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I watched these three videos, and I paid close attention to the five details of organization, language, material, analysis, and delivery. They were all powerful speeches delivered by socially influential people. I have previously watched two of those videos (Steve Jobs' commencement speech, President Obama's "Yes, We Can" speech); however, paying attention to those details made me absorb the speech in a different light.

Mary Fisher's A Whisper of AIDS (Houston, TX, August 19, 1992)

Mary Fisher has been an influential political figure. It is a brave decision for her to publicly admit that she has the disease. However, her voice is clear and she calmly speaks of AIDS. She talks about how our society should back each other up, because there is no one who is truly safe from the disease. AIDS is common and anyone can get it, despite the stereotype that it is only common for homosexual people.

Her voice is high and resembles that of an adolescent aged girl. However, her message is so powerful and she has the presence to draw in the audience. There are not many movements but she keeps her eye contact with the audience and it is well-blended with her voice and delivers her sincerity. She calmly explains how the disease and its growth are affecting the country, which is cause and effect organizational pattern, and calls the disease and epidemic.

She talks about how ignorance and silence are fueling the spread of disease. The patients are just like anybody else – a people. She depicts President Bush and his wife in a positive light

and connects that with how American public should treat the patients. She talks about support of her family and how that factor is becoming the rock of her soul. She claims that we should not, as a society, deny the existence of the disease and hide the patients from the light of the society. Throughout her claims, her voice is placid and sounds as if she was suppressing some very strong emotion. She is pleading for people to not be afraid to use the name of disease. She ends her speech asking blessings from the God; therefore, I assume that most of the audience are Christians or at least think favorably of Christianity.

Steve Jobs' Commencement Speech (Stanford University, CA, June 12, 2005):

The commencement speech is probably one of the most popular speeches of this era. Jobs opens the speech by speaking in plain language, about how his mother put him up for adoption and how his parents became his parents. This instantly makes him from the super-human creator of Apple to the next-door guy whose speech people can relate to. He instantly becomes the figure living this earth. His way of connecting the dots between the drop-out and typography system in modern technology is flawless and simply fascinating.

He talks about the hardest things in his life and how they actually became the turning point in his life. He explains his experience in time-order, which is the chronological pattern. He says that the audience should all find their inner passion and work on it, no matter what happens. He talks about the rocks that hit his face, and how it actually became the cornerstone of his next achievement.

The third part of his speech is particularly impressive. He tells the audience that they've got nothing to lose, that we are all going to die and we should live each day as our last. "Death is a destination we all share. No one has escaped it." He urges the audience not to waste a moment

doing something that is not aligned with their heart. He ends the speech by the famous quote, “stay hungry, stay foolish.” This quote has been so overused that it has almost lost its charm. However, the quote wraps up his message so gracefully that it deserves some attention.

Throughout his speech, he made connections with the audience. He waited as they finished their laughter, as if they – the audience and Jobs himself – were having an actual conversation. He watched as his audience drew into his speech and he led them to the point where he wanted them to be. He was a great speaker and truly an awesome presenter.

President Obama’s “Yes, We Can” speech (Nashua, New Hampshire, January 8, 2008):

Obama starts his speech by saying that he’s still fired up and ready to go. Then he goes on to accrediting his staff members. His words were clear, and he did not use any heavy words. It was simply clean and he gave enough pauses between each word, making sure those audiences hear every single one of his words.

His voice rises when he speaks the words that he wants to put emphasis on. He also places many actions in the speech which increased the audience’s attention. He overwraps the audience in one and when his voice hits its peak (and his speech, made up with the easiest words hit its dramatic points_ -- it just draws in the audience. He talks about people’s needs for change and he hits the point spot-on. One can tell that he has overused his throat and his neck is not in its best condition; however his words are powerfully simple and he emphasized each word with just enough attention. He says what he will, and what he can do if he gets elected as the President of the United States, and he integrates people with his message.

He wraps 9/11, terrorism, and genocide as challenges the country has faced, and brings them to attention without connecting them with fear (using fear would have been the easier way

to control the audience). He integrates people and found himself in the speech that people feel that they are actually part of him and that he actually represents part of them and therefore his is their real representative. He talks about what he can do, and the audience believe that they are capable of carrying on his plans. He give the audience the power to change a nation. His repetition of yes, we can, although subtle, grow in the audience – by chanting the sentence, the audience becomes immersed in his idea. His “Yes, we can” grows as his speech continues, and, as he speaks of his plan, the audience feels the fire in their veins, as if they have been waiting for the next great chapter for the country. Therefore, when Obama speaks his last, “yes, we can,” the audience believes that they are connected to him and his idea.

The speech was composed of the easiest words; however, it carries and enormous amount of hope and confidence as it draws in the audience. The speechwriter was great and the president did a fantastic job in delivering this speech. Although his voice was not in its best condition, his pitch was perfect and it drew the audience right in.

The speeches are made by very influential figures and they reached many people. It is not only because they are famous and powerful in the era, but also because they are good orators. The speeches have very identical characteristics and several skills that made speeches more persuasive and interesting. Speeches such as these are valuable and meaningful, and it’s worth it to study them deeply.

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