

# **Dazzle: Delivering Exceptional CLE Presentations that Get Results**

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Steve Hughes is the President of Hit Your Stride, LLC, a communications consultancy that helps clients look and sound smart when they talk. He is the author of "Speak To Me: A Modern Guide to Giving Really Good Presentations" and he has been featured on NPR, BBC Radio and CBS. As a consummate advocate of the legal community Steve is the creator of "International Be Kind To Lawyers Day" which is observed annually on the 2nd Tuesday in April. Today he works with a host of top law firms including: Latham & Watkins, Kirkland & Ellis, Crowell & Moring, Bryan Cave, and Seyfarth Shaw. He also works with blue chip clients like: NALP, LSAC, ASTD, Association of Corporate Counsel, ACCESS Group, numerous law schools and six state bar associations. Prior to consulting full time, Steve spent 12 years in advertising and public relations - most recently he was a co-owner at an award winning 40-person advertising agency in St. Louis. He holds a BA in French Literature and European History from the University of Kansas and an MBA in Marketing from Washington University where he was awarded the prestigious "Olin Cup."



# ***Dazzle: Delivering Exceptional CLE Programs That Get Results***

**ACLEA – Boston ‘11**

#1 Takeaway

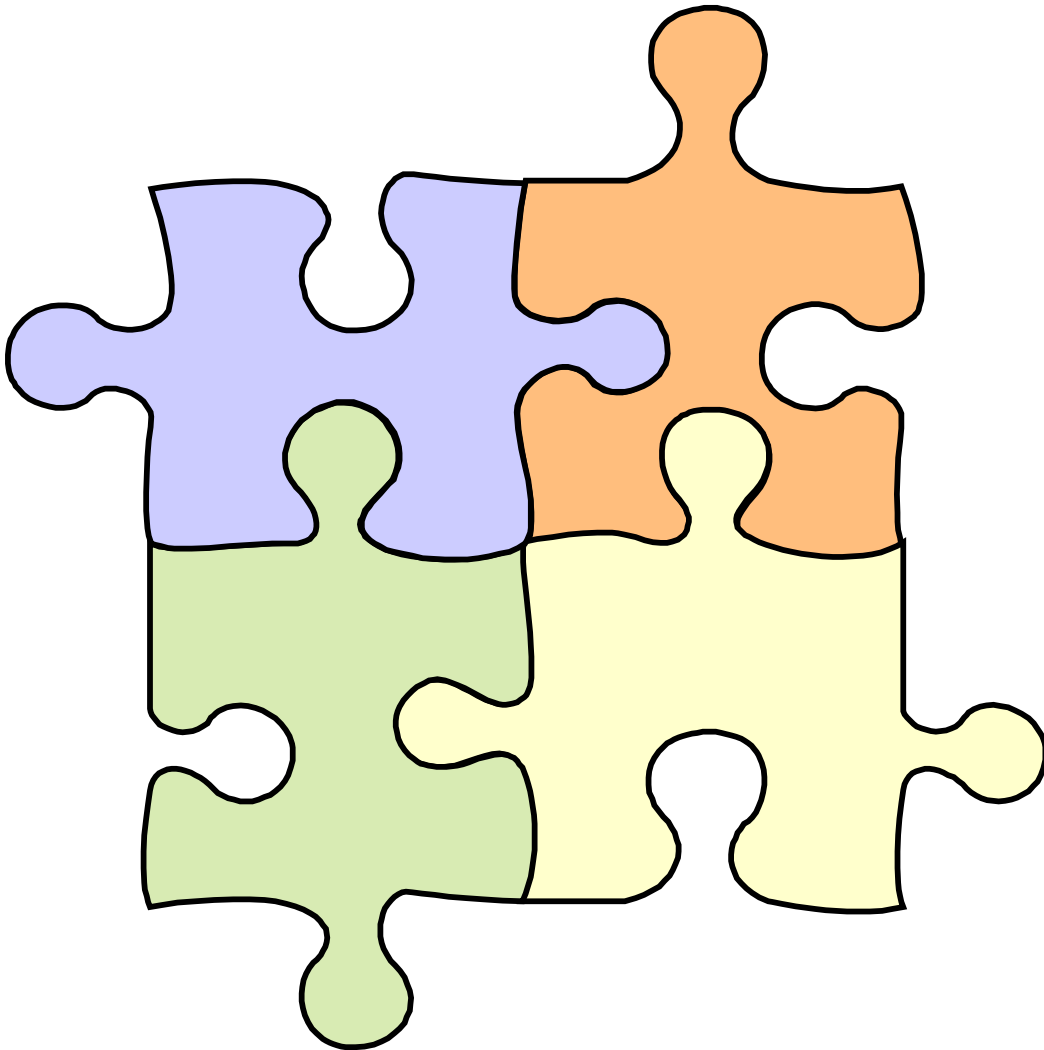


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**Need To Know**

**How do today's attorneys want to receive and process information?**



## **Know Your Audience**

In order for a great message to impact your audience it must be delivered in language that resonates with them. The only way to achieve this is if you know your audience deeply. Here are some questions to consider.

- 1. What do you know about the audience you'll be addressing?**
- 2. What else is on their minds that will compete for their attention?**
- 3. What are their preconceived notions about you, the topic at hand, CLEs, etc.?**
- 4. What's holding them back? Why might they resist your recommendations/information?**
- 5. When are you presenting? What time of day?**
- 6. Where is your presentation taking place? How well do you know the venue?**
- 7. How do they want to process your information? (see above)**
- 8. *What's in it for them?***

## **Take-Home Message**

The first and most important step in any presentation is to determine your goal or Take-Home Message. What is your audience supposed to get out of your presentation? It has to be crystal clear to both you and to them what you're trying to accomplish.

### **Two-part question:**

- **What do I want the audience to do, think, or feel?**
- **Why? What's In It For Them?**

