

The eloquent bulldog

... and how he inspired a war-weary nation to resist imminent defeat

Come back in time to Europe during the early 1940's. Hitler's armies, with the speed and power of a wild animal gone mad, ripped and clawed their way through six European nations within three months. Then, having defeated France, the Nazi war monster crouched, bared its teeth, and prepared to pounce on Great Britain, just 21 miles across the English Channel.

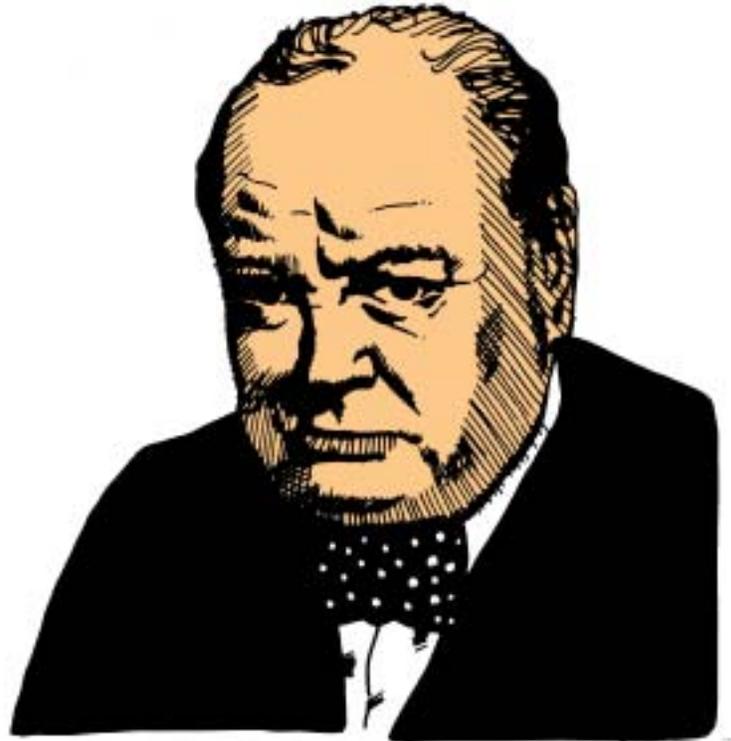
Confidently, almost matter-of-factly, Hitler told his generals that the British would surrender in a few weeks. His plan for this murderous assault: bomb them into submission.

From September 7, 1940 through May 10, 1941 the German Luftwaffe attacked London and other British cities nearly every night, dropping a total of 190,000 tons of bombs! Hitler then offered to negotiate a peace settlement, but the British didn't even reply, so the bombing raids continued—for three more years into 1944! And still the British did not surrender!

How did they withstand such brutal punishment? They had, as their leader, one of the greatest statesmen in history: Winston Churchill.

Churchill became prime minister of Great Britain on the eve of World War II, saying to his countrymen, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat," all of which were soon to be exacted in full measure.

"We shall not flag or fail," he said. "We shall go on to the end... we shall fight in the seas



and oceans ...we shall fight on the beaches ...we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in hills; we shall never surrender!"

Later, though Britain stood alone, desperately outmanned and outgunned, Churchill declared: "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will say, 'This was their finest hour.'"

While the battle raged, this stocky, cigar chomping, determined, eloquent bulldog of a man appeared to be everywhere, urging the British people not to give up. He defied air-raid alarms and walked the streets of London even while bombs were exploding. He toured military installations and visited hospitals to encourage



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the wounded. All the while he held one arm aloft with two fingers in a “V for victory” salute.

To the people of the Allied nations, and especially to the British, this simple gesture became an inspiring symbol of faith in victory. But the source of Churchill’s inspiration was not widely known—it was a message inscribed on a brass plaque—a quotation attributed to Queen Victoria:

“Please understand there is no depression in this House and we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat —they do not exist!”

A race in the sand

A life-long lesson learned

Running on a sandy beach isn’t easy. Running a competitive race on a sandy beach is even harder.

It was a clear, cool, spring day at the beach as the children of this seaside community gathered for a fun day of racing and games. For the ten-year-old girls, a red flag was planted in the sand about 100 yards from a ribbon starting line. The older children lined each side of this simple straight running track waiting to cheer on their siblings and friends. But before lining up with the others, one ten-year-old girl was taken aside by her dad, given his blue jersey to wear, and as he hugged her, he told her to remember just four rules:

“The first rule,” he said, “is to keep your eye on your goal—the red flag.

“Second, don’t pay attention to the other children in the race or look around to see how they are progressing.

“Third, don’t listen to the cheers or the applause of the children on the sidelines.

“And fourth, don’t stop running, no matter what happens!”

Off they started. Many of the other runners were faster than that one figure in the blue jersey who just steadily ran on, untroubled at being last. You could tell if you were there by the tilt of her head that she never once took her eyes off her goal—the flag. Some of the girls in the lead began looking back to see how they were doing, only to trip up and stumble, or bump into another runner. Unconcerned, our

Here’s what you can do:

1. *Develop TOTAL commitment to your values and your cherished beliefs. Act as if your very existence depends on that commitment. Remember Winston Churchill’s example of what one totally committed person can do.*
2. *Just as Churchill kept his brass plaque, keep—on your desk, on your office wall, in your pocket, on your car’s dashboard, on your bathroom mirror, or anyplace where you’ll see it often—something that inspires you. It could be a symbol of your goal, a quotation, a memento, or even a “Can of Success.”*

little friend just kept running. As the other children ran, their friends along the course clapped and cheered them on. Some of them turned and waved a response, and in doing so, lost time. Nearing the flag, the lead runner waved to her friends and began pumping her hands in a victory pose—only to be passed by a little girl in a blue jersey.

