

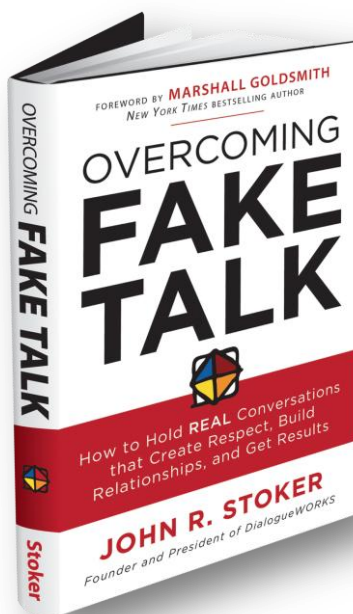
**SPEAKER
INFORMATION
KIT**



JOHN R. STOKER

PRESIDENT & CEO OF
 Dialogue**WORKS**®

AUTHOR OF
OVERCOMING FAKE TALK
(In Bookstores **MAY 17, 2013**)



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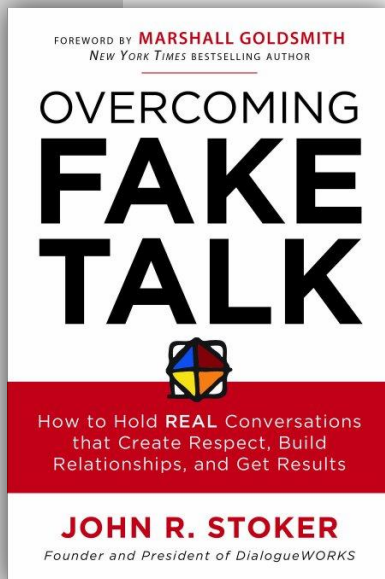
 www.DialogueWORKS.com
www.OvercomingFakeTalk.com

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Dr. John R. Stoker is the author of *Overcoming Fake Talk: How to Create REAL Conversations that Create Respect, Build Relationships, and Get Results*. This landmark book emphasizes that to improve results, one must simultaneously work on improving respect and relationships. *Overcoming Fake Talk* gives readers a set of universal skills as well

as a process for talking about any difficult topic with anyone, anytime. Sadly, “fake talk”—conversations that are devoid of results or that fail to get to the heart of the matter—is all too pervasive today. Skills for overcoming “fake talk” are valuable to everyone. This book is filled with inspiring and thought-provoking stories for every professional, parent, or partner.

A polished speaker and facilitator, John is expert in the areas of communications, critical thinking, performance management, change management, leadership, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence. He has presented to and trained in multiple Fortune 500 companies, including well-known organizations like Turner Broadcasting, Lockheed Martin, Honeywell, and Cox Communications. Other past clients include Comcast Cable, Banner Health, Kodak, Maxum Petroleum, AT&T, OG&E, AutoTrader.com, Manheim, Payflex, Cigna Healthplan, Nebraska Furniture Mart, HCA

Healthcare, Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group, and Presbyterian Health Services.

He has worked with individuals, teams, and audiences large and small for over 20 years. John’s presentations are the perfect mix of theory, practical application, and humor. Those who listen to his presentations or participate in his training courses increase their personal awareness and learn time-tested skills and approaches that improve their personal and professional capability. And they have an enjoyable time while doing so!

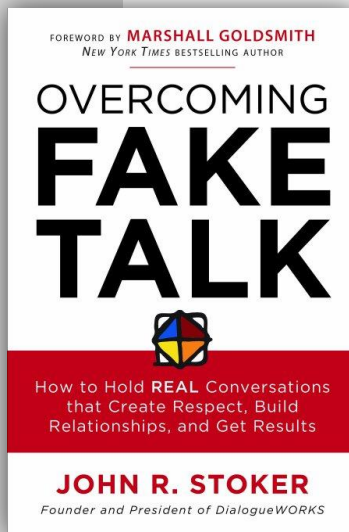
John is dedicated to helping individuals and organizations increase their effectiveness and improve their results. John believes that the challenges we face—whether on the personal, organizational, or even national level—could be more easily resolved if people only knew how to think and talk together effectively. Accordingly, his writing, presentations, and trainings focus on helping professionals and leaders from all walks of life increase their personal effectiveness, engagement, and accountability so they can achieve the results they really want.

