

GSS2026



GLOBAL SPEAKERS SUMMIT | Cairns, Australia

VOICES

From
Courtroom to
Curtain Call

PSA

CUE THE APPLAUSE:
HOW TO PRIME THE AUDIENCE FOR SUCCESS

BEYOND “THE END”:
WHY FINISHING THE BOOK
IS JUST THE BEGINNING

JULY 2025
ISSUE 2/4

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REALTY

PROPERTY ADVISORS & BUYERS AGENT

At Inspire Realty, we are Property Advisors and Buyers Agents helping you invest with confidence to build wealth through our framework, the 8 Principles to Play the Property Game and WIN!



About Us:

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From the Editor

I used to be a rebellious child.

And being Asian, I can't even count the number of cane scars I had for talking back. I got whacked for questioning things, for being too opinionated, for having "too much to say." But despite all the caning, I still couldn't bring myself to speak up when I was wronged. I didn't know how to fight for myself. Not yet.

But on the bright side—my ability to speak?
That had been blooming since I was six.
I still remember my first speech.

Kindergarten graduation. I was six years old, standing on a wooden stage, holding a microphone twice the size of my face. I don't remember what I said—but I remember how it felt.
I didn't know then that those moments—the elocution contests, the school assemblies—were the quiet beginnings of a voice I'd one day use in rooms and stages around the world. I just knew I loved words. And more than that, I loved what they could do.

There's a voice that lives inside each of us.

Not just the one we speak with—but the one we live by.
It's the voice that dares to tell the truth when silence is safer.
The one that speaks up after failure, after heartbreak, after someone else said, "You can't."
The one that says, "Watch me."

This issue of the GSS2026 Magazine is full of that kind of voice.
The kind that doesn't need to shout to be heard.
The kind that rises from resilience—not perfection.

From Joe Curcillo's mind-bending journey through law, magic, and meaning...
To Justine Martin's fierce, funny take on building an empire through chronic illness and grit...
To Mel Sherwood's reminder that your voice isn't just heard—it's felt...

This issue is a tribute to those who dare to speak from the heart.
So whether you're whispering or roaring, just know this: your voice matters.
Let it be real. Let it be human. Let it be yours.

And when you take the stage in Cairns—whether literally or metaphorically—
I'll be right there with you, cheering you on.

With heart and harmony,

DR. WENDY LEE, CSP
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
WENDY@CHAP-ONE.COM

Message from The President



Dear Friends

Professional Speakers Australia and the organising team for the Global Speakers Summit 2026 are hard at it! It is exciting, humbling and awe-inspiring to watch and experience the team ideate, strategise and bring this iconic event to life.

As we count down to our extraordinary gathering in Cairns in March 2026, the Global Speakers Summit (GSS) is a celebration of voices: diverse, powerful, and world-changing.

Every Global Speakers Summit has its own unique rhythm, and GSS2026 promises a chorus of ideas, experiences, and energy like never before. This is more than an event, it's a movement of voices coming together to shape what's next. You'll find your voice amplified through rich conversations, thought-provoking sessions, and powerful connections that spark new possibilities.

From mainstage moments that stir your soul to breakout sessions that sharpen your skills, every element of this Summit has been designed to help you grow, contribute, and be heard. The magic of GSS is in the synergy: when voices from different cultures, industries, and experiences converge, innovation thrives and friendships flourish.

This isn't just about listening, it's about leaning in, speaking up, and leaving transformed. If ever there was a time to invest in your voice and your vision, it's now. GSS2026 is your invitation, answer the call.

I am thrilled to be attending GSS2026 in person, and I embolden you to register and be part of this experience. Beyond the learning and networking, be inspired by the voices you will hear and be transformed by the wonderful opportunities Cairns offers as a destination.

We'll see you in Cairns!

Warm regards,

SALLY FOLEY-LEWIS, CSP
NATIONAL PRESIDENT 2025 & 2026
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Stay On Track

Don't get side tracked with an impulsive thought

Deliver what you said
Make sure your presentation matches your original proposal. The client wants what they bought

HAVE FUN!!

Seriously!

Stay On Time

Timing is EVERYTHING.

Always end on time
(a bit early is better)

Deliver YOU

Be yourself amplified.
Give a little bit extra while you remain authentic

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From Motivation to Movement



From Courtroom to Curtain Call

JOE CURCILLO

Joe Curcillo doesn't just defy categories — he thrives between them. A former prosecutor turned entertainer, engineer turned artist, and magician turned strategist, Joe brings a multidimensional lens to everything he does.

In this VOICES feature, he opens up about what it takes to craft truly unforgettable communication, why real breakthroughs happen at the edges of comfort, and how owning every part of your story might be the boldest move a speaker can make.

1. Your journey has taken you from the courtroom to the stage, and now to Cairns for GSS 2026. What inner calling keeps moving you forward today?

My journey has always been guided by something deeper than applause or accolades—it's been about uncovering what's real beneath the surface. In the courtroom, the best moments came not from rehearsed arguments, but from that flash of clarity when a juror suddenly saw the truth. On stage as an entertainer, it was never just about the trick or the punchline—it was about the instant an audience glimpsed something surprising within themselves.

That same pull is what brought me to the Global Speakers Summit 2026 in Cairns. Because let's face it—as speakers, our job is to inspire transformation, but sometimes we get stuck too. We lean on familiar stories and reliable routines because they're comfortable and safe.

But real breakthroughs don't live in the comfort zone—they thrive in the messy intersections, where speaking meets strategy, precision meets performance, and engineering collides with artistry. And those intersections are exactly where I thrive. I don't step on stage armed with one "perfect speech."

Instead, I draw from everything I've got—the strategic clarity of a trial lawyer, the structural mindset of a civil engineer, the creative vision of an artist, and the energy of an entertainer.

I don't just connect dots—I help you see the blueprint behind compelling communication, and recognize the brushstrokes hidden within every great performance.

That's what keeps pulling me forward today: helping people see something new about themselves, their messages, and their potential—so they can finally move beyond the familiar scripts and step into everything they were always meant to become.

"My voice came alive at the intersections—where the precision of an engineer meets the strategic clarity of a lawyer, where an artist's imagination merges beautifully with an entertainer's energy, and where a magician's insight into perception reveals what audiences truly need to see."

2. Many speakers struggle to define their unique voice. What did it take for you to truly own yours?

I didn't wake up one morning magically knowing my voice—though, as a magician, that would've made a great trick. I earned it by spending years navigating multiple worlds and never fully fitting neatly into any one box. Too strategic for purely creative spaces. Too intuitive for analytical circles. Too theatrical for the courtroom, yet somehow too logical for the stage. Yeah, I was everyone's favorite misfit.

But here's the real magic: everything changed when I stopped viewing these contradictions as obstacles and recognized them for what they truly were—my superpowers.

The moment I realized that speaking from multiple disciplines wasn't a flaw but my greatest advantage, that's when I truly found my unique voice.

If you're still searching for yours, hear me clearly: stop trying to sound like anyone else. Your voice isn't found by speaking louder, mimicking others, or chasing trends. It emerges when you embrace every quirky, fascinating, seemingly contradictory part of your story.

Lean into all of it. Speak from your intersections. Clarity, authenticity, and your real voice will always resonate more powerfully than volume ever could.

3. You're known for helping teams find a 'unified vision.' In your experience, what's the greatest barrier to unity—and how can leaders begin to dissolve it?



The biggest barrier to unity isn't miscommunication—it's the invisible walls we build around our own expertise. Think about it: silos form because we assume everyone sees the vision exactly as we do, without actively making sure our teammates can connect their work to the bigger picture. But alignment doesn't happen in isolation—it comes alive at the intersections.

Trust me, I've spent my life jumping between worlds—engineering, law, entertainment, and the arts—and here's what I've found: real breakthroughs emerge only when those walls fall and diverse perspectives collide.

Whether I was managing complex engineering projects, convincing juries in courtrooms, or advising executives in the boardroom, one truth always held: unity thrives when people step out of their lanes and truly see how their individual roles contribute to a larger, shared vision.

Leaders can tear down these silos by modeling genuine curiosity and intentionally creating spaces where cross-disciplinary conversations become the norm. Encourage your teams to move beyond their expertise, to see themselves as critical players in something bigger than their own roles. When that happens, the vision isn't just understood—it's owned. That's when unity sticks, innovation sparks, and real progress takes flight.

4. You've lived and led through logic, performance, creativity, and strategy. Which of these has challenged you the most—and what did you learn about yourself in the process?

What a great question! I love pausing to think about something I never considered. Creativity was definitely my biggest challenge—not because I lacked it, but because creativity demanded something I wasn't exactly thrilled to give: letting go of control. Logic, performance, and strategy?

Those were familiar and comfortable. As an engineer, I thrived on processes and structure; as a trial lawyer, precision and logic were second nature; as an advisor, I mapped strategic paths with clarity and certainty. Predictability was my home turf.



But creativity required me to embrace the opposite: uncertainty. On stage as a magician and mentalist, it might have looked like I was controlling every outcome—reading minds, predicting behavior—but behind the scenes, it meant leaning heavily into the unpredictable. I had to trust ambiguity, improvise with audience reactions, and accept that some of the most powerful moments happened spontaneously.

The same challenge appeared in my work as an artist. Standing before a blank canvas with acrylic paint in hand, the plan I had in mind often had to give way to what the painting needed to become. Sometimes, I had to let the colors run in unexpected ways, allowing uncertainty and instinct to guide my hand. Just like magic, true artistry emerges when you surrender control and lean into exploration.

Honestly, embracing that unpredictability was messy, frustrating, and sometimes downright scary. But it transformed me. I discovered that genuine breakthroughs don't happen through perfect preparation—they happen when you're willing to confidently step into the unknown, whether on stage, in the boardroom, or in front of an empty canvas.

That insight reshaped who I am as a leader, advisor, and speaker. It taught me to trust my instincts in ambiguity, model courage in uncertain spaces, and guide others to see the transformative potential hidden within complexity. Today, I encourage leaders not just to chase obvious solutions—but to step boldly into the spaces where the unexpected is waiting, because that's precisely where the real magic—and art—happen.

5. When did you first realise that communication isn't just about words—but about understanding minds? And how has that changed the way you speak and lead?

Early in my career, I was convinced communication was all about finding the perfect words and delivering them flawlessly. But standing in front of juries, trying to turn complicated cases into clear, convincing stories,

I quickly discovered something that changed everything: no two jurors ever hear the same message in exactly the same way. It wasn't just about choosing the right words—it was about understanding how each juror processed those words.





And on stage as an entertainer, the same lesson hit home. A great performance wasn't about getting every moment technically perfect. It was about reading the room, tuning into the audience's energy, and responding in real-time to their reactions. It was less about my words, more about their experience.

Today, whether I'm advising executives or speaking on a keynote stage, that insight guides every interaction. I don't just prepare messages—I listen first.

I pay close attention to the psychology underneath the conversation. By understanding how people listen and think, I meet them exactly where they are. Because communication isn't about speaking louder—it's about listening deeper.

That's how genuine connection happens. And that's the foundation for truly transformative leadership.

6. What's one misconception people often have about you—or your work—that you secretly love proving wrong?

People look at my resume—lawyer, engineer, magician, mindreader, artist—and immediately want to fit me into a tidy box. They expect my story to neatly add up, to follow some predictable career path. But let's be honest: real life doesn't work like that—and neither do the messy, complicated challenges leaders face today.

Here's the misconception I secretly love proving wrong:

The thing some people assume would hold me back—that I've spent my life jumping lanes—is actually my greatest advantage. I didn't pivot from one discipline to another; I integrated them.

Every lane I've traveled, every unexpected turn and unconventional passion, lets me see problems differently. I approach challenges with an engineer's structural clarity, a lawyer's strategic precision, an entertainer's knack for connection, and an artist's vision for possibilities.

When you're wrestling with complexity, you don't need someone stuck viewing the world through one narrow lens. You need someone who can spot connections others miss, who can speak with genuine authority and authenticity, and who knows how to unlock insights by looking across multiple disciplines.

That's when the real "aha!" moments happen—and that's where your real magic begins.



7. You speak about legacy and vision. How do you want this keynote—on this global stage—to be remembered?

I'm here because I know every speaker has more to share than they're currently showing the world. More stories, more wisdom—more life. We often hold back the parts we think might not fit: the setbacks, the detours, the weird side hustles, and those unexpected skills we've picked up along the way. But here's the truth: legacy isn't built by playing it safe. It comes from stepping into the spotlight fully, bravely, and unapologetically as yourself.

My hope for this keynote is simple: when you step onto your next stage, you'll remember that your greatest power as a speaker isn't just your expertise. It's your courage to connect the dots between every part of your journey—the triumphs and the stumbles, the disciplines you've explored and those quirky passions you thought didn't belong—to the hearts and minds of your audience.

Because when you speak from that honest, messy, multidimensional place, you don't just become memorable—you become unforgettable.

8. And finally, for the first-time GSS attendee deciding whether to sit in on your session... what would you say to make sure they don't miss it?

If this is your first time at GSS, let me promise you one thing: this session will be different. You're not getting recycled frameworks or feel-good clichés from me. What you will get is real-world insight from someone who doesn't just talk about navigating complexity—I've lived it.

I've engineered structures, painted canvases, argued cases in courtrooms, read minds on stages, and captivated audiences around the globe.

Here's why that matters to you: your niche is valuable, absolutely—but your niche isn't your cage. True impact comes when you step beyond your expertise, when you blend your passions, experiences, and the twists and turns of your story into something uniquely yours. That's when your audience truly sees you—not just as a speaker with good ideas, but as someone unforgettable.

Come to this session and you'll walk out seeing your own story differently. You'll think more boldly, communicate more clearly, and speak from the whole of who you are. You'll leave not just inspired—but equipped, ready to lead and step confidently into the unknown.



Joe Curcillo is a strategic advisor, keynote speaker, and bestselling author known for helping visionary leaders break down silos, communicate powerfully, and lead boldly across disciplines. With a diverse career path that includes civil engineering, trial law, professional magic, and mind-reading entertainment—Joe thrives precisely where logic, creativity, and human connection collide.

