

## SBTV – E15 Transcript – Communicating More Effectively

Bob and Eileen Parkinson

Dennis Zink:

With the advent of technology, communication has become more important than ever before. Today we'll discuss how to communicate more effectively. Welcome to SCORE Business TV, sponsored by Wells Fargo.

In this series, experts share their opinions with business owners and entrepreneurs on a variety of topics. Today we're exploring ways to succeed through effective communication. It's my pleasure to introduce Robert and Eileen Parkinson. Robert Parkinson has a doctorate in communications from Syracuse University. Bob's an author and executive communication coach and consultant. Bob also writes a column called Show and Tell in Saturday's Herald Tribune.

Dennis Zink:

Eileen Parkinson is a corporate communications consultant and executive coach. Eileen worked as an adjunct professor at the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business in Chicago. She has worked as a news anchor, documentary producer, and TV broadcaster. She served as president of the Chicago branch of Screen Actors Guild and their national board of directors and the national board of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, also known as AFTRA. Eileen and Bob, welcome to our show.

Robert P.:

Thank you, nice to be here, Dennis.

Eileen P.:

Thank you, good to be here.

Dennis Zink:

Bob, you and I have an interesting history together. You write for the Sarasota Herald Tribune on Saturday, the Show and Tell column. And I write on Monday the Business SCORE Card column. And about five years ago you and I, I forget who called whom, we got together for coffee and we've been getting together ever since. So what kind of, what do you think we've gotten out of that relationship over five years?

Robert P.:

Relationship, you used the magic word, relationship and understanding. And the kind of work that we're doing is beneficial to all of the people that read our columns and talk to each other about the columns. The whole idea behind what we do and about communication in general is relationships. And without building the relationships, it's like ships passing in the night.

Robert P.:

But that means you have to pay attention to what the audience needs, wants, likes, and expects. Because everything that we do and all of our work is going to be evaluated. And our point is, what does the audience want, need, expect? Not what do we want to do, but what are they looking for? What's of benefit to them? And that's the overview of communication also, the basic thesis of what we're here to

talk about today

Dennis Zink:

And speaking about communications, you've written several books and I'd like to at the beginning of our show, bring in those books, show our audience what you've written.

Robert P.:

Oh, sure.

Dennis Zink:

My favorite is You Can't Push A String. But what are the other books you've written and you've written them with Eileen, haven't you?

Robert P.:

Yeah, well there were a slew of them, I shouldn't say that. There are a number of books. But here's the one that I think is most significant, I can't find it now.

Eileen P.:

Oh, that's because I'm hiding it.

Robert P.:

That's because Eileen, she can talk about it, okay.

Eileen P.:

Be As Good As You Think You Are. And it's a compilation of our experiences having worked for many years within corporations and companies, but also with individuals. And we have acquired a lot of stories and we thought, people don't always have the resources to take a program, a formal communication program, or they don't have the time. And so we put our experiences in anecdotal form down and created Be As Good As You Think You Are.

Robert P.:

And there's a story behind the picture, too. I know you can't see it right now, but in time you'll be able to. There's a picture of a small bird, an eagle, and the bird is looking at an eagle, the reflection of an eagle in a little pond. Now, the story that we use for that and the reason we picked up that idea is that little bird is never going to be an eagle. But if he follows the directions and the suggestions that we're including in the book, he's going to be one powerful finch. And that's what our work is all about. We have limitations that we all have to deal with, but when we have a game plan and we have the skills and we know how to use the skills, we can make things happen in the exchange of ideas.

Robert P.:

Now, the second book is one that's coming out next month and it too has an interesting title, we think. Never Kick a Kangaroo. Now that's a grabber as far as the idea is concerned, but the notion behind this is this. The book is about persuasion, about in getting people to follow some directions and to win in any kind of a contest. And the way you do that is in order to, and this is obviously in the business situation

too, because when you're dealing with a business situation, you must know what the other guy's strengths and weaknesses are, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and then you build them together. And the story here is if you were ever getting into a contest with a kangaroo, don't pick kicking.

Eileen P.:

You're going to lose.

Robert P.:

You're going to lose. So that was the pickup on the whole thing.

Dennis Zink:

Okay.

