

# 3 KEYS TO DELIVERING A POWERFUL TED TALK

*by Nan Crawford*

NAN CRAWFORD & CO.





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Jill Bolte Taylor's extraordinary "Stroke of Insight" was the first TED Talk I saw. In 2008, Jill told her story about having a stroke at age 37. A Harvard trained neuroscientist, during her stroke she was strikingly able to bring a focused fascination that allowed her to examine her experience, even as she was losing brain function. Part of what made her talk so powerful was the artful blend of grounded science and exalted ideas, rooted in her professional expertise and her personal experience. Far beyond insight into how our brains are wired, she spoke ultimately on what it means to be human.

In the years since first learning about TED and their generous

**What made her talk so powerful was the artful blend of grounded science and exalted ideas, rooted in her professional expertise and her personal experience.**

offerings of "riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world," I have had the pleasure of coaching a number of luminaries who have walked onto the stage at TED, as well as numerous prestigious or daunting stages (depending on your perspective) at industry conferences with as many as 20,000 people in the audience. I have helped clients prepare for briefings at The State Department, the UN, and The White House (in 2010). I coached Annie Leonard to take the stage for her appearance on The Colbert Report. And I've helped craft

funding pitches that have raised millions of dollars.

If you're preparing a TED Talk, would *like* to be, or if you want to step onto a bigger stage for any high-stakes presentation, and need to inspire your audience to take action — this workbook is for you.

AT NAN CRAWFORD & Co. we coach bold women leaders\* to step onto a bigger stage. Sometimes that's literally a bigger stage like TED, or a major conference or funding pitch.

*\*We're often asked, so I'll note here: We make exceptions for exceptional men.*

**If you want to step onto a bigger stage for any high-stakes presentation, and need to inspire your audience to take action — *this workbook is for you.***

And often we help our clients answer the question: What's the next stage of your work in the world? How can you have a bigger impact? How do you want to align your passion and purpose while you're here on the planet?

In our presentations coaching and executive coaching, we help clients distill their ideas into a meaningful message and connect to their confidence, so they are prepared to step onto a bigger stage, both literally and fundamentally.

**"How do I walk on stage with confidence and genuinely inspire my audience?"**

WHEN CLIENTS ARE PREPARING FOR MAJOR PRESENTATIONS, one of the key questions they ask is: "How do I walk on stage with confidence and genuinely inspire my audience?" Numerous factors contribute to delivering your



*What's the next stage of your work in the world? How can you have a bigger impact?*

1

*Find Your Light*

2

*Take a Stand*

3

*Speak Your Peace\**

*\*Speak Your Peace. It's spelled both ways. Whether it's a piece, a portion, some contribution to the whole, or a peace offering, words that can bring us together, a call for harmony and connection, don't hold your peace, say what you need to say...I'm a child of the 60's. I spell it Peace.*

message so your audience is motivated to take meaningful action. Chris Anderson's book, *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*, is wonderfully comprehensive and compelling. It covers twenty-one chapters in five domains.

For this article, I've chosen to focus on three key elements especially useful for both:

A. CONTENT STRATEGY.  
THE INTERNAL INQUIRY.  
— The foundation stage of idea building, and

B. DELIVERY.  
THE EXTERNAL  
EXPRESSION.

— The being on-stage stage.

3 KEYS TO DELIVERING A  
POWERFUL TED TALK

1. Find Your Light
2. Take a Stand
3. Speak Your Peace\*



LYNNE TWIST

*Visionary & Founder of The Soul of Money Institute*

Lynne Twist has been active in social justice and environmental causes for more than 40 years. She has helped raise over \$200 million for these causes. Nan has worked with Lynne to prepare presentations for the Bioneers Conference and TEDxMarin.

*“Working with Nan was really powerful. It was wonderful to connect with her skill and her love for her work, and her knowing what really works. Nan’s knowledge that love is the key to connecting with our audience, helped me feel connected. I am so grateful to her.”*

Watch on [nancrawford.com/nans-ted-alumni](http://nancrawford.com/nans-ted-alumni)

*Content Strategy:*

# THE INTERNAL INQUIRY

## How do we decide what it is that we want to say to an audience?

The primary goal of delivering a TED Talk is to communicate a powerful idea in a clear and compelling way. To identify which core idea we want to communicate, we must engage in an internal inquiry.

Our clients often come to us saying, “I really want to do a TED Talk”, or “I really want to be speaking to bigger audiences”, or “I want to make more of a difference”...followed by: *“but I’m not quite sure what to talk about.”*

Or, our clients who have years of experience and deep expertise say, “I’ve kicked ass in a variety of roles and industries, I know I could bring tremendous value to a wider audience, but I’m not certain what the best thought leadership platform is for me.”

Or, “I know what I want to talk about, but I’m not sure where to start.”

START HERE.

