

Chris LoCurto: Welcome to the Chris LoCurto Show, where we discuss leadership and life, and discover that business is what you do, not who you are.

Folks, welcome to the show. We are excited today, because we are talking about a subject that so many of you want to know about. We've got a great author on board today, Michael Port. We're going to be talking about his brand new book: Steal the Show. On the book, on the cover, one of the subtitles of the book is: How to Guarantee a Standing Ovation for All the Performances in Your Life. That's not just standing up and giving speeches, but that's whatever you're doing: speeches, job interviews, closing deals, talking with your boss, talking with your team ... Whatever it is, how to understand the best ways of going about doing that.

Before we get into the interview, I wanted to let you know that we have got a fabulous download from Michael today. It's "50 Tips You Can't Afford To Ignore If You Want To Wow Your Audience." This is easy for you to get. If you would like that, go to [chrislocurto.com/downloads](http://chrislocurto.com/downloads). You can get that right there or text this as one word: Wowfactor. Text the word "Wowfactor" to the number 33444. That's "Wowfactor" to the number 33444, and we will send that to you.

Getting on to Michael, Michael is called "an uncommonly honest author," by the Boston Globe, and a "sales guru" by the Financial Times. Michael Port is a New York Times bestselling author of not one, not two, but six books, including: Book Yourself Solid, The Think Big Manifesto, and his hot new release, Steal the Show, which right now, it is out there. Interestingly, he is probably the only New Times bestselling business book author to have also been successfully a professional actor, guest starring on shows like Law & Order, Third Watch, All My Children, and in films like The Pelican Brief ... love that, and Down to Earth.

These days, Michael can be seen regularly on MSNBC, CNBC, and PBS as an on air expert in communication and business development. That's a lot of stuff! Please, do me a favor. Welcome to the show, Michael Port. Michael, glad to have you on.

Michael Port : Thanks so much. Great to be here.

Chris LoCurto: Dude, that is a lot! You've a ton, and you've been on some great shows.

Michael Port : Yeah.

Chris LoCurto: What was your favorite show?

Michael Port : Oh gosh! Sex & The City is still the thing that gets me recognized from my days in TV, and that was 1997.

Chris LoCurto: Was it really?

Michael Port : Interestingly enough, when I give speeches and my bio is read ... not that many people listen to bios. They're usually finishing up their texts but whenever they hear Sex & The City, all of a sudden all heads pop up. They find that interesting. That was actually a real fun show to work on. I loved all of that work, no doubt. I did a lot of Voice-Overs also. That was my bread and butter. I did Voice-Overs for brands like AT&T, and Coors Beer, Budweiser, Brown, Pizza Hut, MTV, and the Music Box. Remember the Music Box? "All music, all the time."

Chris LoCurto: Oh yeah! Oh my gosh!

Michael Port : I used to do 1-800-CALL-ATT.

Chris LoCurto: Now that you say that ... I didn't know that jumping into the interview, but now that you say that, I'm like, "I know that! Very cool. That's so cool.

Michael Port : Those were great days, but I really loved the theater. That's where my heart was. I had a great time performing, but the business itself wasn't for me at that age. I wanted success, and I wanted it fast, and I wanted it on my own terms. I suppose I still want that, but I didn't know how to manage those feelings at that age. When you are an actor, you have to spend a lot of time waiting for other people to give you work. I wasn't comfortable with that, so I decided to leave. Frankly, it was all premature. When I told my agent, I think I heard her jaw hit the desk. She's like, "You're just at the cusp of greatness," and I said, "No, I don't know. I can't do it anymore." I think I left that prematurely.

One of the things that it taught me, of course in retrospect, is it's the last 10% that matters. It's easy to start something and do okay, but it's the finishing that's the key. When I left acting, I went into business. I talked my way into the fitness industry, for which I was completely unqualified. I tell the story, in Steal the Show, about how I got that job, because I think it's a demonstration of using what an actor knows about performance to authentically present yourself to put yourself in situations that normally you might not excel at. It's, I think, a great lesson that we can all learn from. From there, I went out on my own about five years later.

I got very fortunate with my first book. Book Yourself Solid did very well, and that was about 13 years ago I started, and here we are today. This is the book that I always wanted to write. This was the book that I probably should have written from the beginning. I love performance so much. I love this work so much that I think I needed some time away from performing professionally in order to get clear on how I can use my training ... I have a Masters from the grad program at NYU, to help people who are not actors really thrive in the high stake situations of their life. Your life is made up of lots of high stakes situations, and how you perform during those moments, and if you fall flat, then your life is

relatively flat, but if you can shine when the spotlight's on you, then you get to do big things. That's exciting.

Chris LoCurto: I love the book. I love the concept. I love how you are taking something that you are obviously talented at, because you've done a lot in this area and helping people. You didn't come out with a book to say, "Here is how to be a better actor."

Michael Port : No way. No, this is for regular folks. I wouldn't write for actors now. Those aren't the folks that I serve. The thing is...one of the things that we can learn a lot from actors about is taking direction. It's a very, very important skill to be able to be able to filter the information you get from others about how to improve or to change, and to apply it in such a way that it helps you move forward according to your agenda. Actors, if they work professionally and are well trained, they tend to get very good at that, and they are open to that, because they typically work with directors. They don't work by themselves for the most part, and it really does help.

