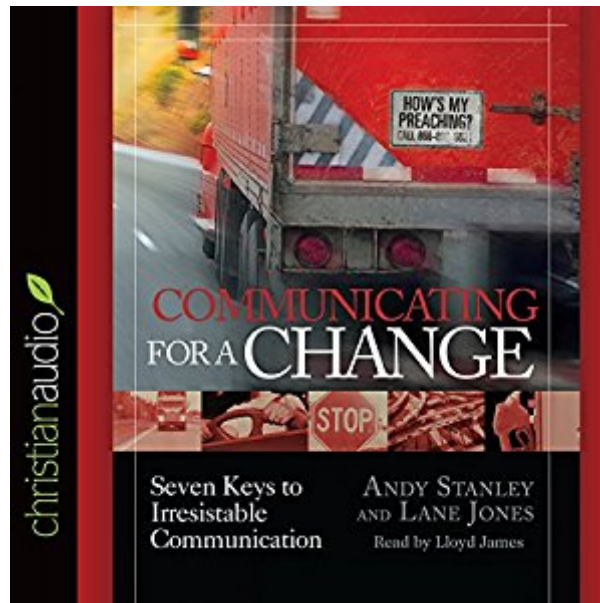


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# Communicating For A Change: Seven Keys To Irresistible Communication



## Synopsis

When You Talk, Are People Changed? Whether you speak from the pulpit, podium, or the front of a classroom, you don't need much more than blank stares and faraway looks to tell you you're not connecting. Take heart before your audience takes leave! You can convey your message in the powerful, life-changing way it deserves to be told. An insightful, entertaining parable that's an excellent guide for any speaker, *Communicating for a Change* takes a simple approach to delivering effectively. Join Pastor Ray as he discovers that the secrets to successful speaking are parallel to the lessons a trucker learns on the road. By knowing your destination before you leave (identifying the one basic premise of your message), using your blinkers (making transitions obvious), and implementing five other practical points, you'll drive your message home every time! "Long ago, in a galaxy far, far away...." "Once upon a time...." "In the beginning...." Great stories capture and hold an audience's attention from start to finish. Why should it be any different when you stand up to speak? In *Communicating for a Change*, Andy Stanley and Lane Jones offer a unique strategy for communicators seeking to deliver captivating and practical messages. In this highly creative presentation, the authors unpack seven concepts that will empower you to engage and impact your audience in a way that leaves them wanting more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Andy Stanley is no doubt one of the best communicators in Evangelical Christianity today. In his book, "Communicating for change" Andy teams up with fellow North Point ministry leader Lane

Jones to help pastors everywhere understand what they are communicating and why. This is laid out in Stanley's 7 imperatives that define his approach to challenging people's minds in order to change their lives. The 7 imperatives are as follows: (1) Determine your goal, (2) Pick a point, (3) Create a map (4) Internalize the Message, (5) Engage Your Audience, (6) Find your Voice, and (7) Start all over. The book is split into two parts, Part 1 is written by Jones and is 71 pages of one giant illustration of the seven points. Part 2 is Stanley's input as he fleshes out the meaning of all 7 imperatives. An evaluation of each part, including strengths, weaknesses, and conclusion, follows.

**Part 1: How's my preaching?** Part one is written by Lane Jones who is the campus director of Browns Bridge Community Church, which is a North Point ministries campus. In part one, Jones tells an elaborate story (made up I presume) in parable fashion of a down-and-out pastor named Ray, who is struggling with communicating to his congregation. Ray knows a man named Peter Harlan who is a wealthy sports owner who has "invested" in Ray in order to help him with implementing new strategies that will refresh Ray's church. There are 7 steps that Pete gives Ray to follow, but Ray struggles with remembering what they are despite the encouraging progress he has seen in his ministry since implementing them. Ray decides to call Peter back after a 6 month hiatus of no contact, because his communication is still struggling. Peter recommends Ray to a friend named WILLY Graham (The name is purposefully confused with Billy Graham, as Peter says his friend Willy is a better communicator than Billy), but Ray is very skeptical as Pete plans an unexpected trip for Ray to visit Willy in Atlanta. Willy and Ray don't exactly hit it off, but Willy gives Ray the 7 imperatives for better communication by way of open road trucking illustrations. Ray seems confused most of the time, but eventually gets the hang of the 7 imperatives and is excited about heading back to his church and implementing the imperatives. The parable of Ray and Willy was quite engaging and offered some helpful insights into good story telling. The story set up well for the second half of the book as Andy Stanley will draw out the implications of the 7 imperatives. The story did cause me to want to skip to the second half of the book, as I kept asking "What is the point?" but I understood that Jones was laying the ground work for Stanley's section. It seemed a bit unnecessary to write such a long story/parable just to lay the ground work for Andy.

