

“Values and Beliefs: Connecting Deeper With Your Client”

The articles in **Lessons From The Stage: Tell The Winning Story** are designed to help you become a much more effective communicator both in and out of the courtroom. As a trial lawyer you face multiple challenges, or “Obstacles” as I prefer to call them, in your cases as well as in your own personal lives. Each of the monthly **Lessons From The Stage** articles featured will provide a framework to begin to appreciate and powerfully use your obstacles to your benefit both inside and outside the courtroom.

In this article, we will focus on yours, and your client’s “Values and Beliefs.”

Many great personal development coaches consistently categorize our life experience into these two main “value areas”: our “moving toward” and the “moving away from” values. The moving-toward values, or “pleasure” values, are emotions like love, happiness, success, security, adventure. These are also known as *ends* values. It's important to make the distinction between *means* values, which are simply “vehicles” or “instruments,” and *ends* values, which drive all of our behaviors as human beings. As I’ve explained in the previous article “Working With The Monologue,” the use of the

monologue is the vehicle to achieving, or creating this “end value” in our life. Through story, character, dialogue, and intentional staging, the monologue is the *means to achieve the end*. The following list of words is what I refer to as “The Stretch Menu.” As you look through this menu, ask yourself what are the words that you value the most? Is there one that resonates the strongest with you? “The stretch” is that voice, that calling inside you that tells you to look deeper, to keep revising, to keep searching, to go through the pain and the fear, find the treasure, and use it. Your stretch could be forgiveness, or compassion, or humor, or trust. Your stretch could be passion, or play, or silence. Whatever word commands your attention, creates fear, or feels like the complete opposite of where you are now... that’s your stretch. That’s your new role. Your calling. The place you want to stretch into.

The stretch becomes more attainable when you realize that every challenge in your life is a gift that is inviting you to strive for greater freedom, opportunity and abundance. When you believe this entirely, your life will change. It’s as simple as that.

The greatest characters in the greatest movies and plays, the greatest stories, celebrate transformation and change. And we have to be able to see our lives as a great story where change is possible. But seeing the possibility

of change is not enough. The work in the theatre is about taking action. Act. Change. Transformation.

As you examine these words, not unlike an actor about to embody a role that may be totally foreign to his or her level of comfort, ask yourself “What do I want?” What do you *really* want? As an example, you may say I want a great family, but what you really want is *connection*. It’s important to be able to go to the source of our language, of what we’re really getting at.

The work with the monologue allows you to discover what you really want, or to discover “the story behind the story.” This is particularly important when it comes to your critical work in deeply understanding and connecting with your client.

Defining your “end values,” or “going beneath the surface of the story” is imperative in communicating your client’s story with depth to the jury. And it’s also imperative that we are able to look beneath the surface in our own lives. How much of your own life “has been on the surface?” Go deeper. Trust. What’s the word that’s feeling right to you, now in your life? What’s your stretch? (Notice the following words are all verbs. Why? Because they’re action based.)

Stretch Menu

Compassion

Love

Trust

Patience

Adventurous

Non-Judgmental

Humor

Service

Surrender

Faith

Playful

Spontaneous

Success

Intimate

Freedom

Humble

Courageous

Risk-Taking

Powerful

Awake

Trusting

Passionate

Comforting

Tolerant

How much do you, or can you “own” these words, on a scale of 1-5? In other words, how much can you make these words “your own?” (If there’s resistance to any of these words, that’s probably a good indication of what your stretch might be.)

Can you add the words “I am...” to this word? Example: *I am a loving man. I am a forgiving woman.* Or, better yet: *I am love. I am forgiveness.*

Try it. No matter how real or unreal it may be, take note of these words and where they resonate in your body. Where’s the resistance you feel around these words? Do these words lift you up or drag you down? Do you feel excitement around these words or shame and regret? No matter what you’re feeling is perfectly fine. In fact, it’s more than fine, it’s necessary, because you’re about to use all that you’re experiencing emotionally and physically around these words. Your goal here is to use everything for your growth into your new, powerful story. We’re not here to control anything. We’re dealing with the truth, however it decides to present itself.

As an exercise, look through this “stretch menu” and imagine their opposites. Every single one of these stretches had their origins in the

opposites. The man or woman needing to stretch into humor may have lived a certain chapter of their life in a zero humor environment. The man or woman needing to stretch into love may have been in a loveless marriage where addiction and jealousy were the reigning champions. Would not the opposite be as vital in the telling of this new story? As painful as it may be, of course it would be. The crossroad is naturally built into the stretch. Seeing the opposite of these stretches is the beginning towards embracing the obstacle, which is one of the greatest goals in the work with “Lessons From The Stage.” What we’re talking about here is the journey between a place where you didn't trust and a place where you do trust, or are willing to, trust. So just as it’s important to define what you value the most, it’s also important for you to define for yourself what you value the *least*, or the areas of your life that will keep you from growing to your fullest potential, or quit “stretching into your stretch!”

If you’re having trouble defining the one stretch that would create immeasurable positive change for you in your life now, return to the opposite of your stretch. Theatre is about the balance of the opposites. A relationship is about the balance of opposites. Your life is about the balance of opposites. The Winning Story in the courtroom is about the balance of opposites.

Here are some examples of the “opposites of the stretch,” or your “moving away-from values:”

Blame

Resentment

Judgment

Jealousy

Hatred

Self-Pity

Depression

Sadness

Boredom

Anxiety

Go through this list. Say the words out loud. Feel the words in your body, your storytelling instrument, and monitor where the feeling (stress or tension) is located.

In the stretch menu, are you able to order them in terms of the ones that resonate the most with you?

Take your top ten. What resonates the most with you?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

In the “opposite menu” what are your top 10 emotions you want to move away from? What’s creating the greatest conflict?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

Now go back to your stretch, your “moving towards values.” And feel the words in your body. Compare the two: the stretch and its opposite. What you’ll have is a balance of power within you, which is the heart of a great play, an Academy-Award winning movie, and your monologue. What you have is the ideal crossroad.

For the purposes of our work here, and for you to “step into your new stretch,” it’s important to recognize that the opposites of your stretch, your “moving away from values” are just as important as your “moving towards values.” The idea in your work with your client’s story and with your own personal story, is to capture, or to honor, the journey of where you’ve been to where you are now. You’re going to use it all.

If you’re having trouble defining your current crossroad, take your top stretch (moving towards value) with your top opposite stretch (moving away from value).

Now you have something rich to work with.

How Your Obstacle Serves You, and Your Client

As an example of how your obstacle can serve you, if your desire (stretch) is to want to be more of a humble person, or to experience more

humility in your life, *believe that you're getting the opportunity to achieve it right now*. Every moment of your life. I believe what we think about, we create. It's the Law Of Attraction at work. The conflict, the opposition, allows us to experience "humble" more than we ever could imagine, if we listen to the "voice" of the experience.

Your crossroads are the blueprints to creating your "stretch." And there will always be new obstacles to get you to the next place. We listen. And learn. And move onto the next great story. What are the obstacles to your freedom?

Your obstacles *are* your freedom.

About Jesse Wilson

*Jesse Wilson is a Juilliard Theater Graduate, TEDx Speaker, communications expert and peak performance trainer. After 20 years of working in the world of theater, Jesse has created **Lessons from the Stage** to awaken people to their true Power, Purpose, and Passion and to be able to live their "greater story."*

Jesse specializes in working with trial lawyers and empowers them to deliver high-impact presentations, as well as rapidly transform their communication and collaboration skills for all aspects of pre-trial and trial work. The true power of the winning story always comes from the inside, and developing a winning story begins with owning our own story.

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