



ELEVATOR SPEECH - CHOOSING YOUR WORDS WISELY TO PROMOTE VOCATIONS

by Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS

Have you ever asked someone a simple question and received a lengthy response? Did you pay attention to the response, or did you wander off to another place and time after about the fourth word? Some topics grab our attention and other things simply do not. What is it that makes us pay attention?

Stories usually captivate the audience. I think that is why Jesus used parables. He knew he could get people's attention as well as get his point across. Francis, of course, preferred actions over words. But we know that words are necessary, and so we should choose them wisely.

How good are you at telling stories? The goal, of course, is to captivate the audience more than put the people to sleep. One way to do that is to develop an "Elevator Speech." The speech should last about the time of a typical elevator ride (30 seconds to 1 minute). (Note: If you live or work in a high-rise, then you'll have more time.)

The story about your journey to the OFS is an important one to share. However, stream of consciousness sharing may not be effective at capturing the other person's attention. So I encourage you to develop your personal elevator speech. You can borrow our slogan—"Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel" of course, but sharing details about your personal journey is a must. Recall how God led you to the Order or how an OFS touched your life. Practice it so it flows off the tip of your tongue. Again, the point isn't the length—but the choice of words.

The Spring 2016 Vocations article included a list of several questions to consider as a way to create your elevator speech/testimonial. More than 60 people allowed me to videotape their testimonials during the Q Congress in St. Louis, Mo. and the Annual Chapter in Winter Park, Fla. Those

testimonials are now posted to the Secular Franciscan You Tube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SecularFranciscans>. Thanks to those who accepted my invitation to share.

With more than 12,000 OFS in the United States, there are at least 11,940 more who have not shared a testimonial with me. Please help me by sending your testimonials to be posted to that site. (Have someone record it using a smart phone and send to me.) This may be a good activity for a local fraternity gathering.

At the time of writing the article, I was a slacker too (i.e., my testimony is not posted). So I am planning to have mine posted before this edition is published. I encourage you to check out the You Tube Channel to see if I have followed through on my plan.

Whether or not you send me your testimonial, practice it with your family (biological and Franciscan) and test it out on some parishioners. Let me know how it goes for you. (OFSvocationscommittee@gmail.com)

In the meanwhile... keep praying the prayer for vocations. Thanks for all your efforts to bring the Gospel alive to everyone you encounter! Pax.

National Prayer for Vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order

O good and gracious God, God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love, as we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis, choosing daily to live the Gospel life, help us to help others hear your call.

Help us to help others recognize their vocation as a Secular Franciscan that You have already planted in their heart. Help us, so that together we all may work to bring the Gospel to life.

Amen!