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BIO INVENTORY

"One bio to rule them all" sounds efficient. Ask Frodo how that worked out.

Speakers actually need several different bios. And treating them as variations of the same document, rather than entirely different tools, is an easy mistake.

Here's what your toolbox should contain:

- **Event bio:** written for audience members who are deciding whether to attend your session. It needs to be compelling and clear to a non-expert why they should listen to you.
- **Website About page:** written for prospective speaking or consulting clients and media, the people who've found you and are deciding whether to go further. This is a vetting and sales document.
- **LinkedIn bio:** written for a broad, mixed audience—speaking clients, media, potential collaborators, fans, and peers—who are doing a quick professional background check. It needs to signal the right things to different readers without losing focus.
- **Bureau profile bio:** written for bureau staff and their clients shopping a roster. It needs strong credentialing and positioning.
- **Publisher/Amazon bio:** written for readers deciding whether to buy the book, so subject matter authority is clutch (your background, research, relevant experience that earns you the right to write on this topic). Speaking credentials are largely

irrelevant to someone who just wants to know if the book is a quality read.

Take some time to check these locations and read what you currently have from the perspective of each audience I've described. How do they look?

START HERE

As I said, that bio inventory includes separate tools. They all share the same foundational element: the one-sentence bio.

This is not a background description. **The one-sentence bio is a decisive statement of what you do.** It needs to be as simple and general as possible, but not boring. (Harder than it sounds.)

For most of your career, it will be a work in progress. Your one-sentence identity statement is a puzzle you'll continually be solving for.

Try it, test it with different types of people, and get feedback from those you trust. Observe how others do it. Ask respected colleagues to describe what you do. Let those experiences inform your new versions.

When you're working on it, think about three things:

- **Who your audience is**
- **The problem you address/the outcome you deliver**
- **What makes your angle distinctive**

What doesn't belong: book titles, client names, awards. Those belong in the paragraphs that follow, not in the sentence that anchors everything.

NB: This sentence also informs your LinkedIn headline, with one adjustment. That field is searchable, so your positioning statement may need keyword tweaking to make sure the right people can actually find you.

ABOUT PAGE

Your About page is where speaking clients and media vet you before an inquiry is ever sent. It answers two questions:

Why should I believe what this person says?

Is this person credible?

A three-paragraph structure is a reliable frame. The first paragraph leads with your brand identity and why you're an expert in your field. You begin with your one-sentence bio because the first sentence carries the most weight and needs to draw the reader in.

The second paragraph delves into who you've worked with and which types of impressive projects you've been part of. The more recognizable your client names, the better.

The third covers credentials, awards, and honors: the institutional recognition that tells a reader others have already vetted you.

Unlike a bio you hand to an event planner, your About page has room to expand. More client names, more accolades, a human detail or two—the About page has room for all of it.

That said, scannability matters here too. And your books don't belong in your bio, they belong on their own page, where they get the real estate they deserve.

EVENT BIO

The bio you send to an event planner has a different job. It needs to be ready to use, and <gasp!> ready to be cut.

Event programs have shortened considerably. Where three paragraphs were once standard, most organizers now work with 75 to 100 words for websites and programs, and as few as 40 to 60 words for event apps. Some conferences specify their own word counts. If your only

prepared version is long, someone on their team will edit it for you and not necessarily in ways you'd choose.

Prepare three versions:

- **Short bio of around 50 words**
- **Medium bio of around 100 words**
- **Full three-paragraph bio for planners who want the complete picture**

Keep all three in your Event Planner Kit so the right version is always one click away.

All three should open with your one-sentence bio. Everything else is an expansion of that foundation.

Every bio you have is telling someone something right now. Be sure it's saying precisely what it needs to.

LET'S TALK

This is a lot to sort through, and it's only one piece of your brand. If you'd like a seasoned set of eyes on where you stand and what to tackle first, that's exactly what I do.

[SCHEDULE A CALL](#)

Not sure if it's the right fit? Reply and we'll figure it out.

Don't forget to **share this newsletter** with a colleague if you find it useful.

GET ON THE RIGHT PATH

Thought leaders turn to Shelley Dolley when they need to build and grow their brands. She draws her insights from managing the career of speaking legend Tom Peters.



MORE ABOUT SHELLEY



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