

The

ENGINEERING CAREER COACH

HELPING ENGINEERS SUCCEED
IN WORK AND LIFE

The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION #54

Stop Talking and Start Communicating as an Engineer

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/startcommunicating

Anthony: In today's episode, my guest Geoffrey Tumlin, author of *Stop Talking, Start Communicating* will give you some counter-intuitive secrets on how to vastly improve your communication skills. Let's do it!

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results. And now for your host, who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible, professional engineer and certified career coach, Anthony Fasano.

Anthony: Welcome to the show. This is the show for engineers who want to succeed in both work and life. You can visit engineeringcareercoach.com for tons of free resources to help you with both your career development and personal development. You can check out our blog, podcasts. We have guides and other resources that can help you.

I am really excited about today's episode because we have Geoff Tumlin who is going to be talking about his book which is *Stop Talking, Start Communicating*. It's an awesome book and as engineers, we need to constantly, constantly focus on our communication skills. I also have Chris Knutson who is going to be joining me, getting more involved in this podcast. He is going to be doing the interview with me as well today with Geoff.

And before we jump into the main segment of the show, I wanted to do two quick things. One, I want to mention to you one more time about the **Engineering Career Success Summit**. That's an event that we are going to be putting on down at Washington DC, April 30th through May 2nd. It's going to focus on developing your communication skills as an engineer, developing your networking abilities. Everything is in your relationships. So you have to focus on building those skills, also developing your leadership abilities.

We have some top speakers from Jonathan Fanning, author of *Who Are You Becoming*. Chris and I are both going to be speaking. We have got a whole slate of panellists that are successful engineering executives that are going to be there to help you. We have got a fun aspect of the two. We have got parties. We have got tours. So please check it out. It's engineeringevent.com. It's not too late to still get your tickets and come. And we also have a virtual option. If you can't make it there, we are going to summarize all the sessions and we will send it to you if you are interested in the virtual ticket. Once again, that's engineeringevent.com. I hope that we get to meet you in Washington DC.

To bring us into the main segment of the show and start the interview with Geoff, I wanted to give you a quote. And the quote goes as follows: “Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift to style the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people.” And that’s from Jim Rohn.

Coaching segment:

Anthony: Now it’s time for the main segment of our show. I am really excited about today’s show. We are going to talk about communication. We have an author here, Geoff Tumlin who I am going to introduce momentarily. I also have Christian Knutson with me.

Chris is a civil engineer. He has worked as an engineer in the air force for the last 20 years and Chris and I are joining up forces. He has written at **The Engineer Leader** blog for the last few years and you heard him on Episode 50. He actually interviewed me to celebrate Episode 50 of this show. So I am really excited to have Chris here on the show with us doing the interview and you will hear a lot more from Chris moving forward.

With that, let me introduce our guest and jump right into our topic of communication today. Geoffrey Tumlin is the CEO of Mouthpiece Consulting and is the author of *Stop Talking, Start Communicating; play dumb, be boring, blow things off, lose your friends and other counter-intuitive secrets to success in business and life.*

Geoffrey earned a Ph.D. and an M.A from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.S. from the United States Military Academy at West Point. As a frequent media guest, Geoffrey’s writing and ideas on communication and leadership have appeared in *Fast Company, Inc.com, Fortune.com, CNNMoney, Investors Business Daily* and there is a long list of other channels, radio programmes, etc. He has also been featured in many journals, newspapers and textbooks with his writing. So we are super excited to have Geoff with us today. Geoff, welcome to the show.

Geoffrey: Thanks Anthony and thanks Chris. It’s a real pleasure to be here tonight.

Anthony: So let’s jump right in. Geoff’s book is a very interesting book and it does look at things kind of from a counter-intuitive perspective which I think is what makes it such an interesting read.

So Geoff, in reviewing your book, *Stop Talking, Start Communicating*, it’s clear that your counter-intuitive advice brings from a serious concern about communication today in our world. What is it about our communication today that is keeping you up at night?

