

LECTURE BUILDING

BUILDING A LECTURE THROUGH ORDERING YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE

1. Intellectual methods, like social or religious methods, give form to the way life is. Whether lecturing, workshopping, or praying, one is trying to articulate the way life goes on. How does life go on in the spirit deeps? Once one grapples with the way life goes on in the spirit deeps, one can understand the meaning of participation in the discipline of prayer. How does life go on in the learning dimension? How does actual communication from one man to another take place? When one understands the dynamics of communication, one knows how to build a lecture.
2. Lecture giving begins with the process of building a lecture, pulling together what one has to say, and then organizing it into a dramatic happening. Lecture giving entails the method of presenting that material. Finally, it involves the pedagogue's style, which can only be grasped in the context of the whole of intellectual methods.
3. Imaginal Education is always drama; drama doesn't necessarily mean being rowdy. Rather, it has to do with human details, the spiritual depth in the actual experiences of people's lives. In order to build a lecture, one has to begin by getting all of his details out. Gathering details is the task of imaginal education.
4. The process of building a lecture and the process of giving a lecture are very related polarities. You might say they are one thing, because it is the demand to give a lecture that feeds back into the process of building one, and vice versa. But it is a different dynamic to look at the problem of preparing the construct for what needs to be put on in the lecture, from that of playing out the drama.
5. There are three critical stages in building a lecture, whether it is a brand new one or the reconstruction or reintensification of an old one. The first stage is that of recalling your own experiences and other illustrations of the life dynamics being brooded over. Your concern is to get out all you know. It is existential knowing--a memory of the deeps of life, how those deeps of life are experienced, and how they can be communicated by pulling them through your own life.
6. When you are doing that kind of recall in preparing for a lecture, you want to brainstorm as many experiences and examples as possible. You do not really care, at this point, what type they are. They may be episodic snatches out of your life or perhaps the structure of the whole lecture.

They may be stories, sequences of events, brief encounters, persons you have met, or anything you can remember. I find it helpful to add such things as scripture and classical stories, movies, plays, historical figures, etc. as they come to me, as well as what have now become classic corporate Movemental stories related to that particular lecture, such as "The Long Necked Girl" or "The man at the pool" stories of the Christ Lecture.

7. One way I have found helpful for pushing oneself to recall is to lay out big pieces of paper with lots of boxes. Then push to fill up every box with everything you have ever known that relates to "Freedom" or the "Holy Spirit" or "Style" or whatever the topic is you are trying to deal with. The ordering is not important; actually, if you try to get order at this point, you may well destroy the process of recall.

8. General insights also need to be listed. For example, "Intentionality is a gift," is a general insight about humanness that takes on new meaning in light of the tactical models we are continually building. There are probably numerous insights we are able to say to ourselves in prose, which will condition our transitions and probably the illustrations we use, as well. All of these insights and personal experiences need to be shoved into those boxes as raw data for creating the lecture.

9. The second step is creating rational order out of all the data. If you are building a new lecture you want to take that raw experience and begin to pull it into some form, seeking for consistency so that it will make sense. Therefore, you will want to draw out a 4x4x4 chart to fill in your rational data. Such a rational chart is important, because building your 4x4x4 is to put on a drama that grasps hold of the roots of someone's existence.

10. In the RS-I course, this job has been done, out of twenty years of gathered data and theological insights, so there is no need to change the corporately consensed-upon exterior categories of the lectures. This is also true of the next four, which speeds you up considerably, since the data can be immediately ordered by that basic frame. Your problem is how to select out of your brainstorm of insights and experiences, that which most pointedly illustrate each of the sixteen boxes you already have. New kinds of sub-ordering may also begin to crop up.

11. You do not really have the rational order of the Freedom lecture, however, unless you are able to take the four points of the Freedom lecture and make a sentence out of it, such as: "The Holy Spirit may be described as freedom: the freedom to be lucid about the way life is, the freedom to be sensitive to life in all of its ramifications, the freedom to be exposed and put yourself out in the participation of the life, and the freedom to be radically consecrated or to be a disciplined person in the midst of that life."; Then you need to have a sentence that connects each of those subpoints for each row, such as: The freedom to be your lucidity involves clarity about the world, oneself, others, and the Word, which illuminates all the rest." Your sentences have to make sense to you before you can go on to flesh them out with any kind of grounding.

