

CHAPTER 7 CLASS HANDOUTS

Note: Your instructor may ask you to download, print out, and/or e-mail the following class handouts for this chapter:

A CRITICAL INCIDENT: A MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH?

INTERACTIVE PROBES FOR “A MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH?”

A CRITICAL INCIDENT: A MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH?*

A Japanese multimedia subsidiary in the United States had just completed a very successful year. All of the company goals were met or surpassed. As a result, the annual sales conference was held at the Disneyland Resort Hotel in California. Many of the salespeople brought their spouses to the conference to celebrate and enjoy a well-earned vacation. The audience at the dinner celebration consisted of mostly American salespeople and their spouses, and some Japanese technical support personnel. The Japanese president gave a brief welcome in halting English, but the audience appreciated his remarks.

Next, the American director of sales, William Wilde, got up and introduced the Japanese vice president, Satoshi Watanabe-san. They had planned ahead of time to give two short motivational speeches to kick off the conference. Watanabe-san was about 50 years old, and he had used the last two weeks to memorize his carefully prepared speech in English. When Watanabe-san stood up, his posture was rigid, his face was serious, and his tone sounded harsh. Here is what he said:

Thank you for your hard work this fiscal year. We have broken many records, but ... we need to be careful and not to appear too proud. We need to keep up our fighting spirit! Our competition is working to defeat us this very minute while we are celebrating. You have done a good job ... but you must do more. There's no time for frivolous activities. You must prepare yourselves to work twice as hard this coming year. The company has invested a lot of money in new manufacturing facilities. These facilities are producing our new product lines. It is your duty to this company to sell these products as efficiently as possible. You must not fail! You must not be content! I hope you do a better job in the new fiscal year. Thank you.

The American audience sat in stunned silence during most of Watanabe-san's speech. The American director of sales, William Wilde, stood up quickly, physically backed away from the Japanese vice president of sales, and with an awkward smile said:

Disregard everything he just said. We are here to celebrate your fantastic achievements this year! We've out-performed all our competitors this past year and your success is far beyond expectations. So give yourselves a big round of applause, and, let the festivities begin!

The audience applauded. William gave the signal to the hotel staff to serve the dinner. For the rest of the conference, the tension between Watanabe-san and William Wilde was obvious, and most of the other Americans were irritable.

*Source: Adapted from Clifford H. Clarke and G. Douglas Lipp (1998). *Danger and Opportunity: Resolving Conflict in U.S.-Based Japanese Subsidiaries*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

NAME: _____

INTERACTIVE PROBES FOR “A MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH?”
(Ask yourself and probe your classmates’ reactions)

1. What kind of persuasion style is Watanabe-san using?
2. How would you explain the American audience’s interpretation of Watanabe-san’s speech? What was their expectation?
3. What kind of persuasion style is Mr. William Wilde using?
4. What would be your analysis of the American audience's interpretation of Mr. Wilde’s speech? What was their expectation?
5. What are the hidden cultural values behind Watanabe-san’s motivational speech?
6. What are the hidden cultural values behind Mr. Wilde’s motivational speech?
7. If you were an intercultural consultant to this organization, what specific recommendations would you offer to both of them?