

**“Besides being chock-full of information that everyone who speaks needs to hear, Milo Shapiro has a way of making whatever he talks about sound interesting. He could write two hundred pages on dryer lint and hold my attention. Have your highlighting pen ready; you’ll be referring back to this book time and again.”**

— *Lewis Harrison, Past President of the  
National Speakers Association, New York Chapter*

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**“This ‘Top Ten’ format is easy and fun to follow, as Milo coaches you through with tips, ideas and strategies you can use right away. He has compiled a full spectrum of information any presenter needs to be brilliant.”**

— *Sheryl Roush, international speaker, trainer, author,  
Past President San Diego Professional Coaches Alliance,  
Past District Governor, Toastmasters International*

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**“Milo provides what you need to know about public speaking and then some. A one-stop read for new and experienced public speakers. The illustrations and examples make it fun to read!!”**

— *Barbara Greenstein, Past Pres. of the American Society  
of Training & Development, San Diego Chapter*

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**“Milo Shapiro's *Public Speaking: Get A's, Not Zzzzzz's!* is a must read for people who are serious about public speaking. It's like a cafeteria with morsels of wisdom that can satisfy any level of speaking appetite - from novice to advanced. Let Milo's years of hands-on speaking experience help you advance your speaking skills.”**

— *Stuart Burkow, co-author of “Guerrilla Profits”,  
President, Guerrilla Profits Int'l (www.GuerrillaProfits.com)*

**“Speak!”**

— *Milo Shapiro*

# Public Speaking:

Get **A's**, Not **ZZZZZZ's**!



**A fun and helpful guide to being prepared, polished, and powerful**

**By Milo Shapiro**

**[www.IMPROVentures.com](http://www.IMPROVentures.com)**

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# ***DEDICATION***

*To my Dad:*

*For all that we know  
you've done for us...*

*And so many more things that we'll  
never know that you've done for us...*

*Much love and appreciation!*

*Hope the book makes you proud.*

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# 0

## Introduction

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*Who is this guy?  
And why should I read this book?*

*(especially when there are lots  
of other books on this topic!)*

Good questions! I know the answer to the first one for sure — I'm practically an expert on that. So let's come back to who I am. Only you can answer the second one and since the answer could be "I don't need to read this book," let's take a look at the options.

Foremost: Is your house on fire? If so, then you should deal with that first. Good public speaking is important, but it won't save your life. And this book is flammable, which will only add to the problem. Quite frankly, I don't have enough insurance to deal with the implications of that.

Second: Do you prefer books that consider themselves to be V.I.B.'s? Because this book is not a V.I.B. You see, V.I.B.'s are "Very Important Books." They're the kind of books you want to *have read* but you don't exactly want to sit down and *read*. In high school, these were books like *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Moby Dick*. I'd love to say that I'd read them, but in truth there was always some sitcom I wanted to watch more.

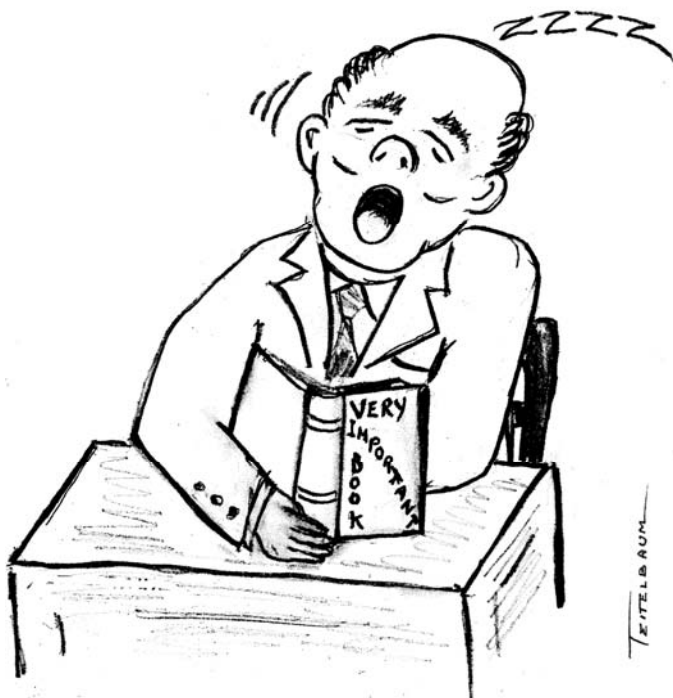
As adults, there are V.I.B.'s, too. They usually have titles like:

*"On Being Productive Through  
Goal Setting and Time Management"*

Doesn't that sound like a book you'd benefit from *having read*? Sure. But does it sound like something you would honestly want to sit down and *read*? Well, I don't know about you, but I have a funny feeling that about nine pages into it, my mind would be off



in Tahiti — without me. I prefer to read something that speaks to me in a way that reflects how I like to think.