**[Try to write your Take-Home Message in one sentence.]**

## **SPARQ Interest in Your Topic**

There is a unique window of opportunity at the beginning of every presentation: The audience's attention is focused and they are eager to hear what you have to say. Capitalize on this with a strong, unexpected opening that creates anticipation and sets up your topic.

How are you going to get their attention?

**S**

**P**

**A**

**R**

**Q**

*Your SPARQ needs to be: 1. Interesting 2. Relevant 3. Quick*

Use SPARQs to: a) open a presentation, b) reinforce a point, c) invigorate your subject matter, d) get your audience thinking, or e) leave them wanting more.

**"I'm going to SPARQ interest in my next presentation by..."**



## **Make It Interactive**

Teaching and training methods have come a long way since the first universities were established in the Middle Ages. It has been proven\* that a talking head dispensing wisdom to passive students is not effective. Be sure that your CLE programs incorporate the latest active learning techniques.

### Incorporate exercises.

- Let your learners wade knee-deep into the material.
- Allow them to discuss the learning points, share opinions, and wrestle with case studies. (Imagine taking a PowerPoint class and not having access to a computer.)
- Include them in your examples: “Let’s say half of you...and the other half...”

### Encourage questions.

- Hold mini-Q&A sessions throughout your presentation.
- Let them text questions to you or your co-presenter.

### Review often.

- Every 20 minutes.
- Include reminder agenda slides. “Where are we in the presentation?”

## Five Ways to Squelch Motivation\*\*

1. Have little \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Get participants in a \_\_\_\_\_ mood and keep them there.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the class will apply what is taught – don't bother with examples.
4. Be quick to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Make them feel \_\_\_\_\_ for asking questions in class.

\*\* Creative Training Techniques Handbook, Robert W. Pike. HRD Press: Amherst, MA. 2003.

## Visual Aids

- *YOU are the presentation!* Any visual aids should simply aid you as a presenter, not replace you.
  1. **Flipcharts** – What slides can you turn into flip charts?
  2. **Props** – What object could you use to reinforce a point?
  3. **Demonstrations** – What hands-on example will bring your content to life?
  4. **Handouts** – What extra details should be in your handout vs. on your slides?
  5. **PowerPoint®** – How can you make your slides visually appealing? What will you do to ensure that your slides are not merely the text of your presentation?
  