John holds a Bachelor’s degree in English and a Master’s degree in Organizational Behavior. After catching his breath, he went on to earn a J.D. degree and became a practicing criminal defense attorney. He spent his summers as a whitewater guide in the Grand Canyon and taught at a leading university for 13 years. Even in view of all his many successes, John considers his greatest accomplishment to be marriage to his wife Stephanie and the ongoing adventure of working together to raise their five engaging children.

"The DialogueWORKS training has helped me and my team to improve our results and the way we interact with our clients more than any other training we have ever experienced. It was spot on!"

Director, Honeywell, Inc.





OVERCOMING FAKE TALK Series

The *Overcoming Fake Talk* keynote presentations can be experienced as a series, or each may be profitably experienced as a standalone event. Except for the first and last presentations in this series, each provides in-depth insight into one of the eight principles for holding REAL Conversations. The first presentation in this list provides an overarching outline of the principles discussed in the remaining presentations. The final presentation in the list contains information that complements the material in the *Overcoming Fake Talk* book and series.

1 Can You Talk About Any Topic, With Anyone, Anytime? *Eight Principles for Overcoming Fake Talk*

When it comes to holding difficult conversations, we usually handle them poorly or we avoid them altogether. Either way, results are bound to suffer. If you understand these eight principles that are at work in every conversation and how to manage them, you will be better able to results and be able to hold REAL conversations—talking about what matters most.

2 Why Can't You See What is Happening? *The Awareness Principle: Choose to be Conscious*

People tend to be oblivious to the fact that their conversations are headed into dangerous waters until it is too late to change course. Recognizing warning signs that indicate a conversation may be headed in a negative direction can be a significant help in improving results. This presentation will teach you how to be both a participant and an observer to improve your conversational success.

3 What are REAL Conversations? *The Knowledge Principle: Do to Know*

When they have to address a tough topic, most people complain, “I don’t know what to say!” This presentation teaches the skills for holding any conversation and a simple four-step process that will help you prepare for tough conversations. You will gain the knowledge and confidence to talk about anything, anytime, with anyone.

4 Do You Ruin Everything by Being You? *The Reflection Principle: Reflect Reflections*

Although we don’t intend to offend others, the simple fact is that we often do. Our communication style is different from others, and those unique differences may hinder our ability to understand, engage, and connect. Learning to recognize another person’s style and reflect their reflections will increase your ability to work and play well with others.

“There is no better facilitator of dialogue skills than John Stoker. He is extremely self-aware and lives the principles he teaches. He listens to what people are saying and not saying and understands what needs to be said in holding courageous conversations.”

Former Senior Manager, Education - Pay Pal, Inc., an eBay company

5 How Do You Get Out of Your Stinking Thinking?

The Perception Principle: Recognize and Suspend to Uncover

Most of us believe everything we think, even though our perception of reality is in fact usually either inaccurate or at least incomplete. This presentation explains how we as humans usually form our perceptions, opinions, and judgments; becoming aware of why you think what you think can help you challenge and assess the accuracy of your thinking. Learning to challenge your reality and see outside yourself will help you broaden your perspective and understanding of others.

6 Can You Talk About What Really Matters?

The Preparation Principle: Prepare or Beware

When it comes to holding difficult conversations, few people stop to really think about the message they want to convey and the person to whom they want to deliver the message. As a result, the message may or may not match the listener. When you are able to clarify your assumptions, identify your intentions, and engage your listener, you will create the REAL conversations you want to hold.

7 Do You Open Your Mouth and Remove All Doubt?

The Expression Principle: Express Your Intention

What we show on the outside—either by our manner or by the words we choose—clearly reflects what is happening on the inside. As we say, “our expressions are a reflection of our intentions.” In any conversation, and especially any difficult conversation, the goal is to share your message in a way that does not create resistance or defensiveness. You can power up your message to be more persuasive and improve your collaboration with others.

8 How is the Answer in the Question?

The Discovery Principle: Ask to Reveal

If we don’t ask, we will never know. But we think we do know, so we don’t ask. In addition to simply acquiring information, questions can be asked in ways that create respect, foster openness, inspire reflection, increase engagement, and deepen understanding. This presentation will give you insights into how to ask questions and listen to answers that will truly enhance your conversations.

