

016 – Andy Andrews 1

Announcer: Do you dream of making a living as a speaker, writer, or performer? Do you want to learn to communicate with clarity, focus, and power? In each episode you will learn the secrets of dynamic communication so you can make a living doing what you love.

Welcome to the Art and Business of Public Speaking with your host, who, for over 30 years has helped men and women build exciting careers, Ken Davis.

Brian: Hello, this is your cohost Brian Scheer, for the Art and Business of Public Speaking, where we peek behind the curtain to discover how to create, grow and maintain a successful career as a communicator.

Hello there, Ken. How are you doing today?

Ken: Hey, I'm doing great, man. I am pumped today because one of my best friends and one of the best speakers I know in the country is going to be with us – Andy Andrews. What an amazing interview. Can I give people a hint ahead of time, Brian?

Brian: Sure.

Ken: This thing was so great that it kept going and kept going so we've actually cut it in two. So you'll hear me come in in the middle of this and break this thing up. But you are going to want to hear both of these podcasts.

Brian: Let me tell you a little bit more about Andy Andrews. Andy has been a friend of Ken's for many years. Over a decade now. But you'll hear some of these references in this interview, but I just want to do this litany of different accolades that he has received over the years. He is a New York Times best-selling author. Held by the New York Times reporter a someone who has quietly become one of the most influential people in America. And you know what? It's fun to watch him navigate through that because he doesn't flaunt his fame. He does it in a very subtle way that influences people on a very heart-to-heart basis.

Zig Ziglar even said about Andy, "Andy Andrews is the best speaker I've ever seen." What an endorsement there. He has the *The Noticer* and *The Traveler's Gift*, and they were both featured selections on ABC's Good Morning America. And Andy has spoken at the request of four different United States Presidents and toured military bases around the world.

He does live in Orange Beach, Alabama where you and I have actually visited his home with his wife Polly and their two sons.

Ken: That really sounds great, and I'm not meaning to brag, but I've spoken to about seven Presidents, but not at their request. I was yelling at the television.

Brian: I've seen that. Andy has his latest book out and I can't wait to get it. It's *The Noticer Returns* and it's available everywhere books and eBooks are sold. You've got to check out those books and he has a series of books. If you go to his website you'll find more information about that. Hey let's dive right in, Ken. I know there's all kinds of

information that the listeners are going to be able to take notes on on this one. I'm excited for them.

Ken: Okay, let's go.

Ken: Hey, this is an exciting day for me. I've got Andy Andrews with me. And not only is Andy, what do you call it, the holder of just more accolades than anybody would ever be able to post on a wall, he also happens to be a very personal friend and I can't wait to ask him some questions about the Art and Business of Public Speaking. Andy, thank you for being with us today.

Andy: Buddy, I am so excited to be here with you. I cannot even stand it.

Ken: Andy, even your response there – one of the first questions I want to ask you is, where do you get your - I'm just going to ask this one straight up front. You and your manager Robert D. – The Robert D. – may be the most energetic people I have ever seen. I get worn out watching you speak in a delightful way. I can hardly even breathe. I have to go take a shower. Do you always have that energy, Andy? Do you find yourself before a show without any energy?

Andy: Sure.

Ken: And what do you do to capture that then?

Andy: Let me ask you something, now. Because I want to make sure I'm dialing in on exactly what you're listeners want to hear. We are kind of talking about some of the behind the scenes, the secrets of public speaking. So let me just tell you, yes. Or no. Whichever.

Ken: Thank you. That really cleared it up for us, Andy.

Andy: Yes or no. Yes I do feel sometimes not so energetic. And no, I don't always feel energetic. I'm just like everybody else, except that I have a little more ADD probably. But one of the things is, a huge part of being consistent as a speaker is to give a consistent performance. It's just like a comedian, Ken. You and I, this background that we have in comedy. We have both had tons of people come up to us in our lives and say, oh my cousin, he should be a comedian. He's so funny.

Well, you and I, we've had discussions. We know people who are funnier than we are. But there is a big difference in being funny for your family and your friends, and being funny at 8pm on a Thursday night in Duluth, Minnesota in February, when you just got off the phone with your wife and the kids are sick and your wife is not real happy that you're gone. And now you've got to go out and be happy at 8pm for people in a convention who really didn't know who you were. They got other things on their minds. And you'd better be good.

Ken: Right. So how do you move from that phone call to the stage and bring that performance that those people paid to see?

Andy: Okay, this is going to sound overly simple, but you know how true this is. I choose it. I just choose it. It's one of those kind of things – you know my boys. Adam is 12 and

Austin is 15. And if there is one thing other than their relationship with God, if there is one thing that I am going to absolutely make sure that these boys know and live and have inside them before they are out from under my direct influence, when they're out in the world, they're going to know that they absolutely have the ability to choose how they act despite how they feel.