- Expect the unexpected and ask yourself, “How good would I be if my PowerPoint® didn’t work?”

**“My next presentation could be improved by using this visual aid to bring my material to life...”**

## **Nice To Know**

### **17 Ways to Zap Your Public Speaking Nerves**

by Steve Hughes, President, *Hit Your Stride, LLC*

**“Each time we face our fear, we gain strength, courage, and confidence in the doing.” ~ Anonymous**

Speaking in public is often cited as one of our biggest fears (even above death). Sadly, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to rid yourself of this fear. However, there are a host of simple tricks you can use to make the process more enjoyable for you and your audience. Here are 17 to get you started.

#### **Things to do well before your presentation:**

1. *Know your stuff.* This may not sound sexy, but it's true. Nothing goes further to soothe your public speaking nerves than knowing exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it. Tim Russert was so effective as moderator of “Meet the Press” because he out-prepared his guests on the show. Deep familiarity with your content also helps the Q&A session go much smoother.

2. *Practice out loud.* If you are able to do a practice delivery of your presentation out loud at least one time before the actual meeting, your comfort and confidence will soar when you do it for a second time “live.” You can say your speech out loud anywhere, anytime: in the shower, during your commute, standing before your beloved pet. The time is there, finding it may require some creativity. If you're seriously pressed for time, rehearse these three key elements: your opening, your closing, and your transitions. That way you start strong, finish strong, and sound good going from one topic to another.

3. *Tell yourself that it's not that big a deal.* Because it really isn't. Time for a little perspective here. Certainly every presentation is important, you may even have a lot at stake, and it might feel like the entire world hangs in the balance, but please remind yourself that it is just a speech. You will live to fight another day. And keep in mind, no matter what happens during your presentation, no one is going to die because of it. (Sorry, doctors, this does not necessarily apply to live surgical presentations.)

4. *Picture your audience ahead of time.* As you write your speech, envision the people you'll be presenting to—what they are wearing, where they are sitting, the expressions on their faces, the concerns on their minds, what they need from your presentation. Humanizing your audience makes them less ominous and more approachable.

5. *Visit the presentation venue ahead of time.* One of the best ways to calm your nerves is to visit the room in which you're going to speak ahead of time. This is especially true if you're presenting in a venue for the first time. Stand where you'll be standing when you give the speech and imagine the audience sitting in front of you. Get a feel for the lighting, the layout of the dais or stage, where you'll place your laptop (if you're using PowerPoint), and so on. Many trial attorneys visit courtrooms beforehand to get the lay of the land and to see a particular judge in action. This will go a long way to strengthen the feeling that "I can do this."

6. *Visualize success.* Don't let negative self-talk about how miserable the speaking experience feels become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, imagine how the audience will react WHEN (not if) you do a good job. Visualize key audience members smiling and nodding in agreement with what you say. Picture yourself confidently stepping away from the podium or platform at the end, knowing that you nailed it. Get excited about how you'll feel at that moment.

**Things to do minutes before your presentation:**

7. *Write it down.* The simple act of writing out your fear on a piece of paper can be empowering. A recent study at the University of Chicago found that students suffering from test anxiety could reduce their nerves and get better scores by writing down their test-related concerns for 10 minutes prior to the test. You can do the same. Take a few minutes to actually write down what worries you have about your speech and you can achieve the same results.\*

8. *Change your diet.* The day of your presentation try to eat foods that contain high amounts of tryptophan, an amino acid that reduces anxiety. (But not too much, you don't want to fall asleep.) Foods that fall into this category are turkey, nuts, cheese, and if you're feeling particularly earthy, flax seeds. Here's a good source for identifying foods with tryptophan: <http://www.dietaryfiberfood.com/tryptophan-sources.php>. Also, avoid caffeinated beverages because they can make you even more jumpy than the natural adrenaline rush you feel from being in front of an audience. If nature's willing to give you a hand, grab hold of it.

