



Talks for Teachers - Part Two

Manuscript Lecture #5 by Manly Palmer Hall

Versatility

It is essential that students learn to be versatile and able to adjust their personalities to any environment necessary for the carrying on of their work. The true teacher is as much at home in the kitchen as in the salon, equally at ease scrubbing or lecturing; never mind how unpleasant the surroundings, he

has learned to be perfectly poised under all conditions. Like the trained actor on the stage, he lives each part as though he knew no other.

Poise

The majority of people have not yet developed that poise which is the mark of power. We find self-consciousness in every walk of life and there are many who, but for that fault, would rise to noble works and be of service in the world. An individual invited to stand up and address a group of people, as in a social gathering, has a great opportunity but usually instead of grasping this he stutters and stammers and finally, turning red, sits down and the word of helpfulness remains unsaid.

The teacher must practice in his daily life to meet every problem with dignity for he who is graceful in a disgraceful situation is a power wherever he may be.

Patience

Those who aspire to be teachers must realize that the great masses of humanity are very little children constantly disobeying those who strive to help them. The teacher must meet his wayward pupils with patience and kindness, even when they have broken his heart for the seventy and seventh time. Year after year he must be prepared to see his work disgraced and his statements distorted by those he gives the most to and labors the hardest for. Each time they are hurt the wayward ones come back for sympathy and protection and the follower of the Wisdom Teaching must start all over again and with divine patience and gentleness do once more the thing he believed was finished long ago.

Courage

The student-teacher must realize that his own convictions must support him; his own innate realization of things as they are forms the base of courage and unless he is firmly set and believes in the message he is giving he cannot hope to survive the years of discouragement and sorrow that alone reward the educator of the masses. The courage based upon the realization that the law provides for those who seek to serve it makes strong the weak and gives power to the feeble. True courage is based upon knowledge and the trust which the lower man places in the higher. Those who are seeking to fulfill their appointed tasks honestly and sincerely are brave with the courage which comes with the realization of right effort and the unquestioning faith in the justice of the universal plan.

In the Realms of the Absent-Minded

We have seen speakers come forward to deliver their talk fortified with reference books and notes enough to fill a room and invariably when they get to the middle of each line their voice breaks on high C. While adjusting their glasses they clutch madly at their memoranda. This is the certain result of tremendous preparation.

The best thing for the occult student to do is to tear up all his notes before he starts, for those crutches to a failing memory are restrictions upon him that are almost impossible to overcome. A speaker's words never have power unless they come directly from his own soul, carrying with them an overwhelming conviction which adds the silver tongue of oratory and the perfect poise which proves the innate familiarity with the subject. All teachers should develop within themselves such qualities that outside assistance becomes not only unnecessary but a positive limitation. If you are aspiring to teach the occult, forget your references and learn the first principles of occult philosophy; you must make yourself so familiar with every phase of this great science that every angle of its intricate workings is within reach of your mental fingers. An orderly mind is the public speaker's greatest friend and the sense of continuity and an ability to connect statements in an intelligent, consecutive manner is the basis of his faculty to secure and retain the interest of his listeners.

Anyone who does not know enough about his subject to discuss it from the platform without memoranda on his cuffs does not know sufficient to deserve the attention of an intelligent audience.

A true student of the occult who is prepared to preach his doctrine before the world must be so familiar with it that he can give an intelligent discourse upon any phase of it which he has ever considered without any preparation whatsoever. Knowledge of this kind is the basis of confidence and confidence is indispensable to ease and fluency.

A great many speakers suffer from dry and husky throats and a homely piece of glazed crockery usually stands beside them subject to frequent call. Just about the time the audience is enraptured in the anti-climax, said speaker pours out a tall glass of water which he drinks in C Minor. This is a disgrace to the platform and is the direct result of nervousness as the contracted nerves close the saliva glands. A speaker who is perfectly at his ease never has a husky throat and is therefore free from one of the rostrum's greatest abominations.

A well trained speaker never knows beforehand what he is going to talk about but taking a general subject, which can be interpreted in many different ways, he develops it from word to word, expressing to his audience a series of deductions which pass semi-automatically through a brain trained to organized and consecutive thought. His perfect knowledge of basic principles enable him to experiment mentally, to combine and arrange within his own brain the various phases of the problem on hand as he goes along. A wise public talker learns as much while lecturing as his listeners for he is merely carrying on a series of mental deductions out loud and his words are only the expressions of a mental organism that is trained to explain all things through a thorough knowledge of certain basic principles. The master teacher studies with his pupils and sits in reverence at the feet of his own mind.