Robert P.:

What we're looking for is your strengths and weaknesses and the other person's strengths and weaknesses. Not to do combat, but to exchange ideas and to be effective in doing just that and making a point and getting people to follow the kinds of suggestions that you think are valuable to them. Because any kind of a sales or business situation is to provide thought, is to get people to consider options. Not to browbeat, but to get communication going and here we are right back to the whole communication idea, exchanging ideas. That's what we're all about and all of the work that we do.

Eileen P.:

Yeah, and the other thing is, there's probably no great new revelation in either one of these books, but that's not the objective. Often we need to renew or revisit what we've known in the past, but perhaps have forgotten or habits have moved in that have overridden what we know can be more effective. When it comes to communication, there's no ceiling as to how well we can communicate. We can be good communicators, but perhaps the book or perhaps taking a program to learn some skills, makes you a better communicator.

Dennis Zink:

Okay. So what do people do wrong? What are some of the biggest mistakes that you see people making in communications? And we've kind of covered, really, why it's important to communicate effectively. But what are the mistakes they the end to make?

Eileen P.:

Well, I think because so many people are nervous when they get up to talk in front of a group or when they feel that the spotlight is put on them, even in a one-to-one situation, they let nervous energy begin to control them rather than being aware of how to use that nervous energy in a productive way. Athletes call it adrenaline and of course to play a game well, no matter what the game is, you have to use that adrenaline in a productive way.

Eileen P.:

And as communicators we have to understand to use that nervous energy in a way that is going to help

us make a connection with that other person or with an audience. Do you realize that there are about twice as many people who are scared of speaking in front of a group than even flying or death?

Dennis Zink:

Yes, I'm aware of that. Absolutely.

Robert P.:

But there's another issue here, if I may jump in. One of the reasons people have difficulty communicating well is because they don't know how to do it. They never learned how to, they know how to talk. They know how to walk around. They know how to do those things, but as far as standing in front of an audience, big audience or small audience, what the skills are and what the behaviors are, they don't know and unfortunately many of them don't want to bother to learn how to do it.

Dennis Zink:

But we're going to show them right now, aren't we?

Robert P.:

We sure are.

Eileen P.:

Yeah.

Dennis Zink:

Okay, so stay tuned. So Bob, basically you can communicate, and Eileen, in three ways the way I see it. One, you can read something which is the written word, whether it's in an email or a text or a tweet or snail mail. Or you can listen to something, whether it's a podcast, someone talking to you on the phone. Or in person, you have the visual additive in addition to audio, you see expressions on someone's face. And I know that that's very important. How they say it is in addition to what they say. So can you comment on those three areas? Maybe you want to take the first one, the second, third, however you want to handle that, Bob, let's talk about writing first.

Robert P.:

Okay. That's an interesting one to pick first, Dennis, because we all do it, but once again, most people don't know how to write, particularly when they're dealing with email. I want to tell you this too, I'll teach you, everybody, how to do email so they never make the mistake that we've all have made before. You know, sending the message before you really want to do it. Ah, I didn't want to send it.

Dennis Zink:

I just did that yesterday.

Robert P.:

Yeah, okay. Here's a simple way to avoid ever doing that. And this is worth the time that everybody is spending listening right now. We call it writing upside down. When you look at the way people do email, there were three steps. They put down a title, or not a title, they put down the address of the person

who's going to get it. They put down a grabber title-

Eileen P.:

A subject line.

Robert P.:

And then they write the memo. What happens though, is if you make a mistake, you can't make it all go away. So here's what you do. You write backwards. You do first the long message. Because nothing's going to go anywhere until you put a title on there. You can make all the changes you want. Once you know what the message is going to be and you're satisfied with it, then the next step is you put your-

Dennis Zink:

Subject?

Eileen P.:

Subject line?

Robert P.:

Yeah, no.

Eileen P.:

The subject line-

Robert P.:

The subject line, I'm sorry, yeah. I'm thinking faster than I'm talking here and that's not good. Put the subject line. Now the subject line should do two things. It should preview the message and it should be a grabber. It should grab the audience. So don't just say something like "New budget numbers". That's okay, but a stronger email message would be, "Dangerous new budget numbers, surprising new budget numbers, frightening new budget numbers".

Dennis Zink:

"You're being fired for the budget numbers."

Robert P.:

That's exactly right. Because see now, you've previewed the thing and you're going to entice people to pay attention to it.

Eileen P.:

And someone's going to read it.

