



Podcast Episode 237
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“You CAN Command an Audience! Don’t Try to Beat Them, Join ‘em”

David Loy: Hi and welcome to *In the Loop* with Andy Andrews, I’m your host David Loy. Thanks for taking the time to join us. We, Andy, we hear from people all the time.

Andy Andrews: You were laughing before we started.

David: I was laughing.

Andy: And I said, what are you laughing at?

David: And I said, we’ll talk about it once we start recording.

Andy: Ok so we’re recording, so talk about it.

David: Well a minute ago, before we started recording, you said, in a very serious tone, well you just, I’m not going to repeat it, what did you say?

Andy: I said, I just feel a little melancholy today. I looked in the mirror and I had a head like a melon, a face like a collie.

David: And that’s what I was laughing at. I was picturing you setting up that joke, as you so often do, in such a serious tone, and Matt and I both genuinely said, well why

Andy, are you ok? Of course you respond with head like a melon, face like a collie. And that was just, it just reminds me.

Andy: Yeah, that's something I've done, I've done that forever. I mean, pre-comedy days I did that. I loved setting people up for a punch line but I also in high school, I had the same reputation in high school that I have with my wife Polly. Which is, I'll start with something, like at a dinner party, and I had to say to Polly, look you cannot just like roll your eyes when I start talking. I mean, everybody knows that I'm coming out with something, you can't do that. And we laugh about it. But in high school, it was that way with almost everybody. I could've come in and said, my grandfather just died, and everybody would've gone, yeah, yeah, and?

David: On the edge on their chair.

Andy: And it was like oh my gosh.

David: And that's still what you endure today. And I know actually, I've had that same experience with you because I've now been around you enough to know, for the most part, I've missed it with melancholy, but for the most part I can tell when you're doing something. So I have to turn away or not give it away for the rest of the guys, or to ruin the joke to the team. But is that a burden that you carry or is that a privilege?

Andy: It's a privilege. I love doing it, and I do that to the boys all the time.

David: And do they roll their eyes just yet?

Andy: No, they love it. I mean, you love being gotten. And of course they are learning to do that too.

David: I was going to say that, Adam especially. He's got great timing.

Andy: Adam has great timing and guts. He just has guts. And he can look at you, I mean, Adam would either be, I mean, when Adam grows up he could be a great con man, a great politician, one or the other.

David: Kind of interchangeable.

Andy: Yeah they are interchangeable. Because he can look right at you and just smile and just lay it out there, you know. So it's very funny.

David: What's the, we're getting off topic here, we haven't even gotten to the topic, but this is funny, what's the thing you always say about Austin and Adam, the difference between the two of them, and as it relates to dating relationships?

Andy: Oh yeah, we had, years ago, and they're 16 and 13 now, when they were like, I guess 11 and 9, there was friends who had this daughter and she just loved both of our boys, she just loved both of them, she was their age. And so we were laughing one night and we said, if she ends up dating Austin, which Austin has been, Austin has been forty years old ever since he was six, ok. So we said, if she ends up dating Austin, you can be sure she will be home at the correct time, she will be where she is supposed to be, nothing will happen, she will be protected, if anything changes you will get a phone call, everything will be, I mean, that's dating Austin. We said, now if she dates Adam, she'll have a lot more fun. You might have to get them out of jail but she'll have a lot more fun.

David: And as they've gotten older, you probably still think that's true.

Andy: Yeah. I hope the jail part is not true but yes, that's definitely true.

David: If you had to pick one and he might be more likely to have that happen. Alright Andy, let's get to today's question, we had a really interesting question come in from Dale. So let me read this for you and we'll get started. Hi Andy, I'm happy to say that I have been consistently listening to the podcast for well over a year now and I have seen a change in my thinking. I would like your insight on one particular area of concern though. It struck me that as a public speaker, especially during your comedian years that you've received a great deal of applause, but that you may have also experienced some heckling too. I believe most of us struggle with persisting when our audience appears bored, disengaged or even outright disrespectful. How do we become impervious to insult whether real or perceived in our personal and professional lives? I'm a teacher and I can get derailed when my students are disengaged or disrespectful, especially if I've worked hard to create an engaging lesson. With my children I know it's my responsibility to teach them respect. But that is difficult to do if I'm angry because I feel disrespected. So again, how have you overcome chiding behavior in your life? Thanks again, from Dale.

