

# Are You Who You Tell Others They Should Be?

By Victor Gray

It is my pleasure to report on the 2006 NSA Convention in Orlando, held July 21-25. After attending the previous two conventions, this meeting will forever hold a special place in my heart. I was fortunate to attend a five-hour "Mega Session" with NSA great Nido Qubein, CSP, CPAE. Nido spent the majority of his allotted time presenting his sought-after views on several of the NSA competencies, including Expertise, Eloquence and Enterprise.

Zig Ziglar, CPAE, a legend in the speaking industry, led the ecumenical Sunday church service. Zig's soloist was LaDonna Gatlin, CSP, CPAE. Yep, she's a sister of the Gatlin Brothers, an admired country-western musical group. I was uplifted as the praises filled the Marriott conference center.

Despite the obvious conference "star power", the experience that has impacted me the most was a few extemporaneous comments made by Desi Williamson, CSP, CPAE before the Black NSA group.

Desie shared the genuineness of being one of the top speakers in our industry one moment, and being completely paralyzed the next moment after falling from a ladder and



(left to right) Rita Hookstead, Dan Burrus, Victor Gray, Eliz Greene, Melanie Gray, Mike Domitrz, Karen Domitrz, Jason Kotecki, Kim Kotecki, Roger Stauter.

damaging two vertebrae. Desie accepted some risky surgery that had a fifty percent possibility of leaving him paralyzed for life!

Fortunately, the surgery was successful and Desie would eventually regain full use of his limbs. However, after three months in the hospital, the former scholar-athlete at the University of Minnesota found himself unable to move his limbs because his muscles atrophied.

Just imagine for a moment if your brain was fully active, but you could not stand, walk or even lift your arms to feed yourself! It is likely, your mind would tell you it is time to respond to client needs, send out a proposal or update your web site. All those thoughts would be irrelevant because you have to wait for someone to feed you.

Desie shared, with great emotion, the despair any person would experience given this devastating personal situation. Unable to mask his feelings to his physician, Desie was challenged to "live out" the words that he the motivational speaker had shared with his many audiences nation wide.

## Are You Congruent?

So, you might think what's this got to do with me and my speaking career? The answer is "congruence". I use this term when talking about trust in my training programs.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines congruence as being in a state of agreement. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that congruence is equality. As speakers, congruence means that we are what we tell others

they should be. In other words, our actions agree with our words, and we are equal with what we say and do. The real test of congruence is doing the same thing in private that you speak about in public, despite the fact that no one is looking.

The great news for Desie Williamson is that he has returned to good health, and his speaking skills have not suffered one bit, thanks to some caring friends and a rigorous exercise regimen.

As speakers, we should not have to experience a life-changing event to live out what we tell others. Desie's experience of living out what you talk about will remain with me for some time to come. I hope it makes a difference in your speaking and professional career as well.

*Copyright 2006. Victor Gray, "Lead Change With No Fear" LLC*