



Communication Culture

STIRRING TOGETHER SIMPLE AND SIZZLE

By Helena Kaufman, *The Afro News Vancouver*

WERE YOU LEFT BREATHLESS last month at the prospect of learning to put your passion on paper? Do you doubt that mere words can represent your competence, your opinion and the information vital to your reader? OK. We have work ahead of us then!

It's got mainly to do with the best use and positioning of the eight basic sentence elements.

The Power Parts

The most important of these are nouns and verbs. The others are pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections and enhance our primary messages. They will be the elements that betray us as underachiever English speakers or impress with how smoothly we manipulate language for our communication needs. I like to think of them as the accessories you coordinate with the power pieces you dress up to suit the audience and purpose of your written message.

Words express our thoughts and ideas. They are the names we have assigned to things and actions. And, they transmit the pictures and meanings that affect our mindset at the time they are received.

Nouns are the naming words. They name persons, places, things, animals, ideas and actions. They drive the sentence that carries your thoughts in the position of a subject.

Verbs are the action words that express actions, events or states of being. They appear as the natural complement to the 'agent' in

the sentence and make up the predicate. Much depends on the power unleashed by the right choice of action words.

The Balance

The effect you have on people and the 'feeling' in your message depends on the nouns and verbs you choose to convey your point. Culturally as well as grammatically, we like balance. One may think of words lying on the page giving information, but the writer who can capture the imagination through vivid senses is the one who entices a reader to share their time and energy. A well crafted phrase with the right tempo and a strong and emotional verb might even induce someone to share their money.

Our communication culture likes direct and clear sentences to carry our messages. As sentences are more than your brain blurting out a thought, they must be a balanced presentation. In addition to a subject (noun) and a predicate (verb) your sentence may carry an object to receive the action or other optional bits of information like place and time.

The Treasury

Our ability to express ideas depends greatly on our vocabulary. This is the supply of words we have collected from the experiences of our lifetime of living. Fast track that treasure of words by reading other people's experiences in art, science, love, life etc. Reading and listening gives limitless entry to the bank of others' words and ideas for us to draw on.

Even messages transmitted via technology, flashing on a screen of any kind enter our understanding by having us feel, see, hear and imagine touch and smell.

"How do I paint pictures and stay simple," you say? Try these tips to sharpen your message yet keep it simple.:

- Simply say what you mean
- Don't over share technicalities
- Cut extra words that may not add, but will detract
- Use lively words to stir imagination in readers
- Write 'reader based' text that will appeal to a person's interest and imagination. Engage readers with words that paint pictures, transmit visuals and appeal to their emotions.

VIP – Use clean, compact and precise words. The craft of communication requires practice. It takes time to cut well. Can you commit to 20 minutes writing practice towards your personal or professional communication?.

Next: the arsenal of words and how to animate them in our communication culture.

Helena is a writer and communication trainer with global interests. See www.helenakaufman.com and sign up for the F.R.E.E. Express Lane language usage Tipster sheet delivered weekly.

www.theafronews.ca