Andy: Now is Dale, we don't know again, if Dale was man or a woman?

David: That's right, that could go either way.

Andy: Whether Dale is a man or woman, Dale is very smart, because Dale used the word chide.

David: Oh yes. Wait, isn't that what you put on your baked potatoes?

Andy: Yeah. And so we're glad to know Dale is very smart.

David: Dale is well educated, I apparently am not.

Andy: Man, I know exactly what Dale is talking about.

David: First of all, let me ask, from your comedian days, did you ever deal with a heckler?

Andy: You know what, I did more at the beginning. A couple of things happened that allowed me to suppress that, ok. One is, I realized by watching other comedians, that some people would have more problems with hecklers, some people would have fewer problems. And so one of the things that I noticed is that people that had more problems with the hecklers, and I don't mean to go as far as I'm going with this, just it's easier to explain. Those people have more problems with more arrogant attitude I suppose or pushier demeanor, or more know it all type of thing. Now I'm not saying that they were, I'm just saying that was the perception of the audience, ok. And the people who had less problems with them were people who had more friendly rapport with the audience. I also saw that people who had more problems with hecklers were more likely to put out some kind of vibe that people wanted to challenge them. And so that's one thing that I decided to do, is that I would be friends with the audience.

And it's curious, you know, I've told you before David, how many times I looked back and I realized that I was being taught lessons about what I do now then, right. And so one of the things that I, a lot of times when I'm working with a corporation or people, I'll talk to them about how to deal with a lady, in front of other people or how to deal with a lady in front of her husband or how to deal with a lady so that she

doesn't think you have weird intentions or whatever. And this is just a brief example, I tell guys, if you're going to compliment, boy that sounded southern didn't it? If you're going to compliment a woman, you want to do it in the context of your relationship, of your wife, or your significant person. What I'm saying is, if you said to a woman, hey I really like those earrings you've got. Well you know, she could think, why is this guy telling me this for? But if you say, hey your earrings are awesome, my wife would love those earrings. Ok, so now she knows, ok, you have a wife and she knows you're thinking about her, and she knows, you told her you had one. So you're obviously, I mean, you must like the earrings and you're just a nice guy. Well a lot of that kind of stuff, and so that was just some of the kind of things that I'll teach in situations, but a lot of that kind of stuff I learned on stage. Because I would see how, if you were talking to a woman, even from the stage, I could see the look in their eyes, look in the other people around them, the look in her husband or her boyfriend. And I will tell you, nothing will get a heckler going faster for a comedian if a guy in the audience thinks that his wife or girlfriend really likes this comedian. Nothing will get them going faster. I mean, they just want to take him down.

David: The competition.

Andy: Yeah. And so that's very odd. But so anyway, I did, I learned that then.

David: But even beyond comedian aspect of it, I think Dale's touching something here that all of us deal with. How do you deal with experience "heckling" in your daily life?

Andy: And that really, and I'll tell you this, that goes to the second thing that I learned how to deal with it. And that was, and I think I may have told you this before, in

conversations, maybe I've mentioned on *In the Loop*, but one night I was on stage and something happen, I can't remember what it was, but the whole audience like looked to the right, you know. I mean, I did too. I don't know, somebody dropped something, I can't remember. But everybody looked and it took five or ten seconds for everybody to figure out what it happened and then kind of they looked back at me and I kind of started going again. But I sensed I'd lost them. I couldn't get them back, it just didn't feel the same. And so I went home that night and I thought, you know what, this is not the last time this is going to happen, there's going to be something, if it's not that, it's going to be something else. So I figured out over the course of, and really I just kind of kept doing it, but over the course of year until I really had a lot of it down. I came up and I kept a list of everything that could possibly happen. Somebody drop something, somebody has a heart attack, the lights go out, there's a big clap of thunder, the fire alarm is pulled, somebody runs up on stage. And what I did was, I worked to come up with something to say. Because at that first time I realized that everybody looked over there and then they looked back at me. And if I'd had one little funny comment to say about it, then we could've gone on.

