

## **Lizbeth Phelps: TotalPicture Radio Interview Transcript**

It is the mission of our guest today, Lizbeth Phelps, that inspired leadership training be the home base of a powerful international movement of bold, original entrepreneurs revolutionizing the world. According to her blog, *Escaping The Wannabees*, her part in your success will be to inspire, empower and encourage you to fulfill, without reservation, the calling you have and then succeed at it, with powerful communication that makes you wealthy and indeed evolves the human condition.

Welcome to a leadership channel podcast on TotalPicture Radio, this is Peter Clayton.

I met Lizbeth at an event in New York City a couple of weeks ago which we will return to but first Lizbeth, welcome to TotalPicture Radio.

**Lizbeth:** Thank you so much Peter. I'm so happy to be here.

**Peter:** That was a pretty lofty introduction.

**Lizbeth:** It really was.

**Peter:** You are the founder of Inspired Leadership Training, so please define this and explain how this differs from the traditional leadership coaching that a lot of people are doing.

**Lizbeth:** First and foremost, traditional leadership training or coaching really has to do with or is relevant for C-levels in corporations.

**Peter:** The Marshall Goldsmiths of the world whom I've interviewed, who go in and beat up on the CEO because they can.

**Lizbeth:** Right, exactly. I've had people tell me, "You should change the name of your business because you don't go in to corporations." I used to go into corporations but there's a conflict of interests between me and corporate America. They don't want to escape the wannabees, quite honestly, and sometimes they're programmed to do things in a certain way and it's hard for them to

escape the wannabees. My public speaking training, for instance, really, really pushes the envelop and C-level is not my market, but who I work with are entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs who want to change the world and affect the world, and what my training does is really have them understand and become a leader of change with a powerful inspirational message. I kind of call it the on the mountaintop message or the Martin Luther King message – every single entrepreneur has it; I don't care who they are and when they stand on that mountaintop with that inspirational message, they become a leader of change and that's really what my leadership training is intended to do.

**Peter:** A lot of entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs today out of necessity rather than out of choice, right? Because they got blown out of a corporation as a VP or an SVP and they maybe I don't know 40 years old, 50 years old and they can't get back into an organization at the level they want.

**Lizabeth:** Right.

**Peter:** Their option is to either do consulting or become entrepreneurial.

**Lizabeth:** Yay!

**Peter:** For a lot of people that's a real difficult transition.

**Lizabeth:** It is; it is very hard because of what I was just saying, they're just not used to a lot of freedom and creativity. They have certain jobs and responsibilities and becoming an entrepreneur means you're doing the whole enchilada... but I'm a huge advocate for it and I'm happy for them. I know they're not but I'm really, really happy for them when they can't find work because I want them to escape "The Wannabees."

I want them to remove their dependency on these authorities, these authorities that are crashing. If you look around, every single systemic authority in our culture is crumbling and I think it's because we're supposed to become self-sufficient and sovereign to get a little philosophical here and so I think there's a movement kind of behind

the scenes to help people become more independent and sovereign and by being entrepreneurs.

**Peter:** You use the term “brain sticky” and lead what you call The Brain Sticky Institute. What does brain sticky mean and how did you come to coin this phrase?

**Lizbeth:** I remember writing to my list and saying what do you think of this phrase? What does brain sticky mean? My definition of brain sticky is communication that is compelling, memorable and original. Original is the key, the operative word there. I came to use the word and the phrase because I started years ago with my public speaking training which is based on neuroscience. It’s based on the areas of neuroscience in learning, memory and emotion and I know an awful lot about the brain and at least about how the brain processes and how the brain learns. As I started growing my programs and what it was I was offering, I saw that all that information about the brain was really coming into play even when I was helping people with their marketing messages. Even when I was helping people craft businesses themselves that stand out and are brain sticking, I was using what I know about neuroscience and so I said, “You know what, since the arc goes across from public speaking to marketing messages, I’m going to use the term brain,” and brain sticky is exactly what I’m having people become – people, businesses, and messages that stick to the brain.

