

## Great Game of Huddle Notes

### July 16, 2019

Angie Crews started today's Huddle by introducing our guest speaker Amy Patillo from MU Extension. She informed us how to frame a messages that will stick to our audience. Amy's presentation is normally 4 hours long but she tried her best to cut it to down to 30 minutes. The rest of her presentation was emailed to us.

Key notes from Amy's presentation are based on the book "Made to Stick" by Dan and Chip Heath.

#### SIX PRINCIPLES OF STICKINESS

##### 1. Simplicity:

Stripe the message down to the core, not into sound bites but into proverbs, both simple and profound. Fitting it into "The Golden Rule".

##### For example:

If you're trying to explain what a Grapefruit is and you start off telling your audience that's it's like an Orange, it's larger, and can sometimes be citrus and sweet. You want the message to have simplicity in it.

- Determine most important thing you would like to relay
- "Don't bury the lead."
- "Names, Names, Names".
  - Hoover Adams made a business strategy simple. (The cure for Decision paralysis.) Hoover Adams founded the Dunn Daily Record, the local newspaper in Dunn, North Carolina. He boasts a 112% subscription rate. He has had the same strategy for 40 years, "Names, Names, and Names". What he meant was that, every day, he demands that his staff feature as many people from Dunn as possible. Adams will literally flip through the paper and count the names. And his point is: Look, we can't compete with *USA Today* or the *Washington Post*. What we can do that nobody else can is tell you what your neighbors are up to. So, if you're an editor choosing between a beautiful photo of the local park at sunset or a really boring photo of 9 people around a conference room table, which are you going to publish? The boring one, because it lets you mention nine names in the caption.
  - With the "names, names, names" mantra, Hoover Adams is helping his people make decision the same way that he would. And that's the value of simplicity—it helps to break up the decision paralysis your employees face and ensure that everyone is rowing the same direction.
- Tap into existing schemas or analogies that evoke familiar concepts (the fatty foods schema, for example).
  - Fatty Food **THE "GREASY FOOD" STRATEGY: HOW TO SPELL SUCCESS**  
Do you know what **37 grams of fat** looks like? What if you heard that a medium-sized bag of buttered popcorn contained more artery-clogging saturated fat than a bacon-and-eggs breakfast, a Big Mac and fries, and a steak dinner with all the trimmings – *combined*? Thirty-

seven grams of saturated fat might not mean much. But the image of three greasy meals, in a 1990s ad campaign, sparked a popcorn boycott in movie theaters from coast to coast.

## 2. Unexpectedness:

Get people's attention by violating their expectations.

Get triggers that opens up the audience "uh-huh moments" so we can fill them with important new information or new perspectives.

### Fun Fact:

JFK did this when he announced that the US would put a man on the moon within the decade.

### Tips:

- Common sense is the enemy of sticky messages – if people think they already "get it," they pay less attention.
- Get attention with surprise. Figure out what is counterintuitive about the message (all that fat packed in a bag of popcorn!?).
- Hold attention with interest.
- Avoid gimmicks.
- Present numbers or statistics in surprising ways, making them less abstract.

## 3. Concreteness: Share a Common Language, Share a Common Goal

Our brains are hardwired to remember visual or sensory information much better than abstract concepts. The most memorable messages are expressed in terms of vivid pictures, analogies, and human actions.

### Tips:

- Find your inner Aesop: Write with the concreteness of a fable.
- Make abstraction (and numbers) concrete with imagery (think of the popcorn example).
- Set the scene. Provide a concrete context.
- Put people in the story.

## 4. Credibility: Are you better off now than you were four years ago? – Ronald Regan

Sticky ideas have to carry their own credentials – not necessarily hard facts or numbers – but triggers that connect your story to audiences' real life experiences.

For example, instead of citing specific economic statistics, Ronald Reagan asked Americans in a televised presidential debate, "are you better off than you were 4 years ago?" The "evidence" was alive in each audience member's mind. Credibility was built into the message and he won the election.

### Tips:

- Use convincing details.
- Invite audiences to try it out or “see for themselves.”
- Prove it by showing examples and case studies where the concept or solution is realized. Show that your idea is viable because it’s worked elsewhere.

## 5. Emotions:

If you want people to care, make them feel something. They might forget what you said or what they read, but they’ll remember exactly how you made them feel. They’ll remember if they were filled with pride or if they cried, laughed, or shuddered. Most of us feel our emotions stirred when we hear even a very short clip of a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. We remember how the full speech made us feel – we don’t need to hear the words again to experience the emotion.

### Tips:

- Connect to people’s sense of identity – make it matter to them.
- Try not to overwhelm. People shut down if a problem appears too big to surmount. Studies find that one starving child elicits more sympathy than millions starving in an epidemic.
- Help people imagine themselves acting on their convictions or living in a better world. Projecting a positive future motivates behavior.
- Engaging the individual is key, but remember that “group interest” – the community or worldview we identify with – is often a better predictor of political opinions than self-interest.

## 6. Stories:

A story format combines all these principles and opens minds to new information. Stories are easy to retell – far easier than facts or statistics without context. If they’re compelling – *concrete, credible, emotional, simple, and unexpected* – our stories will be more likely to spread by themselves.

### Tips:

- Spark people’s imagination – invite them to picture themselves in a story or acting on a conviction.
- Think of the stories you tell at the water-cooler or the dinner table. Retelling gives people a sense of ownership and engagement.
- Look for three key plots found in inspiring stories: challenge (overcoming obstacles); connection (getting along or reconnecting with people); and creativity (encouraging a new way of thinking or changing perspective).