I do focus, in the book, on feedback, how to give it, how to take it, how to get the kind of feedback that you want so that it doesn't come across as constructive criticism. To me, criticism, even if it's constructive, is just criticism dressed up in instruction. It's still criticism either way, "Listen, can I give you a little constructive criticism, please?" That's not as supportive as the kind of feedback that we might want. We tend to run away from criticism, and as a result, we don't grow. I wrote this for folks who are absolutely terrified of performing, and I also wrote this for folks who quite like performing.

There is this meme out there that public speaking is the number one fear, fear so great that you'd rather die than give a speech. I haven't seen one study that actually proved it. You hear it everywhere! It's one of those things. 67% of statistics are made up on the spot. It's one of those. I just think it perpetuates this myth that it's supposed to be this terrifying, traumatic, horrible experience, when it can actually be quite fun and really pleasurable, and an opportunity for self-expression. Think about it. If I had a gun, and I held it to your head, and let's just say you were afraid of public speaking, and I just said, "Right now you have two options. One, you can give a speech for ten minutes. Number two, I pull the trigger and I blow your head off." I think the answer would be number one.

Chris LoCurto: That'd be a pretty easy answer.

Michael Port: I'm just saying I don't think that would be so tough. This idea that it actually is that greatest fear that people have, I think is not how we should frame it. Recognize that you don't need to be an entertainer to be a performer. That's really important to remember. You just need to be somebody who wants to connect with others and deliver on promises.

Chris LoCurto: I think that's probably ... For me, that's the most powerful piece, having been on the stage for years, and years, and years. The thing that I try to help people understand is, you have two options. You can focus on you, or you can focus on what the people are hearing. That's two different things. Even though the words may be the same, it's two different states of mind. That's what I love about the book. You didn't write the book about how to focus on your fear. You focused, on the book, on saying, "Let's focus on what you're putting out there," which to me is the most important thing. The moment I stop thinking about myself, there is no need to be nervous. The only reason to be nervous is if you're not prepared. It's not what you say, but it's what they hear. You can start really thinking about, "I need to give the most important information."

Michael Port: Just one quick thing. In chapter 2 ... Chapter 3, rather, which is about crushing your fears and silencing critics, I discuss two different ways to reduce your anxiety about performing. They're internal, rather than external. There are certainly things you can do externally. You can try to calm your breath and warm up your body, but ultimately, the fear is inside you. It's not on the outside of you. It's on the inside. There are two ways that we can reduce that fear. One, we can be better prepared. One of the reasons that we are often afraid is because we are not as prepared as we would like to be. We don't know if we are going to be able to deliver what we want to deliver.

I focus a considerable amount of time, in *Steal the Show*, on creating, writing, designing, developing your speeches, and rehearsing for them. Since I was trained, I know how to rehearse, but most people don't. Why should they? They were never taught. It's not something that you learn in your senior year in high school. I give them a very specific step-by-step process for rehearsing, so that they know how to be prepared. If you're prepared, then you tend to be calmer. If you know what you are going to do, and you know what to do, and you know what you're doing, then you feel a lot better.

Number two; we get a lot more anxious when we get self-absorbed. Once we start thinking about ourselves, and we go, "Oh my God, I look fat in these pants," or "They're going to hate me," or "They're not going to believe anything I have to say," or "Who am I to say this? It's already been said," or any other number of things that we start to obsess on, when we obsess on those things, it just gets worse. It's a downward spiral. If we focus on the audience and every speech, every interview, every negotiation, every deal, every engagement ... When I say "engagement," I mean "will you marry me" type engagement has a promise. Our job is to deliver on the promise, to focus on the people we're meant to serve.

When your focus comes off of you, and your own needs, and anxieties, and on to the people that you're there to serve, it gets a lot easier. You get a lot more relaxed. You are often more comfortable, and you forget about some of the things that were making you nervous, because you can't hold those two thoughts in your head at the same time. Your mind is focused on one thing,

which is delivering on the promise, that you don't have the space in your brain for the anxiety.

Chris LoCurto: Just to let you know the makeup of our audience, we've got about 40% business owners ... Entrepreneurs. We've got about 40% leaders and people who want to be entrepreneurs, and about 20% who want to be a leader or entrepreneur, and 10% team members and stuff like that. The important thing that I want people to hear is, as we're going through this, so much of this is in the context of the term "speech," but it's everything you do. If every interaction is a sale of some sort, every interaction is you trying to convince, if you are the receptionist, if you're talking to your leadership, if you're doing a sale ... The best sales people understand this, everything is that speech. It's that context of, "If I get out of me and not worry about me, and can focus on this person on the other end, I can actually succeed in this." Correct?

Michael Port: That's exactly right. In the beginning of the book, there are two things that I lay out right away, just to set the ground rules. First off, when I say audience, audience is somebody who is listening. It could be one person sitting across the desk from you, or it could be a theater filled with people. Anybody who you ask for attention from is an audience, and there is often an inherent value in that interaction based on performance. Then number two; performance in the way that we're looking at is about authenticity, because sometimes when we hear the word "performance," we think "fake." We think "phony."

