“The Circus” – by dan clark

When I was a young boy, my father and I were standing in line to buy tickets for the circus. Finally, there was only one family between us and the ticket counter. There were eight children, all probably under the age of twelve. You could tell they didn't have a lot of money and sense they had never been to the circus before. The father and mother were at the head of the pack, standing proud as could be. The mother was holding her husband's hand, looking up at him as if to say, “You're my knight in shining armor.” He was smiling and basking in pride, looking at her as if to reply, “You got that right.” The father asked the ticket lady if he could please buy eight children’s tickets and two adult tickets so he could take his family to the circus. The ticket lady quoted the price. The wife let go of her husband's hand and dropped her head. The man's lip began to quiver. He leaned a little closer and asked, “How much did you say?” The ticket lady again quoted the price. The man didn’t have enough money. How was he supposed to turn and tell his eight kids that he didn’t have enough money to take them to the circus? Seeing what was going on, my dad put his hand into his pocket, pulled out a $20 bill, and dropped it on the ground. (We were not wealthy in any sense of the word!) My father reached down, picked up the bill, tapped the man on the shoulder and said, “Excuse me, sir, this fell out of your pocket.” The man knew what was going on, and it was obvious that he appreciated the help in a desperate, heartbreaking, embarrassing situation. He looked straight into my dad’s eyes, took my dad’s hand in both of his, squeezed tightly onto the $20 bill, and with a tear streaming down his cheek, replied, “Thank you, thank you, sir. I will never forget this!” My father and I went back to our car and drove home. We didn’t go to the circus, but we didn’t go without.
YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

Data indicates that within the first three seconds of a new encounter, we are evaluated - even if it is just a glance. People appraise our visual and behavioral appearance from head to toe. They observe our demeanor, mannerisms, and body language and even assess our grooming and accessories – watch, handbag, briefcase. Within only three seconds, we make an indelible impression. We may intrigue some and disenchant others, depending on our Sense Of Self.

This first impression process occurs in every new situation. Within the first few seconds, people pass judgment on you – looking for common surface clues. Once the first impression is made, it is virtually irreversible. The process works like this:
- If you appear to be of comparable business or social level, you are considered suitable for further interaction.
- If you appear to be of higher business or social status, you are admired and cultivated as a valuable contact.
- If you appear to be of lower business or social standing, you are tolerated but kept at arm's length.
- If you are in an interview situation, you can either appear to match the corporate culture or not, ultimately affecting the outcome.

It is human nature to constantly make these appraisals, in business and social environments. You may hardly have said a word, however once this three-second evaluation is over, the content of your speech will not change it. As a professional speaker I know that when you make the best possible first impression, you have your audience in the palm of your hand. When you make a poor first impression, you lose your audience’s attention, no matter how hard you scramble to recover it.

Because projecting a Special Sense Of Self is so vitally important to success in every aspect of our existence, let me point out that you can learn to make a positive and lasting first impression, modify it to suit any situation, and come out a winner. Doing so requires you to assess and identify your personality, physical appearance, lifestyle and goals. Those who do will have the advantage!
SERVICE BEFORE SELF

“WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO THAT OTHERS WILL NOT DO?”
(The World Famous Mayo Clinic)

When my dad was taken to the hospital for exploratory surgery and came out not only diagnosed with malignant carcinoid cancer but also given only six months to live, my family was sad and frightened. An attending physician who was a friend pulled me aside and explained that Dad was so sick and his vital signs were so weak that he might only last a few weeks. He didn’t even have strength to walk and was confined to a wheelchair. As one of twenty-five experimental patients with a six-month life expectancy, Dad was invited to the world famous Mayo Clinic and flew back to Rochester, Minnesota and we went with him. The Mayo Clinic immediately stood out from all other hospitals. There was no wait at admissions, and my dad was made to feel like he was the single most important person who ever walked in the door. Presidents, kings, rulers, and celebrities all come to the Mayo Clinic, and yet as one of hundreds of patients, they made my dad feel like he was the single most important person they had ever served!