Likewise, in spite of my own passion for public speaking, I've seen too many V.I.B.'s on the topic that could put a person to sleep immediately after drinking a full Starbucks® Venti Mocha. And that's a shame! To my way of thinking, speaking in public is inherently *interesting!* It's about creating excitement regarding a message that you want or need to share. It's exposing people to new ideas and possibly motivating them to take action. So why do so many books on the topic suck the life out of it? Why can't they be fun and stimulating reading and still be packed with content?

If you've survived these first five paragraphs, you've already realized that I don't write like most other training authors. I prefer to write the same way that I would speak to you — which, oddly

enough, I think is valuable if the topic at hand is *how to speak to people!*

I'll try to keep things light to make sure that this book is a comfortable and fun read, but not at the expense of saying what needs to be said.

I also strongly believe that we can tell people facts until their heads are swimming, but if you tell a good story with a lesson built in, the message resonates and sticks. For this reason, I illustrate a lot of my points with examples and tales. Some come from times when following this advice caused a positive outcome, but many are those lessons learned through trial-by-fire. A good number of my anecdotes come from personally having lived out some foul-up...and surviving to write it down (and we *do* survive them all) so that you never have to experience the same problem.

If my speaking style sounds too informal for the type of speaking you might do, let me share a few thoughts with you:

1. I want this book to be fun to learn from. It doesn't mean I *always* speak informally. It's just one possible approach and it's the one I chose for this book.
2. Some people reading this book (maybe you, maybe not) may think that speaking to a group is scarier than bungee jumping off a space shuttle. So just *reading* a book on speaking to an audience may have their stomach in a knot. If I can keep this book a little lighter, maybe it'll help those people to keep breathing, thinking...and reading.
3. With each passing year, a higher percentage of the audiences we address are made up of Generation X (born 1965-1980), Generation Y (born 1981-1994), and even Millennials (born 1995 or later). These are folks who do not remember life before MTV, *America's Funniest Videos*, and reality TV. They are far more used to learning from an informal approach than Baby Boomers and the generation before them. Including the right percentage of informality holds their attention better.
4. My speaking engagements have been well-received by professional organizations such as Minolta, Pfizer, Kodak, Southwest Airlines, Hilton Hotels, the American Society of

Training and Development, and the Project Management Institute. Something I'm doing seems to be working.

5. You're still reading the introduction, which is probably a good sign.

With the long-running success of David Letterman's "Top Ten" lists and their many parodies, I decided that this would be a fun format to use for discussing the many lessons around presentation skills and public speaking (these two terms are often used interchangeably, but are not always the same).

Since this isn't a V.I.B., I encourage you to mark up this book so it's an easy reference tool. On your first reading, circle with pencil areas that you think you'll want to come back to when you're ready to act upon them. Write ideas that come to you in the margin as you read.

Most importantly, highlight points that you think you might want to be able to quickly find to reconsider right before an event. Only you know which ones are best for you, be it packing tips or fear reduction ideas or reminders on what to do when you arrive...whatever suits *your* needs.

After you finish, when the time comes for you to do a presentation, a simple ten-minute review of the highlighted bullet points will be like having all those lessons rush back to you without having to re-read the book.

Though you're always welcome to!

# 0½

## The Power of Story

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If you read the intro, you know that I believe strongly in the power of **story** as a tool for speaking and teaching.

Most of your audiences will be mature enough that they can learn from you *without* the use of story, so why do I take the time to mention it in the introduction *and* add this special bonus chapter just to emphasize this point? Because I firmly believe that nothing else you do in your attempts to become a better speaker will help you more than becoming a good story teller *and* selecting the right stories to support your intentions. Just like on *American Idol* – how many times has Simon Cowell bemoaned, “Decent job, but you sang the wrong song for you.” You’ve gotta tell the *right* stories or it won’t matter how well you tell them!

