RANDY HARVEY
CHAMPIONSHIP SPEECH BREAKDOWN

Speech Transcript:

When I was 7, we drove to my cousin's for dinner and to show off Fat Dad's new car, a 1960 Ford Fairlane. [ST] [PD]

I fell asleep in the backseat and my folks left me sleeping as they went on up to the house. When I woke up, I stumbled outta the car and headed for the porch. [PD] [SM]x2

Whoo-whoo-rrrr-roooooo. I was surrounded by a pack of black and tan hunting hounds. Whoo-whoo-rrrr-roooooo. My heart jumped and then so did I. First to the trunk, and then to the roof of his new car. [PD] [SM]

Mr. Contest Chair, Fellow Toastmasters and Guests. [R3]

I was frozen like a treed racoon. I was bawling and screaming. The hounds were circling and howling. [PD]

An ugly one-eyed dog clawed and scratched its way onto the trunk. Its yellow teeth snapping and foaming uhhhhhhhh. I was standing in water; it was mine. [H]x2 [PD]

His claws screeched and slipped on the glass when I heard, "Son!" And I dove at the voice to be caught in Fat Dad's arms. [PD] [SM]

Safety was a flannel shirt, (sniffffff) that smelled of cherry tobacco, and a thunderous bellow that scattered hounds like cottonseed on the wind. [R3] [PD] [SM]

The next morning Fat Dad was buffin' (spit) the scratches out of his new car. I said, "Fat Dad I'm sorry you had to rescue me." He scooped me up in his big arms, said "Son, in life, sometimes you're the catcher, sometimes you're the caught. When you love somebody, their trouble is your trouble." [PD] [SM]

Fat Dad was **my** Daddy. And that **loving** nickname "Fat Dad" has been handed down through four generations, to the men in **my** family. **[SM]**

When I was 16, Fat Dad bought **me** a 1963 Volkswagen Beetle. Wide tires, chrome wheels. **I** was drivin' it one sunny afternoon, listenin' to *Simon and Garfunkel* **on the 8-track**. "Cecilia, you're breakin' **my heart...**" **[ST] [PD] [SM]**

Humongous horsefly shot through the window in **my** mouth and down **my throat, Raaaa-huh-huuh-huh**. **[PD]**

It came **back up**, lodged in **my** right **nostril**. What would **you** do with a horsefly buzzin' in **your** nose takin' bites the **size of Texas**? **[Q] [PD]**

I steered with **my knees**, tried to fire that bug out of **my nose**. **[PD]**

The car shot to the left, then it catapulted back to **the right**, chopped down **Morrison's fence**, sailing across **their yard**, right at Mossberger's **fountain**, where **Mary Poppins stood** holding her umbrella, pouring water from a can. **[PD] [SM]x2**

I hit that fountain so hard **I launched it like Sputnik**. Mary Poppins **hovered briefly**. Then went down faster than a **spoonful of sugar**. **[PD] [SM]**

Well the Morrisons and the Mossbergers, **they were a bit excited**. **[SM]**

Not Fat Dad. He rode in like the cavalry. Made peace with the neighbors. **I** sat on a rock, **in shock**. **[PD] [SM]x2**

As Fat Dad put his arm around **me**, **I** burst into tears. "Shhhhhhh. **We can fix the fence. I'll buy another fountain. We can even replace that old car**. Those are just things. But I could never replace you. Besides, the town will be **talking about this for weeks!**" **[PD] [SM]**

The lesson? **Love**. **[Q]**

Now teenage boys, they don't always think about cars. Sometimes they think about, **girls**. Fat Dad overheard **me** and **my** buddies braggin' about our adventures with women. **[ST] [SM]x2**

Not bein' the shy type, **he joined right in**. Listened for a while and then like ice water thrown on **you** in a cold shower said, "Boys, real men **love** for a lifetime. Not for a moment." **[PD]**

Ruined the whole conversation! [SM]

But Fat Dad **loved** **my** Mama. When they walked in the garden or when they sat on the sofa, their hands always seemed to find each other. **[PD]** **[SM]**

And when Mama was sittin' watchin' TV, Fat Dad would come up behind her, **wrap his strong arms around her, rest his chin on her shoulder, kiss her on the cheek**. **[PD]**

"Eweeeee!" As a teenager **I** couldn't believe old people **carried on that way**. **[SM]**

But Fat Dad's **love** was more than romance. **When my Mama battled the cancer that eventually took her life**, Fat Dad like a good shepherd, caring for a wounded lamb, fed and bathed, read and sang to her. **[ST]** **[PD]** **[SM]**