9 Why ‘Ego Off’?

The Connection Principle: Listen and Attend to Connect

Unless we make a conscious effort to be conscious, we rarely listen past what we think we know, or we simply listen for data or acknowledgement that supports what we already know. When we stop listening at that point, we fail to hear or observe the messages that are being sent to us. Listening and attending for those messages will help you understand what is in the heads and hearts of others.

“This training offered a unique approach in applying theory and practicing the conversation. It was delivered with passion and enthusiasm that fully engaged each audience, eliciting voluntary participation from all. The content and delivery was well received by everyone.”

Human Resources Manager - Maxum Petroleum East

10 How Do You Hold You Back?

The Creation Principle: Choose to Change

Again and again, we continue to do the same things, or do things in the same way, somehow expecting that this time our results are going to be different. When you clearly understand the process of your own behavior and see what holds you back, however, you are in a position to make a different choice: choose to change. The presentation will give you some tools you can use to start getting different, more successful results.

Leadership Series

1 The Ego Has Landed!

How to Get Out of Your Own Way and Get Results

The ability to communicate, engage, and collaborate with others seriously impacts our ability to create results. This presentation addresses ways in which our ego creates highly emotional interactions that diminish our ability to solve problems effectively. This session also touches on neuroscience theory and applications that will help individuals understand themselves and others better and learn to manage their perceptions and thinking to get what they want.

2 Do You Ruin Everything By Being You?

Creating Connection and Personal Engagement for Results

The way we speak and interact might be abrasive to others, even when we do not intend to offend. Individual “interaction styles” determine how successful we will be when we attempt to connect, engage, and understand one another. Learn how to recognize different communication styles and how to “match” the styles of others to make your interactions more satisfying to all concerned.

3 Why Don't Your Conversations Work?

Seven Barriers to Effective Communication

The reason our conversations sometimes fail is because we do not recognize some simple barriers that show up in every conversation. These barriers stifle our ability to connect and engage with the other person, clearly express a powerful message, increase collaboration and teamwork, and reach the goals that are vital to success. In this session, John will identify the seven barriers and talk about what can be done to break them down.

“DialogueWORKS is the first course I’ve taken that has given me the tools I need as a leader to really handle the difficult situations.”

Course Participant - Banner Health

4 Can You Navigate the Waters of Change?

Focusing Minds for Results

Any change, whether large or small, can have a huge impact on individual energy, focus, and productivity. This session addresses how to manage the dynamics of change so that people can remain productive and focused, even amidst the competing distractions of the change process.

5 Can You Manage Conflict to Reach Resolution?

Resolving Conflict to Achieve Results

For most people, resolving conflict holds the top spot on their list of least favorite activities. Few enjoy handling the deluge of emotion and the mental sparring that occur when a resolution must be reached or an important decision must be made. If we recognize five components that are present in every conflict and manage them properly, we will be able to resolve conflict with cooperation and collaboration instead of contention and coercion.

6 Can You Speak Victory into Others?

Giving Feedback to Unleash Potential

Whether you are speaking with your employees, your boss, or your family members, many people find it very difficult to give constructive feedback without causing defensiveness or anger. Being able to provide constructive feedback in a way that works is the key to improving performance, creating accountability, and achieving results. John provides a number of “feedback factors” that will increase the power of your message and teaches a simple framework you can use to deliver any feedback effectively.

7 Are Emotions Derailing Your Results?

Four Strategies for Defusing “Hot” Emotions

When confronted with negative or “hot” emotion, most of us struggle to know what to do to return to rationality and get the conversation back on track. If we understand how violated values create emotional reaction, we hold the key to defusing defensiveness in ourselves and others. Dr. Stoker teaches four effective strategies that anyone can use to shift resistant emotion into tempered engagement.

8 Does Talking About Performance Really Matter?

Four Steps to an Outstanding Performance Review

Managers wonder if they will experience resistance—or even lawsuits—when they hold annual performance reviews. To ensure a positive experience and continued productivity, hold an annual review that is constructive and motivating. Dr. Stoker teaches a simple, easy-to-use process for holding a performance review that will take the guesswork out of this much-anticipated experience and increase engagement, create value, and improve accountability and commitment.