Expression

Simplicity of speech is a very important requisite to the masterful teacher. A large number of lecturers affect various unnatural tones, lisp and drawl, et cetera, in an attempt to appear distinguished and powerful. All affectation should be avoided by lecturers on religious subjects; they are not tragedians delivering a Hamlet soliloquy or a tirade from Richard III but are attempting to present spiritual truth in the same simple manner that Buddha gave them in India or the Master Jesus along the shores of Galilee. If they are inspired by their message a great life and power is added to their words; it is not a premeditated thing but contains the great force of the message from one man to his brother.

Let us also get rid of those speakers with the static lag, those who end every word with an "er-r-r-r". Also that type who stop abruptly, at loss for a word, leaving their listeners suspended 'twixt heaven and and hell' while they fumble in the ethers for an adverb - then suddenly catch it and dash off madly in another oratorical outburst. Thus broken, disconnected speaking always produces an unfavorable mental reaction upon the listener.

We also wish to warn our friends of declamatory aspiration of a certain series of stock phrases which issued two by two from the ark and have since propagated until they form part of the repertoire of some of our leading vocal demonstrators. Listed below are a few of the original species:

- (a) "It gives me great pleasure"
- (b) "Ladies and Gentlemen"
- (c) "This is so unexpected that I hardly know what to say".
- (d) "As I look into your intelligent faces"

Anyone carrying any of these pet phrases with them must expect to be loaded down from the tremendous number of barnacles with which all of

these stock expressions are encrusted. Silence always wins over any of these.

We would remind the would-be teacher also that he is not speaking for himself alone but there is an elderly lady who is hard of hearing in the back row. A very famous orator once said: "When speaking always address the individuals in the last seats at the back." A great many young lecturers forget to open their mouths when they talk and a series of half strangled, partially smothered sounds issue forth which cannot be heard beyond the front seat. If it is worth saying, it is worth saying loud. Also please keep in mind that when you talk up your nose it will have a peculiar reaction upon the audience. Nasal talking is the result of a stoppage in the nasal tubes; a person who is said to be speaking through his nose is in reality not allowing the air to pass through and into the resonant cavities in the head. Many a public speaker could attract and hold a much larger audience if he would have his nose properly treated.

Subject Matter

There is only one lecture in the world on religious subjects but the successful speaker is the one who finds the largest number of ways of saying the same thing. Many speakers only have one sermon and having once listened to them all the novelty is gone. Novel and unusual ways of present facts is the basis of popularity. A lecturer should keep posted upon every current topic of importance and be able to weave his spiritual knowledge into the practical problems of everyday life. Every condition which arises in the world of affairs is the basis for a lecture, every great scientific discovery, every great philosophical deduction is a golden opportunity for the speaker.

The success of a lecturer does not usually depend upon the depth of his philosophy or the intricacy of his problems but usually upon his ability to strike the chord of human interest. People are most directly interested in their own affairs and the conditions of life with which they come in contact. When the speaker can strike this simple chord of living things he will always have the interest of his listeners who live also in everyday affairs rather than in the world of science and philosophy.

Language

Simple language is always the most impressive and there is no power greater than the right word in the right place - not the longest word but the most familiar one should be constantly at the teacher's lips. Long words are generally used to conceal ignorance and are not intended to be enlightening in any way. For ages science and philosophy have hidden behind Latin vocabularies using words of ten syllables to bridge an aching void.

Whenever it becomes necessary to use foreign words in a lecture, as is often the case in occult philosophy, their English equivalent should always be given. The speaker must always use the hypothesis that his audience knows absolutely nothing about either his thoughts or his ideals. Sanskrit without an interpretation has ruined many a lecture, while the audience goes into a state of unconsciousness very quickly under the influence of Greek, Latin and Hebrew poured out from some exponent of things divine.

Continuity

It is very important that a teacher or speaker should hitch his ideas together and let them work towards a climax in a logical and reasonable manner. He is privileged, under certain conditions, to deviate from the direct subject of his talk but he must not forget to come back sometime before it ends. Many speakers, taking subjects to talk from, talk so far from them that they become lost in a maze of sidelines and leave the point upon which the audience desires illumination practically untouched.

Many speakers ramble off into anecdotes - all about when they went to school is Oshkosh or when they ran for Governor of Borneo, or that instant in 1871 when they did so and so. Among things spiritual are a large number who explain minutely to disinterested strangers their last flight on the astral plane. Anecdotes are best left out and some notable occurrence from history or nationally known condition used as a simile will be awarded a better reception from the audience.

Copyrighted Sept. 1st, 1923
Anyone attempting to commercialize
this will be prosecuted.

(signature) Manly P. Hall