He advises executives, leaders, and visionaries to embrace their multidisciplinary strengths, navigate complexity with clarity, and deliver messages that resonate deeply. Joe is the author of *The Generalist's Advantage*, *The Symphony of Disciplines*, and a companion leadership series focused on integrative thinking.

He lives in Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA, with his wife Deb—and an endless supply of caffeine, fueling his relentless pursuit of what's next.



The Emotional Signature of Your Voice:

HOW TONE, STORY AND TRUTH CONVERGE

When you think of the most powerful speakers you've ever heard, chances are it wasn't just their message that moved you – it was the way their voice carried that message into your heart through their emotional signature, the unique blend of tone, story and truth expressed through their voice.

As professional speakers, we invest in structure, storytelling and stagecraft. But sometimes we overlook our most potent tool: the voice itself. Not just how it sounds, but what it says about us.

I have a background as an actor and a singer, so I've been training my voice from a young age. With this foundation, and now working as a speaker and workshop leader helping clients to express themselves with impact, it's clear to me that the magic of our voice is released when it's used with intention. The clearer the intention, the more effective our voice can be as an emotional instrument that influences, connects and transforms.

And when we focus that intention at the intersection between tone, story, and truth, we can use our voice to deepen our emotional impact.

Firstly, let consider tone, the music beneath the message. It's how we express emotion through pace, pitch, rhythm and pause. We've all heard a speaker whose words were "right" but whose tone felt wrong – flat, forced, or disconnected. And we've all experienced the opposite: a voice that said very little but stirred something deep because it was alive with presence.

Tone is where the emotional intent of a message lives. It's why a sentence like "I'm glad you're here", can sound welcoming, indifferent, or even sarcastic, depending on the tone.



"If tone is the music, story is the vessel."

As an actor, I was trained to find the emotional truth of a line by setting a clear intention for the scene. The same words can have entirely different impacts depending on whether the character's objective is to comfort or challenge; seduce or persuade. Similarly, as speakers, we need to connect with our feeling in that moment and ask: What emotional goal am I pursuing?

Once that intention is clear, your tone will follow. It's not a performance, more like a natural byproduct of your emotional alignment. And just as in acting, subtle shifts in tone can speak louder than words.

As global speakers, we also need to consider how tone is interpreted across cultures. A passionate tone might inspire in one context but overwhelm in another. A quiet, grounded tone might project humility in some countries, while coming across as uncertain in others. Tuning into these differences sharpens our impact and broadens our reach.

Stories give shape to emotion. They give your voice a reason to rise, fall, pause... And they give your audience a way to emotionally invest – not just in your message, but in you.

We know that humans are hardwired for narrative and that stories activate the brain in ways facts can't. Stories also reveal who you are, not just as a speaker, but as a human being.

Actors inhabit stories through becoming a character, but as speakers, we inhabit our own stories. The power of story lies not just in what you tell, but how you tell it. Your voice brings it to life. A moment of silence before the punchline, a breath taken before a painful memory, a tremor of laughter in a joyful recollection. Remember, these aren't performance tricks; they're emotional cues, communicated through the instrument of your voice as a result of you intentionally connecting with your feelings.

I recently coached a client, a CEO, who shared a story about a deeply personal failure. Her voice cracked slightly; not theatrically, but authentically. The result? The audience leaned in to hear more. Her vulnerability, expressed vocally, connected more powerfully than any perfectly delivered line.

As speakers, we don't just tell our stories, we re-live them. This includes feeling them again. Reconnect to your original intention when you chose to share it. Your voice will reflect the emotional journey, and your audience will travel it with you.

The final, and perhaps most powerful, element in the emotional signature of a voice is truth.

Truth doesn't mean perfection. It means alignment. When who you are, what you say and how you say it are in sync, your voice carries the ring of authenticity. When it's not, your audience may not consciously know what's missing, but they will feel the dissonance.

On stage, authenticity is your most magnetic quality. A voice that is too polished, too rehearsed, or too "performed" can create distance. But a voice that's congruent with the speaker's values and emotions draws people in.

This is something actors are taught from day one: don't perform the emotion, experience it. And let the voice be a reflection of that truth. In speaking, the principle holds.

Your voice is the messenger of your inner world. If that's misaligned; if you're saying one thing but feeling another, your voice will tell on you.

Before stepping on stage, ask yourself: Am I connected to this message today, not just when I first wrote it? When you speak from a place of alignment, your voice naturally resonates with credibility, presence and impact.

Mel Sherwood is a Communication Skills and Personal Impact Speaker, Founder of The RED Effect™ and Author of 'The Authority Guide to Pitching Your Business'.

She works with global business leaders and teams who want to increase their influence and impact through clear, confident and compelling communication.

An Australian now based in Scotland, Mel is known for her engaging speaking style and love of red lipstick. She combines over 25 years' experience in business with a background as an actor, presenter and singer.

Tone. Story. Truth. Individually, they are powerful. Together, they create your emotional signature – the distinctive way your voice makes people feel.

Your emotional signature is not crafted overnight. It's refined through reflection, practice and the alignment of inner intention with outward expression.

So, how can you enhance it? Here are some ideas:

- Reflect on how you intend your audience to feel at key moments in your talk.
- Revisit the emotional core of your stories and rehearse them with fresh intention.
- Use recording and playback to tune your tone to your purpose, not just your script.

This is the intersection of technique and truth. Not performance for applause, but performance in service of connection.

An investor once told a founder I was working with, "I don't just want to think it's a good idea; I want to feel it's a good idea." As speakers, we know that the real transformation happens in the heart, not the head – your voice is the bridge between the two. That is your emotional signature. So let your voice carry your intention – clear, real and fully alive.

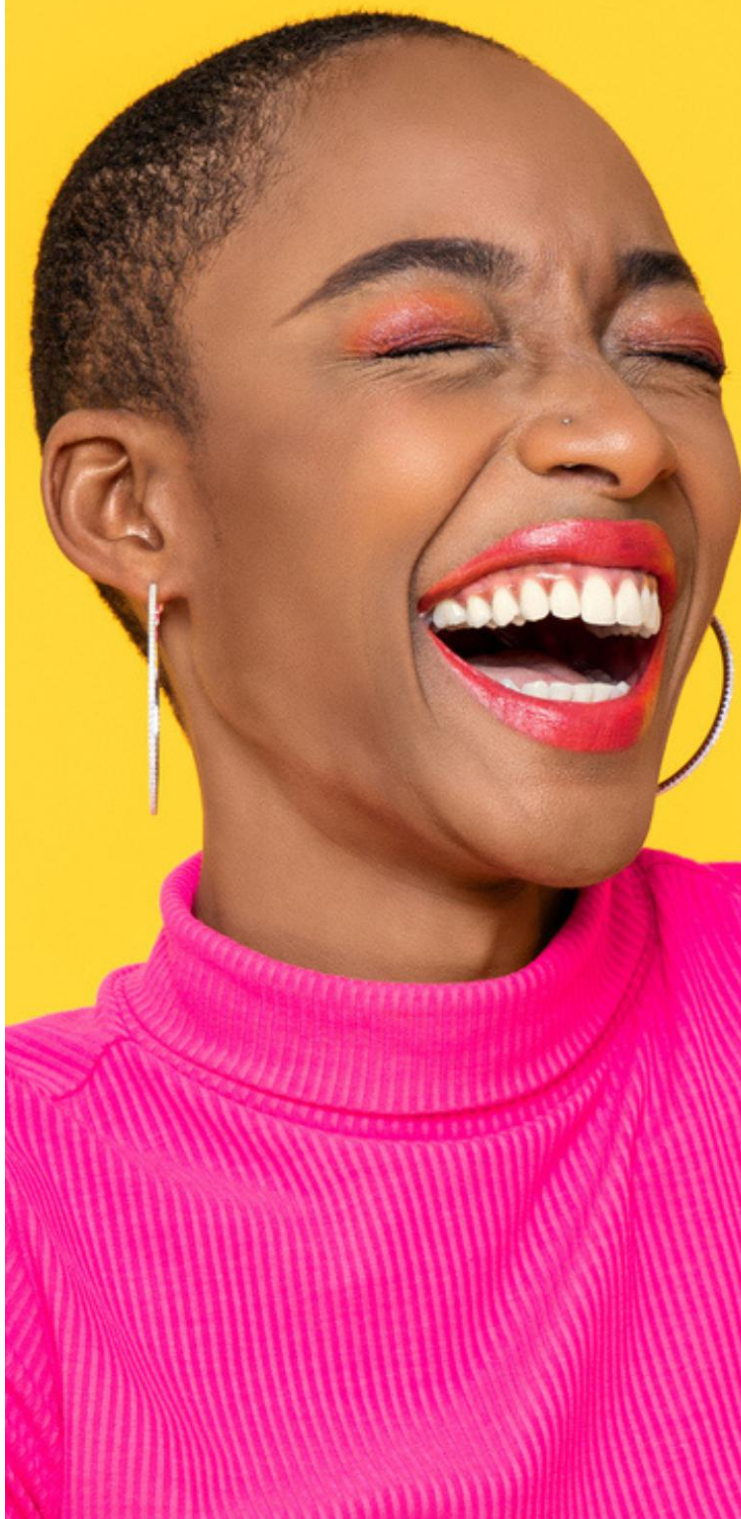




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-  Contracts
-  Affiliate Program
-  Forms & Quizzes
-  Blogging
-  Sales Manager
-  Ecommerce & Goods



WORDS MATTER!

HEIGHTENING THE HUMAN VOICE IN
A DIGITALLY DOMINATED DIALOGUE.

A Professional Speaker's words can be either WEAPONS or WANDS...

They can damage and harm immensely, or they can create magic and possibility beyond our wildest imaginations.

From the earliest times of the Athenian Greeks and Aristotle (widely considered the founder of the study of rhetoric, public speaking and persuasion in the 300's B.C), man has been applying voice as a platform for influence.

It is a platform that requires skill, yet this fundamental basic requirement of good 'humaning' does not necessarily come naturally to many people, or in many cases is taken for granted and we assume that we are doing it well.

But in many cases we are not.

And if we underplay that distinct humanness and the ability to human well by effecting our real voices meaningfully, then how different are we from robots mechanically defaulting to digital nuance when it comes to the experiences that we create?

And yes this applies to even speaking professionals... we need to human better.

Among the most distinct differences between humans and machines lies our capacity for care, connection, and emotional understanding... and the demonstration of this care and connection is largely via our words.

How We Make Other People Feel is a Skill!

We are navigating a tricky modern paradox: technology is advancing at lightning speed, yet the hunger for genuine human connection has never been greater.

In a world gone digital crazy, this amplifies our most unique human advantages.

It plays into many of our most critical conditions for success, and it is amplified by the spotlight of the speaker stage.

It is both a huge opportunity and a huge risk - and the mindset, language and responsibility that we choose will determine which direction each of us leans in.

As speakers what we assume is going to be relevant to our audiences and what we share with them on stage is part of the story, but the way we understand their worlds and create a deeper and more connected experience for them from start to finish is where the rubber is really going to hit the road.

We're going to have to human at a level that we may not have even imagined previously, it's going to be where our own relevance and future success is going to be created.



It's Where Our Voices are Going to Really Matter!

As thought leaders though we have largely been conditioned to prioritise content.

Great effort goes into models and methods, and what our 'stuff' looks like on the big screen.

But the content or the 'what' is changing so fast these days that if we obsess about 'what' then we will almost always be in the wrong place and not connecting meaningfully.

We need to significantly improve our 'how', the way we intuit and deliver our responses to the current human need state.

Again, even better humaning...

The 'how' is what connects, what cares, what cuts deep in the most meaningful ways.

In my business (Still Human - workplace advisory) I have the privilege of perspective and access, and I obtain a very meaningful understanding of what makes my clients tick... their 'how'.

I spend a lot of time debating, challenging, designing, trash-canning, and re-crafting the performance principles of many of the organisations that I assist, and I'm always intrigued by the initial default to the generic principles being the 'must haves' that so many organisations feel compelled to attach to :

Excellence
Trust
Customer centricity
Integrity (the all-time champion!)
Innovation
Service
Responsibility
Quality
Courage
Communication
Teamwork
Respect
Collaboration
Passion
Reliability

... to list a few.

Then, when I ask the executives in these organizations what these principles look like in the lived experience when properly demonstrated, I get blank stares.

When I ask how these principles impact organizational strategy, more blank stares and sometimes attempts at saving face.

And when I ask what happens when employees, including leaders, behave in ways contradictory to the articulated principles – there is silence. And then a response of “nothing”.

This is What I Call the 'Principles Predicament'.

Of course there are some people who do have good awareness, understanding and application of their respective organisational principles (often labelled as 'values'), but from what I've experienced in the many organisations that I've worked with around the world, this figure is scarily minuscule compared to what it should be.

Has this caused you to stop and pause to reflect on your own principles articulation, and how you are living them meaningfully in your own business (both on and off the stage)?

As a speaker and thought leader are you being authentic to what it is that you share with the world?

How is this contributing to the human awesomeness that you stand for, hopefully?

Perhaps this would be easier and more accessible if I simplify the whole conversation.

Yes, you may keep all the other principles stuff that you want to add in because it feels like it needs to be there, but single out one even bigger overarching principle... **AWESOME HUMANING!**



Am I repeating myself?

YES! That's how critical this is.

There is however a catch.

As speakers we run the risk of wheel spinning on the philosophical narrative and never getting to the practical application.

That almost perfect audience state where we have people feeling deeply, thinking clearly, and properly equipped to act!

I work hard to get this right, knowing that I may not be present to see the moment that it all aligns for my audiences, that moment where the feeling, thinking and doing happen synchronously for them... and their lives shift magically.

Because it can happen days, weeks, months or even years after having received my words.

And, on occasion, even bigger magic can happen... and it can happen seconds after we speak...

I had a perfect experience like this a little while back.

