

Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern

Alan Monroe (1969) stated that "Although individuals may vary to some extent, research has shown that most people seek consistency or balance among their cognitions. When confronted with a problem that disturbs their normal orientation, they look for a solution; when they feel a want or need, they search for a way to satisfy it. In short when anything throws them into a condition of disorganization or dissonance, they are motivated to adjust their cognitions or values, or to alter their behavior so as to achieve a new state of balance" (p. 42).

The Motivated Sequence derives its name from the fact that by following the normal processes of human thinking it motivates an audience to respond affirmatively to the speaker's purpose. The sequence contains five distinct steps:

- (1) Attention (get the attention of your audience),
- (2) Need (describe the problem, demonstrate a need for change),
- (3) Satisfaction (present a practical, and concise solution),
- (4) Visualization (allow your audience to picture the results),
- (5) Action (request immediate action from your audience).

I. The Attention Step. First and foremost you need to gain the attention of your audience. In order to gain favorable attention, one or more of the following are recommended (most of these are the same techniques you used in the introductions of your informative speeches):

- A. relating to the audience
- F. humorous anecdote
- B. showing importance of the topic
- G. telling a dramatic story
- C. making a startling statement
- H. posing a question (maybe rhetorical)
- D. arousing curiosity or suspense
- I. using visual aids for illustration
- E. using a quotation relevant to your topic

II. The Need Step. Now that you have the interest and attention of your audience, you must next make them feel a need for change. You need to show your audience that there is a serious problem with the current situation. It is important to state the need clearly and to illustrate it with strong supporting materials. One or more of the following are recommended:

- A. give a clear concise statement or description of the need or problem.
- B. one or more detailed examples which illustrate the need.

- C. statistical data (don't overwhelm us with statistics, & make sure we can relate)
- D. Testimony and other form of support to show the extent of the need

In your need step you will make a convincing demonstration of how the need directly affects your audience: their health, happiness, security, or other interests. By the end of this step your listeners should be so concerned about the problem that they are psychologically primed to hear your solution.

III. The Satisfaction Step. Having aroused a sense of need, you satisfy it by providing a solution to the problem. Now you present YOUR PLAN/ SOLUTION and show your audience how it will work. The following techniques are recommended:

- A. briefly state the action or change you wish your audience to adopt.
- B. a complete concise explanation of your plan.
- C. a theoretical demonstration -- show how this action logically meets the problem.
- D. give actual examples showing that this plan has worked effectively, and it's a practical solution
- E. use facts, figures and the testimony of experts to support your claims\plan.

Make sure that you give your audience enough details of your proposal/plan so that it is clearly understood. Diagrams and charts are often useful here. You want your audience to leave the satisfaction step with a clear understanding of your plan. Your audience should now be wondering how this will work for them and what it can do for them (e.g., "This seems to be a practical solution for me, however, I would like to see/visualize it in action. How can I benefit?").

IV. The Visualization Step. Now that you have given your plan/solution you will intensify your audience's desire for your plan by helping them visualize your plan. You want to project your audience into the future and picture the potential benefits of your plan. Use vivid imagery to show your listeners how they will profit from your policy. Make them visualize how much better conditions will be once your plan is adopted. The Visualization Step may be developed using one of the following techniques:

- A. The Positive Method -- by describing conditions as they will be in the future if the solution you purpose is carried out. Provide vivid, concrete descriptions. Select some situation which you

are quite sure will arise in the future, and picture your audience actually enjoying the conditions which acceptance of your plan will produce.

- B. The Negative Method -- by describing the adverse conditions that will prevail in the future if the plan you have presented is not carried out. Picture for your audience the danger or the unpleasantness which will result from failure to follow your advice. Select from the Need Step the most undesirable aspects of the present situation, and show how these conditions will continue if your proposal is rejected.
- C. The Contrast Method -- by combining the positive and negative approaches. Use the negative method first, visualizing the bad effects if the audience fails to follow your advice; then the positive method, visualizing the good effects of believing or doing as you recommend.

Which ever method you use, remember that the Visualization Step must stand the test of reality. The conditions you picture must be capable of attainment. Moreover, they must be VIVID. Let your listeners actually see themselves enjoying the advantages, or suffering the evils, you describe. Now that your audience is convinced your policy is beneficial, they should be motivated to take action NOW.

- V. The Action Step. The function of the action step is to translate the desire created in the Visualization Step into overt action. Make a call for action. Tell your audience exactly what you want them to do NOW, and exactly how to do it. For example: Tell them where to go today on campus to donate blood. Give them the address of the state representative that they can write to (or give them stamped addressed envelopes to the representative, or even a form letter they can sign). Give them all the information they need to sign up for the CPR class offered next week at the Red Cross. You have done the leg work and you are making it easy for your audience to take IMMEDIATE ACTION.

This step can take the form of one or more of the following devices:

- A. a challenge or appeal
- B. a summary is always expected by your audience
- C. a quotation
- D. an illustration
- E. a statement of personal intentions

You must conclude with a final stirring appeal that reinforces your audience's commitment to ACT NOW! Beware, however, of making the action step too long or involved. You are trying to make this easy for your audience to do RIGHT NOW.

The Motivated Sequence Pattern is tailor made for policy speeches that seek immediate action. This sequence follows the process of human thinking and leads the listener step by step to the desired action. This is a tried and true sequence that is extremely effective. The Motivated Sequence Pattern is used by people who make their living by persuasion--especially advertisers. Many TV commercials use this same sequence.

The above material is based on excerpts and thoughts taken from: D. Ehninger, A.H. Monroe, and

B.E. Gronbeck's, (1978) Principles and Types of Speech Communication, 8th. Ed., pp. 142-163;
S.E. Lucas (1995) The Art of Public Speaking, 5th. Ed., pp. 353-361.

