

June-July; August-September 1960
10, Steele's Road, London, N.W. 3

My dear Friends,

For the first time in all these years I have forgotten to write the June-July letter in time! I think this was because ever since I arrived in England there have been so many things to think of and to arrange. So, as it is now June 16th, I think I had better write two letters in one.

I arrived in London by air from S. Africa on May 8th. I left India on March 11th. So I spent nearly two months in S. Africa. I was very glad to be able to do that as I wanted to see everyone again and to say goodbye to a country which has been my home for over twenty years. I never thought, when I left it three years ago, that it would be so long before I returned. India and America were not in my mind then. But I am so glad that I could do those tours. Many people talk as if I had now "retired". I shall never retire, and I feel just as fit as ever. I was able whilst in S. Africa to see almost every Lodge again, even Nairobi in Kenya where I stayed with my very good friend, Mr. Patel. We did five meetings in three days whilst I was there, which perhaps is a record. Then I flew to Rhodesia, where I thought I would only see the Salisbury members, but the Bulawayo members asked me to come, and I found I could alter my route to take them in. And there we had a perfectly wonderful meeting. They only had a day or so to advertise it, but the room was crowded out, and the enthusiastic audience would not stop cheering. I was talking about "How We Create Our Destinies."

There is one thing I am always certain about. Everybody in the world wants the Ageless Wisdom, and would welcome it, if we could find out how to present it to them in simple words relating it always to everyday human problems. When I stayed with Mrs. Marjorie Myers, in Cincinnati, Ohio, she gave me a splendid little article she had written about speaking over the radio (she is a professional radio woman as well as a Theosophist) which so echoes what I myself have found out that I will quote some of it to you all now. It not only applies to radio speaking but also to any lecturing to the public.

"Radio is a means of speaking to large numbers of people at one time. But to be effective you must catch their attention so that they will listen, and you must make your meaning so clear that they will understand what you are talking about. In order to be listened to, you must first get your listener's attention; in order to keep his attention you must interest him; in order to interest him you must make yourself understood.

"We have information to give which we think is important, and we want all kinds of listeners, not just those interested in metaphysical subjects. Listeners are not necessarily scholars. To get their attention we must use words they can understand, simple, expressive, concrete words. We must talk in words that paint pictures to get attention. Deal with subjects which are a part of all personal experience. Remember you must reach not only the mind of your listener but also his feelings. Touch upon life's ambitions, frustrations, sorrows, good and bad fortune. One expert has said that sentences should be short and contain a large amount of human interest. Build word pictures that are clear and concise. Remember that the listener is always one step behind the speaker. The speaker conveys his word picture, and the listener must build up his own mental picture from these words. If the ideas presented are not clear and concise, the listener stops listening to think, and therefore does not grasp the full idea presented. There should be precise references and occasional repetitions so that the listener does not lose the train of thought.

Mr. Sweet Thing!
Love -
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"Make your thought picture clear. When you mention something abstract, lead up to it in terms of what is known. When Jesus spoke and taught He spoke in terms people could understand. He spoke the profoundest truths in the simplest words, telling the unknown in terms of the known, the familiar, the felt.

"Besides these three A B C's -- Attention, Interest and Clarity, there are two other suggestions worth considering. Try to think of yourself as a listener instead of a speaker. Imagine that you know nothing or little of Theosophy. Then say, 'Is that interesting? Does it answer some problem, some need?' Say what will appeal to the listener.

"And last, but certainly not least, to lecture successfully there must be an intimate, personal relationship between speaker and listener. This does not mean that the speaker must inject his own personality into his speech. Nor does it mean cheapness nor lack of dignity, but it does impose upon the speaker the necessity for seeing and feeling himself in the personal relationship. Talk to your listeners. Talk in a conversational style. For a written article you rightfully use a more formal style, but for a lecture, speak as you talk. Use more personal pronouns -- your life, your soul, instead of man's life, the soul. Instead of 'How can Theosophy solve the problems of humanity,' say 'How can Theosophy help you to meet your problems?' Establish contact with your listeners and they will give you their attention."

Now I hope Mrs. Myers, if she reads this, will forgive me for thus condensing her very valuable little article. Mr. Geoffrey Hodson told me that getting into rapport with an audience is technically called "audience-relationship." Some speakers have it, others not. It is the most valuable part of a speaker's equipment. I think it really means that the speaker feels that he is just an ordinary human being talking to other ordinary human beings and longing to tell them something that will help and cheer them.

A year or two ago, a boy who was very clairvoyant was listening to several speeches with me. What he said to me afterwards was very illuminating. "Oh! Miss Codd," he wailed to me, "Some of them don't get over, and do you know why? It is because they are thinking of what impression they are making instead of thinking of the people themselves." That was pretty wise for a boy of twenty, don't you think?

In July I shall be off for a Summer School in Denmark. I hope to meet there again not only some very kind Danes who were at Adyar with me, but also an American member who was there too with me, the one who gave King Leopold some Theosophical books and made him promise to be sure and read them.

We have just come to the end of the English Convention. All the new people talked instead of the old ones. I sometimes think that when we have a Convention without a Star, it turns out very happily. We all get chummy and appreciate each other's sometimes rather "beginnerish" efforts.

This is to do duty for four months. Perhaps my faithful Secretaries will not mind! (I am always immensely grateful to them!) So you will not hear from me again until next October.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

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