Geoffrey: Concerned that although the digital revolution has been overwhelmingly positive for communication itself, wonderful new ways for us to reach out and interact with each other, I am

concerned that the, essentially, what has happened in the last 15 years is the vast majority of the new ways to communicate that have proliferated, encourage expedient or easy communication.

And that's not a problem except that a lot of the hardest things we need to do with our communication like for example; argue, result conflict, persuade, provide emotional support, just to take four out of a number of others. But those are four difficult communications skills. And I am concerned that all of our overwhelming emphasis on communication channels that are more expedient so that in the given day, I am spending the vast majority of my time communicating in ways that are relatively easy. Whether that is by text message or whether that is by e-mail. That and social media will have you those forms of communication dominate overwhelmingly most of our days.

And I am worried that all of our communication skills or the more difficult things our communication needs to do are becoming a little bit rusty and that many of us are finding that when we go to reach for these more difficult communication behaviours like arguing sensibly, resolving conflict, being able to provide real time emotional support, being able to persuade somebody for an important message; that we go to reach for these skills and we are finding that we are not that successful as we used to be. And that our higher stakes conversations are failing more frequently that we would like them to.

Anthony: That's interesting. So basically, while this kind of digital communication, whether it's texting, social media, while they can be powerful, they may have a lot of positivism in the sense they can also dewater, water down I guess is better a way to say our communication efforts. In other words, everything is done so quickly and people certainly don't put as much thought into some of their conversations. Is that accurate?

Geoffrey: Yeah. What I am worried about is that there is a tendency. Communication is great. The assumption Anthony is that you don't need to worry about it because you do it all the time. But nothing can be further from the truth. And we are just as in anything else that skill-based you can get a lot better with practice. And essentially, what I am concerned about is, it is easier to see if you just take it to the extreme a little but think about your own day. I may interact with people a hundred times and ninety something percent of those are emails, texts or something with social media.

To be clear, there is nothing wrong and not only is there nothing wrong with those ways of communicating, but all of their little quirks aside and all of us, you know, managing our own inboxes, these have been enormous advances. The fact that three of us are talking for free over a Skype line that you can record. I mean, this is a wonderful advance and there are hundreds of such advances. I mean, that's what we got. We didn't get revolution and travel or we didn't get a revolution yet completely in medicine or pick your list of what you thought if you were a young child. You thought, look what is going to change in the future?

The revolution we got is communication-based. And most of the new ways to communicate, reach out, connect with each other encourage more expedient ways of communicating and we are losing the practice with some of the more difficult things we need our communication to do. And so, you just

take the quick canary test in the com line. Just take those 4 things that I listed; persuasion, argumentation, social support in resolving conflict and if you are listening to this podcast, ask yourself this one question: Are you happy with how successful you are today with your conflict resolution skills, with your ability to argue important points, with your ability to persuade people when necessary for your priorities and with your ability to deliver real time emotional support when somebody is in need?

And if you are okay with that, if you are fine with those skills, for you, for the people you supervise, and for your kids if you have any. If you are fine with all those, then you don't have anything to worry about. Don't worry about what I am saying. But if you are like mini-people and you wonder, "You know what Anthony? How come my conversations feel a little more awkward these days? How come I am having a harder time persuading someone at work that this idea I have had is a good idea? Why is it that when I go to talk to my friend who just lost his dad and I am trying to comfort this person I have known all my life then that's a much more fumbly conversation than I like it to be." And I think that I have an answer for that if you are in that category.

And the answer is, essentially the digital revolution encouraged us to play communication trackers all day long. And so when we go to reach for our communication chess skills, we are finding that they are rusty. It doesn't matter how good I am at emailing or even how good I am at trying to persuade people in an email although I will, as all of our experience suggest, it's a heck of a lot easier to persuade somebody face-to-face for various reasons that we could go into but that's not I am worried about. I am just worried that we are not, by any stretch of the imagination, getting the amount of practice that we used to get in the more difficult ways of communicating.

And so a gap has emerged between what we say we want to do with our communication and what we are actually competent to do. And most of the people I talk to don't have a problem believing that something is going on with our communication. But because of communication, scrape this perception: "I don't need to practice these things. I do them all the time", it's sometimes hard for people to go to the next step and say, "Oh! This is skills-based and I am just not doing it as much as I used to." But that's what I believe is going on.