Robert P.:

Yeah. And the last thing that you write or type in is the name, the person who's going to get it. Because nothing goes out until that goes on. So you won't ever make a mistake.

Eileen P.:

The other challenge with email is we've all been taught to write one way. Now, with the advent of Twitter and technology and how to communicate, messaging. Writing is suffering because we're coming up with little abbreviations and so spelling has gone down the tubes. But with email in particular, it's important to remember, in order to entice someone to read your email, because we all get so much email and we'll look at those subject lines and what is going to attract someone.

Eileen P.:

But once they get into the body of what we're writing, does it sound like you or does it sound like an essay for the English class? So the more we can write conversationally, so often someone will come up and say, "I read that article and I could hear your voice as I was reading it."

Dennis Zink:

That's what success is.

Eileen P.:

Yeah, that's the key to a successful email as well. So, write the email as if you're having a conversation with that person. The other key thing is put your message upfront. If you make someone work to find out why you wrote that email, you're going to lose them.

Dennis Zink:

How about length?

Eileen P.:

Well, ideally probably no more than that one screen and that's a challenge for me too, but it really does help because if someone has to scroll up, again, time is always a factor for the person who's reading that email and maybe they won't. And if your message is not upfront and it's down here on page two or three, they miss it.

Robert P.:

That's the real key, Dennis, put the message up front. Now, sometimes in business situations where we have bad news to deliver, we work very hard to sort of segue our way in and get people to want to pay attention and spend a lot of time listening to stuff or reading stuff. The fact of the matter is when somebody sits down to read something, they want information now.

Robert P.:

Don't try to hide it because you can't, and particularly in print because they're in charge of where they're looking. Now, if you're giving a live presentation, you can try to put all kinds of stuff in there, but in print, right there. So if you would try to hide the message, people are going to get more angry than they would have been in the first place.

Dennis Zink:

You hit on something I want to go a little deeper into. When people make presentations in front of, let's say a business presentation, it could be to one or more people, I could be an audience. They tend to put

in too much stuff I think. They feel if they're doing a PowerPoint, they need to have 15 lines on each slide and to me that's not very effective. I believe in the Steve Jobs style of PowerPoint, which is just putting up a picture, engage the audience and explain to them what it is you're going to explain to them. What do you think about that?

Robert P.:

I think obviously Steve Jobs did a pretty good job for a long time. Here, we like one-liners, Dennis, and we've used those in a number of situations. Here's something to think about when you're designing a presentation or print work. You look at the material that you're going to be covering and ask yourself this very simple question. What can I leave out and still make my point? Say that again. What can I leave out and still make my point? There's a lot of stuff, but the audience doesn't want stuff. An audience wants information.

Robert P.:

Our job is to do the editing and the direction and the fine tuning so they get the message without working hard. If you ask an audience or you demand that an audience works hard to figure out what you're saying, they won't. That's not their job, working hard. That's our job.

Eileen P.:

There's another one liner. Less is more. And less is more is a saying that was, I'm not sure if it was developed by Mies van der Rohe, the (German) architect. His philosophy was the less you put on a building and in the building, the more flexibility people have who live in it or use it. And when it comes to developing a presentation, particularly when you're developing those PowerPoint slides, the less you put on that slide, the more impact it has for the people looking at it.

Dennis Zink:

Let's turn to audio for a moment. Podcasts, using the phone. You can't see the person, you're just hearing a voice. What are some tips on being more effective when doing that?

Robert P.:

Okay. Imagine the person, because you're talking to a person, not just to a microphone or to the wall. I worked with a man years ago and he had a wonderful idea, he was coaching me on giving a presentation in a situation like this. And he said, what I want you to do is envision the way that guy is that you're talking to, what kind of a chair is he sitting in? And I said, what do you mean? He said, how is he sitting down? Is he sitting in a big stuffed chair, is he sitting on a couch, is he sitting on a little bench? Because as soon as we envision how somebody is sitting, that changes the mechanics and we will talk differently. So keep that in mind. We have to be sure that we understand that we're communicating ideas. It's all about ideas, not just words.

Robert P.:

And the way we have to do that is envision the person, deal with what we want to say. And let me say just three words to remember whenever you're giving a presentation. What, why, how. All kinds of things that we have been involved with putting presentations together. But those three words are going to be lifesavers. Simple idea. What's the point? What are you talking about? What's the message? Why

is it important for the person that you're talking to? Not convenient for you, but important to the person that you're talking to. And then how are you going to do it?