On arrival my dad was carefully wheeled into a large, sterile room with no furniture in it where we met Team Mayo—twelve polished professionals all dressed in their gowns and uniforms eager to do whatever was necessary to help my dad. World-renowned chief oncologist Dr. Scutt took charge and softly and politely introduced each of his eleven colleagues as his equal. There were no ego trips or pecking order. He introduced the nutritionist, then the dietician, then the orthopedic specialist, and then the physical therapist. He introduced another oncologist, an abdominal/intestinal specialist, nurses, nurses’ aids, and even a music therapist certified in natural herbal organic treatment. All were equal, significant, and important to the care of my dad because each brought a unique outlook, opinion, and expertise from their training and education. This first impression bolstered the level of confidence we had in the doctors and their treatment as they made it crystal clear that Mayo was not about any one of them—it was only about making my sweet dad well!

Dr. Scutt reverently knelt in front of my dad’s wheelchair and said, “There is a difference between dying of cancer and living with cancer. What will it be?” My dad’s sad face slowly lit up with the first smile since his surgery. As the positive energy and confident conversation continued, color came back into his cheeks, his hollow eyes got back their glimmer, and seven days later my dad walked out of the Mayo Clinic on his own with renewed physical and emotional strength, and genuine hope of healing! My dad went on to live six and a half years and was the only one of the twenty-five experimental patients who lived beyond the six-month prediction. Every twelve weeks my dad went to Mayo for seven days of tests and treatments. He said he fought hard because he wanted to give all he could to Mayo and help them advance their specialized treatment for carcinoid cancer. Because of my dad’s successful, long-term care, the FDA approved the drug given to him for regular use in other hospitals in the United States. The Clark Family loves the Mayo Clinic!

THE “TEAM MAYO WAY”

On a later occasion my dad flew back to Mayo by himself for a week of treatment and a special test called an echocardiograph where a tube is inserted in the patient’s esophagus so that the operator can view the heart from a closer point than the heretofore echo and traditional cardiograph would permit. The machine to be used had been newly developed and had not yet been acquired by other hospitals in the United States. In due course, Dad was lying on the table with the incredible Dr. A. Jamil Tajik, his assistant, and a nurse to take care of the intravenous injections hovering over him. (more)
(Service Before Self – What Are You Willing To Do That Others Will Not Do - continued)

In his own words dad explained, “After preparations got under way, including the spraying of my throat to make it numb and more receptive to the black tube, Dr. Tajik asked me if I had any of my family with me,” Dad said. “I told him that I was alone. He said there were some risks in using the machine that he had to advise me of. At the end of the tube was a mirror-like tip through which the action of the heart was relayed to a screen. The good doctor explained that as he attempted to thrust the tube down my throat he might cut the esophagus, or he might even cut the heart. I asked him, “What then?” and he replied that I could die on the table. With a deep breath, I knew I could trust a Mayo doctor and agreed to the procedure. The first try the tube would not go down. He pulled it back up, and the second time he was successful.”

Dad concluded, “I presume that the nurse noticed a tear of fear in my eye that dropped and ran down my check as we proceeded with the test. She promptly and gently held my hand and began to whisper and assure me that everything would be all right. I had never felt the need for third-party support as strongly as I did at that moment. And in the ‘Mayo Way,’ that dear nurse, whose name I will probably never know, gave me, through her soft, confident voice and compassionate, tender touch, a beautiful fulfillment that I would be fine. As I lay helpless on that uncomfortable bed a thousand miles from home, she refused to let me feel alone.”

“The Bellman” – by dan clark

As the pain of his cancer mounted I knew Dad’s last day was approaching, and I wanted to be by his bedside when he took his last breath. But that didn’t happen for me. I had to fly out for back-to-back engagements. I was in Seattle, Washington, to give two speeches to two large groups—one at meeting on Friday morning, the other at a convention on Saturday.

