

KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION 2011 CONVENTION



**PURSUING JUSTICE**  
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**IT'S NOT JUST WHAT YOU SAY,  
IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT:  
PURSUING EXCELLENCE IN  
LAW THROUGH LEADERSHIP  
AND COMMUNICATION  
PRINCIPLES!**

CLE Credit: 1.0  
Wednesday, June 15, 2011  
2:05 p.m. - 3:05 p.m.  
Thoroughbred Meeting Room 4  
Lexington Convention Center  
Lexington, Kentucky



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**Printed by: Kanet Pol & Bridges  
7107 Shona Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237**

**Kentucky Bar Association**

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## THE PRESENTER



Crystal Rae Coel Coleman  
321B Wilson Hall  
Department of Organizational Communication  
Murray State University  
Murray, Kentucky 42071  
(270) 809-4467

**CRYSTAL RAE COEL COLEMAN** is the Director of Speech and Debate in the Organizational Communication Department at Murray State University and the Head of Elizabeth College. She received her B.A. from Hampton University, her M.A. from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and her J.D. from Southern University Law Center. Ms. Coleman served as the summer law clerk for the Honorable Louis G. Hill of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. She has been an educator and administrator for over twenty years and will be teaching this winter break in London, England and Dublin, Ireland. Ms. Coleman is a member of the Public Advocacy Commission, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and American Bar Associations, Kentucky Forensic Association, Kentucky and National Communication Associations, Mediation Association of Kentucky, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Alpha Delta, and Pi Kappa Delta. Ms. Coleman is the author of THE Presentation Guidebook: From the Classroom to the Boardroom and co-author of several texts.



**IT'S NOT JUST WHAT YOU SAY; IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT:  
PURSUING EXCELLENCE IN LAW THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND  
COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES!**

Crystal Rae Coel Coleman

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"Losers talk about their mountains, winners talk **to** their mountains."

I am a winner and so is every person reading this material! Greatness is a mindset. However, there are *levels* of greatness that often follow periods of instruction and experience. Few if any are experts after the initial training period. I want to know the name of any attorney who claims to be as competent as the first day he or she practiced law. That person is content with mediocrity and I need to know his or her name so that I **NEVER** hire that idiot!

A great transformational leader is one who sees *mountains* as challenges and not as barriers. A great transformational leader is organized, articulate and able to produce the actions and reactions that he or she wants to produce. A great attorney is a great leader. . . a dynamic presence who not only motivates and persuades but one who creates concrete messages that are also delivered well! A great leader knows that "mediocrity" is not an option. Therefore, one who is great always strives to be better. When one's mindset is focused on improving then one never stops growing, maturing and nurturing his or her strengths.

This material focuses on innovative leadership and oratorical principles that move an audience (clients, employers, and peers) from simple spectators to engaged listeners. Transformative techniques are examined to prove how communication is a powerful force that must be studied and used correctly to maximize its effectiveness. Although the function of transformation includes advancing new cultural forms while emphasizing values and goals that motivate followers and constituents to support leader-intended change, the elimination of traditional methods and values is not advocated.

Rather, I want the reader to understand the progressive coalescing of these values to enhance the overall message especially in a digital era. Therefore, the following information about leadership theories, data and oratorical principles are introduced in order to educate and motivate legal minds. Traditional public address and interpersonal communication techniques must incorporate strategies that engage client, courtroom, and workplace audiences. Well-written and well-delivered messages combined with the correct usage of presentation aids will have the greatest impact for any audience that sits in a courtroom, conference room or boardroom.

We are who we think we are. If we embrace mediocrity, then mediocrity will become our reality. Since this is not MY reality, I propose that it is NOT an option

for anyone. Too often routine lifestyles are breeding grounds for “this is the way we have always done it” mentalities that stifle growth and promote *laziness* and *averageness*. Therefore, it’s important to remind ourselves that WE are forces to be reckoned with. WE can use our power; *i.e.* intellect, tenacity, experiences along with other forces to be the best attorneys/administrators we can be regardless of where we work. Our clients, employers and peers gravitate towards leaders who are self-motivated, who talk **to** their mountains, and who have a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of others.