9. *Drink some OJ.* Orange juice is not just for breakfast anymore. The vitamin C in OJ has been shown to lower stress hormones in less than 15 minutes. (This works with pulp and pulp free.)

10. *Fire up your iPod.* Music has an amazing capacity to instantly transform a person's mood, so why not make it an ally? Try this: A few minutes before you're about to speak, steal away to an empty hallway, a nearby bathroom, or some quiet place and listen to your absolute favorite upbeat song. (Of course, you're welcome to jam out in the conference room right next to the key decision maker, but many people will find this less than endearing. Hence, the quiet place.) The music will instantly psyche you up to take center stage and rock the house.

11. *Make a fist.* Right before you get up to speak, clench both fists as tightly as you can, hold for 10 seconds, then release your fists and rest for 10 seconds. Repeat

twice. This exercise only takes a minute, yet it effectively releases muscle tension and thereby helps you relax.

12. *Do a breathing exercise.* Take in a deep breath from your diaphragm like you're sticking your belly out and hold it for 5 seconds. Then let your breath out in short, controlled bursts until all the air is out of your lungs. (Think Lamaze.) It should take 10 to 15 "mini-exhales" to get all the air from your lungs. Repeat two more times. You'll be surprised at how relaxed you feel.

13. *Strike a pose.* Recent research by Harvard assistant professor, Amy J.C. Cuddy, reports that holding yourself in a "power pose" for two minutes prior to a big presentation leads to optimal hormone levels, an increased sense of power, and a higher tolerance for risk. Not too shabby. Here's how to achieve these benefits. Arrive a little early to the room where your next presentation is taking place. Then, either stand next to a table and lean over it on your hands or sit down and lean back in a chair with your hands behind your head and your feet up on the table. Both are classic power moves (but probably not the kind of moves you'd want to make during a presentation). Be sure to hold either position for at least two minutes and surprisingly, your cortisol "stress" levels will decrease and testosterone will rise. A nice 1-2 punch for any speaker.

**Things to do during your presentation:**

14. *Move around.* Get out of the phone booth. While you're speaking, be sure to use the full "canvass" of the room or stage. Moving your legs and arms naturally (as opposed to statue-like stillness) is a terrific way to expel nervous energy. A few suggestions: take two-three steps in one direction, plant your feet and make a point. Repeat as needed. Similarly, try to gesture to either side of your torso to get blood flowing and your muscles in motion. Simply put, your nervous energy has to have an outlet and physical movement releases that energy in a good way. The other option is uncontrolled shaking and twitching. Your choice.

15. *Practice Eye-to-Eye Contact.* If you freak out at the idea of speaking in front of a large group of people, then don't speak to large groups. Instead, deliver your speech point-by-point to individual members of your audience. Just lock eyes with one person, say a complete thought to him or her, then pause briefly while you look for the next person to talk to. Repeat the process. (Added bonus: You'll also appear more confident, trustworthy, and poised.)

16. *Do it more often.* Psychologists will tell you that the more you confront your fears, the less intimidating they become. The fancy term for this is exposure therapy. If public speaking is a scary proposition and you avoid it like the plague, the fear will loom even larger when you have to speak. Look for opportunities outside your professional life to get up and speak in front of people even if it's just a five-minute update—making a toast at your brother-in-law's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party, standing up and making a point at a neighborhood association meeting, giving a committee report at your kid's school, etc.

17. *Remember that the audience can't tell how nervous you are.* The number one comment I hear from people in my seminars after seeing themselves give a speech on video is that they don't appear nearly as nervous as they actually felt. The reason for this is that your audience will assume you're in control, feeling good, and ready to do a fine job, unless you give them a reason to think otherwise. Plus, nervousness doesn't show on the outside anywhere near its level of being experienced on the inside.

For instance, unless you tell them how nervous you feel or you shake hysterically (which rarely happens), your audience will naturally assume the best about you because it's in their best interest that you are a good speaker. Who sits down to listen to a speech with the hope that the presenter is dreadful? Since they can't discern how you feel on the inside, this dynamic is the great equalizer.

