

*"Sweating Bullets will reinvent the way you approach  
high-stakes communication."*

- Jason Jennings,

Business Thought Leader and NY Times Bestselling Author

# SWEATING BULLETS

**A Story about Overcoming  
the Fear of Public Speaking**

# DALE DIXON

# PRAISE FOR SWEATING BULLETS

"Congratulations on this excellent book to help business people with speaking to audiences. The dialogue format of telling a story to disarm the reader who can benefit from this guidance is brilliant. I find that effective communication skills rank as the top priority for leaders of organizations. Great communicators can be great leaders. Poor communicators will run into a wall they cannot overcome without help. Your book provides that help."

**Dennis L. Johnson, President & Chief Executive Officer,  
United Heritage Mutual Holding Company, United Heritage  
Financial Group, United Heritage Life Insurance Company**

"Dale has been instrumental in working with our communications team and executive leadership team in sharpening our messaging and presentation skills. Sweating Bullets is an engaging, quick read that puts Dale's expertise in your hands with an action packed plan that includes effective practical tips to overcome anxiety and deliver a meaningful message."

**Virginia Aulin, VP, Human Resources, Communications and  
Corporate Affairs, Packaging Corporation of America**

"In *Sweating Bullets*, Dale shares a clear, actionable pathway to significantly improving your presenting skills. By combining practical ideas with a sharp focus on the purity of purpose, Dale opens up several gems for anyone to increase the impact of their presentations."

**Ron Price, Price-Associates and author of  
*Treasure Inside and The Complete Leader***

"As Chloe did for Mack, Dale has given us a wonderful gift in the form of this story, laying out lessons learned and giving us the tools we need to hone our presentation and communication skills."

**Lynn McConnell, Director, Human Resources, Hawley Troxell**

"I've known Dale Dixon for years and have heard him present numerous times. He is always able to capture the attention of his audience and make the experience memorable. Beginner or seasoned veteran, you'll be inspired and have new tools to engage your audiences. Dale offers invaluable lessons on being a powerful presenter and communicator. As a small business owner and content expert who regularly speaks to many audiences, I highly recommend and encourage you read this for your own well-being!"

**Rhea Allen, President/CEO Peppershock Media and  
Integrative Marketing Consultant**

"At the outset, I could not imagine that this book would actually have relevance for me. I know I "present" every day, one way or the other, but the initial reaction to the word "presentation" pushed me into the camp of thinking this book was about someone else. I'm not a presenter. The biggest surprise was to find that this was about me, indeed."

**Dr. Ken Swaim, Swaim Chiropractic**

"The story was engaging and informative. It definitely got the point across that even those who do not have confidence in their presenting skills can become impactful presenters with guidance and

practice, and those who are confident presenters always have much more to learn and improve on."

**Donna Price Shines, Executive Director/CEO,  
The Mentoring Network, Inc.**

"I was engaged, the lessons were clear, and it was an easy read. It is refreshing to see an author use clear language. Much more effective than a dry textbook."

**Dan Whiting, Federal Strategist, ADG Creative**

"It is fabulous. I found myself using the lessons as I worked to prepare a training for our department. It is very easy to follow; the personal story makes it more engaging and relatable. Great lessons, clear points."

**Brenda Maynard Walters, Senior Immigration Administrator**

"Dale provides an excellent book that many public speakers can relate to. His years of experience benefit the reader with genuine opportunities to see themselves in the examples given. I recommend *Sweating Bullets* for anyone wanting to improve their presentation skills."

**LeRoy Forsman, Chief of Police (Retired),  
Author of *Live Like a Leader 24/7***



The background of the cover features a series of concentric, light gray circles centered behind the title. A thin, vertical yellow line runs down the left side of the cover. The title 'SWEATING BULLETS' is rendered in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

# **SWEATING BULLETS**

**A Story About Overcoming  
the Fear of Public Speaking**

**DALE DIXON**

*Sweating Bullets: A Story About Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking*

By Dale Dixon

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To my best friend, confidant, cheerleader, and anchor, my wife.

Tonia, I love you more than words can describe.