I was invited to deliver a talk on the TEDx stage. I pondered what I should talk about, what was an 'idea worth sharing'. And I decided to share something deeply personal but also something that I knew was a big challenge for many people today, relating to stress and how it is affecting humanity.



My speaking script (TEDx is carefully coached and scripted) read like this

MOUNT KILIMANJARO

(top of Africa – 5895m) (show success photo)

MOUNT ELBRUS

(top of Europe – 5642m) (show success photo)

EVEREST BASE CAMP

(on the way to the top of the world – 5364m)
(show success photo)

I know people who have died attempting these dangerous summits, but in my case it wasn't these adventures that nearly killed me...

It was something completely unexpected and non-obvious, the **STRESS DOOM LOOP!**

(show illustration - 3 stress aspects –

PEOPLE PLEASING! | LISTS! |

NOT ENOUGH TIME!)

Ask them :

As you look at this loop, at these three stress bombs... do you see certain elements where some or lots of your stress may live? (pause longer than usual)

I woke up on the morning of the 29th Dec 2014, and I had no sensation in my body... I could not feel at all. No physical sensation. NOTHING!

My nervous system was tripping out!

My nervous system was... in a state of CHAOS!!!
(show hospital photo)

I very quickly had given my audience a heart connection (emotional drama), a head connection (valuable information), and a glimpse of a solution that had them wanting more.

You can see how this unfolds in more detail by watching the talk, but in a nutshell the bulk of the talk time was spent taking them into reflecting on their own lives and giving them a very practical and actionable method for managing their own stress, enhancing their well-being, and effectively changing their lives.

But the real moment of magic happened afterwards.

I was outside the event hall, and not one, not two, but a whole stream of people came to chat with me and show me messages that they had sent, appointments that they had booked, and diarised actions that they had chosen during the brief time I was on stage.

My voice had connected!

My words had landed.

And magical impact was unfolding...

SO WHAT NOW?

I have been sharing here how I believe we can amplify our human awesomeness and in doing so how we can build incredible speaking businesses in an increasingly digital world.

We don't know what's coming next. How can we? What we do know for sure however is that if we don't apply ourselves meaningfully to a higher level of humaning we are going to be left behind.

And in the words of another client of mine in a recent session, 'It's not complicated, it's just hard.'

But we need to choose our words carefully. Words matter!

Being on stage as a professional speaker is a privilege and is not to be taken lightly. To amplify this by bringing humanity and even more awesome humaning to that space of privilege is a choice.

It is an intention. And not a simple one.

Will you wield your words as weapons that leave people worse off than before they experienced you?

Or will you wave your words as wands that create magical possibilities for everybody that experiences you, whether on or off the stage?

I wish for you the courage of optimism, enthusiasm, and awesome humaning as you add your own magic to making the world an even better place.

Take care of yourself.

Take care of each other.

HUMAN AWESOMELY!

So, what words are you making matter most?
What agreements do you enter into with yourself?
What are your personal words 'rules' going to be?

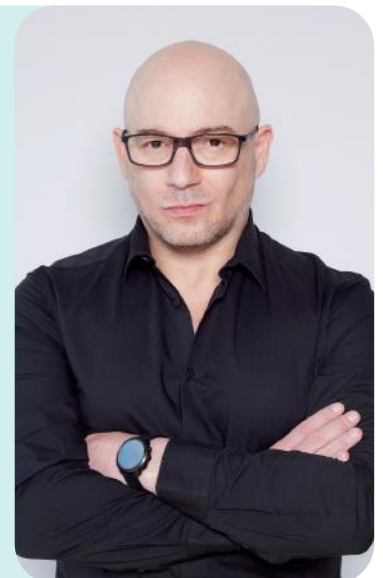
Brad Shorkend is a behavioural specialist and high-performance junkie, obsessed with helping leaders, businesses, and anyone who wakes up to work be better at the complicated job of being human.

Since 2005, as a speaker, facilitator, thinking sparring partner, and CEO of Still Human (Workplace Advisory), he has impacted thousands worldwide.

A relentless entrepreneur, Brad has founded and (mostly) successfully led over 20 businesses across industries including architecture, telecommunications, fashion, start-up acceleration, music retail, beauty, technology, consulting, and FMCG.

He co-authored the 2018 book **"WE ARE STILL HUMAN (and work shouldn't suck!)"** and has contributed to various other published works.

Brad is a TEDx speaker and a frequent contributor to print, online publications, and radio. He also serves as adjunct faculty at GIBS and Duke CE business schools.



AUTHOR SHOWCASE



MOXIE: How I Learnt to Harden the Fuck Up

MOXIE : How I Learnt to Harden the Fuck Up is the raw and powerful memoir of Justine Martin, a woman who refused to let life break her. After being hit with a relentless string of diagnoses including multiple sclerosis, cancer, and an acquired brain injury, Justine was told she would never work again.

Instead, she built an empire. This book is a no-holds-barred account of how she turned adversity into fuel, grief into growth, and pain into purpose. With unapologetic honesty and a wicked sense of humour, Justine shares how she found her voice, created five thriving businesses, and became an award-winning speaker and advocate.

Moxie is more than a memoir — it's a manifesto for anyone who's ever been knocked down and dared to get back up swinging.

People often ask me how I do it. How I keep going. How I keep smiling. How I've built five businesses, won over 20 business awards, 40 art awards, published bestselling books, and stood on international stages — all while living with multiple chronic illnesses. The truth is, I found my moxie.

Moxie is a fire in your gut that doesn't burn out when life throws its worst at you. It's that inner spark that says, "Nope, not today," even when your body and mind are screaming for you to stop. Moxie is getting knocked down for the hundredth time and still finding the strength to stand back up. Not just to bounce back — but to bounce forward, stronger, wiser, louder.

I didn't arrive at moxie the easy way. In my 40s, my world unravelled. I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Then cancer. Then an acquired brain injury. Then more autoimmune conditions, and more hospital stays than I could count. Doctors told me I wouldn't work again. That I should accept a future of decline. I cried. I screamed. I grieved. And then I decided that if I was still breathing, I was still living



I didn't just build a business. I built five. Each one came from a place of purpose. Art helped me heal, so I opened JUZT Art. My voice gave me power, so I became a speaker. My story inspired others, so I created Resilience Mindset. I saw the need for inclusive publishing, so I launched Morpheus Publishing. And when I noticed gaps in support services, I created Geelong Residential Cleaners and Garden Maintenance. I turned pain into passion, and passion into impact.

That's what moxie is. It's finding the courage to create something out of the rubble. It's waking up with a body that doesn't always cooperate, and choosing to lead anyway. It's realising you can rewrite the story they tried to hand you — and doing just that.

I never set out to be a speaker. In fact, I used to hate the sound of my own voice. But when I started sharing my story, something shifted. People didn't just listen — they connected. They came up to me afterwards and said, "Thank you. That's exactly what I needed to hear." And in those moments, I understood the power of showing up fully as yourself. Not sugar-coated. Not polished. Just real.

That's why I speak now. That's why I write. That's why I mentor others. Because I know what it feels like to be invisible, to be dismissed, to be broken — and I also know what it feels like to rise.

To the speakers, entrepreneurs, and leaders reading this — you already have moxie. You wouldn't be where you are if you didn't.



**– and if I was living,
I was going to do something
bloody amazing with it.**

But sometimes we forget it. We let fear, doubt, or comparison dull our spark. I want you to remember who you are. What you've overcome.

What you've built. What you've survived.
And I want you to share it.



Because the world doesn't need more perfect people on pedestals. It needs humans — raw, resilient, messy, bold — who are willing to stand up and say, "This is me. This is what I've been through. And this is what's possible."

I had the honour of meeting Dr Tererai Trent at Crom Castle in Ireland, and what unfolded from that moment still feels surreal. Her wisdom, warmth, and deep belief in human potential left a mark on me. When she agreed to write the foreword for my memoir, I was beyond humbled.

To have her words open my book is one of the greatest blessings in my life and a beautiful reminder of the power of connection between women who have walked through fire and chosen to lead anyway.

I didn't get here by playing it safe. I got here by taking risks, backing myself, and refusing to let anyone — including myself — write me off.

I have moxie. And if I can find mine in the middle of pain, chaos, and uncertainty — so can you.



Justine Martin is a resilience expert, international keynote speaker, and award-winning entrepreneur. After being diagnosed with multiple chronic illnesses including multiple sclerosis, cancer, and an acquired brain injury, she was told she would never work again.

Instead, she built five thriving businesses and became a leading voice for empowerment, inclusion, and bouncing forward from adversity.

Justine is the author of multiple best-selling books, including *Whispers of Resilience* and *Finding Hope*, and the founder of Morpheus Publishing, which helps people with disabilities and diverse voices become published authors. Her passion is helping others discover their strength through storytelling and lived experience.



The foreword to this powerful memoir is written by none other than Dr Tererai Trent, Oprah Winfrey's "favourite guest of all time."

Her inspiring words set the tone for a story of grit, growth, and unshakable resilience.

PRE-ORDER HERE



From Koalas to Keynotes:

A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH
LINDSAY ADAMS, OAM

Chairperson of GSS 2026

What happens when you blend a world-class speaker, a coastal paradise, and a bold vision for the future of global speaking? You get Lindsay Adams, OAM, Chairperson of the Global Speakers Summit 2026.

We sat down with Lindsay to get the inside scoop—from why Cairns was chosen, to the surprising suggestion that nearly had kangaroos in the spotlight.

1 Why Cairns? Was it the reef, the vibe, or a secret love for koalas?

Honestly? It was all of the above! The reef, the rainforest, the warmth (both the weather and the people)—Cairns has this incredible laid-back energy that we knew would create magic. Plus, who doesn't love a koala selfie?

2 The theme is Grow, Sell, Speak, 26 and Beyond. What future are we really stepping into here, and why now?

We're stepping into a future where speakers have to be smarter, faster, and more adaptable than ever. It's about growing your business, selling your expertise, speaking with impact, and embracing AI, tech, and global trends so we're not just keeping up—we're leading the way.

3 In the earliest planning meetings, what was the one non-negotiable you held onto fiercely?

Connection. No matter how big the event got, it had to feel personal. We wanted it to feel like a huge, exciting global family reunion—where everyone walks away feeling seen, valued, and inspired.

4 What's been the biggest "oh no" moment so far, and how did your team spin it into gold?

Realising just how many moving parts there are when you invite the whole world to Australia! However, the team didn't panic—they leaned in, tightened the plan, and turned it into an opportunity to create an even better experience. We got sharper, faster, and stronger.

5 As Chairperson, what's been your proudest moment so far? And your funniest?

Proudest: Watching the team step up and own the vision like it was theirs. It's not just my summit—it's our summit.

Funniest: Someone suggested we have kangaroo rides as entertainment. (Spoiler: we're not doing it. Probably.)

6 What do you hope every speaker and attendee feels when they leave Cairns?

Elevated. I want them to leave feeling bigger, braver, and bolder than when they arrived—like they're ready to take on the world, and then some.

7 Finish this sentence: GSS 2026 is not just a summit. It's a...

...once-in-a-lifetime collision of ideas, inspiration, and opportunity.



"It's not just my summit—it's our summit."
— Lindsay Adams, OAM

GSS 2026: Where Impact Takes the Stage

Whether you're coming for the thought leadership, the networking, or that once-in-a-lifetime selfie with a koala, GSS 2026 in Cairns promises more than just a summit—it promises transformation.

With Lindsay Adams, OAM, at the helm, expect warmth, wit, and a world-class experience like no other. See you in Cairns!

Beyond “The End”:

Why Finishing the Book Is Just the Beginning

You did it.

After late nights, endless rewrites, imposter syndrome spirals, and probably a few too many coffees, you've typed those glorious final words: The End.

But here's the kicker no one tells you early enough: writing the book is only half the journey. The real work?

That begins when you decide to put your book into the hands (and minds and hearts), of readers.

The Harder Part of the Hard Work

Publishing a book is like giving birth to a beautiful idea. But what about raising it into something that stands on its own in the world? That's the marathon.

Today traditionally published authors are expected to be marketers, networkers, PR specialists, and content creators. For self-published authors, it's even more DIY. From building a launch strategy to designing assets, running ads, coordinating speaking engagements, and engaging your community. This phase is where your book becomes more than pages; it becomes your platform.

According to The Guardian, a growing number of authors report spending more time marketing their books than they did writing them, more out of necessity, than choice.

Visibility: The New Currency for Authors

A brilliant book won't make waves if it stays buried in the algorithm. This is where visibility comes in.

Successful authors today understand that building an audience around their message is crucial. A professional website, active social presence, regular emails, podcast interviews, book clubs, event appearances, they all count.

Platforms like Goodreads, Amazon Author Central, and LinkedIn allow authors to cultivate ongoing dialogue with their audiences. Some even host live online Q&As or create behind-the-scenes content for their readers. But for speakers and thought leaders, we have a powerful route to visibility...

Enter the GSS2026 Author Showcase

The Global Speakers Summit 2026 Author Showcase is your chance to bring your book centre stage ... literally. Whether you've written a book on leadership, communication, culture, creativity, resilience, or reinvention, if it supports personal or professional growth, your story deserves the spotlight.

The GSS Author Showcase is a carefully curated opportunity for published authors attending the Global Speakers Summit 2026 in Cairns, to share their message with a global audience of fellow speakers, event organisers, and decision-makers.



What's on offer?

- Premium visibility in front of a highly engaged international audience
- High-quality photos and video clips of your showcase appearance
- Opportunities to generate leads, sell books, and potentially secure future speaking gigs
- And the chance to inspire, educate, and empower through your words

And here's the reality check: only nine spots are available.

You've Got the book, Now Build The Buzz

Publishing a book isn't just about hitting print. It's about getting your message into the right hands so it can do the work it was meant to do. You've already done the hard work of writing it. Now it's time to let it shine.

If you've registered for GSS2026 and you're a published author, the Author Showcase is the perfect next chapter to build your marketing collateral.

