

# Four Steps to Speaking with Purpose and Influence

*Or, Four Steps of Using Wisdom in Your Speech*

The four steps are, Message, Audience, Effect, and Timing.

## 1. Message

Before speaking, be it to an individual, a room of people, or the world, ask yourself, "What is the message I want to convey?"

## 2. Audience

Once you have focused on the core concept you want to express, consider your audience. Ask yourself, "Who is my audience?" Another way to ask this is, "Who is listening?"

## 3. Effect

Next, ask yourself, "What is the desired effect?" "What do I want to accomplish right now?"

## 4. Timing

If you have your message, know your audience and know your desired effect, ask yourself, "Is this pertinent right now?" "Does it really matter right now?" "Is now the best time to say this?"

Throughout this process, keep in mind one of Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' favorite adages, "Never miss a good chance to shut up."

If you have used these four steps and have determined to speak, do so confidently and with purpose.

At first, challenge yourself to use these four steps for an hour. Then progress to an entire day. Use this mental exercise to strengthen your mind, words, and influence.