“John’s presentation not only helped me effectively communicate with my boss and my coworkers, but it helped me see how I could be more effective communicating with my family. For the first time, I actually can ‘hear’ my daughter. It literally changed my life.”

Participant - PerkinElmer, Inc.

TESTIMONIALS

Organization Consultant, Humana Healthcare

Over the years, I have told and retold John's stories to my colleagues and friends, with amazing clarity. Of course, I don't come close to the engaging and humorous style John conveys. This is a testament to his impact, his relevancy and his creative speaking ability. Be sure to ask him about what makes "ya hu-u-u-ungry"!

Internal Development Consultant,
Scottsdale Healthcare

John is gifted in sharing stories and humor to convert the complex to simple, actionable elements. The learning heightened our personal awareness about conscious choice versus autopilot default, in all our verbal and non-verbal communications. John challenges us to deliver ROI through "win-win" outcomes based on constructive interaction and effective decision-making for individuals, leaders, and organizations.

President, The Learning Exchange

John is one of the best leadership development presenters that we currently have because of his ability to teach important content in a way that keeps people engaged and interested in changing the way they think and behave. He presents information that is grounded in research in a way that helps people understand what it means to them and what they need to do to change, and he does it with a presentation style that is warm, hysterically funny and always stimulating. He's a tremendous speaker!

President and CEO, Provision Communication

Our company recently spent a day working with John on dialogue effectiveness. Everyone, to the person, was impacted by the insights that John shared. His knowledge and delivery keep you captivated and leave you understanding why it is critical to pay attention to and improve your dialogue skills. Our time together was a homerun!

Sr. Vice President, Human Resources,
Connolly, LLC

John Stoker has a very down-to-earth style that combines thought-provoking insights into the way we think and behave with real-life stories that we can all relate to. John has helped me become more effective in every interaction I have with people up, down, and across my organization.

President, HRMA SWFL

We knew John would be talking about ego and gaining understanding, so most of us were prepared for an hour of psychology terms and basic recommendations about how to communicate. Much to my delight and that of others, the content of his presentation offered definitions with clear examples of how they impacted us; focused activities that solidified his points; clear, realistic suggestions for applying what we learned to our everyday interactions with others, and a healthy dose of humor. I recommend John Stoker without reservation.

"During my thirty years of leading and managing, there have been only a few unforgettable programs that have fundamentally changed my overall effectiveness in thinking and communicating. DialogueWORKS is one of them."

Vice-President of Strategic Planning and Organizational Development - UST, Inc.

TESTIMONIALS

Division Director for Workforce Development, HCA

Because John Stoker came highly recommended from a peer from another healthcare agency, we had no doubt that he would exceed our expectations. He is a very effective lecturer with great communication skills. He was interesting and he linked his presentation to our industry and effectively engaged our audience in the presentation. I hope to have John present to us again in the future.

President and CEO,
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare

Mr. Stoker was a great speaker who was highly engaging. He delivered his message in a way that was genuine and entertaining and that caused one to evaluate oneself toward the end of improving results and one's leadership. He also provided terrific content that really hit the mark in helping us to learn how to hold the conversations that are relevant in a physician's world.

Although our expectations were high, Mr. Stoker exceeded those expectations. At the end of the program, many expressed that they wished he had spoken longer. Not only did Mr. Stoker address the issues that are relevant to any leader, but he also taught us skills that were immediately applied to a variety of situations. Those who have the chance to hear John speak will not be disappointed.

Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, and Secretary, UST, Inc.

John is one of the most creative and effective consultants I have ever retained. Whether it was building teams for customer service, sales, marketing, IT, and senior management, or creating customized training programs to deal with the unique issues facing a highly regulated industry, John's grasp of the issues and his extensive experience carried the day.

John was particularly helpful in developing a "managing change" program as we implemented a \$250 million cost reduction program. John was so well received through the Company that he was often asked to coach executives through their issues. John always had the Company's interest foremost in his mind.

VP Workforce Solutions, Member Experience,
Payflex-Aetna

John's sessions have enabled our teams to speak the same language, become better listeners, understand self-defeating barriers and to have far more productive and constructive conversations throughout all levels of the organization. This in turn has had a tremendous impact on our customer service, employee engagement, and ability to accomplish great work in a rapidly-changing environment.