## Content Strategy. Step 1:

# FIND YOUR LIGHT

If you are presenting to a very specific audience, it is vital to begin with understanding their particular needs and how you can be of service, how you can make a difference.

However, the TED audience is a broad, general audience. And there are numerous industry conferences on a wide variety of broad business topics. So the task is often one of deciding: “of all the ideas I’m passionate about and deeply knowledgeable about, which one\* is the most compelling idea worth sharing?”

*\*Of course you can develop multiple talks, but it’s helpful to identify one that feels especially relevant and useful.*

In his book *TED Talks*, Chris Anderson writes:

*“Anyone who has an idea worth sharing, is capable of giving a powerful talk.... I’m using the word idea quite broadly.... An idea is anything that can change how people see the world.”*

Remembering that the TED tag line and thus the bar is: *riveting talks by remarkable people.*

Answering the question: “What do you want your TED Talk to be about?” Is a lot like answering the questions: “What is the idea that

matters so deeply to me that I am willing to invest in it? Align with it? Hoist its banner high?

And because of the nature of how TED Talks are shared and often spread around the world, the question is also: “Is this idea I want to share, at the core of my personal brand?”

If you are working to choose one of your many arenas of expertise upon which to build a thought leadership platform, and you genuinely believe others will benefit from your ideas and experience, another way to ask the question above is: “What do you want to be known for?”

This question invites you to rigorously distill your values and your strengths. What is your superpower? Of course you may have many, but what is at the tip of your spear?

One of the avenues I take to find answers to these questions, and to illuminate this internal inquiry, is a metaphor that comes from my background in theatre. I’ve worked as a professional actor, director, and improviser. In decades of executive coaching and development work, I’ve used theatre as a lens for leadership. We help clients leverage the techniques and skills that actors use to engage their audience.

Those range from empathy to improvisation, expressiveness to conviction...

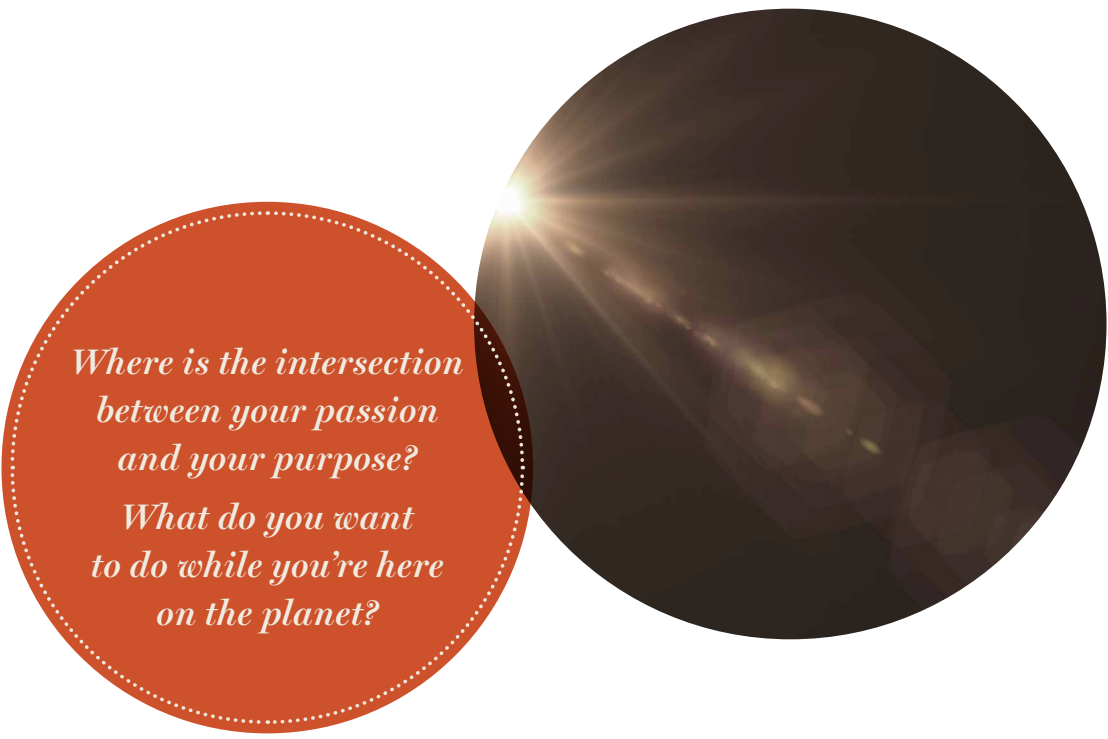
On-stage, a keen actor aligns their movements to both follow the director’s instruction and to land in the best light. Actors are trained to navigate the space, in part, by literally feeling the warmth from the “hot spot” of theatre lights. If they miss the mark during a rehearsal, the director may call out, “Find your light”.

In seeking to hone the message you need to deliver to an audience, you can begin the inquiry by finding your light.

## FIND YOUR LIGHT

What lights you up? What turns you on? What lifts you up? What brings you joy? What are your passions? What wisdom do you carry that can help shed light on a path for others? What’s the lens you look through? What values and beliefs are the guiding lights of what you see and what you say and what you do? What do you most want to focus on?

There’s also this notion of light that is not only about lumens but is about weight — what is heavy and what is light. In what way can you lift the burdens of others? What insight can you share, given



*Where is the intersection  
between your passion  
and your purpose?  
What do you want  
to do while you're here  
on the planet?*

your unique experience, that can help lighten the load we all carry?

To truly inspire people and encourage them to take action, we need to be passionate. The word encourage comes from the Latin root word cor, meaning “heart”. In Spanish, corazón, in French coeur. To encourage — to lift the heart; embolden; strengthen one’s resolve. When we speak in front of people, we have an opportunity to do that work. Where is the intersection

between your passion and your purpose? What do you want to do while you’re here on the planet?

When we know that, and we decide to make a difference, we can walk onto any stage with clarity, courage and conviction. And we can change the world.

So, the first task in this arc of stepping on to a bigger stage is to listen within to become clear about the message you want to share with the world.

What is the legacy you want to leave? If that feels rather large and weighty and thus hard to get started on, you can begin with: What’s the message you most need to share with the folks who are going to be in your audience the next time you will present?



*Content Strategy: Power Practice A.1.*

## FIND YOUR LIGHT

Grab a journal and a favorite pen or pencil.

Go someplace quiet that you love.

Your sofa. Your garden. The beach. The woods. A museum. A park...

Answer these questions of passion and purpose.

*What lights you up?*

*What brings you joy?*

*What challenges are you really good at taking on?*

*When you look around the world, where might you lighten the load?*

*Where do you see opportunity to uplift others?*

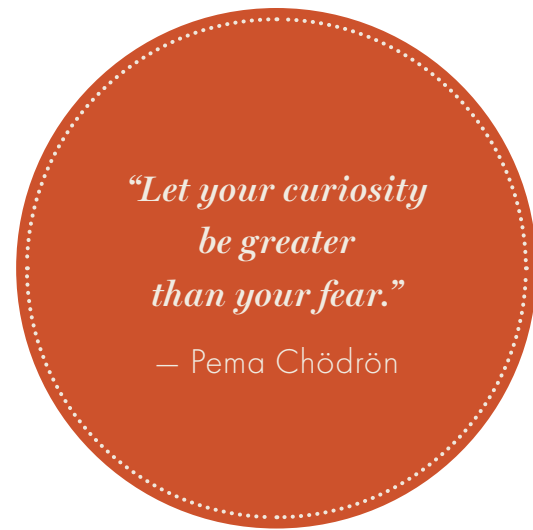
*Look back on your life and list moments that led you to say,  
“and that’s when I realized...”*

*What’s the longest lever you can grab hold of  
to help bend the arc of history toward justice?*

These are not always easy questions to answer, but they are essential. Don’t feel like the answers you right down must be immediately eloquent. Let your ideas flow. Keep asking, “what else” until you land on an idea that grabs you and won’t let you go.

**When we find the confluence of what the world needs  
and where our strengths and passions lie,  
we find a reservoir of deeply meaningful work.**

## Content Strategy. Step 2: TAKE A STAND



*“Let your curiosity  
be greater  
than your fear.”*

— Pema Chödrön

There are numerous external challenges that can throw you off balance and distract you. It is your job to return again and again to your center so you can stand in your strength when it matters most. Stepping onto a bigger stage means we will be open to external critique. It can be daunting. Often people avoid taking the risk. One of the ways we navigate that is by choosing an idea for which we are willing to take a stand. To be seen. To be heard. To stand up despite the detractors. Time and again. If we are called to speak the truth, we go in knowing they may shoot the messenger.

But first, we must learn how to navigate the internal stream of doubt and the critical inner voices that throw us off course, or worse keep us from setting out at all. We must find within us the courage of our convictions. I'm especially interested in how we do that. I wrote my Master's Thesis on: Transforming The Inner Critic and Allowing Our Innate Creativity to Flourish.

**We must learn how to navigate the internal stream of doubt and the critical inner voices that throw us off course.**

We have all been sharpened on the whetstone of life. We have all faced challenges and known triumphs. Often both require considerable courage. When in your life have you taken a strong stand? What do you feel called to take a stand for now? Ask yourself the question (which is a formidable challenge for me personally): what are you willing to say “NO” to, so you can focus your energy like an archer's arrow flying to the center of what matters most!

One of the ways we find our own courage, is through the acts of empathy and imagination. Who do you admire that has

demonstrated the courage of their convictions? What events, movements or innovations throughout history have inspired you in this way? Can you imagine what they were feeling? Can you step into their shoes?

If you're speaking to an audience with the strength of your convictions, if you are taking a stand and calling on them to take action — it's a very different kind of presentation than if you just want to inform them. The impact on our audience is much more powerful when we are rooted in our values and our commitments.



### BARTON SEAVER

*Savior of the Seas*

Barton is a National Geographic fellow, director of the Healthy and Sustainable Food Program at the Harvard School of Public Health, a TED alumnus, an international speaker, and author.

Nan helped Barton Seaver 'step onto a bigger stage' when he was first invited to speak at TED.

*“TED was a rocket launch for me. I didn't have a standard speech. I didn't have a shtick. Nan taught me how to have the freedom to adapt to my audience, how to borrow their lexicon. I am a far better speaker now than if she had helped me create a canned presentation. Today I am represented by two major speaking bureaus. My speaker's fees range from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per appearance, but what's most important to me is I am bringing my passions to life.”*

Watch on [nancrawford.com/exceptional-men](http://nancrawford.com/exceptional-men)



Content Strategy: Power Practice A.2.

## TAKE A STAND

Speed Read.

Go to your computer. Make a new folder. Name it something like: courage. determination. resolve. fierce grace. standing tall.

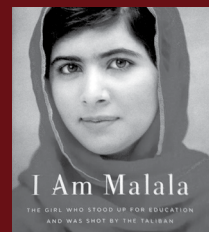
Think about the names of people who inspire you with their courage, strength, and resolve Recall events (current or historic) that turned on the tide of courage.

Do an image search online, and put the images into your "courage" folder.

Now get creative. Print them if you like. Make a collage. Create a slide show. Make them your screen saver.

Pick one image and choose six words to describe it. Print that out like a bumper sticker...and let it inspire you to take a stand.

**Unshakable resolve. The world is watching.**



*“I would like to be able to touch a bell and call up my real self, the truly me, because if I really need my proper self, I must not allow myself to disappear.”*

— From *We Are Many*  
By Pablo Neruda

Once you have decided on an idea, and committed to it, you can begin to craft the words you will speak. Before you begin to outline your speech, “begin with the end in mind”. Ask yourself, “What do you want your audience to feel, say and do as a result of hearing you?”

These are all three distinct from what you want them to *know*.

What emotions will you stir? What refrain will they echo? What action do you want them to take? From there you can begin to craft the words that will embolden them.

If your audience members remember one phrase from your

presentation, what refrain will they repeat?

**If you distilled your speech down to one sentence, what would it be?**

If you and your audience were to march through the streets carrying a banner held high, what would it say? If you passed out bumper stickers...you get the idea.

ABC’s of INFLUENCE. You also want to consider what your audience likely knows about your subject, and what they need from you. What are their main

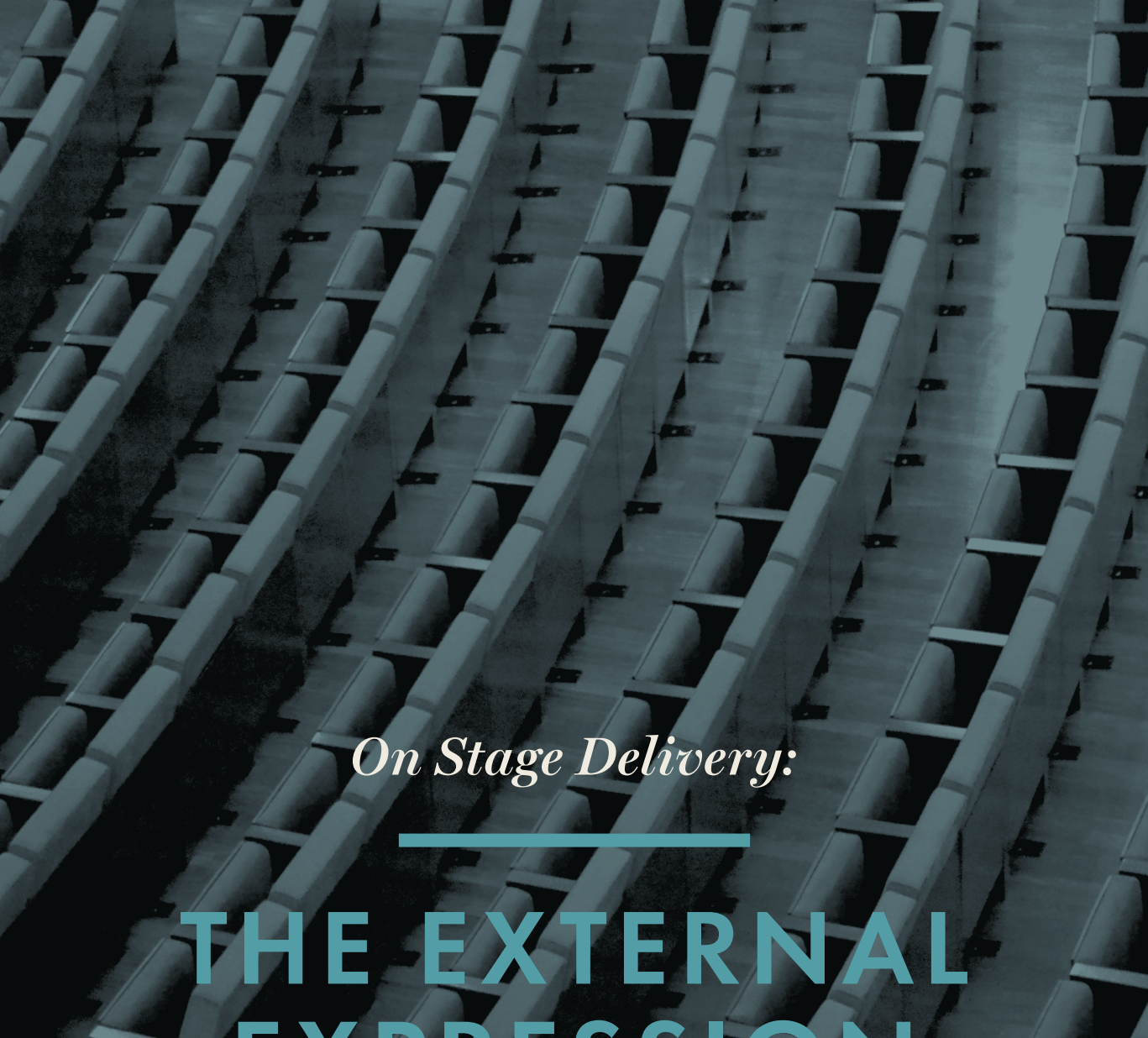
Aspirations, Beliefs and Concerns? How will you address what I call the ABC’s of Influence?

What stories will connect them to their aspirations? What data will help you challenge their limiting beliefs? What evidence will assuage their concerns?

Know what you want them to feel, say and do before you begin to craft your script. Know your one sentence, your banner, your bumper sticker, and write that down.

Then let the stream of stories, stats and sage advice flow from there. Enjoy the creativity born of clarity and courage.

## Content Strategy. Step 3: SPEAK YOUR PEACE



*On Stage Delivery:*

# THE EXTERNAL EXPRESSION

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## *On Stage Delivery. Step 1:* **FIND YOUR LIGHT**

*(As noted above)* Actors are trained to feel the warmth from the “hot spot” of theatre lights. A keen actor aligns their movements around the stage to follow the Director’s instruction and at the same time to land in the best light. Like a consummate actor, if you are presenting on a major stage, or for that matter: a fancy board room or a lack-luster conference room that rivals the broom closet...you need to know how to “find your light”. Said another way, You need to position yourself in the most advantageous location to get your message across.

**You need to position yourself in the most advantageous location to get your message across.**

If we want to inspire our audience, it helps to be luminous. It’s easier to be luminous when you’re well lit. Even in a drab conference room, you can arrive early, choose a seat where you can see the door, and open the blinds to let more light in if you have the option.

If you are walking onto the TED stage, they will perhaps lay out a little red carpet for you. You

can see the round red carpet in numerous talks, sometimes it’s small and upstage on the left or downstage on the right, sometimes it’s large and center stage. They may tell you where the light is, or they may not. It may seem so obvious it’s trivial. It may be the former. It is not the latter.

# POWER PRACTICE

*On Stage Delivery: Power Practice B.1.*

## FIND YOUR LIGHT

Speed read.

Whether you are speaking at TED or any event or conference with a full stage set up that includes lighting...In your rehearsal, the conference crew will have you address various items including microphones, how you'll advance your slides, location of cameras and the almighty time-clock. It is important you also make sure you have time during your rehearsal to walk the stage, for a number of reasons, and especially so you can find your light.

**Draw your attention to your body and as you move around the stage, notice where the light feels warmer on your face, brighter in your eyes.**

**It may be subtle or obvious. Either way, it is your job to discover it.**

If you're having difficulty feeling the light, ask the stage crew during your rehearsal to show you two or three or four spots that are well lit and in different places on stage. They may say the whole stage is washed in light, and that it therefore doesn't matter where you stand. But borrowing a line from George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, some areas "are more equal than others". Even in a full stage wash, you can find the warmer spots.

If they haven't already, ask if you can place "spike marks" with tape so you can more easily hit your mark. You want to be able to find your light, take a stand and speak your peace, *with ease*. A few, small well-placed pieces of tape can help you.

During your presentation, you can walk anywhere around the stage they allow, which may be the breadth of the entire stage, or the edges of a little red carpet. You may take bold, sweeping strides or no more than 2 or 3 steps in any direction, but when you stop, find your light and take a stand.



## SARAH CROWELL

TEDX SAN LUIS OBISPO

Sarah Crowell is the multi-award-winning Artistic Director at Destiny Arts Center, an Oakland-based arts program inspiring and igniting social change through the arts.

*"Before working with Nan on my Ted Talk, I was anxious and insecure, even though I was talking about my life's work, maybe BECAUSE I talking about my life's work.*

*I was having a tough time distilling my story into something that would be accessible, poignant and inspiring.*

*After working with Nan, I felt excited, clear and ready to make a powerful statement about my work. She was both a generous collaborator and a rigorous editor.*

*Nan helped me shape my key ideas in a way that solidly told my story and inspired my audience to make a difference."*

Watch on [nancrawford.com/nans-ted-alumni](https://nancrawford.com/nans-ted-alumni)

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## *On Stage Delivery. Step 2:* **TAKE A STAND**

When you take the stage, once you find your light, take a stand. Take a breath, center yourself, and take in the audience. All of this will help center the audience's attention on what you are about to say.

When I say: "Take A Stand," I do not mean you should be rigid or locked into place. I mean: plant your feet firmly on the stage and embody your message with unshakable determination. Pay attention to the feeling of your feet on the floor. Pay attention to your spine. Your shoulders. Your head, lifted. Pay attention to the energy that runs from your feet up your spine.

When I say, "Take A Stand," I mean: Move with purpose. Embody your words with steadfast resolve.

### **Move with purpose. Embody your words with steadfast resolve.**

You can gesture, pivot, kneel or leap, but do not flail, sway, waffle or slump unless you are telling a story about sinking at sea. You can move from place to place to illustrate different ideas, but do not wander aimlessly. Nor should you march from point A to B and halt upon arrival as though directed to do so. You can saunter, mosey, stride or strut

depending on which mode best illustrates your intention, but your movements must be congruent with your message. Even if part of your presentation is an inquiry, a questioning, a story about a moment of indecision...fully commit to the words and let them be purposefully reflected in your physicality.

In Shakespeare's play Hamlet, Hamlet gives advice to the players who are rehearsing the play within the play. He tells them, "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action." In essence, embody your message. Your stance, gestures, gait and facial expressions must all align with the emotion and

**Your stance, gestures, gait and facial expressions must all align with the emotion and intention of your words.  
Your credibility depends on it.**

intention of your words.  
Your credibility depends on it.

One of the most common unconscious habits people have that undermines their authority on stage, is wandering. If you move about in a way that distracts the audience from your message, you dilute the power of what you're saying. You've seen speakers that do this. They come in different flavors. There's the shifter, shifting their weight back and forth, left, right. We don't trust people who are shifty.

There's the shuffler, who kind of takes a step up, sort of takes a step back, maybe takes another

step. They are stuttering with their feet. There's the wanderer. The John Muir, if you will, that walks all over the stage, back and forth and back again in a dizzying dance. Often it is entirely unconscious. Often they say they do so in an effort to "use the stage" or "be more casual".

### **If your movement is in no way aligned with your message, the "informal" becomes ineffective.**

When someone has a lot of energy, when they are passionate about

their message (which of course we want them to be), what I often see happening is their energy can become dissipated. Ebullience is lovely, but when we uncork a bottle of Veuve Clicquot we don't actually want to spill any of the champagne. We want to savor every sip of it's effervescence.

You don't want your movements to dilute and distract from your message. We help our clients eliminate unconscious habits that undermine their authority. We work with clients to focus their energy and their physicality, to move with purpose, so their message is clear and compelling.

*On Stage Delivery: Power Practice B.2.*

## TAKE A STAND

Imagine you have paint on the bottom of your shoes and the audience can see the pattern you have traveled around the stage, as you speak to them. A lot of people are painting in the fashion of Jackson Pollack. A haphazard free flowing explosion of energy. Some people pick one spot and stay glued to it.

When we're trying to translate our message to any audience, but particularly to a large one, we want our "painting" to be more focused. If you "paint" in a style reminiscent of the simple geometric patterns of Frank Lloyd Wright, you help the audience follow your "line" of thinking.

When moving from idea A to idea B in your outline is echoed by moving from point A to point B on the stage, it helps your audience to visualize the distinctions you are making. Utilize graceful arcs, clear lines, and repetition of form. The more you pay attention to the geometry of your movement pattern on stage, the better you will help your audience understand your perspective.

**The more you pay attention to the geometry of your movement pattern on stage, the better you will help your audience understand your perspective.**

Similar to Hamlet's advice to the players, designers and devotees of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright repeat the refrain: "form follows function." Let your movements be informed by your words. Let your movements illustrate your intention.

As a basic example, when you introduce a new idea, moving to a new location on stage helps create a visual distinction that corresponds to the cognitive one. Similarly, if you are advocating for a group of people to change what they are doing, by moving from one point of the stage where you discuss what is happening to another point on the stage where you speak to what could or should be happening, you help to illustrate the shift you are promoting.

Even without traveling much distance on stage, your gestures can fundamentally help the audience understand your message. Jill Bolte Taylor illustrates her story in describing the complex neurological activities of the left and right sides of the brain with both behavioral gestures: dialing the phone, and expressive gestures: stretching her arms wide, lifting her hands slowly overhead and back down again as she says: "I am an energy being connected to the energy all around me."

When we are onstage, we must remember her words and embody the energy of our message so fully that our audience feels connected to us — not just on a cognitive level, but also on an emotional and kinesthetic level.

*"I am an energy being connected to the energy all around me."*

— Jill Bolte Taylor

## On Stage Delivery. Step 3:

# SPEAK YOUR PEACE

How we say what we say is vital. Certainly, we need to be crystal clear about what we are saying and why. But, in my more than 20 years of working with leaders to hone their communications, one of the biggest mistakes people consistently make is, they devote 99% of their preparation time to figuring out the content, and little to no time focusing on delivery.

This is especially true when it comes to the voice. You want your voice to be alive and dynamic, not just conveying information. You have to pay attention to it and rehearse to get it there.



*Client:  
Don Parker  
presenting at  
Autodesk U  
to a crowd  
of 10,000*

**One of the biggest mistakes people consistently make is: they devote 99% of their preparation time to figuring out the content, and little to no time focusing on delivery.**

You want your voice to be as powerful as you are.

VOCAL DYNAMICS. In order to invigorate the voice, you need to focus on two primary factors in rehearsal: your breath and your vocal dynamics.

1. Be extravagant with your breath. The breath helps you stay centered and stand your ground. And our voice rides on our breath, so the deeper we breathe the more power and flexibility our voice has.
2. Pay attention to the vocal dynamics of volume, speed and emphasis.

## EXPRESSIVE VOICES

Kai Ryssdal is the host of the radio show Marketplace which focuses on business, economics and money. Kai has an exceptionally expressive voice.

Dan Pink also has a decidedly expressive and energetic voice. Listen to Dan Pink's TEDTalk:

*The Surprising Science of Motivation.*

There are great examples throughout, I'm fond of a few at 15:16

*"Let me give you an even MORE radical example of it. Something called the Results Only Work Environment. ...People Don't Have Schedules. (he says, matching the percussive rhythm with Results Only Work Environment)...Meetings in these kinds of environments, (he pauses, to signal the radical notion ahead)...are optional. ...What happens? Productivity goes UP, worker satisfaction goes UP, turnover goes down."* (with each "UP" his pitch rises, & on the word "down" his pitch drops down. We instinctively connect to Dan's ideas because the way in which he speaks illustrates both his words and his ardent commitment to them.)

The following Power Practice has additional thoughts on developing dynamic vocal delivery by deciding on the intention you want to convey. Line by line. Let your intention guide the emotion and resonance of your message.

Which essentially brings us full circle. In order to speak with conviction, we need to know why we are speaking. Why is it important for us to share our idea? Getting clear on our intention, is essentially the first step of the Internal Inquiry: And so we find ourselves back at: Find Your Light.

## IN CLOSING

Find Your Light.  
Take A Stand.  
Speak Your Peace.

The three keys will not unlock every door along the path. But I have seen time after time how they have helped people distill their ideas into a meaningful

message and walk on stage with clarity and conviction.

Whether you are speaking at TED or some other gathering of people curious to learn, I hope you will bring joy and curiosity to the task of sparking ideas in others, in service to the greater good.

*Find your light.  
Take a stand.  
Speak your peace.  
Change the world.*

*I'm personally curious at present, oh gentle reader, fierce reader, bold reader, tenacious reader...what has been of service to you? I would be delighted to receive comments, questions, snide remarks. And if you are the sort that notices such things, I'd appreciate alerts of any typographical errors or opportunities for greater clarity. Oh, perfection — so pernicious. Ah, clarity — so delicious.*



*Client:  
Debbie Reynolds  
presenting at  
Tableau 2018  
to a crowd  
of 15,000*

*On Stage Delivery: Power Practice B.3.*

## SPEAK YOUR PEACE

1. **LISTEN** to an interview show on the radio, like Fresh Air, or to a favorite podcast, or an audio book. Typically, when listening to the audio content our attention is on the content. As part of this practice, shift your attention to how the content is being delivered. Pay attention to the dynamics of the voice. In our one on one client coaching, we focus on several aspects of vocal delivery. Volume. Tone. Tempo. Pitch. Emphasis. Rhythm. Silence....

2. **PAY ATTENTION** to the specific vocals dynamics the speaker is employing in order to drive the message home.

3. **PLAY A GAME** I call: "Which Word Carries The Weight In Which Way." (Which, by the way, you can say three times, fast, as a little bonus warm-up for the articulators.) Listen for which word or words in each sentence or phrase carry the core idea and identify the various ways the voice emphasizes those words. Louder is a popular means of emphasis, of course. But there are many variations: softer, slower, higher pitch, a pause, then rat-a-tat-tat — a percussive declaration! As you become keener at hearing which words someone emphasizes, and how they do so, you become

more attuned to your own palette of vocal hues and textures. I often say: There's a correlation between diction and conviction.

4. **RETURN TO YOUR OWN IDEAS AND WORDS**, after you play the game for awhile. Focus on the intention of each sentence or section of your speech. Then mark which word in each phrase needs the most emphasis in order to make your intention clear.

We absolutely need sound reasoning and solid data for any talk we deliver. But we must also be mindful of how we say what we say. If we deliver a list of ideas, however clear with minimum energy and variation, we risk losing our audience. We cannot influence our audience if they tune out.

The more thoughtful vocal choices you make, the clearer you are. The more dynamic vocal choices you make, the more engaging you are.

**The more thoughtful vocal choices you make, the clearer you are.**

**The more dynamic vocal choices you make, the more engaging you are.**



Nan Crawford is an expert in how to increase your influence.

She specializes in coaching visionary leaders to deliver high-stakes presentations, master high-impact conversations, and make high-level decisions. Nan helps clients leverage their strength, insight and expertise, so they inspire audiences to take meaningful action.

Nan works with a skilled team of coaches, trainers and instructional designers at Nan Crawford & Co. They have coached clients to write

and deliver powerful presentations on numerous prestigious stages at industry conferences with as many as 20,000 people in the audience, for boards of directors, TED, TEDwomen, TEDx, The Global Philanthropy Forum, The State Department, The White House (in 2010) and The Colbert Report.

In addition, Nan and her team have coached leaders to prepare for and land major career advancements, from launching their own venture, to becoming CEO of a publicly traded company,

to stepping onto for-profit boards of directors.

Corporate clients include American Express, Amgen, Autodesk, Disney, FitBit, Genentech, Google, IBM, ILM, Medtronic, Netflix, Office Depot, and Target.

Nan has helped clients craft funding pitches that raised millions of dollars from organizations such as:

**The Dell Foundation, Goldman Sachs, The Packard Foundation,**

**The Sloan Foundation, and The Walton Family Fund.**

Nan has taught in the Executive Education and MBA programs at Columbia, Duke, Harvard and UC Berkeley. She is a cum laude graduate with a BFA in Theatre from the University of Texas and holds an MA in Organization Development from CIIS.

Her dynamic approach has appeared in **Fast Company, Inc. Magazine,** and **The New York Times** called her work “inspirational.”

*“Our doubts  
are traitors,  
and make us  
lose the good  
we oft might win,  
by fearing  
to attempt”*

— William Shakespeare



## INDIVIDUAL COACHING

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### QUICK! I NEED TO BE FANTASTIC

For clients with an urgent, short term need: We work together so you walk on stage with clarity, confidence and courage.

### READY FOR ANYTHING

For clients with more time to invest. Prepare for multiple upcoming appearances of varying lengths, tailored for different audiences.

Nan will help you develop and deliver an expandable presentation portfolio.

### INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE

For visionary leaders committed to making a difference in the world, who are ready to propel their work to the next stage. Nan Crawford & Co. will help you define strategy, prioritize goals, and keep you accountable, as you increase your status as an expert, expand your thought-leadership platform, and gain positions of greater authority and influence.

## TEAM LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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### STRATEGIC STORYTELLING for DATA ANALYSTS

### EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

### POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

### CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS terrific tailoring for specific client needs

For more information on our Team Leadership and Large Group Programs visit: [nancrawford.com/coaching-programs](http://nancrawford.com/coaching-programs)

## KEYNOTE PERFORMANCES

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### COURAGEOUS CREATIVITY Tools to Navigate Challenge & Instigate Change

### INNOVATION INSIGHTS Leverage the Lessons of Improvisation, Curiosity & Collaboration

### GET OUT OF YOUR OWN WAY Bring Your Most Confident Self to the Table

For more information on hiring Nan to inspire your audience with a Keynote Performance, visit: [nancrawford.com/keynotes](http://nancrawford.com/keynotes)

## CONFERENCE COACHING & CONSULTING

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### ELEVATE YOUR EVENT Improve performance at every level of your event.



*Find your light.  
Take a stand.  
Speak your peace.  
Change the world.*

**Contact Nan Crawford & Co. today to help make your next talk rock! Increase your influence. Increase your income. Call 415.282.8558 email [nan@nancrawford.com](mailto:nan@nancrawford.com) visit [nancrawford.com](http://nancrawford.com)**