12. The third step is to carefully choose key illustrations, and spin them out in order to make them speak. This means taking the incident of the illustration, and writing down everything about it you can remember--details about the people involved, their reactions, your emotions, the context--everything you can recall. Then you chop away at that information, deciding on the crux for the point needing to be made in the lecture. Neither an unclear illustration nor one burdened with unimportant detail is helpful in empowering your lecture. Therefore, you select the key information that "crux" depends upon, and spin it all out so the illustration will have the greatest impact.

13. With illustrations, the pedagogue needs flexibility. He needs to choose that which enhance his dramatic movement and address his particular group. When you are first lecturing, it does not seem to you a matter of which illustration to use, but how to get enough illustrations to fill up fifty minutes. But when you have given numerous lectures and heard others give them, that is definitely not your problem. Then, it is what to throw out of all the vast notes you have taken over the past year or two. Each person finally comes to the point where he makes the decision, "I have to give this lecture without my favorite illustration." You have to choose what you really need for the occasion, at the same time, honoring the corporate wisdom concerning powerful illustrations.

14. All illustrations must be pulled through one's life. Stealing from your colleagues is more than permissible in relation to lecture illustrations; it is utterly necessary. When someone tells a story, it is yours to use. That is part of being a corporate teaching staff, rather than just one teacher doing his own thing." However, people can spot a phony thief a mile away. A "non-phony" thief is one who has pulled his theft through his own experience so that he has almost forgotten where he first stole it; it has become so much a part of himself. There are certain kinds of illustrations one could not steal, no matter what. If you are four feet tall, an illustration about your great height comes off as phony, unless you make some radical changes in it. Someone illustrating his war experiences when he is a fifteen year old boy will not likely come off. Yet, if you can pull it off, then pull it off! You do not need to have to have been in the army to tell about war experiences you have actually had in your own life. Stealing is fantastic, but it has to be pulled through your own existence. Those listening could not possibly guess it is a lie because it so obviously applies to the human being they see standing before them. It is that kind of authenticity you are after, not some kind of phony honesty. After all, everything one has learned in his life is, in one form or another, stolen.

15. Illustrations need to be chosen relative to the quality of the happening needing to be performed. It is obvious, but quality is needed rather than quantity. Sometimes one illustration is so good you can pull a whole section of the lecture through it, so that you do not need many other illustrations. In other situations, you may be after a whole battery of illustrations just to barrage them with images. I heard a God lecture once where the pedagogue, in talking about "being overwhelmed," literally overwhelmed us with a battery of things. It was like you were getting a hundred illustrations, but you were really getting just one: that is, that the

world is coming concretely at you from every angle.

16. Classical stories out of history, and literature, corporate stories the Movement has used for years to add power to particular lectures, and scripture are fantastic to use to back up your own personal examples, for they are rooting people in their past heritage, and creating new images for their future, as well as illustrating a point in their contemporary life. It allows something like scripture, as well as stories out of one's own community, to be recovered and looked at afresh.

17. Now, what do you need to take with you into the classroom? If you take your 4x4x4x4 into the classroom with you, it is obvious you would have to be a powerful magician to be able to pull out just exactly what you need from all that rack of paints you have. Therefore you have to have decided what paint you are going to use prior to entering the classroom. I am a very forgetful person, so I find that when I have a lecture in manuscript form it is possible for me to recoup it. But that manuscript is not really a manuscript, because it is never done the same way twice. It is a flexible series of routines built each time into a fresh lecture. Most people, I find, do not need to work from manuscript pieces but go into the classroom with just a little sheet of paper with a freshly established list of what they want to do in that particular time. Some go into the room with nothing but their memory. They are lecturers who memorize the illustrations and patterns they want to use, brood through the order and what is necessary for the particular group and then throw their notes away. They give the lecture on the run, in the back of the classroom, all kinds of wierd things, becuase they are so totally freed from those notes most of us find necessary to have. A pedagogue, whatever way he eventually determines, is most helpful to him is dramatically and flexibly dealing with the lives of the particular group he is working with.

