed very well

and will create much thought and discussion. The same type of delivery with other audiences has failed to produce the same results. It is believed, however, that another type of delivery would hold the second audience as successfully as in the first instance. These things are those, however, which must be mastered by broad experience together with the keenest kind of observation and study of audiences.

It is believed also that the student will see at once, that the end in view will determine certain things concerning the delivery. When a speech has as its main end that of clearness there will result very definite speech forms, but if action were desired the type of delivery that might be most excellently adapted to the making of an idea clear, would not suit this end in any sense.

The higher one's reach toward mastery the more will one have to give attention to values and relations in thought, in composition, and in delivery.

EXERCISES.

These exercises are provided as a means of testing the students' knowledge of the subject and for training through actual practice. Exercises are not to be sent to the School.

1—Secure a rhetoric and look up the definition, and study the examples given, of:

Simple sentence

Compound sentence

Complex sentence

Co-ordinate sentence

Loose sentence

Suspended sentence—sometimes called the periodic sentence.

Inverted order.

2—Using the volume, "Selected Speeches for Practice," and the volume, "Analysis of Oratorical Style," select and write down illustrations of the different kinds of sentences mentioned above, selecting about ten illustrations of each kind.

In each illustration chosen examine the sentence carefully in order to determine why the given order of the sentence ex-

presses the best relationship of the ideas within the sentence. In as many cases as you have time, arrange the sentences differently, and note the effect upon the relationship of the different ideas.

3—Using the same volumes, select a group of words that are used merely for the purpose of expressing relationship of ideas.

4—Select a group of phrases which express relationship of ideas. In each instance note exactly the relationship that is indicated by each phrase. Fix this use in mind so that you may be able to make the same correct use in your own speech.

5—Note any sentences that are used with the purpose of making transitions from one phase of thought to another.

"Self-distrust is the cause of
most of our failures."

—Bovee.