I was staying out of town at the Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel. It was early Friday morning, October 12. I had shaved and showered and put on my coat and tie when the phone rang. Thinking it was my ride to the convention center, I picked up the phone and almost flippantly said, “I’ll be right there.” Fifteen seconds of silence started my heart pounding out of my chest. Then Paul confirmed my greatest fear. “Dad passed away this morning at 7 A.M.”

I sat down on the bed, and the tears immediately started to flow. I asked, “How is mom?” He said, “Good.” I said, “Give her a big hug and a kiss for me, and tell her I’ll phone her in a little while.” Paul then asked me the gazillion-dollar question, “What are you going to do?” What would you do? After a moment of consideration, I said, “I’m going to go make my speech. That’s what Dad would want me to do. He always taught us to only make commitments that we can keep and to always keep those commitments.”

I thought it through out loud as I continued to talk to Paul. “I can’t imagine what it would be like to be the meeting planner with more than 2,500 people sitting in the audience and not have the speaker show up. Dad always taught us to keep our promises. I need to stay here and speak and spend the night, speak tomorrow, and then hustle home. God knows I need your support, and hopefully I can give you some of mine. I know that you and the rest of our family and Mom’s huge circle of friends will comfort Mom and each other. Mom will understand that my decision is exactly what Dad would want me to do. I’ll talk to Mom later today and will see you tomorrow.”

I hung up the phone and broke down crying like a baby. My dad, my hero, was gone! And I was ripped and wrenches with the pain of regrets. Every thought and word was, “I wish I . . . If only I had . . .” For the record, I’ve done a lot of pretty cool things in my life and have had an exciting time! But I would trade it all for just one more day with my dad! I miss him and have many regrets.
(The Bellman – continued)

As an author, I love to interview people, especially elderly people (elderly meaning someone older than I am!). When I interview older people, I am often told that they do not have regrets for things they did; they only have regrets for things they did not do. Do you? Will you? I did. I still have regrets regarding my dad and don’t wish regrets on anyone.

Fifteen minutes had gone by when the phone rang again. This time it was my ride. I told him I would be right down. I went into the bathroom, splashed some water on my face to freshen up, left my room, and entered the elevator. As the elevator doors began to close, the corner of a bellman’s cart crammed its way through the narrow opening and the doors binged back open. On the elevator came an overzealous, way-too-cheery, psycho bellman. He pushed his cart to the middle, forcing me back to the rear corner. Trying to avoid eye contact, I stood with my head down, hands clasped in the “elevator position.” As the doors closed he blurted, “Yee-haw! Whoa! Did you see the beautiful sunshine today? I’ve lived here in Seattle all of my eighteen years, and it’s rained every single day. You must have brought the good, happy weather with you. How ya doin’?”

Not looking up I said, “Fine.” He kept staring at me until he again blurted, “No, sir, you’re not fine. Your eyes are red and a little puffy. You’ve been crying.” Instinctively, I replied, “Yeah. I just found out that my dad died this morning, and I’m really sad.” The bellman said, “Whoa,” and went hauntingly quiet until the doors opened at the lobby. He went left, and I went right.

Fast forward to the introduction of my speech. I had to dig deeper than I had ever dug in my life to rise to the occasion, but I did, and I made my speech. At the end of my speech I told the audience I would conclude with a song from one of my albums. I told them the reason I was singing it was because my dad died that morning, and it would be the first time he had ever heard me sing it in public. It was a song I wrote the day my dad came out of cancer surgery when they gave him six months to live. My dad told me it was his favorite song I had ever recorded, and at his request I ended up singing it at his funeral.:

“Will I See You Again?” — by dan clark

There’s a feeling stuck inside me ‘bout a leader of life’s band.
You’re the one who showed me how to play, and whispered, “Yes, you can!”
You taught me life and living love; your wisdom was my friend.
Will I see you again?
There’s a memory-making motion ‘bout a beacon burning bright.
You’re the one who turned my troubled times from darkness into light.
Your guiding ray unveiled the way, you counseled ‘til the end.
Will I see you again?
You always cautioned at the door, “Remember who you are,”
’Cause I guess you saw in me what I could be.
I needed you to need me, and you stretched a helping hand,
Unselfishly, so tenderly left footprints in my sand.
You let me understand.
There’s a notion nestled in me ‘bout the rules of the Master Man,
Even though you lost the battle here, you won the war, His plan.
I’ll miss your hugs and eyes that grin, but we’ll meet once more
So long ’til then.
When I see you again.
Yes, I’m gonna see you again.          (more)
I finished the song and had the driver take me to the Seattle Aquarium. Why the Aquarium? To run from change? To ignore the pain? Absolutely not! Rather, to create a special ambiance and safe environment in which I could think and feel and focus on what matters most. It's the exact same reason that a corporation or organization has a meeting off campus at a nice hotel or resort—to get away, gain perspective, reinvent, revitalize, and recommit to the most important issues and people.

That day at the aquarium, I “questioned and answered” myself and thoroughly evaluated my innermost beliefs and feelings. In the tranquil setting of water and slow-swimming beautiful creatures, I remembered that we are all going to die and that we have to deal with it by living every day to leave no regrets. Yes, I contemplated my own mortality and asked the better questions to get the better answers like, “Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is the meaning of life? Does character count? Did my parents’ sign a divorce certificate the same time they signed their marriage certificate (“until death do us part”)? Or is there a higher authority where marriage is performed for time and all eternity, that binds in heaven that which has been bound on earth so families stay intact in the hereafter and I can see my dad again?

Questions and more questions, until I realized six truths that answered them all: “Pain is a signal to grow, not to suffer, and once we learn the lesson the pain is teaching us, the pain goes away;” “Crisis does not make or break the individual. It just reveals the true character within;” “Nobody knows how strong or good we are until we are stretched and tested;” “The glory of God is intelligence – whatever degree of learning and character development we attain unto in this life will rise with us in the next;” “In life there are no mistakes, only lessons – no set backs, only tests;” and “Families are forever – if not, then what’s forever for?” I realized my dad died, not me, and though I would miss him I must go on with more intensity and zeal for life than ever before! My tears were selfish tears as he was out of his cancer pain and in a much better, sweet peaceful place! I had the driver take me back to the Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel.

I walked into the hotel room, and there on the chest of drawers was a basket of fruit. Not your basic basket delivered from the hotel gift shop with the colored cellophane cover, ribbon bow, and small sterile stamped card from the manager—“Thanks for staying with us, Ralphie.” This basket was a broken basket, slightly smashed on one side. It appeared as if it was a last-minute gesture with no resources available.

Whoever delivered it was obviously into presentation because the crinkled portion of the basket was turned toward the wall and covered by a big, silky, rubberized leaf that had apparently been picked off a fake tree in the lobby. In the “fruit” basket were two oranges, an apple, a big, ripe tomato and a long, thick carrot. Most important, there was a hand-written note that said, “Mr. Clark, I’m sure sorry your dad died. I was off work today at 5 P.M., but I came back tonight so I could be here for you. Room service closes at 10 P.M., but the kitchen has decided to stay open all night long so they can be here just for you. If you need anything, just call and ask for me. Signed, James—the bellman in the elevator.”

James was not the only one to sign the card. Every single employee that night at the Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel signed my little card. I have it matted, framed, and hanging in my office!