Someone says, "I don't want to perform, because I don't want to be phony." I will often ask them if they are phony, and they said, "No, of course I'm not phony." I say, "Then you don't have to worry about it." There are people who will be phony, there are people who will be fake but if you're not that kind of person, then when you're performing, you won't come across as that kind of person. The greatest performers in the world are the most honest ones, the most authentic ones. Performance is in large part about amplifying different parts of your personality in order to achieve a particular goal.

One of the things we can learn from acting is that an actor, when they're trying to develop a character, tries to identify, as clearly as possible, what the character wants, their objectives, what they're trying to achieve. You can't play-act emotions.

Chris LoCurto: That's good.

Michael Port: You can't play-act sensibilities, but what happens when you're performing, in this case as an actor ... We'll demonstrate very shortly how this applies to non-actors. When you're developing a character, you're trying to identify what you want to achieve, and then you try every tactic you possibly can to achieve that goal. If it's a well-written script, then the writer has introduced lots of obstacles, and those obstacles create conflict, which is often very compelling for the audience to watch. Then the actor's job is to fight as hard as possible to get

through those obstacles, get around those obstacles in order to get where they want to go. Depending on how the script turns out, the resolution is either one where that character did get what they want or they don't.

The same thing is true in life. We all have agendas. I think to shy away from the fact that we have agendas is actually inauthentic. If we are clear about our agenda, then we are authentic, and then we try everything we can to achieve that objective and to fulfill that agenda. When I go on the podcasts during a book launch like this, I'm not going on just to have a chat. I want people who are listening to go, "I really liked this stuff. I think it could be helpful. I want to go buy his book." That's my agenda. I don't think that stating that objective turns people off. I think they'll go, "Yeah, of course that makes sense." Everybody is trying to achieve something to make something happen, to produce something. That's perfectly normal. What's inauthentic is when you pretend that you don't have that objective.

Chris LoCurto: I don't have book to sell, but I do.

Michael Port: Yeah, it's like, "Yeah, I don't care if anybody buys my book, but you can find it at [stealtheshow.com](http://stealtheshow.com)." It's inauthentic. That's what we're trying to do. We're just trying to demonstrate that then I need to perform. I'm not coming on here doing a song and dance. I'm not ... (singing). I'm not here to sing, because that's not what I do. That's not necessarily what performance is about. I think people will see this pretty quickly when they get into the book, because ... Just think about a negotiation. Think about how the way you use your body language influences the outcome of that negotiation. If you can't stop your fidgeting, they may see that you are uncomfortable, and if they see that you are comfortable, they know they've got you.

If you don't know how to organize your ideas when you're presenting to your team around a big project, if you don't know how to tell the story of the project, then that project may not come to fruition in a way that you want it to. We know that business is made up of a series of successful projects. One project after another, if it's completed successfully, it tends to produce a successful business. Every project has a story, and every business has a story. That's one of the reasons that I focus significantly on story-creation, story sculpting, molding, and story telling, how to find the right stories, and then how to craft them so that you tell them quite well.

Chris LoCurto: That is one of the most powerful pieces, is creating that good story. Let me ask you this, how can people ... You've been a part of the greatest writing processes, I assume, because you've been in amazing shows. Like you say, *Sex & The City* was ... I don't even know how many years it was on.

Michael Port: That thing runs nonstop. Right now it's on the homepage of Amazon Prime.

Chris LoCurto: There you go!

- Michael Port: I still get little checks like \$28.
- Chris LoCurto: That's not because they did a crappy job or stories. Obviously, this has been a powerful process. How do people create a story that keeps their audience, whether it is thousands of people or two people? How do they keep people on the edge of their seats?
- Michael Port: Let's start with sourcing your stories, discovering them. This is one of the things that people often ask. They say, "I don't know what stories to tell. How can I figure out what stories to tell?" We have had so many experiences throughout our life that we just can't handle thinking about all the time, because it, of course, would just be too much for our brain to handle, but they're still in our brain ... Things that happened to you when you were 5, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, et cetera, et cetera. I have this prompting process to pull those stories out of you, and then a specific way that you use it to craft those stories. Let's play a little game, if you'd be so kind.
- Chris LoCurto: Yeah, of course.
- Michael Port: Can we do that?
- Chris LoCurto: Sure.
- Michael Port: Okay. I want to prompt you and see just what stories come to mind. This is a great thing to do with a friend. It's the reason I'm going to do it with you now, because it's much more fun, and your brain tends to work more quickly and more creatively. As a result, you come up with more stories. What you do is you take out a piece of paper, and you would just put a line on the side of the piece paper with a title that says "Stories." You're not going to judge these stories. You're not deciding whether or not you're going to use these at any point. You're just trying to remember the stories. That's all.
- Then you back later, and you look and go, "Could I use that in my next meeting to demonstrate the point of hard work," or "Could I use that story to demonstrate that every once in a while we do things that make us look foolish, but you know what, we live to tell the tale?" You go back after and do that. Right now it's just a brainstorm creative process. I'm going to start with people. I just want you to just...whatever person comes to your mind, whatever story comes to your mind. No filtering. You don't have to tell me the whole story, but just say, "The time that I fell off a cliff." Let's say a high school girlfriend, what comes to mind?
- Chris LoCurto: The funniest thing is the moment that came out, a girlfriend that I had that did not last very long, but I remember, riding on the bus together, her flipping up the seat and ... I don't even know why didn't know that she carried a knife with her, and carved our names into the bottom of the seat of the bus.