Sample Preparation Outline for Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern

You will be motivating your audience to an immediate action. Take a good look at this sample outline. The Motivated Sequence Pattern Outline is different from the Informative outline. Always consider your audience-- every step of the way. Use the Audience Centered Approach to public speaking.

The Following student's outline is a sample outline that you may use as a guide as you prepare your Motivated Sequence Pattern preparation outline. You will want to include all the labels that you see in this outline. The Visual Framework here is what I will be looking for in your outlines. The Visual Framework is the use of Roman numerals, Letters (both upper and lower case) and Arabic numerals along with clean indentation and the use of all labels for all elements. Your use of connectives is up to you. I would suggest that you use internal previews and internal summaries where you feel that they are needed. Your objective is to put together a clear concise speech that is easy to follow, and the use of connectives is very important in doing this. Just because you don't see internal previews and summaries here does not mean that you can't or shouldn't use them.

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Topic: Random Acts of Kindness

Specific Purpose:
To motivate my audience to partake in random acts of kindness.

Central Idea:
Partaking in random acts of kindness can brighten someone's day, save someone's life, and even change the world.

INTRODUCTION

I. The Attention Step

A. (Attention Getter/Relevancy Statement) Example of Mark walking home and dropping his books.... (Canfield, p. 35)

1. Bill saved Mark's life ... with a small, random, seemingly unimportant act of kindness.
2. So how many times have you stopped to help

someone pick up the books they dropped? Or paused to thank a housekeeper for keeping your hall so clean? Asked to speak to the manager of a restaurant because you had a great waitress?

3. If your answer is not often or never, you should consider participating in random acts of kindness.

B. (Credibility Statement) I have recently become interested in random acts of kindness and by reading several books on the subject, I have learned more about the impact these acts can have on people's lives.

C. (Preview) Random acts of kindness can brighten someone's day, save someone's life, maybe even change the world.

(Transition: So why do we need random acts of kindness?)

BODY

II. The Need Step

A. Throughout the nation, throughout the world, people are having bad days.

1. In fact, 17.5 million Americans suffer from depression each year. (Drexler)
2. How many times have you heard about people in the news who were so distraught or depressed that they decided to go shoot a few people? The postal worker. The boy at his high school.
3. And I'm sure all of you can recall having a bad day or feeling unhappy.

B. As College Students we tend to get wrapped up in the stress and deadlines of our everyday life.

1. We forget to take the time to offer a compliments to others.
2. We are often in too much of a hurry to stop and help someone in need.

3. When we are in need of help and can't get it we may become unhappy.

C. Unhappiness leads to more unhappiness.

1. For instance, a teacher having a bad day might yell at a student.
2. The Student may then go back to the dorm and yell at his/her roommate.
3. The roommate then yells at his/her friend. It's a chain reaction.

(Transition: But there is a way to break a link in this chain. The smallest effort can stop this chain reaction in its tracks and even reverse it. And every one of you can do it.)

III. The Satisfaction Step

A. By partaking in random acts of kindness, you can change someone's day for the better, give someone a boost of confidence, possibly even save a life or eventually change the world.

1. There are so many ways to be kind.
 - a. You could tell the next worker you see what a great job he/she's doing.
 - b. Pick up and return that pen the person walking in front of you dropped.
 - c. Thank the cafeteria worker for the superior service.
 - d. Compliment a friend on a quality or a classmate on his/her strong points.
2. Just think of the things you could do for others or say to others that will brighten their day.

(Transition: These are only a few examples of kind acts that you can do.)

B. According to a Greek proverb, "Kindness begets kindness."

1. It's true! Kindness is also a chain reaction.
2. One act of kindness leads to another.

- a. Example--A teacher compliments you on the strong points of your speech.
- b. With the boost of confidence, you will go to your room and thank your roommate for cleaning last weekend.
- c. He/She'll compliment a friend and so on. And it all started with a teacher's simple comment on a speech.

(Internal Summary: Now you know how you can use random acts of kindness everyday to benefit yourself and everyone around you.)

(Transition: Envision yourself partaking in Random Acts of Kindness on a daily basis.)

IV. The Visualization Step

A. Imagine yourself thanking your professor for his/her enthusiasm.

1. How would that make him/her feel? Probably terrific
2. And the next class that comes in that day will be in for the most enthusiastic lecture ever.

B. Or imagine commenting on a classmate's talent, only to find out later that you saved his/her life.

C. There are no disadvantages--It is a Win-Win situation.

1. It doesn't cost anything, and we definitely don't lose anything by doing it.
2. In fact, random acts of kindness will not only cheer other people up, they will make you feel good too.
3. Let's admit it, when we compliment someone or lend a helping hand, we feel good about ourselves.

(Transition: But don't just think about what you can do--go do it!)

CONCLUSION

V. The Action Step

- A. (Summary) With all of the problems in the world, and the bad days that people are having sometimes all it takes to turn a problem into an opportunity, and a bad day into a smile is a simple act of kindness.

- B. (Call to Immediate Action) According to William Wordsworth, "nameless, unremembered acts of kindness" are "the best portion" of a person's life, so go out and demonstrate it in every way that you can. (Ryan, p. 578)
 1. I'm going to hand out some cards that have a suggestion for a random act of kindness you can do today.

 2. Try one of the random acts on the card you receive, or try one of your own ideas.

 3. Be honest, sincere, generous and kind.

- C. (Memorable Close) Who knows, the world may slowly become a better place because of a single random act of kindness.
 1. Let it be yours.
 2. Oh, and by the way, you are a TERRIFIC audience!

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