



## PODCAST #40

### *Interview with Louis Lautman (LL) by Carma Spence (CS)*

*This transcript has been edited for readability.*

**CS:** Hello and welcome to *Public Speaking Super Powers*. This is Carma Spence, your host. And today I am talking with Louis Lautman, the executive producer of [The Yes Movie](#) and founder of the Young Entrepreneur Society. Louis, welcome to *Public Speaking Super Powers*.

**LL:** Thanks, Carma, great to be here.

**CS:** Just so listeners can get a feel for your unique expertise, could you tell us a little bit about your journey to success in public speaking?

**LL:** Absolutely. Well, I guess it all started a long time ago when I was in grade school, probably around the second or third grade. I was public speaking, but I was public speaking in the wrong venue. And that was in the back of class, trying to share information with the other students and the teacher didn't seem to like that. And I was always told not to talk in class and now I get paid to go back to schools and talk in class and share the strategies that I've learned along the way.

I'd always been in sales in my teenage years, having different sales jobs, part time sales jobs. And then, after I graduated college, got full time professional sales jobs. And I really enjoyed the whole idea of presentations and standing up in front of, whether it be one person or group of people, and really presenting to them. And when I was 23 years old, I realized very quickly, that my passion in life wasn't presenting other people's products and services, but it was really presenting my own products and services and thoughts and methodologies and strategies and ideas.

So, I'm 32 now, and since the age of 23, I've been having a fulltime speaking career. There's been ups, there's been downs, there's been lefts and there's been rights, but I've certainly gotten out there and had the opportunity to speak in crowds of one to one thousands and up all around the world.

And it's been a great journey, and it's a never-ending journey. Because, to me, it's really part of my lifestyle, it's who I am. And I am really a conduit of information, sharing strategies and ideas. Whether people agree with them or not, they're there for people to implement. I only share things that I've found that work. So some of the strategies that I share are strategies of other people, and strategies that somehow I've stumbled across. Most of the strategies I stumbled across through frustration and failure, just by having to find a solution to a current situation I was in.

**CS:** You know something you said in there, it was almost like a throwaway line, where you said I've spoken in front of groups of one to whatever. And most people don't think of one-on-one speaking as public speaking, but really the skills you can use to just talking with a friend, can be used when you're talking to a thousand friends.

**LL:** Yeah, I agree with that 100 percent, Carma. A big part of what I speak on is communication skills, selling skills, influence and entrepreneurship. And I teach people that the sale begins upon meeting a person.

The sale begins upon the first point of contact. See most people think, they're introduced to someone or they meet someone at a networking event or they pick up the phone and cold call someone and they think the actual presentation begins when you're sitting in a board room and everyone's sitting around and you pull out your charts and everything. But you're being judged, you're being looked at, people whether they realize it or not, whether they want to or not, are subconsciously making assessments of how you look, how you sound, how you feel. And all these sorts of things. So, you've got to really be aware that how you're presenting yourself is being presented at all times. Not only during a presentation phase. When you walk into a lobby, when you walk into someone's house, and you take your raincoat off, or your boots off, or your hat off, or your shoes off, or whatever it is, when you shake the hand and make eye contact for the first time, if you're smiling or not, if you're standing upright or not. And all these sorts of things, a big part of the presentation, and what I teach people is that nobody really remembers what you say, but they always remember how you made them feel.

**CS:** Oh, yeah.

**LL:** So, there's a great study 30-40 years ago by Dr. Albert Moravian, who said that the words that you actually use only account for about 7 percent of the effect of your communication. The other is your body language and your tonality. So that's something that most people think, that well it's everything that I say, it's the words that I use, but it's more so how were you being. How do you sound? How do you feel? How do you look? During that presentation that people are really taking in.

**CS:** So, given that you started so young, in the second grade, do you believe that public speaking is a learned skill? Or something you are born being able to do?

**LL:** Yeah, you know, I love that question, Carma, because a lot of people will look at me or come up to me and say, "Well, you're just so lucky. You were born with it." The gift of gab. Or you just have that thing. And I quickly tell them, because I make the inquiry myself, I always wonder, are good presenters or good entrepreneurs, or good whatever... Is it by nature? Or nurture? And I'm here to tell you that it's made by nurture. Yeah. Some of us have different characteristics and abilities. We all can't be six foot five or we all can't run faster than the speed of light or jump so high or maybe some of us, our teeth are shaped crookedly and we have a speech impediment, or whatever it is. We're all given certain natural characteristics and abilities. But it's what we do with those characteristics and those abilities that really make the greatest difference.