Michael Port: Oh my God!

Chris LoCurto: I don't know why that was all that came to mind, but it was just one of those ...

Michael Port: There you go, but see, that's it.

Chris LoCurto: ... "Huh, I wonder what happened to that girl?"

Michael Port: Yeah, and when is the last time you thought of that? It could be 30 years, 40 years.

Chris LoCurto: Yeah, probably.

Michael Port: There you go. It's just a demonstration that there are lots of stories floating around in our brain that we have access to. You just right this down and say, "Girlfriend with a knife who carved up the floor ... Whatever.

Chris LoCurto: The bottom of the seat.

Michael Port: After you do this for few minutes, you'll have ten stories just on people. You could do this for day, and you'd come up with 100 stories, I bet. You might look at that one, for example, and say, "How could I apply that?" Say, "I'm giving a speech about trying new things," or "I'm trying to get my team at the office to experiment a little bit." Maybe that's the story. Say like, "I met this girl. She is like my first girlfriend. It was really exciting, and next thing you know, she does this thing and I was freaking out. I was scared out of my mind, because I never even had a knife!"

Chris LoCurto: Are we going to carve our names into each other's arms or something next?

Michael Port: Yeah. Then you could find something in the story and say, "Then I started thinking about all of the other dangerous things that could happen with this knife. What is she going to do with it? What if I break up with her? Will she stab me in the chest?"

Chris LoCurto: That is.

Michael Port: Yes. You are able to demonstrate to them that even though there is risk associated with trying new things, that it all turned out okay in the end, assuming that you don't get stabbed in the chest.

Chris LoCurto: The funny thing is those were thoughts ... I wasn't afraid that she was going to stab me, but literally, the thought of, "I'm dating a girl who carries a knife who just flipped up a seat and carved it. What in the world am I doing!" You have that conflict, right?



Michael Port: Interestingly enough, a story like that, you could have a number of different meanings, just depending on how you look at it, how you want to pass out the different ideas or the morals of the story. That's one thing you do. Now you look at places. You just think of places like for example maybe a place you used to go in the summer at some point, either a vacation you took recently...

Chris LoCurto: For me it's always ... My favorite summer place is Sonoma out in California.

Michael Port: Anything that happened there when you were younger?

Chris LoCurto: Gosh, nothing comes to mind, except it was always just a fun, exciting thing.

Michael Port: Do you have any friends there?

Chris LoCurto: No, not that live there. Live outside of it. I was born there and so on, but I was raised in Tahoe, so it was just a destination.

Michael Port: How about with your family? Did you have any particular experiences with your dad there that were meaningful?

Chris LoCurto: Yeah, absolutely. Actually, my mom was raised not too far from there, so it was actually good. I took her back there years ago, to just drive around. She hadn't been there in forever, so being able to drive through her old haunts and looking at the ... I found out that my mother, as a senior in high school ... There is big fountain where she went school, they dumped dried laundry soap in the fountain, and it filled all the streets and everything with all of these bubbles. There you go.

Michael Port: There you go. There is a story for that. We just had to go over this a little deeper until something came up. There is a story there about your mother going and looking back at her past and what it meant to her. That's a pretty big deal. When you get older, when you look back on your life, what does it mean to you? What are the things that you can remember? That's something that people would be wise to think about now. Then there is the story of the soap, that even good people do some things do some things every once in a while that are a little bit irreverent or naughty.

Chris LoCurto: You are assuming that my mom is good.

Chris LoCurto: I say that because she is listening to this.

Michael Port: There is that. It's a story that you can use to tell one of your kids when they did something that they really weren't supposed, but you're not going to pretend that you did things like that either ... You understand the consequences of these kind of things. Then that goes into a real life high stake situation. Once again, you see how even the story discovery is not just about giving speeches on a stage. There's people, places, and then things. Maybe your first car?

Chris LoCurto: I had a Fiat. I had a little Fiat that actually caught fire underneath the dashboard.

Michael Port: Great. See? There you go. That's a pretty big deal, and I'm sure there's a great story around it. Finally ... People, places, things, and then times or events. When we think of times and events, there are things that will immediately pop up, or maybe your graduation from high school or your graduation from college.

Chris LoCurto: It is amazing how rapidly ... You use this by pulling, piece after piece, by just using events, things, pieces, people?

Michael Port: Yeah ... Places.

Chris LoCurto: Creates the beginnings of the content.

Michael Port: That's right. Then what we do is then we just brainstorm the whole story. Sometimes, it helps recording it, because you were trying to flash it out. If we do it on audio, and then we listen back, and we can write it down, what we said or we can have it transcribed if it's a very long story. It's good to have just a big messy draft, because that way, what we're going to do is we're going to cut. I'm going to try to sculpt it, mold it, because a story has three acts. The first act is the exposition: the time, the setting, and the place. It's the information that the listener needs to know in order to understand what comes next.