Let’s put this experience into perspective and briefly rekindle the lesson learned. Here we have James, an eighteen-year-old young man, the youngest person on the entire employee payroll, who “gets it.” Here we have James, the lowest-paid person on the entire employee payroll, who “gets it.” Gets what? Service Before Self. Can you teach it? Can you expect it from others? No. James had a natural desire to exceed external expectations and be more than he had been simply because he wanted to - motivated only by the simple fact that he can! (END)
DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN, AND THEN SOME

If a Delta Airlines jet with more than thirty thousand moving parts is assembled by the lowest bidder, is this best or right? Six thousand Delta Airlines planes take off and land every day somewhere in the world. If Delta’s maintenance department is running at 99 percent success efficiency, is the company best in its industry to have only a 1 percent failure rate? One percent of six thousand is sixty, and if sixty Delta jets crash every day, is that right? Even when we achieve a 99.9 percent efficiency rating in America:

- 2 babies will be given to the wrong parents every day.
- 107 incorrect medical procedures will be performed every day.
- 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions will be written in the next twelve months.
- 2 million documents will be lost by the IRS, and 103,260 income tax returns will be processed incorrectly this year.
- 22,000 checks will be deducted from the wrong bank accounts in the next sixty minutes.
- 1,314 calls will be misrouted by telephone companies during the next minute.
- 18,322 pieces of mail will be mishandled in the next hour.

OUR COMPASSIONATE U.S. MILITARY

I proudly serve on the International Board of Governors of Operation Smile, a volunteer humanitarian medical organization performing thousands of cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries on children in twenty-five developing countries, conducting thirty-three missions per year worldwide.

During an Operation Smile mission to Baghdad, 110 children with severe facial deformities, including 29 under the age of two—with their parents, medical volunteers, and nine Iraqi doctors (210 people total)—were taken across the desert in several buses on a twenty-four-hour ride to Amman, Jordan, for surgery. Halfway there, their buses were attacked by terrorists - Sunni insurgents who boarded the buses screaming, pointing guns and knives, demanding that the Shiites be identified and dragged off the buses to be executed. No one responded. Miraculously, thirty minutes later the terrorists got off the buses without hurting anyone and disappeared into the night. Rattled and frightened, the Iraqi families and medical volunteers continued to Amman, and within days the 110 surgeries had been successfully completed. All 210 people on this mission were petrified to make the long bus ride home. Even the bus drivers refused to go. I received a phone call from my dear friend Michael Nebeker, Operation Smile western development director, whose sister Susan was on this mission and had reported the details to him. Then a subsequent call came from Dr. Bill Magee to see if I could use my relationship with the Air Force to help. I called my friend and hero Gerald Murray, Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, and explained the situation. He and all U.S. Air Force officers know how important it is for them to win the hearts and minds of the people, and he said he could get this thing done if we generated a “sponsor letter” from a senator or congressman. Senator John Warner, R–Virginia and Congressman Trent Franks, D–Arizona, with the incredible support from Utah Republican Senator Orrin Hatch composed the letter and then hand delivered it to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Chief Murray then counseled with Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley and soon sent two C-17 transport jets from Baghdad to Amman and rescued these 210 people. It’s amazing what happens when we realize the power of one, don’t let good get in the way of great, and do everything we can, and then some!
Don’t Waste A Good Recession!
The Six Secrets To Crisis Management

1. Acknowledge there really is a global recession – things are bad. Realize your customers and co-workers really are hurting. If you sugarcoat this you lose credibility. True leaders and managers accept and acknowledge that this current world economy has caused a lot of fear and pain. Leadership and Sales 101 is aligning your emotions and empathetic understanding with the stress, pain and emotions of those whom you lead and the customers you serve. We’ve had energy induced recessions (in the 70’s gas prices went sky high with long lines at the pumps). We’ve had credit induced recessions (in the late 80’s and early 90’s with the S&L failures, banks stopped lending until a huge government bailout). We’ve had housing induced recessions (from 1983 to 1993 homes lost value and traded down). But this is the first recession in my lifetime where all three of these causes created and continue to fuel a recession all at the same time!

2. In this environment everybody must be a “Producer.” It’s all hands on deck! It’s do whatever it takes to live to fight another day! Get lean and mean, eliminate the fat from the body, trim the bells and whistles from the machine.


4. Don’t isolate yourself. Don’t hide. If a wolf knocks at your door, invite him in and make a fur coat! If you are the leader, embrace all of your employees, especially your sales force. In down markets, it is the time to position our selves and establish our value, show our strengths and gain respect!