Anthony: I am just thinking as you are talking and of the evolution that even my own, how I communicate. And it's like, it was phone calls and then it was, obviously the text messaging became so big. I just realized today. I was reading through your book Geoff, I don't even text anymore. I just hit the little microphone on my iPhone and read the text and I just hit 'send'. So it's like, we continue to get like, how can we avoid communication? How can we do something quicker? And I am going to have to take notes myself on this podcast because I got a nine year-old daughter and if I could figure out how to persuade her to go to bed a little bit earlier, if you could teach me that, then we will be in good shape.

Geoffrey: Yeah. So, I'll say two things about your nine-year-old daughter. The first is that, if you want to know how to persuade her, it is the same way we learn anything. Doing it. Trial and error. You do

and then you look at what happen and then you try again. And so it's constant refinement. What I do, how to work, what can I improve next time and then you do it again. You do it again and you do it again. And then eventually skills improve.

Now the flipside is that there is a convoy guy. I am far more interested in your daughter learning these difficult skills as early as possible. And so the way you do things like that, is that you encourage her with questions that can't be answered in kind of abrupt or expedient form. A classic way of doing this is you ask your child, at some point during the day or you know, whenever and say, "Hey, tell me something today that made you sad, mad and glad." And just for her to answer that question about here, this thing made me sad, this thing made me mad, and this thing made me glad; you are talking about feelings.

And that's more complicated than you know, she can't just send you an emoticon or a smiley alright. So you practicing this, she will be practicing something that is harder. For me to put my emotions which swirl around inside of me into words with your concrete is higher-order skill. And so, in some of the ways that you interact with her, you will be able to reinforce those. I mean, look, I have got a nephew. I know how he is going to ask for dates when he is old enough to date. He is going to send text messages or poke people on social media or whatever the new fin would be by then right? Because it's the same thing I would have done had it been available. But it wasn't. And when I was in high school it was the 80's man. Big hair, flock of seagulls. There was no text message. And so I had to get rejected to my face! Over and over again.

But I learned some very important stuff. I learned, "Oh, it looks like rejection is coming." Or I see in her face that this isn't going to work. I need to adjust. Fire. I need to try something different. I need to circle back. I need to try to make this a full request for face saving. All these things and now you fast forward it today.

I mean, I am a consultant. I make my living basically asking people for dates for money. So when I go and ask a client for something today, and I am asking for a project and he has got a price tag and all of a sudden I can see a look on their face and I have this enormous body of experience of asking for stuff to people's face and seeing when I am about to get rejected. Or when it's going to go successfully. And it's all there because I have had a much longer time horizon to practice some of these more difficult skills.

But what about my nephew and what about your daughter who have at their disposal a much more convenient modes of communication? Which again there is nothing wrong with these modes. This is a revolution and it's wonderful, all of these ways to connect. And I am not suggesting by any stretch of the imagination, that any of us wouldn't be using them overwhelmingly because we are simply communicating a lot more and a lot of our communication can be handled through these more expedient easier channels. But not everything.

I am arguing only for ninety, ten. 90% can be expedient but retain 10% to practice the harder stuff because my concern is that we are not at ninety ten. We are at ninety-nine, one. And when we go to do the one, it's awkward. We are failing more often and for some of us, we take the wrong learning from that. The learning we take is, "Oh, that didn't work very well. Maybe I'll just send an email next time." That's the wrong lesson.

Anthony: Yeap. Chris, you got something that you want to jump in on it?

Chris: Yeah. I was going to ask Geoff because it's interesting to listen to the both of you talk because my family right now is, we are communicating distance over the ocean and I almost chuckled to myself because that's primarily how my nine-year old daughter communicate towards me. So, of course I got to ask the question and through most of my business day, I am doing almost, Geoff, exactly what you said.