So, what people don't see are the hundreds and thousands of calls that I go on, practicing. What people didn't see were when I would drive an hour to go talk to a Lyons Club in the middle of nowhere for a luncheon with a bunch of 70-year-old people who, doesn't matter what I was saying, they just sit there and smile because they probably couldn't hear me anyway. But they didn't see were the hundreds of hours of practice of presentations that I had given. The hundreds of hours of books that I've read and seminars I've gone to, and audio programs that I've listened to in my car. The hours that I've spent learning different techniques and strategies. These are things that the people don't see. For everything that goes into a presentation, there's hundreds of hours that go on in the background to prepare for that presentation. That's what people don't see and they just say, "Louis, you're so polished. You're so dynamic. You're so impactful. You're so congruent. You're wonderful. I could never do what you do." Well, you couldn't do what I do overnight, but if you were committed, anything is possible. You could become even better, even greater, have more impact, have a greater message, as long as you're committed. But success isn't easy. It might look easy. I like the example of a duck. A duck looks calm cool and collected on the outside, but underneath they're paddling like a Dickens under there.

**CS:** Very true.

**LL:** All the work, when we see someone on TV who looks so nice and elegant, they look so wonderful, but we don't see all that work that went behind all of that.

- CS:** Right. And, you know, something you said that also just triggered something that has always been in my belief system about any success, is that we all have the ingredients necessary to succeed at anything. However, it is what we are interested in, passionate about, and committed to, that really is where we shine in our life.
- LL:** Yeah, I agree with that 100 percent. And if you want to find out what you're interested in and passionate about and committed to, is just look around your life. You know, what you have? What are you doing? And there's the answer. And if you want to change that, all you got to change is what you're doing. What you're thinking about. And what you spend your time on.
- CS:** Right. Most definitely. So now imagine that you are a public speaking superhero. What do you believe is your main superpower?
- LL:** My main superpower is my commitment. It's like if I know that in order to become the public speaker, or – I like to use the word professional speaker, because a lot of people that speak in public. I used to be a public speaker, but now I'm a professional speaker, so I monetize my speaking abilities.

So, if you're committed to becoming a professional speaker, and that becomes your career, or part time business, or whatever it is, you've got to be committed. If I knew that it took 100 presentations or 1000 presentations, like I remember hearing Zig Ziglar talk one time and he said that he never got paid for a professional speech until he was 45 years old. And he said he put on 3000 free speeches before he finally got paid. If the number was 3000, or even if it was 1500, or even it was 500, or even if it was 100, if I knew that once I got over that threshold of 100 free speeches, whatever it was, I'd eventually start getting paid for my presentations, I would be committed to do whatever it took to set up those presentations. So, some people think, "Well I've got the greatest information. I've got the best way to deliver it. And I'm just going to sit back and wait." Well, nobody comes knocking at your door to find your products or services, or to call you in to talk to their group or their organization. You've got to proactively go out and let people know that you have the ability to share valuable information that'll make a difference for their people or their organization.

And that might mean you've got a cold call people. That might mean you've got to call someone up on the phone and talk to them, and present the opportunity them. And then you've got to call them back. Or maybe they don't pick up and you've got a call five, 10, 15, 20 times just so you can drive an hour, two hours, or fly halfway across the country or the world, or whatever, or even pay an admission fee, just so you can speak to the group for free.

Most people aren't committed to doing that. Now, the people who are committed to doing it are the people who are actually doing that. And I actually went out and did that. And that's commitment. There's a lot of other speakers that go out there and do that, because the more that you start to build an awareness of who you are, the more you start to get results for what it is that you're teaching and presenting on, the more that people are knowing what you do and get a great impact from it, and want you around more often. The more you get to that point, the more people are going to want you around. But in order to get there, you've got to put it out there at some point. And if nobody knows who you are, it's very hard to get paid right off the bat. You might be able to. But you've got to be committed. So, the ones who, how I'd say is that commitment. And you just got to get out there and start speaking.

So, if you're listening to this and you've never been paid for a speech before, start setting up as many free speeches as you possibly can, in any and all contexts, until you finally find a way or you finally start making some contacts the people who pay you to give presentations.

- CS:** What kind of advice would you give someone if they wanted to cultivate that particular superpower in their life?

**LL:** Well, one is that you've got to start finding venues for yourself. Two of the greatest venues that I've found for training myself, in addition to having a job in sales, so I was forced to talk to people, its not like I was a computer programmer and I didn't talk to anyone, I just looked at a computer screen all day. I was talking to 30, 40, 50, 60 people every single day on the phone and in person, presenting different products and services. So you want to do something that helps you hone your presentation skills. And after a while you'll start to learn about human nature. You'll start to learn about what people like. What people don't like. And you have to have some way of measuring, am I doing the right thing or am I doing the wrong thing. And start doing more of what works. And you'll just intuitively start to feel ways to bring people closer and have a greater impact on them.

So, you want to be out there presenting as much as possible and being aware of what's working and not working. But two of the greatest trainings that I took as a very young person that are fairly inexpensive and have been around for years and are global organizations that have had to have had a major impact on many people. One I'd say join a local Toastmasters group. [Toastmasters.org](http://Toastmasters.org). I'm not any part of them, right now. I don't get any credit for referring you there. But they usually meet about once a week for an hour, and when you first get there all you do is you stand up, you say your name and where you're from, and it's probably the scariest thing you'll ever do. But then after that you're giving a presentation for a minute, then two minutes, then three minutes. And they're giving you constructive and valuable feedback. It's so powerful and helpful for you.