## I. 5M MODEL OF LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

According to Chemers (1997) the 5M Model of Leadership Effectiveness includes: (1) model leadership behavior, (2) motivate members, (3) manage group processes, (4) make decisions, (5) mentor members. This model incorporates the features of several theories that incorporate the characteristics of effective leadership.

Leaders are either designated or they emerge by virtue of their personality traits. Great leaders speak frequently but they are also humble enough to listen to those who know more. They have knowledge about issues but they also encourage diverse opinions. Of course, there are a few in positions of power (notice that I don’t say they are *leaders*) who are unreasonably autocratic and uncooperative; however, they are often the exceptions.

Understanding the different leadership theories allows a person to understand how to manage, mentor and motivate the people who need legal advice. Leadership theories are not right or wrong. However, there are effective and ineffective ways to lead individuals or teams based on various factors. The following theories remind us that certain situations and our own strengths and weaknesses must be considered if we want to reject complacency and bust loose from the status quo.

## II. STYLES LEADERSHIP THEORY

The *Styles Leadership Theory* claims there are three styles of leadership and depending on the people you have to lead, one or more can be adopted. The *autocratic leader* wants to be in control. This leader asserts authority over people and takes credit for the decisions made. A leader with an autocratic style may be great for accomplishing tasks; but at times, he or she may be ineffective for morale. This style is necessary if you are positive that your decision is the best for the welfare of your staff or your clients. However, adopting this style for every instance may alienate you and hurt what you are ultimately trying to accomplish.

The *democratic leader* wants to share the responsibilities of a task. The democratic style seeks to guide people while also allowing them some input in making decisions. (This style is preferred but I have seen a democratic leader fail because the team needed more guidance and reaching a consensus was difficult and time-consuming. Therefore, an autocratic style is sometimes more effective).

The *laissez-faire leader* wants little control over the people he or she supervises. This leader's style is only great if all members involved are mature, self-motivated and able to function well without constant direction. Having this style is unproductive when people are seeking your advice. If this style is adopted in lieu of spending more time with a client or a co-worker then you have an ethical issue. Often, attorneys are faced with heavy caseloads or discouraging situations that make it easy to give up and become apathetic. This is dangerous for a career; and it's lethal for the emotional well-being of the attorney and those who are close to that person (Engleberg and Wynn 2009).

As an educator/administrator for over twenty-two years, I have personally witnessed ineffective leadership due to a laissez-faire style when core tasks needed to be completed. Some forget that they are no longer in the classroom but in a boardroom. Several forget to change the tone, vocabulary or nonverbal communication before changing audiences. Therefore, some professionals are insulted even though that was not the intent of the messenger. In academia, professors who come to class ill-prepared, fumbling with notes or electronic devices lose credibility with the students. Administrators who do not email discussion or business agendas before the day of the meeting are not perceived as outstanding as those who are more efficient and respectful of others' input before the day of the meeting.

The same potential for a loss of credibility is possible in the law environment. If you fear success, if you are constantly aggressive and defensive, or if you become apathetic, it is hard for clients, colleagues and superiors to trust you. Trust is at the core of the attorney/client relationship. A lack of trust can lead to a client not feeling comfortable enough to share pertinent information which could help you win a case. If you lack a solid reputation, perhaps it's due to a fear of failing or a fear of leading! You can not let a client guide you. You must be well-prepared and have a rapport with your constituency before trying to successfully help. You have to know the styles and when to use them!