I wouldn't say that is like a ninety, ten. That is probably like a eighty twenty. Maybe some days it's a seventy, thirty split unlike communications. But for that person who is awkward in ninety-nine percent, expedient one percent 'in your face' type of communication situation how do they balance it out? How do they set themselves up for success when they have that one percent or that ten percent communication where they are going to have to be able to have that deep face-to-face conversation with somebody when, you're right, they are used to short acronym on their text message keypad.

Geoffrey: To me the question is one of looking at the skills and if you are happy and pleased with your success rates in these more difficult interactions. Then again, the kind of four canaries in the core mine are conflict resolution, persuasion, argumentation and social support. There are others. Storytelling, putting your emotions into words and so forth. There are others. I list many of them in my book. But they are kind of the four big ones: conflict resolution, persuasion, argumentation and social support.

And if you are happy right now with your success rate, you don't need to change a thing. You figured something out. But if you are feeling like, in any of these areas or even in all of them, you know, I would like to have more success in these interactions and I would like for these kinds of conversations to be less awkward and a little bit more fluid, then I have a very boring message which is: you have to practice that.

There is no substitute for, if you feel like, I am not a successful arguing as I like to be for important points at work or home. Let's say at work now. It doesn't mean that occasionally, you might not argue. You might not train your argument through email especially if the person that you are trying to have the argument with is, you know, separated by business and so forth. So this is a good point. Me framing my argument to you, something that's important at work.

I've got an idea and you two guys are my colleagues. And so I am going to sit down and going to count on this and I am really going to think about this email and I am even going to draft it and I'll

keep it in the draft open mail. I'll come first in the morning and I will look at it again. And so I craft the perfect email about my idea that I want to persuade you two guys and I send it to you. And I may or may not be successful.

But that type of persuasion is very different than me getting you guys on the phone and having to field your questions on the fly, having you guys be a little bit more off the cuff and not reading my email and then thinking about your own response by saying "Oh come on man, that's a terrible idea" or "Wait a minute, man we tried that five years ago" and me having to scramble and adjust and listen to your tone of voice. And try to perceive, "Uh-oh, Chris is playing Anthony off me and I need to try to get both of them because they are connected at the hip." And all of these things that I would have to do to persuade you on the phone or even more so, in person because then I have to look at your facial cues, manage the kind of physical space between us and so forth. It's not the same.

That real-time persuasion on the phone or real-time plus facial cues and facial orientation in person, it's much harder. But the thing of it is, no matter how much I want to sit behind my computer all day long and never come out, eventually some of the most important persuading that I am going to have to do in my life is going to be real-time over the phone, a phone call I cannot pick up or we are actually going to get on a plane and go see a client and I'm going to make a pitch, face-to-face.

And so it doesn't matter when I finally fly out to present this to a client if I am the greatest emailer of all. Because, in that face-to-face meeting, I am going to have to do a tonne of things. Responding questions on the flyer, read immediate cues, read the facial cues, manage the spatial orientation, scramble when it's not going my way, know how to close it out when ongoing conversation has gone my way.

All of these things, if all I have done before, has been the more expedient ways of communicating. In this instance, even though I have been persuading all along through my emails, I will find that I don't have enough in the tank enough of practices as I should be for a lot of the situations that I find myself in, especially the higher stakes one which often go down in synchronous real-time communication channels.

Anthony: Hey Geoff, let me ask you this question. You get to work with a lot of people and a lot of organisations. What are the most common communication mistakes that you see in your work?

Geoffrey: Oh, that's easy. So by far, the most common is not preparing for important interactions. I mean, the craziest thing about it is that people because of their fear in public speaking, will stay up all night working on PowerPoint slides for a briefing that everyone is sleeping through. Nobody cares about, during or after but people burn midnight oil on stinking PowerPoint because it's public speaking. But the real conversations that turn careers, career turning points, marriage turning points, family turning points. The action in communication happens one-on-one, one-on-two in a person. Not public speaking.

Public speaking isn't where it's at. Yeah, do you need to know I like giving presentations? Well yeah, obviously. But how often do you do it? Not very often. And when you do, how high are the stakes? That's debatable. But the conversations that were going to change your marriage or change your projective or your career or happening one-on-one and largely you are having to do them on your feet. And again, back to communication scrape perception, "Why on earth do I have to practice these things? I do it all the time. Everybody knows I am communicating all the time. I am communicating more than ever".