David: It would have defused the whole situation.

Andy: And so in real life, there are things in your profession that you will always deal with. If you're a teacher like Dale is, you're going to deal, you're just going to deal, I can't think of anything there's more, I guess along the same lines than teaching and stand-up comedy, in a way. Especially if a teacher's great, ok. Because I've seen comedians, in fact it was a mantra for a while in comedy circles, that you better be getting a laugh every ten, twelve seconds or something like that. But some of the best I've ever seen, they get a laugh every 60 seconds. But the difference is, that they are engaging, they are engaging. And I'm more of that, at my, in the comedy thing, that was probably every 15 seconds, I was getting some kind of laugh. But as I began to

shade over into the other area and I began to change, I realized that really, an audience does not care if they're laughing every 15 seconds or they're laughing every 90 seconds, just engage them, interest them, just don't be boring, you know. So the same things, the same rules of comedy apply for teaching, for great teaching ok. Because people forget with the teaching thing, I hear people, you're a teacher, I'm a teacher, and these people need to listen bla bla bla. You know, people forget that at the bottom of the pool, a bottom line is, until something has been learned, nothing has been taught. And if nothing has been taught, you're not really a teacher, ok. And so, what I would really and I want to give Dale a couple of hints for the classroom, with this stuff, but I also want to address the children thing if that's ok?

David: Absolutely.

Andy: The classroom thing and this is for Dale and any teacher, I would really urge you to take a good close look at how you present. And what I mean by that is, what do you do physically? I would look at that first, ok, because that's the easiest thing to change. If you got a church and there is a pastor at that church that always stands behind the podium, always stands behind the podium, always. Ok, you know how that is, I mean, I don't care what they're saying, when you are still, your eyes are focused on one location, it's one place you're looking at, it's one background, it's one spot, it's almost hypnotic that you just get a little sleepier, you get tired, whatever. Now there is something else that happen, it ramps up a little bit, if the speaker or the teacher gets out from behind the desk, and moves back and forth across the front of the room. Now I'm not saying move like a caged lion, ok, back and forth. I'm talking about, you know, somebody moving in the context of the front of the room, alright. Now I want to tell you this, I'm going to tell Dale like a huge secret of mine.

David: Listen closely Dale.

Andy: This is a huge secret. And I have a reputation as a pretty good speaker, ok. Well one of the things that I realized several years ago that it was up to me, this was up to me alright, to get them. No matter how the situation was, no matter what the audience was, no matter what they had going on in their day, it was up to me to engage these people. Well sometimes, you know, as a speaker, as a comedian, you're putting situations where you're after lunch and they're tired and they just eaten, and want to go to sleep. Sometimes you're put in a situation where frankly they're drunk, ok. I mean, I've spoken, whether comedian or speaker, I've spoken at things like after dinner where there was like wine flowing and these people like had too much. And so I'm just saying. Then you're sometimes as a speaker put in a situation where they just had a business meeting and they're just told, they're all getting cut 20% of their salaries. And it's just craziness. So anything can take somebody's attention but here is the secret or here's a secret of mine. That is, I thought years ago, what does nobody do? Well nobody, I mean, when I started doing it a bunch of years ago, nobody was coming off the stage, nobody came off the stage. Because that's like in TV, they talk about breaking the fourth wall. In television when right in the middle of a movie someone look right in the camera and talk to the viewer. Ok, well on stage, that's breaking the fourth wall. You come off that stage. And as a teacher, you come into that class or you move in a different area. One time I was speaking and this is kind of like a class, but one time I was speaking, I had thirty, forty people in a room. It was a very small room and I knew these guys were all of a sudden, it was not, they had other things going on. And I knew, I was supposed to give some examples, leadership. And so at one point I moved to the side, I moved to their side, right. And started talking over there and I said, do me a favor, everybody turn your chair. And so instead of everybody facing this way, now they're facing at a totally another way, and there's a totally different background. And then little later I went again and I had