In fact, probably the most important thing to their success as adults, in whatever they choose to do, will be to develop the ability to act in a certain way despite how they feel.

Ken: That is absolutely amazing. And that goes to so many other areas in life. All of us have been in situations where we were so angry we would like to lash out and actually physically punch someone or say something bad to a boss that has just embarrassed us in front of all the other people. You are absolutely right. And that is a great answer. I was going to say before, there is a switch. There's a switch there that you can push, and that switch moves from what I'm feeling to what is necessary and what is right.

And people sometimes say, well it sounds like when you go on stage you just turn on a switch. Yes, we do. We absolutely do. Because people have paid good money. We're there to help people and enrich their lives.

Andy: And you know what? If I can further that thought, if you want to have a very fulfilled life, if you want to be successful in every part of your life and influential with your family and influential with your community, you better to learn how to use that switch. Whether you're on stage or not, you better learn how to use that switch when you come out of your bedroom in the morning and greet your family.

And that's one of the things that I talked to the boys about, is when you get up in the morning and you come out with the family, you choose to act a certain way. It was real funny, Ken, because I told the guys, I said, look. I would not be on you about this if I did not know for a fact that you have the ability to wake up like you want to. I said, now when you wake up with mom, or mom's trying to wake you up, oh, oh,...don't turn on the light! Can I have five more minutes! Ohhh! I said, but when we're at the hunting camp and at 4am Uncle Sandy walks in and slams the light on and says Good Morning, boys! You wake right up and go, Good Morning, Uncle Sandy! I said, you have the ability to do it. So if you will do it for Uncle Sandy and Uncle Joe and Uncle Ken, certainly you can do it for your mom.

Ken: That is amazing. I had to get to that right away because you came on the screen and suddenly you were full of energy and I had to ask that question. Because I heard you in the background before you were on the mic going, oh, do I have to wake up and do this?

But listen, people look at you, Andy, with all of these accolades that you have and they say, how do you get from here to there? So many of our listeners would like just even to build a bit of a career in speaking. Some of them to aspire to greatness. Can you tell us just a little bit of your story, Andy? And how you move from the beginning to where you are now.

Andy:

Well, it is kind of an odd thing. When I look at it as a whole, I kind of get a 30,000 foot view of my life, it does look kind of weird. In fact, I told Polly the other night, I said, I feel like I've lived four or five different lives.

There was the life until 19 where I was living with my family and my mom and my dad. And then my mom died of cancer. My dad was killed in a car accident the same year – so crazy time. But you know me, I've always had the ability to take a bad situation and make it worse. And I did. I made some bad moves and ended up literally homeless before that was even a word. 35 years ago nobody was talking about homeless people. That wasn't a term anybody used, but I was sleeping under a pier on the Gulf Coast and in and out of people's garages, which is not safe or smart. But I did. That was a couple three years.

And then met an old man who really took an interest in me and I started really listening to what he had to say, and started transitioning out of there. Part of it was the biographies that he started me reading. He talked to me a lot about perspective. And talked to me a lot about thinking. Jones was the first guy who ever told me, he said look, you know, you can't always believe everything you think. And it took me a long time to really get the full brunt of that, but it has turned out to be one of the most important things for me in helping high level people who have already achieved a lot achieve more.

I read these biographies. He got me hooked on biographies. And he got me hooked on biographies, really, Ken, he kind of invested my thought process into something else. It was very odd, because I hated biographies. I didn't really like school and they made me read biographies in school and I hated them.

And so when he gave me three, they were three books that were obviously biographies because on the covers, Winston Churchill, George Washington Carver and Will Rogers. So I knew they were biographies. I didn't know what to say, so I said, biographies? And he said, no. These are adventure stories. These are mysteries and romances and thrillers. And they're true. And I was like, oh. Okay. And he said, yeah, they're from the library. When you get through them you can take them back.

I started reading Churchill that night, not really because I wanted to or even because I intended to read the whole book. I started reading it just because he was the only person paying any attention to me, and I wanted to be able to, when he said, hey, are you reading the books, I wanted to say, yeah, I'm into Churchill. But I really didn't intend to read it. I was just going to read a little bit. But as I started the book, almost immediately it said that Winston met this little girl named Clementine, and he didn't know it but she was to one day become his wife. And I remember thinking, oh, well, there's the romance. And just kind of blowing that off.

And then the chapter's really short, and whoever wrote that book was really smart, because every time they got to the end of the chapter, it was always something like – and if Winston had only known what was beyond the door, he would have never opened it up. And I was like, oh my gosh, okay. I'd keep reading. And I'd go, this is kind

of the mystery. And then World War II started and I said, this is the thriller part. And it was very odd, I was very aware that I was thinking those thing because he said that. But I was still aware that I was still legitimately thinking it. So it's very odd to me.

