

TALK LESS,
SAY MORE

3 Habits *to*
Influence Others *and*
Make Things
Happen

CONNIE
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WILEY

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Connect - **Convey** - **Convince**®



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Introduction

Connect-Convey-Convince®

What does it take to be an influential communicator in today's information-overload, attention-deficit, and distraction-driven world? Do you have to morph into a superhuman communicator such as Ronald Reagan, Oprah Winfrey, or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to deliver results and keep people tuned in to your ideas?

No, when it comes to communicating influentially in our fast-paced, Twitter-happy society, less is more.

You can become a high performance communicator if you simply get into the practice of using three habits in the right order. This simple shift in how you get your points across will create an enormous change in how people respond to you, whether you're talking to an audience of one or one thousand.

Forget the endless communication techniques that you've heard about over the years. All of those

**Now More
Than Ever,
Less Is More**

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techniques actually boil down to just three skills: Connect-Convey-Convince[®]. I first discovered this high performance secret when I was a television news anchor and talk show host with access to communication masters such as former president Bill Clinton, sex guru Dr. Ruth Westheimer, and General Electric CEO Jack Welch. I studied skilled communicators as they influenced our television viewers, studio audiences, and television production staff, which sparked my decade of high performance communication research and, ultimately, this book.

Tired of Struggling to Get Your Points Across?

This book is brief but meaty by design. It will teach you how to use these three principles to win positives responses in a world of short attention spans, even from the most difficult people in your life and those who are the most distracted and impatient. Suddenly, people will pay attention to you, understand you clearly, and commit to action.

Consider how you currently approach communication. In our crazy busy world, words flow from your mouth or fingertips. You explain, request, plead, sugarcoat, apologize, question, and/or demand. All in a quest to make things happen. Sometimes your words inspire action. However more often, they don't. Even worse, your attempts spark subsequent back-and-forth exchanges to clarify what you really want. Time is wasted, mix-ups occur, and opportunities are squandered.

In your rush to meet today's overwhelming demands, you're probably using tech tools to

dodge and deflect. Case in point: how often do you do these things?

- Check caller ID, think, “Not you, not now,” and send the caller to voice mail jail, playing digital dodgeball?
- Check voice mail and e-mail simultaneously?
- Grow impatient with long-winded callers and zap their messages in midsentence?
- Return people’s calls, hoping they’re not there, only to be disappointed when they pick up the phone and you actually have to talk to them?
- Talk to someone in person when your cell phone rings . . . and you answer it, leaving someone hanging?
- *Communi-fake*, pretending to be on your phone to avoid talking to someone in person?

The question is, How often are others doing this to *you*? Every one of us has our own “buttons” that get pushed, leading to negative results, including tune-out. People push your buttons. You push theirs, too, even when you don’t intend to.

It’s time to press the right three buttons for results in today’s fast-paced world to keep people tuned in and raise your ratings.

Becoming an influential communicator is the solution. This sequence of habits—**Connect-Convey-Convince**[®]—will help you grab attention, gain complete clarity, and sway others to

**It’s Time to
Engage, Gain
Clarity and
Commitment**

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make things happen. It will help you successfully influence even the busiest people.

The strategy is simple, and yet it creates profound differences in how others respond to you. Suddenly, you'll become a high performance communicator who keeps people tuned in and wins positive results.

Let's get started maximizing success by minimizing words.

HABIT 1 CONNECT

MANAGING ATTENTION

**Give People What They Want
and Value So They'll Tune In**





1

Why Connect?

Attention Management

Does this sound familiar? You're sharing an idea in a meeting when a sinking feeling washes over you that *no one is paying attention*. A quick scan of the room confirms it. Some people are distractedly thumbing Blackberry devices under the table. Others have dashed out to take phone calls. Still others are fidgeting with text messages. The few who are not ignoring you are so impatient that they cut you off and talk over you.

That's what happened to David, an emerging leader at a global consumer product company. It was happening in everyday conversations, but it really upset him when it occurred during a presentation.

David was puzzled, thinking what went wrong? He'd spent endless hours preparing for his big moment—gathering information, confirming facts, and painstakingly creating dozens of difficult slides. He had immersed himself in preparation.

Engage or Be Ignored

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Yet, when he stood in front of his audience to deliver the message, he lost them at hello.

David experienced the most common communication breakdown facing business professionals today: he *failed to connect*. He didn't manage his audience's attention. As a result, he had no chance to *convey* his message so they'd clearly understand it, or *convince* others to make decisions and take action.

Chances are this has happened to you today, in a conversation, a phone call that wasn't returned, or even an ignored e-mail. In this chapter, you'll discover the first step for communicating at your highest performance level in a distracted, attention-deficit world. You'll learn how to capture people's hearts and minds so you don't lose their attention or drive them to distraction.

Make It a Habit

Have you noticed that some people are natural connectors? They seem to attract attention like magnets. Why? The world's top communicators make connecting a habit.

The difference between the masters and the rest of us is that they've learned to make connecting *automatic*—they do it every time, with every person. They make engaging people and managing their attention a priority.

Perhaps you have the gift—this power to draw attention. If not, don't worry. Connecting is a learnable skill. It's not like singing ability. You can learn to be an A-list connector even if you've spent your whole life skipping this step and ending up ignored or tuned out.

Connecting is the ability to engage and manage people's attention in today's busy world. It's changed profoundly. It's no longer enough to make contact. Now you must give people *what they want and value* in order to earn their attention, or they'll tune you out. Connecting used to be a "nice to have" competence, but it's now a make-or-break skill. That's because there's been a monumental power shift in communication. The listeners now hold the power. It's as if they hold the remote control and you're just one of many TV channels. They have options, so if you want to be Must-See TV, you must connect smartly.