Find out more and apply here:

<https://gss2026.com/author-showcase>



Sally Foley-Lewis, CSP is a global expert in middle management leadership and productivity. With over 20 years of experience, Sally empowers middle managers to boost performance, delegate with confidence, give feedback that sticks, and lead with purpose.

A multi-award-winning speaker, educator, author and mentor, she's known for her practical, no-fluff style, a dash of humour, and deep commitment to unlocking leadership potential in the often-overlooked middle.

As the creator of six books, including, *The Productive Leader* and *The 5 Key Ingredients (and Secret Sauce) to High-Performing Middle Managers*, Sally's mission is simple: lift leaders to lead.

From Page to Platform at GSS2026

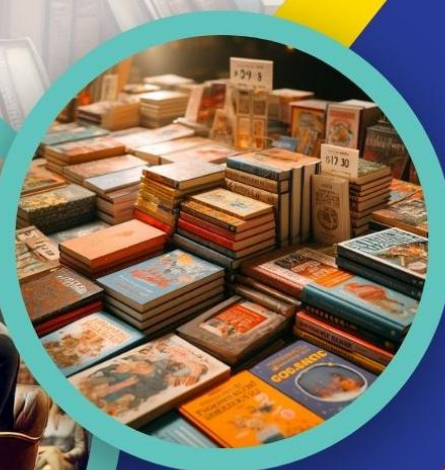
AUTHOR SHOWCASE

ONLY 9 SPOTS AVAILABLE

For more information and to apply:

<https://gss2026.com/author-showcase>

Terms & Conditions Apply



Got a question? Email president@professionalspeakers.org.au



The German Guide to Funny

HOW FUNNY CAN / SHOULD / MUST MY VOICE BE?
AND HOW?

A German trying to explain humor to you? This should be, well: fun? interesting? complicated?

Especially since, according to my wife and teenage kids, I'm not funny at all. Of course, I see it differently. But I won't hold it against you if you turn the page right now. Well, not much anyway...

The Unlikely Humor Expert

We Germans have a certain reputation when it comes to humor. We're known for punctuality—not punchlines. Perhaps that's why I've spent years researching humor in positive psychology. I tried to engineer and think myself into a more funny person – with some success, some say (by the way: I find this funny!)





But you know about the irony: sometimes the people most fascinated by a subject are those who have to work hardest to master it. The accountant who becomes a salsa instructor, the introvert who studies charisma. So perhaps my "humor handicap" makes me uniquely qualified to help fellow speakers enhance their funny bone. Or muscle. Or sperm (not funny, I know...)

Why Bother Being Funny?

Always start with tie. Err: chai. No, bullshit: always start with why: So why should you care about humor in professional speaking at all? Isn't delivering solid content enough? Well, let me share what the research actually tells us (and I'll add some me-search):

The Four Flavors of Funny

According to *Martin et al. (2003)*, there are four main humor styles, which I've learned to navigate through painful trial and error:

 <p>Affiliative</p>	 <p>Self-Enhancing</p>	 <p>Aggressive</p>	 <p>Self-Defeating</p>
<p>This connects people through shared laughter. It's inclusive, warm, and non-threatening.</p> <p>Example: "I tried to implement a standing desk policy at home. Now my family just stands around watching me cook dinner."</p>	<p>This helps you cope with life's challenges by finding the funny side.</p> <p>Example: "My meditation app keeps telling me I've reached a seven-day streak, which is good to know since I always fall asleep before being able to track my practice."</p>	<p>This targets others with teasing, ridicule, or sarcasm.</p> <p>Example: "Looking at the front row, I can tell who is divorced or actually should be divorced by the time my intro is over." (Note: Handle with extreme caution unless you reallllly know what you're doing)</p>	<p>This involves making yourself the butt of jokes in a way that undermines your status.</p> <p>Example: "I'm such a terrible public speaker that my own PowerPoint presentations try to crash just to escape." (Not really funny, I know.)</p>

As speakers, we should primarily aim for affiliative and self-enhancing humor, with occasional, gentle self-deprecation. As a German, I naturally tried to systemize this into a simple flowchart of some 15 pages, but the otherwise charming editor Wendy wouldn't let me.

Humor isn't just fun—it's functional. Studies show that humor as a character strength in the VIA framework correlates with greater overall wellbeing (*Buschor, Proyer, & Ruch, 2013*).

People with a strong sense of humor even appear to heal faster after physical illnesses (*Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006*) and age more healthily (Vaillant, 2000).

Meaning: the hours and hours the audience spends listening to you are generally well-spent (psychological science – just to let you know – is always about averages and huge data sets, not everything applies to everyone all of the time...)

When we laugh, we experience positive emotions that broaden our perspective and build psychological resources – for the next crisis or the next failed joke. In speaking terms, this means your audience becomes more receptive, retains more information, and—perhaps most importantly—likes you more.

But not all humor is created equal, which brings us to...



Size doesn't matter – Or: The Humor-Measuring Contest

How funny should your speaking voice be? That depends on your audience, topic, and personal style. There's no universal humor quotient you must or can reach.

Some topics require more gravitas, others more levity. Some audiences expect formality, others informality. The key is calibration and connection, not maximization.

I've found that even the most serious presentations can benefit from moments of lightness. These don't need to be hilarious—just human. A knowing smile, a playful analogy, or a brief anecdote can provide welcome cognitive rest during complex material.

As someone who has measured just about everything related to humor (there are actually psychological scales for this, because of course there are), I can tell you that quality trumps quantity every time. One authentic moment of shared mirth creates more connection than ten forced jokes.

The Self-Deprecation Manual (Use Responsibly)

Making fun of yourself is perhaps the safest and most endearing form of humor for speakers. But there's a crucial difference between humanizing yourself and undermining yourself.

Here's my tried-and-tested approach:

1. Target foibles, not competence:

Joke about your coffee addiction, not your lack of expertise.

"I've researched positive psychology for 15 years, which explains why my coffee mug says 'Optimist' on one side and 'But bring coffee first' on the other." (I first wanted to write something along the idea of "people rather forgive your incontinence than your incompetence", but I didn't find it funny enough. Do you?)

You Don't Have to BE Funny, But You Should Try to SEE Funny

Here's the liberating truth I wish someone had told me years ago: being a humorous speaker doesn't mean being a comedian. We can't all be Tim Gards – that's the sad thing! The good thing is: Tim Gard exists already! (once, as far as I can tell.)

Cultivating a humorous voice means developing what I call "humor vision"—the ability to spot and highlight the inherent absurdities, contradictions, and unexpected connections in our shared human experience.

As the positive psychology researchers Bincze and Cser so aptly put it (and yes, I'm quoting them directly because, as a German, I appreciate proper citation): "You don't have to BE funny. But you should try to SEE funny." (*European Positive Psychology Conference, Innsbruck, July 10, 2024, around 3.37 p.m. CET, room 104.*)

This shift in perspective changed everything for me. Instead of pressuring myself to write jokes, I started collecting funny observations. Instead of trying to be witty, I began noticing what genuinely made me laugh and bringing that authentic amusement to my talks.

2. Keep it relevant:

Choose self-deprecating stories that reinforce rather than distract from your message.

For a talk on resilience:

"My first book was rejected by 12 publishers."

"And your second?"

"There is no second. And no first."

3. Balance vulnerability with confidence:

Follow self-deprecation with demonstrated competence. "Despite my thick German accent that makes me sound like I'm always angry—which my international students have pointed out repeatedly—I've managed to teach positive psychology in seven different countries."

(Eight of them are German-speaking, by the way...)

4. Test before you try:

Practice your self-deprecating humor with trusted colleagues. What sounds charmingly humble to you might sound alarmingly insecure to others.

Remember:
The goal is to appear more human, not less capable.

Three Evidence-Based Ways to Boost Your Humor Skills

Now, let's get serious (sorry – German...).

Humor, like any other skill, can be deliberately practiced. Here are three research-backed exercises adapted from positive psychology interventions:

1. The "Three Funny Things" Exercise:

Each evening, write down three amusing things that happened that day, why they were funny, and your role in them. This trains your attention to spot humor in everyday life. And makes you realize how much your humorous moments are (at least co-)created by yourself!

2. The "Humor Reframe":

Take a stressful situation from your professional life and find three potentially funny aspects of it. This can help build cognitive flexibility and emotional resilience. (And it might help the audience connect with your sorry lot.)

3. The "Five Playful Minutes":

Schedule five minutes daily for something purely playful or silly. This cultivates the lighthearted mindset from which spontaneous humor springs. (I for example just told myself the same joke ten times in a row: "Beethoven's favorite fruit? Ba-na-na-naaa"...)

I've tested these with skeptics (including German engineering executives, possibly the toughest audience for humor exercises) and found they genuinely work—if practiced with rigor and dedication.



When Humor Backfires: Limiting Beliefs and Real Risks

Let's address the anxieties that may be running through your mind:

"Am I funny enough?"

Probably more than you think, especially if you focus on authentic observations rather than crafted jokes.

"Will my humor land with this audience?"

Not always, and that's perfectly okay. A humor attempt that falls flat can be recovered with a simple "Well, that sounded funnier in my head" and moving on.

"Could I offend someone?"

Yes, which is why we avoid humor that targets others or relies on stereotypes. When in doubt, make yourself the protagonist of any potentially embarrassing story.

"Will people take me seriously?"

Yes, if your humor enhances rather than replaces substance. Research shows that appropriate humor often increases perceived competence by demonstrating social intelligence.

The biggest risk isn't a joke falling flat—it's appearing inauthentic or formulaic. Your audience can tell when you're reciting memorized one-liners versus sharing genuine moments of wit or wonder.

The Serious Conclusion (With a hopefully funny Twist)

Humor in professional speaking isn't about getting laughs—it's about getting in sync with the audience. It's about introducing lightness so that your valuable message doesn't feel too heavy. It's about making yourself human so your expertise becomes accessible, connectible, digestible.

And here's the twist: the more seriously you take your message, the more you might benefit from not taking yourself too seriously. This tension—between significant content and light delivery—creates the perfect conditions for your voice to resonate.



So no, you don't need to be funny. But yes, your voice probably could be a little humorous than you initially think. Not because humor is essential to speaking success, but because it's fundamental to human connection.

And if all else fails, just mention that you got your humor advice from a German. That alone should be good for at least one sympathetic chuckle.



Christian Thiele [*pronounced: Tee-le*] is an expert in positive psychology and positive leadership at the German University for Health and Sports. He speaks, coaches, facilitates workshops, writes and podcasts on humor and other aspects of happiness and wellbeing – especially at work.

Despite being German, he occasionally makes people laugh. Sometimes even intentionally – at least he believes so. His wife and his kids have doubts...

Terrible, but passionate climber.
Passionate, but terrible lover.

GSS2026

WORD SAFARI



P	R	N	I	F	X	I	C	S	I	M	C	G	C	J
I	D	R	A	Q	E	P	M	N	J	O	G	L	U	A
Z	P	K	Z	K	V	E	F	P	N	O	H	O	L	T
R	H	N	G	X	B	L	R	N	A	E	N	B	T	U
Q	J	T	T	C	U	Z	E	X	A	C	R	A	U	X
T	W	L	W	E	O	C	L	V	Q	X	T	L	R	N
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F	E	E	R	T	N	I	A	D	R	I	M	I	S	T
H	A	I	E	R	I	P	S	N	I	M	O	A	H	E
I	A	M	Q	E	B	F	Y	Q	U	S	Y	N	Y	N
C	J	M	A	B	H	J	H	S	F	J	L	A	N	N
C	O	L	L	A	B	O	R	A	T	E	J	H	A	C

The mic's hot, the sun's out, and somewhere in this jungle of letters,
your speaker superpowers are hiding.

Track down all 15 words below – they may be chilling sideways, climbing
backwards, or swinging diagonally like a sugar-high koala.

Find them before the summit starts!

SPEAKER CLUE CARDS (Match the word to the clue!)

- Where the crocs chill and the speakers thrill
- The mic drop moment
- What great speakers leave behind (besides slides)
- The stage has no borders
- Jedi mind tricks, but ethical
- When your talk makes someone quit their job (in a good way)
- Happens outside the comfort zone
- Fancy word for “chat, laugh, LinkedIn”
- Not just a mountain, but where legends meet
- When solo becomes a symphony
- Seeing 2050 before breakfast
- Respecting the local dance before doing your talk
- The real currency of GSS
- A rainforest older than the Amazon
- As in Great Barrier, stunning and local



Cue the Applause:

HOW TO PRIME THE AUDIENCE FOR SUCCESS!

A great introduction lifts the energy—for you, for the audience, and for the whole event.

I was recently invited to speak at an internal kickoff for a smaller group of consultants (imagine a conference room, not a big stage). I was up after the coffee break. The manager sat down with the rest and introduced me like this:

"Yeah, so we've got an external speaker now. Thought it might be good for you to hear a new voice. Antoni, go ahead..." No applause, no explanations, nothing.

I call this a headwind introduction.

Book a

heck lists

Books

It wasn't the first time someone gave a poor intro. I'm sure you've experienced it too, right? But it was the first time that I made a firm decision: from now on, I'll do everything I can to make sure the introduction is better—because it has such a positive impact on both me and the audience.

A well-prepared introduction sets the tone for the speaker's success. It's more than just a formality—it frames the speaker's message, builds credibility, and engages the audience before the talk even begins. Sadly, many overlook this moment or stumble through it with generic comments. That's a shame.

One of the most common pitfalls is a lack of preparation. The emcee (even professional ones, I'm sad to say) often grabs the speaker's bio at the last minute, reads it word for word, and misses the chance to connect the speaker's message to the purpose of the meeting. The risk? The audience zones out, and the speaker gets that headwind I mentioned.

I just saw this happen. One of Sweden's top speakers was about to be introduced by a manager who read from a script and made odd remarks like: "Is it you who claims you're such a great speaker or is it others who say that?"

Now this awesome speaker had to defend himself. The vibe in the room got weird. The manager failed to prime the audience to be in a good mood.

If you're a speaker, talk to the person introducing you beforehand.