But those biographies, I eventually read over 200 of them, and ended up kind of discovering those seven decisions, those seven things that made up my book *The Traveler's Gift*. And that's really where I found those. Of course, at that age...

Ken: Now, were you performing at this time?

Andy: You know, I kind of was. I was living on the beach and there was a Holiday Inn right down the beach from me. And a guy named Brent Burns there, who played guitar and sang, and he's still around. Brent's still a buddy of mine. He sings funny songs. And so I said, I am a comedian. I didn't say I want to be one. I said, I am one. And I don't know if Brent knew at first whether I was really – I was sleeping under the pier. But I said, I'd like to work out some material. And of course I'd never really done anything.

And so he let me go between his sets. And I think back on that and Brent would sit out in this audience of 20 or 30 people from Alabama in the 80s, and this was way before comedy clubs. And none of these people had ever seen a live comedian. And of course when I was standing up there they still weren't seeing one. But Brent was very nice – I still think about how he would go, Ha Ha Ha Ha. He'd laugh and I was horrible. But that was the beginning of that.

I always wanted to be on stage but I didn't really know how to do it. And that was kind of the beginning of that. And so the comedy thing really kind of morphed into the other.

Ken: Do you feel like that was how you wired – were you created to be in front of people, encouraging, saying those words, building into their lives? When you look back can you see that drive right from the beginning?

Andy: Without a doubt. It's odd to look back. The thing that's always aggravated me about God is He never seems to be under obligation to tell me what He's doing. And so I seem to be clueless looking forward a lot of times. But every time I turn around I can see the hand of God in that path. So it's very odd to me that, even as a little boy, I was just compelled to tell people something.

It was funny, when I was a little kid my parents would have friends over and they would sit their friends down on the couch and they'd say, well, if you don't mind, we've promised Andy that he could have five minutes to do a show or something. And he'll go back to his room if we do this. And so they'd sit down and this little six year old would come out and I'd go, Hello ladies and gentlemen! And I'd do whatever I did. But I was just compelled to say something, and it was a long time before I really had anything to say.

Ken: So you went from sleeping under a pier, doing these little stints for your friend, and there's one other connection I'd like you to make, because today, as you said, you work

with some of the highest powered people in the country, helping them be better. You speak to them. The connection there – when did the connection come that, wait a minute. I can make people laugh. But I've got something I want to say. When did that - and the reason I'm excited about this, Andy, is because I so identify with that.

Andy: I know. You and I have talked and we are so parallel.

Ken: When did that come?

Andy: I did comedy for a good while, and I had some pretty good success with it. I did a lot of college concerts and was like comedian of the year two years on college concerts. And entertainer of the year. It was just kind of funny to me because if you look at the history of that particular award, it's voted on by over a thousand colleges. And one year it was The Police. The next year it was Huey Lewis and the News. And the next year it was me. And it was like, who is this?

I went from that – I toured with Joan Rivers for two years. I was with her during every crazy thing that happened in her life. I was with her when she quit Carson. When that fight was going on. I was with her when Edgar died and she took me to Caesar's Palace for my first time. So that was great.

And I toured with Randy Travis and Garth Brooks and Cher and Kenny Rogers. It was really Kenny – I did about five years with Kenny. And we were on a bus one night and talking about how he grew up in a garage in Houston and how I'd lived under a pier. I was telling him just what I told you. About the biographies, and about these seven things. And he said, you need to start talking about that in your show. And I said, yeah, okay. He said, no, I'm serious. I really think you need to bring that into your show. And I said, be funny and then be serious? He said, yeah, and then be funny again. He said, you talk, you transition, so just do that.

And so then I asked the big question. I said, do you want me to do it in your show? And he said, yeah, I think so. And this was – he was as hot as anybody on the planet ever gets. We were doing arenas night after night and it was me, the Oak Ridge Boys and Kenny. Or me, Dolly Parton and Kenny.

And so I started doing that and putting that stuff in there and people started coming up and saying hey, we really loved you. That serious part was our favorite part – which is not usually what a comedian wants to hear. But then people started saying, hey, how do we get in touch with you to bring you in to our company? And that's really how that kind of transition started.

Ken: Wow. That is amazing. I know when we sent you a series of questions, you wrote – and I'm going to move on to some other things right after this, but the question was, what was the biggest struggle when you first started out in your career. Now I'm going to tell you what it sounds like to me and then maybe you can say yes, that's right, or you can say no. You said "speaking enough. Getting enough speaking engagements."

Now, what it sounds like to me is that literally that there were speaking engagements laying everywhere at your feet and all you had to do was kick through the bad ones and pick up the good ones. Is that true? Or did you really have times when you wanted more than engagements than were available?