II. GIVING A DRAMATIC LECTURE

PREPARATION:

18. Now we want to move from the paint pallette to the lecture itself. Our task is how to take all the preparatory work and actually turn it into the lecture to be given to a particular group, for a particular reason, at a particular occasion in history.

19. Every lecture is a fresh painting. The collection of materials organized in relation to the 4x4 is like paint out of which to create afresh with every situation. In order to have the lecture be a particular happening for a particular group of people, there are several things that must be thought through before entering the classroom in addition to the building of the 4x4x4. One is the emphasis. The 4x4x4 does not tell you what your emphasis is; one point on the fourth level may take fifteen minutes.

to get across while a whole row takes only three minutes. Sometimes Paragraphs I, II, and IV of a lecture need only a sweep of the hand while Part III may take forty-five minutes. It is not helpful, when giving the Church lecture, for example, to spend two-thirds of the time on the "sickness of the Twentieth Century Church". One needs to decide, first, where the downbeat of the lecture is, or which dimension of the Church needs time spent on it. Out of that decision, then, the illustrating and "fleshing out" can be done.

20. The time plan needs to be thought through. Sometimes you have to give a lecture in only thirty minutes because you decided you had to spend the first thirty minutes mopping up other problems or getting ready to give the lecture. Then again, maybe you decide to go ahead and take an hour and fifteen minutes for a particular purpose. Generally speaking, however, there is a limit of fifty minutes or so on the time; and one must always respect that limit with great seriousness. Castro apparently could hold people spellbound for three hours, but I wonder if it was necessary. The happening should not be much more than the "seat" can take.

21. A third thing to be thought through is the dramatic movement. Those who have the most trouble with time are those who think giving a lecture is taking this whole paint tray and plastering it on everybody's life, tube by tube, until they run out of paint. If there is any illustration they know or anything they have noticed left out of previous lectures, they get it in. This may give the group a lot of paint but it does not create a drama, or a painting. The task of building what goes on in the classroom is the task of taking this complex paint tray and painting--for that particular class at that particular moment in history. So the crucial question is, "What do you want to have happen to this group of people today. what do they need? They do not need everything on your paint rack. Your job is to be a happening--a particular happening with a particular group of people on a particular afternoon. Therefore, to decide the intensification and ordering of what has to be done; to decide how to get on and of stage is to deal with the dramatic movement of the lecture as carefully and creatively as the 4x4x4.

22. The fourth thing is the selection of your particular illustrations in relationship to the particular group. One may use an entirely different set of illustrations from some other group. When courses are held in exurban areas, inner city areas, suburban areas, with youth, elders, and adults, one has to know what is going to be particularly helpful in each situation.

23. To summarize all this, thus far, the 4x4 is the place where the Movement maintains its corporateness in terms of the RS-I lectures. As a methodology, a 4x4 is very crucial. However, the actual material used needs to be flexible in relationship to the pedagogue and flexible in relationship to the occasion. The 4x4x4 is a methodology that is always being worked on, and acts as a paint palette out of which any particular lecture is given.

THE DRAMA:

24. Now take the drama and look at it step by step. The first thing you ~~deis~~ get on stage. That is very important. Some of our colleagues spend quite a bit of time getting on stage, because it requires two things: the teacher putting on the overcoat of being a teacher and the group putting on the overcoat of being the student in that particualr situation. That is, a relationship has to become established between the teacher and those who are playing the role of the class. A decision has to be made on the part of the class to be the class and allow that teacher to be their teacher. That's what the on-stage is out to do. It has to give an opportunity for that decision be made. I have seen great teachers, who if the group had not made that decision in the first foray, try another foray. They would not give a lecture until they had the permission of the group. It is hard to underestimate that. Sometimes, in pedagogy guilds, a person is half-way through teaching before the class gets their eyes focussed on the blackboard.

25. The pedagogue has to do something to call the class's attention that something is going to happen here, and that a decision has to be made. For the teacher himself, this may be something like getting on top of himself and getting a fell of the group he is going to talk to by sensing their response. There is a conversation going on in a lecture. The one giving a lecture is always listening to the response, listening to the eyes of the people to whom he is talking. Sometimes getting on stage might be a matter of doing something funny. In the old Toastmasters Club they had to tell a joke to get started. That may not be helpful here but they were clear you had to get onstage. There is something settling about humor. If a whole group of people have laughed about a common issue, they have ritualized a decision that they have started to listen to a particular lecture.