**Peter:** I’ve had the good fortune of going to a number of neuro-leadership summits and I’ve interviewed David Rock who started Results Coaching which is all brain-based coaching that he does. He wrote a book called *Quiet Leadership* and another one called *The Brain at Work*, the evidence is there that if you have a better understanding of how your brain works, you can become a more effective leader.

**Lizbeth:** Well, that’s true. I don’t teach my entrepreneurs how to understand their own brains; I have them understand the brains of their prospects and their audiences just to make that distinction.

**Peter:** Let’s describe your process then in helping someone achieve their goals as a visionary entrepreneur, as you describe it, and some of the tools and techniques that you do teach.

**Lizabeth:** First, we have to make sure that their business is a stand-apart business, and I can't tell you how many service entrepreneurs just don't – they blend into the woodwork. So my first job is to make sure that they are positioned in a way that's really, really unusual and really different, so that's the first thing that has to occur and that's so intuitive. It's a different process for everybody, but there are keys to doing that. Having a target market, for instance, having a very narrow population target market instantly has you differentiate it. I had one gentleman who was a chiropractor and he decided that he really wanted to differentiate himself – or actually he didn't think of it that way; he just wanted to market to pregnant moms and then when they had their children, the moment that the children were born up until about 3 years of age, he wanted to do chiropractic work on those babies. Just that alone differentiates him from all other chiropractors who are training and working with everybody.

That's just one little tip right there, is I make sure that a way to stand apart is to have a really narrow target market, but all the other techniques I have for having somebody stand apart is – there's many. But then after the business is different and brain sticky, then I make sure, this is when we start to develop that inspirational message that I talked about.

I call it a meta message – meta meaning above – above the business, bigger than you, bigger than your business, what is this inspirational message? What is it that you believe to your core? I have done this for about three years now and it's the most, oh! I mean I get so passionate when I talk about it because what I find with absolutely everybody is that their meta message has always been in them. Mine has been in me since I was in 5th grade and I had to spell anti-establishmentarian and I understood the word the minute we had it as spelling word, loved it, and so that's been in me all along and here I am with a blog called Escaping the Wannabees. I'm all about anti-establishmentarian, go your own way.

My point is just that the next phase, after the brain sticky business is creating this message of change, this Meta-Message and this absolutely elevates every single entrepreneur way, way above their compatriots because they are standing on that mountain top and they are delivering a message of change which is my purpose, is to help them become messengers of change and then I help them deliver that

message either on the stage with my brain-based learning techniques of public speaking or if they don't want to do something on stage, I help them deliver that message off stage in marketing messages and then I help to market it. Market either their event or market their business itself.

**Peter:** Let's talk about this on-stage thing a little bit and as I mentioned Lizabeth and I met at an event in New York City, a presentation by an internet entrepreneur and Lizabeth actually posted a video on her blog critiquing the presentation, which I highly encourage you to take a look at, but I'd like to have you explain some of your concepts starting with one that's called No Empty Chairs.

**Lizabeth:** You make it sound like it's a title of a technique, but I guess it is.

**Peter:** It is.

**Lizabeth:** No empty chairs means just that – when you are leading a room, it is absolutely critical that you remove the empty chairs in the room. I like to pack my people in and Dale Carnegie actually likes to pack his people in or used to back in the 60s and 70s. There is something very powerful that happens when people, energy, bodies are sitting right next to each other. It creates something called entrainment in the room where everybody starts to kind of hum together into same rhythm and same vibration when you got them packed in, but when you have a lot of empty chairs, it really literally scatters the energy and I can tell you, in my last events, they drive me crazy if there is any empty chair, if somebody has gotten up and they've had to leave for the afternoon or something, sometimes there will be a chair that's sitting there and I'll just stop myself.