When dad and daughter hugged afterward, she didn’t seem nearly as elated about winning the race as she was about the lesson she had learned. Joyfully she looked at her dad and said, *“I remembered!”* Now the question is, *“Will you remember?”*

Here’s what you can do:

1. *When you set your goal, keep it in sight. That might mean writing it down and carrying it with you.*
2. *Focus on what you’re doing and not on what others are doing. Use “laser vision” to focus on your goal. Avoid distractions.*
3. *Pay no attention to the cheers or the jeers on your journey to goal achievement. They won’t help you, and only distract you from your goal by breaking your focus.*
4. *Don’t stop running! No matter what happens, keep on. The race doesn’t always go to the fastest woman or man—it goes to those who think they can.*

Enjoy your next race—whatever that may be—and “Remember!”

Humor – a serious business

“Why do you use humor in your seminars, Joel?”

In a two-hour custom seminar for computer technicians on the subject of how to see change more positively, they laughed 117 times. In a half-day custom seminar for stockbrokers and their branch managers on increasing their book of business by finding out what everyone else is doing and then...not doing it, they laughed 221 times!

Why did they laugh, you ask?

Because early in my career as a professional speaker I learned that humor—more than any other technique—can keep an audience relaxed, alert and receptive. Think about it—how do you feel when you laugh? It keeps the windows of your mind *open*.

But humor didn't always come naturally to me, so I decided to work at it. Over two decades and 1,500 seminars later, I'm *still* working at it, and I've developed a strategy that I use in almost every presentation. Here's how *you* can use it when *you* speak before a group.

1. First, remind yourself to take the presentation very seriously, but not to take *yourself* seriously at all. (Remember, if *you* take yourself too seriously, no one else will!)
2. Get the audience laughing *at you* within the first 90 seconds. *At you*. Once they see that you *enjoy* being laughed at, it's easier for them to laugh at *themselves*.
3. Get them laughing at an imaginary person: “this guy” “a man at the...” “a woman who...” within the first five minutes.
4. Next, get them laughing at themselves—as a group—within the first ten minutes.
5. Keep them laughing at least every 2 to 5 minutes thereafter, in a four-hour seminar.
6. Conclude every important, serious point with a laugh, to release the tension.
7. Get them to laugh—big time—just before the coffee break.



8. Finally, end the seminar on a big laugh, causing the audience to remember your time together as having been fun. That way they'll be more likely to act on your suggestions!

Remember, humor is the ability to laugh at things you can't change. And once an audience can laugh at and accept the things they can't change, they're in the *right mood*—the mood to improve in those areas in which change is possible.

That's why I use humor in my seminars—how about you?

Here's what you can do:

1. *Begin seeing your limitations or liabilities in a more humorous light. This will make them seem less serious, and help you turn them into assets. Comedians do this constantly.*
2. *Next time you speak before a group, sprinkle in a little humor. Then evaluate the results. Did it help you? Did it help the audience?*
3. *When you encounter a highly-tense situation, be spontaneous and do something that might cause the people involved to smile or chuckle and let down their guard. Keep the windows of their minds open!*

Smile – you’re on the phone

Make Alexander Bell proud

Forget the research evidence, the dozens of pages of documentation and the years of prodding by communications consultants. Do your own survey right now. Pick up your telephone and call ten companies or businesses in your area that provide some sort of customer service, such as banks, brokerage firms, business equipment or insurance companies. Ask to speak to “a manager.” If you get through, explain that you called to evaluate their telephone techniques. Then give the manager a brief report, hang up, and record your findings.

Chances are your research will prove that the most common errors you encounter in telephone answering are among the “dirty dozen.” Here they are:

1. Letting the phone ring too long.
2. Not identifying the company name or department.
3. Inability to transfer calls properly.
4. Disconnecting calls.
5. Asking the caller to repeat requests more than once.
6. Leaving the line without an explanation.
7. Not using the caller’s name.
8. Leaving someone on hold too long.
9. Sounding like the caller is being screened.
10. Getting angry at irate callers.
11. Irritated or annoyed tone of voice.
12. Anything that wastes the caller’s time.

One major service organization interviews over 50 applicants before selecting the one they hire to answer their phones. They know that their telephone receptionist is going to talk to more customers than any salesperson or manager ever will!

In this day and age of impersonal voice mail, isn’t it even more important to invest the time, effort and money to ensure that your organization is making the best impression possible? Why not call your own main number and see what happens!



Here’s what you can do:

1. Have your phone answered with an unhurried and clear statement of your company name, the receptionist’s name, and an offer to help...
“Hello, thank you for calling ABC Corporation, this is Debbie. How may I help you?” or “Good morning, ABC Corporation. How may I help you?” Much better than just “ABC!” And the “HOW may I help you?” not “CAN I help you?” promises the caller some kind of action or result.
2. Don’t leave a caller on hold for more than 90 seconds. It’s the most people can handle comfortably. They get fidgety after 45 seconds, so be sure someone breaks in every 30 or 40 seconds and explains the delay or what action is going on. If the delay is prolonged, offer to take a message and have them called back.
3. There’s no excuse for getting angry or annoyed at any caller, especially at someone who is rude or irate. Just be glad you don’t have to live with that crabby individual every day!
4. Smiling will improve your tone of voice immensely. A smile can actually be heard over the phone, so remember to smile—no matter who is calling!



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