**Part 2: Communicating for a change** Part two begins Stanley's section on the implications of the story of Ray and Willy. This part was much more engaging than the first and acted as the "application" section of the book. Andy also shares some of his "secrets" to great communicating in this section. It was full of golden nuggets for learning better communication to any audience, Christian or non. In chapter 1 of this section, Andy explains the first imperative: determine your goal, with the purpose of answering the question "What are you trying to accomplish?" The point of this chapter is to help

pastors and communicators engage better with why they are doing what they're doing; is it for the purpose of life change? Attitude change? To get your congregation to understand something better? In Andy's view, these are the essential questions the pastor needs to be asking when evaluating the purpose of their communication. At the end of the chapter he offers the 3 main points for takeaway: (1) Our approach to communicating should be shaped by our goal in communicating, (2) Our goal should be life change. Specifically, to teach people how to live a life that reflects the values, principles, and truths of the Bible, and (3) When you commit to preach for life change, preparation is not complete until you have answered two very important questions: So what and Now what? (pg.100). The next chapter focuses on picking a point, while answering the question "What are you trying to say?" This chapter seeks to show the pastor how to garner the one main point of a sermon from the text and then build a message around it. Andy calls this the "one point message." The takeaway from the chapter illustrates the process: (1) In a one point message it is essential for the communicator to know the answer to two questions: What is the one thing I want my audience to know? What do I want them to do about it? (2) For most communicators the biggest challenge will not be finding one idea, but eliminating the other three. (3) The process of developing a one point message is as follows: 1. Dig until you find it 2. Build everything around it and 3. make it stick (117). The third imperative is creating a map, answering the question What's the best route to your point? In this chapter Stanley lays out "the outline that revolves around 5 words, each of which represents a section of the message" (119). The words are: Me, We, God, You, Me. Each of the words correspond to an element of the passage: Me = orientation, We = identification, God = illumination, You = application, and We = inspiration. The point of these categories is to get the people in a given congregation to think about these questions in regards to what the sermon says about each area. In Stanley's view, abstracting up must occur in order to properly evaluate each area. The takeaway of the chapter is: (1) An outline built around your relationship with the audience, rather than the content, best matches the way they naturally process information. (2) ME-WE-GOD-YOU-WE. (3) Begin writing these five words in the margin where they apply in your current way of outlining. Add sections you are missing. The next chapter deals with internalizing the message, answering the question: what's your story? This was is a key chapter for all pastors everywhere, in my opinion, and it seems that way to Stanley as well. The takeaways are: (1) Before you stand to deliver a message, you must own it. (2) Reduce your entire message down to five or six pieces. Not points, pieces or sections of information. (3) If something doesn't support, illustrate, or clarify the point, cut it. The last two chapters deal with engaging your audience, and finding your voice as a preacher. Strengths and weaknesses As I stated before, Andy Stanley is a tremendous

