



## PODCAST #76

*Interview with Tim Manson (TM)  
by Carma Spence (CS)*

*This transcript has been edited for readability.*

**CS:** Hello and welcome to *Public Speaking Super Powers*. This is your host Carma Spence. Today I'm speaking with Tim Manson. Tim is a corporate trainer with more than 24 years of experience in the field of adult training. He is also an avid horseman. With this background, Tim naturally evolved from the classroom environment to the experiential environment, using horses in his corporate training program. Tim teams up with his clients to create a culture of performance, accountability and service in today's competitive marketplace. Welcome to *Public Speaking Super Powers*, Tim.

**TM:** Thanks very much. I appreciate the opportunity.

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

**TM:** That journey has started a long time ago. Public speakers are often class clowns in school. And that's pretty much what I was way back when, a million years ago, when I was a kid. And I always had a natural affinity, I suppose, for speaking in public, sometimes to my parents' chagrin. Sometimes things weren't always as appropriate as they should be back then. But I think I've grown and learned. But my real public speaking, as far as a professional speaker, really came about in 2005 or so. As you said in my introduction, I've been a corporate trainer, in one capacity or another, from the United States Army to corporate America to defense contractors and now working for myself. And that's a form of public speaking.

But in 2004, a friend of mine, by the name of John Garcia, who is a good friend of mine and a professional speaker in his own right at that time, came to me and said, "Tim, you know you've got a great voice. You've got a great ability to talk to people. You need to become a professional speaker.

I said, "John, I don't have your story. I don't have cancer like you have. And survived it. I don't have the story of growing up like you did in a small home with 13 siblings to poor Mexican parents. I don't have that story. I have a good family life. My parents were well off. They didn't beat me or anything like that. So, you know, what do I have that people would want to listen to?"

Well, be careful what you wish for. A year later, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. And my public speaking really kind of began at that point as far as a professional speaker.

**CS:** Wow. So, given your experience with public speaking, do you believe it is a learned skill? Or something you are born able to do? And how have you come to that conclusion?

**TM:** I think public speaking is both a learned skill and some folks are born with it. There are just natural speakers out there. And a lot of folks that, as I termed a while ago the class clown back in high school and college. The extroverts, I believe, are more inclined to have a more successful, at least a quicker, successful journey towards public speaking. Whereas most of who are introverts are not quite able to do that. Now, I say that, and there are certainly introverts who have made that leap and have been successful public speakers. But they took a lot of work and a lot of effort to get there. And even the best extrovert can't do it by himself or herself. They do need training.

And I've taken a lot of training with the great Les Brown on several occasions and I've even had the opportunity to share the stage with Les. So as good of a speaker as I thought I was, I became a much better speaker with training and assistance from Les Brown. And other training programs that I've attended. And things that I've read. It's a two edged sword, I guess. You both born with the opportunity and the ability, but training also enhances that ability. And I don't think there's any public speaker out there who is as skilled as they are without any training whatsoever. So I guess that's the answer to the question. It's both. You can be born with the ability, but you still have to hone it.

**CS:** And, you know, there was something that you sort of alluded to in your story of your journey to public speaking and that was an underlying belief that you need to have some sort of tragic story in your in your own personal life in order to become a good public speaker. Do you do you believe that? Do you believe that you have to have some sort of compelling, possibly tragic, story in order to become a good speaker?

**TM:** You know, I don't believe that anymore. When I first was talking to John Garcia, he had his story about cancer. And Les Brown had a tragic story about growing up and becoming successful from poverty. And a lot of the folks that I know that are professional speakers; they do have those tragic stories. And I've got my M.S. But I also believe that that's not necessarily a requirement. I have a particular presentation that I do that is all about how to create your greatest life. And while I do share my M.S. story. It's not the story that I concentrate on. So you don't necessarily have to have tragedy in order to become a good public speaker.

**CS:** Now imagine that you are a public speaking superhero. What do you believe would be your main superpower?

**TM:** Wow, super hero. Do I get to have a big red S on my chest or something like it?

**CS:** You'd probably would have a "T" ... T for Tim.

**TM:** A T? Super T. Well, you know, I think my superpower would be the ability to change minds one heart at a time. The ability to get folks to focus on themselves and to not only want to accomplish their dreams, but to go out and do it. So many folks have so many dreams and they just fall by the wayside. If there's anything that a person could use to push them

forward, I believe that's the spoken word. And we as public speakers have not only an opportunity, but an obligation to do that for folks that need to hear the message that we have. So that's my super power, to change minds one heart at a time.

**CS:** You know, that seems like a very useful superpower in corporate training. Especially with the emphasis that you have.