26. The on-stage drama, besides enabling the putting on of the decision to be teacher and class, has to hold their interest in that particular issue. This is one of the reasons the pedagogue lays out a broad context and focuses on where the group is. It is as if you don't dare start talking about something until everybody is clear what you have entered. So you relate what you are doing to yesterday's work and to tommorow's work, and in the process, you elicit concern for this subject. This is a part of you getting on stage. Although sometimes the teacher has an extended job to do to get the lecture started, other times it can be done very quickly. To hook people's longings, fears and hostilities is to let something begin to happen. Sometimes the reading of a piece of poetry is a helpful way to do that. It is an oblique attack, and if well-choosen, in one sense, it says everything you have to say in your lecture. But then, they really need to hear it all again. That is the way life always is. You tell them what you're going to tell

them, then you tell them, then you tell them what you have told them. Then you say the "benediction." In the very beginning you tell them the whole story and then come back at it in several ways.

27. The overall rhythm has to be thought through to put on a lecture. The easiest way to succeed in the overall drama is to begin with the intellectually comprehensive; that is, shock them with the rational thought-through-ness of what you have to say. Then move on to the histrionics, the dramatics. Unless you can sweepingly interest the intellectual, there is no permission to be histrionic. Once people have said, "Yes, I see what you are talking about," then the lecturer can tell them what he is talking about. By histrionic, I mean that a drama is pulled through your own being. The pedagogue is not just out to talk to the top of the head. He is out to talk to people's decision-making faculty, their illusion-spinning faculty. The only reason he is in there is to deal with the depth understanding, and struggling with life. Thus, a certain kind of histrionics are crucial.

28. Another way of talking about this is that the drama has to have its highest level of existential intensification at the end and not the beginning. If given a "knock-out blow" in Act I, they do not even listen to Acts II, III, and IV, whereas they really may have needed Acts II, III, and IV to figure out what knocked them out.

29. The first probe gives the students the idea and relates that idea to their whole life, so they are located as to where they will be working. The pedagogue comes in with a probe from the left. Then he comes in on the same subject with another probe from the right, saving the knock-out blow for the end. That follows the dramatic order of most good lectures - the last section of the 4X4 is the one with the "wallop" in it. At least it is true in the Church lecture. Another way to move is to get out the idea, do a probe and then do the knock-out blow third. The fourth section, then, is clarification of the decision that has to be made when a person is knocked out. Give them the idea, hit them once, and then level them on the floor. Then go over to them while they're on the floor and talk to them about the complexities they are now in. The Freedom lecture is like that. The last row of the Freedom lecture, the decision row, is like talking to somebody on the floor. "By the way, having to make all your own decisions and accept the consequences doesn't mean you are not a disciplined person." The Christ lecture is this way, also. When you get through with row three of the Christ lecture, the job is done, but then it is necessary to go back and clarify what this has to do with reinterpreting the symbols of the whole Christian faith. So the lecturer talks to them on the floor about Jesus and lambs and other mysterious things like that.

30. Any other order besides those two is probably poor. If the

knock-out blow is done in the second row, the lecture is in serious trouble. Also, if you give them the idea of the whole thing any other place but first, there may be trouble. Sometimes the lecturer has to make a little probe first and then give them the idea, maybe an attack from the left and then say, "By the way, what I'm attacking is...." Then he comes back from the right.

31. The probes need to be in the order that gets the job done. For example, in the Freedom lecture under lucidity, it is pretty good to do the world first and the self second, then to do others third, and the Word last. That last is obviously the knock-out blow because that is the lucidity in the midst of lucidity itself. That is really a good order, but OK, it would be possible to do the world, then the other, and then the self, without violating all of history. Another example is in the Christ lecture within the dynamics row on the issue of the "offense." First, it is an intellectual offense, then it is a volitional offense, then it is an emotional offense, and finally, it is an offense that has to do with dying. The lecturer needs to be conscious of the drama that goes on at that level as well.