And when **my** Mama's sunset fell and turned to starlight, Fat Dad held her close, whispered words of **love**, and faith, to calm her fear. **[PD]** **[SM]**

Fat Dad's **love** for **my** Mama was a gift to **my** wife and children, because watching him **I** learned to **love** them for a lifetime. **[CB]** **[SM]**

This year I had **my** first Father's Day without Fat Dad, and **I** miss him. But the lessons he taught **me** will last a lifetime. **[CB]** **[SM]x2**

When **you love**, sometimes **you're** the catcher, sometimes **you're** the caught. **[CB]**

When there's trouble, **love** rushes in, wraps its strong arms around **you**. Real men, well, they **love** for a lifetime. Not for a moment. **[CB]** **[SM]**

Fellow Toastmasters, the lesson is **love**. And **I'm** proud to tell **ya**, **my** children call **me Fat Dad**. **[CB]**

SPEECH STATS:

Word Count: 809

Speech Length: 7:27

Title: Lessons from Fat Dad

Click here to watch the speech.

COLOR KEY

- ## Humor [H] - x 28

  This includes only parts that received genuine laughter from the audience. Laughter varies in intensity.

  This speech averaged **3.76 LPMs** (Laughs Per Minute) and **28.89 WPL** (Words Per Laugh).

  First laugh came at **0:37** of the speech.

  This speech *almost* took the lead for the most humor in terms of LPM, just behind Darren LaCroix's winning speech from 2001 which was 3.81 LPM. However, Randy did have the most WPL at 28.89—Darren's WPL was slightly higher (*less* is better) at 32.37 WPL. Much of Randy's humor came during the action/commotion of his second story.

- ## Foundational Phrase [FP] - x 13

  Foundational Phrase for this speech: **"Love"**

  There were some notable phrases, but ultimately, the core message of this speech was packaged into a single word: Love

  I go into more detail about this in the *Observations* section that follows.

  Other notable and *related* phrases:

  - "*The lesson? Love." / "The lesson is love*."
  - "*Love for a lifetime, not for a moment*"
  - "*Sometimes you're the catcher, sometimes you're the caught*."
  - "*When you love somebody, their trouble is your trouble*."
  - "[love]*...wraps its strong arms around you*."

- ## "You"; "Your"; "We"; "Us"; "Our" - x 8

  I included these words that were directly aimed at the audience, dialogue excluded (character and internal). Talking *to* the audience will be more "you/your" focused. This could mean abstract ideas, "imagine this…" hypotheticals, concepts that describe how something works, etc. Those will naturally use more "you/your" words.

- ## "I" or "Me" or "My" or "Myself" - x 49

  The original reason for tracking this stat was the thought that it might be useful to compare with the amount of "You" focused words. Turns out, it is. Just not in the way I originally thought.

  The theory was, if this number was much greater than "You" focused words, it would show that the speaker was more "*me, me, me*" focused and not tailoring the message to the audience.

  While that is a possibility, what I've found thus far is that it tells more about the content of the speech. More specifically, it tells us that there are personal stories being told.

  **The total number counted does not include in-story character dialogue.

- ## "Ladies and Gentlemen" or "My Friends" [MF] - x 3

  The speaker used "*Fellow Toastmasters*" and *"Guests"* to address the audience.

- ## Physical Descriptions or VAKS [PD] - x 21

  Descriptive physical characteristics of people, things, and locations. The ones I included were any overt words that described the setting for where the speaker was at during the story, where the speaker wanted to take the audience, or descriptions of people in the scene.

  Describing complex processes may also be included since they are intended to make it easier for the audience to imagine.

  Physical in this case is what was heard, smelled, and what was seen. It also means that "*We were at my house*" is not enough—this requires specifics that are intended to paint a picture in the minds of the audience. I intentionally left out what was felt emotionally or metaphorically.

  In this speech he used this technique to the fullest which was one of this speech's unique traits. Each one of his stories provided me with a clear picture of the setting and what was going on. He also used the full spectrum of VAKS (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Smell) as well as his voice to give a memorable speech.

- ## Callbacks [CB] - x 5

  Humorous and other. It's common for speakers to derive humor from callbacks to *something* or *someone* from the speech journey. Foundational Phrases after the first one are essentially callbacks as well.

  The idea of a callback is to move on from "it" (the eventual callback) so the audience is no longer thinking about it, and then call it back later so it's an "A HA!" moment of familiarity.