### **III. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY**

The *Transformational Leadership Theory* is the most recent leadership theory. It was developed in the 1970s and it examines what leaders have

accomplished rather than just examining personal characteristics or their relationships with others. Transformational leaders get things done! They turn goals into action! They inspire people to be committed to the mission and to perform beyond their duties. They inspire clients to reveal information because trust has been developed. These leaders are charismatic, visionary, supportive, empowering, innovative, and they are models of “member effectiveness” because they create a climate of mutual trust. However, these leaders are more than extroverts. They actually help to bring about positive changes by moving people from self-interests to team interests and/or goal completion. (Engleberg and Wynn 2009).

#### **IV. EXPECTANCY-VALUE THEORY**

Transformational leaders know how to motivate others. It doesn't matter if the team is comprised of peers, superiors or subordinates; effective leaders motivate people to succeed above and beyond the norm. The *Expectancy-Value Theory* (Rotter, 1966), states that the value of the goal and the likelihood of obtaining that goal is what motivates people to work towards the goal. Therefore, even if your goal is to win a case or invent the next legal research computer system, you may not be motivated to pursue the goal if the chance of achieving it is very small. There are three perceptions according to this theory:

*Expectancy*: How probable will the effort produce the desired outcome?

*Instrumentality*: Will achieving the desired outcome result in a benefit?

*Valence*: Is the benefit valuable and worth the effort?

To motivate people:

- A. Make sure the people you lead understand and accept a realistic goal.
- B. Make sure the rewards are attainable and sufficient.
- C. Recognize individual differences or preferences and be able to discern whether the recognition will enhance or embarrass a person; *i.e.* (in collectivist cultures, public recognition could be inappropriate or embarrassing).

#### **V. CREDIBILITY**

The Styles Theory, Transformational Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory have affected my leadership as a campus leader. Students, staff and faculty members require different styles and they respond to different strategies for motivating others. Most appreciate a leader's understanding of all of these theories. Unfortunately, some academicians in positions of

power forget how to move from speaking to students to speaking to colleagues. Some forget that leadership includes an ability to engage an audience and **intellect alone will not make people want to work for you or with you**. Some forget that just because “everyone else does it like this” does not make it right; nor does it advance your credibility as an effective leader. Some are in leadership positions while others are true leaders who effectuate positive changes. These true leaders have credibility that is embraced by many. There are three types of credibility (Lucas, 2001, p. 402):

- Initial:* The credibility one has before he or she speaks.
- Derived:* The credibility one produces as he or she speaks.
- Terminal:* The credibility one has after he or she speaks.

Regardless of one’s status, the credibility you possess after you speak is the most important. People can be respected by virtue of a title. However, if one leads a poorly organized meeting or gives a presentation where he or she reads a PowerPoint screen word for word, that respect will often diminish. Therefore, it is important to know that *titles* only garner a minimal amount of credibility and respect. To have the respect that motivates others to be outstanding in the workplace, a leader needs to be well-prepared, organized and have effective communication skills. The leader needs to know the forces to combine in order to engage the traditional or virtual audience. The following oratorical principles are to help enhance your reputation as a leader/attorney/administrator. It takes several factors combined with a great mindset to become a respected and reputable catalyst for change.

## VI. THE IMPACT OF PRESENTATION SKILLS

From raising and lowering the pitch of your voice (high pitched voices are perceived as less credible), to increasing the volume at the moment you want to create strong emotions, to moving away from the jury when you want to transition between main points or begin your conclusion, strong presentation skills are paramount for winning a client, winning a case, or winning over a colleague. Entrepreneur and motivational speaker Phil Bruschi, M.S. has been a consultant for business presentations for over twenty years. He is the author of the book Mind Aerobics: The FundaMENTALS of Memory Fitness. As an adjunct professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, he shares his twelve “deadly sins” for presentational speaking (Coel Coleman, 2010, p. 10):

1. Not starting on time.
2. Being unprepared.

3. Apologizing for yourself or your organization.
4. Unprofessional use of presentation aids.
5. Improper handling of questions and answers during a forum.
6. Not knowing who makes up your audience.
7. A lack of enthusiasm for your topic or the lack of enthusiasm is apparent through your delivery.
8. Reading to your audience.
9. Poor eye contact with the audience (concentrating on one section of the room).
10. A lack of controlled gestures and vocal variety.
11. A lack of supportive materials like examples, facts, statistics, or stories to enhance your information.
12. Running way over your time limit.

