



Craig Valentine's  
**52 Speaking Tips**

Keep your audience on the Edge of their Seats!

## Dialogue is the Heart

The hook to any story is conflict, which you'll find out about in a future lesson, but the heart of any story is dialogue. Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

See, dialogue pumps life into the story and makes it go. But by far the biggest mistake most speakers make with their stories is they use far too much narration and far too little dialogue.

Listen to the difference. Narration sounds like this:

"And my wife told me that my dream was not for sale."

Dialogue sounds like this:

My wife said, "Craig, I don't care how much they try to compensate you, your dream is not for sale."

Which one puts you in the scene? Dialogue! It's the difference between me saying, "I told Jake to look out for the truck," or me saying, "Jake, look out for the truck!"

See, narration is a report. Dialogue is a story.

Here's a list of ways dialogue is better than narration when it comes to speaking.

It puts your audience in the middle of a scene and lets them hear what was said exactly as it was said.



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It also helps your audience picture your characters better, because they can actually hear the way your character said something.

It opens up lots of humor possibilities.

It makes the most impactful lines really hit home deeply.

It sets up the opportunity for wonderful reactions from other characters. As my friend Darren LaCroix says, "Reactions tell the story."

Well, guess what? Characters can't show reactions to narration. They can only show reactions to dialoguing back and forth with each other.

So one character says something like, "Craig, you can win the World Championship of Public Speaking!" Then I show the visual shocked look on my face. Then I give the verbal response, "What are you talking about? I just lost a humorous speech contest at the club level!" So reactions tell the story.

Next, it promotes vocal variety, because you can say the lines just like the characters said them. I had one time in an airport in Chicago where a lady runs up to me and starts reading the bottom of my World Championship trophy and says, "Hmm, 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking. Huh! Say some things!"

Now I couldn't do that in narration, but because it's dialogue I can say it the way she said it.

So if someone yells, "Watch out!" that's the way you give the line. You can't do that in narration. Instead you've have to settle for, "And he yelled for us to watch out." Feel the difference?



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So listen to this quick live example of one of my stories, and hear what line makes the greatest impact.

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*Have you ever gone to a drive-through restaurant, placed your order, and been misunderstood? Now I can't mention the name of this restaurant, but its initials are K, F, and C. [audience laughing]*

*So imagine this. You're in my passenger seat. We're driving through the KFC, and I always order three thighs. That's the only part of the chicken I like. So we get up to the intercom and she says, "Welcome to KFC. May I help you?"*

*I say, "Yes, I would like three thighs."*

*She said, "Small or large?" [audience laughing]*

*And before I could even register it, I just blurted out, "Do you have large thighs?" [audience laughing]*

*Okay, I'm going to recommend that you never ask anyone that. [laughing]*

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Welcome back. Believe me, that line would not have worked if I had to say, "And then I asked her if she had large thighs." No, it has to be done in dialogue.

Remember this, all the important lines absolutely must be done in dialogue.

I've coached speakers who have had relatives in the hospital, and they narrate how the doctor came out and told them that their relative would live. Hello! You



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can't present it that way! That line is too important. It needs to be done in dialogue. It needs to be something like this –

“Hey doc, what do you got?”

And the doctor turned to me, took off his glasses, and said, “Mr. Smith, your wife's going to make it. She's going to pull through.”

Now you tell me which way breathes life into the story. The answer is dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.



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## Craig's Top 10 Recommended Resources

1. <http://www.edgeoftheirseats.com/>
2. <http://www.createyourkeynote.com/>
3. <http://www.dynamicdeliverydevices.com/>
4. <http://www.learntoownthestage.com/>
5. <http://www.wcspeaking.com/>
6. <http://www.askcraigvalentine.com/>
7. <http://www.audioforspeakers.com>
8. <http://www.resourcesforspeakers.com>
9. <http://www.thebookonspeaking.com>
10. <http://www.automateyourspeaking.com>

## Craig Valentine's Background & Results

**Craig Valentine, MBA**, an award-winning speaker, management trainer, and speech coach, has traveled the world helping speakers breathe life into their presentations. He has spoken in the United States, Taiwan, Canada, Jamaica, Qatar (Doha), England, Bahamas, Hong Kong, and China. In 1999 he won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters International after competing with more than 25,000 contestants from 14 countries.

- *The conference was this past weekend and with your "virtual coaching" I was able to give my own "Killer Keynote". I stood on that stage and gave the speech I had always dreamed of giving-- they laughed where I wanted them to laugh -- they teared up where I wanted to touch them the most -- they came into the scene of my stories -- they heard my message and believed. It was a wonderful moment for me and I will always consider it a gift. Now I would be lying if I said I didn't enjoy the standing ovation at the end...Susan Lamb-Robinson, Speaker; Toronto, Canada*
- *"I now deliver better presentations in 20 minutes than I did in 60 minutes; moreover, my closing ratio has increased 350% thanks to the lessons learned in The Edge of Their Seats Storytelling Home-Study Course. Craig's 9 Step Formula has changed my*



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*life.* "Kevin D. Gross, MBA, President, Alumni Connection.com  
[www.AlumniConnection.com](http://www.AlumniConnection.com)

- *I learned more from you in one hour than I have in years of giving speeches. You are a master of your game. Thank you for inspiring me to find my own voice and greatness as a speaker!! Thank you! Pele Raymond Ugboajah; Author, Speaker, Business Coach; DreamBanc, L.L.C.*
- *Craig Valentine is one of America's finest speakers, 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking and author of what I consider to be the bible of public speaking, "Nuts and Bolts of Public Speaking". He's also got several audio and DVD's on the subject. Craig was the driving force and the biggest reason I made it to the World Championships last year in Calgary. The two days I spent with him, in his living room, in Baltimore, completely changed the way approach public speaking...Martin Presse, 2008 Finalist for World Champion of Public Speaking*
- *Hey man I know you are busy but I wanted to bring you up to speed on us. We just returned from San Francisco where we spoke at the national convention of NAMI. It was great. No notes, we both spoke for about an hour. Based on all the comments they liked it. There were a number of people there who had heard us before and they were amazed at the changes we made. Thanks! Bill Neely; [www.billandtena.com](http://www.billandtena.com); Courage in Crisis*
- *Thank you 1000 times over. I just came home from Niagara, what a fantastic time I had. All of your techniques worked. I offered 7 free, 1 hour consultations if booked today offered only in January. I not only booked those I had a line up afterward. Sarah Hilton; Speaker on Mental Health, Toronto*
- *Thanks for your changes...I gave the speech last Monday and everyone raved about it. Thank you so much for your help. I went in very confident, knowing it was a very good speech thanks to your advice and changes. In fact, they hope to get me back again and several said they want to find out where else I am speaking so they can come hear me again. Christine Duvivier; Managing Director, Impact Partners*