The people you're communicating with can zap you at any moment with their internal remotes, lured away by more appealing distractions such as e-mail, text messages, cell phone calls, or Web surfing. People have become so impatient in our fast-faster-fastest world that they don't even wait for you to finish a sentence—they cut you off and talk right over you.

Our attention-deficit world also encourages people to disconnect from in-person conversations:

- Have you ever been talking with someone when their cell phone rings and they choose to answer it and leave you hanging?
- Has the person in the next cubicle ever shot you an e-mail instead of walking over to talk to you?
- Are people keeping you at arm's length with e-mail and text messages instead of returning calls or talking face-to-face?

Today's Make-or- Break Skill

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Blame the lure of instant gratification. Think about it: we're now conditioned to get what we want, pronto. For example, there's GPS, speed dating, instant messaging, quick weight loss surgery, spray tans, ten-minute whitening strips—the list is endless. You don't even have to pay professional dues anymore, with shortcut shows like American Idol around to catapult you to the top. We've become a shortcut society.

That means you have to win people over in a hurry as attention spans shrink. It's vital to connect with people on their terms. So how do you do this? Simple: *Give people what they want and value right up front.* That's my definition of smart connecting: Give people what they want and value so you keep their attention.

Biggest Blunders: Self- Absorption and Aimless Schmoozing

Think of a time when you failed to engage someone. Why did you fail to connect? There are countless reasons. Among them, perhaps you:

- Took too long to get to the point
- Chose the wrong method
- Didn't focus on the person
- Failed to grasp their true resistance
- Misjudged what they wanted or valued
- Lost your head and came across badly
- Sugarcoated a subject or demoralized someone
- Weren't specific enough
- Used a one-size-fits-all approach

All of these scenarios cause tune-out in today's short-attention-span, self-absorbed society. What's the solution? Give people what they want and value, quickly. If you simply zero in on what matters most to your audience, they'll reward you by paying attention. Like Tom Cruise in the movie *Jerry Maguire*, you'll have them at hello.

Now that you realize connecting is critical in our instant-gratification society, it's time to start putting this attention-grabbing rule to work so you can advance toward *conveying* important information and *convincing* people to act. The first section of the book will focus on smart connecting strategies and techniques that you can start using today to manage the attention of your audience, enabling you to perform at your highest level and make your ratings soar.

product, gain ground in your profession, win market share, or simply improve relationships.

Ask yourself, in the press of day-to-day activities, are you communicating in a way that engages people, helps them reach moments of clarity and true understanding, and encourages them to move quickly?

My hope is that you'll use these habits every day to meet today's communication challenges. If so, you'll be rewarded with quicker response times, more positive outcomes, and a boost in your personal ratings.

Less is truly more.

About the Author

Connie Dieken is the nation's leading authority on high performance communication in a short attention span world. The founder and president of onPoint Communication, she helps leaders to speak as smart as they think and influence others to take positive action.



Organizations like Apple, Olympus, McDonald's, Moen, The Cleveland Clinic, Pacific Life, Progressive Insurance, and American Greetings turn to Connie to help them develop and deliver high-profile communications for winning outcomes at presentations, product launches, mergers and acquisitions, annual meetings, investor relations, culture shifts, media appearances, and leadership development. She helps them reach their highest performance in today's fast-paced, listening-impaired, shortcut society.

The country's foremost Fortune 500 communication coach, Connie is a former Emmy Award-winning TV news anchor, reporter, talk show host, and inductee of the Radio/Television Broadcasters Hall of Fame. It was there, in television studios, where she discovered how leaders could capitalize on communication techniques to gain influence and improve business results. Since launching onPoint Communication, Connie has helped thousands of leaders achieve successful results. During the process, she earned a Leadership Think Tank

Award; the National Speakers Association's highest earned honor, the Certified Speaking Professional; and a NAWBO Top Ten Women Business Owners Award.

Connie has also coauthored four books: *Communicate Clearly, Confidently & Credibly* and the *303 Solutions* book series. She produced the innovative Connect-Convey-Convince communication method to improve business performance and her work has been featured in *The Los Angeles Times*, *Crain's Business*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Women's Day*, and in dozens of other publications across the country.

Connie draws on her wealth of experiences in the ruthless world of broadcasting to fuel her research. Before launching onPoint, she spent more than twenty years as a television news anchor, reporter, and cohost of America's longest running television talk show, *The Morning Exchange*. She is a multiple Emmy[®] Award-winning and Telly[®] Award-winning journalist and has represented more than fifty companies as their spokesperson, including Intel, Sealy, GE, American Greetings, Ernst and Young, and Goodyear. She's also the voice of Diebold automated teller machines.

Connie delivers her insights through keynote addresses, coaching programs, leadership retreats, seminars, workshops, and strategic plans. She is a member of the National Speaker's Association, the National Association of Female Executives, and an active contributor to many charitable and civic projects.

To read *more* excerpts of Connie Dieken's

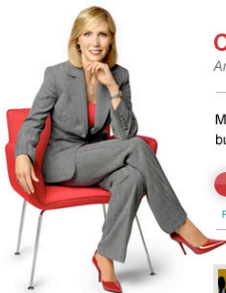
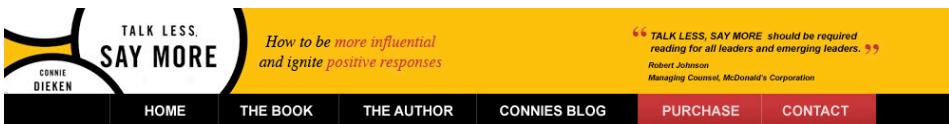
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Today's Talk Less Tip

Sound like a wimp and you'll be treated like one. If you habitually change your mind, you'll strike others as wishy-washy and indecisive.