I'll interrupt my own presentation and I'll ask my assistant to come and remove it and I'll ask my audience, I'll say, "Do you feel the difference?" And every single one of them says, "Oh my God, yes. There is a such a difference as soon as that empty chair is removed." It's a rather esoteric concept, Peter, and I don't expect everybody to understand it but it just works, trust me.

**Peter:** What if you're in an auditorium-style room where the seats are cemented to the floor, what do you do?

**Lizbeth:** Then you ask have your usher, your assistants, somebody, ask them to usher everybody up to the front and just pack them in there and so that all of the empty chairs are behind the audience.

**Peter:** This presentation that you and I were in, there were a lot of empty chairs and not only that, it was like a really bad visual, this room.

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, right. That's a good point. Absolutely.

**Peter:** Yeah, and this guy is trying to get you to spend \$6000.

**Lizbeth:** Right.

**Peter:** In this room that looked like it hadn't been renovated since what... 1956 maybe, I don't know, 63, somewhere around there.

**Lizbeth:** Yes, right.

**Peter:** Which to me again it's so much of what you're talking about and what we're talking about here is a perception and a feeling. How do you feel walking into a room? Are you comfortable? Do you feel like you're really in a receptive mode?

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, right absolutely. So you're sensing that as soon as you get in the room with all those empty chairs and you don't realize it even. It's a very subconscious trigger for us all, but it's not something that draws us in. It doesn't draw us in and I just want to go on to say that this applies to – even though I don't really frequent church or synagogues or anything like that but this is something I've been begging ministers to do because when you go into these churches, the same thing; people are sitting in the back and pews have lots of empty spaces and the same thing at whatever kind of live event it is, you want to have absolutely no spaces, because those spaces are energy leaks.

**Peter:** Concert promoters have figured this out for years.

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, absolutely, right. Without question.

**Peter:** Back to your critique of our friend in New York, the second thing in your video you discussed his use of PowerPoint and here's something that I totally agree with you on. I mean PowerPoint for the most part really just sucks.

**Lizabeth:** Yeah, that's it. End of story.

**Peter:** It's a crutch.

**Lizabeth:** Yes, it is a crutch.

**Peter:** Instead of focusing on the presenter, you're focusing on this PowerPoint presentation which oftentimes has far too many words on it that you can't read or some chart or graph that really doesn't need to be there.

**Lizabeth:** Right, absolutely. Yeah and then of course, the lights have to be dimmed which is never a good thing.

**Peter:** Right.

**Lizabeth:** People will start to nod off. Oh there are so many reasons not to have PowerPoint and people argue with me and I just say, "Just give it up." I think I said in my video that if there is a video, a movie, something that you're showing that's action-oriented on that screen and that's valuable and maybe you need to show a picture of something that can be really valuable because a picture is worth a thousand words. But by and large, it is such a crutch and I put out a challenge a year ago or so (nobody took me up on it) which was I challenge you to get rid of your PowerPoint, do it before and then after and see how creative you have to become when you don't have that crutch. Just see what you have to do. How you have to use your body, how you have to become the visual in the room, by where you stand and by your hand motions and a little bit of charades that you have to do. You become so much more creative without it and a much better teacher much more brain sticky.

**Peter:** Yeah, it's true and a couple of years ago, I was at an event and the presenter got up and his PowerPoint didn't work at all. It was really interesting because this gentleman turned out to be an extremely good speaker who knew his content cold. He didn't need

the PowerPoint. What happened was now, instead of sitting there looking at some PowerPoint, you're focused on him for the entire one hour that he spoke and created a completely different kind of energy in the room and a relation to the speaker.

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, you create this energy loop. There's an energy loop between you and your audience all the time and when you've got the machine in and you've got this inanimate object that is inside the loop and it just breaks everything down, but yes, so you notice the difference, right? You felt difference inside when he removed the PowerPoint?