Here are just a few reasons why I’m dedicated to helping people integrate these skills into their presentations:

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### Memory

*Story* is proven to be an effective means of getting listeners to absorb and remember the idea you wish to share.

If I asked you to tell me the five most important lessons you learned from a parent, you might be able to do it, but I’m guessing it would take some thought.

By contrast, if I asked you to tell me the moral of these five stories:

1. The Hare and the Tortoise
2. The Boy Who Cried Wolf
3. The Mouse and the Thorn in the Lion's Paw
4. Green Eggs and Ham
5. The Wizard of Oz

...most readers could rattle off something like:

1. Slow and steady wins the race.
2. If you tell lies, no one will believe you when you tell the truth.
3. Even the smallest creatures can be good allies.
4. You have to try new things.
5. There's no place like home.

And even if you missed one (or worded the lesson slightly different than I did), chances are the whole story came rushing back to you when you saw the moral I listed.

Now which are more important in most of our lives: the influence of our parents or *The Hare and the Tortoise*? For most, it'd be our parents, yet "Slow and steady wins the race" is a stronger memory for us. **That's** the power of story. And that's the power I want *you* to bring to your presentations...with lessons people will not just follow, but *remember*. And when they remember the lesson with the story, they will remember **you** along with it.

---

## Attention

The brain seems to process stories in a different way than it does facts. For whatever reason, there is a great sense of relief in hearing a story by comparison. This is the reason that a good sermon is usually the highlight of a religious service. Rather than merely reciting the rules, expectations, and devotional comments, we are now treated to a tale. Be it from the Bible, current events, or a childhood story of the orator, we are taken someplace else and given the opportunity to visualize something being played out. We are taken on a journey that lands us back where we started, but wiser for the trip.

We like to believe that we are far grown up from the children who gathered on the floor around the school librarian's feet, as she opened up a tome from the bookshelf. But the reality is that we turn from such tales to Hollywood and let *them* tell us stories where the visuals are simply given to us. As adults, we relish stories just as much; we just like them to be a little richer.

New parents often rediscover this joy when they start to read bedtime stories to their children. One friend admitted to me that she was looking forward to bedtime that night so she could find out what was going to happen next in the story she was reading to her son.



When you create good stories and tell them well, you will have your audiences fully present and more than willing to give you their complete attention.

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## **Impact**

“...when I read the good news, my first instinct was to call Jim to tell him what happened. He'd be so excited. My hand was halfway to the phone before it hit me, as it had hit me over a dozen times that week, that Jim had passed away. He was gone. There would be no telling Jim about anything anymore. No calls. No notes. No visits. No laughing. No shoulder. And the grieving would start over, again and again, in moments like these, as the reality slowly sunk in.”

Nothing has the power to evoke emotion or personalize a message more quickly or powerfully than a story. In only a few lines of typing, I took you to another place and time in my life, back in the mid-nineties, when my emotions were strong and I was learning some lessons that I would share later. Whether we are sharing bad times or good, personal tales or those of the world, stories give us far more opportunity to make a strong impression upon those we are addressing.

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For the reasons we've just gone over, you'll find that I will use stories in this book to make my points as well.

Now that we've made that point, let's start working with our top ten lists so everything else about our speeches, from advanced preparation to leaving the stage, will be top-notch.

Come on...it'll be fun!

# 1

## 10 Things To Know And Do Before You Even *Start* To Plan For A Specific Event

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Don't get me wrong: I love the excitement of improvisation and the rush that comes from the risk it involves. I even love adlibbing a bit in my keynote speeches when something relates to the room or when I can make a tie-in to something that preceded me. But these are situations where I'm in control. The last thing I want when I'm speaking is surprises...especially when I could have headed them off by being better prepared!

While there is an entire art and skill set to handling those times when we need to speak unexpectedly, most of the time we are forewarned when we are to make a presentation.

What can you do to start preparing *right now* for the possibility that you might be asked to speak at some point? This might seem like an odd question, but if you expect that you will be doing some speaking, there are steps you can take now to be a few steps ahead of the game.

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- 1. Have a question list that you'll go through every time you talk to a meeting planner.**

This has been one of the most valuable tools I've ever incorporated into my business.