"John is a skilled facilitator and has quality materials (audio/visual and written) which help keep the training on track. He has a special skill to entertain and to teach at the same time and relates well to members from diverse backgrounds. Our team appreciated the training!"

Regional President - Maxum Petroleum East



TESTIMONIALS

Director, Talent Management & Development,
Lennox International

John is a tremendous asset to the work we've done within the organization. His ability to tie leading research to practical recommendations and then to teach others to use new skills and achieve better results has fueled a variety of initiatives within the organizations for which I've worked.

I recommend his work without hesitation and am grateful to count him as a colleague and collaborator.

Sr. Vice President of Human Resources,
Maxum Petroleum

A gifted teacher and storyteller, John guides learners to be better communicators and more effective team members by combining humorous and highly relevant stories from his experience as a lawyer, business educator, and whitewater guide with practical, relevant business tools. I have become a better leader through my association with John.

CEO, Partnership Coaching

John is a gifted presenter and facilitator with amazing energy and the best stories in the world. His expertise in dialogue and communication as essential tools to effective leadership is unparalleled. John's audiences and clients not only gain awareness and insight, but develop practical skills, enabling them to be more effective as individuals and in teams. I highly recommend John without reservation.

Executive Vice President, USSTC

John's research and training programs blend just the right amount of theory with real world application. I saw firsthand the benefits his programs had on individuals within the region and the bottom-line performance increases to productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. After the DialogueWORKS Training, our departments also experienced lower turnover and higher job satisfaction scores.

In terms of my personal management experience, no other training had a greater impact on me than John's work on Dialogue, Mental Models, and Leadership. These programs were not just seminars with a binder, the training was actionable and used to create positive, sustainable change and organizational momentum.

I highly recommend John and his training programs to any results-oriented company that is truly interested and committed in working with a principled professional who delivers a positive road map to change and organizational improvement.

"The skills I learned really WORKED!!!"

Supervisor - United States Air Force

About DialogueWORKS

DialogueWORKS is an organizational development firm that believes REAL conversation is the key to increasing individual capability and capacity to achieve results.

DialogueWORKS specializes in the design, creation, and delivery of training products that help leaders and individual contributors acquire the behaviors that yield superior results through working with people.

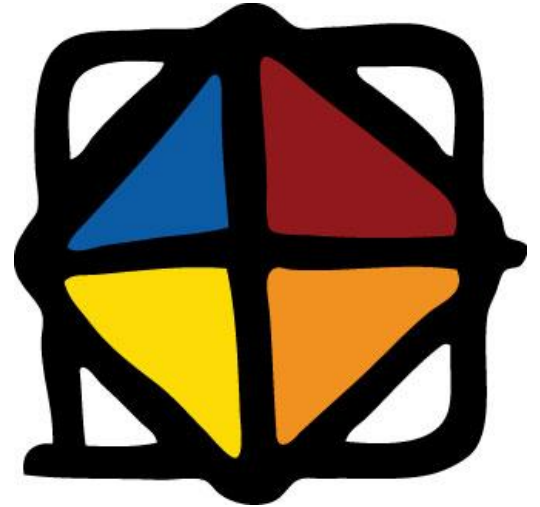
Founded in 1998, the company is headquartered in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains, and has affiliates throughout North America, South America, Europe, India, Asia, New Zealand, and Australia.

Because the performance of people is central to personal, professional, and organizational effectiveness, we help organizations put people back into the business of the business. Our training focuses on time-tested models and principles that improve individual performance and effectiveness by creating a culture based on respect, trust, candor, collaboration, learning, and accountability to achieve results.

DialogueWORKS provides proprietary training products, assessment tools, and design expertise that produce results in the following areas:

- Organizational culture
- Performance accountability and improvement
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership development
- Emotional Intelligence
- Coaching for contribution and collaboration
- Change management
- REAL conversation

We are happy to create customized products to meet clients' requests, and we will customize existing products to meet specific company needs.