them move all the way around. Now never said what we're doing but then later I talked about leadership and how if people trust the leader and trust that there is a point to something and trust that, if a leader is confident and a leader da da daa. I said, now you guys, I mean, you turned your chairs all the way around. You didn't have any clue but this was something that I asked you to do and I said, come on, let's go. And I said, you don't have to go to a million leadership seminars to learn that a lot of times leadership is confidently leading people and assuring people, you know what you're doing, so come on with me, we're going to be good and let's do this. You know, leadership is, you want to see a great leader in high school, find the great leader in high school, find the kid that everybody always goes to the movie they want to see. Everybody always goes to a restaurant they want to eat at. And so anyway, move around Dale, don't be afraid. Even today if I see somebody in one of these conventions, somebody's sleeping, or somebody nodding off, I mean, because that happens. Or occasionally in a convention I'll see somebody like in one of these business things that they'll pull out a newspaper, you know. Just like, right there at the beginning, they pull out the newspaper. And so I'm sure as a teacher you see people doing something they shouldn't be doing. And so as a speaker, you can't say, hey Johnny, put that newspaper away right this minute, what are you thinking. You can't do that. But you also have to understand, that guy takes out the newspaper, there's fifty people looking at him, it's totally taking attention away. And then when their attention go away, it's like a cancer that runs through the thing, you don't stop it.

David: So how do you stop it?

Andy: What I do, is I'm kind of going in the audience anyway, and so I'll just go right to him and like if they're kind of nodding off, I go right to them and I stand right beside them. And a lot of times I put my hand on their shoulder, and kind of jiggle

them a little bit. It's like, when I tell, now I told this guy and I'll jiggle them. And of course they're like, holy crap, this guy's talking to me. And no way they won't ever go to sleep again, right. And the same thing with the newspaper, I'll just go stand right beside them and they become very self-conscious and they'll put it up. So as a teacher you could do that and you don't even have to call anybody down generally. Now obviously as a teacher you may deal with some people who are challenging you, ok. And so there are ways and just remember, maybe we go back to that first thing, figure out some of the things, see what possible things Dale could they say? What are the things they could say? And figure out the things you could say back. And I'll tell you where comedy comes from, or humor comes from. It comes from, what is the exaggeration of this? There's really only two or three things that you can apply. So what is the exaggeration of this? Who is offended by this and what is stupid about this? Those are really the three things you could trace 90% of every comedy routine you ever went, that it was ever done, to those three things. And so you can write something around that, with the kids, address the kids. Am I talking too long?

David: No, well we're about to wrap up and I want to summarize and challenge a few people to do something here but go ahead.

Andy: Ok, well the thing with the children, what did she say about teaching them respect?

David: I know it's my responsibility to teach them respect but that it's difficult to do if I'm angry because I'm feeling disrespected.

Andy: Ok, alright. Here's the thing Dale. Go back to and I hope you've been listening to the podcast for a while. Go back to how this change really occurs? Because what you're talking about here, is you're wanting to change a behavior in your children,

alright. And so how does change really occurs? Very quickly, it's the two things. One is, what's in it for me, and the second thing is proof beyond a reasonable doubt, ok. And so what's in it for me, I mean, that's so self-explanatory. I'm not talking about greedy thing, I'm talking about how does this affect my life. And so I know exactly what you're talking about because I have a 16-year-old and a 13-year-old. And sometimes that teenage thing, they're distracted, they're thinking about something else, and sometimes I can feel like, hey are you listening to me, you know, my dad comes out in me.