If there's too much exposition, then it just goes on for too long that people get bored, and they say, "Is something going to happen?" It's like watching a movie, and you're like 20 minutes in, and you're like, "Are they going to do anything except sit there?" You want stuff to happen. That's what people want in the story. If there's not enough, then you might feel like you're watching a French film. You're like, "What's going on?"

Chris LoCurto: I don't have a clue.

Michael Port: Who is the brother? There's a lot of wonderful French films. I'm just fooling around, but that's the case. They're just enough.

Chris LoCurto: It's the backstory of, "This has to be interesting." It has to tell enough, but obviously you can't give too much information.

Michael Port: Yeah. It's enough that people are, "I want to know what's going to happen next." The order of the information that's shared is very important. I just came from doing a master class in LA. We have another one next week in New York. It's part of the book launch, a full day event. A number of people were having trouble telling their stories, and this is something that we worked on. For one of them, all they needed to do to make the story truly remarkable ... People were blown away by the story, was just changing the order of some of the information in terms of the way it was introduced. Same information, just different place in the story set the story up differently.

If you know the end of the story at the beginning of the story, it may not work. However, there are some stories that you already know the end of, but you don't know how they go there, and you're fascinated to know, so fascinating to know how they go there. When we see a fictionalized historical film ... We know that John Kennedy was shot, but a film about behind the scenes might be fascinating, because we are interested to know how all of this went down. It can go both ways. The order of the information is very important.

The first act is always about the exposition. The second act is the conflict. It starts with inciting incidence. Something occurs that creates conflict, and that conflict spurs some kind of action, and that action might create more conflict, which then spurs some more action, which then spurs some more conflict. In most stories, the bulk of the story is in act 2. That's the middle part. That's where the tension's created.

Then, of course act 3 is the resolution. Resolution is the thing that we're waiting for. It's not always happy. Sometimes it's "they all lived happily ever after," and sometimes it's "they all died in the end." The resolution determines the length of the story, meaning if the resolution is worth waiting for, it's incredible powerful, and then the story can be longer.

Michael Port: Yeah, right. "All of that, and that's the ending?" The strange thing about all of this is it's art. Many people don't think of themselves as artists, but they are. They are creative artists. Anytime they tell a story, they are an artist telling a story, trying to sculpt it in such a way that the listener finds it intriguing. If you're just telling stories to tell stories to hear yourself tell stories, then they might not be as interesting to the listener. We're trying to understand how to make these stories relevant to the people that are listening.

Chris LoCurto: I think ... We just did our next level of event where one of the things we were teaching on was sales. This is so powerful to sales people, correct?

Michael Port: That's right.

Chris LoCurto: When you look at creating a sale, a sale isn't just, "I've got this great book, Steal the Show, you should buy it. It's great."

Michael Port: It'd be really nice if that's what it was.

Chris LoCurto: If this worked out, we'd all be doing good, but that creating the ... Like you said, creating the given circumstance. What is going on? What is the backstory? Here is this, this, this, and the here is the conflict, for so many people, you are touching people where it is a fear getting out there and talking to people, getting out there and speaking to their leaders, trying to convince somebody of something ... Whatever that audience is. You do have to create the conflict so that the other person understands the pain.

Michael Port: Anytime you're speaking, it's public speaking, isn't it?

Chris LoCurto: Yeah, absolutely.

Michael Port: If you open your mouth and words come out, you're speaking publicly. It's not just on a stage. In my bio, you mentioned that the Financial Times called me a "sales guru," and the Wall Street Journal called me a "marketing guru." I love that those are in there, because they crack me up. They really do, because when I started my professional life when I left acting, I hated the whole idea of marketing and selling. I hated it. I just couldn't get my mind wrapped around selling, mostly because mostly the people that sold to me turn me off.

Chris LoCurto: The experiences that you'd heard.

Michael Port: Yeah, the experiences that I had around it turned me off, so I said, "I don't want to be one of those people." Just like I said earlier, when you say, "Are you phony," and you said, "No," then you won't be. I had that fear too at the beginning, that if I just did any selling, if I tried to convince anybody of anything, then somehow I'm going to be inauthentic. I had that same fear. I really laugh when I hear those lines, and I really appreciate it, because my first five books are about marketing and sales for business owners. The reason that I started writing on those topics is because I found a way to fall in love with it using performance.

I realized, "You know what? I have to play the role of somebody who is comfortable selling. How do I do that? Maybe I can use the imagination technique of "acting as if." Maybe I can use the improvisation principle of saying, "Yes, and," and they worked. Then I realized, "Wait a minute. I'm not pretending to be somebody else when I'm doing this. I'm me, and it's a part of me, and I can enjoy it, and you know what? I can actually be really good at it, and be very comfortable with it." That's how I got here today, and that's why I wrote Steal the Show.

Chris LoCurto: Which again, powerful books and the whole process, helping people to see it from every aspect. Book Yourself Solid, a great book of helping people to overcome the obstacles that they have, or actually I should say, that they assume are out there. Let's say somebody is moving in that direction, what is the biggest mistake that somebody in public speaking, and acting, and selling, what's the biggest mistake somebody can make, and how can they avoid it?