32. Now, how to get offstage? Each has to have his own particular style for doing that but the main thing is to put the decision in the laps of the class as you leave, making certain the decision put there is an authentic one for them. I like the way the Gospel of Mark ends. It ends abruptly. One runs right into the crucifixion and on the other side of crucifixion, right into the tomb. When one comes to the tomb, the angel speaks about the resurrection and the women leave without telling anyone about it. The curtain just comes down and leaves the audience with the sheer mystery of the thing. Sometimes a very abrupt ending is a way to indicate that the decision is on you. At any rate, one has to get off stage.

THE PRACTICAL TOOLS:

33. Now, OK, some very practical things that have to do with putting on any lecture. The first is use of the chalk board. Normally speaking, a class of RS-I people will only write down on their paper what you have on the board. They think that if it is important enough to put on the board, it is important to write down on paper. Now, you cannot put everything on the board and the lecturer is not really interested that they write down everything said. That is not what the lecturer is out for. The board is another medium in and through which you allow the whole lecture to be held together. One of the things about the board that Words and Time move by, but the board stays put. You can draw an artform on the board and relate people back to it. There can be a system of thought on the left represented by one picture, and another system of thought represented by a picture on the right. Without the board, the lecturer would be unable to easily relate each to the other. It is not necessary to leave a grandiose art form on the board after every lecture, although

it is necessary to think it through before beginning any lecture, what kind of pictures are going to be up on the board when the lecture is completed. We used to tease one colleague about photographing his board in technicolor when he finished because he always used four different colors of chalk. That is not necessary, but at least he took the issue of board work seriously.

34. The second thing is the use of voice. Lecturing is something more than just talking loudly enough so that everyone can hear without straining his ears--that is, unless the pedagogue wants them to strain to hear. After a quiet portion, you can pound back at them with something you have to say. The pedagogue does not give them a choice about hearing; they only have the choice of leaving the room. You can do a lot more with your voice than you think. You can bounce it off the table, make it sound like it is down underneath the table, ricochet it off the back of the room or bounce it off the ceiling. It can go where you want it to go. If you want to say something to a particular person, your voice will go right back to where you want it to go.

35. Some of us have magnolia blossom voices, but oh, what one of those can do! If you have a raspy old voice, a raspy old voice can do things no magnolia blossom can. There are teachers with terrible voices who do a fantastically effective job by deciding that the voice they have is the one they are going to use; and then they use it. If you have a Polish accent, or something exciting like that, decide you are going to use that accent to get the job done. There are advantages in being a Southerner in the North or a New Englander in the South, or a Canadian (They can get away with anything in the United States, just by talking Canadian.) If you have a voice that really needs to have something done about it, then do it. For example, I know a grown man who has the voice of a sixth grade girl. It was limiting for him and I do not know what he had done about it, but he has lowered his voice. It still sounds a little odd, but it doesn't sound like it used to. And he gets the job done.

36. The pedagogue also needs to use his body. You communicate with your body as well as with your voice. There is a skill to using gestures. I think many gestures should be very subtle. The underplaying of a shrug or a certain look can be very powerful. You may need some very exuberant gestures. They say when Reinhold Niebuhr preached, with his long arms and big hands, he would reach down to the bottom of the floor and then sweep the clouds of heaven. You can picture how that might be done with a gesture. He called transcendence down into the situation some way or another. The use of your body shows the way you deal with life. To affirm your body is to bodily affirm your relationship to your students.

37. One of our pedagogues, a small woman of about 4 feet 10 inches, was standing in front of a group, giving a lecture from her notes. It was suggested to her that in order to get and keep people's attention, she needed to move. She started to move around and talk to people. Her vivacity and enthusiasm and spryness were able to command attention in a way that made her appear three times her size. She looked like someone who ought to have everyone's attention. Then, there are those who look like someone who just came off a football field. One of our colleagues is like that. He is 6-feet-something and weighs well over 200 pounds. If he did what our short friend was asked to do, it would have such an impact that no one

would hear what he has to say. He has to be more subtle in the use of his body. If you have a bald head, that is a great weapon. Intense eyes are fantastic--the kind that let you know you have been looked at. Everyone must find his own particular characteristic which will work for him