Eileen P.:  
Yeah.

Robert P.:  
Done.

Eileen P.:  
And that's particularly important and relevant when you're leaving a voicemail message.

Robert P.:  
Oh, yeah.

Eileen P.:  
Our son would say to me, mom, your voicemails just go on and on and on. And I'd say, I know, that's because you're my son. But in leaving a voicemail message, this what why how, is a very simple format to organize what you want to say, which helps you eliminate a lot of the uh, well, I'm calling because... a lot of the non-words.

Dennis Zink:  
So you're saying your messages should be short and sweet, right to the point.

Eileen P.:  
Yes.

Dennis Zink:  
And then get the call back, hopefully.

Eileen P.:  
Exactly. And don't give it all, because you do want them to call back. So I'm calling because, or you asked me to call you because, I have found out some interesting options we have. Call me and we can discuss them.

Dennis Zink:  
Okay.

Robert P.:  
It makes life a whole lot easier for both parties, we should say for all parties. When you make the point and move on.

Dennis Zink:  
Let's do that.

Robert P.:

Make the point and move on. Okay.

Dennis Zink:

Let's move on to video. Television, making a presentation in front of an audience, being there in person as opposed to on the phone or in writing. So we'll start with you, Eileen.

Eileen P.:

Well, going back to what Bob said as far as talking on the phone. Envision that audience. Don't try to realize that there might be thousands of people looking at you, but who is the one person you want to talk to. And you talk to that one person. And there are options, various options. In a setting like this, we're talking with you. We're not looking at the camera because this is where the conversation is happening. But there are those situations, I worked with a gentleman who came to me after the fact. He was interviewed on one of the major networks and he was a partner in his company, and he was put into a room looking at the camera. And so we call that the head in the box, right?

Eileen P.:

And of course he had the earpiece in his ear, the IFB as you have in yours. And it was very disconcerting to him because he could hear, but he wasn't seeing the people in New York city. So we do have to learn and know a little bit about what's going to happen before we get there. What kind of an interview is it going to be. When you're looking at the camera, you look directly at the camera and it's so important to know what your eyes are doing because you don't want them looking all over the place. That doesn't connote confidence that says, I'm very nervous, I'm uncomfortable.

Dennis Zink:

So you mentioned picking out a person, and this is in your preparation. So now you're actually giving the speech. You've got a thousand people in the audience, are you just focusing on one person or do you look around from person to person? Do you pick-

Eileen P.:

If you're giving a speech and the audience that's being televised, ah.

Dennis Zink:

No, not televised. You're there. You're in an auditorium, you're in person.

Eileen P.:

Oh, you talk to individuals. And you talk to individuals one at a time. Some people have been told scan the audience so everyone thinks you're looking at him and her. We don't spend enough time with an individual for them to feel that connection and for them to be engaged. And so you focus on a set of eyes and give them a thought or two and then pause, find another set of eyes and give a thought or two. So that you are, in essence, everyone in that audience feels as if you are talking to them. How often do we come out of a speech and say, wow, I felt like she was really talking to me. That person connected by looking at people. Individuals.

Robert P.:

Here's another line. We like one-liners. Here's another line to remember in this situation. Talk to people, not to things. And that simply means even if you have a big crowd, you look at this person and you look at another person and you look at another person. If you're trying to spray the whole room, you talk to nobody. You end up talking to nobody. You then forget what you're saying, you stumble all over the words and you get to be terrible. Talk to one person. Life gets easier.

Eileen P.:

With scanning, it increases our nervousness because we're not getting feedback from our audience. And it's important for us to know how we're coming across with an audience. And if you focus on individuals one at a time, you get that, you see the head nodding. Or you'll see a frown or whatever it might be, and that's important for us as the speaker to be able to then reinforce what it is we want them to know or to do or to move on.

Dennis Zink:

Bob, do me a favor. I've heard you talk about this before and I forget what the percentages are, but how a person presents themselves as opposed to what they say, the importance of that in believability or understanding?

Robert P.:

Great, great question. I hate to say good question.

Dennis Zink:

Yes.

Robert P.:

But I'll say it anyway, that's a good question, Dennis. Remember your book, Be as Good as You Think you are?

