



A 300wordsaday.com guide to church communication.



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Introduction

I am a pastor.

What that means is that I spend a lot of time helping people figure out stuff.

If money didn't matter, I would spend my time

- conversing with people who feel distant from God about what His love might look like,
- conversing with people who feel close to God about how to be more like Him, and
- creating stories and content which convey His love and acceptance and obedience.

And because money doesn't matter as much as people, I get to spend a lot of time doing those three things.

Because I started my professional life as a communication scholar, I spend a lot of time thinking about how to help people understand (almost anything). Though I seldom write specifically about "communication", I write a lot about listening, about audiences, about cultures, and about thinking through the implications of what we say and do.

This ebook is a collection of seven essays. They weren't written as "church essays." In fact, they were written to be as unchurchy as possible. However, they may be helpful for people wrestling with how to convey big ideas in clear language.

Emilio and the box pews: One message, many people.



Emilio stared at the pews. It wasn't like he hadn't seen pews before. He saw them every Sunday morning. And Monday morning. And most other mornings.

Emilio was an associate pastor. Pews were his business. But these were different. They were box pews, benches with sides, benches with doors.

He was visiting this church for a concert. It always intrigued him to see how other churches did things, how they were built, how they sounded. He always looked at the print materials, looked for clues about how they did what they did. It gave him the opportunity to think about church.

This evening, staring at the box pews, was no different. He knew that these neat, civilized, regular cubicles weren't how they had started. After the reformation, in the British Isles in particular, people brought in seating, they built boxes, treating them as little personal spaces in the public space of church. It was a way to have privacy, to maintain family space. It didn't hurt that they blocked out the breezes that blew through the cold buildings. But it didn't help to break down barriers.

As he stared at them, Emilio pictured the cubicles in his own church, and in many other churches. This time they weren't around families. They were around generations, around interest groups, around social strata. There were groups that went into their cubicles every Sunday, with walls around them.

Sometimes that was fine. Sometimes it wasn't.

But the challenge it posed for Emilio tonight was huge. He kept hearing about the importance of communication. He kept hearing people talk about wanting to know what was happening at the church, what great things were going on. He kept hearing people talk about the importance of vision, of knowing what is going on.

His project was to give everyone access to the information they needed to grow, in formats and frequency that helped them feel like they belonged to the community, to the tribe.

And he knew that they were trying. There were weekly bulletins, biweekly mailers, web updates, a Facebook group, Sunday school class email prayer chains. There were displays in the hallways, announcements in the services, notes on clipboards in classrooms. There was a limited circulation newsletter. There were hundreds of pieces of information. And there were people who said they never heard what was going on who, when questioned, acknowledged that they didn't read the newsletter.

Emilio, self-styled "social media pastor"*, knew that there were tremendous opportunities for conversation using new technologies. But he was also aware that a significant number of people in the congregation didn't want to be part of those technologies. The ages of the congregation spanned a century. The income likely spanned 6 figures. The education ranged nearly as far.

He knew the social media options. He used them. But it wasn't a social media congregation. It was a people congregation. And As Emilio stared at the box pews, he knew that although the people sat in chairs and pews, they might as well be in cubicles...or silos.

One core message, a hundred applications, a thousand different mailboxes.

What could he do?

*<http://www.chrisbrogan.com/workflow-social-media-pastor/>

Not everyone likes coffee: consider the culture of the audience.

I was raised well by my Swedish family. I always offer coffee. (And then take some myself, thank you very much).

Some people like tea. My offer of coffee is misguided. Some people are opposed to caffeine. My offer of coffee is an affront. Some people aren't thirsty. My offer of coffee is irrelevant. Some people like coffee, but not the way I make it. My offer of coffee forces them to be polite.



I could, of course, only talk with people who like coffee the way I make it. I could (implicitly) demand that they conform to my tastes if they are going to talk with me. But that would become tedious after awhile.