communicator and this book proves why that is the case. The strengths of the book are self evident in that it gives the lay preacher or pastor, as well as the trained preacher or pastor, a bevy of ideas to implement into their communication style. Certainly, this book is helpful for the first time preacher as well as the seasoned veteran. It also presents pastors with very practical application. So many pastors really are like Ray, the character in the first half of the book, who struggle to be refreshed in their preaching and communication with their congregation. But I would say this book is not just for pastors. It has a wealth of information that could be implemented in several areas of life outside of the church. Moreover, this book would be great for staff meetings, especially in the church. As a minister myself, staff meetings tend to be boring and disengaging. Just by way of a pastor learning to communicate better could help with presenting the information of a staff meeting in a more engaging way. The weaknesses of the book pertain mostly to Stanley's method. While I see a tremendous amount of value in his 7 imperatives, I find that a few of them have some serious flaws. The first flaw I find is more general and could apply to the first 3 imperatives (determine your goal, pick a point, and create a map). I do appreciate that Stanley desires pastors to effectively communicate by giving the congregation one main point of a message. However, this could prove to be difficult in that not every biblical passage can be boiled down to one main point. This could also lead to poor hermeneutics and, I believe, a misinterpretation and misapplication of any given biblical authors main point of a particular passage. This is a serious thing to consider, especially when preaching. I do believe the goal of preaching is to get people a main point and tell them what to do with it, but not at the cost of determining the biblical authors main intent. the text of the bible takes precedence over that of application and "points." This, I believe, is the main flaw of "big idea" preaching, of which Andy is a major proponent. The second flaw pertains to what is not mentioned in the book, but I want to be careful that I do not commit the fallacy of an argument from silence. I understand the main intention of the book was to give pastors steps to better communication, but what about the process of getting there? it would have been helpful for both Stanley and Jones to lay out what a typical week looks like for them in relation to their formation of a sermon. What does this look like on short weeks? Holidays? Holy week? when you preach a few times in a week? How do all of these questions relate to exegesis of the text? In other words, it would have been helpful for Stanley and Jones to lay out their exegetical process and how they got to the points they got. Conclusion Though there are some serious flaws in my opinion, I would still recommend this book to the pastor, lay or trained, who is struggling with how to better communicate with their church. Stanley shows why he is such a great communicator in this book, but be careful in taking everything as gold here. This is the process that works for Stanley, it may not be what works for

you. Regardless though, if you are wanting to learn from one of Christianity's greatest communicators, buy this book!

I heard this book referenced on a church leadership podcast, and I decided to check it out. Andy Stanley puts forth some good ideas about narrowing focus and producing a one point message. I think the book could have benefited more from greater depth on the parts of the lesson and could have done without the opening parable. I found the beginning slow, but I enjoyed the main content. Stanley has truly worked at improving his style and approach, and the reader benefits from this.

A friend recommended I read this book on communication and I am so glad he did. I was looking for a book to help me communicate as a systems analyst. But it's a book on writing and delivering sermons. I don't preach in church and only speak to large groups occasionally. But from the first few pages I was finding principles that I can use in my everyday work and I have a deeper understanding of what it takes for my Pastor to prepare each week. The writing style is engaging and geared towards helping the reader. That's a win win. If you're a public speaker buy this book, if you need to get better at communication this book will help you too.

Communicating for Change is an easy read. Mine was delivered about 9:30 or so on a Thursday morning, I was done by 6:00pm that afternoon (and I had some interruptions in the middle). However don't let the size fool you, the principles are thought provoking and powerful when applied. I'll admit, I reworked my sermon for that following Sunday using the methodology he lays out in the book, and I was impressed. I was impressed at how people reacted to the sermon (which I shouldn't have been when you consider how much time this method applies to connecting to the audience. I was also very impressed with how easy it was to follow the flow of the "road map" he suggests. I will say this, for me many of the principles were things I was already trying to do (at least from time to time when I would think about it). What this book did for me was give me a good framework to hang my hat on. If your current speaking style is not "conversational" you might feel like a fish out of water right at first, but I suggest you give it a try. You might surprise yourself and your audience. Some have suggested that to follow the principles lined out in this book is simply to try to imitate Andy Stanley's style. I think they are wrong. Methodology and style are two different things. If anything following (or adapting) this methodology allows for your own personality to come out even more, helping to make you more relatable to your audience and more genuine in your messages. Also don't think that preaching a "one point sermon" somehow means there is less

content and more fluff. In fact the opposite is true. Preaching a one point sermon actually requires more study time and the willingness to cut the fluff and filler. Anyway, a very good book from which I think any communicator could take away some beneficial principles.

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