Available Courses

- **Creating REAL Conversations for Results**
This two-day program teaches participants the skills and techniques for holding difficult conversations.
- **Thinking for Results**
This course provides participants a number of learning skills to increase their critical thinking skills for improved innovation, creativity, problem solving, and decision making.
- **Expanding Leadership Capacity**
This program teaches leaders how to hold conversations to manage expectations, give feedback, provide positive feedback and defuse defensiveness.
- **Managing Performance for Results**
Every conversation that encompasses the performance of others is addressed including the performance review.
- **Managing Conflict for Results**
The five components that are present in every conflict are identified and participants learn to manage those components to reach resolution.
- **Creating Emotional Intelligence for Results**
Nothing may be more important than an individual learning to understand and manage the nuances of highly emotional and negative situations. Participants learn to manage the components of emotional reaction in themselves and others.

Our Mission, Simple and Direct:

*To get people talking
about what matters most!*

We collaborate with leaders in illuminating, creating, and implementing innovative interpersonal and organizational development solutions which achieve successful results.

In all that we do, we recognize the need for strong client relationships, which are based on trust, respect, candor, collaboration, learning, and accountability. If these are your values then we would love to collaborate with you to increase individual performance and improve your results.

We invite you...

To visit us on the web at

 www.DialogueWORKS.com

As part of our online community, you will have access to a wealth of material that will benefit you and your organization immediately, including

- Articles
- Self-Assessments
- Video clips
- Training summaries

Register for the free monthly **DialogueWORKS** newsletter, and receive email notification when one of our frequent webinars featuring John R. Stoker will be presented.

Aerospace Industry

Lockheed Martin
Honeywell
BF Goodrich Aerostructures
Kelly Aviation

Durable Goods / Manufacturing

Ford Motor Company
Manheim Auctions
AutoTrader.com
Perkin Elmer

Financial Services

JP Morgan
American Express

Consumer Goods and Services

Monsanto Chemical Group
Oriental Trading Company
Hallmark Card
US Smokeless Tobacco
Kinko's
Alcon Labs
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals
Unified Grocers
Eastman Kodak
Nebraska Furniture Mart

Consulting and Education

Marriott School of Management
Novations
South Florida SHRM
HR Tampa
ASTD Nebraska
SHRM Nebraska
AZODN
University of Arkansas Currents
ASTD New Mexico
Deloitte-Consulting

Natural Resources

Chevron
Amoco Oil
Texaco
Maxum Petroleum
U.S. Forest Service

High Tech and Telecommunications

AT & T
Novell
BellSouth
Cox Communications
Turner Broadcasting
Comcast Cable
Provision Communication

Healthcare

Scottsdale Healthcare
Pinnacle Health System
GE Medical Systems
Cigna/Healthplan
Southeast Georgia Health System
Nebraska Medical Center
Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group
NextCare Urgent Care
Banner Health
HCA Healthcare
Payflex-Aetna

Electric Utilities

Oklahoma Gas & Electric
Wisconsin Electric

Hospitality and Entertainment

Pan Pacific Hotels

Government and Public Services

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
County of San Bernardino, California
State of Georgia
City of Bradenton, Florida
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
Springville (Utah) Chamber of Commerce
Utah Council of City Managers
Boystown

Agriculture

U.S. Sugar Corporation

Steel

Geneva Steel
Bethlehem Steel

Fees and Setup Requirements

Event and Travel Fees

- Agreed-upon speaking fees are due on the day of the event.
- Travel fees and per diem will be billed within 14 days of the event. Travel fees include round-trip coach airfare, transportation to and from the event, parking fees, and meals. When an overnight stay is required, travel fees also include costs for hotel accommodations.

Audio/Visual

- **Cordless lapel or lavalier microphone** (Dr. Stoker prefers to move around on stage and in the audience.) If the meeting room is fairly small, no microphone will be necessary.
- **A second microphone** (may be hand-held or stationary) for the introducer. It works best if there is no need to “hand off” a microphone to the presenter.
- **LCD projector and screen** for a PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Stoker will bring his own laptop and wireless remote control. Please provide a high-end LCD projector with standard VGA outlet.
- **Sound system** or speakers for the projection of video segments. Dr. Stoker often shows video segments in his speaking and training. Please inquire whether a sound system is required for your event.
- **Projection screen** large enough that the entire audience can see the presentation and segments. The screen should be large enough that everyone can see the entire screen. The screen may be placed behind the speaker or in one of the corners at the front of the room.