But the ways that we are communicating aren't giving us the full range of skills that we say that we need for our lives. We want to be successful in creating relationships, building strong linkages. That includes knowing how to establish reports or push on through early awkwardness in a conversation, rescue an interaction that is heading for the ditch and so forth. And all of these very important things that we say, most of us say, "Look I want to know how to build important relationships from working at home and I want to be able to do the hard stuff as well as the easy stuff with my communication." And it simply requires practice of those more difficult skills which is so boring and nothing could be more anachronistic in the digital age. "What are you talking about? Practice my communication? Come on. It's the digital age. I just fire off and go". So it's a throwback.

The one thing when I got married you know, a little bit over 10 years ago and my wife thought I was nuts. At that time, I was a Ph.D. in communication but I would make her practice. What are you going to say? How is it going to come out when some things should? Why on Earth would I do this? This is the dumbest thing. I am like, trust me. All you got to do, try it a couple of times and watch your success rate. Watch what happens to it. And it's the one thing she says that she was very resistant about. She thought I was nuts. But she tried it a couple of times and it worked for her because it's so simple.

Preparing for a conversation that matters increases the chances of success. It's the number one greatest failure. It's what people leave on the table all the time. They don't practice. And so I get a phone call after the conversation is blown up. "Hey Geoff can you help me out? Man I talked with my boss about this very important thing that I want and he laughed me out of the office." Well, Bubba it's too late then. You have had your best persuasive attempt. Your first one. Your best one is ended in a trail of tears. You should have called before. So we could think through it before the first time. After the thing is already blown up, we are just managing the aftermath. We are not working to shape it from the beginning.

Chris: Geoff, that's great advice and it actually makes me feel good because you being the communications expert, I had a couple chances actually earlier this week with some discover projects that I am working on. Where which literally there, as we say, it was life or death high stakes but it was a pretty important discussions and I am glad to know that I did the one thing that I was supposed to do which was prepare for it. So there weren't any PowerPoint presentations but I spent a little bit of time with myself before I walked in there.

But you are a communications expert so I got to ask the question, which is probably an answerable question but how did you end up writing a book that encourages people to stop talking?

Geoffrey: This is the crazy nature of the digital age. Is that the problem isn't not enough communication. The problem is too much communication. And for all of the reasons that we talked about; it is too much of the easy, it's not enough of the difficult, there is not enough reflection. I mean, people like me who spend their life helping people use their communication as a force for good in people's lives. And so I am working with people to help them use their communication to achieve what they want in their life.

And what is so baffling about the digital age is people in my profession have been trying for hundreds of years. If you want somebody to be more successful with their communication, essentially what you want to do to grossly simplify it, is that you want them to constantly take the other person's perspective, constantly be doing something called perspective-taking but it's just, you are always communicating with the diadded mind, with the other person in mind and you are trying to create the space for reflection when people talk because as long as there is the space for reflection and deliberate thinking, people aren't going to get in as much trouble with their words. And so in my profession we have been fighting to encourage people to take the other person's perspective and to create the space for deliberation and reflection for hundreds of years. And it's been hard enough pre-digital revolution.

But the truth being the most under attack in the digital age are the other person's perspective because you know, look man, they didn't call it a 'wePhone'. They called it an iPhone. And social media is good for a lot of things but it also happens to encourage a lot of thoroughly trivial self-expression. So that's all I-based communication. Not we-based. It's not perspective-taking. And that's to a large degree been encouraged. Our devices, our choices led us basically do whatever we want and create very individualistic ways of interacting so that's made it even harder for the technical bunch perspective.