I thought of this today when someone said that a group of people didn't understand something that I had written. I realized that how I write in my blog, where you choose to drink the coffee, where an audience gathers because they have acquired a taste for the way I brew ideas, will be different than how I write elsewhere, on behalf of others. When I am writing on behalf of my organization (currently, my church), I have to remember that the audience isn't *my* audience, it is the organization's audience.

That audience at Grabill Missionary Church is a collection of microcultures that have formed in this organization since 1905 when the church started. While I've been forming elsewhere for half that time, I've only been here for a year. And while I can use my voice and perspective, there is an edge in my personal writing that is not part of the organization's persona.

I read today about buyer personas* in a case study of rightnow.com. The post talks about identifying clear profiles of the buyers you are seeking. Once you have this picture, you structure your communication strategy, a website, for example, to answer the questions that this buyer has. The company in the article is an IT company, but the application became clear for me.

When I am writing on behalf of my organization, I have to remember that the audience isn't my audience, it is the organization's audience.

On my blog, I always offer coffee.

But what if I were to help our church think about our people? There is a group of people in our church who are parents of young children. They really don't care much about coffee. They pretty much want to know what time and where and how long the children's events are. They want to be able to find that information quickly and really don't care about my odd photos and clever wording.

There is a group of people in our church who are committed to learning and want to know where the learning opportunities are and whether we have anything online and what we have offline.

There is a group of people in our church who want to serve other people. They need to know when and where and how and who.

And as I think about those buyer personas, I realize that we haven't been thinking that way. I realize that if we did, we could help them very well and could be much clearer in our website and all of our communication. And that's a good thing.

So what if we rebuilt our website to match the questions that parents of young children have about where they need to be at what time? What if we identified options for service? What if we built links for learners?

What if, in short, we built our site to match our buyers rather than our structures?

I think I'll get some more coffee and work on that. Can I get you some?

*<http://www.webinknow.com/2008/07/how-well-do-you.html>

The Next Sentence: Being strategic with messages

We were planning a church service, several of us. We met every week, talking through how the songs and the drama and the readings could connect to the sermon and to the congregation. We looked at a video, a clip to drop into the sermon. The video was really cool, really interesting, really entertaining. Including it would make the service amazing.

And then Steve, the preacher, asked, “What’s the next sentence?”

“What?”

“After that video plays, what is the next sentence, the sentence that makes it make sense?”

A great question for the two of us in particular. He is a wonderful communicator. I am a spin master. And as we thought it through, we realized that there was no way we could move people from the video to the rest of the sermon, to that thought that was the point of the morning. There was no connection. If the video stayed, the whole sermon would have to be changed...including the topic.

By itself, the video was great. There were a number of settings in which it would work. But that sermon on that Sunday for that audience was not the place. It would destroy what was being built.

I wrote those three words, “the next sentence” on a scrap of paper and kept them above my desk.

How will I follow that great story or event or project? How can I take that attention, that emotion, that readiness to learn on the part of the audience, and help them learn? Or will I take the mood, the readiness, the anticipation and ruin it with *“Wasn’t that a great story? I knew you’d like it. Anyway, back to what we were talking about.”*

I wish I could say that I have the next sentence figured out. But I don't.

I realized that
for every
illustration,
for every event,
for every lesson,
for everything
that I know
captures
attention, I need
to think about
what comes
next.

Five years after I learned the phrase, I was at a new church. We had a newcomer lunch. We wanted to have something for people who have started coming to church services here within the last year. It's the first event like that we've had around here in at least 13 years.

We thought it made sense to help people get connected, to find out more about who we are and what we believe.

We announced the event out loud. We put it in our publications. We sent invitations to everyone we knew of that fit in that demographic.

We had between 20 and 30 people signed up to come. We invited a bunch of staff and a couple elders and the fellowship committee. We had 75 people. We had a great time.

And then I started thinking about the next sentence. I realized I needed to take a next step with that event. So I created a postcard to send to the people who had attended the event.