**Peter:** Yeah, absolutely. The third thing you commented on the presentation we were at together in New York was this gentleman's energy when he was in front of the room. Can you tell us about that?

**Lizbeth:** Do you mind if I turn the tables and ask you what you felt of his energy and it could have been that you're very – that it was fine with you and you're used to it because most people are used to the kind of energy he presented. Can I ask you what you thought?

**Peter:** I thought he had, he used a very interesting technique. Now for our listeners, we have to understand it was dog and pony show. "Come to my thing and I'll tell you how to become the greatest person in the world, oh by the way at the end of the presentation, I you really want to learn how to become the greatest person in the world, right? You know, pull out your credit card and then come back in two weeks." I mean that's sort of – it was the basic pitch here, but he used a couple of techniques that I thought were very interesting. First of all, he would make a declarative statement and he would keep on saying to everyone in the room, "Now write this down," and I thought that was very clever the way he did that but you're right, he did not have a tremendous amount of energy or enthusiasm for what I thought he was trying to get again people to spend quite a bit of money to follow up on.

**Lizbeth:** I turn this over to you only because I think we're very conditioned by a certain kind of presenter and that kind of presenter is clinical often – not always but can be clinical, very intellectual. We laud in our country and in our culture the intellect. When people start to move into passion and emotion, people get uncomfortable. They

have assumptions about a person who is filled with passion and energy. It triggers people for their own reasons, not that it's an objective thing; it's a very subjective situation, so my point here is that he was pleasant, right? He was pleasant.

**Peter:** He was pleasant, yeah.

**Lizbeth:** There's nothing wrong with that.

**Peter:** No. He was friendly.

**Lizbeth:** He wasn't brain antagonistic, which is the opposite, which is just dead boring. It wasn't that way but he didn't have energy. He didn't have the passion and there is an enormous difference. When I'm in my public speaking training on the second day people are practicing. They're practicing what I taught them on the first day, and everybody in the room gets to watch them. They are often very, very sedate like he was.

I almost never met anybody who can deliver the passion the way it really should be delivered, in my trainings I mean, and that's why they're there. But once I coach them right there in the room and I show them how to do it with passion and then they go and do it, the whole room erupts and they say, oh that's so much better," so different feeling. It feels so different inside of us as audience members when the presenter has passion and I've had so many people say to me, "But Lizbeth, you know, it's a personality thing. I'm kind of quiet and reserved," and for awhile I kind of got stymied by that and sort of believed and bought into that whole thing, but I'm over that because I really, really believe that if you are passionate about something, you can't keep quiet about it. You can't contain yourself unless, now we're getting psychological, but unless – there is something inside of you that's filled with self-doubt and maybe you question yourself so much that you can't break free, but if you have a passionate message and you're not all shouting in front of the mountain top about it and you're not bubbling over, I think there is something wrong. There is something at least to be looked at because I believe, I don't care how quiet a person you are, you are in love with something you can't shut up about it.

**Peter:** Yeah, but back to intellectualizing this a little bit Lizabeth, I mean a lot of people would say, “Well, I’m not a performer and I have a important message here and I don’t want to come across as trying to sell somebody something.”

**Lizabeth:** That’s true. There are these assumptions like I asked I think my brother actually, we were talking about it one night a couple of years ago and he put the word fake or phony, labeled people as – not that he necessarily thought that way, but we were just trying to come up with what are the assumptions, and yeah so it can be either that you’re unglued.

**Peter:** Yeah, you don’t want to come across as an actor or a pitch man or somebody who is just trying to hassle somebody, right?

**Lizabeth:** Right.

**Peter:** I think back to the critique of this internet entrepreneur that we watched, I think that’s part of his persona and sort of his approach is kind of low key and he was trying to engender trust within the audience that he was an expert. He knew exactly what he’s talking about and he had all of this evidentiary material and videos to support his core message of what he was trying to get across and I think his low-energy approach was on purpose.

