

Is a Picture Really Worth a Thousand Words: A brief rebuttal on behalf of words, especially spoken...

By Carter Hendricks

Introduction

First, as I begin this paper, let me offer this disclaimer. I am a fan of art in all its forms and appreciate the tremendous impact of a picture or photo or any other form of visual art for that matter. There's no doubt that there's tremendous power in a photo. A photo has a unique ability to capture emotion and humanity. It can grab your attention and galvanize your actions. That, I do not argue.

But, this paper, my first in this prestigious society of intellectual giants (Yes, that's a politician pandering to you) does attempt to make a rebuttal on behalf of the power of words. To be more specific, we will offer an argument that the "spoken" word is the most powerful of all forms of communication.

As I chose this topic, I must admit that I treaded cautiously as I am married to an English and Art teacher. My wife, Faye, is capable of producing beautiful prose and enchanting poetry. She's equally capable of creating a work of art that will impress and inspire. She's gifted in ways that I will never know since I don't share those gifts. So, to avoid being cast out to the couch for my nightly snooze, I shared this topic with her to seek her input.

Among many positive characteristics, I can always count on Faye to offer great feedback when I ask and many times when I don't ask. As a volleyball coach, she's used to offering constructive feedback to help her athletes grow. She did not disappoint me with her feedback as she said she thought it would make for an interesting topic even though I'd be arguing an incorrect and invalid point. She wished me the best of luck!

So, I write this paper with the desire to understand why the spoken word is so powerful and can lead to real change. In addition, I consider myself a practitioner of public speaking. Over the last twenty years, I've given over 700 speeches on a variety of topics and in varying lengths. From the impromptu speeches on a council floor to commencement addresses, I've had the opportunity to use the power of the spoken word and I've done so to the best of my abilities. I also write this paper to learn and to grow in my own abilities and profession.

Together, we will explore proof of the power of the spoken word by examining the context of three of the greatest speeches in our country's history. While doing so, we will attempt to understand the common elements that make a speech great from a historical perspective. But, before we get the cart before the horse, we must first make our initial defense on behalf of the written/ spoken word.

For fear of belaboring a point, I only offer one example of the power of the written and spoken word's ability to incite action, the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is a compilation of written

books, many of which are transcribed from Christ's speeches as well as speeches from the Apostles. It is the best-selling and most read "book" ever produced. In many versions, it is completely without photos. Yet, it has led to more change of society and individual lives than any photo or visual art form could ever hope. That's no disrespect to the power of the photo. But, it would take a billion photos to come remotely close to the power of the Bible

After all, it was Edward Bulwer-Lytton in his play Cardinal Richelieu that reminded us that the "pen is mightier than the sword." The power of words to move us and to create lasting effect is even greater than our ability to our arm ourselves and physically force our will on others.

Why so? Words, especially spoken, can engage our logic and emotion simultaneously. They can change our head and our heart and that's what leads to lasting change and improvement in society. So, if the pen is mightier than the sword, then we must conclude that the spoken word is like the pen but with more emotion and context. It's mightier than the sword and perhaps worth more than a thousand photos.

The Attributes of Three Great Speeches

With this premise in mind, let's take a look at the elements of a truly great speech. By great, we mean speeches that have delivered on four core elements or attributes. According to nearly every source on public speaking, these attributes can be identified as follows:

1. The speaker has fire in the belly with passion and conviction
2. The speech paints a picture with alliteration and imagery
3. The speech stirs the soul by engaging emotion
4. The speaker seizes the moment by honoring the audience

These attributes aren't a check list. They're an assessment of why the greatest, most memorable speeches of all time have had the lasting power and impact that they've had. But, it's not accurate or fair to suggest that the power of words can be easily summoned for use. The speaker plays an important role. It's the convergence of speech and speaker working in harmony that produce the most lasting and memorable impact.

When the great orators are equipped with the right words, then mountains are moved, wars are won, and ideals are inspired. For instance, President John F. Kennedy created the most robust space program in the world with one sentence in his May 25, 1961 speech he delivered in person to a joint session of Congress when he said, "I believe we should go to the moon."

Winston Churchill rallied the Brits when he said "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat" during his June 4, 1940 speech to the House of Commons where he boldly proclaimed that "...we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender..."

When the moment is right, the words are written, and the speaker is ready, then the power of the spoken word can be truly unleashed as it was in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, MLK's I Have a Dream, and Jim Valvano's ESPY speech.

These three speeches clearly contain each of the four key elements of a truly great speech. In addition, they have long been remembered and have demonstrated the power of the spoken word. We will take a look at each speech by analyzing its context, audience, and key attributes.

In doing so, these speeches will serve as the proverbial proof in the pudding that words are more powerful than pictures.