The card had four questions:

Thanks for coming to the Newcomer Lunch.
Those of us who are oldtimers enjoyed it.
We hope you did, too.
Because this was the first time we've done this, we would appreciate your help. Would you answer these questions and drop this card in the offering plate the next time you come to church? (or hand it to a staff member or mail it in or attach it to a homing pigeon).

Thanks,
Pastor Jon Swanson

Our goal was to help you get a clearer picture of Grabill Missionary Church.

1. Given that goal, what was the most helpful part of the hour?
2. Given that goal, what one thing could we do that would make Newcomer Lunches more effective?
3. What were you expecting that we didn't do?
4. Should we keep doing this? Yes No

Name (optional)

It was a simple card, inviting another level of involvement.

And then we started looking for addresses.

And we realized that we didn't have a list of the people who showed up.

And we didn't have the list of people who had said they were coming.

And we didn't remember to have people sign a sheet when they filled out a name tag.

We had a great event, we had people wanting to do it again, but we had no way to follow up.

Since then, we've been able to build a list of the newcomers. Our people did a wonderful job of mingling and talking and learning names and building connections. And we have already gotten back several cards, with very positive comments.

The lesson? Think about what comes after the thing that you are doing now. After *this* story, what's the moral? After *this* presentation, what's the followup? After *this* lesson, what's the application?

So why do we forget the next sentence?

Reason 1: We are more concerned about performing than teaching.

There is always a *performing* component to teaching. There is something about a group that sparks something. But if we look at teaching *as a performance*, we are in trouble.

When you are giving a performance, you are playing a role. You turn it on, you turn it off. You memorize the lines without thinking about them. They may not even be your lines. And the measure of a performance is, did I make them laugh or cry? Did I entertain them? Was it good? Was *I* good?

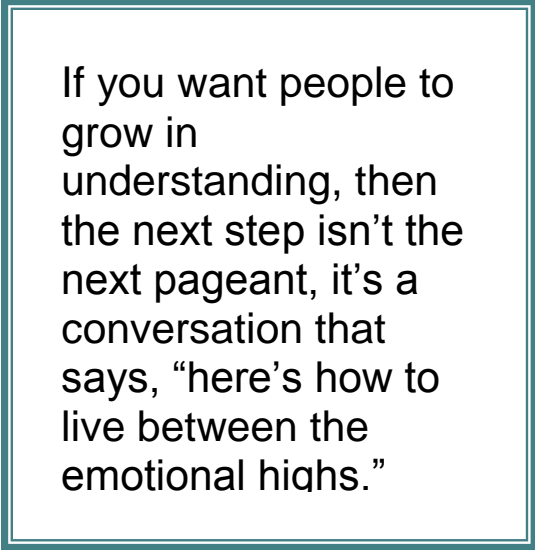
But the measure of teaching is, the measure of discipling is...what can *they* do?

There are times for performances. There are times for drama in teaching. But unless you are an artist, only use drama on the way to something else, on the way to the next sentence.

How can you tell if you are performing? After a performance you wait for the applause and go backstage. After a lesson, you are looking into eyes, providing additional explanation. It's a conversation. It's clarification. It's involvement in lives. It's...it's....it's....not just another speech.

I'll tell you a secret about church. Many people only come to the building twice a year: Christmas and Easter. (If there's a funeral or a wedding or a christening, those are exceptions). The people with that schedule have their reasons. The people who run church often think, "We need to plan big events for those two times. It will be impressive and chreasters will want to come back." (Yes, that's what we call you. I'm sorry. I didn't make it up.)

The problem with that idea is simple: no one has camels on the Sunday after Christmas.



If you want people to grow in understanding, then the next step isn't the next pageant, it's a conversation that says, "here's how to live between the emotional highs."

If the goal of gathering from Sunday to Sunday (and in between) is growth, then to have a huge pageant to entertain means that people are entertained, and then incredibly disappointed when there isn't something entertaining the next week. So people come back the next time there is something entertaining, for the next pageant.

(Truth in advertising time. A couple years ago, after having written and then watched a Christmas drama based on a Cubs fan entitled, of course, "maybe next year", I walked out of the church building and said to my boss, "time to start working on Easter." He made me shut up.)