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# INTRODUCTION

I was sitting at the anchor desk of a local TV station. I remember it vividly. I had an epiphany. After several years of anchoring the news and reporting more stories than I could remember, it hit me: “All I have to do is be me.”

Looking back on the moment, it seems so simple. As with so many simple things in life, the lesson is profound. Each evening, before each newscast, I would get myself worked up, nervous, and anxious. Why? I was speaking in front of a crowd of people. Yes, those people were in living rooms, and we were connected via video cameras, broadcast equipment, a transmitter, and televisions, but it was Communication 101. I was telling a story and it didn’t matter if it was one, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand people watching. I had to perform.

At the heart of the epiphany was the realization that I have what it takes. If I can talk to one person, face-to-face; I can talk to one hundred thousand. Effectively communicating with one person is just as important as effectively communicating with one hundred thousand.

## SWEATING BULLETS

I'm here to tell you, "You have what it takes." Think about your life. Each day, you are in contact with countless people. You interact with a few face to face, having in-depth conversations. Some interactions will be once-in-a-lifetime opportunities—a job interview or big sales presentation. Others will be the quickly forgotten chance meeting—the chatty clerk at an out-of-town grocery store during a trip or a conversation with a stranger on the ski chairlift.

Then, there's the mundane. It shouldn't be mundane, but human nature dictates that repetition becomes routine and loses its luster. Conversations with your spouse, family, friends, coworkers, and colleagues rarely receive a second thought. The interaction is natural. You're simply communicating.

In the midst of all of these interactions is the peripheral: people within earshot who watch your actions and listen to your words.

It might be a paradigm-shifting thought, but your life really is a presentation. You are constantly communicating a message. Most of the time, you don't give it a second thought.

In light of your day-to-day presenting, why is it that giving a formal presentation causes so much anxiety? Yes, the stakes are higher, but you have so much practice presenting. What if you could find confidence in the amount of presentation practice you possess?

So often, people facing the high-stakes presentation lose sight of the communication skill they possess. That's why I wrote *Sweating Bullets* as a story. Actually, the following pages contain a fable. I thought it important to use the structure of a story to convey powerful lessons to help you turn the daily practice of communication into the confidence to effectively present a high-stakes message.

## INTRODUCTION

Those I've helped with their presentation skills didn't immediately realize their inherent expertise in communication. Effectively communicating a message is the same process, whether it's with a friend, family member, or a stranger at the grocery store. It could involve two people on a sales call, ten people in a boardroom, or a hundred people in an audience at a convention hall. The stakes may be much higher for the larger audience, but they are people, nonetheless, and the art of sharing information remains the same.

Join me on a journey of mixing historical fact with fiction as I share some real-life experiences through fictionalized characters in an attempt to help you become a better presenter.

## THE POWER OF A STORY

Remember hearing a story that stirred an emotion? Do your favorite songs remind you of a joyful (or painful) time in your life? Start paying attention to your surroundings, and you'll see and hear so many stories. Your favorite song probably tells a story. The advertisement that catches your attention probably tells a story. People with whom you enjoy interacting probably have a good story to tell.

Stories contain the most effective means to convey a message. We experienced the power of stories as children. Why is it, then, that we migrate away from stories in high school and college, attempting to learn through lecture, statistics, facts, and figures? Sure, there's a place for those things. But what is most memorable? The story.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS STORY

Mack Thompson is an executive plagued with self-doubt about his ability to speak in front of a crowd of people. His level of discomfort

## SWEATING BULLETS

in front of an audience makes me squirm, and perhaps it will do the same to you.

Mack has a chance meeting with a skilled presenter, Chloe Parker. He takes the bold step of asking Chloe to teach him a thing or two about presenting. Each chapter will give you a glimpse at how Mack and Chloe work through the typical stumbling blocks we all experience as communicators.

At the end of each chapter, you'll see a **Bullet Points** section. Here, you will receive additional resources to seek out and dive a little deeper into specific, presentation-related issues.

Throughout the book are the **Seven Laws of Presenting**. Each is a bite-sized nugget to keep you focused on what really matters as you work to improve your communication skills.

My sincere desire is that Mack's story will inspire you to consider the communication skill and talent within you. They just need a little coaxing and coaching to be released.