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

On November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln waited patiently while Edward Everett spoke for nearly two hours at the ceremony to dedicate the Soldier's National Cemetery at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

On a cold and overcast day, almost twenty thousand people were in attendance to hear Everett who was considered one of the nation's finest orators of the day. The nation was war torn and growing weary. The Battle of Gettysburg had been bloody and too painful of a reminder of the deep cost of war.

Everett concluded his remarks and was widely received. At almost two hours, he had used every tool in his orator's tool belt. Then, President Lincoln followed with a two hundred and seventy two word message that lasted less than three minutes.

During his remarks, President Lincoln used powerful imagery, strong alliteration, conviction for the cause, and a steadfast vision for victory. His words resonated throughout the country and served as a rallying cry for the Union forces.

On this November day, President Lincoln said, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—

that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

I agree with almost everything President Lincoln asserted in his incredible speech. However, his assessment of the memory of our nation couldn't have been more wrong. In fact, we long remember those who fought and that hallowed ground precisely because he spoke those words in such a way that inspired our nation to rededicate to our ideals that all men are created equal and continues to inspire leaders today.

Martin Luther King's I Have A Dream (1667 words)

Some one hundred years later, another great leader delivered what many consider to be the greatest speech in American History. At the foot of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have A Dream Speech” on August 28, 1963 to a crowd of over 250,000 people.

In one thousand six hundred and sixty seven words (that's the equivalent of 1.66 photos) and lasting less than eighteen minutes, King offered a speech that shook the foundation of our country and reignited the ideals that Lincoln had implored the country to remember at those sacred grounds in Gettysburg.

In his speech, King used the power of each of the four key attributes with grace and repetition. His thunderous voice at times roaring across the national mall assailing the audience with passion and conviction.

His use of imagery can be found in his opening line as he started, “Five score years ago.” Invoking Lincoln's image and reminding his audience of advocates of the century of struggle since the civil war. In fact, King used imagery throughout the speech to paint mental pictures and to draw parallels with history.

In doing so, he was engaging the emotions of the audience as he primed them for what would become his most famous moment as he shared a dream for a better America bringing the speech and the audience to an emotional moment that those in attendance and around the world have never forgotten.

Enjoy, as we share some of King's most powerful verses and continue to demonstrate the power of words.

King's I Have a Dream

“I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity

and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. *We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only."* We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."¹

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Like so many others, I get chills when I hear this powerful speech. As I did my research on this topic, this speech consistently found the top of the "greatest speeches" ever written list. King's words resonated with the audience in attendance and world-wide as he tapped into the social and political will to once and for all ensure that all residents of our great country are truly freed from the shackles of slavery and racism.

Jim Valvano's Don't Give Up Speech (1,693 words)

Of course, not every great speech can lead to a revolution, war, or championing a universal cause like civil rights. Rather, some of the truly greatest speeches of our generation have been more obscure and less obvious.

The final speech examined in this paper comes from a basketball coach as he tried to break the shackles of a terrible disease.

In June of 1992, Legendary North Carolina State Basketball Coach Jim Valvano was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, metastatic adenocarcinoma. His diagnosis was not good and his colleagues and friends from ESPN knew that he didn't have much time left with us.

It's important to know that Jimmy V had developed an expansive network of friends and peers as a coach and as a broadcaster. After Valvano's successful coaching career, he had become a very popular commentator for ESPN basketball coverage. He and Dick Vitale helped to define the station's coverage of college basketball with their colorful and often over the top commentary.

So, as the executives of ESPN decided to hold their first ever ESPY awards in March of 1993, they knew that they wanted to honor Coach V as they knew he was on his last stages of the battle. So, they honored him with the inaugural Arthur Ashe Courage and Humanitarian Award.

On March 3, 1993, Coach Jim “Jimmy V” Valvano attended the first-ever ESPY Awards in New York City. With an audience of millions in person and on television, Jimmy V gave a one thousand six hundred and ninety three word speech that was chock full of raw emotion.

His look was strong, but his strength was weak. He was near the last days of his life. Yet, he came to the stage as a proud and courageous man. He came to the stage as a legend and a friend. He came to that stage with a purpose. He was going to beat cancer by never quitting.

In doing so, he created a mantra that will live on forever...”don’t give up, don’t ever give up” and launched the Jimmy V Cancer Foundation to raise money and awareness to defeat this terrible disease.

Like the greatest of politicians, Jimmy V understood the key attributes of an incredible speech and he was blessed with certain skills and characteristics that made his words irresistible. Jimmy V dripped with passion and authenticity.

His positive disposition and comfortable speaking style engaged the audience. And once he had the audience engaged, Jimmy V knew how to pull them in further and further to paint that picture and to engage those emotions.