For that reason, only *some* of the Foundational Phrases may be included, and some may not. Normally the Foundational Phrase (subsequent ones after the first) get counted in the Callback section, but in this speech, only the ones that had a recognizable phrase were included.

After analyzing the speech, I concluded that the Foundational Phrase was the word "Love," but it was more subliminal than overt. The reason is at times the word was seemingly used in passing and although it was probably deliberate by Randy, the audience didn't catch it as something familiar, or in other words, as a *callback*.

- ## Rule of Three [R3] - x 4

  The rule of three is all inclusive. Whether used for comedic effect or not.

  It's common to see the Rule of Three used all at once in a single sentence such as, "*He was tall, strong, and mean.*" Randy primarily used it when listing descriptive details as well as in-character dialogue.

- ## Questions [Q] - x 2

  Questions directly aimed at the audience (rhetorical or not).

  The original intent of the Questions category was to include only thoughtful questions— things that made the audience reflect on their lives. However, even benign or rhetorical questions aimed at the audience can help build a connection to the speaker, just as addressing the audience as "My Friends" or "Ladies and Gentlemen" does. Because of that, those types of questions were included as well.

- ## Time Transitions [TT] - x 4

  Transition words that indicated that there was a time change from the speaker's point of view. The idea is to show progression from one point in the speaker's life to another. So, if there are multiple time transitions within the same story, they may or may not be counted. These help to prepare the audience for a change in the story in order to prevent confusion.

- ## Stories [ST] - x 4

  This includes all stories told throughout the entire speech. Some stories may be slightly exaggerated, but the idea is that the speaker is telling the audience a story that happened, either in their life or somebody else's. This does not include metaphorical stories, intentionally exaggerated tales or things like "Imagine you are…"

  In this speech there were 4 separate stories.

- ### Stage Movement [SM] - x 26

  This section covers how many times the speaker moved to a different place on the stage during the speech. Minor movements for in-story character changes (for dialogue) or for small side steps for illustrating points or addressing different parts of the audience will not be counted. I'll also keep track of anything else that's notable about the speaker's stage movements**.**

***Initials were put at end of sentence if multiple Color Key elements were in the same sentence.*

Observations:

- **Confident Entrance and Exit**: Fast confident approach to shake the Contest Chair's hand before his speech began and then he confidently hustled and waved to the audience as he exited the stage.

  He also gave the Contest Chair the politician's handshake when he ended his speech. It's intended to show warmth and sincerity to the one you're shaking hands with, but I'd say it's more of a play to the audience than anything else. The audience sees the handshake on the big screen and thinks "Awe, what a nice fellow! I like him." Or *something* like that. Don't just take my word for it, though, the 2003, 2005, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017 champions did this as well.

- **Stepping Out of Stories**: He stepped out of his stories to make the light-hearted humorous moments. What I mean by this is that he'd be in the middle of telling a story and then he'd jump back to the present and speak directly to the audience, usually a comment about the scene he was describing. Here are a few examples from the speech:

  - After he was talking about how Fat Dad and Mama were in love, he stepped out of the story to say this: "*Eweeeee! As a teenager I couldn't believe old people carried on that way.*"

  - During the part where the horsefly was lodged in his nose he stopped to ask a question: "*What would you do with a horsefly buzzin' in your nose takin' bites the size of Texas?*"

  - After Fat Dad interrupted him and his friends talking about girls, he jumped out to say, "*Ruined the whole conversation!*"

- **Humor Technique**: His best humor came out of his stories, especially the parts when he stepped out of the stories as described above.

- **Storytelling**: The whole speech felt like we were in a constant state of "story." Even when he was "out" of a story, it felt seamless and interconnected to his series of stories. It was well done.

- **Props:** He used the chair as his prop, and it was used in a variety of ways. He stood on the chair while enacting the story about him jumping on the roof to get away from the dogs and when demonstrating how Fat Dad was buffin' the scratches out of the car. He used it as his driver's seat when driving the car and he used it to show how Fat Dad comforted him on the rock after the car crash. He also used it when telling about how Fat Dad and Mama would always find each other's hands and it was also the sofa where Mama sat.

- **Gestures:** He used a lot of physical gestures to help tell his stories and particularly the action portions. He didn't just tell the story, he showed us. Some examples were when he jumped on Fat Dad's new car to avoid the dogs, when he was driving his car using his knees and when he swerved back and forth, the Mary Poppins' statue, the use of Fat Dad's arms in scooping, wrapping, hugging, etc.