5. Get back to Being Brilliant At The Basics by using the 15 Principles and Methods of Influence, while avoiding the Seven Deadly Sins That Sabotage Sales!

6. Never compromise your commitment to Integrity, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All You Do.
We must be willing to pay any price & travel any distance to associate with extraordinary human beings. Dan Can Customize Each Speech Because He Does Something Every Day To Make Himself Better, More Qualified, And More Inspiring To Be Around. Dan's Message Is Always Fresh, Relevant & Exhilarating Because He Is!

Dan has interviewed and spent quality time with the most famous, successful and powerful people on the planet. They have taught Dan what works, what doesn’t and why. In 1982 Dan was sponsored into the National Speakers Association by Zig Ziglar who has continually mentored Dan in Motivation. In 1988 Dan was a house guest of Muhammad Ali where for five hours they laughed, ate and analyzed Why Champions Struggle To Stay On Top. Dan learned Creativity from David Foster and Originality and Showmanship from Willie Nelson and Alice Cooper. Dan was taught the Critical Nature Of Preparation by Wayne Gretzky and his father Walter in their day together at the family home in Brantford, Ontario; learned Team Building from Coach Lou Holtz; learned Character and Work Ethic from his professional wrestler buddy DDP; discovered flying a high tech fighter jet is about High Touch Feel when he went Mach 1 & caught 9.4 G’s flying with the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds; and interviewed Michael Jordan about Thriving On Pressure when the game is on the line. In 2007 Dan attended the last reunion and sacred goblet ceremony of the Doolittle Raiders where they spent the evening discussing Courage. Dan committed to Service Before Self after hanging out with World War II fighter Ace 1Lt Alden Rigby and “Candy Bomber” Col. Gail Halvorsen. In 2008 Dan learned much about Homeland Security from U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates and Canada’s Defense Minister Peter MacKay when Dan served as the Master of Ceremonies at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of NORAD. Dan also learned to Dream Big and that “Failure Is Not An Option” from astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Frank Borman as they dined together at the Army/Navy football game; was tutored in Teamwork by Oakland Raiders HOFeRs Art Shell & Fred Biletnikoff; learned “Success Is Never Final” from discussions with Bill Marriott who was married by Dan’s Uncle J. Reuben; and swapped stories with Colin Powell and Henry Kissinger about International Diplomacy when Dan was the keynote speaker at their Horatio Alger Association Gala.

"Dan Clark spoke at my Commanders Conference, was the keynote speaker at our “Corona” 4 Star Generals Conference & World Chiefs Conference, and has been a Character and Leadership Development consultant for many years to most of our senior officers throughout the world. Since January of 2002, Dan has spoken every five weeks to the newest class of graduating officers and NCO’s at Air University. Dan’s approaches to team building and crisis management are so unique that we invited him to speak to over 30,000 combat troops and civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, and in the U.A.E.. In 16 days Dan spoke 23 times on 12 Bases and on the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier. Dan’s ability to quickly connect with his audience and profoundly touch their lives makes him a speaker every corporation should hire and the best I’ve ever heard!” -General Hal Hornburg USAF
The Purpose Of A Meeting Is To Give Your People An Experience They Can’t Get At Work, And To Take Them To An Intellectual & Emotional Place They Cannot Take Themselves! Why Settle For Just A Polished Presenter When You Can Tap Into The Power, Knowledge & Wisdom Of A Hall Of Fame Professional Speaker? Learn The Secrets To Personal Greatness & Organizational Superiority From An Extraordinary Man Who Has Spent A Lifetime Preparing Himself To Educate, Train, Entertain & Inspire The World!

To Personally Talk To Dan About What He Can Do For Your Organization Phone: 1-800-676-1121. To Preview Dan’s Demo DVD Go To: www.danclemarspeak.com Or Contact Your Speakers Bureau.