As a nineteen year old, I remember this speech like it was yesterday. My dad and I watched a lot of sports together and we watched the ESPY speech together. We both cried. One month later on April 2, 1993, my dad died. Two months after the speech, Jimmy V. died. I cried for both.

Now, let’s consider some Jimmy V’s words as we continue to explore the power of his words...and I’ll try not to cry...

Jimmy V’s Don’t Give Up

“Thank you, thank you very much. Thank you. That’s the lowest I’ve ever seen Dick Vitale since the owner of the Detroit Pistons called him in and told him he should go into broadcasting.

I can’t tell you what an honor it is to even be mentioned in the same breath with Arthur Ashe. This is something I certainly will treasure forever. But, as it was said on the tape, and I also don’t have one of those things going with the cue cards, so I’m going to speak longer than anybody else has spoken tonight. That’s the way it goes. Time is very precious to me. I don’t know how much I have left, and I have some things that I would like to say. Hopefully, at the end, I will have said something that will be important to other people, too.

But, I can't help it. Now I'm fighting cancer, everybody knows that. People ask me all the time about how you go through your life and how's your day, and nothing is changed for me. As Dick said, I'm a very emotional and passionate man. I can't help it. That's being the son of Rocco and Angelina Valvano. It comes with the territory. We hug, we kiss, we love.

When people say to me how do you get through life or each day, it's the same thing. To me, there are three things we all should do every day. We should do this every day of our lives. Number one is laugh. You should laugh every day. Number two is think. You should spend some time in thought. Number three is you should have your emotions moved to tears, could be happiness or joy. But think about it. If you laugh, you think and you cry, that's a full day. That's a heck of a day. You do that seven days a week, you're going to have something special.

I rode on the plane up today with Mike Krzyzewski, my good friend and wonderful coach. People don't realize he's ten times a better person than he is a coach, and we know he's a great coach. He's meant a lot to me in these last five or six months with my battle. But when I look at Mike, I think, we competed against each other as players. I coached against him for 15 years, and I always have to think about what's important in life to me are these three things. Where you started, where you are and where you're going to be. Those are the three things that I try to do every day. When I think about getting up and giving a speech, I can't help it. I have to remember the first speech I ever gave.

I was coaching at Rutgers University, that was my first job, oh that's wonderful (reaction to applause), and I was the freshman coach. That's when freshmen played on freshman teams, and I was so fired up about my first job. I see Lou Holtz here. Coach Holtz, who doesn't like the very first job you had? The very first time you stood in the locker room to give a pep talk. That's a special place, the locker room, for a coach to give a talk. So my idol as a coach was Vince Lombardi, and I read this book called *Commitment To Excellence* by Vince Lombardi. And in the book, Lombardi talked about the first time he spoke before his Green Bay Packers team in the locker room, and they were perennial losers. I'm reading this and Lombardi said he was thinking should it be a long talk, or a short talk? But he wanted it to be emotional, so it would be brief.

So here's what I did. Normally you get in the locker room, I don't know, 25 minutes, a half hour before the team takes the field. You do your little x and o's, and then you give the great Knute Rockne talk. We all do. Speech number 84. You pull them right out, you get ready. You get your squad ready. Well, this is the first one I ever gave, and I read this thing.

Lombardi, what he said was he didn't go in, he waited. His team wondering, where is he? Where is this great coach? He's not there. Ten minutes, he's still not there. Three minutes before they could take the field, Lombardi comes in, bangs the door open, and I think you all remember what great presence he had, great presence. He walked in, and he walked back and forth, like this, just walked, staring at the players. He said, "All eyes on me."

I'm reading this in this book. I'm getting this picture of Lombardi before his first game, and he said, "Gentlemen, we will be successful this year, if you can focus on three things, and three

things only. Your family, your religion and the Green Bay Packers.” They knocked the walls down, and the rest was history.

I said, that’s beautiful. I’m going to do that. Your family, your religion and Rutgers basketball. That’s it. I had it. Listen, I’m 21 years old. The kids I’m coaching are 19, and I’m going to be the greatest coach in the world, the next Lombardi. I’m practicing outside of the locker room, and the managers tell me you got to go in. Not yet, not yet, family, religion, Rutgers Basketball. All eyes on me. I got it, I got it. Then finally he said, three minutes, I said fine. True story. I go to knock the doors open just like Lombardi. Boom! They don’t open. I almost broke my arm. Now I was down, the players were looking. Help the coach out, help him out. Now I did like Lombardi, I walked back and forth, and I was going like that with my arm getting the feeling back in it. Finally I said, “Gentlemen, all eyes on me.” These kids wanted to play, they’re 19. “Let’s go,” I said. “Gentlemen, we’ll be successful this year if you can focus on three things, and three things only. Your family, your religion and the Green Bay Packers,” I told them. I did that. I remember that. I remember where I came from.