- **Facial Expressions:** He committed with his facial expressions as he acted out the stories. The frightened look when the dogs swarmed was a perfect example.

- **Vocal Variety**: His storytelling used contrast in volume and in excitement. It kept me guessing and hanging on for what would come next. His voice also changed depending on the emotion and it was effective at changing the tone of the speech. His calm, earnest, sincere tone when he portrayed Fat Dad, his voice of sadness when talking about his Mama, and his excited/action voice. He was one of the best storytellers I've ever listened to, and his voice helped tremendously.

  Another aspect of this was when he made sound effects. He made a lot of noises (*not* words) to put you in the moment. Things such as coughing, barking, gasping, spitting, etc.

- **Action:** He maximized the action. There were parts that you could argue were "over the top" but because he committed to them and they were in the midst of a story, they kept me engaged. I didn't stop to think during the speech, "Hey, that was a little too much theatrics for me." Heck no, it was just a lot of action, not actin'.

- **Word Choice:** For his stories and descriptions, he used a lot of vivid, descriptive words. Apart from that, his default way of talking was colloquial. He used a lot of *jumpin'* and *buffin'* and *listenin'* which made it feel more authentic to the characters.

- **Emotional Threshold**: Randy didn't bring the audience down too far emotionally. He didn't dwell or get to the specifics of either Mama dying or Fat Dad's passing. His Mama dying mainly focused on the love that Fat Dad gave to her rather than the sadness of her death. It also reinforced Fat Dad's calm and comforting demeanor. That's not to say that the speech didn't mess with the *heartstrings*, it's just that he managed them well. The 2014 Champion of Public Speaking, [Dananjaya Hettiarachchi](#), has a good [video](#) about not leaving the audience at a low point, and what Dwayne did in this speech was a good way of balancing the audience's emotions.

- **Gurus and Side Characters:**

  - **Gurus**: Fat Dad was the Guru of this speech.
  - **Side Characters**: Randy, his cousins, the pack of hounds, his friends, his neighbors the

Morrisons and the Mossbergers, Mama, Randy's wife, and his children were all side characters. Side characters are part of the stories but don't directly contribute to a learning moment. This isn't a problem, just an observation. Side characters help give depth to a story. Additional note about this speech: Although not physically present in the story, I could also argue that the band *Simon and Garfunkel* and Mary Poppins were side characters as well.

- o A Guru is someone or something in the speech that teaches the speaker (and ultimately the audience) something meaningful. As a speaker, you don't want to be the wise Guru. You want to be the dolt who learns from the guru(s), and that's who end up teaching the audience as well. **Tip:** Self-deprecation can be an important element in allowing the guru to shine.

- **Fat Dad**: I felt like I knew him, or at least knew the type of man he was. He was strong, a provider, he loved and protected his family, he was principled, generous, compassionate, he was patient, willing to work without complaining, a diplomat, and he had a sense of humor.

- **Symbolic**: He referenced Fat Dad's arms throughout the speech. I believe they served a purpose of being synonymous with Love, as well as of stability and safety. Here are the references from the speech:

  - "*And I dove at the voice to be caught in Fat Dad's arms.*"
  - "*He scooped me up in his big arms, said...*"
  - "*As Fat Dad put his arm around me, I burst into tears.*"
  - "*And when Mama was sittin' watchin' TV, Fat Dad would come up behind her, wrap his strong arms around her...*"
  - "*And when my Mama's sunset fell and turned to starlight, Fat Dad held her close...*"
  - "*When there's trouble, love rushes in, wraps its strong arms around you.*"

  Only one of those examples included the explicit message of love, but they were all an expression of it. This was a creative way to keep the core message alive and always within "arms" reach of its core message of love. Extremely well done.

- **Foundational Phrase:** He told us the lesson of the speech and that should have ended my search, but I just didn't want to listen. I always start out looking for *that* creative and repetitive phrase; the one that leaves no doubt as to what the speaker wanted the message to be. And in this speech, there were a few phrases he used more than once. He dangled them in front of my nose like carrots.

  Therein lies the problem, though. There wasn't just a single catchy phrase. There were 3 (possibly a fourth symbolic one). This muddied up the waters a bit. And besides, it's expecting too much of the audience to remember multiple phrases.

  So, instead of guessing, I decided to take my fingers out of my ears and listen to Randy. The lesson was "love"—the well-rounded love for family and spouse.