Professor R. Michael Bokeno, Ph.D. is nationally recognized for his research, teaching practices and excellence in higher education. As the editor of five major journals, author of textbooks and consultant in organizational communication theories, he is often called upon to present complex information for major profit and non-profit entities. He offers the following five obligations of a presenter (Coel Coleman, 2010, p. 34):

1. The obligation to **accuracy** includes the need for and importance of responsible research. Often, a professional or novice presenter assumes his or her own experience or knowledge will suffice. However, if the knowledge or experience happens to contradict established facts or other evidence, this obligation is not met.
2. The obligation to **intelligibility** means that what makes perfect sense to you, the speaker, may not make sense at all to your listeners. Consider an array of examples, descriptions and illustrations that will make complicated points easier to understand.

3. The obligation to **completeness** is striving to make a “whole” statement, or paint a “whole” picture of something in the time you have to speak. At the end of the presentation, you do not want your audience asking for more. Whether the message you have to make is large or small, make sure the audience understands it in its totality.
4. The obligation to **interest** means that it is your responsibility to make the presentation one the listeners will “tune in” for. Again, using a variety of examples and other materials to support your points will help maintain interest for as many listeners as possible.
5. Finally, but most important, the obligation to **usefulness** refers back to the overarching goal of presentational speaking. When this obligation is met, listeners will find relevance and/or application to their situation.

Dr. J. Christopher Fleming is the Director of Admissions at Texas A & M-Corpus Christi. With over eleven years of Enrollment Management experience, his expertise with recruitment and retention is only surpassed by his extensive training in speechwriting and public address. He is an accomplished orator with national titles, awards and published accolades. Dr. Fleming shares his insight about delivering an effective message (Coel Coleman, 2010, 60-61):

The delivery of oratory is an art that skillfully demonstrates the elements of storytelling. Setting the scene and navigating the audience through the concepts of a presentation illustrate the unfolding of an intriguing plot. In the vocation of admissions recruitment, the skillful presenter is one who not only shares the obligatory institutional facts but someone who can also weave data and audience engagement into the fabric of the presentation. Aside from the rudimentary facts, how is the audience engaged in the presentation? Although the example above focuses on a specific activity, the tips provided below are just as appropriate to other applications of oration:

- A. Clarity is important. Clear communication is one of the keys for an effective delivery. Knowing what you want to say is half the battle; the other half is actually saying it.
- B. Your message must have direction. Have you taken the appropriate time to explain key ideas and concepts essential to understanding

the message? It is always a good idea to introduce where you are taking the audience, to take the audience to the destination, and finally to summarize where you have gone.

- C. The use of the appropriate vocabulary apropos to the sophistication level of the addressees is also important and builds upon the first tip of clarity. Generational jargon or idioms utilized in certain social clusters may not be the most appropriate language to use, depending on the audience and the story narrated.
- D. Always remember that what you say is as important as what you do not say. Nonverbal communication is one of the elements that makes the storyteller believable and assists in engaging the listener during the quest. Gestures, facial expressions, such as a warm and inviting smile, and eliminating distracting or offensive movements cultivate an environment in which interactive communication can take place. More is not always better! Sometimes a simple smile and an acknowledgement of the audience can prepare your listeners for their impending journey. Pacing and fidgeting can distract your listeners and create a detrimental disconnect between you and them.
- E. Demonstrate excitement...if you are uninterested in the plot...as the narrator, no one else will be interested either.
- F. Practice does make perfect! And whatever you practice, that's what you are perfecting. Continuous reinforcement of bad habits will inevitably manifest itself in your delivery.
- G. Take your time, breathe and enjoy the journey. Half the fun of going on a journey is not the destination but the path used to get there.
- H. Understand your role as the storyteller and never abdicate that role to your audience by requiring them to fill in the blanks.
- I. Time is a factor. Know your limitations and adapt your story to comply with the stated boundaries and limitations.
- J. Prepare . . . prepare . . . prepare!