It’s so important to know where you are. I know where I am right now. How do you go from where you are to where you want to be? I think you have to have an enthusiasm for life. You have to have a dream, a goal. You have to be willing to work for it.

I talked about my family; my family’s so important. People think I have courage. The courage in my family are my wife Pam, my three daughters, here, Nicole, Jamie, LeeAnn, my mom, who’s right here too. That screen is flashing up there 30 seconds like I care about that screen right now, huh? I got tumors all over my body. I’m worried about some guy in the back going 30 seconds? You got a lot, hey va fa napoli, buddy. You got a lot.

I just got one last thing; I urge all of you, all of you, to enjoy your life, the precious moments you have. To spend each day with some laughter and some thought, to get your emotions going. To be enthusiastic every day, and as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Nothing great could be accomplished without enthusiasm,” to keep your dreams alive in spite of problems whatever you have. The ability to be able to work hard for your dreams to come true, to become a reality.

Now I look at where I am now, and I know what I want to do. What I would like to be able to do is spend whatever time I have left and to give, and maybe, some hope to others. Arthur Ashe Foundation is a wonderful thing, and AIDS, the amount of money pouring in for AIDS is not enough, but is significant. But if I told you it’s ten times the amount that goes in for cancer research. I also told you that 500,000 people will die this year of cancer. I also tell you that one in every four will be afflicted with this disease, and yet somehow, we seem to have put it in a little bit of the background. I want to bring it back on the front table.

We need your help. I need your help. We need money for research. It may not save my life. It may save my children’s lives. It may save someone you love. And ESPN has been so kind to support me in this endeavor and allow me to announce tonight, that with ESPN’s support, which means what? Their money and their dollars and they’re helping me – we are starting The

Jimmy V Foundation for Cancer Research. And its motto is “Don’t give up . . . Don’t ever give up.”

That’s what I’m going to try to do every minute that I have left. I will thank God for the day and the moment I have. If you see me, smile and give me a hug. That’s important to me too. But try if you can to support, whether it’s AIDS or the cancer foundation, so that someone else might survive, might prosper and might actually be cured of this dreaded disease. I can’t thank ESPN enough for allowing this to happen. I’m going to work as hard as I can for cancer research and hopefully, maybe, we’ll have some cures and some breakthroughs. I’d like to think, I’m going to fight my brains out to be back here again next year for the Arthur Ashe recipient. I want to give it next year!

I know, I gotta go, I gotta go; and I got one last thing, and I said it before, and I want to say it again. Cancer can take away all my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart and it cannot touch my soul. And those three things are going to carry on forever.”

And so, Coach Jim Valvano left us these amazing words and a legacy of impact through the Jimmy V Foundation. How powerful were his words? Two years ago over Spring Break, my family traveled to Minnesota to visit relatives. On the way back, we stopped overnight in the Wisconsin Dells area. This is a great little resort town in the middle of Wisconsin.

While there, we watched the ESPN 30 in 30 special on Jimmy V. We talked about the show afterwards and how Jimmy V’s speech had meant so much to me because of his passion and because of the context of my own dad’s death. We went to bed that night and I woke up the next day like any other.

As we started traveling again that day, I recognized something special on Lily’s cell phone. She had changed her wallpaper to a picture of Jimmy V with the quote, “don’t give up...don’t ever give up.”

That’s one more life inspired by the power of words.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

In conclusion, the power of words, especially spoken, is undeniable. When woven correctly, words create a tapestry of emotions that inspires the imagination and action. From the best novels to the ten sentence speeches, like the Gettysburg Address, words are unmistakably, incredibly powerful.

At least, my experience writing this paper has certainly reminded me of that power. And, like with many experiences, I learned a few unexpected things as I sought to prove the power of words.

For instance, I learned that Martin Luther King added the “I have a dream phrase” when he was prompted by a shout from the crowd to “Tell em about the dream Martin!” That voice was of Mahalia Jackson. This improvisation of this speech defined an American generation. In 1999, a

poll of scholars of public address voted MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech as the best of the 20th century.

I learned that there are five manuscripts of the Gettysburg Address and scholars disagree on which is the original. Of these versions, the Bliss version, written well after the speech as a favor for a friend, is viewed by many as the standard text. Its text differs, however, from the written versions prepared by Lincoln before and after his speech. It is the only version to which Lincoln affixed his signature, and the last he is known to have written.

I also learned the history of the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" varies. Its modern use attributed to an advertising executive's strategy to help sell advertisements by enhancing the value of using pictures to sell products.

I learned that Jimmy V's message still moves me to tears and that his raw emotion transcended the conventional norms of a great speech. His words, dripping with a mixture of despair and determination, touched the soul of those who heard them live. Some twenty-two years later, the Jimmy V Foundation has raised over \$130 million to fight cancer.

...Don't give up, Don't ever give up...