  He used the word "love" (or a variation of it) **13** times throughout the speech.

  "Love" was the common word that was weaved into the speech and just like that we're left with a Foundational *Word*. Other champions who did this were the 2001 winner, Darren LaCroix and the

2005 winner, [Lance Miller](). Unlike Darren and Lance, though, Randy used more of a subliminal Foundational Word. The reason I say it was subliminal is that it was masked in various contexts and wasn't isolated to a specific sentence. Here are a couple of times he used the word tactically without bringing attention to it, but that kept the idea alive in the listener's mind.

- "*Fat Dad held her close, whispered words of **love**, and faith, to calm her fear.*"
- "*And that **loving** nickname "Fat Dad" has been handed down through four generations, to the men in my family*"

Another note about this Foundational Phrase is in regard to the title of the speech, *Lessons from Fat Dat*. Well, the lesson (singular) was "love" as he told us concretely in the very last line of the speech, "*Fellow Toastmasters, <u>the lesson is love</u>. And I'm proud to tell ya, my children call me Fat Dad.*"

Now, having "Lesson**s**" in the speech title instead of "Lesson" leaves us to believe there were more than one lesson. In this speech I'd say that was the case. It's just that they all involved love. For example, "*Love for a lifetime, not for a moment*"; "*Sometimes you're the catcher, sometimes you're the caught. When you love somebody, their trouble is your trouble*"; "[love]...*wraps its strong arms around you.*"

This speech was unique *and I'm proud to tell ya*, I liked it.

- **Lifetime**: The speech felt like it *lasted a lifetime*. Not in a bad way. I felt the weight of the stories he told. Not only that but the emotional turns, including love, humor, and sadness. It felt so much longer than 7 minutes of my time. This speech truly took you on a journey.

- **Tie Up Loose Ends**: He ended on the final resolution and tied the perfect knot with him now inheriting the name of *Fat Dad*. On top of that, he closed on a sequence which included all his familiar/repeated phrases from earlier in the speech:

  "*When you love, sometimes you're the catcher, sometimes you're the caught. When there's trouble, love rushes in, wraps its strong arms around you. Real men, well, they love for a lifetime. Not for a moment. Fellow Toastmasters, the lesson is love. And I'm proud to tell ya, my children call me Fat Dad.*"

- **Inspiration:** I've never been as inspired by a speech as I have with this one. Most championship speeches do leave me with a "high" feeling, although it's usually a general good feeling and hard to know where to channel it. This speech makes me want to emulate Fat Dat. It makes me want to deliberately be a role model for my kids and even makes me want to create some family traditions that I can pass down to my children. Perhaps it's just that this speech was the most relevant to my current place in life.

- **Speech to Remember**: I also learned from this speech that you don't always need a concrete Foundational Phrase for your speech to be remembered. In this speech, the stories and the emotional moments from the stories are the reasons I'll remember this speech, not because of a catchy phrase. Looking back at this speech, I didn't need to be told the lesson was love. The stories left me with an unquestionable feeling of it.

Feedback / Criticism:

- **Contemporary Events**: Using references to contemporary or lesser-known historical events, people, etc. in your speech makes them difficult to stand the test of time. In this speech, the Ford Fairlane, the song he was listening to by *Simon and Garfunkel* and even the references to Mary Poppins are what I'm referring to. They may not appeal to viewers of today since they are significantly less known now than in the past. With that said, it's good to know the audience that you'll be speaking to, and in this case the audience knew very well what he was talking about.

- **Stage Movement for Stories**: The staging of his stories seemed to overlap on the stage for where he was at (physically) when telling the various stories. This has the potential to disrupt the "movie" that is playing in the audience's head. However, I don't believe it did in this case. He had so many more elements to his stories (emotion, vocal variety, action, gestures, etc.) that it never crossed my mind that Fat Dad was hugging Mama at the same spot on the stage where he steered the car with his knees.

- **Volume:** There were times that I felt his volume was too loud and perhaps a little harsh on the ears. These moments occurred during the action portions of the opening story and during the car accident story. However, this is likely only an issue for the recorded audio which I'm using for this breakdown. It was probably just fine for the in-person audience. If that's the case, I'll go kick rocks.

- **Perfection:** He had a line during the speech where he sounded as though he were about to say a different word before catching himself and saying "*scratches*." "*The next morning Fat Dad was buffin' (spit) the scratches…*"

  In most of the championship speeches there is a minor hitch such as this and it's a good reminder that it's okay to make mistakes, even champions do it.