If you want people to grow in understanding, then the next step isn't the next pageant, it's a conversation that says, "here's how to live between the emotional highs."

So how do you avoid turning lessons and events and stories into performances (if you want more from them)?

Always give people something to do. Now. Right away. And then one to do in a day. And then one to do in a week. And then for a lifetime. Sound like too much? Chris Brogan talks about giving people five takeaways* in every presentation (and he comes close).

Some people need something right now. Some people need something for a lifetime. Speak to both of those groups.

Reason #2: We're afraid to say the hard next sentence.

You've told the perfect story about Helen. You've told it perfectly. The audience members, whether one person or 1500 people, are transfixed. There are tears in some eyes. Heads are nodding in agreement or identification. No one, it seems, is sleeping, though you are 40 minutes into this presentation 90 minutes after lunch or 30 minutes before.

But then you stop. Because the next sentence is a really hard thing to say.

We are afraid of success, afraid of failure. We are afraid to be measured by what we are asking for. We are afraid to confront. We are afraid that we might have to do this again. We are afraid that we will be meddling.

I taught public speaking for several years. One day, a student gave a persuasive speech about becoming an organ donor. She talked about the value of organ donation, about the lives that are saved. She talked about the value of deciding ahead of time, so that your family knows what you want. She talked about the ease of signing up.

It was a wonderful persuasive speech.

Until the end.

“In your hand you have a form. All you need to do is sign it. I'm thinking about taking this step. You should, too.”

All the arguments, all the reasons, all the simplicity...but she hadn't persuaded herself. Why should we sign up if she hasn't?

If she had acknowledged her own fear, her own uncertainty, I would have been sympathetic. But she had spoken with confidence up to that point.

That's how fear can mess with our ability to say the next sentence, to call for the change or the choice that we know should follow. We are afraid that we might be held accountable for not living up to what we are asking. We are afraid that if our event is too successful we might have to plan more. We are afraid that if we ask for a clear action on the part of the audience...and no one responds...we'll be regarded as a failure.

So we hedge. We leave lots of options. We say "think about this." We focus on the great attendance at the banquet as the measure of success rather than the giving in response to the appeal. We say, "many people like Helen could be affected" rather than simply saying, "I could die, too. So could you."

People in sales deal with failure every day, if failure is someone telling you "no." But there are more people speaking than there are people in sales. There are more people planning events than there are professionals. There are many of us who are responsible to teach, to preach, to plan events, to bring about change.

And many of us aren't nearly as effective as we would like to be because we are afraid to say the next sentence, the one that will challenge people deeply.

The other evening I was reminded of a time that I wasn't afraid.

A man who sometimes attended our church had died. The hospice chaplain was doing the funeral. I was asked to talk a bit about Neal.

He was an interesting and odd person. He had left his family more than once. He was incredibly needy as a person. He had been living in a motel room for seven years before moving into a nursing home and then, finally, to hospice care.

His grown children came to the funeral but they brought a huge amount of (understandable) anger.

And after the welcome and the prayer and a song and some readings from the Bible by the chaplain, I got up to speak.

So what's the next sentence? The sentence after "hello"?

"Neal wasn't perfect. You all know that. He disappointed you."

Suddenly, the kids were paying attention to a pastor who wasn't going to turn their biological father into a perfect man. They were able to let go of a bit of their anger now that they knew that someone understood it.

I was almost afraid to say that sentence, almost afraid to say the thing that allowed a conversation to begin.

How to remember the next sentence

I've been talking about the importance of being intentional about the next sentence, whether that is the sentence after the compelling story in a speech, or the sentence after a powerful video in a sermon, or the mailing that is the followup after a major event. Call it the next step, the next party, the call to action. Call it whatever you want.

Here are eight ways to write the next sentence. Of course, some of these relate to sentences, others to events. But deal with it.