Michael Port: I think that many people, when they hear what I'm about to say, will brush it off. They'll never do it. They'll go, "I would never do that." Here is what I think it is; I think it's respect. If you do not respect the audience no matter what they are doing, no matter what they are thinking, no matter what they are throwing at you, it's hard to win them, because there are two essential components. One is respecting them, and two, loving them no matter what they're doing. Sometimes, that's hard, maybe because we try to judge people who are

listening to us in an audience, and we think maybe they hate us because they look like they're frowning. Meanwhile, they're just thinking, and that's why they look, like, "Hmm, this is very interesting."

Chris LoCurto: We've got a ton teaching personality styles. I've been teaching personality styles for almost 20 years. The biggest, the funniest that when I started speaking, the first person that threw me off was what we call a high compliant. A high detailed person. It was a friend of mine sitting in the audience, and she had this dull look on her face. I had to ask her afterwards. I'm like, "Were you mad at me?" She's like, "What are you talking about?" I'm like, "You just looked like you hated every word coming from my mouth."

That's when I discovered that there are people who are really high processors, high detail people that process with their face. If you're pulling your energy from a crowd, which you should not do. You need to have your energy anyways, then you will look out in that crowd and see that one person or those three people and go, "I'm sucking."

Michael Port: Let's use your friend as an example. Let's flip it. Let's look at the other side. We want to be the kind of person that others want to help. We want to be the kind of person that others want to help, because if we want to move forward, if we want doors opened for us, then people have to do that for us. We try to break them down, but eventually, somebody is going to tackle us and send us packing. We want to be the kind of person that others want to help.

When I was young, I had trouble in class absorbing what the teacher was saying and taking the notes at the same time, because I'm dyslexic. I would try to take the notes, but in trying to take the notes, because I wrote them down slowly, the teacher would already be past what I was writing down when I looked back up, and I would have missed a section. I had to get notes from other people. Typically, if you're asking people for their notes, they resist, because they think, "You're not going to class, why should I give you my notes for ...?" I'd have to explain to them, "Look, here is the deal," and I had to be the kind of person that others want to help. I'd also had to be that kind of student that the teacher would want to help.

When you're sitting in an audience, your face tells the teacher something. When you're sitting in a meeting, your face tells the leader of that meeting something. People are making all sorts of assumptions about the way we are looking at them. As a performer, what I know is how my face looks. I often joke that because I have a shaved head, and I have deep set eyes, and kind of a big jaw, that I look like a killer. I smile a lot, because if I don't, I might look a little intimidating. Fortunately, I'm not very big. If I was really big, then it might be really scary. I'm not a particularly big person, so I joke about that.

There's some truth to it, in that people respond to the way you look, and if you don't realize how you look, you may not be getting the kind of response that

you want. I don't mean whether your hair looks good. I mean, does it look like you care about what they're saying? Is your face soft and open? Do you look like you're disregarding what they're saying or how they feel? Do you look like you're paying attention, for that matter? These are all performance elements. I know if I'm sitting there in a meeting or class, and I'm getting tired, and then maybe even if I'm a little bored, I don't show that to the teacher.

That would, A, be disrespectful, and B, it's certainly going to help me get where I want and get the help that I want. I perform and make my face look like I am listening, and then that actually helps me listen too. That's the other thing that's interesting. This is something that we should monitor also. One of the things you can do is, you can have your friends video you when you don't realize they are in those different situations, and the show you, "Here is your face." I'm like, "That's what my face looks like?" Often I will do this with audiences when I speak. I will speak, and then I will watch them while they speak, and I'll make mental notes, and then I will use different people in the audience, and give different examples, of course if they're willing ... Only if they're willing. That's the key.

Any audience interaction must be proportionate to the amount of trust that you've earned. If you have a lot of trust, then there's trust in the room, and if the people know each other [inaudible 00:40:47], then you can do this. I might say, "Here is what I see from you when you're sitting here watching me." Maybe I see some, they look a little bit resentful or look a little bit arrogant in the way they're looking at you, so I'll say, "This is what I see. I may be totally wrong, but this is my impression. Let's see if your team thinks the same thing when you are with them." Often, the team says, "Yeah." If the team knows them well, [I'll 00:41:17] say, "I know you are really not like that, but that's what you look like sometimes, and it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable." You can change that if you learn how to perform.

Chris LoCurto: Yeah. I used to sit in a teaching setting a long time ago, where we would have people come in from time to time, and there was the cool section. I felt so bad for a lot of speakers coming in, because they always go straight there and try to win that crowd, and it's like, "Don't focus on that as your audience. Don't try and pull your energy, because eventually, they would completely leave that section alone. They're not getting something; so don't pull that from them. Understand that they're going to be there. Do your thing, but what you're showing me as the speaker is that you're insecure about part of your audience right now."

Michael Port: That's right. We can break the audience up into three different groups. There are the people who are your big fans. These are the ...

Chris LoCurto: Always going to give you great feedback.

Michael Port : Yep. They're just totally on your side of the fence. They already see the world the way you see the world. They are easy. They are easy, easy, easy. Then there are the people who are on the other side of the fence who are hard. They absolutely, no matter what you do, do not want to come over to your side of the fence. They don't want to see the world the way you see the world. If you are on the political right, the political left is not going to come over to your side of the fence. why in the elections, they are always going for the electorate that's in the middle ... Those independents. That few percent, because they are the persuadables.