And when you do, here are three ways you can help them do it better:

- 1** Write down a few key points about yourself—not a long biography. Add, for example, three things about you that you want them to know to establish credibility, curiosity, etc., or the three main takeaways from your talk—tailored for this audience. Or one key question that you will answer.
- 2** Ask them to share why they wanted you to come in the first place. That makes it personal. This is what I often prefer. And then I can add a few things for them.
- 3** Write a short script and be crystal clear that they should learn it by heart.

Bonus tip: Make sure they get the audience to applaud. It sets a good tone.



A great introduction is a bridge between your message and the audience's interests. When you guide the manager or host on how to do it right, you increase your chance of starting strong and leaving a lasting impression. And as professional speakers, that's what we want—because that's when real change can happen.

Thanks for reading my mind—and good luck with those intros of yours!



Antoni Lacinai is based in Sweden and works as a global keynote speaker. He shares insights on awesome human communication so that strategies become reality. He has written and co-written 14 books (one newly released is called **Moderate Great**). He is a regular columnist for HR and leadership magazines, and is often interviewed on TV. Antoni will be at GSS2026 where he will also hold a session.

Connect with him at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lacinai/>



Behind the Mic

JOHAN IRWAN KAMARUZAMAN, CSP

When you meet Johan Irwan Kamarozaman, CSP, you don't just hear his voice — you feel it. It's the voice of an engineer-turned-educator, a rock guitarist with a passion for human behaviour, and a leader who's just as comfortable on an international stage as he is coaching one-on-one. Whether he's representing MAPS, VSAI, or the Global Speakers Federation, Johan's voice carries more than just words — it carries presence, purpose, and a powerful beat.

In this exclusive VOICES-themed chat, we ask him to imagine his voice as a persona — and true to Johan's style, he doesn't hold back. Expect riffs of wisdom, moments of raw vulnerability, and just enough rock and roll to keep things interesting.

1. If your voice were a person, who would it be? A rock legend? A wise sage?

As a guitar player, I imagine my voice is someone like Steve Vai, a guitar virtuoso.

For me, he didn't just play songs on stage; he told stories from his performance. You can feel the emotions he would like to convey in different parts of the songs.

To me, professional speaking is just like a performance on stage. We tell stories so that people can resonate with the message, we take the audience on a journey of discovery, and as we leave the stage, they will see the world differently.

2. You started as an engineer and transformed into a speaker. Has your voice changed with each shift in your career ?

Every time I shifted my profession, I reflected a lot. I did not just transform from an engineer to a speaker. I also did marketing and business development. And along the way, I was involved in network marketing and selling trust funds. The journey allowed me to discover myself, and I believe being on stage is where I belong. Since I love to read books and impart knowledge, I believe being a speaker suits my purpose.

The decision that led me to become a speaker was when I realized deep in my heart that there was a small voice whispering to me that I wanted to be the person on stage every time I attended conferences or seminars.

My frustration was at its peak when I organized a leadership program where we hired lecturers to deliver on several leadership topics.



“The outcome of the program was so frustrating that I learned practically nothing about leadership throughout the 11 days of the program. That made me decide to do something about it.”

3 What's one off-air moment where your voice made an impact that stayed with you?

To me, the moment my voice impacts someone is when I know that I have served my purpose. As speakers, sometimes we don't even know how our voice impacts others.

But there have been several occasions when someone came to me, telling me how the sessions made a difference in their life. That is what truly matters.

4. As a GSF Board Rep, you hear voices from around the world. What makes your voice uniquely Malaysian

In a simple word, I would call rojak — a blend of mixed cultures, languages, and values that we hold on to

I believe Malaysia is unique in itself because we are always mixed with people who are different from us.

That is where respect plays an important role. We must speak what we believe in, read the room, and always respect other points of view.



5. Fast forward to GSS2026 in Cairns.

The lights dim. Your voice echoes through the hall with one final message to the next generation of speakers.

What does it say?

In a world dominated by AI and algorithms, our most valuable asset is our authenticity. To speak with purpose, conviction, and intention.

That is what being human is all about. Nothing beats a human voice when we deliver a message with soul.



Johan Irwan Kamarozaman, CSP, is the founder of Leap Leadership Academy and a passionate advocate for leadership and communication development.

A former engineer turned professional speaker, he is a past president of MAPS, GSF Board Representative, certified coach, and author recognized among Malaysia's 100 Most Inspirational LinkedIn Icons.

You didn't come all this way just for the applause.

Be Unforgettable, Not Unrecorded

Professional
filming &
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packages
for GSS
keynote
speakers.

From the Stage to Strategy

This is more than just footage
It's creating content that builds
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Limited Spots

Payment plans available

Expressions of interest now open

email: info@melindahird.com.au

melinda hird

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

melindahirdphotography.com.au

A man in a purple shirt is seen from behind, addressing a large, blurred audience in a dimly lit room. The audience is seated and appears to be listening attentively. The man's shirt has a subtle pink and white striped pattern.

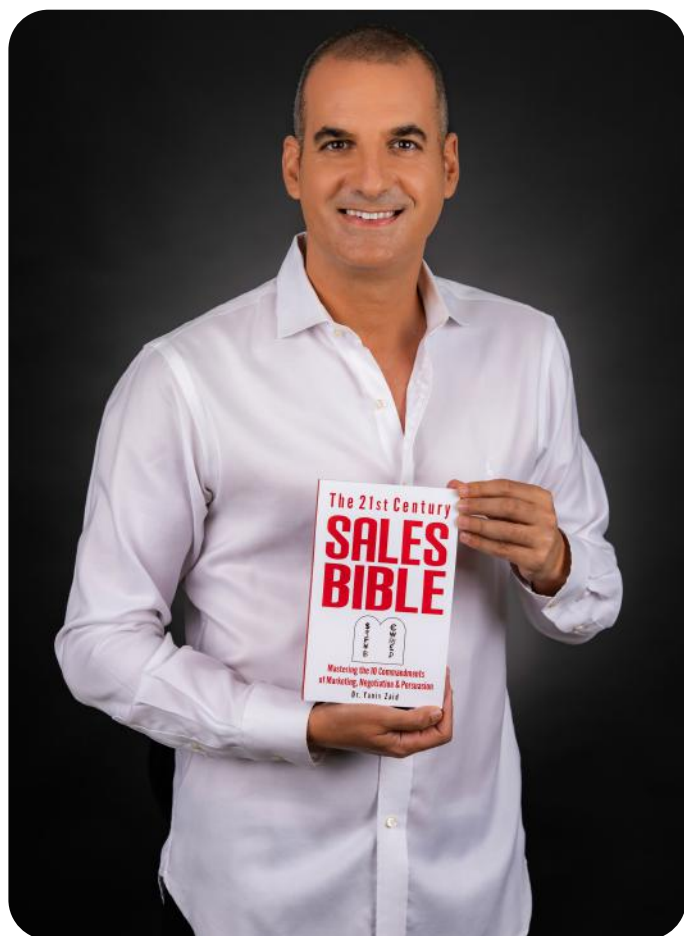
Recipes Don't Make the Chef

HOW YOUR UNIQUE VOICE WILL
BUILD YOUR BRAND

In 2004, I published my first book, *Persuade and Influence any Audience*. The book was based mostly on lectures that I gave at the time, on presentation, “debate” speechwriting, and public speaking.

Among the many “empowering” statements I heard from my environment - both near and far - when the book came out in stores, one statement was repeated, again and again, “Why are you revealing all your tricks and secrets? Why are you publishing all your lectures in the book? You are harming yourself - people will not come to your lectures because they have already read your book!” (I also received feedback such as “You don’t make money from books,” “Who will read your book?” and lots of other “limiting beliefs”)

I recalled those statements some years later as I was talking with a top chef who was taking part in one of my mentoring programs when she revealed to me one of the most well-known secrets in the world. She said to me, “Do you know why famous chefs publish their recipes in cookbooks, in newspaper articles, on their cooking shows, and on TV? And why they aren’t afraid their competitors will copy them, or that people will prepare their special dishes at home and then will not go to their restaurants? Because they never really reveal everything!



Even if the technical and professional explanation is detailed in a long recipe, there is always the “secret ingredient” that will not appear - that 2-5% of the recipe that the chefs never completely reveal.” She gave me an example that frequently appears in cookbooks: “add salt/oil/sugar to taste or in the right quantity or as necessary”.

What is the “right quantity”? The chef is the only one who really knows, based on their years of experience. If you make it at home, it probably will not come out as tasty.

I agreed with the chef - as I have always claimed that you can teach others everything, but no one can copy you exactly, because each one of us has a unique voice and special perspective.

The chefs know that. To build authority, they must appear on television shows, be featured in newspaper articles, on social media, at lectures and so on, and to publish their knowledge. But they are not afraid of being copied, because they are sure about their unique voice, experience, and expertise, and know that if their customers or competitors try, (and there are those that try all the time), they will never manage to copy or imitate them perfectly.

Therefore, the chefs maintain a relative advantage (for as long as they publish and are active, innovative, etc.).

What is more, in my experience, even if people theoretically knew everything I know (from reading my books), they would still come to my lectures and presentations!

Why? Because going to a lecture, workshop, speaking gig or conference (like going to the restaurant of a chef whose recipe you have just read online) has an importance, meaning and purpose that are far beyond knowledge itself: experience, networking, “breaking routine,” meeting the lecturer in person, meeting friends, enjoying refreshments, fun and humor, and many other reasons.





Even if people did know everything that you know (and they never do), they will still leave the house to meet you - at the office, treatment room, restaurant, conference hall or wherever - for all those other reasons.

Put yourself at the front of the stage, and do not be afraid of sharing your unique voice and knowledge (your very best knowledge!) on every possible platform - lectures, traditional and digital media, active blogs, YouTube, social media, and more.

When you publish and share your knowledge (your very best!) you will always leave your audience with a “taste for more” - whoever wishes to see and learn more of your content will have to contact you, to ask you directly, come to one of your activities or to your place of business.

Your unique voice cannot truly be replaced. Every expert, professional, mentor and authority bring with them their own unique perspective and life experience, and therefore people will always seek your company (and perhaps more) if you share your (very best!) knowledge.

Our wish as speakers is to make people think about us and talk about us as much as possible, and become our ambassadors, with minimal effort and minimal costs.

If you give people unique knowledge that is useful to them, a practical tool they can work with, they will think about you every time they use that valuable tool and they will give you (in their subconscious) the credit for their success repeatedly.

William Buckley was once asked, “What book would you take with you to a desert island?” He answered: “A book on how to build ships.”

What happens (that is, in our audiences' subconscious) when they implement what they heard from us?

They think of us (even if only in their subconscious... but that is enough)! They give us credit for the tip and our unique voice! This is how our audiences become our ambassadors, without us even being aware of it.

Do you want your audiences and customers to have a high professional opinion of you and to also create a wonderful reputation for you (for free) throughout the entire market?

Then show them your unique voice and give them tips that they will find useful and of practical value and which they can work with. They will thank you for this - and will remember you forever.



Dr. Yaniv Zaid is an international author, global speaker and expert in sales, marketing, persuasion. Communication and public speaking.

<https://linktr.ee/drpersuasion>



THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN

Behind every world-class summit is a powerhouse team working tirelessly to turn vision into reality.

We caught up with the GSS 2026 committee members to uncover the secrets, surprises, and spirit driving this incredible event.

1 What's one little-known fact about the planning of GSS 2026 that would surprise people?

We had the entire theme, vibe, and early program mapped out before we even submitted the bid for GSS 2026 to the Global Speakers Federation. That's how excited and committed we were! It's been full steam ahead from day one.

2 What's been your most creative moment during planning?

Brainstorming how to make the international day more than just a few flags and turning it into an immersive, colourful, cultural experience that celebrates where everyone comes from. (And there may have been a conversation about including koalas and surfboards too...)

3 What part of the summit are you personally most excited about?



Lindsay: Seeing 400+ speakers from around the world mixing, laughing, and learning together.



Rael: The moments between sessions—those spontaneous hallway conversations that change lives.



Amanda: Watching people make unexpected connections that turn into lifelong collaborations. Magic!

4 What unexpected skill (that you never thought you'd need) came in handy while organizing GSS 2026?



Lindsay: Herding cats—oops, I mean herding creative, brilliant humans!



Rael: Negotiating like a champion to land the best deals without losing the vibe.

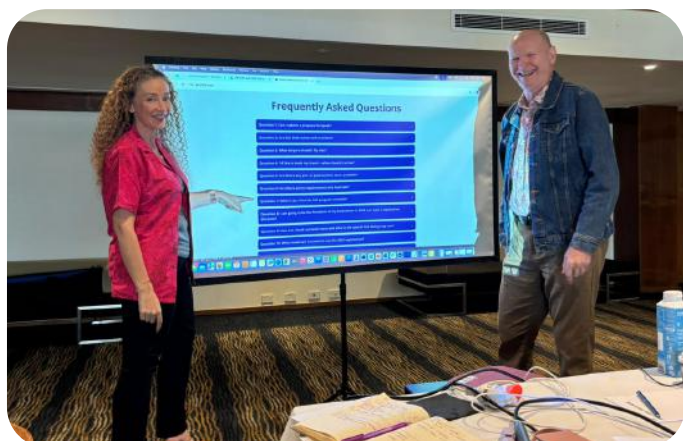


Amanda: Crisis-texting entire paragraphs with perfect grammar at 1:00 a.m.

5 One word that describes the GSS 2026 team spirit?

Unstoppable.

(With a strong side order of “fun” and “caffeine.”)



6 If this committee had a group mascot, what would it be—and why?

A kangaroo with a jetpack.

Because we're proudly Aussie, we leap over obstacles, and we're moving fast into the future!



7 Late nights, group chats, 3 a.m. inspirations—what's been the most unexpectedly fun part of this journey?

- The random moments of genius that pop up in the middle of serious discussions.
- The “what if” brainstorming sessions that started crazy and ended up brilliant.
- Laughing at ourselves and knowing that no matter what, we're building something extraordinary, together.