- 1. Write a clear outcome for your presentation.** In my life as a speech teacher, I would make students write a measurable outcome: "When I have finished speaking, my audience will be able to ____." I don't do that anymore. Unless I want to make sure I'm actually effective.
- 2. Practice the story you are telling.** Ever start telling a story and then wonder what your point was? Your audience was wondering, too. So take some time and tell the story out loud. Unless, of course, the point doesn't matter.
- 3. Stop and look at the audience, even before the event.** When we are speaking, when we are planning events, we are working with real people, people with short attention spans and learning styles not our own and bladders and broken hearts and, well, lives. I get consumed with my presentation and planning and cool graphics and neat events. However, I need to stop and look at the people who will be in the room. When I do, I often change and simplify and clarify. Of course, maybe that's just me.
- 4. Create a checklist.** I talked earlier about remembering everything but an attendance list which would allow followup for an event. If we had assembled a checklist, one of us would have remembered. I am horrible at lists. All the more reason. ("cool story. check. next

sentence. check.”)

- 5. Pray.** This may not apply to you. If not, jump to number 6. I have this belief that God actually knows people inside and out. So when I’m trying to figure out the next sentence, I occasionally ask what to say. And sometimes I am told. And sometimes I even have to erase something.
- 6. Wait.** So you told an incredibly moving, incredibly appropriate, incredibly inspiring story. You can tell that it moved people, mostly because you have tears in your own eyes. So wait for a bit. Before you say that next sentence, wait. Let people think and feel for a bit. Just wait.

You want proof? Think of a really moving episode of *Extreme Makeover*. Lives changed, people helped. You want to sit and think about whether you are doing the same. And immediately you hear “stay tuned for *Desperate Housewives*.” Suddenly you realize that the network isn’t about moving your heart.

Don’t be like the network.

- 7. Pretend.** Pretend for a moment that you actually know what you are doing. Because you probably do. I was talking with someone today about the imposter syndrome. This is best illustrated by that fear in teachers that someday while we are teaching, someone will stand up and say, “you made that up!” and we will say, “You are right. Finally, someone saw the truth about me.” It is possible, however, that you do know what you are doing and if you quit thinking about your insecurity you can think about helping people change the world.

Because that’s what you are about, right?

- 8. Pilot.** Experiment. Tell your stories to friends before the event. Have a few people for dinner before you have 1,000 people at a banquet. Occasionally, have your spouse or friend read a post before you hit publish. The thing that seemed really cool inside your head may not be.

And after this list, the next sentence...is up to you.

*<http://www.chrisbrogan.com/two-important-speaking-tips/>

The Next Piece: Why not to overwhelm the audience.

You are in the middle of a presentation. You have the audience leaning in. They are tweeting every word. They are writing their own posts in their heads with the wonderful material you are giving them. They are, you are, fully engaged.

Suddenly, a costumed gorilla runs into the room, screams, and runs out.



Everyone sees. Everyone is startled, and then laughs.

Everyone is distracted. People are still tweeting, but now they are talking about what just happened more than about whatever you were saying.

Unless you are one of the people known for having costumed gorillas running through, this is a silly thing to do.

And there probably should only be one of those people.

At any given moment of intentional discourse, any given time where you are putting words and experiences together for a purpose, you have a bag full of pieces. And you have several bags for other games, for other purposes. The temptation, often, is to go for the big effect, for the huge memorable experience, for the huge E, for the screaming gorilla.

Fight that temptation.

You are in a relationship with an audience. You are trying to make the next move, to give others something to build on, to build with. You are trying to take what they have done and thought, add to it in a meaningful way, and give them a chance.

Or you are building a billboard, helping people know what goes on inside as they drive by outside. You want them to stay safe, to catch a glimpse, to have a really clear bit of understanding.

As fun as it is to be remembered for your effects, what would be even cooler would be to be remembered for the thoughtfully built relationships, the way

that you wove value into the lives of the people that you knew, the way that you played the next piece, whether on a board or a sign, with respect and awareness of long-term effectiveness.