Room Setup

- **Lighting:** The energy and “electricity” in the room are increased when the speaker can see the audience and when the audience members can see each other’s reactions. For this reason, Dr. Stoker would like to have the house lights (excluding fluorescent lights) turned up full.
- **Seating:** If seated in rounds, try to seat the audience in crescent so all participants will be facing the stage area. If seated theater-style, try a curved effect as this dramatically enhances the warmth and interaction of the group.
- **No head table** or other obstacle between the lectern and the audience. Dr. Stoker appreciates the opportunity to connect with the audience by moving around and into the group whenever possible.
- **Small table** in an accessible spot to hold Dr. Stoker’s laptop computer.

Profile



For over 20 years, John R. Stoker has been facilitating and speaking to audiences, helping them to improve their thinking and communicating skills. He is an expert in communications who believes the human capacity to achieve astonishing results is contingent upon the individual's ability to interact with others. John's entertaining and thought-provoking presentations are always well received. He blends theory, engaging stories, and practical application into all of his presentations, providing rich takeaways for all participants.

John has dedicated his professional career to the science of communication and interpersonal interaction. He has worked extensively in the areas of dialogue, critical thinking, performance management, conflict resolution, and change.

Since leaving VitalSmarts in 1991, John has founded two organizations, Light Storm Consulting, Inc., and DialogueWORKS, LC. In these two entities, he has taught and spoken to thousands of individuals and leaders, helping them to increase their capacity to achieve results.

John holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Behavior as well as a J.D. Degree. He is the author of *Overcoming Fake Talk: How to Hold REAL Conversations that Create Respect, Build Relationships, and Get Results*. This landmark book is both entertaining and engaging, and it presents a number of applicable skills that will help readers to learn to talk about what matters most.

Speaking Topics

John is willing to customize any of his presentations in order to directly address the particular needs of your group. He teaches on a number of topics in these areas:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Performance Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Change Management
- Culture Change

Testimonials

Sr. Vice President, Human Resources, Connolly, LLC

John Stoker has a very down-to-earth style that combines thought-provoking insights into the way we think and behave with real-life stories that we can all relate to. John has helped me become more effective in every interaction I have with people up, down, and across my organization.

CEO, Partnership Coaching

John is a gifted presenter and facilitator with amazing energy and the best stories in the world. His expertise in dialogue and communication as essential tools to effective leadership is unparalleled. John's audiences and clients not only gain awareness and insight, but develop practical skills, enabling them to be more effective as individuals and in teams. I highly recommend John without reservation.

Clients

Some of John's recent clients include: Honeywell, Cox Communications, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Payflex-Aetna, Comcast Cable, Lockheed Martin, American Express, Boystown, and Banner Health.

Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

www.LeaderExcel.com

 Dialogue**WORKS**[®]

December 2012

John Stoker
Consultant

**Opt for
Optimism**

**Rise Above
Routine**

REAL Conversations
It's about Respect and Results

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December 2012

The Magazine of Life Leadership

MENTAL • CONVERSATIONS

REAL Conversations

What keeps you up at night?



by John R. Stoker

YOU CLIMB INTO BED AND SUDDENLY *your normal life* reasserts itself. Whether it's sick and crying children, flu pandemics, an ornery boss, higher taxes, a nagging recession, an angry ex-spouse, the prospect of losing your job, not being able to retire, or troubled and puzzling relationships, frustrations play out on the stage of your mind as you lie in bed.

What's keeping you awake at night? Your answer likely centers on *one core concern: I'm not getting the results I want!*

Your concern may be with a surly teenager, financial reversals, a difficult boss, an impossible task, or a crazed coworker. Most concerns deal with *violated expectations*. As much as you want to resolve these concerns, you avoid talking about them. And so you continue to experience *violated expectations* and *poor results*. All your frustrations deal with your *interactions* and *relationships* with others—and you contribute to your frustrations.

Yes, you want better *results!* You want to achieve your goals, enjoy your work, have positive *relationships*, and gain the *respect* of associates. When you come up short, sleep can be incredibly elusive.

You can't talk about improving results without considering the impact that your relationships have on results. When *respect* is strengthened, your *relationships* improve, and *results* follow. So, the next time you can't sleep, look at the *results* you have, the *relationships* you are in, and the *respect* you bring to or receive in any conversation. You can't improve *results* without addressing *respect* and *relationships*. These 3 Rs are part of every conversation you hold.

