

Speaking Truth to and with Power: Effective Communication for Leaders & Teams
Educating, Engaging, Empowering



Speaking Truth to and with Power for Leaders and Teams starts with the performance of poetry and storytelling that leads audiences through a process of considering their own sense of self, community, and agency. As we learn to express ourselves more clearly, we also learn to listen more actively and compassionately to our fellow community members.

This interactive workshop will be led by Dr. Sonny Kelly, an expert in interpersonal communication. Participants will engage the subject of forging diverse personal connections in innovative and practical ways. Using storytelling, poetry, and examples from participants' own experiences, Dr. Kelly will lead them through a process of diagnosing and developing positive and confirming communication environments versus negative and disconfirming communication environments. Participants will learn clear tactics on effective ways to create and maintain positive and confirming communication environments while speaking truth to power ("coaching up") and speaking truth with power ("coaching down" and "coaching laterally"). Finally, participants will garner some crucial skills that will help them to navigate and positively impact existing negative and disconfirming communication environments. All of this hinges upon the practice of taking on a *dual perspective* – putting ourselves in others' shoes just long enough to understand the world through their eyes (Wood, 2020). This workshop can be conducted face to face or virtually.

Format:

This workshop can be conducted virtually or face-to-face. Dr. Kelly will use a PowerPoint slideshow, dialogue with participants, and a large notepad (chat box when virtual) to conduct this workshop. The workshop duration can be 60 to 120 minutes.

The Speaking Truth to & with Power Workshop has the following objectives:

- Participants will understand the definition and elements of a confirming communication environment, where all participants feel heard, respected, and empowered to engage in productive cooperation and conflict.
- Participants will understand the elements of a disconfirming communication environment, where participants feel shut out, disrespected, and disempowered.
- Participants will learn and practice tactics for building and maintaining positive confirming communication environments through cooperation and conflict.
- Participants will learn effective practices of coaching up (to superiors), coaching laterally (to peers), and coaching down (to their troops or employees) in confirming and persuasive ways.

Legacy Heirs Productions Inc has conducted performances, lectures, and workshops for hundreds of satisfied clients like: GlaxoSmithKline, QIAGEN, The Association of Community Health Workers, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, HMA Community Strategies, RTI, Sentara Health, The USO, The Junior League, Cumberland County Arts Council, Duke University, Syracuse University, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Greensboro, East Carolina University, Fayetteville State University, Georgia Tech University, St. Andrews University, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Sandhills Community College, Durham Technical Community College, The Levin Jewish Community Center, Cumberland County Schools, as well as numerous churches, community organizations, and K-12 schools across the nation.

Why a Performance-Based Workshop?

Dialogic Performance practitioner Augusto Boal (1995) privileges performance spaces as “*spaces of liberty* where people can free their memories, emotions, imaginations, thinking of their past, in the present, and where they can invent their future instead of waiting for it” (p. 5). From the beginning, Dr. Kelly’s goal has been to actualize Augusto Boal’s belief that performance can create spaces for positive collective growth and change (Boal, 1979).

The Power of Dialogue

My use of the term dialogue is also based upon David Bohm’s (1994) definition of dialogue as an open, empathetic, collective, coherent, iterative, and reflexive sharing of unique perspectives, ideas, and ideals between participants that comprises a “*stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us” (p. 7). The kind of dialogue that *The Talk* pursues is what Lisa Schirch and David Campt (2007) conceptualize in their work on “dialogue for difficult subjects” as an open and continuous mutual learning process that “aims to build relationships between people as they address a common concern” (p. 6). It is through the episteme of critical dialogic performance and performance-making that I seek to facilitate intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogue that can reframe and reclaim a positive, dignified, and agential sense of self for, and with diverse community members.

About Dr. Sonny Kelly (CEO & Lead Teacher/Learner)

Dr. Sonny Kelly is a professional performer, storyteller, motivator, speaker, veteran, and scholar. Currently a full time professor of Communication at Fayetteville Technical Community College, Dr. Kelly holds a PhD in Communication from UNC Chapel Hill. He is a graduate of St. Mary’s University (MA, Communication Studies, ’08) and Stanford University (BA, International Relations, ’98). Dr. Kelly has been a professional actor on stage and television for over 25 years. He has served our nation as a U.S. Air Force officer, and his community as a non-profit organization program director, a youth worker and church minister. He volunteers as an Artist in Residence with Fayetteville Urban Ministry’s Find-A-Friend youth program in Fayetteville, NC and Boomerang Youth, Inc’s alternative to suspension program in Chapel Hill, NC. **To learn more, please visit www.legacyheirsproductions.com or contact Sonny Kelly at (210)793-5241.**

References

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- Boal, Augusto (1995). *The rainbow of desire*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (1990). *On dialogue*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schirch, L. & Campt, D. (2007). *The little book of dialogue for difficult subjects: A practical, hands on guide*. New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing.
- Wood, J.T. (2020). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters*. Cengage Learning, Inc.