# Preview Of “How To Speak, How To Listen” By Mortimer J. Adler

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## Introduction

In this essay, the preview of the Book “How to Speak, How to Listen” by author Mortimer J. Adler will be discussed on the basis of three Basic Philosophical/religious questions by Dr. Behr. The author’s main points of discussion and the big picture of the author’s point of view will be previewed. The main ideas of the author, like how the author describes and perceives human nature and how we have to act to live a happy and better life, will be explored through the book (Adler, 2008).

## Discussion

In this book, the author has provided us with many useful tips and tricks for effective communication. The main idea of the book is to provide the readers with detailed information on improving their listening and speaking skills. The author’s main idea is to provide guidelines for two basic forms of speaking: persuasive speech and interactive speech. In Chapter 4, “Sales Talk and Other Persuasive Speech,” the author discusses the guidelines to improve the level of persuasiveness. The author talked about three main tactics discussed by Aristotle for being a persuasive speaker, i.e., the Greek words ethos, pathos, and logos. These are the tactics that can make a person persuasive, and he related them to the sales talk, as advertising requires convincing and persuading people to buy from you (Adler, 2008).

To convince people, the author suggested that ethos is important as it involves the character and credibility of the speaker and the ethical implications. One can gain the trust of the audience in many ways, including telling them stories about his own life experiences or underestimating his skills to talk about the matter, which will provoke the audience to dismiss his undervaluation. In this way, one can make the audience trust him, and his audience will not only listen to him but also be attracted to what he is talking about. According to the author, as ethos indicates the character of a person, the first step to becoming a persuader is to develop one’s character. One must portray himself as a person with a character that suits the purpose for which he wants to persuade the audience. He must portray himself as a likable, attractive, and trustworthy person to the audience. He should show that he can be trusted for his goodwill and honesty (Adler, 2008).

The other convincing factor discussed by the author is pathos. Pathos is considered a motivating factor by the emotional involvement of the audience. The persuader should try to keep the emotions of the audience running on the right path by appealing to their emotions. The persuader can implement pathos by telling the audience some emotional stories using an emotional tone, etc. The third factor is to create logos. Logos can be defined as logical reasoning about the matter, and it can be presented by the persuader through advanced logical abstracts and logical facts from historical data, etc. Logos comes at last as feelings in favor of the matter have been produced, and then it is time to bring the passion into play. According to the author, persuaders should not provide lengthy arguments and mathematical interpretations. He should avoid and omit many steps of reasoning so that the audience does not lose interest in the speech (Adler, 2008).

In Chapter 5, the author has provided recommendations on how effectively you may prepare and deliver formal lectures. Lectures can be delivered orally, and they can also be in written form to teach and persuade. Lecturing and teaching do not always aim to convince; they also involve persuasion. Sales talk includes all types of practical persuasion. Reading is easier than listening; likewise, writing is easier than lecturing, as both listening and speaking occur for a limited span of time. Instructive speech is easier and more effective when there is two-way communication. While silent listening and continuous speech are difficult, the lecturer should do whatever he can to avoid any disturbance that can destroy the audience's attention. The speaker should speak clearly, with words that are simple to understand, and with clarity of voice. Bring something new for them. While delivering the lectures, ethos and pathos should also be embedded in the lecture to increase the emotional responses and sympathetic ears. The lecturer should put some extra physical energy in his voice, his body gestures, and the stance of the body to make the audience more involved. The author mentions these non-physical elements of trust, emotions, the character of a person, energetic voice, and body gestures as real physical elements that can help a person be effective in persuasive and instructive speech (Adler, 2008).

According to the author's viewpoint, it is human nature for a person to be attracted to a speaker whom he trusts and who has succeeded in making himself a credible and trustworthy person. People pay attention to the stories of speakers' own life experiences and pay attention to them. It is human nature to be attracted to speech where they find emotional attachments or some logic-based discussions. The author provides an example of Brutus's speech from Shakespeare's play, which is persuasive and includes ethos, pathos, and logos factors. The author believes that a lecture should be prepared and practiced beforehand so that it is not time-consuming and keeps the audience engaged. To explain this, the author gave an example of a professor who was invited to deliver twelve lectures a week, but the professor was used to giving one lecture a week. He rejected the offer just because he thought he could not prepare that many lectures. The author, with his personal experience, suggested that the lecturer should not talk about a topic that the audience already knows and understands. It is human nature that people try to avoid repetitive information, or if there is any disturbance, their focus will be shattered (Adler, 2008).

The author believes that a person can lead a good life and stay successful and happy by effectively

doing his tasks. To be happy and effective, he should have strong communication power for both persuasive and interactive speech. Non-physical elements like the trustworthiness of the audience, portraying a credible character to them, and energetic body gestures, etc., should be considered as real, and they can lead a lecturer or a persuader to have effective communication skills. This results in his success, prosperity, and happy life (Adler, 2008).

## Works Cited

Adler, Mortimer J. *How to Speak How to Listen*. Touchstone, edition (2008) pp. 288