

## Lessons from a Eulogy

Ryan stood before the congregation. He fought to control his emotions. He unfolded his careful handwritten eulogy.

*“I’m here to tell you about my grandpa...my hero. My first memories of him are when I was five...years old.....”*

After that long pause, he said, *“I can’t do this.”* He started to fold that handwritten paper. There wasn’t a sound in the church. He began to step away. Then he stopped. After a long pause, he stepped back to the lectern, unfolded the paper, and picked up where he had left off.

After five minutes of speaking, he said his final words, folded his paper, slipped into his pocket, and walked back to his pew.

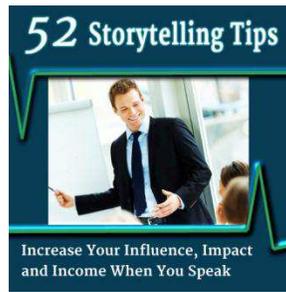
His cousin Leah then stepped to the lectern. Her eulogy was filled with humorous stories about her grandpa. She painted such vivid pictures that I could recall memories I experienced in their grandfather’s house, and I hadn’t been there in over 20 years.

Leah’s eulogy was the perfect match for Ryan’s. His was filled with lessons learned, love and respect for his grandfather, and his emotion was raw and unchecked. Leah’s was filled with humor, love and respect for her grandfather, and her emotion was kept in check.

It was one of the most heartfelt and real pair of presentations I’ve ever heard.

As a speaker and coach, I was reminded of these important lessons:

- When you speak with real emotion, you create a deep connection with others. It’s



a **shared experience** because it's real.

- Two people with the same grandfather, feeling similar emotions about him, used different methods of expressing their love and grief. One is not better than the other.
- By speaking from their hearts and sharing their experiences and perspectives, Ryan and Leah provided more depth and insight into their grandfather.

These were not two professional speakers or storytellers. They were simply two people who shared their thoughts and feelings, without shame and embarrassment, about a man they loved.

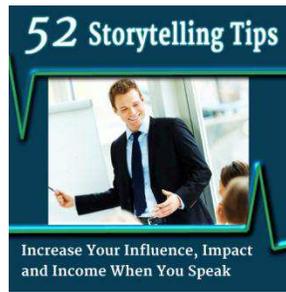
What can YOU take away from this experience?

1) When sharing a story, it's OK to show emotion. Shedding tears or laughing is appropriate, as long as they don't overwhelm your presentation. If you find that you're too overcome with emotion when sharing a story, it's too soon to tell it to an audience. Never use the stage for your own therapy session.

Also, never use your emotions to manipulate the audience's emotions. I've seen speakers who cry 'on cue,' in the same moment, every time they share the same story. If you're genuinely moved by a situation, you're not going to cry, at the exact same spot, for the same length of time, every time you share that story. People can sense insincerity.

2) Your perspective is an important addition to **any** story. Just as Ryan shared his grief through tears, and Leah shared hers through humorous vignettes, you can offer a unique view of other people or incidents. This gives a more complete view of that situation or person.

3) You may generate a response you didn't expect. When Leah finished speaking, her



uncle stood up and applauded. It was a spur-of-the-moment reaction, and it was beautiful. The priest didn't think so, but, that was his problem. Her uncle's response was one of genuine appreciation for a eulogy that paid tribute to his father.

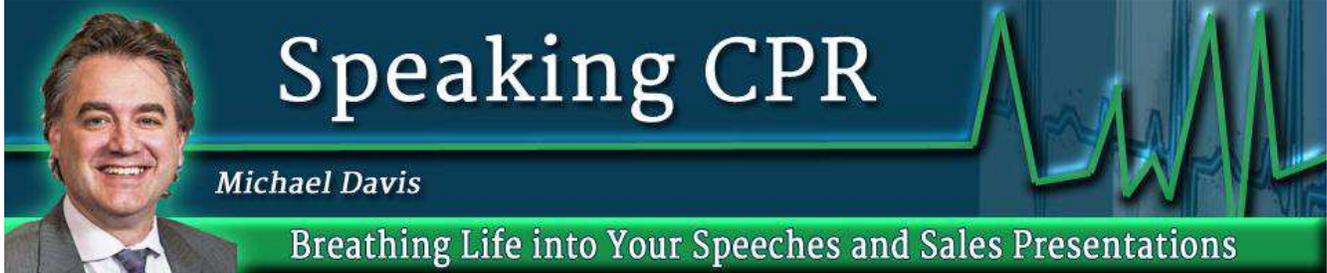
As you prepare your story, accept that emotional parts of it may have an impact on you. When this happens, stay in the moment. Let the emotion wash through you. **Do not apologize.** Your audience will be drawn closer to you because you're allowing yourself to be open and vulnerable with them. This connection is hard to break.

**ACTION STEP:** Internalize and practice your speech. When you know your material, you're much more likely to be aware of audience reactions. When you know your material, your emotions are much more likely to flow through you. When you and your audience are in synch emotionally, you can live in the moment, and you present a story that people will remember.