The gorilla guy is remembered. And copied. And becomes his own parody. The guy who plays the really big E on the gameboard is amusing. Once. But the person who thinks well about the next piece?

She changes the world.

Translation: The importance of story

I preached this morning.

My job is more about administration and communication and training, but when our senior pastor is gone, I get to preach. ("Get to" may sound bad. Take it in the best way. I love my boss's preaching, in the "it has changed my life" kind of way.)

There are lots of different approaches to preaching, styles of preaching, attitudes about preaching. I was reminded again this morning that my best approach in the pulpit, as well as my best approach in writing, is to be a translator.



In the picture you can see the pile of books from my reading last night. I took none of those books with me onto the platform. There is a dictionary of Bible words. There is a commentary on the specific book of the Bible I was using. There is a systematic theology book there (taking concepts and explaining them as an organized system). There is a theology book that looks at the specific concept I was talking about. There are two Bibles.

When I walked onto the platform this morning, I didn't take any of those books. I took some stories.

I looked at the books to make sure that the stories I was telling, the way I was telling the stories, was consistent with what the text says, was consistent with what scholars say. But for this audience on this morning with this speaker and

with this particular subject, I didn't need to read a bunch of commentators and Greek words and outlines. I needed to tell stories that would help us understand something not as a theological construct but as something that happened to and with and for real people.

As you are writing, as you are speaking, as you are representing an organization or a company, I offer this challenge: do your research carefully and thoughtfully. But then, rather than quoting all the quotes, tell a story for the people you are looking at. It's scary for you. But maybe they don't need experts. Maybe they need someone to translate truth into real life.

8 ways to use social media in church

(This essay refers to many social media tools. If you don't know what one of them is or what it does, look it up. Use Google.)

Chris Brogan is helping people figure out how to apply social media tools in particular contexts. I offered to do the church application. Of course, because Chris has been helping me explore the possibilities for the past couple years, he has been mentoring this post.

I'll start with a couple of principles which I try to remember:

Principle #1: Church buildings are tools. So are social media.

When people think about church, they think location. They go to a building. But the building is a convenience, a place to gather and stay warm and dry. Although we want buildings that are useful, if we get stuck on making them too cool, too amazing, too vast, we use up resources that could go elsewhere. Not just money, but time and attention and energy. When we think about social media, we often get captured by the coolness.

I do. As a result for example, I had a Pownce account that I never checked leaving one person thinking I left the internet. When I am at my best, however, I am looking at social media as a set of tools to be used for a variety of specific purposes...and I will choose carefully based on what I want to accomplish.

Principle #2: Church is by definition about community and relationships. So are social media.

If you take what Jesus said about what we know as church with some seriousness, it is a set of vertical and horizontal relationships. It is about the people. And so it is with social media. How are we building relationships? How are we developing connections and using the connections to help people grow?

Principle #3: The curtain is pretty transparent.

For some reason, people who are exploring social media for proselytizing seem to think that no one will know what they are trying to do. For example, if you are creating strategies for saving people and you publish those strategies online, the “lost people” who are the “target” of the “assimilation strategies” can read them. And will understand that the appearance of authenticity is just a strategy. (Maybe of the Borg. (That’s from *Star Trek*.)

I understand this struggle. It is the struggle of every brand that is trying to create a social media strategy. However, at some level, church isn’t a brand. My solution is to just live and talk and explore as if my Invisible Friend is real. Just like Big Bird did.

What I’ve done:

- 1. Share events on work trips using Flickr and audio blogging.** I was part of a team that went to Gulfport as part of Katrina reconstruction. While we were there, we put pictures on Flickr, we audioblogged with Hipcast, and just blogged. People back home were able to look and listen and read. Even people who didn’t know what the technology was could follow the links that we emailed around and also put on the church website. (<http://levite.wordpress.com/gulfport-news/>)
- 2. Share corporate gatherings with Ustream.** A couple years ago we started turning on a video camera and streaming our services. These weren’t services produced for broadcast, with great camera work, stellar audio, and TV timeouts. Quite the opposite. The service existed and we let people at home watch it through an unobtrusive camera. For the first couple months, we just used the mic on the camera. We just took what was happening inside outside. And people watched. A guy whose wife couldn’t get out because of early Alzheimer’s disease. People who are living on the other side of the world. And one day, people who couldn’t safely travel because of the ice. (Though I haven’t tried it, I’m guessing that you could use [blog.tv](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/fmc) and chat back) (<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/fmc>)
- 3. Share your heart with blogging.** I’ve been writing at levite.wordpress.com for a few years and people have gotten to know how

