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### Words Can Command

Our motivation is similar to gas in our car tank, when it isn't fueled by something it runs out and when it runs out you can't move. Although you don't literally stop moving, think about it. Without a reason or a motive, can you really do anything? you can't. For instance, Imagine there's a meal you love eating. The desire to eat and experience that meal again is the motivation that makes you get up to go make it again in your kitchen. Our motivation is similar to that meal we love. It can come from any internal and external factors of our lives but regardless of where it comes from it drives us to achieve the things we want and need.

In relation to this idea of motivation, let's take a look at the world of motivational speaking. Motivational speaking is a form of public or private speaking that is tailored by the speaker to encourage, inspire, or uplift the listener. This is usually done by sharing life stories and experiences as background for their speech with the purpose of pushing people to be better than they were or are. For example, by watching Denzel Washington's speech at the University of Pennsylvania we can see the magic of motivational speaking at work (Washington 00:07:11-00:08:02).

In June of 2016 Denzel Washington was asked to give a speech at the University of Pennsylvania for the 2016 graduates. That was also where his son was attending college. His audience was full of people from different races and backgrounds but they all were gathered for one thing and that was to celebrate that momentous graduation day occasion. His purpose was to push those young graduates and inspire their young minds to "fall forward" into their dreams. Instead of always making sure they have something to fall back on as he puts it "I'm sure people that told you to make sure you have something to fall back on" but he "never understood that concept having something to fall back" so he pushes his young listeners to "fall forward" into their dreams (Washington 00:07:11- 00:08:02) .

Denzel is a very successful movie actor, producer, director, and a college graduate that is why his words are so inspiring. Despite the challenges he had to overcome he still made his dreams come true. This adds a big layer of pathos and ethos that makes the listeners want to listen to his speech. In his address Denzel quotes Nelson Mandela by saying "Nelson Mandela said there is no passion to be found playing small and settling for a life that's less than the one you're capable of living" he says this to dare his listeners to dream big and to live a life they are capable of living (Washington 00:07:11- 00:08:02). The best part of it all is that he is credible to speak on this topic. He knows what it feels like to be in listeners' shoes. That is why his

message of “fall forward” makes so much sense, he saw how falling forward and going all in on his dreams panned out (Washington 00:07:11- 00:08:02). Also considering the time and place his statements were made it is very effective in motivating and inspiring not only the graduates but even me as the writer who viewed that speech from a third party source like youtube. The history of motivational speaking can be dated all the way back to the 12th century. Where philosophers and profound thinkers like Socrates and Aristotle shared their insight on life inspiring many of that time. In our modern context one of the first motivational books published was "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie. He was very well known for his motivational speaking, publishing the book "How to Win Friends and Influence People" (Biography.com Editors).

After graduating in 1908, from a sales position to a brief stint in acting, followed by military service during World War I. Carnegie had a realization about public speaking that changed the path of his life. He utilized his success as a salesman and began teaching public speaking (Biography.com Editors). Carnegie is an example of how our words combined with our words combined with our motivation can change or dictate our lives.

Our words are like matches, they can ignite flames of motivation and inspiration in the minds of the people that hear them. Speakers like Denzel Washington use a combination of articulate words and their life experiences to motivate their listeners to “fall forward” into their dreams and pursue them with unwavering determination (Washington 00:07:11- 00:08:02). Denzel's speech at the University of Pennsylvania shows us how personal accomplishments combined with credibility and relevance can profoundly impact a listener to actually listen. His words have the ability to urge the listener to put his message of "fall forward" into action (Washington 00:07:11- 00:08:02).

### Work Cited

Denzel, Washington. "University of Pennsylvania." *Youtube*, uploaded by Vidbi, 14 June 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEFbfg9dek>. Accessed 21 February 2024.

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