Behind the scenes with **Lindsay**, **Rael**, and **Amanda**, it's clear: GSS 2026 isn't just a summit — it's a collective leap forward. Fueled by creativity, camaraderie, and a whole lot of caffeine, this committee is ready to welcome the world to Cairns for an unforgettable experience.



You're Not Too Loud, You're Just Right

SALLY FOLEY-LEWIS, CSP MBA
NATIONAL PRESIDENT PSA AUSTRALIA

There was a time when I thought my voice didn't matter.

Growing up, I learned that being loud wasn't always welcome. At school, I was the one told to quiet down, to pipe down, to stop being too much. I remember being part of a school chorus, I was full of enthusiasm, I belted out the song with gusto. I loved singing! But at the very next rehearsal, the teacher moved me to the back row. Not because I was off-key, but because, as she whispered to another teacher, "She's a bit too loud".

That stuck. I no longer sing in public!

It planted the seed that loudness equalled wrongness. That being heard meant being a problem. In other parts of life, I began to internalise the idea that using my voice, really using it, was something to be ashamed of. Too loud. Too opinionated. Too bold.

So, for a while, I tried to tone it down. I softened my voice. I made my points gently. I worked hard to not take up too much space. But it never felt right. I wasn't being me. And, more importantly, I wasn't being heard, certainly not where it mattered.

As I moved through my career, something began to shift. I found myself in situations where the cost of staying quiet was too high. When a boss forged my signature. When a senior leader behaved unethically. When a team was stuck in a loop of poor communication. When a colleague was being spoken over. I knew something needed to be said, so I spoke up. Not for attention, but because it was the right thing to do.

By way of a more recent example, I was facilitating a leadership session and things were getting tense. People were dancing around an obvious issue. I paused and called it out directly but respectfully. The room went still. Then one senior leader leaned forward and said,

“Thank you. We’ve needed to hear that all day”.

These moments remind me, my voice isn't too loud, it was just and clear. Just honest. Just right. It took me years to reclaim that confidence, to understand that the discomfort wasn't mine to carry. The discomfort belonged to those who weren't ready to hear what needed to be said.

And here's the thing: when you find your voice and use it for what's right, not just what's expected, you build trust and credibility. Not everyone will applaud. That's okay. But the right people will listen. And more than that, they'll feel permission to use their voices, too.

I take that voice into rooms full of hundreds as a professional speaker, into team workshops, boardrooms, and coaching calls.

And I encourage others to do the same. Speak up. Ask the question. Challenge the assumption. Say the thing that makes progress possible.

If you're a leader, and I would confidently say you are, your business, your clients, your team needs to hear you. If you're passionate, your message deserves volume. And if you've ever been told you're too loud, pause and ask: “Too loud for whom?”.

Leadership is not about being the loudest in the room. It's about having the courage to say what matters. Even when your voice shakes. Even when it's unpopular. Even if you've been shoved in the back row before.

So today, I honour the younger me, hidden at the back of the chorus, yet bursting to be heard. And I honour every speaker, facilitator, leader who's ever questioned whether they're too much.

**You're not too much.
You're not too loud.
You are just right.
Speak up.**



Sally Foley-Lewis, CSP MBA works with middle managers to lead with confidence, courage and capability. She makes her impact through award-winning keynotes, books, and practical workshops across the globe.

A full-page underwater photograph showing a diver in a black wetsuit swimming through clear blue water. The diver is positioned in the center-right of the frame, facing away from the camera. Below the water surface, there is a vibrant coral reef with various types of coral, including large, flat, brownish-orange corals and smaller, more intricate structures. The lighting is bright, creating a sense of depth and clarity. The overall tone is serene and adventurous.

Tropical Time-Out

Explore. Connect. Unwind - With Your Global Speaking Tribe.

Welcome to a series of unforgettable adventures designed by speakers, for speakers. As part of your GSS 2026 experience, we've curated a suite of premium tour options that let you explore the best of Far North Queensland, all while spending quality time with your fellow international presenters.

Each tour is a chance to deepen friendships, exchange ideas, and make meaningful memories with the very people who share your passion for the platform. While there may be a few public guests on board, our goal is to fill each trip with as many GSS 2026 attendees as possible, so it'll feel more like a reunion than a regular day tour.

Whether you're cruising the Great Barrier Reef, soaring above the rainforest, casting a line offshore, or rafting through the wild, you'll be doing it all in great company.

All tours are expertly organised by our exclusive GSS 2026 Travel Agent, Kylie Duncan-Tiver of MTA Travel. Kylie is a seasoned pro who specialises in working with professional speakers, and she's here to support not just your tour bookings, but also your full travel needs, domestic or international.

So, pick your adventures, pack your sunscreen, and get ready to explore Cairns the speaker way.

Here's Kylie's contact details:

Kylie Duncan-Tiver
MTA Travel

Email: kduncantiver@mtatravel.com.au

Mobile Phone: +61 419 856 407

Feel free to call Kylie any time to discuss your tour options. Kylie is also a proud Sponsor of the GSS 2026 and will be joining us personally in Cairns in March 2026.



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1 Great Barrier Reef Adventure — Moore Reef Day Tour

Available: 11 March & 12 March 2026

Operator: Sunlover Reef Cruises

Departure: Reef Fleet Terminal, Cairns

Your Journey Begins:

Climb aboard a high-speed, air-conditioned catamaran and cruise your way to the stunning outer reef for 4 hours of aquatic wonder at Sunlover's Moore Reef Pontoon.

Dive Into the Highlights:

- Live marine talk from an expert naturalist
- Guided coral tours via semi-submersible and glass-bottom boat
- Snorkel gear & instructions included — all levels welcome!
- Onboard touch tank for hands-on marine discovery
- Underwater observatory & fish-feeding presentation
- Toddler-friendly enclosed wading pool
- Freshwater showers, change rooms, and comfort galore
- Optional: Sea Walker Helmet Dive 🧢

Pricing:

- Adults: From \$295
- Children (4–15 yrs): \$169
- Infants (0–3 yrs): FREE

Add-Ons for More Thrills:

- Guided Snorkel Tour: \$56
- Sea Walker Helmet Dive: \$149
- Intro/Certified Scuba Dive: \$149
- 10-Min Nautilus Helicopter Scenic Flight: \$199

Want to Amp It Up?

Go deluxe with the Half-Day Moore Reef Cruise + Helicopter Return — cruise out, fly back!

Price: \$489 pp

Departure: 8am

Includes:

- 100 mins reef time
- Pontoon access
- Snorkel, glass-bottom boat, semi-sub tour & observatory



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2 Grand Kuranda Rainforest Adventure

Dates: 11 & 12 March 2026

Operator: Tropic Wings

Pickup: Reef Casino entrance

Ready to immerse yourself in the lush, living heart of Tropical North Queensland? Jump aboard the 100% Electric Coach and embark on a full-day eco-experience that blends culture, wildlife, and jaw-dropping rainforest scenery!

Your Day Includes:

- Kuranda Scenic Railway – ride the historic rail through waterfalls and ancient rainforest
- Skyrail Rainforest Cableway – glide above the canopy with spectacular views
- Entry to the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary
- Meet Aussie icons at the Koala & Wildlife Park
- Army Duck Rainforest Tour – unique amphibious adventure!
- Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience – culture, dance & storytelling
- Access to the Award-Winning Rainforestation Nature Park
- Authentic Aussie BBQ Lunch included



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Want to Upgrade Your Experience?

Price: \$315 per person

- Gold Class Scenic Railway: \$60 pp – more comfort, more charm
- Diamond View Skyrail: \$36 pp – enjoy glass-floor gondolas with panoramic rainforest views!

3 Reef Fishing Adventure – Full Day Charter

Date: Wednesday 11 March 2026

Location: Great Barrier Reef

Departure: Cairns Marlin Marina
(D Finger, behind Shangri-La)

Check-in: 6:20am sharp

Cast Off for a Thrill-Packed Day at Sea!

Join our 9-hour all-inclusive fishing charter for a high-energy day chasing legendary reef species like Coral Trout, Red Emperor, Large Mouth Nannygai, and Spanish Mackerel. Whether you're a seasoned angler or a first timer with big dreams, this is your shot at pulling in 10kg+ giants from the depths of the reef!

What's Included:

- Top-quality fishing gear
- Morning tea + fresh croissants
- Cold buffet lunch on board
- Optional cold beer for the ride home
- Optional restaurant-cooked catch — the perfect end to a perfect day!



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What to Expect:

- Friendly welcome + safety briefing
- 90-minute cruise to prime fishing spots (up to 50km offshore!)
- Expert guidance on deep-sea reef fishing techniques
- A shared adventure with fellow ocean lovers, tourists, families, and fish fanatics
- Return to shore between 3:30–4:00pm with tales to tell and dinner in hand

No group? No worries!

Our shared charters are perfect for solo travellers, couples, or anyone keen to join a fun, friendly crew.

Price: \$340 per person

Book early — spots fill fast!

Make unforgettable memories

(and maybe land your personal best!).

4 Wildlife Wonder: Hartley's Crocodile Adventures

Date: 17 March 2026

Duration: Half Day | **Price:** \$125 per person

Includes: Return transfers from Cairns & Northern Beaches hotels

Discover the Wild Side of Australia!

Sleep in, grab your coffee, and get ready for an afternoon packed with jaw-dropping encounters and unforgettable wildlife moments! This half-day escape to Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is the perfect mix of relaxing coastal views, Aussie animals, and thrilling shows.

What's Included:

- Hotel pick-up in style: expert commentary enroute
- Scenic drive along the stunning Northern Beaches coastline
- Entry to Hartley's, Australia's best wildlife park
- Snake Show, Wallaby Feeding, Cassowary Encounter
- Wetlands Cruise, spot crocs in their natural habitat
- Crocodile Attack Show, a must-see adrenaline hit!

Take It All In:

Wander at your own pace along rainforest boardwalks and bushland trails. Snap selfies with curious critters, enjoy the immersive environment, and soak up the sounds and sights of real Aussie wilderness.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

**Remember your camera —
you'll want to capture every wild moment!**

After an exciting afternoon, your driver will whisk you back to your hotel — relaxed, amazed, and maybe a little more daring than before.

Spots are limited — book now and bring your wild side to life!

5 Whitewater Rafting: Barron Gorge Rush

Date: 17 March 2026

Operator: Raging Thunder

Duration: Half Day | 2:00pm–5:30pm

Hotel Pickup (optional): from 1:45pm

Price: \$158 per person (+ \$30 levy)



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

Strap on your helmet, grab your paddle, and charge through Grade 2-3 rapids with names like Rooster Tail and Cheese Churn. You're going to get soaked and love every second of it!

What's Included:

- Return hotel transfers (Cairns & Northern Beaches – if selected)
- All rafting gear (life jackets, helmets, paddles – just bring shoes!)
- Pro river guides to coach and cheer you on
- Private vehicle transport

What's Not Included:

- Rafting photos (\$59 – available for purchase)
- Rafting shoes (hire available)
- \$30 river levy (payable on the day)

What to Expect:

- Scenic drive to Barron Gorge National Park
- Gear up & safety briefing
- Paddle training
- 3+ hours of epic, laughter-filled rafting through lush rainforest and foaming whitewater
- Adrenaline and awe in equal measure
- Hotel drop-off to dry off and relive the stories

Ages 12–70 welcome

Group size: Up to 120 adventurers

Perfect for first-timers, thrill-seekers, and anyone who wants to feel alive in nature's playground.

Ready to Ride the Wild Side?

Get ready for a pulse-pounding half-day adventure just 20 minutes from Cairns! Barron Gorge isn't just another river, it's a rainforest-powered thrill ride carved through the Wet Tropics World Heritage area.

Book now with our GSS 2026 Travel Agent,
Kylie Duncan-Tiver at
kduncantiver@mtatravel.com.au
and make your reef dream a reality!



Your Voice is Your Value:

CRAFTING A SIGNATURE BRAND THAT SPEAKS
BEFORE YOU DO

Before your slides appear.
Before your shoes hit the stage.
Before your audience sees the expression on your face,
They hear you.

And in that first breath, your voice has already begun shaping their perception.
It's the sound of your certainty. The rhythm of your insight. The echo of your impact.

As speakers, we often obsess over visuals, vocabulary, and velocity. But your voice, your authentic voice, isn't just an instrument, it's your imprint. It speaks your brand more emotively than your bio ever could.

This is the essence of what I call your Signature Brand Voice. And no, it's not about tone, cadence, or volume. It's about value. Because here's the truth that most high-performing professionals miss:

**“Your work doesn't speak for itself.
Your voice does.”**

From Volume to Value: The Rise of the Signature Brand Voice

We live in a world saturated with noise and hungry for meaning. Standing out isn't about being louder, it's about being truer.

Your Signature Brand Voice is where your personal brand, professional brand, and purpose brand converge. It's the audible expression of what you stand for, shaped by your values, vision, and lived experience.

When that alignment is clear, your voice becomes not just recognisable, but resonant. And that resonance is where real influence lives.



Your True North: Aligning Voice with Vision

Every powerful voice has a True North - a sense of direction, not just projection.

In my work with thought leaders, executives, and changemakers, I use the True North Activation Strategy to align their message with their mission. Too many speakers have crafted polished presentations but haven't yet uncovered their authentic positioning.

Your voice should never be borrowed.
It should never be a performance.
It should be a projection of purpose.

Activate your True North with these three powerful reflections. Ask yourself:

- What does my voice really represent?
- What conversations do I want to lead in the world?
- Where am I still whispering when I'm meant to roar?

Style Follows Substance: Practical Shifts That Honour Depth

Let's shift from hacks to what I call distinctive speaker disciplines - practices that honour depth and drive impact.

Clarity ignites charisma.

Clarity is confidence. Fancy words don't make you sound smarter. Clear ones make you unforgettable.

Repetition builds resonance.

Want your message to stick? Say it. Then say it again. Then say it differently. (Just ask MLK, Jobs, or Obama.)

