

Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

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Dear Marketplace Friend,

I was setting up for an introductory breakfast for **The Master's Program** in Newport Beach a few days ago when the first guests began to arrive. The third man in the door was delightfully outgoing. We had a conversation underway when we found an unexpected connection: his father – Ken Poure – had been a hero of mine for 40 years, and a friend for the last 25. *We bonded instantly...*

I met Kenny during his years as the visionary leader of Hume Lake Christian Camps in California's Sierra Nevada mountains. When he wasn't directing thousands of Christians through their mountaintop experiences, he was "on the circuit" – in churches and Christian events everywhere – as an itinerant speaker. *If you ever heard Ken, you couldn't forget him...*

Most people think that guest speakers are obliged to open with a joke or two; I don't think I ever heard Ken tell a joke. He did have a bucket load of hilarious personal stories that would keep a crowd awake and delighted; he's in his 80's now, but still a stitch. *In the last few years, I've kept phone messages from Ken unerased at my home, keeping them around for a smile...*

It was from Ken I first heard the survey data on the gender differences in daily dialog. Here's the claim: women speak about 30,000 words every day. Men use about 15,000 in the same timeframe. Hence (*here comes the punch line*), when guys get home from work everyday, they're pretty much "talked out," while their wife has half of her conversation arsenal left to fire, which they're often prepared to do. *Yuk, yuk, yuk (laughter).*

Is that just a joke, or is it for real? That depends who you're asking, it appears. I'm not the worlds-best websearcher, but my Google mining found that it may be a case of "he said; she said more..." One source put it at 7,000 words/day for women, and 2,000 for men. Another echoed Kenny: women offering 30,000, and men replying with 15,000, with no apparent plan to catch-up. In any case, there seems to be a natural disparity in diction.

Think about it: most casual talkers - not the amateur auctioneer types, but the friendly guy-next-door acquaintance who isn't trying to "fast talk you" into something -

run about 200 words/minute, without slurs and drop-outs. That means that five minutes of monolog will pour out 1000 words. If the high-end survey has credibility, it means that the typical woman's daily dosage of outbound oratory would fill 150 minutes, uninterrupted. The man listening to her says what he has to say in just 75 minutes, with time to spare. If he's perfected one-word answers to deep and thoughtful questions, he may be even more conservative in his chatter. That's what averages are all about, aren't they?

Why does any of that matter? It wouldn't, except for relationships with others. It's a fact: *with people, relationships are just conversations, interrupted.*

When you're talking, you have a relationship that is either moving up or down in value, based on the communication. When you part, the relationship goes on hold, until you next converse. *"We haven't talked in so long!"* is to say that the relationship has been on hold. *"We never talk!"* is the warning shot across the bow, often fired by a wife who senses that *together all alone* is doing nothing for her intimacy with the strong, silent type who never initiates a word...

A 1st Century gentile military officer was visited by an angel one day who gave him an intriguing tip: send for Simon Peter, and have him come to his house. Why? *"He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved."* (Acts 11:14). Peter came; he talked; Cornelius (*the*

officer) and his household said, "Yes!" That day, they began a relationship with Peter, and with God, through Jesus Christ, because of those choice words, deliberately spoken.

You've heard it said: *"He knows more than he's telling."* You've got a few thousand words to use today; what results will they produce?

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