When I first entered the business, I was winging it every time, assuming that the meeting planner would provide all the information I'd need. I learned quickly that there were things I needed to ask or the information would never reach me. As I'd subsequently call back to get answers to issues I *should* have asked up front, two things happened:

- 1) I looked unprepared and unprofessional.
- 2) I inevitably forgot to ask one or two things I should have before arriving.

By creating a **Question List**, you ensure that you never forget anything and you show your level of detail and competence to the planner. Once the speaking engagement seems likely, I officially switch into Interview Mode. I'll usually say something like:

"Maggie, over the years I've compiled a list of questions about upcoming speaking engagements. It'll take us about five to ten minutes to get through, depending upon your answers. I know that this may sound like a lot, but each question on the list comes from an experience when I realized, belatedly, that I would have been more prepared for the event had I asked.

"By the time we finish this survey, there shouldn't be any chance that there will be topics we *should have* covered. Can you spend

[This is the end of the preview section. If you've been enjoying it and want to finish this list and read the ones you saw in the table of contents, please visit [www.IMPROVentures.com](http://www.IMPROVentures.com) to buy a copy of this book.

If you continue scrolling, there are a few more pages that follow from the end of the book that tell you a bit more about the author and his programs]

# About The Author

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Milo Shapiro grew up in the suburban town of Syosset on Long Island in NY. He graduated college from the State University of New York at Albany in upstate New York.

His Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science led to fifteen years in the world of Information Technology, from which he learned many of the lessons of the business world that he would later apply to his next career.

During those years that he was a programmer and project manager, he studied the art of improvisation in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Edmonton, and Calgary, developing a deep love for both the art and for how valuable its lessons are in day to day life.

In 2000, he left that career to start his own company, ***IMPROVentures***, to pursue his goal: Sharing with the world the many ways we can improve both our business and personal skills through the fun and lessons of improvisation.

One need not be any sort of comedian to benefit from learning to play with spontaneity and creativity in this way. The next few pages describe a few of the programs Milo has developed.

Milo now resides in beautiful San Diego, CA, and, after spending seven years in Albany, NY, he would be perfectly happy if he never saw snow again.

For more on Milo's programs and how to bring him to your event, visit his website:

  
[www.IMPROventures.com](http://www.IMPROventures.com)

# TEAMprovising™



IMPROVentures' first offering was the **teambuilding course TEAMprovising™**, teaching organizations about communication skills and teamwork through the fun and lessons of improvisation.

Improv teaches us about listening skills, building on each others' ideas, non-verbal communication, and more. The lessons apply to **sales and client support** just as much as they do within teams.

While playing these “games”, attendees have been known to make statements like, “This is what happens in our staff meetings!” or “My client does this to me!”

Milo has shared this “teambuilding-plus” work with organizations as varied as Southwest Airlines, the U.S. Marines, and San Diego Gas & Electric.

# Motivational Speaking



In 2001, his connections to the National Speaker Association led to his development of a new second branch of IMPROVentures focused on **keynote speaking** for conferences and events.

Milo's solo keynote, "**You Gotta Fail...To Succeed!**" is a motivational speech about moving past the fear of failure so we can excel.

When we resist expanding our borders because of fear, we deny ourselves *and* the organizations we serve the brilliance that is in each one of us.

What makes the program so memorable is that he gets the entire audience playing a few basic improv games in pairs from their seats. In a way, it's like a mini-teambuilding event within the keynote, but the games he uses here are designed to make points about risk-taking while allowing everyone to remain in the safety of the audience space.

When requested, it has been customized to relate the base theme of risk-taking more specifically to topics like customer service, leadership, and teamwork.

Letters of reference recommending this program can be found at [www.IMPROVentures.com](http://www.IMPROVentures.com), including praise from Hilton Hotels, Minolta, Southwest Airlines, and the Wellpoint/BlueCross family of insurance.

# Business-y Entertainment



In response to requests for **entertainment with a business message**, Milo collaborated to create a keynote duo called *The IMPROVprofessionals* who perform a two-person “keynote”.

The duo performs ten improv games, each of which is designed to prove a business point on a topic relating to this audience. This “edu-tainment” show has tackled topics including management and teamwork, sales, customer service, communication, event planning, and fundraising.

The response to this program has been wonderful, with managers often saying “We’ll remember these lessons because it was so much fun learning them.”

Testimonials from Pfizer, Cox Communications, Kodak, Sempra Energy, and Meeting Professionals International can be found on his site: [www.IMPROVentures.com](http://www.IMPROVentures.com).