Pauses deliver purpose.

Silence is one of your strongest speaking tools. Use it to let ideas breathe—and help you catch yours.

Stories anchor insights.

Insight without story is a wasted spark. Story without insight fizzles. Fuse them. That's fire.

‘What not to say’ deepens relevance.

Sometimes the most powerful shift is removing old scripts that no longer serve your message.

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Sometimes the most powerful shift is removing old scripts that no longer serve your message.

“The opposite of humility isn't loud confidence. The opposite of humility is authenticity.”



Speaking to Serve, Not to Prove

One of the most powerful shifts I made in my career wasn't about how I spoke, but why I speak. I stopped speaking to prove I belonged in the room.

I started speaking to serve the room.

This shift is transformational because when you stop performing for validation, your voice becomes a conduit for connection, impact, and legacy. When you speak from service, your message moves beyond “me” and into “we”.

It becomes less about the spotlight, more about a ripple effect.

From Imposter to Impact: Owning the Voice You've Been Hiding

If you've ever shrunk your voice to fit a space,
If you've ever softened your truth to sound more “likeable”,
If you've ever mimicked someone else's speaking style because it looked “successful”,

You're not alone.

But you're also not here to be someone else's echo.

Your voice deserves the full volume of your experience. And yes, this includes those messy, magic-making moments that shaped who you are. Because authenticity isn't an audience trend—it's your superpower.

Legacy Through Language: Make Your Voice a Movement

As speakers, we hold a unique privilege and responsibility. Our voices don't just fill rooms, they can shift rooms. Reframe narratives. Reignite possibilities.

But this won't happen if we treat our voice as a tool. It must become our trust signal.

In a world of polarisation, AI-generated content, and hyper-curated branding, the human voice remains irreplaceable. It's the heartbeat of every movement, every breakthrough, every truth.

Speak Like You Mean Legacy

You don't need to be the loudest person on stage.
You need to be the most aligned.

Because alignment builds trust.
Trust builds influence.
And influence - that's what moves audiences from listening to changing.

So the next time you prepare for a keynote, a boardroom presentation or a global summit talk, don't just ask, "What am I going to say?" Ask, "What am I truly voicing - and why does it matter?"

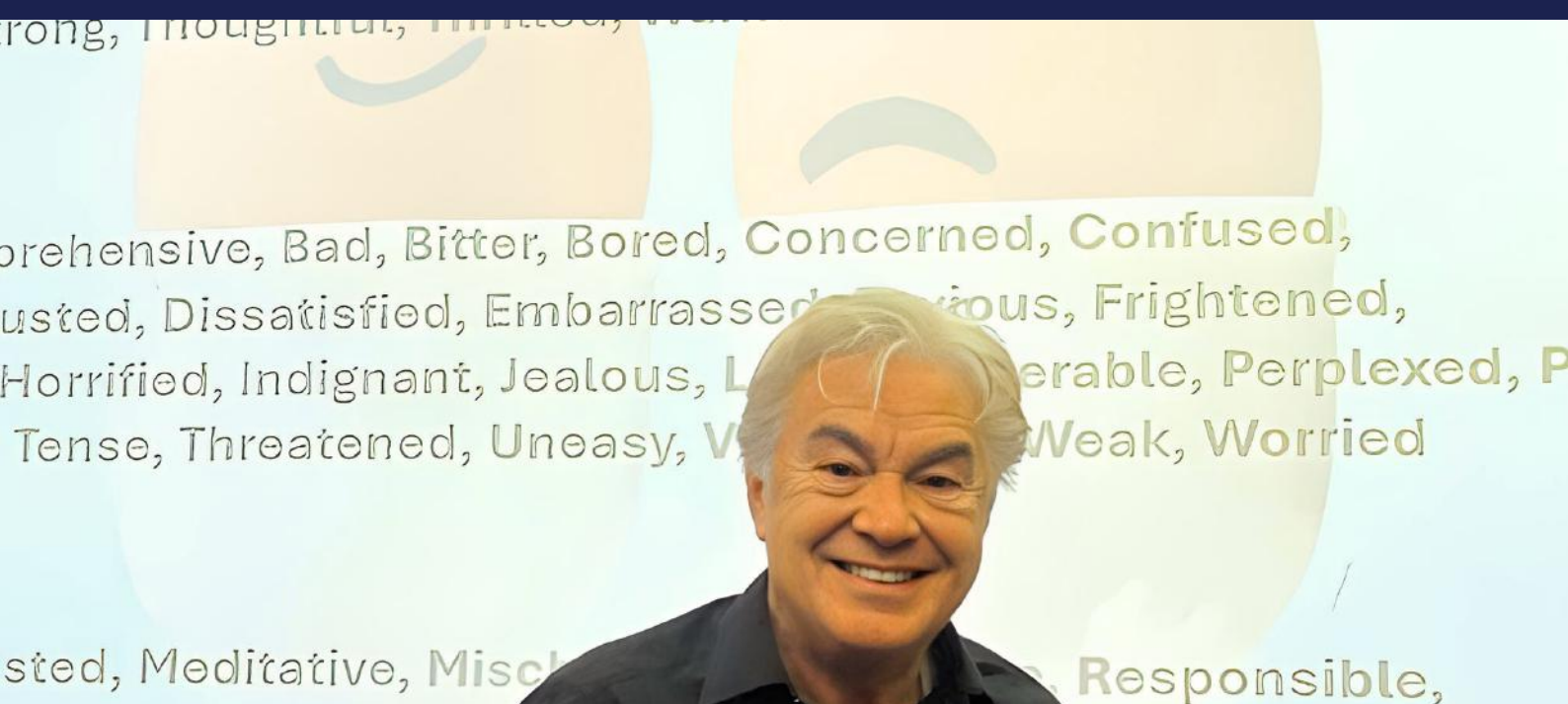
And if it sounds like your truth, your vision, your legacy, speak up.

We're listening.

Nicole Hatherly is an award-winning brand strategist, keynote speaker, executive coach, and leadership expert with over 30 years of experience shaping iconic strategies for visionaries and brands like CommBank, TikTok, Cisco, and Electrolux. Known for "branding humans (humanely 🥰)," she helps professionals go from invisible to invaluable by aligning their voice, value, and visibility.

Nicole has shared stages with Arianna Huffington, Brené Brown, and Seth Godin, and her True North and Beyond Innovation frameworks have ignited influence worldwide. When she's not unlocking voices, she's trekking Everest Base Camp or chasing waves, living her brand of curiosity, connection, and courage.





The Compliance Whisperer

KEVIN RYAN, CSP

Spend a few minutes with Kevin Ryan, and it's clear why companies keep calling him back. With a sharp wit and decades of experience across industries, Kevin has a gift for making complex topics not just digestible — but surprisingly enjoyable.

Whether he's tackling compliance, workplace behaviour, or cross-cultural dynamics, his approach is grounded, human, and refreshingly real.

In this VOICES feature, Kevin shares the lessons he's learned from classrooms to corporate boardrooms, why humour is a powerful teaching tool, and how the future of workplace learning is being reshaped — one engaging conversation at a time.

1. Kevin, you've been at the helm of Ryan & Associates for over 30 years. What's the biggest shift you've seen in how companies approach training and compliance since you first began?

I remember when International Standards (like ISO9001) became prevalent last century. While they did provide a common baseline, they could also mandate compliance that often compromised any training. While companies expected compliance boxes to be ticked, their staff deserved an enriching learning experience – and aligning these two often required agonising and unnecessary ‘mapping’ of competencies.

This remains a challenge today. Clients expect you to ‘tick the boxes’ as well as provide your attendees with tangible take-aways. And the time they expect this all to happen in NEVER increases... just the opposite.

The growth of asynchronous learning reflects this time-poor world yet also allows us to make the learning available for when the learner wants it. Re-purposing my content for this new modality has been a great challenge – but very rewarding.

2. You're well known for making “boring but important” topics like compliance, workplace safety, and policy training not only digestible—but enjoyable. What's your secret to making serious subjects stick?

The role of the speaker is to make what's important interesting. If talking to staff, framing it in the context of the benefit or risk to them in a non-threatening way is essential. I believe there is no such thing as a boring subject – just boring presenters. Everything can be put in a fun framework. I have taken the most boring health and safety regulations and had groups workshop a hypothetical movie on the subject. They might be asked to create a movie title or catchphrase or design the poster. This always gets strong engagement. The tools available today for gamification are increasing exponentially. Every audience loves to play!

The decision that led me to become a speaker was when I realized deep in my heart that there was a small voice whispering to me that I wanted to be the person on stage every time I attended conferences or seminars.

My frustration was at its peak when I organized a leadership program where we hired lecturers to deliver on several leadership topics.



“The tools available today for gamification are increasing exponentially.

Every audience loves to play!”

3. Your transition from the classroom to corporate boardrooms is impressive. How did your early years in education shape your approach to adult learning today?

I still have a partnership with an ex-teacher where we provide content and seminars to schools. Fourteen-year-old boys remain my toughest audience.

They remind me daily that attention is earned, not assumed. They also show me how fast the landscape is shifting. Their expectations around delivery, tone, and interactivity have influenced how I present to adults.

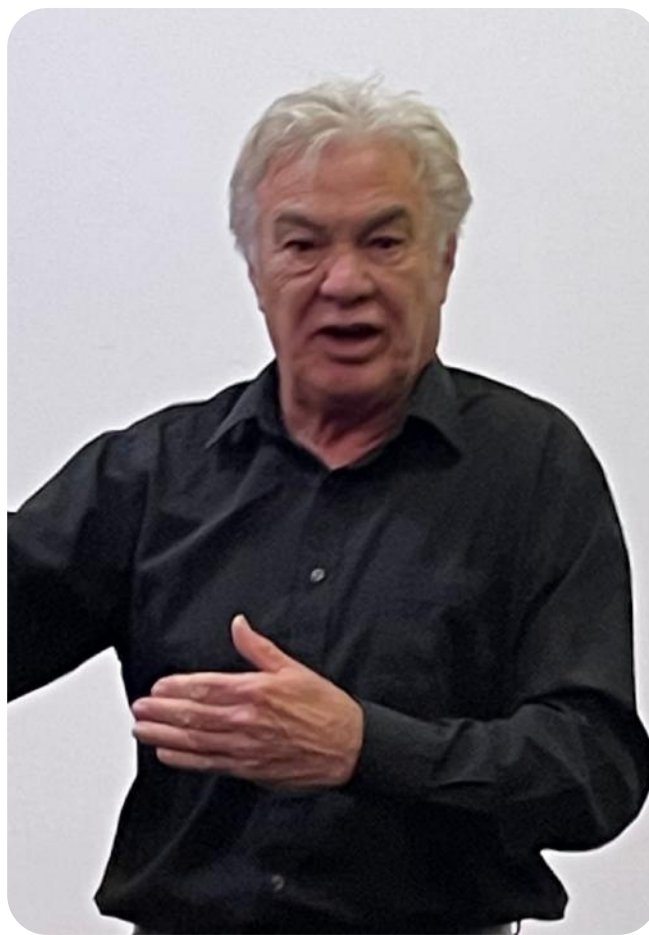
In many ways, they've become my best research group.

4. You've worked with sectors ranging from aviation to local government.

What's the most unusual or unexpected training brief you've ever received?

I have co-written a book on the use of humour in the workplace. This has been developed into workshops on how to incorporate appropriate fun into customer service, sales and corporate communication.

A large electric vehicle manufacturer in China thought this would be a good way to address the interpersonal challenges they were having with their teams of engineers – half of whom were German, the rest Chinese.



The client clearly understood that I spoke no Mandarin or German. The format was to be a two-day workshop, the thought of which gave me more than one sleepless night.

However, the results were such that the client booked me for a series of workshops over the next three years.

While I am still unsure how well I met the brief, the positive outcome resulted from simply getting a group of people who previously had not gelled to find the points they had in common.

All I really needed to do was create an environment where they could identify commonalities (in this case, what they both found amusing). This was amplified by the fact that they had to communicate in the only language they had in common – English.

From this and other challenges, I have developed the belief that our first and most important job as speakers is to create the right environment in the room.

5. A lot of your work is about behaviour change. What's one piece of advice you give clients who want to make training actually translate into workplace action?

I strongly advocate Dr Don Kirkpatrick's Model of training evaluation.

While I can take charge of the first two levels (giving them a good experience and some tangible take aways) levels three and four (applying the learning back in the workplace and creating long-term organisational change) depend on my client.

Environment drives behaviour, so if staff go back into a workplace that does not support what they have learned, the training will be wasted. My job is to make sure my client understands this. This will often result in their asking me to work more with them.

6. As we look toward GSS2026 and beyond, what excites you most about the future of workplace learning and the speaking profession?

In a world where we are asked to do more in less time, I think AI will be our greatest friend. As learning professionals, we now have a tool that will allow us – even force us - to lift our game. In a world where we are asked to do more in less time, I think AI will be our greatest friend.



As learning professionals, we now have a tool that will allow us – even force us - to lift our game.

Basic AI can now do what clients used to pay me to do twenty years ago. This challenges me to identify the human intelligence I can bring into the room. As well as compelling us to lift our game it will also provide us with a tool to scale in a way that has never been possible before.

For genuine creatives – like professional speakers – AI offers an expanded universe of opportunities. GSS2026 will gather like-minded thought-leaders from around the world to explore these.

The venue choice was inspired. Cairns is in the middle of the most spectacularly beautiful part of our country and we are really looking forward to showing it off to our international colleagues.



Kevin Ryan, CSP, is a high-energy speaker, trainer, and author with over 30 years of experience delivering impactful keynotes and workshops across Australia and Asia.

Known for his engaging style and practical takeaways, he's earned top industry honours and a global reputation for making communication, leadership, and humour come to life.



From Motivation to Movement:

WHY I STOPPED SPEAKING FOR APPLAUSE
AND STARTED SPEAKING FOR A CAUSE

Are you a speaker—or are you an advocate?

Because here's the truth: nobody wants their gravestone to read "Spoke at Google." They want to be remembered as someone who impacted, inspired, and was loved.