In any case, find what works for you and be sure to include these nerve-reducing tactics in your regular speech preparation.



## **Practicing the Skills in Everyday Life**

Here are some simple ways to practice and perfect your new presentation skills in everyday situations. After all, you don't have to be on your feet presenting to an audience to refine your skills.

### **Eye-to-Eye Contact**

1. When you're out at lunch with co-workers or friends try to give one thought to one person with a slight pause in between. Make it a habit to speak only when you're looking people in the eyes.
2. Try to do the same thing at meetings with three or more people. After a while, this skill will seem like second nature and will be relatively easy to incorporate into your stand-up presentations.

### **Proper Stance**

1. The next time you're waiting in line, think about standing in a balanced stance (feet shoulder-length apart or a modified 4<sup>th</sup> position in dance).
2. You can also work on your stance riding in an elevator. Anywhere you have to stand for several minutes becomes an excellent practice opportunity for working on your stance.

## **Practicing the Skills in Everyday Life**

### Inflection

1. A great way to improve your inflection is to read children's books aloud. Strive to make each character speak in a different voice. Make an effort to bring the content to life and paint a vivid picture in the mind of the child. Just about everyone is a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle—try to carve out some time to read some Dr. Seuss or A.A. Milne to a little one in your life. Your next presentation might be better because of it.
2. Leave yourself a voicemail message. Wait a few minutes and then listen to it on speakerphone. How much inflection did you hear? Try it again, only this time really think about annunciating and punctuating the words that are coming out of your mouth.
3. Make it a habit to always listen to your voicemail messages before you hit the “send” button. This will help you in two areas: One, it will ensure that your messages are clear. Two, you will get a chance to hear your inflection (or lack thereof) and re-record the message if need be.

## **Practicing the Skills in Everyday Life**

### Gestures

1. When you're talking to someone on the phone at work, use the speakerphone feature and work on your gestures to help your listener "see" what you're saying. You would be surprised at the difference it makes to the person on the other end of the phone when you use demonstrable gestures while you speak.
2. The same thing applies at home when you're talking to people on the phone.

## Where To Go

### Quotations

- [www.thinkexist.com](http://www.thinkexist.com) – scores of thought-provoking quotes from a variety of sources
- [www.great-quotes.com](http://www.great-quotes.com) – over 54,000 quotes
- [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com) – 11,000 literary quotes (Bartlett's)
- [www.quoteland.com](http://www.quoteland.com) – thousands of quotes searchable by category
- In Google, type key word(s) for which you need a quote, then add a plus sign and the word quote
  - Example: "time to change" + quote
  - Google will then find a huge list of quotes that have the words "time to change" in them
  - This approach works well for lesser-known quotes that may not necessarily be found in traditional quote sites like the ones listed above

### Images/Pictures

- Free Sites
  - [www.google.com/images](http://www.google.com/images) (Google Images) – these are "free" images, **BUT YOU MUST GET PERMISSION FROM THE IMAGE'S OWNER BEFORE YOU CAN USE THEM**
  - [www.flickr.com/creativecommons](http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons) – thousands of royalty free images
  - [www.morguefile.com](http://www.morguefile.com) – large free database of images
- Pay-per-Image Sites
  - [www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com) – download great images for \$1, \$2 or \$3 apiece
  - [www.fotolia.com](http://www.fotolia.com) – similar to 123rf.com above
  - [www.istockphotos.com](http://www.istockphotos.com) – thousands of inexpensive images
  - [www.photos.com](http://www.photos.com) – large image database; users can download as many images royalty-free and use them as much as they like (\$140/month)

## Comic Strips

- [www.cartoonbank.com](http://www.cartoonbank.com) – access to every New Yorker comic strip; users can download individual comic strips (\$20 for unlimited use of one comic)
- [www.kingfeatures.com](http://www.kingfeatures.com) – similar to Cartoon Bank this site has access to a vast assortment of comic strips from the “Amazing Spiderman” to “Zits”; users can download comic strips (\$20/year per comic)

## Stories

- The best resource for stories is your own life experience – things that happen to you at work, on vacation, going about your everyday life.
- The next best source for stories is your friends, relatives and co-workers – listen and take note of the things you hear them say
- Start a “story file” – have a place where you keep all these great stories.
- The last step is to simply match up the stories you have collected with the topic you’re addressing in your presentation(s).