Andy: Here's really what I meant by that, because I think that a lot of times speakers, as they start, they want to be paid right off the bat. They want to be paid well. And of course, we all want that. But if you, as you're starting, if you're only speaking the times you're getting paid, and this is my opinion, then I don't know if you're speaking enough to get great at it. Because there's just not enough paying jobs to get that craft at a different level.

Ken: Now I've got to stop you there because I want the people who are listening to hear this. You don't wait for people to pay you \$12,000, \$25,000 a speech. Even \$1,000 a speech. You take the pay that you can get and you continue to speak as much as you can and I know you're going to back me up on this, you speak as much as you can until that phone starts ringing. And it will if you hone that craft. It'll start ringing.

Andy: That's exactly right. People say, how do I get started in the business? And they usually mean, how do I get booked and get paid for it. But I always say, the way you get started is to take advantage of every opportunity that you can find to speak. And let me tell you something, if you say well there's not just enough opportunities in my area to speak, then you ain't looking.

Because every church, every school, every Rotary club, Civitan club, Key club – there's so many opportunities to speak, and the thing is, man, you speak until your calendar will not let you do it for free. Until you're so inundated that you have to say, I'm going to have to charge something to weed some of this out. And you know and I know that even at the level at you're at, Ken, that is what determines your price as a speaker, is how much time that you want to spend speaking.

And so we say, if I don't want to spend too much time speaking, if I want to have more time on my own, I'll charge \$20M a speech. Then I'll have a lot of time. But if charge \$100 a speech, I'll be speaking twenty times a day. And so you've got to find that balance in there. But as you're starting, in my opinion, you start at nothing, because if you don't speak a lot, you'll never get good enough to really make a living at it.

Ken: That is absolutely so true.

Andy: Here is something else that I really, really believe, that I don't think anybody ever tells anybody. And that is, there is a big difference between somebody who's getting nothing to speak in the level of, I guess, of what they're doing. The effect that they're having and their ability. There's a big difference in people who speak for free, and people who speak for \$500. There's a big difference.

And then there's a big difference in people who speak for \$500 and people who speak for \$5000. And I'll tell you what it is. Frankly, many, many, many companies out there, if the fee is less than \$1000, you can get away with being average. You really can. But I'm telling you, if they're paying you \$5000 or \$10,000, you'd better be good because they talk, and if you get \$10,000 to go somewhere and speak, you better be really good. Because if you're not, then they're going to come out there and everybody's going to say, all their peers, all their buyer peers, all their people who book conventions to other places, hey – how was he? And they're going to say, well, I'll tell you what. He wasn't really worth \$10,000.

But if it was \$1000, it didn't really matter how great or how average you were. If somebody says, how was he, yeah, he was good. Because \$1000, the companies will just spend it like water. They don't really care, I guess. But if you want to get into that other realm, you'd better do it a lot.

Ken: Right. I call that the big room. If you want to get in the big room, you'd better – you can work the lounge or you can work the big room. That is so true.

Ken: Hey, this is Ken Davis and I warned you about this. We ran out of time for this podcast, but Andy Andrews agreed to stay and he kept on going and talked about finding your style and some amazing information on balancing family and career. You're not going to want to miss that in the next podcast.

He's an amazing guy. There's nothing quiet about that guy, don't you think, Brian?

Brian: No, nothing at all. In fact, I've seen him live and if you haven't, I think you even said it at one point, you've got to check Andy out on stage. Watch him how he really captivates that audience. The way he goes down in there. In fact, we even advise, don't come off stage. They've got to see you up there on stage so they can see your eyes. But I've seen Andy do this, and he's just a wizard at being able to tap into the hearts of the people on an individual basis on this.

And I was very, very taken – I was taking notes on this entire talk – flipping that switch. We have a choice to make. What choice are you going to make today?

Ken: Every morning it's your switch, and you can switch it to the evil dark side, or you can switch it to be the kind of person you know that you really can be.

Brian: Well I'm looking forward to next week's podcast. In the meantime, I do encourage everyone to go look at our Show Notes. You can find out more information not only about Andy, but some of the offerings that we have to help take your career to the next level. And one of those offerings that I wanted to tell the listeners about was the SCORRE conference.

We have a live event October 26-29 at the beautiful Park Hyatt in Beaver Creek, Colorado. Find out more about the SCORRE conference at SCORREConference.tv. You'll find all the details and how to register right there.

Ken: .tv?

Brian: .tv.

Ken: What happened to com? What happened to that?

Brian: That was \$10,000. We decided to go with the TV version.

Ken: Okay.

Brian: Hey, thanks for tuning in to another episode of the Art and Business of Public Speaking. Be sure to check out the full Show Notes at DynamicCommunicators.com where you can find the resources we discussed today and a downloadable transcript of the podcast.

By the way, if you enjoyed today's episode, we would love for you to rate the podcast in iTunes. This helps us get in front of more people who are interested in our message. Thanks so much for your help, and we'll see you again next week.