



# Ships, Anchors and your Points!

by Mohamed Isa

**W**hen I was 14 I had my only overnight fishing trip with my father and his cousins Mohamed and Hassan; and few imaginary great white sharks. It was windy, cold and it rained most of the time. I did not want to go with them but my father insisted and issued a decree in line with his Constitutional Powers. I had no option but to obey. The trip was frustrating to me because I never caught a single fish. However, I am proud to say I was responsible for anchoring the boat by throwing three anchors on to the seabed to make sure we are not cast away! Likewise, in speaking, if you do not anchor your points, they will fade away! So here are four techniques for anchoring your speech points.

**Anecdotes.** Anecdotes are simply stories that you share with the audience to attach your points to them. So if the audience remembers the story, they will remember the point. If you recall from a previous article, there are few crucial elements for a story to be effective like the Circumstance, Characters, Conflict, Conversation and the Carry out Message. In the above paragraph, I used few of these elements. Your story does not have to be profound but rather help you in achieving your purpose which is to anchor your points in the minds of the audience. Build your story file now and thank me later!

**Activity.** When you engage the audience in an activity, they are immersed in it and chances are that they will append your points to the activity. In 2002, I moved to Jeddah to join the Lipton

Team. In my first management meeting we needed to decide the fate of a project. The Brand Manager, distributed Yellow Post-it notes to everyone and asked us to write either a "Yes" or a "No" to indicate whether we thought the project will succeed. The majority said: Yes. The Manager was smart to involve us in the activity so that we do not wander away with other preoccupations and to check on the sentiments of the team members. I am not surprised that I still remember this meeting until now. It was a simple but yet a great anchor. What activities could you use to anchor your points?

**Analogy.** Analogies are great in illustrating your points and making them unforgettable. For example, one time we had a management meeting and I used a boat to illustrate my viewpoint on a critical decision. The company received many plaques and trophies for sponsoring various events and one of them was a miniature boat. I placed the boat on the table and asked: If this boat were sinking, what should you do? Accept more load or off-load goods to survive? They all said: Of course, off-load. Here, I retorted: Exactly. But what the company is doing now is the opposite. So, ask yourself, what analogies you could use to anchor your points? I am fascinated by the pearl diving journey and I use it to illustrate my points across a spectrum of management topics.

**Acronyms.** Acronyms are great tools for anchoring your points. Be creative. Come up with your own sets of acronyms. Few years ago, I created an acronym that

can help you become more energized to achieve more in your life. I dubbed it: CLAP. Celebrate Little Achievements Promptly. Most people do not celebrate frequently. Are you one of them? When you celebrate more, you achieve more because you build momentum. Join the movement, whenever you make an achievement, celebrate it promptly. Your passion will be fired up.

Look at your main points, identify the keywords, and try to come up with a thread or a theme to create you next acronym. The audience will appreciate it and you will get a bonus. Your acronym will help you in managing the transitions between your points. This will make you appear as a proficient speaker who moves smoothly through his points. Sounds great, right? You bet. That is what I am looking for. To make you a more effective speaker in fact and appearance.

Experiment with these four techniques to anchor your points permanently in the minds of the audience. You could use one or all four of them in one speech to make your messages stick. And remember if you do not have anchors, your messages will fade away in the ocean, never to be found again! @



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