During the covid years, I positioned myself as a humorous motivational speaker. At the 2022 Global Speakers Summit, I met Scott Friedman—and started my professional speaking career after having been a corporate communication trainer for six years—thanks to Together We Can Change the World.

In the last 13 months, I've spoken about my #Unapologetic movement in Singapore, Bali, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Macau, China, Dubai, Nigeria (twice), London (twice), Johannesburg, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Holland, France, Germany, and—in tech conferences and women's events in my city Barcelona.

Advocacy Doesn't Pay

Let's be honest: advocacy isn't a quick payday. But after four years of promoting my "Adaptability IQ" talk and describing myself as "transformational" more times than a shampoo commercial, I was tired. Tired of my own face in Canva templates. Tired of checking LinkedIn 30 times a day, hoping someone commented "So inspiring!"

I didn't want to keep going—my ego was suffering from too much stimulation and then taking a nope when the client didn't hire me. Making the talk about me as the transformation was tiring.

And that's when it clicked: I didn't want to be booked. I wanted to be heard. Well, I wanted to get paid—and with such a competitive market of every Toastmaster and his cousin speaking for free—me, myself and ChatGPT shifted my brand.

When I shifted from motivational speaker to advocate, I stopped chasing speaking fees and started designing paid communication trainings and long-term relationships with my ideal client—with a long-term vision.

**The freedom?
I could now speak for free—
wherever and whenever
it mattered most.**

Advocacy gave me a purpose again and I could speak on what lights my eyes up and combine it with trends on corporate training and leadership topics.

From Purpose to Paycheck

I'm not an expert in women's studies. But I am an expert in communication—and I'm passionate about helping women show up unapologetically in systems that weren't built for them.

I've visited 63 countries and lived on 5 continents. I have something to share about women showing up. When I took Patrick O's Purpose Compass, I discovered something freeing: I didn't need to be the expert to speak about the cause. I just had to use my platform to support it.

I became the megaphone, not the manual and so HR women followed me on LinkedIn because my content helped them and event planners didn't just listen—they leaned in. I started a podcast on LinkedIn about people with habits Unapologetic women need. Now I could interview HR leaders and reach out to them on LinkedIn offering them value—instead of just pitching my "talk."

Nobody Is Looking for a Speaker

Our corporate client wants transformation or—at the least—an engaging speaker on a relevant topic. Stats from Yaniv's research at GSS Bali showed that event organizers still mostly want entertainment. A keynote is only powerful if it moves people—not just emotionally, but in their behavior—or it at least should be as entertaining as Netflix.

Being a "great speaker" is like being a chart-topping reggaetón singer who sings about babes and bikinis. You might get people dancing for 45 minutes—but what happens afterward? Being an advocate means your talk is just the beginning of the relationship with the client. You're not giving up on them—you're continuing with others for the cause. The feeling is different.



**Does your message move their bodies
or move their lives?**

When you become an advocate, you zoom out. You take your leadership talk and connect it to something bigger: equity, inclusion, mental health, self-advocacy—whatever lights your fire. Your content stops being a monologue and starts being a mission.

Advocacy Pays— Eventually, and Authentically

I used to dread reaching out to HR heads. It felt like selling snake oil wrapped in inspirational quotes. But when I started speaking about unapologetic communication—because it aligned with both my values and corporate challenges—I became an ally to HR. Not a vendor. Not a pitch.

Suddenly, I wasn't "selling a talk." I was offering a solution. A long-term partner. A voice for the very change they were tasked to implement. That energy shift? Game-changing.

Now I can comment on HR forums and not be deleted—because now I offer value—not just info on why to hire me for a one-off program.

You stop being the annoying follow-up email. You become the trusted collaborator who gets the big picture—and knows how to move people toward it. This shift is for those who want a long career in speaking, because this approach is based on long-term relationships with stakeholders, finding global allies, and selling training to further the cause. You must like training—not just stage speaking.

Going Global Requires Cultural Humility (and a Sense of Humor)

I cried in front of the attendees early May in Johannesburg. Big, ugly, snotty tears. We were all doing a firewalk with GSS member Corus, and I was terrified—the fear of being burned triggered other fears. But I walked anyway. Twice.

And because I've positioned myself not just as a speaker, but as an advocate for #Unapologetic habits, that moment of raw emotion didn't damage my credibility.



It deepened it. I wasn't there to impress—I was there to be real. If I'd just been the "keynote speaker," I might've wiped the tears and pretended I was fine.

But being an advocate gave me permission to be human first, professional second.

The Future Belongs to Storytellers and Humorists

Let's be clear: PowerPoint monologues are dead. Gen Z won't tolerate them. Millennials are allergic to them. And even Boomers are starting to lose attention spans. Leadership speakers are a dime a dozen on eSpeakers.

If you want to stay relevant, you need one, or both of these to be memorable and bookable:

1. **Exceptional Storytelling**
2. **Culturally Intelligent Humor**

Humor is universal only when you understand the culture. HumOUR connects you to the HUManness in OUR audience.

When you show up with stories of resilience, humour and practical take-home messages from your expert experience as an advocate, you become unique.

Humor builds trust. Trust builds change. Change is what we sell.

Make Them Remember: Story + Struggle + Smile

The best speeches aren't perfect and shiny. Many speakers use the same stories—because they have not done much except on their topic and expertise—except speak about it for a decade. The new audiences want relevant stories and adventure.

You want to stick in someone's mind? Don't just say, "1995 was hard." Do the #vulnerability. Take us there. Make us feel the heartbreak, the panic, the hangover.

**Emotion builds retention.
Humor builds resilience.
Together, they make you unforgettable.**

Closing Thought: Don't Just Speak—Stand for Something

If you've been speaking for 2025's trends, consider this your invitation to evolve to a more powerful you.

Ask yourself:

- What issue would I defend at dinner parties and boardrooms?
- What injustice keeps me up at night?
- What story am I uniquely positioned to tell?

We don't need more TED-style tech talkers. We need speakers who bleed purpose and breathe courage. Speakers who make us laugh and revitalise our hope.

Jessica Brightfield studied non profit management after teaching in Egypt. She has lived in 8 countries, learned 5 languages and tried to sell every corporate trend under the sun. She is the woman behind the #Unaplogetic Movement.

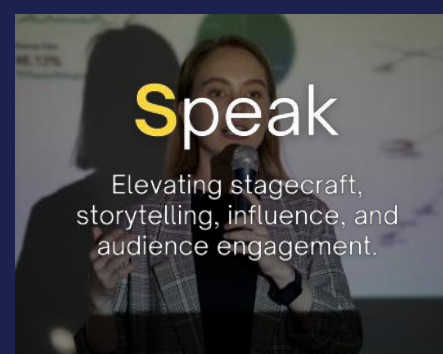
She was on the VSA and PSA Spain board; she was a member of 5 PSAs in 2022 and is dedicated to encouraging women to get heard. Vice president of women's networks, Jess is an enthusiastic member of GSF. She is based in Barcelona. She is a Canadian who was London PSA's runner up winner and Europe's top female speaker in 2022. She's an avid Toastmaster groupie and a beach lover.



Positioning yourself as an advocate with expertise makes you a magnet for meaningful work. It makes HR listen. It makes clients return. And it made me come alive again. I just finished a tour in Africa; I spoke at 3 Toastmasters conferences; I spoke to the thought leaders of the countries. I connected as an advocate to those leaders from 20 African nations.

So yes, I'm still a speaker. But now, I speak for something bigger than "leadership." I speak for the women who don't have the privilege to be heard as leaders and I train the skills that will make them into leaders. That shift has made all the difference.

GSS2026 | Apply to present under one of our four key themes:



Who Can Apply?

All registered attendees of GSS2026.

How to Apply?

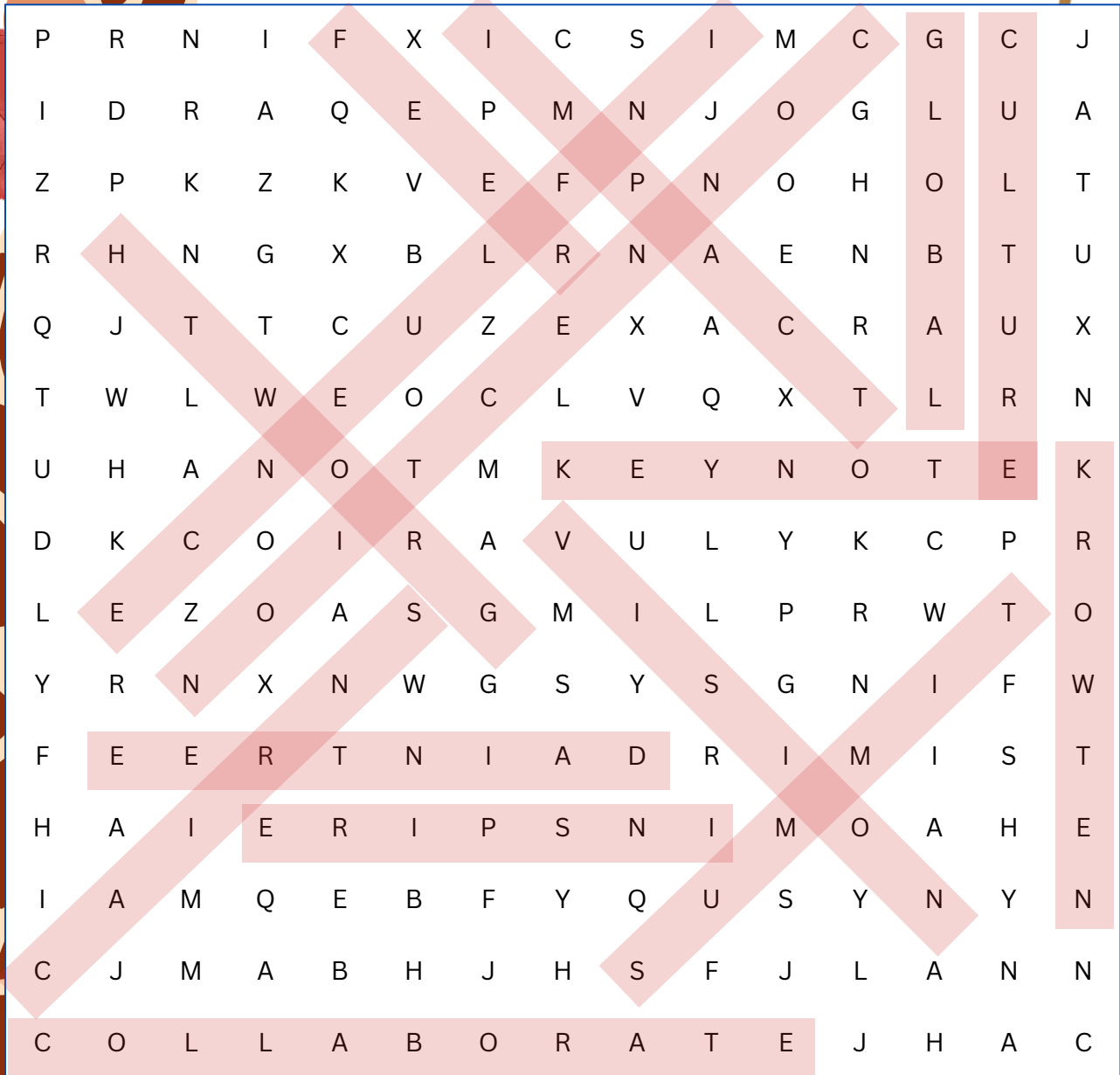
Submit your proposal at Call for Speakers – Global Speakers Summit 2026

Deadline:

The first round of applications close on 1 July 2025.

GSS2026

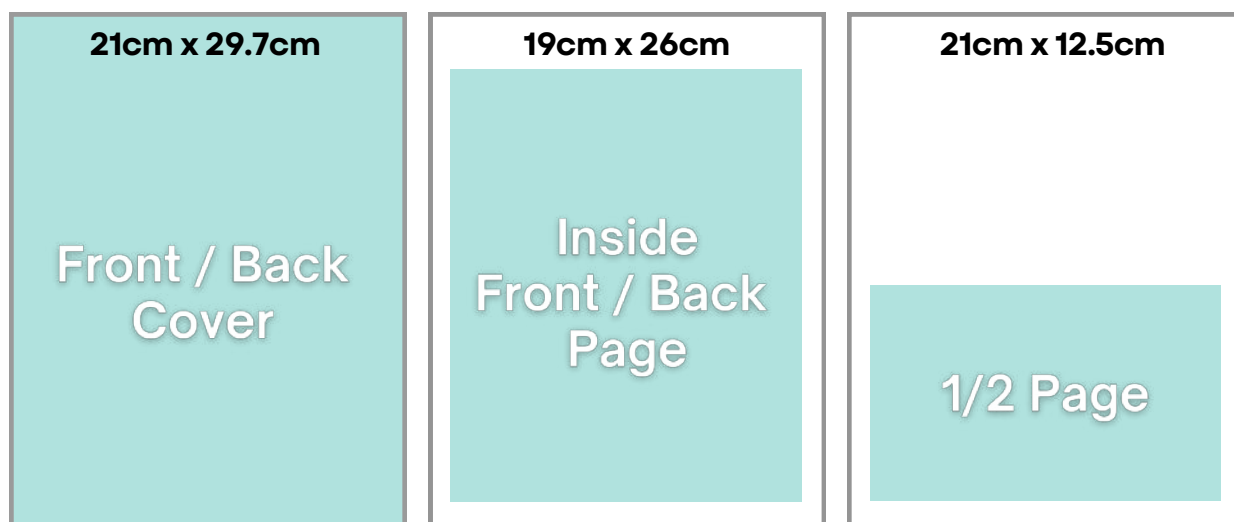
WORD SAFARI



WORD SAFARI ANSWER KEY

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- KEYNOTE
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Double Page Article	1,500	3,750
Three Page Article	2,250	4,500

For more info, please reach out to: info@professionalspeakers.org.au