38. Personal contact is the last category. You have to make personal contact and there are many ways to go about it. Sometimes it can be done dramatically, like picking on one person in particular. In a seminar that seems a little more appropriate than in a lecture, but some of the more bold among us do not mind picking on someone. There are also subtle and more complicated ways of picking on someone. The lecturer can call someone by name and ask them what they think of a certain statement or point. A move like that will cause everyone in the room to start thinking; and it dramatizes a personal relationship with the group. Once, the church lecture was given to a room full of ministers and their wives. One couple was about eighty years old. The lecturer got to the point in the lecture where it speaks of being the Church until you are 92, unless you live to be 93. He called on the eighty-year-old woman by name and asked her if that was not the truth. Did she not have to decide what she would do with her remaining years? The room was so quiet, you could have heard a pin drop. She, and everyone else in the room, had to decide what she would do with the rest of her life.

39. One of my colleagues always picks out one of the most stable, self-depreciating people in the room when he does the Christ lecture. He makes this choice very carefully, goes over to the individual, lays his hand on his head and says, "Sharon, you are the greatest! Do you believe that?" And she says, "I don't think so," or "I don't know." He says, "Well, cast out those demons, Sharon, you are the greatest!" "Do you believe that now?" When she says "Yes!" it is a powerful decision. Everyone in the room is clear that not Sharon, but every one of them is being singled out. It is personal contact with everyone in the room. The same thing can be performed more subtly by picking out someone to look at. The quality of how you do personal contact communicates that you are not talking to a stone wall or to a blackboard, or to lecture notes, you are talking to people who are listening to what you have to say. You communicate; it is dialogue.

40. The same thing goes on during the seminar rituals. This is why it is so important that we use, "Grace and Peace is yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen," at the beginning of the God lecture. No one will say anything, so you say, "And all the people said, 'Amen!,'" Then they say, "Amen." And you say, "We have lost the depths of the symbolic life today, haven't we?" And then you proceed to talk about the role symbols will play throughout the weekend.

41. There are many ways of dialoguing, both subtle and complex. Whatever form is employed, it needs to create a sense of personal contact. This means a good bit of brooding beforehand on both the group and yourself. For if you misfire when you pick out Sharon, you are in trouble. If you are going to communicate intentionally and personally with the group, you must be certain of what it is you intend to intentionally communicate. Some sort of exciting stunt is not what you are after.

THE REFINEMENT:

42. I want to say a word about "refinement." The question of vulgarity is not among the most important things to say about lecture-building, but it must be on the list. We have had some necessity as a Movement to make a strong attack on "pious-ity," or perverted piety. The occasional effective and symbolic use of some of the great four-letter Anglo-Saxon words to cut through the shallowness has been effective. They also give a secular word to say about life. I do not call them vulgar. Vulgarity is when one is just being cute, or is using a coarse, vulgar word for the sake of calling attention to himself, or any reason other than getting the job done. On the other side of that, there is the power in words like Kazantzakis uses, "the dung hill of our flesh and minds." If it is necessary to further intensify the lecture, you can use some of those choice Anglo-Saxon offerings, but only as they are appropriate to your particular audience.

43. In addition, we all have little ticks, or unconscious habits such as blowing our noses or scratching or playing with our hands. One needs to remember that we are dealing with the world's dignified public. For the ministry we are called to, we must not allow ourselves to be dismissed because of vulgarity. If you cannot defend your action before God himself, then do not use it.

44. There is also a necessary refinement in how you handle the role of teacher. A pedagogue must be very careful not to violate that role. To teach, you put on an artform and it must stand there doing its job, however poorly. It takes a certain discipline to respect the sacredness of what a pedagogue is trying to do. It is the discipline of not reaching out for approval, or not being overwhelmed by criticism. A pedagogue delivers up to God the deed of being a pedagogue. To the degree that he has given himself to that task, and received from the class its participation, he may have some sense after the presence of the Holy Spirit itself. That needs to be respected and honored--not disgraced with the need for approval, or a vulnerability to criticism. When a lecturer leaves the front of the room, the only thing he has left is his name written in the word forgiveness. It is not that he did or did not do a powerful deed. His only status is that before God, he is forgiven.