Eileen P.:

It was a great question.

Robert P.:

And there are a lot of data about the importance of it. One of the things to think about is perhaps from one of the keynote research studies, about 55% of the impact that we have on an audience comes from how we look. 55%. About 38% of the impact we have comes from how we sound. Only 7% comes from what the heck we say. Now, that doesn't mean that what we say is unimportant. That would be a foolish thing to say. But the importance of the two pieces of data, as soon as we walk into a room, big room, small room, makes no difference. As soon as we walk in, the audience makes judgments. They like us, they don't like us, they trust us, they don't trust us. They're confused. Just like that, we haven't said a word yet, but they have made a judgment.

Robert P.:

And we do that too when we are part of an audience. So step number one, realize what impact you might be having on the audience. You've been judged already. It's unfair, but that's what happens. So you better be ready for it, which means before you say word one, know that you're standing up straight, you're looking them in the eye, the volume is strong. You have a good sentence to begin with rather than, uh, thank you, it's nice to have you here today and we've been looking forward to this meeting for a long time. Who cares? If you get that kind of information coming from a speaker, you're almost dead in the water, instant turnoff.

Robert P.:

So know what your first line is going to be. Pick your target, know what the line is and stand up straight like your mother used to tell us when she hit you in the middle of the back, stand up straight, stand up straight. Well-balanced and good, strong voice comes out with that first line. Let me tell you what I am suggesting we do tomorrow.

Eileen P.:

Notice also, Bob is using gestures to emphasize and describe what he's saying. And he also used gestures that can get in the way of people thinking of us as being knowledgeable or confident, whatever that descriptor word is. So we have to be aware that we use the purposeful gestures, the kind of gestures we'd use in one-to-one conversation where there's not a stress factor.

Dennis Zink:

They just flow naturally, those are the good ones, right?

Eileen P.:

Exactly.

Dennis Zink:

If you're thinking about doing this or that, that's when you get in trouble.

Eileen P.:

That's right, yeah.

Robert P.:

The whole idea is to think about the message and think about the person to whom you're delivering that message. Those are the two major, important elements. Don't script it because you probably won't do very well. But talk to somebody, look at somebody and just deliver that line. Let me tell you how we're going to solve this problem. That's going to grab attention, that's going to get people to pay attention to you and it's going to get you started.

Dennis Zink:

So Bob and Eileen, how do you prepare for the speech you're going to give to a thousand people in an audience? What do you do? Do you use your camera and photograph yourself, what do you do?

Robert P.:

You stand up straight and you do it. Hold your own little telephone out if necessary so you can record yourself, but identify and remember who the audience is going to be and sort of make believe that they're out there. But stand up and say it. You can't just think it and then get in front of an audience of a hundred or a thousand or 25 people.

Eileen P.:

And that's key. You have to say it out loud. How often do we get up in front of a group and something comes out that we never intended to say and we can't retract it? So in practicing and it is practice, practice, practice. In practicing we say it out loud. And it's not that you are then going to say it exactly the same way when you get in front of a group, it's just that you've lived it and you know what you want to say. And it's far easier to have that conversation. Notice how we use conversation rather than giving a speech. If you think of it as having a conversation with your audience-

Dennis Zink:

It's two-way.

Eileen P.:

It's two-way, yes. And that brings up Q and A. When Q and A comes, part of our effectiveness and success when we are asked a question is we have to listen. That's an important factor of good communication.

Dennis Zink:

Let me ask you, people have a preferred method of communication. Some people prefer texting today. Some people prefer, oh, just call me. Some people prefer, yeah, I'll meet with you for a coffee. Should you ask someone what their preferred mode of communication is or what their preferences are?

Robert P.:

That field is choice, yeah, you may want to do that because some people, I know a man, I know him quite well, and he just won't take a phone call. He wants it on email. I know another guy who worked very closely with him, he won't take an email, he just won't respond to it at all because he's the telephone guy and that's his history. So, since you're trying to get an idea from your head to somebody else's head, that's what communication is all about. Getting information transferred.

Robert P.:

Find out what the tools are that are most comfortable for the person that you're dealing with, if at all possible. Now the reality sets in and sometimes you can't do one on one on one. But if there's any possibility, find out what's important to the other person. Because you're trying to change that one, you're trying to get an idea into them. Help.