# Public Dynamics



A third branch of IMPROVentures called “**Public Dynamics**” was created by request of some of Milo’s clients in other areas. He now offers **classes and coaching in public speaking**, building upon the ideas in the public-speaking top-ten lists used in this book through more personal contact.

One of Milo’s clients went on to break all of his personal sales records on the QVC television sales network after Milo’s coaching regarding how to work the interview process better to come across more likeable. In particular, by telling better stories more effectively instead of focusing on details, the client became more compelling on screen.

Milo is also available to deliver keynote speeches on public speaking and the power of *story* to convey a more lasting message.



# About The Illustrator

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Bob Teitelbaum is a former New York lawyer and real estate broker who, now retired to Florida with his wife Joan, has the opportunity to pursue his interests in the arts.

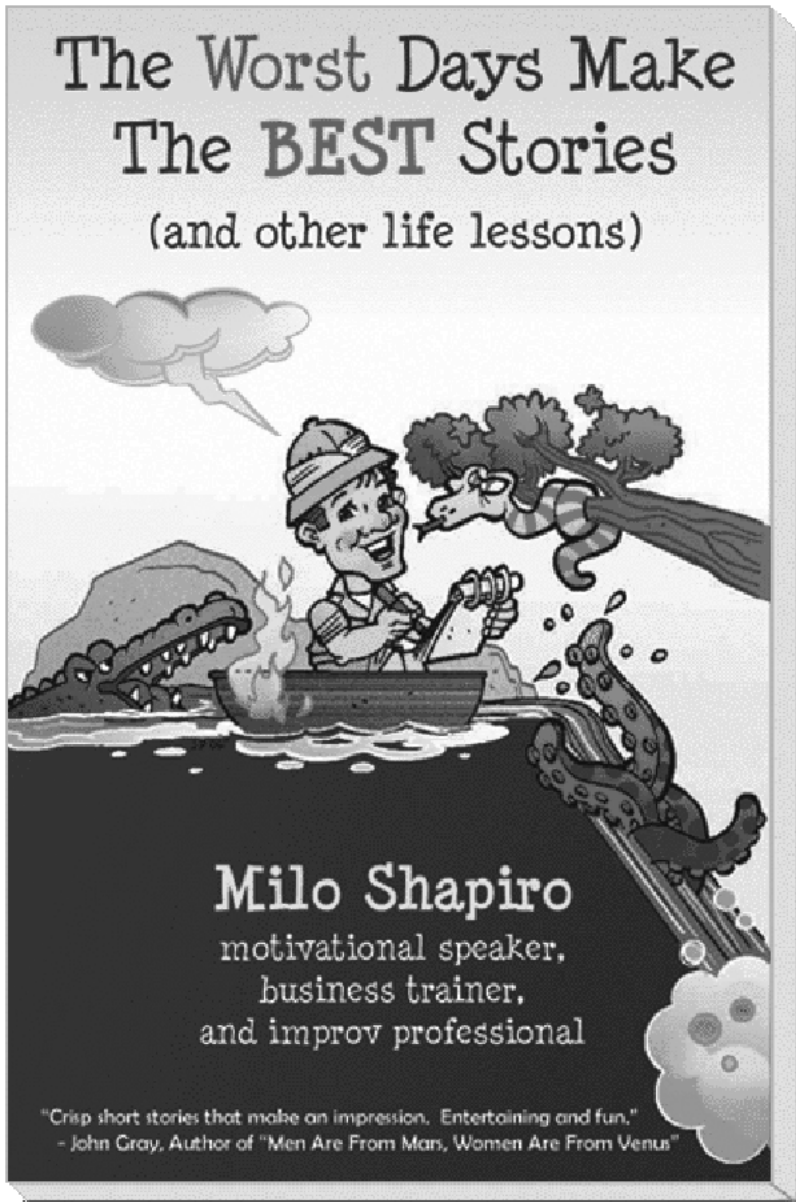
His productions include intensely researched wooden ship models, stained glass windows, oil paintings, and photography (both realistic and computer enhanced). This book is his first venture into the world of cartooning.

He's also one heck of a Dad.





ALSO BY MILO SHAPIRO



26 great, true stories with life lessons within the laughter.  
Visit [www.IMPROVentures.com](http://www.IMPROVentures.com) for details!