Your conversations affect your results. Indeed, your *result* is the conversation; the *respect* you experience is the conversation; and your *relationship* with everyone you interact with is the conversation. You are at the core of every conversation you hold—you are respon-

sible for what you get. You are the only one who has control over *you*, your relationships, the respect you bring to those relationships, and the results you achieve. If you're not realizing the results you want, you need to fix what isn't working. So, before you explain to the Cosmos that your problems are someone else's fault—know that while you may be right, *you're also dead wrong.*

If you're part of the relationship, you're part of the conversation. And if the relationship isn't

working, you can *likely* change the way you're engaging in the conversations to positive effect. What you do or don't do contributes to every conversation that you hold. You just can't let yourself off of the hook.

Have you ever been in a prickly situation where you just don't know how to talk about what really matters, so you don't bring up the tough issue? Or how about those times when everyone nods in

agreement during a conversation that seems to go great, but then the expected outcome never materializes? Then there are times when you try your best, but somehow you (or the person you're talking with) make a mess of it. Such scenarios are what I call *counterfeit conversations* or *fake talk*. Such conversations can be about any topic: changing, improving, requesting, or correcting something. The conversation seems



For 30 years, I've tried to help people see the difference between fake (counterfeit) and real (authentic) leadership. John Stoker not only reveals fake talk, he also delivers spot-on advice for holding real conversations that cultivate relationships, respect and results. Read it and reap. You'll be a better, more effective leader.

Ken Shelton, editor/CEO,
Leadership Excellence

to go well, but nothing happens! *Counterfeit conversation* never produces desired results!

We've all held these conversations and then ended up mystified when performance or behavior remains the same, accountability or responsibility never improve, problems aren't solved, customers aren't satisfied, quality and safety continue to be at risk, and change challenges go unaddressed. We think we share our message, but we don't learn until later, *after not getting expected results*, that the conversation went awry.

Sometimes *fake talk* occurs because we expect people to read our minds. So, our listeners keep doing what they've always done. People who engage in *fake talk* tend to beat around the bush or are so vague that we easily misinterpret what is being said, and have no clue how to perform up to expectations or be accountable for results.

Fake talk is also marked by a rise in frustration. Such conversations can be so filled with emotion, aggression, and disrespect. People are too busy *fighting* or *flighting* to understand what is really being said. *Fake talk* is vague, manipulative, covert, short-sighted, problematic, disrespectful, accusatory, non-complimentary or an out-right lie. Such conversation can be passive, aggressive, or *both*.

Hold REAL Conversations

Instead of *counterfeit conversations*, we should be holding *REAL conversation*.

REAL is an acronym for *four skills* used in all effective conversation:

- Recognize and suspend judgments
- Express thoughts, feelings, experience, or opinions without creating resistance
- Ask questions to understand
- Listen and attend to messages that others

express verbally and nonverbally.

These four skills greatly improve the quality of your conversations and help you to talk about anything, anytime, with anyone. *REAL conversations* achieve results, increase respect, and build relationships. The parties to *REAL conversations* come away feeling understood, valued and respected. The behavior and relationship of the parties are changed for the positive, and things get done.

REAL conversations are *specific, direct, open, insightful, solution-oriented, respectful, and encouraging or complimentary.* To assess the *quality of your conversations*, answer **three questions**: How do my conversations impact my results? How would I describe the quality of my relationships? Is *respect* a hallmark of how I treat others and how they treat me?

If you answer *No* to these questions, you're likely engaging in *fake talk*. The greatest opportunities for holding *REAL Conversations* come when no one agrees with your view, you don't get what you want, or others repeatedly violate your expectations. *The quality of all you receive* reflects the *quality of your conversations*. When you engage in *fake talk*, you put *results, respect* and *relationships* in jeopardy.

To achieve the results that you seek, stop engaging in *fake talk*; instead, hold *REAL conversations*. Learn how to talk about what matters most. Engage in conversations that express what you truly think, feel, or want—and give people what they need to succeed.

Holding *REAL* conversations requires courage, but the results—and *the good night's sleep*—will be worth it. PE

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ACTION: Conduct REAL conversations.

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