David: And you start talking louder.

Andy: Yeah. And you know, I'm tempted to say, don't you look at me, when I talk to you. You know, you tend toward that. Ok, but the thing that I have come to understand and I think this will help you Dale, is I always try a thing, what do their hearts say, what's in their hearts? Because now, hopefully this is not your kids, but still you might have children who are disrespectful, they just are. And so you can, it's the same thing, the change applies, but it's a different approach, it's maybe a different thing for them. But with your children I would imagine that your children are not meaning to be disrespectful. And if other than the parent- child back and forth, you're being disrespectful bla bla bla. Other than that, that deep down in their heart, if they really came to believe that they were disrespectful, it would kill them, they would just hate it. And so I would imagine that deep down your children are respectful. So here's one thing that you can lay out and I have done this before. Is to sit down with them and say, hey can I tell you something that goes on with me. You know, as a family, we have certain things we're trying to do, that we are trying to accomplish.

Now as a family if we're trying to accomplish some things and do some things, that means, there's something that we're trying to become, ok. And so, I've said this to my boys, I said guys, when I talk, I know that I may talk a lot, I may think out loud and I stumble around trying to figure out what I'm going to say sometimes, but anytime I talk to you, it's really important to me, because you are so important to me, I love you so much, so I'm trying to get something across. And I know that you are respectful, you are respectful guys. I know that you are not disrespectful. However when you interrupt or when you kind of keep walking or when you turn away or when you look at something else, it makes me feel like, I don't feel respected, I don't feel that way. Now I know you don't feel that way, ok. You probably don't mean it that way but to me it feels disrespectful. And it worries me to think, because me, you and me, we're tight, we're always going to love each other, no matter what, but when you get out in the world, with teachers, with people who have the potential to hire you, with opportunities, they have the potential to give you opportunity, stuff like that is gonna keep you from getting hired. It's going to keep you from getting a promotion, it's gonna keep your from getting a raise, it's going to keep you.

David: So you're telling them what's in it for them?

Andy: Yeah, what's in it for them. And so I'm saying, so, with me, let's practice, practice with me. So that you can when you get away from home, you can make all the money you wanna make, you can be as influential as you want to be, but I'm going to be your practice thing, ok. And so let's get good at making eye contact, and nodding as I talk, and smiling, and reaffirming what I say. So I think that'll help.

David: Well absolutely. Dale thank you for a great question. And actually Andy I think we have a lot of listeners to *In the Loop* that either are teachers, or have been teachers or often in similar situations. I'd actually love to put the challenge out there,

if you know somebody that could benefit from some of these tips, forward it to them. We'd love to have them understand and know more about some of these strategies that Andy's putting out there, and how to communicate effectively? And even in the face, as they'll put it, heckling. Alright we're going to wrap up. Andy we'll talk to you next week. And if you'd like to jump in on this conversation, send us an email intheloop@andyandrews.com. Let us know your thoughts, your experiences. If you are a teacher, we'd love to hear it from you on this subject. You can also call and leave us a voicemail, 1800 726 2639, that's 1800 726 Andy. And hopefully we'll play your question on a future episode. Andy any closing thought as we wrap up?

Andy: Yeah, I just wanted to say, that I have had just like brain sparks the whole time we were doing this. I mean, I'm just sparking in this teacher thing because there's a lot, I would love to do, let's do an episode some time, of the best teachers I've known and why they were the best. Because in almost every case, these people were the best because of something they did. Not because of something they knew, ok. And so I think we all have seen some bad ones and we've seen some good ones.

David: That is a great episode. Let's record that soon. Alright Andy, thanks for your time. We'll talk to you next week.

Andy: Alright buddy, thank you.

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Would you like to run something by Andy? Contact us and your question might be featured on the show!

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