



Gail Larsen, Founder

*If you want to change the world,  
tell a better story*

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## The Four Bones of a Transformational Speech

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Cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien, author of *The Four-Fold Way*, teaches there are four bones to which we must pay attention if we are to remain fully present in our lives. As in life, so it is in speaking! Here are the four bones:

**1. First, the wishbone.** That is where our vision resides, the place of dreaming and re-dreaming so that we live the life we came to live. When you're developing your presentation, what is the vision you hold of what is possible because you choose to show up? A transformational speech begins with knowing the new story you want people to embrace and act upon. So exercise your wishbone as your very first step to a transformational speech. What is the outcome you wish for that makes all the energy of preparing and delivering a presentation worthwhile?

**2. The second bone is the backbone.** Taking action in support of our dreams requires courage and strength. The call to action you put forth in your speaking is the backbone – it first represents your own backbone, the bravery to ask for something worthy of a better story. Then you call forth the backbone of the audience when you challenge them to leave the room with a commitment to a personal step toward an action that will make the new story possible. Just one step; ask them for that without apology or equivocation.

**3. The third is the funny bone.** It is said that laughter is the shortest distance between two people. It is perennial wisdom in professional speaking circles that, "You don't have to be funny to speak; only to get paid for it!"

**4. Then there's the hollow little bone.** This bone is likely the most challenging for a speaker who needs a strong ego to show up in the first place – and then get out of the way. To be a "hollow bone" requires that we acknowledge our doubts and fears and reluctance and do the work to heal the personal wounds that cause us to question our callings and capacities. Only then can we be "hollow" enough to make room for something more powerful than a carefully crafted speech to flow through us and out to others. When we recognize that ultimately our speaking is in support of our message and not about us, we open the hollow bone to hope and possibility and to receive grand support for a worthy mission. We experience an energetic surge when the hollow little bone is an open channel for truth to be spoken in the moment.

When your wishbone, your backbone, your funny bone and the hollow little bone are acknowledged and expressed, you're well on your way to presenting the speech you were born to give to the audience you are destined to serve. To be a transformational speaker, remember the Four Bones!