**TM:** Absolutely. Sometimes you get folks in a training situation that really don't want to be there. They've got other things back at the office. They don't understand why they're there. Particularly when I use the horses in my training programs, they don't understand how a horse could possibly help them. So you have to be able to change those minds and the only way you can change a mind, is by changing the heart, speaking to the heart. And that doesn't necessarily mean you have to speak with a tragic story. You just have to speak with the right words, that gets the individual the knowledge that not only do they need to be there, but they want to be there.

**CS:** Right. Now what kind of advice would you give someone if they want to develop that particular super power, too?

**TM:** The biggest advice and the first advice that I would recommend anyone to do who wanted to become a superhero in public speaking, is to join Toastmasters International. I've been a member of that organization for going on 16 years now, and as I mentioned previously, speakers are born and speakers are made. And I believe Toastmasters International is the place for people to practice this craft we call speaking. You may be very good at this craft already. And I believe that I'm very good at this craft already. But I stay in Toastmasters because it gives me an opportunity and a place to practice this craft in an environment that is safe with friends and companions and co-members that will give me an honest evaluation and feedback on what I'm doing right, and what I need to improve on. So without a doubt, that's the first step in this journey to public speaking, is to join Toastmasters International.

**CS:** And how about developing that the power to change minds one heart at a time?

**TM:** Find your message. The first heart that you have to change is yours. The first mind you have to change is yours. Find the message that you can really reach out and touch your audience with, no matter what it is. It doesn't have to be a tragic story. Find the message that you need to reach out and touch folks with. I've had an opportunity to share the stage with Les Brown. And he told me on Saturday, when I was at one of his training programs, he says, "Tim, you got a message I want the world to hear. I'm doing a five-camera shoot live motivational speaking program in Charlotte, North Carolina on Monday. I want you to be there."

I said, "Les, what do you want me to talk about?"

He said, "I don't care."

"But Les, what do you want me to talk about?"

He said, "It doesn't matter. Just be there. You've got 35 minutes. Show up."

So what am I going to talk about that could possibly warrant this opportunity to share the stage with the great Les Brown? So I started to work and think about it and I made a story or a presentation based on the letters of my last name, M A N S O N. And I did that for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, so I remember what I wanted to talk about. And each one of those points, the M and A and N S O N had a purpose behind it.

So in M is make the decision. A is act on that decision. N is it's necessary to struggle. S is set the bar high and continue raise it. O is overcome obstacles. And never give up is the last N.

And so I built the speech around that framework. And used some personal stories, not necessarily ... some with the M.S., but mostly other kinds of stories that I had of myself and other people. So that was a message that I gave to this audience of over 200 people. And had very little time to prepare it. So you got to find that compelling message, because afterwards, folks came up to me and said, "Oh yeah, I hear you. I identify with what you were saying. You really touched my heart. I'm going to go out and do the things that you suggested that I should do to accomplish my dreams."

So there's what it is. Whether you're just a trainer – and I don't mean that negatively, because there's a lot of folks that are just training. They're imparting knowledge or skills about a particular activity or skill set. And we as motivational speakers need trainers.

And the other place that I would suggest a motivational speaker to go would be to Les Brown's speaker training programs. Yes, they're expensive, but you've got to invest in yourself in order to be able to invest in your audience. So we as speakers need to do that. Invest in yourself. Get the kind of training that you need, but most importantly, find that message.

Back when I was talking to John Garcia, I didn't know what message I had. I didn't know what I could say. The M.S. helps me to get a message across about overcoming adversity. I'm not just a one trick pony. Overcome adversity is one message that I have. But creating your greatest life is another message that I have. And I have other messages about how to move forward in life. And I use the Wizard of Oz characters in one of my presentations. So find that message.

And I've known professional speakers who've told me, I do five speeches. I've got one message. And I craft it in five different ways, they say. So I've got two or three messages that I can craft in multiple ways. And I can take any of my basic outlines and put that message in for the audience.

And that's the other important thing is to know your audience. Know what they want. If you don't know what your audience wants, you can't craft a speech for that particular audience. And speeches must be crafted for one particular audience, because at that particular moment, that is the only audience in the world. So you don't need to worry about anybody else. Not the future. Not the past. That one audience. And then maybe just one individual in that audience who's heart you might change.

**CS:** Perfect. Well, thank you so much, Tim, for sharing your unique insight with us today.

**TM:** I appreciate the opportunity. This is just one more public speaking opportunity and I encourage other folks to get into this line of work. Begin to find your own message to change those minds one heart at a time.

**CS:** Wonderful. Well, this is the end of today's episode of *Public Speaking Super Powers*. This is your host, Carma Spence, signing off.

If you would like to learn more about Tim Manson, visit his profile page at:

<http://publicspeakingssuperpowers.com/featuredspeakers/tim-manson/>