John R. Stanley, M.A. was a state and national award-winning presenter when he was in college. He has gone from a being a champion speaker to being a outstanding director and award-winning coach of the nationally recognized North Central College Speech and Debate Team in Illinois (Coel Coleman, 2010, 65-67).

Professor Stanley recommends the **H-A-V-E S-O-M-E F-U-N** approach:

- K. **Happy:** You are happy to be there... Most speakers will be experiencing some level of anxiety before they officially get up in front of the audience. Even though your anxiety may be heightened at the beginning of the presentation, let the audience know you want to talk to them about your topic. If humor is appropriate...I encourage it...don't be afraid to smile.
- L. **Appearance.** Your appearance can greatly affect the audience's perception of you and can greatly affect your credibility. Dress for the speaking situation.
- M. **Variety.** Vary the way you say your words within the presentation. Having clear inflection within each sentence helps your audience stay focused on your message and you won't come off as boring. Every sentence matters. I suggest taping yourself. Listening to the way you say the words within your presentation beforehand can help you better emphasize particular points and keep the audience fully engaged. This can help you avoid that dreaded monotone speaking that puts an audience to sleep.
- N. **Eye contact.** No audience wants to watch you read to them. It is acceptable to refer to your notes, but part of keeping an audience engaged means maintaining a nice balance of eye contact. Avoid staring down a particular audience member.
- O. **Say...it right.** Articulating and pronouncing words correctly will add to your charisma and credibility... When in doubt, consult a dictionary.
- P. **Own...your speech.** Own the room. It is yours if you are the one presenting, so speak loudly enough for everyone to hear you. Volume is important.
- Q. **Movement.** Since you own the room, take advantage of using the presentation space you have been given in the front of the room; (But don't pace).
- R. **Energize.** If you notice your audience is becoming disinterested, bring them back...Do not be afraid to let your personality come through in your delivery.
- S. **Focus.** It is important to stay focused on the message you want to convey. Even when there are distractions (and sometimes there will be plenty!), you should maintain your cool and not falter.

- T. **Unique.** You are a unique speaker, with your own voice...Be proud of it. Let it be heard.
- U. **Never...apologize.** Avoid apologizing if you make a mistake...Most listeners will likely miss mistakes that you clearly notice. Saying "I'm sorry" only draws further attention to delivery blunders.

## **VII. THE IMPACT OF PRESENTATION AIDS**

- A. The aforementioned tips for creating and delivering your messages for courtrooms, conference rooms, or boardrooms are excellent. Presentation aids can be effective tools for reinforcing your messages or for helping your audience to retain your information. There are several types of presentation aids:
  - 1. Charts, posters and graphs.
  - 2. PowerPoint and multimedia.
  - 3. Objects and models.
  - 4. Photographs and handouts.
  - 5. Video and audio clips.
  - 6. Your own body and live models.
- B. All of these can be outstanding aids or confusing distractions. Therefore, unless you understand how to use each of these the correct way, do not be surprised when you do not get the results you thought you would get. Aids should:
  - 1. Create vivid images and concrete meanings.
  - 2. Assist the audience with message retention.
  - 3. Reflect professionalism and enthusiasm for one's presentation.
  - 4. Help demonstrate proficiency for presentational speaking.
  - 5. Be dynamic and clearly reflect their purpose.
  - 6. Never be displayed throughout the entire presentation.