45. To put it another way, a pedagogue is not concerned with whether or not his class agrees with him. He does not care whether they make the decision to be saved or not. That is not his affair. That problem lies between the participant and God. The pedagogue never takes seriously any criticism or any approval. He does his job. He make crticially evaluate himself, but that is another matter. For the group, he uses whatever he has done to help call them forth as human beings. It may mean he must escape the situation entirely in order to do the best job of honoring them, which reflects the fact that more than anything else, people like to be let off the hook of what has been asked of them. When they come up after a lecture to talk to the pedagogue, they simply want him to tell them, "Well, it was just an act. It wasn't real." Or, "I didn't really mean it," or "Yes, you are right, there is another side to the story." There is never any other side to the story. The problem is, they don't want the story they have on their hands.

46. The third area has to do with honoring people. It is very closely related to the other two. It is a terrible thing to misuse an audience by saying things you are uncertain about, or that you yourself have not thought through. If you

have not thought something through to the extent that it has become your own conviction, then do not pretend you have that conviction. That is misusing an audience. There must be life in what you are saying. Several times, I have misused an audience by being abstract instead of pointing them to the reality. However, it is worse to misuse an audience by using something that has nothing to do with the lecture but only has to do with dramatizing yourself into greatness. Honoring people and enabling lives to be changed is the core of all our teaching. It is so easy, and so subtle how we, for our own sake, go into teaching and do dishonor to people.

47. The last thing I want to say about refinement has to do with our looks. I saved it until last because it is so powerful. We are in such chaos today relative to our hair and our clothes that probably none of us really has any certainty about our appearance, or how we should look when we go out on to the stage of history as a teacher. I always think surely no one will talk about the way I comb my hair. Yet clothes and hair are very much a part of the lecturer's style. He is telling a story about who he is and what he is out to say by the way he dresses and looks. Probably the key criteria for making decisions about how to look in a teaching situation, or how to look generally, has to do with telling God's story and not your own. If the Lord of history created you looking like an Iowa farmer because you are an Iowa farmer and there is nothing wrong with Iowa farmers, then you ought to tell the story the way God wrote it. Tell it the way it is. You ought to find a way of embroidering and giving authentic presentation to Iowa farm heritage, rather than pretending that you are a Yale man, or something like that. If you are short, you have to know you are short; if you are tall, you have to know you are tall; if you are young, you have to know you are young. Some teachers do not want to be the young ones they are. If you are eighteen, then you have to be eighteen, though an unusual eighteen. If you are ninety, then be clear you are not sixty or some other age you might like to be.

48. If you are unusually plain, then operate with your situation. Abraham Lincoln, it is said, was an ugly man. From the pictures I have seen, there are grounds to substantiate that claim. He was ugly, but he knew how to use his ugliness and breathe life through it. That may serve as an illustration of how to tell your own story. As a pedagogue, you are the presence who is obedient to the Creator who created him in that situation. If the lecturer has pimples, but has decided to be the be his has to be, then radiance will even flow through pimples. The best one can do with what he has it to affirm it; then something happens to it. The deep interior refinement we are pointing to here has to do with the notion that suffering is common to all men. The way one communicates his suffering communicates very deeply to others.

49. If a lecturer is prosperous in terms of this world's gifts--good health, a sound mind and body, emotional health and a good education--he must find ways to communicate that all that is nothing. He must, at all costs, avoid pretention. He must be very clear that every single human being is in radical dependence on God, that every gift is limited, that every situation in life is headed for the equality of the grave. The more gifts the Lord has given you to be responsible for, the more gifts you have to die to, the more you have to give up on behalf of all, the more temptations you have to suffer to vain glory. On the other

hand, the less you have, the more temptation there is to belittle yourself. Oh, tragedy of tragedies if you show up limited in some area! For it allows you to let that limitation tell you you can belittle yourself further, which, in turn provokes disaster, or a temptation to bitterness.

50. The man who rests in the being that the Lord gave him to be with, cuts through the vain glory, cuts through the self-belittling, cuts through the bitterness and therefore is able to give his neighbor what the Lord gave to him. This is the kind of refinement I am talking about. Every human being has to find his own way to portray it. But whatever else we are out to communicate in being a teacher, it is to communicate the deep and wondrous and overwhelming spirit that revelation in Christ has led us to. In all of a lecturer's looks, manners, and uses of himself, he must communicate obedience to God. Or to put it another way, if he communicates the way it is, he communicates authenticity.