Dennis Zink:

Eileen, is snail mail still an option? Snail mail.

Eileen P.:

Snail mail is still an option, yes. It's not used as much, but I think on an occasion, we were invited to a

function and after the function I sat down and I hand wrote a little note thanking the person for inviting us and for the experience. I can't tell you the impact that handwritten note had. And I didn't do it for that reason, it was just that I was moved to write the handwritten note, I thought that would be appropriate. But it had great impact. And so snail mail can have great impact with individuals. Email of course is a more direct way to do it, but there are people who don't respond to the email as well.

Dennis Zink:

Let's revisit giving a speech to an audience or having a conversation. What can you do to research the audience? If it's a small group, it's easy to look them up on LinkedIn or something like that, get backgrounds, but what if it's a larger group? Say even a couple of hundred people? What kind of research can you do?

Robert P.:

Well here's where the technology, you asked Eileen about technology before, here's where technology can be very helpful because you can fire up your computer and learn all kinds of things about the company and the history and the product and the planning and so on. Take a few minutes and do that. Other thing to do is ask your colleagues who have had experience with those same companies and those same people. You don't have to know everything all by yourself. But if you go into a situation where you haven't done your homework, it's a gamble and that doesn't make any sense.

Eileen P.:

Yeah.

Robert P.:

Know how to start. What's your first sentence? And that's going to open up the door. It's going to open up the flow.

Eileen P.:

We use what we call audience analysis. Take time, ask yourself some questions about who are they? And if you can identify areas that they come from, if they're in the same company, are you speaking to the upper management? Are you speaking to the general employees of the groups? What are their important points? What do they need to know and what do they know about you? If indeed they know who you are, you don't have to establish credibility. And in fact you'd be wasting their time if you're talking about all the things you've done.

Eileen P.:

But perhaps it's an audience that really doesn't know that much about you. Well, in order for you to have impact with them, with the information you're going to share, you do have to take that time to establish some credibility. So what is the age group of them? Which is why we call it audience analysis. How will they respond to you? What do they need to know? And by doing that analysis, it helps you determine how you present the information that you're going to present. Because as Bob mentioned earlier, we use different approaches depending upon who our listeners are. Different language, different style possibly.

Dennis Zink:  
How about fear?

Robert P.:  
Have a game plan. Absolutely have a game plan.

Eileen P.:  
How about fear?

Dennis Zink:  
Fear, yeah.

Eileen P.:  
Fear...?

Dennis Zink:  
Fear of public speaking.

Eileen P.:  
Ah.

Dennis Zink:  
How do you control that, what do you do, gee, I've got to give a speech to fifty people.

Eileen P.:  
I pull out my book. The one about the eagle, yes, yeah.

Dennis Zink:  
Yeah, my mom vacuumed our finch by the way. Whenever you mention finch I think about a vacuum.

Eileen P.:  
Oh, dear.

Robert P.:  
One of the problems, one of the things that causes that problem is not knowing what to do.

Eileen P.:  
Yeah.

Robert P.:  
So we had a man come to ask us for some help, this was a couple of years ago. His daughter was going to be married and he had to give his speech. And he came in and said, can you help me? We said, sure. So we sat down and the first question he asked was, what should I say? And I remember saying to him, I don't know. No, he responded as if I had said something really nasty or I had picked a fight with him. He

said, I thought you could help me. I said, well, I can, but I don't know you yet and I don't know your daughter. Let's first find out about them, what's important to them, to her. And over the course of time we developed a great relationship and when he finally came to deliver this speech at his daughter's wedding, he was really good. Because he had skills.

Robert P.:

Let me tell you another little story, it's kind of fun. I'll drop the names of the players here, but we had an occasion a while back to work with a professional football player who was going to be interviewed by a television, personality.

Dennis Zink:

Was he as big as a refrigerator?

Robert P.:

Yeah. Well, okay, you just blew that one. And there was a refrigerator in the kitchen. And the guy that he was going to talk with, be interviewed guy, was one of the personalities that was sort of a nasty guy sometimes. So we knew what his status was going to be when he did the interview. But the fridge was really very, very good. So rather than being conflict, it was conversation. And when they broke from the commercial, or from the break into a commercial, the host leaned across his desk, like this. And he said to the fridge, you got some help getting ready to be on the show, didn't you?