**CS:** I was a Toastmaster for several years. And it really did help a lot.

**LL:** Yeah. So you know the value of it. And then the other one that I took at a very young age was the Dale Carnegie public speaking class. And that was really helpful. Because, again, I took both these when I was about 21, 22. And, it really opened me up and gave me good valuable feedback. Dale Carnegie, the author of [How To Win Friends and Influence People](#). He has, I think, it's like an 8- or 12-week program where, again, you meet once a week for three hours. And there's a group of people and it's all about public speaking. And these are two fairly inexpensive opportunities to learn and grow. But the most important thing is to just do it. Go out there and start speaking. A lot of people, they're getting ready to get ready to get ready, and they know what to do. But it's getting themselves to do it that really makes that biggest difference. So, if you want to become a public speaker, or then ultimately a professional speaker and get paid for your presentations, you've got to go out there and talk to tons of people, hundreds and thousands of people, without getting paid first. And then, eventually, you'll figure out a way to get paid. You might get paid right off the bat. And that's great, if you do. But, you want to have some kind of experience. You want to have some kind of frames of reference to pull from so when different things happen. You might be giving a presentation, people get up and leave. It could emotionally tear you apart. You might have people that interrupt. You've got to learn to deal with this. And the only way to do it, is through the experience itself. And then continue watching and learning and growing from other professional speakers that you admire.

**CS:** Now, along the lines of commitment, obviously this all takes a lot of commitment. Do you have any tips, advice for judging whether you have that commitment? Or want to have that commitment? I mean, there may be people who are like toying with the idea of becoming a public speaker, but then, they don't want to put in a lot of hours only to find out that they're really not committed to it. How do you know?

**LL:** Right. Well, it comes down to really getting clear on what your values are. So it's like if someone tells you their values are being healthy and eating a healthy lifestyle, but then all you really see them doing is smoking cigarettes and eating junk food and, sitting around watching TV all day. They might tell you with their words that they're committed to health. But what they're really committed to is what you watch them doing, and that's having an unhealthy lifestyle. So if someone tells you they're committed to becoming a professional speaker, look at their actions. What are they doing? Are they actually going out and listening to audio programs? Watching other speakers? Going to public events where they can study and examine the speaker that they like and want to be like? Are they actually

doing that? If they're not, then they're really not committed. If they want to be committed, those are the activities that you've got to take part in. And then, are they contacting people and letting them know that they can give a presentation at the local Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Lyons Club, Boy Scout club, old age home, anyone that will listen to them, just to perfect their presentation.

I think the founder of the National Speakers Association, Cavett Robert, said, "It's easier to find a new audience than it is to find a new speech." So, there's nothing wrong with giving the same speech, every single day, over and over and over, by perfecting it. Of course, you want to be in the moment, and pull up new things. But if you have a basic structure of what you talk about, it's a lot easier than showing up blank. You want to be prepared for your speech. And the way you do that is just by giving it over and over and over. And if you're committed, you've got to go out there and contact people who will listen to you, even if it's for free, because then eventually it will lead into a paying gig here and there. And then hopefully more often.

**CS:** So it sounds like what you're saying is number one is try on commitment for size. Actually, do what a committed person would do, and if it sticks, then you're committed. If it doesn't, then you're not.

**LL:** Yeah. You're either committed or not. You could say you are. But that doesn't mean anything. It is either you are committed or you're not. It doesn't matter what you say. Look at who you are being. What are you doing? How can you be committed if you haven't picked up the phone and told anybody you're a great presenter? That's all part of it.

We like to think that it's all showing up on stage and getting a standing ovation and an encore at the end. But there's a couple of things that go into that. You've got to be able to present yourself as the person, and position yourself that that group should be bringing in to have you present to.

**CS:** I think, you know, what you've just said, in a way, could be an eye opener for many people listening to this. And I think that was really important that you shared that. One last question: How are you defining young?

**LL:** Ah! Young is not an age, but it's a mindset. It's a way of being. It's young at heart. I've met young people, let's say Bob Proctor, when I met him in filmed him for *The Yes Movie*, he was 74 years old and he said he was a young entrepreneur.

I've met people who were my age and even in their 20s who were older than Bob as far as their mentality. I mean I'm looking at these folks, I'm like, "Holy cow!" You know, they're ready to keel over and die, and here's some 70-year-olds that are young at heart, young at mind, young in spirit, and they're forging ahead, running forward, having fun, enjoying life, they're passionate about what they do.

**CS:** So basically, if you're young at heart, you can join the Young Entrepreneurs Society. It has nothing to do with the years you've spent on this planet.

**LL:** Absolutely.

**CS:** Wonderful. Well, thank you so much, Louis, for joining us today on *Public Speaking Super Powers*. This is Carma Spence, your host signing off.

If you would like to learn more about Louis Lautman, visit his profile page at:  
<http://publicspeakingssuperpowers.com/featuredspeakers/louis-lautman/>