The same thing is true in the audience. What's very helpful is to try to focus our argument, so to speak, that we're trying to make on the persuadable in the middle. They may not see the world the way you see the world just yet, but they want to, and they want to embrace it. They may scare them a little bit, because ... Think about this. If you're asking somebody to change the way they think, or the way they feel, or something that they do, they may have been doing that thing for 30 years, or feeling that think, or thinking that way for a long, long time, and the decisions they've been making over the course of their life have been influenced by that particular perspective or those particular actions.

Now you're saying to them, "I'd like you to consider a different way," and you might even be saying, "because that way is producing negative consequences." That might be confronting to them, because change can be confronting. You may be asking a lot of them. Interestingly enough, especially if you're giving a speech or you're coming in new to the office and you take a new leadership position, they may not know you very well, and all of a sudden you are asking for something different.

We need to do our best to demonstrate that we understand the way the world looks to them. If they are people who are open to changing, they will be much more likely to do so, because they believe that we understand them. Let's think about it. If I came on to this podcast and I said, "Listen, performing is easy. Any idiot could do it. People who can't perform, you've just got to get your act together, and read this book, and then do what I tell you to do," that you ...

Chris LoCurto: Book sales right there, baby!

Michael Port: Right. Exactly. You'd be like, "Jeez, this is the least listened to show that I've ever done," but because I work to demonstrate that I really do understand the way the world looks, we can make a connection, because it's easy to separate ourselves from somebody who has a particular talent or skill set that we might not think we have. They might say, "Yeah, but much easy for you Michael, because you were a professional actor. You have training, you have the talent," et cetera. Of course, I would say there are always people with more talent; there are always people with more training. I don't get caught up in that and I don't want other people to either.

The point is, it's easy to distance yourself especially if you don't want to do the thing that the person is asking you to do, even though you know you should be doing it. It's too easy. This is why we have to make that connection. If we're trying to ask something of somebody, they need to know that we get them. This is essential.

Chris LoCurto: 40%. I'm going to make up one of those statistics right now. 40% of the population are what we call high amiables. They have the hardest time making decisions, and they're also the very people who cannot stand change in conflict. To your point, if this is almost half of your audience, and you are the, "Hey, do this because I tell you to," then you are almost cutting out 40% of your audience immediately, because you haven't proven to them that you understand where they are coming from and you have a greater solution, correct?

Michael Port: That's exactly right. I do beg to differ. I do think it's 42.3%.

Chris LoCurto: I think you are right!

Michael Port: You knew that was coming, didn't you?

Chris LoCurto: Absolutely. That's the new statistics. I haven't put that out there yet. Thank you for introducing that. That's awesome.

Michael Port: You are very welcome. It's my pleasure.

Chris LoCurto: Dude, there is so much ... I'm cutting out half of my questions with you. There is so much we could talk about, but we are running out of time, and I know you've got more stuff you've got to run onto. Let me through just throw out a couple more with the people that are listening, I want them to know, because a lot of stuff that I get is, "How do I move people in a direction?" For you, I want to ask, how with the speech, with the building, and with the content, with the presentation at the end ... My buddy Rory Vaden, I believe you were on his show, I believe recently.

Michael Port: I was. Yeah.

Chris LoCurto: He is a genius at this, and it's one of the things that even I, I've been speaking 27 years. I love speaking. It's my happy place, but one thing that I have always sucked at is the end of the speech, "Hey, here's what I need you to go and do," because it's just ... I will teach everything under the sun, but that's always a difficult thing for me. How can I motivate my audience to take action after my presentation?

Michael Port: I'm with you. I'm in your court. This is something that I've had to work on over the years myself for two reasons. One, because I typically don't like to ask a lot of people. That's just sort of my natural disposition. Two, I get so focused on teaching, and helping, and that I forget that I'm supposed to say, "By the way,



"I've got this thing." I really do. I'm like, "Oh Jeez, I never ..." I'll do a podcast. I get off and go, "I didn't even give him a website." It is something that's very important, because you are in service of other as you stand in the service of your own destiny. We are not ... I don't speak for free. There's always some value to it, either I'm getting paid my fees, or I may go somewhere for free, because I think the exposure to potential business is worthwhile. Again, just like that we always have some kind of agenda when people design speeches specifically as sales vehicles rather than delivering on a promise to that audience. That's a little bit different. What you're talking about is delivering completely on the promise to your audience, and also saying, "I've got this thing."

My theory was this, always be best in class. If you're best in class, if you go out there and steal the show, if you kill it, you will have people lining up for what you have to offer. When I did this workshop this weekend or this masterclass this weekend, at the end we told them ... Louis and I said, "We have a couple of online courses. If you want these courses, normally they cost \$2,500, but if you buy them together, his and mine together, you can have them for 1,000 just while you're here today." We sold lots of them. We just explained what was in them, as I said, the normal price and here is what it would cost. Then we also had a line of people giving their name and information to my fiancée so that she would contact them about private coaching or some of our higher level graduate programs. We didn't sell those.