## Public Speaking Practice

- [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) – Toastmasters International is a worldwide organization whose sole purpose is to help people improve their public speaking skills. They boast more than 70,000 members, it costs only about \$70/year and there are dozens of clubs in every city in the country.

## **FOR FURTHER READING**

Atkinson, Cliff. Beyond Bullet Points: Using Microsoft PowerPoint to Create Presentations That Inform, Motivate, and Inspire. Redmond, Washington: Microsoft Press, 2005.

Gallo, Carmine. 10 Simple Secrets of the World's Greatest Business Communicators. Sourcebooks, 2005.

Humes, James C. Speak Like Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln: 21 Powerful Secrets of History's Greatest Speakers. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2002.

Reynolds, Garr. Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery. Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2008.

Silverstein, Lori L., Wake Me Up When the Data Is Over: How Organizations Use Stories to Drive Results. New York: National Storytelling Network Press, 2006.

Simmons, Annette. The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling. New York: Perseus Publishing, 2001.

Zelazny, Gene. Say It With Charts. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

## **Presentation Self-Coaching Sheet**

1. What did you like best about your CLE presentation?

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2. Where were looking when you were speaking? Did you use Eye-To-Eye Contact? Did you complete a thought with one person before moving to the next?

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3. What kind of gestures did you have? What were your hands doing when you weren't gesturing? Any repetitive or distracting gestures?

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4. How were you standing? Was your stance balanced? Did you stay in one place? Did you step outside of the phone booth? How did you use the stage?

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5. How loud was your voice on a 5-point scale? (1 = whisper, 5 = shouting)

1

2

3

4

5

6. How much inflection was in your voice? Did you vocalize (speak through) any pauses?

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7. What would you like to improve for your next CLE class?

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## About the Trainer:

Steve Hughes is President *Hit Your Stride, LLC*, a communications consultancy that helps people look and sound smart when they talk. He is the author the forthcoming book, *Speak To Me* (October 2011) and his seminars have been featured on NPR and BBC Radio. Steve is also the proud creator of “National Be Kind to Lawyers Day” which is observed annually on the second Tuesday in October ([www.BeKindToLawyers.com](http://www.BeKindToLawyers.com)).

Today he works with a host of blue chip clients including:

- **Law Firms:** *Latham & Watkins, Kirkland & Ellis, Crowell & Moring, Bryan Cave, Seyfarth Shaw, Chadbourne & Parke*
- **State Bar Associations:** *Alaska, Illinois, Ohio, Oklahoma, Missouri, Wisconsin*
- **Fortune 500:** *Boeing, MetLife, Deloitte, Nestle Purina, MasterCard*
- **Education:** Washington U. in St. Louis, U. of Minnesota, U. of Missouri, U. of Idaho, Chapman U.
- **Associations:** *NALP, Law School Admission Council, Association of Corporate Counsel, ASTD, SHRM, Legal Marketing Association*

Prior to launching Hit Your Stride, Steve worked for 12 years in advertising and public relations where he delivered hundreds of presentations with millions of dollars on the line. Most recently he was a managing partner at an award-winning 40-person advertising agency in St. Louis.

Steve holds a BA in French Literature and European History from the University of Kansas and an MBA in Marketing from Washington University, where he was awarded the prestigious Olin Cup.

## Steve's Other Programs:

- “Rainmaking 1-2-3: Making BD a Natural Part of Your Daily Life”
- “Influence: The Art & Science of Changing Minds”
- “Instant Access: Making Great & Lasting First Impressions”
- “Tell Me More: Creating Interest in Your Practice with Everyone You Meet”
- “Virtual Magic: Presenting with Excellence over the Phone/Web”
- “The Multiplier Principle: The Surprising Personal & Professional Benefits of Giving without Keeping Score”

**“Great CLE presenters are made not born.”**