I think and feel. My friend Rick sometimes tells people what he will be preaching about to get ideas and suggestions. The key, however, is to wrestle. (<http://honest2blog.wordpress.com/>)

4. **Share community development with a group blog.** During Lent 2008 I was part of creating a small group. Seven people wrote once a week each about a Lent-related theme. They talked with each other. They talked with commenters. They ended up having as much interaction as a face-to-face small group might have during its first six weeks of meeting. They want to keep going. <http://lent2008.wordpress.com/>
5. **Share your life with Twitter.** I can't ever figure out how to describe Twitter. Even calling it microblogging doesn't help. So I just send people here. Especially when I am traveling. And then they discover that they can find out what I'm doing and where I am. And then they understand. <http://twitter.com/jnswanson>
6. **Share your heart with Youtube.** I've created a number of pieces of video to use in church services and other places. Some are citizen journalism, showing what people connected to church are doing in the community. Some are thought pieces. (Bonus: that video used audio that was captured by on a digital voicemail service. People could call in, leave a message, and then I was able to edit it in.) Some are, well, odd. But all of them are quickly produced and connect to particular people. The secret is to remember that an apology or a birthday greeting with only one intended audience member can be absolutely huge in impact.

Citizen journalism: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Sk7Bt12nBI

Thought piece: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8boI8RdOz-Q>

Odd: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2_fCJ-ehKg

Apology: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPNg_fAFrv8

Birthday: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0dnC0Qx6kw>

7. **Share attention with a note.** Yep. You can actually handwrite a note to someone. Of course, if you take a picture with your cameraphone, order a print through Walgreens or Snapfish or other photo sites, and then glue it to cardstock before you write the note, you can personalize a moment or an event in a way that merges multiple media for maximum impact.
8. **Be human.** Are people at Facebook? Friend them. Building networks at LinkedIn? Connect. Writing a book on conversation? Sign up. Raising money to fight cancer? Join in.

Chris has had a ton of other ideas I haven't done. One of the best? Have kids interview old people on camera and produce videos together.

Oh, one other thing. I know people that I didn't know a year ago because of all of these things above. I have cried and laughed with, prayed for, talked to, understood, taught, been taught by these people. There are real people behind these words and screens and cameras. Out here, outside the church building.

Original link: <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/your-help-requested-planning-a-small-series/>

Thoughts on getting ready for Sunday

Tomorrow morning I am teaching two different groups of people. The first group is about 10 people, mostly in their forties. The second group is about 30 people, all at least 70. Tomorrow night I am teaching a group of unknown number, of mixed demographic. Their one common link is that they all are leaders of adults at our church.



So why am I writing a post right now instead of studying and reading and writing? Because I needed to tell myself a few things.

1. There will be other times. Don't pack everything into one session.
2. It's better to have one thing understood well than a thousand things mentioned briefly. Really. (No, really. Because if it matters, then it is worth making sure they—and you—understand it inside and out.)
3. Think about the people and the ideas and how they connect. Not about what will make me sound good, or make them feel bad.
4. Since I'm talking, in part, about how to teach...teach that way. It's called modeling. And not doing it is called either lazy or lacking integrity.
5. If you need to prove that you know something, put it in a handout. And then maybe forget to hand it out.
6. Remember that you always feel this way and you take it seriously and it always ends up okay because this is what you are built for.
7. Remember to not be complacent about number six.
8. It's not performance. It's relationship.

Okay. That's all. Thanks for listening. Back to work.