Robert P.:

And the fridge leaned back over the other side of the desk and he said, if you were going to come on the field and play football with me, wouldn't you want to get some coaching before you did it? Now that was the answer right there. Learn how to do it.

Dennis Zink:

And for the benefit of the audience, the fridge is, was it Will Perry?

Eileen P.:

William?

Dennis Zink:

Perry.

Robert P.:

William Perry, yeah.

Dennis Zink:

Right.

Eileen P.:

Played for the Bears. Chicago Bears. The Bears.

Robert P.:

Yeah, and you see, there lies the problem for so many people, Dennis. They don't know how to give a talk. They know how to talk, but they don't know how to deliver a talk.

Eileen P.:

Yeah. And there are very specific skills to learn. Bob mentioned stand up tall, stand so that you command attention. If we're standing with weight on one foot, think about the silent body language we give. And standing on one foot, it doesn't look important and it gives our audience permission to tune out.

Dennis Zink:

We look like a crane.

Eileen P.:

Yeah.

Dennis Zink:

There's a local person who does that, I won't tell you who but-

Eileen P.:

Yeah, or one foot around the other. It doesn't look confident. So you stand tall with feet just slightly apart and you look them in the eye and speak at a voice level that everyone can hear. Even if your microphoned, you cannot depend on the microphone to project your passion, to project your enthusiasm. I've yet to meet a sound engineer who can make us sound interesting. They can only make us louder or softer. And so we have to project our interest in our subject matter. So there are very specific skills that we can learn and practice that help us then be able to deliver our well-thought out presentation or talk, whatever we're giving.

Robert P.:

And that's going to go back to how we look and how we sound. What do we say and how do we say it? Why should somebody pay attention to you if you're not doing a good job voicing your presentation, if they can't hear you very well, or if you're mumbling or stumbling, why should they work? That's not their job. That's our job. So if you realize we've got an of two or 500 doesn't make any difference, what are they looking for? What can I give to them? How can I deliver? And that goes back to the what, why, how, also. What's important to them? Why is it important? How can I deliver it? And it gets to be a lot easier.

Robert P.:

The simple fact of the matter, Dennis, is we all know how to talk. We learned how to talk a very long time ago. But for many of us, we didn't learn how to talk. How to use the skills, how to use the tools. We excuse ourselves by saying well, no, I don't focus on that but I'm doing okay. Well, you're not doing okay. And for a dozen years or so, we used a line in our coaching, an example of if somebody says they were doing okay, and you say well let me ask you a question. If you were going to have a plumber do some work on your house, and you asked your neighbor who had this man, how did he do? And the

neighbor said, okay. You're probably aren't going to hire him. Because okay is not good enough, right?

Robert P.:

Now, 12 years ago we started to use this line and about, I don't know, 12 weeks ago or 12 months ago, AT&T started to use that line, too. Okay is not good enough. That's the whole point. We're annoyed that they took our line, but that's okay. The simple fact of the matter is what's the point? How do you make it and how do you help the audience understand?

Dennis Zink:

As this conversation comes to a close, are there any final thoughts you'd like to provide to our audience?

Robert P.:

Yeah. You don't have to make noise all the time.

Eileen P.:

Yeah.

Robert P.:

It's okay to be quiet. In fact, if we are quiet, if we pause, what happens is we give the audience a moment to think about what we just said. We give ourselves a moment to think about what we're going to say next. So we're planning the adventure and we give ourselves time to analyze the audience. Are we getting our message through clearly? You don't have to make noise all the time.

Eileen P.:

Right. And when we pause, we give ourselves some breath. It's important to breathe in order to be able to carry on that conversation.

Dennis Zink:

And on that note, when you pause, it's time for applause. So thank you both very much.

Robert P.:

Thank you, Dennis.

Eileen P.:

Oh, and you're a poet.

Robert P.:

Nice to be here.

Dennis Zink:

Better than I think I could be, or whatever.

Eileen P.:

Thank you.

Dennis Zink:

Thanks for being my guests today. If you'd like more information about today's show or you'd like to inquire about having your own SCORE mentor, please reach out to us at [score.org](http://score.org) or 1-800-634-0245. I'd like to thank our guests for appearing on this episode of SCORE business TV. I'd also like to thank our sponsor, Wells Fargo. Please tune in for our next episode. Until then, thank you and have a great day.