Loud and Clear:
Maximizing Your Credibility And Influence In the World of Ideas

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Who narrates the world?
The Problem

Most of the voices we hear come from an extremely narrow slice of society.
What is the cost to society if so many voices and minds are missing?
The Opportunity

What if we invested in our missing brain power?
Starting Point: Women

Television
Pundits on political talk shows

Wikipedia
Contributors

Hollywood
Writers, producers, directors

Opinion Writers
Top ten print and online outlets

Congress

Corporate Boards

Women’s overall share of voice: 15%
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Women’s overall share of voice: 15%
Why so few women?  
(an age-old question)

"There are issues of biological aptitude" that can explain why women may have been underrepresented "in tenured positions in science and engineering."  
~Larry Summers, then President of Harvard University, at a Harvard conference

"I went to the editorial page editor, to try to get out of the column. I was a bundle of frayed nerves. Men enjoy verbal dueling. As a woman, I wanted to be liked, not attacked."
~Maureen Dowd  
New York Times column

"When a newspaper goes out looking for opinions on Iraq and only asks men; when it goes three days in a row and runs 24 men and only one woman - that is a problem."
~Susan Estrich  
Syndicated column
But what if the solution were simpler?

*The Washington Post* tracked submissions for five months.

Submissions:
- Men: 90%
- Women: 10%

Bylines:
- Men: 88%
- Women: 12%

→ Women don’t submit.
Why does this matter?

→ This is how thought leadership begins.
How thought leaders rise:

Ideas
- Op-ed & other “front door” idea forums
- Expert Citations

Credibility
- Social Media (viral sharing)
- Blog mentions

Exposure
- Radio/TV appearances
- Book Deals
- Speaking Opportunities

Influence
- Funding
- Fellowships
- Policy Consulting Invitations
- Leadership Positions

→ Ability to change the world
Ex: Katie Orenstein

Because the stories we tell determine what we think about what happens, which determines what happens next.
Ex: Michele Weldon

Because true stories have power and magic.
FIVE CORE QUESTIONS
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1. What is the source of credibility and how do you establish it?
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2. How do you build an evidence-based, value-driven argument?
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2. How do you build an evidence-based, value-driven argument?

3. What is the difference between being “right” and being effective?

4. What is the bigger picture – and how do you and your ideas fit into it?
FIVE CORE QUESTIONS

1. What is the source of credibility and how do you establish

2. How do you build an evidence-based, value-driven argument (as opposed to rhetoric)?

3. What is the difference between being “right” and being effective?

4. What is the bigger picture – and how do you and your ideas fit into it?

5. Do you understand your knowledge and experience in terms of its value to others?
Think Big

- Christa – can you add any graphics that suggest bigness? The universe? A page from *Horton hears a Who?*

- We will use this graphic while Joe talks about thinking big.
A live experiment in PEAK CREDIBILITY
Hello my name is:_____________

I’m an expert in: ___________

Because:

____________________________
We want everyone to try this sentence on.

But first…

What’s an “expert”?”
Potential credentials: PhD, book, title, fancy affiliation, experience, citations...

Or...
Our definition:

**Expert:** You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.
Tips:

1. Be specific

2. Choose anything you want – personal or professional

3. One thing – not everything
Hello my name is: ________________

I’m an expert in: ________________

Because: ________________________
What did we learn?

- Shiny baubles
- Quantify
- Specify
- Personal experience
- Matter of fact tone
- Jargon v. metaphor
- Coherence
- Evidence v. passion
What’s so vexing about being an expert?
What if...
What if…

You believed you knew the cure for cancer?
Maximum influence driven by maximum awareness of your value to others
And by the way:

How do you feel about the term “expert”?
Our definition:

**Expert:** You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.
Our definition:

**Resource:** You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.
Public Voices Fellowships

http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/faculty/teaching/publicvoices.html

vimeo.com/52204970
change the world’s conversation!

• Write an op-ed
  Whatever your version of that is

• Think of women you know who should have a bigger voice – and tell them so.

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