And the other piece which is encouraging reflection, well it's like what Anthony was saying. You know, he doesn't even type the characters any more on the text message. He just hits the microphone button and speaks to it and that's what we all do because we are busy. And we are the short-cutting species. Come on, we are the species that created duct tape and post-it notes. I mean, we love shortcut. And so I am going to try to figure out how to, even with what's expedient now, make it increasingly expedient. And every time that I try to figure out how to squeeze an extra fraction of a second off my interaction, what I am actually doing is squeezing out that little bitty patch of deliberation. That is the turf I need the most to make sure that my communication is as good as it can possibly be.

And so, some of the inherent forces of the digital revolution and again, to repeat a point, I don't want to go back. I couldn't be happier that the revolution that we had was communication. That's great! I

am fine that we are flying around. Basically in the same planes and driving the same cars that we were from the 1940's and 50's. You know, they use gas. They use fossil fuels. They have rubber on the tyres and metal all around them. It's basically the same. But we got the communication revolution. I am delighted that that's what we got.

But the revolution is underperforming. And the reason that it's underperforming is because we need the new ways and we need to carry forward with us enough of the old ways so that the difficult things we want; our communication to be able to do for us and for our children aren't lost in the transition to increasingly expedient, inconvenient ways to communicate. When so much of what I need to do is painfully slow and inefficient, but by the way, it's so space to space, height touched if you will, slow inefficient in a personal connection that actually give me so much joy and fulfilment in my work and home life.

Anthony: That's pretty awesome. Geoff, I have got one more question I want to ask you and then we are going to move into the Take Action Today segment of the show. I am going to have Geoff kind of give you an off the wall piece of counter-intuitive advice that you can try to implement. So before we get into the last segment, Geoff, one question for you.

Engineers are primary audience and a lot of times there can be friction. You work on project teams. You work for supervisor who is usually running a project or running your department. A lot of engineers contact me with issues with their boss or supervisors or whatever their case may be. So it could be a million different issues but the bottom line is, what advice would you give someone who has to approach their supervisor about uneasy situations? What are the couple of things that maybe you could just throw out that might be helpful for them in that kind of a situation?

Geoffrey: Let me give some general advice then we make it a little bit more specific. The first general advice, which I say to almost anything is that, look, you need to be an experimenter. And you need to think of each interaction that you are having is something that I can learn from. And I am going to try this technique to this time and I am going to see how that goes for me. And then when it's done I am going to think about: what happened, what went well, what didn't and so forth. So think more like an experimenter because that's how you build expertise by thinking through what you want to do, using the technique, implying it and then seeing what happened. And then asking that critical question you know; what happened into that work for me. So that's the general advice.

Specifically wise, if it's a difficult topic or something that you want to say, that you are worried about how it might be perceived, is write down the main pillars. Most important messages have one or maybe two pillars. And so if you are trying to basically talk to your boss about, "Look, basically I want to take on more responsibility. So the first pillar is the actual technical part of the message. You have a one sentence message here in that case. I want to take on more responsibility.

But you need a second pillar in these sentences because you want to be not face threatening or you want to try to have that first message which on its own could speak come across as two brash report

write with your boss. You want to kind of ease into that. So your second pillar is: what is it that you are going to say to try to prove that immediate or reflexive rejection. So without being too deep into it most persuasive attempts, the very first thing that you are trying to do is prevent that reflexive rejection. Because then people start off with 'no' and you have to work them off the 'no'. And so in this instance I would recommend, okay, the second pillar: what are you going to say to your boss to try to make that a softer start-out? And that pillar may be something along the lines of, "Look I can't, thank you enough for all that you have taught me and taken me under your wing." And you put in your own words.

But the basic idea is the technical part of what I need to say to my bosses, I need more responsibility. But this pillar that is going ease me into it is something along the lines of depending on what actually happened in this condition. Look, I can't be more grateful for the way you have taken me under my wings. I have learned a tonne in the 18 months that I have been here and I am ready for more. I am ready for more responsibility. And so you might ease through the straight message that you have by more clearly acknowledging at the beginning everything that your boss has done for you in this case, to help you get comfortable in the organisation.

