Motivational Speaking

In the genre of motivational speaking, there tends to be a lot of positive talking and, well, motivational speaking. The person who is talking to his/her audience actually has to work hard to make sure that what he/she says not only positively reinforces the thoughts of the audience, but also at the same time scare them into doing “the right thing” by showing possible consequences to their actions. Motivational speaking has an almost unlimited potential for output on topics to preach about. Whether one is trying to motivate people to exercise more to stay in shape, to recycle, or even to have safe sex, it all comes down to one thing: is it effective?

There was a famous man who recently passed away whose name is Jimmy Valvano. He was a motivational speaker and his words have touched many. Jimmy V used any second he had in front of any audience either on TV or in person to talk about fighting cancer, getting people motivated to support cancer research and to donate as much as possible for the advancement of cancer fighting ability. Motivational speaking is nothing like doing a presentation for a work, or getting up in front of your graduating class talking about the future. Motivational speaking is about writing a speech intended to motivate and inspire your audience like Jimmy Valvano. Motivational speakers are even used in businesses to create a company strategy with clarity while helping employees to see a brighter future using a positive tone to inspire the workers to pull together. This profession requires no formal training or certification; however, you absolutely need to have skills in public speaking towards large audiences because that is the only kind of audience the speaker will be in front of.

Usually the audience consists of people who are seeking help with their issue, however the motivational speaking can be forced on the audience such as in schools or businesses. Even though it may be annoying to have to sit through the entire speech sometimes, this genre can help people lead themselves to better lives because it motivates them to set goals and strive to achieve them. For example, I had a motivational speaker come to my highschool to talk about abusive relationships. He started his speech in the usual fashion:

* The Speaker shows the audience the situation (usually with a visual)
* The Speaker explains how to address the situation at hand
* The Speaker shows how to fix the issue through self experience, then
* The Speaker then encourages the audience to apply his/her teaching to their lives

Motivational speaking usually informs the audience how to avaoid/react/prepare for certain situations. A lot of Ethos and Pathos are used in this type of genre along with the input of Logos for support. Speakers must establish ethos from the start. If the speaker does not have any character in his speech, it can jepordize his presence on stage. The audience connects better to a more energetic and enthused speaker rather than a monotone speaker reading off of notecards. Logos is used usually at the beginning of the speech (in some cases even starts out with a bunch of statistics) to educate the audience about the issue at hand. Whether the issue is how to make or save money all the way to being involved in a drunk driving accident that killed innocent people, there are always statistics needing to be shown. For example, did you know that in 2008 there were 37, 261 total fatalities involved in drunk driving accidents, but only 13,846 of them who died were the ones who were drunk. That is only 37% of the total deaths. Pretty weird huh? Now statistics like that are the kinds that trigger Pathos within your speech. People are emotionaly affected by this, which is a good thing, because now the audience is emotionally engaged into what the speaker has to say. That is exactly what the speaker wants.

The organization and structure of the texts and words in the genre are usually academic and formal, however some speakers input more of a casual feel in order to connect with the audience on more of a personal level. The speaker usually comes off with a very assertive and up-beat voice in order to rile up the audience about the issue usually talking about how he/she has been through the same issue. After that is accomplished, the speaker then talks about addressing the issue at hand with an almost disgusted sounding voice to show his feelings toward the issue (hoping the audience feels the same way). The speaker then flips back to a very motivating voice (he is trying once again to rile up the crowd). Usually the ending of the speech is almost a yelling tone while offering encouragement at the same time so the audience will most likely choose to apply the speakers thinking to their lives.

Motivational Speaking may look easy to the people who are in the audience looking at the speaker just talk about an ongoing issue in the US. However it is a completely different rodeo for the speaker. The reason for that is the audience only has to show up, sit down, and listen while the speaker puts everything together, prepares for the debut, calms his/her nerves, and gets in front of the large audience and talks to them trying to persuade them to do the right thing. Motivation is one of THE hardest things to envoke on a person better yet an audience. So next time you catch yourself listening to a motivational speaker either in person, on television, or even the radio, just remember two things: “What if that was you on stage talking to the audience? And how would you want the audience to act while you were pouring your heart out to the them trying to motivate them into doing the right thing?” I was asked those same questions by my father who motivationally speaks to Firefighters every summer for two weeks while at Fire School Training in College Station, TX. He enjoys every minute because my father, Chris, absolutely loves giving lectures and speeches to people (trust me I know), because he loves to share his intelligence with people who are willing to listen.

Motivational speaking is an art. Those who are willing to speak must have people willing to listen, and those who are willing to listen can learn and apply everything to their own lives to lead a better one. There are no tricks, no mirrors, and no magic in motivational speaking. There is only truth and it is the speaker’s job to be able to handle it and share it with the ignorant. THE TRUTH SHALL BE REVEALED!