7. Be large enough for everyone in the audience to see them.
  8. Be used during every dress rehearsal.
  9. Should have some color.
- C. When using PowerPoint slides PLEASE:
1. Remember the five x five rule -- no more than five words per line and five lines per slide. That would be twenty-five words maximum per slide. (There is also a six x six rule).
  2. Try to limit yourself to one slide per minute of delivery.
  3. Be sure your colors and fonts reflect the tone of the presentation (professional versus comical) and help the audience read the information without making people strain their eyes.
  4. Limit the sound and animation to the absolute minimum. Let your words and delivery style -- not the technology -- impress your audience.
  5. Rehearse the timing and practice the execution.
- D. You can utilize presentation aids to help the audience comprehend specific concepts. However, their execution can 'make' or 'break' a presentation. While professional and creatively designed presentation aids can enhance the audience's experience with you as a speaker, poorly constructed aids that are used incorrectly can actually detract from your message, thus leading to audience confusion and detachment (Coel Coleman, 2010).

## VIII. THE IMPACT OF FEAR

I'm a lawyer! Everyone knows that lawyers are fearless and excellent communicators! I am NOT afraid to get up and speak in front of people! I am the top litigator at my firm! I was first in my graduating class! I won Moot Court! Are you crazy lady? Why even put this portion into this material?

Okay, most attorneys are not as nervous as people in other professions. However, even if you are the best of the best (right now), having a mindset of arrogance is the same as being lazy, average and mediocre. Remember, greatness is about wanting to be better than you are today. Since greatness also involves *some* humility, I am thrilled to admit that I am nervous before most presentations! The nervousness fuels my desire

to be excellent that moment and to create better presentations next time. Therefore, I am leery of myself when I am *too* relaxed.

I encourage my clients to relax their minds, bodies and souls before writing and delivering messages. It is important to envision success. It's important to see yourself as a winner. It's also important to know that no matter how great you will be when you walk into any room, you have the potential to be even better!

However, being a little nervous which promotes greatness, is not the same as fear that keeps you from trying new techniques and new principles because "that's not what everyone else is doing." If you live in fear, then just like mediocrity, it will become your reality.

I always tell people to read Dr. Lou Davidson Tillson's case study in my book. It allows a person with high communication apprehension to know that he or she is not alone. It also reminds those of us who are nervous with purpose, to stay focused and not take our audience for granted. Dr. Tillson's case study also makes one think about clients who may have high communication apprehension. Reading it reminds me to have compassion and patience even in the middle of my personal challenges.

Dr. Tillson is a graduate faculty member in the Department of Organizational Communication at Murray State University. She has taught and conducted research for over twenty years in the areas of rhetoric and public address, instructional communication, interpersonal communication and organizational communication. She has served as the Assistant Dean for the College of Fine Arts, the Basic Course Director and she currently serves as the department's Director of the Senior Capstone Course. Multiple peer-reviewed journals have included her work. Her case study entitled Building Community and Reducing Communication Apprehension: A Case Study Approach was also published in The Speech Communication Teacher.

It's called stagefright, communication apprehension, nervousness, etc. However, the nervousness can be overcome by recognizing that most people want to hear what you have to say. They are not watching you so they can judge you. People want to hear your message. Some nervousness can actually help you to have a great performance. To overcome any level of stagefright and find peace within, you can pray, practice and prepare. All three are best but any combination will help. It is difficult to have a great performance when you have negative thoughts. Speak blessings to yourself. Some people find it hard to say nice things to themselves! Find a way to be thankful for being able to give the presentation. You could impact a life in some way. Find peace in knowing

that it really, really, really won't be that bad! Take a deep breath; close your eyes; and envision a successful meeting or presentation.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

Regardless of the amount of time you take to prepare for a client meeting, a jury trial, or a presentation, if the delivery is ineffective, there is a good chance you will lose the client, the verdict and/or your credibility! Being a great leader is a mindset laced with real knowledge and effective skills. People do not have to like you; but they do need to respect you and your ability to practice law. It's not just what you say; it's **how** you say it! Embrace greatness! Talk to the "mountains" that keep you from *pursuing* excellence and greatness. They have nothing to do with arrogance. Be an outstanding legal mind who is a leader with verbal and nonverbal competencies that help to effectuate positive changes within others...

...just because you can!

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