And so by the time you done that, you identify what your two pillars, I would have you actually say it. Let's actually fore come that speed. Have the interaction a couple of times. You will have put in your own words. You will have realized, "Oh, I thought it sounded so easy in my head but when I actually start to say it, it's harder". So you will start to throw them up the actual words. You will get comfortable with a couple, kind of key sentences that your message hangs around and you will be much more likely to prevent reflexive rejection during that conversation. And so that's how I would recommend in specific and general level preparing for a difficult conversation with your boss.

Anthony: Thanks so much Geoff. And what we are going to do now is we are going to go into our Take Action Today segment of the show so Geoff can give you really one piece of actual advice that you can take with you.

Take Action Today Segment:

Anthony: Alright, now it's time for the Take Action Today segment of the show. And you know, you have listened to this whole podcast and now we want to leave you with something that is really actionable. So we still have Geoff Tumlin here with us, author of Stop Talking, Start Communicating and Geoff, in your book, you give a lot of different counter-intuitive pieces of advice whether it's don't be yourself, lose your friends, play dumb, ignore your heart, don't solve problems and so on and so forth. Can you take one of them here for the end of the show to close this out and tell us what it is and tell us how someone could utilise that in their career kind of immediately and in their life, their personal life as well and start to see some improvements in their communication efforts.

Geoffrey: Sure. One of my chapters is I Don't Give People What They Want and it's about storytelling because people love stories. And so if you want to be a better communicator, practice being a storyteller and tell stories more often. And it doesn't have to be: "Once upon a time, there was this person and this person..." It doesn't have to be like that. Just telling things and narrow the form.

So when you are done listening to the podcast, go to your significant other, go to your kids and tell them a story. Tell them a story about the day. Tell them a story at the end of the day. Listen to one of their stories. Tell them a story about one of their crazy aunts or crazy uncles or the time that you and one of their family members did something really unusual when you were kids.

And then the next day tomorrow at work, find an opportunity where when you were going put something together and give three points and here is the evidence add a story to that as well. Don't just talk about why this particular idea that you have is the best course of action when you evaluate all the alternatives. Tell a story about what's that's going to mean when you actually bring this idea forth. What's it going to mean to the end users of the product. What problem is it solving, not that well, this will help us be more efficient, but tell a story about the problem from two months ago that bedevilled a customer and put it in human terms.

And that's the thing that I would say to practice and do immediately and get back in the habit of being a storyteller. Putting things in narrative form. That along with a lot of the ideas that we talked about on the phone call today can help us take better advantage of the remarkable innovations of the digital age and still be successful in the full range of communication that we need for our life at work and home.

Anthony: Geoff, thank you so much for coming on this show here today and sharing some of your wisdom here with us. Where can our listeners find you or learn more about you? Where can you refer them to?

Geoffrey: Well, I'll give you two. My author website which links to a lot of interviews and the stuff that I have written is at tumlin.com. And then the communication company where I do a lot of my work in the areas that we have talked about tonight is mouthpeaceconsulting.com. So either tumlin.com or mouthpeaceconsulting.com.

Anthony's Closing Remarks:

Great. And we are going to link to those sites and Geoff's book in the show notes for this show which you will be able to find at engineeringcareercoach.com/startcommunicating and we will also list a summary of the show there with some of the main points that Geoff made today. So I hope you enjoyed the episode today. One thing that I'll ask you to consider is if you are interested in taking your engineering career to the next level, consider trying out our private community which is the Institute for Engineering Career Development where we help engineers succeed in both work and life. We

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focus on skills like communication skills that Geoff talked about. Also networking, leadership and other things. Christian and I are actually in the process of retooling it and adding more benefits to the institute which is going to happen in May. However, you can get in now for the pricing today and you will be able to have that long term even with all the improvements that are coming. So check that out at engineeringcareerdevelopment.com. And until next time, I hope that you continue to engineer your own success.

*If you want to hear more episodes of **The Engineering Career Coach Podcast** you can subscribe on iTunes or go to engineeringcareercoach.com, where you will find tons of free engineering career resources. Just click the 'start here' button on the site for an easy to navigate index of all the resources available.*

You can also follow Anthony Fasano on Twitter @anthonyjfasano or Facebook at facebook.com/engineeryourownsuccess. Until the next time, thanks for listening!