Your recommended resource this week is the book '[Confessions of a Public Speaker](#)' by Scott Berkun. Mr. Berkun offers a real world view of the challenges of speaking and storytelling. He has a witty and energetic style that keeps you turning the pages. His experiences can help you save time and embarrassment.

**Until next week, always remember, you have a story that someone needs to hear.**

**For additional resources, see below:**



## Recommended Resources

- 1) *3D Storytelling Workshop* Click on this link: [3D Storytelling Workshop](#)
- 2) *Inject More Humor into Your Presentations*  
Click on this link: [Inject More Humor into Your Presentations](#)
- 3) *Go Ahead and Laugh!* Click on this link: [Go Ahead and Laugh](#)
- 4) *Stand Up, Stand OUT!* Click on this link: [Stand Up, Stand OUT!](#)
- 5) *EDGE of Their Seats Storytelling*  
Click on this link: [Edge of Their Seats Storytelling](#)
- 6) *Hollywood Presentation Skills*  
Click on this link: [Hollywood Presentation Skills](#)

## Michael's Background

For many years, Michael Davis gave presentations and speeches that were, in a word, ineffective. Mistakes, confusing messages and failed attempts to capture the interest and attention of audiences created tremendous frustration.

Then a chance meeting with World Champion speaker David Brooks opened the door to meeting many other World Champion and Hall of Fame speakers. Investment of time, energy and thousands of dollars in training and coaching helped him develop the skills to become a speaker and leader who influences, impacts, and inspires others.

In 2011, he earned the certification of World Class Speech Coach. He also studies the art of comedy and movie making to learn new skills that can take speech creation and delivery to new levels.

## Michael's Raving Fans

*"Mike Davis is an **engaging, inspiring speaker**. I believe, however, that **his greatest talent** is his **ability to draw the best out of those** lucky enough to have him as a coach. I had this privilege for a period of four months. During this time, he constantly challenged me to **improve both the content** of my speeches and **my delivery**. I would not have made the finals in Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking competition without the help of Mike Davis. **I don't know of a better Public Speaking teacher** in Cincinnati.*

**Chris Nachtrab**  
Vice President & Partner  
The Everest Group

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Last summer, when I spoke and promoted to subscribe to [my email newsletter] Hot Marketing Tips, I got a big fat zero sign ups.*

***At your wise suggestion**, I passed the signup clipboard around the room this time. When you first mentioned it, it felt very old-fashion and not trendy or technology driven. I set a goal for 50 new sign ups. Probably 2 times more than I have ever had sign up at one time.*

*When I tallied the new subscribers after the lunch yesterday, **we hit a total of 72!** I think that is about **46% of the room**. **THANKS!**"*

**Drew Dinkelacker**  
President, The Marketing Accelerator

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Evaluate to Elevate is a **powerful program**. Every speaker should hear it... **twice!**"*

**Darren LaCroix**  
2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Mike helped me fine tune a 10-minute presentation from "too much information" into a **clear, to-the-point focus** that has not only **given me more confidence**, but generating **more positive feedback** from the audience **NOW** than I did before meeting with Mike.*

*Mike has a unique ability to help you focus on the main point(s) of your presentation and then how to present them in a way that is **easy for those in the audience to understand**."*

**Doug Smith**  
Sr. Account Executive  
Hubbard Interactive

*“The **success** I enjoyed in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking is the **result of coaching I received from Mike Davis**. He helped me **refine and deliver** a speech that carried me **all the way to the finals**. His tireless dedication is **outstanding!** Mike Davis will help you communicate better and be more successful.”*

**Phil Barth**  
Portfolio Manager  
International Paper

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Mike has an easy way of working with you that **isn’t intimidating**... Amazing, **insightful feedback**... My presentations are now **far more interesting** and result in **additional sales** of my services. No matter what the level of speaking at which you may be performing, **you’re sure to improve with Mike Davis.**”*

**Joann Westwood**  
Westwood Virtual Associates, LLC

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Mike Davis breathed life into a topic that many of our group of trial lawyers take for granted, that public speaking is both an art and a science. It is clear that Mike is himself passionate about this topic and his insights are invaluable for those facing the daunting task of public speaking for the first time and for those seasoned veterans behind the podium”.*

**David Williamson**  
Attorney

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Michael has completely opened my eyes! I’m **performing at an entirely new level**. I went into my last event with the **utmost confidence** thanks to him. He even called me the night before with a few last-minute reminders! If you speak for a living — if your revenue depends on your ability to communicate, **you NEED Michael Davis!**”*

**Brennan Scanlon**  
Co-Executive Director  
Business Network International

\*\*\*\*\*

*“I recommend the coaching services of Michael Davis. He helped me to put a new, more **meaningful spin** on my existing presentations that enabled me to **connect with my audience**. He provided me with tools and resources that allowed me to **gain confidence, decrease my anxiety, and more effectively get my message across**. Most importantly, he taught me how to **have fun** with public speaking!”*

**Dr. Laura Ward**  
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital