

An effective lessons says something that people need to hear...

in a way they want to hear it

(con't)

Ho-Hum

Why Should I Listen?

The Big Idea

Are you through?
What should I do?

From **INVOLUNTARY ACTION** >>>> to >>>> **VOLUNTARY ATTENTION**

In the previous, “Ho-hum” phase of our presentation, we got our audience’s attention involuntarily. When you say something really interesting, catchy, unusual, or funny, people perk up and listen, but they won’t stay with you unless you give them a reason to listen. That’s what this next section is all about.

Your audience now asks themselves, “you got my attention, by why should I listen, or why should I keep listening to you?” Whereas you have hurdled the, “why should I listen to **you**” you must now get them to hurdle the “why should I listen to **what** you have to say.” We want to move them off of us and onto our subject as quickly as possible.

People want to know what good its going to do to listen to you for the next 40 minutes. If you can answer that need, then you’ll bring them with you. Again, as a student, its our responsibility to look for, and seek to understand, the meaning of the message. However, this is not a class on how to be a better student. As a teacher, you need to do what you can, without detracting from your total purpose, to bring them along with you.

Generally, information that is first perceived to meet a need, before being given, will make a deeper, longer lasting impression than information that is given and then later applied. But, God is gracious, in that His word never returns void. It will make an impression. We want to be the best tools we can in that impression making process.

The Action

1) Consider your Big Idea

Remember your purpose statement (pg. 96)? At this stage, you are essentially rewording it into a form that will...

- a) Answer a crucial question.
- b) Solve a pressing problem.
- c) Resolve a vital issue.

2) Create a Need

- a) Ask a question in such a way that your audience will want to know the answer.
- b) Present the problem in such a way that your audience will want to know the solution.
- c) State the issue in such a way that your people will want to know the resolution.

Organization

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Now its time to give the **answer** to your audience's question, the solution to your audience's problem, the resolution to your audience's dilemma.

What is this answer, solution or resolution?

It's your BIG IDEA.

The thing you developed, and studied, and prepared —the BIG IDEA — is not the first thing you say.

- It makes no sene to give an answer to a question that no one has yet asked, or a solution to something no one yet sees as a problem. Before giving the big idea, we must first answer the question, "Why Should I Listen?"
- It is just as senseless to present a problem or issue, when no one is listening. Before answering, "Why Should I Listen?" you must first deal with the Ho-Hum. The first thing to do in our effective talk is to get our audience's attention.

Developing your Big Idea

An Effective Talk says SOMETHING as opposed to SOME THINGS.

Remember our maxim, "an effective talk is one which says something..."? Part of our emphasis is on the "something" as opposed to "some things." Any talk of substance will say lots of things, present a myriad of ideas. However, the **effective talk, will have one main idea.** This single idea encompasses everything that is said and gives unity and organization to all the other ideas. This single main idea has been called many things — central theme, thesis statement, proposition, and main thought. Despite its many names, the **BIG IDEA** has always had one function: it is an umbrella encompassing all other parts of our talk. A good umbrella will leave no thought out in the rain of dislocation and confusion. Or, if you will, it is the trunk of a tree into which all our branches and limbs connect. It is a river into which all the streams and tributaries of individual ideas eventually flow.

Every effective orator, of all times, from the ancient Greeks and Romans, throughout and including speeches found in the Bible, from pulpits ever since, and even in political oratory of democracies past and present, the history of public speaking and the lessons we have learned from that history unite to argue forcefully that **a speech, to be maximally effective, ought to attempt to develop more or less fully only one major proposition.**

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DEVELOPING your Big Idea

REASONS an Effective Talk says SOMETHING as opposed to SOME THINGS.

1) A talk that says something is more effective than a talk that says some things, because it has a **GREATER IMPACT**.

- It carries more force because it is focused.
- We want to shoot bullets our students, not buckshot.

2) A talk that says something is more effective than a talk that says some things, because it is **MORE MEMORABLE**.

- The more unrelated items a person has to remember, the more he will forget.
- An effective talk has only one major assertion for a person to remember.
- The individual ideas in an effective talk are related to the BIG IDEA and consequently to one another.

3) A talk that says something is more effective than a talk that says some things, because it is **LESS CONFUSING**.

- The human mind demands unity, order and progression.
- A single main idea gives a talk unity, order and progression.

The COMPONENTS of an Idea

To qualify as an idea, a cluster of words must have:

1) A Subject

The subject answers the question, "what am I talking about?"

2) A Predicate

The predicate answers the question, "what am I saying about what I am talking about?"

Examples:

Subject	Predicate

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Ho-Hum

Why Should I Listen?

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The COMPONENTS of an Idea (con't)

The **SUBJECT** may be more than a noun; it includes the noun and all its modifiers. A subject may even be a noun clause.

The **PREDICATE** may also be more than just a verb; it includes any object or modifiers attached to the verb.

Every word in an idea is either part of the subject or part of the predicate.

The FORM of an Idea

Your **BIG IDEA** may take one of three forms.

1. A statement of **fact or opinion**.
2. A statement of **potential**.
Operative words:
3. A statement of **obligation**.
Operative words:

Your **BIG IDEA** may **NOT** take the form of:

1. A Question.

Ideas are not questions; they are answers to questions.

2. A statement of purpose

A purpose statement is not your **idea**, it is what you want your idea to **accomplish**.

A particular idea may accomplish a variety of specific purposes depending upon how it is developed and applied.

A specific purpose may be accomplished by one of several ideas depending upon the audience, the speaker, and the occasion.

The Big Idea is derived from and communicated through your study of the Bible.

Ho-Hum

Why Should I Listen?

The Big Idea

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What should I do?

PRESENTING your BIG IDEA

After stating your BIG IDEA, your students will ask one or more of the three functional questions. A mental demand that your audience will make throughout the answering of any and all functional questions is: **For Instance!**

FOR INSTANCE

The Purpose of FOR INSTANCES

1) The “for instances” refer to the various kinds of supporting material that will help you answer your functional question(s).

2) Therefore, the three **PRIMARY PURPOSES** of “for instances” are:

- a) To explain an idea (What do you mean?)
- b) To prove an idea (Is it true?)
- c) To apply an idea (So what?)

Note that the three functional questions can be asked about any idea in your talk., the one BIG IDEA, or the myriad of related ideas that you will communicate during the course of your discussion.

3) There are also two **SECONDARY PURPOSES** of “for instances”:

- a) To make an idea more memorable.
- b) To maintain the audience’s attention.

FOR INSTANCES are derived from and communicated through your Biblical studies. In the previous sections or GATHERING your material, we organized our material into related items. It is here, as a “FOR INSTANCE” that we use all those related items to support our BIG IDEA.

Keep in mind, as you’re coming up with “FOR INSTANCES” that you want to point everything to that one BIG IDEA. If it relates, use it, if it detracts than be careful.

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The FORMS of your For Instance

There are 5 basic forms of for-instance.

ALWAYS, and **FOREVER**, Biblical forms of the following are preferred.

NEVER are non-Biblical forms of these to take precedence over the Biblical.

STORIES/ILLUSTRATIONS

These include specific instances, both anecdotal (CAUTION!) and Biblical, and illustrations. Stories are useful to explain or apply and idea, but not prove it. A single story proves nothing; whereas a sufficient number of specific instances may serve to establish a principle, precedent or trend.

ANALOGIES

Explain something that your audience may not know by comparing it to something they do know. This would also include Biblical allegories and parables.

STATISTICS

Things like, "this word appears 27 times, and 25 of those it refers to..." can be a good (although oft abused) form of Biblical statistic. Non-Biblical forms are useful to highlight a point, or draw attention to something. They are more likely to be remembered and hold the audience's attention when they are properly dramatized. ("Every 4th child born in Chinese, therefore we are going to stop at 3").

QUOTATIONS

These are useful when you just can't express and idea any better than someone else did. If you can say it better, than do!

VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids need to be well thought out, and practiced in order to be useful.

	What do you mean?	Is it True?	So What?
Stories	+	-	+
Analogies	++	-	?
Statistics	?	++	?
Quotations	+	+	+
Visual Aids	+	+	+

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What is your BIG IDEA?

Your BIG IDEA is derived from and communicated through your Biblical text(s). Our job as the exegete (the one who gets out—ex—from the text) is to present what the Bible says about a given subject, in a specific area, without tainting it with our beliefs, values, and doctrinal positions — as much as is humanly possible.

Single-Text Presentations

If you are presenting a short study (15-20 minutes, or less) or a brief devotional (10 minutes or less) then by virtue of time, you'll most likely be limited to one text (especially in the case of the brief devotional, and especially if either the audience is young, or does not have a Bible and you have no overheads). In this case, your BIG IDEA is presented for you in that text and all you have to do is flesh it out.

How do you flesh it out? This is an art and a science. It requires first determining the break(s) of thought in the passage you are looking at. A most basic break in thought is the paragraph. Most Bibles will have paragraph divisions, and usually they are correct (remember, these are not inspired). But, if you'll take a single paragraph and read it ump-teen times, with a view toward one thing: what is the BIG IDEA the author is trying to get across in this paragraph? If it is really a paragraph, then every verse in that paragraph will point to one BIG IDEA...that's the point of a paragraph, right?!

When you think you've arrived at the BIG IDEA test it. Run back through the each verse, and see if every verse, and every sentence thereof, fits into this BIG IDEA...if so, then you've discovered the BIG IDEA.

The process is a lot like climbing a steep mountain. You never know, until you reach the peek, just how close you are. DON'T GIVE UP. Many a Bible students have given up on finding their summit — the BIG IDEA — just before reaching it! Keep stretching for the next thought...you'll arrive soon enough.

By the way, one great way to derive the BIG IDEA from a passage, is through the use of the horizontal chart (see pg. 19).

Multi-Text Presentations

In a longer, more thorough presentation you'll be using multiple texts. Because each text you use has a BIG IDEA of its own, you may be tempted to think in terms of multiple BIG IDEAs. But, you need one BIG IDEA for your presentation. Remember, "an effective talk is one that says something (as opposed to some things) that people need to hear..." How do you gather a single BIG IDEA from these texts?

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The procedure to determine the BIG IDEA from multiple texts is really the same as for above. All you need to do is look through you binoculars at all your study, but in reverse. That is, look through the wrong end and you'll get the big picture. Just as each verse, and sentence of your paragraph must match your BIG IDEA, so should each passage of your multiple passages.

Here's what you do. Write out, in one sentence or less, the BIG IDEA of each passage you're using. In fact, write each one in the form: SUBJECT + PREDICATE (see pg. 103). Now, look over each of these, and make a single BIG IDEA from all of them.

Some passages may not fit. Try altering your BIG IDEA to fit all of them, but if some passages just don't belong, then move them out of the way and gather your BIG IDEA from the remainder. You may be able to fit those other passages back in, as peripheral ideas later, but for now, organize your material around this BIG IDEA.

Use the Three Functional Questions

If you'll keep in mind the three functional questions, the use of multiple texts will help you. That is, am I using this particular passage to answer "What do you mean?" or "Is it true?" or "So What?" — or a combination of those.

Bearing these questions in mind helps you to make transitions from one text to another. It is ALWAYS helpful for your audience to know, IN ADVANCE, why they are about to read a particular text, before they do it. Many times I see teachers put a new overhead up and start reading from the next text, without any explanation as to why—now, this can be effectively done for effect—sometimes you want your audience to see it for themselves, before you explain it to them. But beware, and be aware, that you need to be deliberate in doing this. And even then, if you'll bear in mind those three functional questions, you can then present your purpose for showing this text in a more effective way.

You may even want to state your functional question. "You may be asking yourself, 'so what?' Well," you, the teacher, say, "let me show you the significance of this..." and you turn to your new passage. Or you may say, "You may have never seen this before, so let me show you that the Bible does consistently show this to be true..." and you show them the next passage, thereby answering the "Is it true?". And then, again, "let me help you understand what I mean..." and the next passage. These are good transitional phrases to help keep your audience with you.

Although this is really a part of the presentation phase of our class, I put it here because it also helps you organize your material by thinking, "What does my audience know about this subject?" And then ask yourself what, or which, of the three functional questions will they need answered. Based on those answers, you deliver different passages.

Now, bear in mind, that at this point, we have already done our study. We probably already have those answers for ourselves. You need to deliberately ask these questions though, because your

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audience wasn't there when you were doing your study. They don't have the answers that you do. That's what your job as a teacher is: either give them the answers, or give them enough direction so that they can begin to seek out those answers for themselves.

Now make a purpose statement

Once you have the BIG IDEA, you can then determine what you want to get your students to do based on this BIG IDEA. Remember, though, the BIG IDEA is not a purpose statement. The purpose statement is a call to action based on your BIG IDEA. You'll use your purpose statement to further refine the organization of the passage(s) you'll be presenting, and the answer to the three functional questions.

For Example:

Big Idea: Jesus is Jehovah.

Possible Purpose Statements:

My specific purpose is for my students to...

- recognize error about Jesus when they encounter it.
- live more holy lives because of who Jesus is.
- know Jesus better and be better equipped to more like Him
- be more like Jesus by better knowing Him
- love others as only God could love us
- better understand the makeup of the God head

You can see that with one BIG IDEA you can have multiple purpose statements. By having a different purpose, but the same BIG IDEA, you'll be using mostly the same material, but you'll alter it along these lines:

- 1) Your HO-HUM, and especially your WHY SHOULD I LISTEN, will be based largely upon your purpose statement, and will answer, "SO WHAT?"
- 2) Your ARE YOU THROUGH, WHAT SHOULD I DO will be based upon your purpose statement.
- 3) You'll arrange the bulk of your BIG IDEA around the functional questions that are best suited to achieve your purpose statement.

Note how this works: you're using the same texts, because your BIG IDEA is the same. Your BIG IDEA must remain the same, because it was derived from your study. What you're changing is the order of material, and the inclusion or exclusion of material not to give a twisted slant, but an emphasis in order to achieve your purpose. Understand though, that your BIG IDEA needs to remain constant. When you've got all your material arranged, you need to test it against your BIG IDEA, to see that it still matches. Don't put anything into the text that isn't there!

Organization

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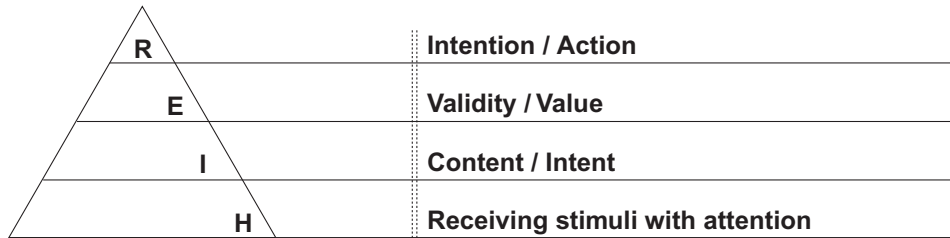
Ho-Hum

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Remember the HIERarchy of listening?



And remember your purpose statement?

“My specific purpose is for my students to... _____”

Put the two together and we have the makings of our conclusion:

We are trying to achieve the objective of our purpose statement, by keeping in mind the way people listen (H.I.E.R). Or, from the other perspective, our goal is for our listeners to reach the “Intention / Action” phase of our listening model, or specifically, the objective of our purpose statement.

- Hopefully, our audience has deemed the “FOR INSTANCES” of your BIG IDEA both VALID and VALUABLE. We have achieved this state by answering any, or all, of the three FUNCTIONAL QUESTIONS (*is it true, what do you mean, and so what*).
- If they have, then they understood both the content and the intent of our BIG IDEA. This is accomplished also by answering the three FUNCTIONAL QUESTIONS and by making our BIG IDEA clear by keeping everything related to this one idea. Remember, “something”, not “some things”.
- If they have, then its because they were actively listening, or “receiving stimuli with attention.” We helped ensure this by first getting there attention (HO-HUM) and then keeping it (WHY SHOULD I LISTEN).

NOW we want them to act on what we’ve presented. Much of this is the role of the Holy Spirit, so we’re done, right? Almost. At this point our specific objective is to reinforce what we’ve already said. We can do this by including several, or all of the following:

- A REITERATION of your BIG IDEA.
- A REVIEW of the answers to your functional questions.
- SPECIFIC THINGS that can be done
- A CALL to action
- MOVING and/or MEMORABLE material