Someone just asks, "How can we work with you privately?" I said, "There a few ways that you can work with either me or my staff," et cetera. "Just leave your name and email address to Amy, and then she or the director of missions will call you next week and you could talk about it." Simple as that. I think that if you are confident, in that you are there to deliver on the promise, and you know that you can truly help people and go to that next level with them, then I think making an offer is quite a lovely thing to do. People buy to express their values. It's one of the things I write about in Book Yourself Solid. They don't buy for us. They're not doing it as a favor. It's like "Kid, here is 25 cents for your lemonade." That's a favor, but no, normally they don't. What they want to do is express their values. Take, for example, let's say you saw my credit card receipts and every single item on there had some ... There was a case of vodka delivered to my house every Monday. I was playing the slot machines in Vegas every week and there were 19 leased Porsches and Maserati's in my garage, you get a picture of one particular value system. If you saw my credit statements and it had something very different like educational experiences for the family or private school for the kids or any number of other things that were a little bit more positive in nature ... I'm not judging. I'm not judging the vodka, Porsche driving, gambling. I'm not judging. I'm just saying, you'd say there are two ...

Chris LoCurto:

As long as I'm not doing it at the same time.

- Michael Port: Exactly. Those are two value sets. What it suggests to me is that people buy to express their values. If you have something ... If you are offering some sort of educational program or selling a particular product that makes somebody's life better in some way, they're expressing how they feel about their life by buying that product. It's not about you. If you take it off of you ... Remember at the beginning we talked about, you're less nervous when you have to present or perform in a high stake situation when you take it off of yourself, focus on delivering the promise. The same thing is true when you are trying to introduce what you sell to somebody. Take it off yourself, it's not about you. Focus on the fact that they express their values through what they buy.
- Chris LoCurto: If you've done a great job ... If you've done this ... Folks, listen, we've barely scratched the surface of this book. We've been going an hour, and we've barely scratched the surface of this, but if we've done the things that you're teaching, if we've put these things into place, we are on stage, we're delivering or caring more about the people than we are of ourselves, we've done a great job putting together the content, we've delivered well, we have a thousand times better chance of moving people in the direction in whatever direction of whatever it is that we are wanting them to do, because we've got trust, we've respected them, they respect us. It's as simple as an ask? Is that correct?
- Michael Port: Yeah, absolutely. Simple is a nice way to look at it. It doesn't mean it's going to be necessarily comfortable for us when we start out. Eventually it becomes more comfortable. What I'd say right now is, I'm going suggest people go buy *Steal the Show*, but I'm not asking them to, because it's not for me. It's for them, and that's what's important. At the end of the day, what do I get per book? A dollar fifty, \$2? The publisher gets the rest, so I'm not going to get rich off them just buying.
- Chris LoCurto: You didn't write the book for a buck fifty a book. You wrote it because you wanted to change lives.
- Michael Port: Yes, exactly. Hopefully the people who read it go, "Wow. This is phenomenal. I want to work with them more." Again, it's just total transparency. It makes it a lot easier, and ultimately the people who are listening, they'll decide whether or not they want to improve their performances. They'll decide whether or not there's value in that. Some people will say, "No. I don't really think it matters. I'll just keep doing what I'm doing." Other people will say, "I do care about the future. I know the future belongs to the learner, and I know that performance matter. I know that if I can perform better in high stake situations, then I'll steal the show," and they'll go buy the book.
- Chris LoCurto: One last thing. If you were to go back to a young Michael, early 20s, what would you tell him?

- Michael Port: I'd tell them, "Don't be such a prick." I'll just say, "Get over yourself and your own ego, and do the work that's required, and if you get rejected, don't give up." Period.
- Chris LoCurto: As funny as that is, it's so incredibly powerful, so powerful. Michael, thank you so much. Again, the book is Steal the Show: From Speeches to Job Interviews to Deal-Closing Pitches, How to Guarantee a Standing Ovation for All the Performances in Your Life. How can people get the book and get more of you?
- Michael Port: stealtheshow.com is a great place to go, because we offer bonuses along with the purchase of a book. Of course any bookstore that you frequent will have the book as well.
- Chris LoCurto: Excellent. Michael, thank you so much for coming on the show and doing this.
- Michael Port: I've got to say, because people who are listening to this podcast, they should go listen to my podcast also. Steal the Show with Michael Port is really quite good. Lots of short episodes specifically content-driven, just me and the microphone.
- Chris LoCurto: Fantastic. Again, thank you so much for coming on the show.
- Michael Port: You're welcome. It's my pleasure.
- Chris LoCurto: Folks, Steal the Show, the podcast, stealtheshow.com, Michael has got incredible material out there to change your life. Also, we have got the fantastic download that he has given us, "50 Tips You Can't Afford To Ignore If You Want To Wow Your Audience." Very easy to get. Go to [chrislocurto.com/downloads](http://chrislocurto.com/downloads) or text "Wowfactor" to the number 33444. Guys, this is stuff you need to know. I hope that you have taken plenty of notes from this. I hope that you have realized how much this can impact you in your business, in your leadership, in your way to becoming a leader.
- When I said that we've only scratched the surface, I am not kidding. There is a ton of great information in this book, so make sure that you pick it up. As always, we want you to take this information, change your leadership, change your business, change your life, and join us on the next episode.