**Lizabeth:** Yeah, I think so too. Here’s the fact of the matter is when somebody is phony, we know it. I won’t go into the whole thing here, but there is something called mirror neurons our brains. One of the things that mirror neurons do is they pick up the intention behind other people. We are just wired to understand the intention behind people’s words, so we know when somebody is fake and passionate and when they’re genuine and passionate. Our brains really just know it, so that’s what I say to people who kind of argue with me and I’m like, “If you are sincere and you are genuinely passionate which I certainly am, then their brains are going to pick it up and you don’t have to worry.”

**Peter:** That’s an interesting perspective and I think you’re absolutely right. Somebody is really trying to pull something on you normally, right?

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, we do.

**Peter:** If you are genuine and passionate about what you are trying to communicate, then you don't have to worry about it.

**Lizbeth:** Exactly.

**Peter:** People will pick up and say, "Yeah, this is a genuine person. They're authentic and they believe in the message that they are delivering here," so yeah, that's a very interesting perspective.

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, it's just automatic. It's just the way we're wired so it's sort of like just relax, let it go, go on cruise control in a sense.

**Peter:** I want to return for a minute to the concept of brain-based learning and you had sent me an article, describing the 10 factors of rapid and deep brain based learning and I'd like you to share some of these with us starting with novelty in unexpected.

**Lizbeth:** The brain tends instantly to what's novel and what's new and that's because the brain cares about one thing, which is survival. That's it. So if something is new in its environment at all, the brain is going to stand up and pay attention because it could be threatening. It could be threatening to us. So anything that's novel, it's just instant. Again, it's how we're wired. It's automatic.

So if you yourself are doing something in your business or in your deliver on stage, that is unexpected, that is new, that is fresh, the brain will instantly attend to it, so that's one of the first things the brain instantly attends to.

I have these 10 factors go into kind of extend beyond but I want to talk about the three factors that the brain attends too fast, because I just think that it's really worth noting and caring around with you, is knowing that (1) is novelty, the second thing that the brain attends to instantly is relevancy. Anything that is relevant to it the brain cares about. I mean it's just we are such as self-serving beings, we really area. You must make sure that your business is relevant to your market.

That's one of the big things when I'm creating a brain sticky business, is so many people have businesses they think people should be invest in rather than what they want to invest in. There's a huge difference, so its relevancy is the second thing that a brain will attend to instantly and the third thing is that a brain attends to instantly and then also that keeps it's attention is emotion. The brain instantly pays attention to something emotional in its environment and it's what helps us learn is emotion.

Those are the top three, and I just really wanted everybody to be able to carry those around with them, because 10 is a lot, but there are many others. So when you are teaching, and when you are speaking, you want to make sure you have those three and then there are others. You want to make sure that you, yourself are creating a lot of positive emotion in the room. You need to be generating that and that creates what I called monoamines. Monoamines are the feel-good neurotransmitters (or hormones) in the brain and we have the power as presenters, and teachers, to activate the monoamines, like norepinephrine and adrenaline in the brains of our audiences, by being very positive ourselves and there are many things that we can do to get a sense of well being in our audience. It's absolutely critical to learning.

We're talking really about these are the 10 factors of deep and rapid learning, so positive emotion. Repetition, we have got to repeat when we're up there presetting, we need to repeat or when we're even doing a sales presentation one on one, we need to repeat what we've said and ideally have the other person repeat.

In my audiences, I have everybody repeating and I tell them right up front, you're going to feel like you're in second grade and I explained why I have them repeat and that's a whole other matter too, but I have them repeat things that I'm saying so that it sticks and at the end of a presentation, I have them repeat everything, not everything they learned but the key points.

A physical movement is absolutely imperative to learning and it is something that again, this is where we get into the conflict in corporate because corporate would not want their audience members moving around. The presenter himself would not want his audience members moving around but the fact of the matter is our bodies learn.

That's why we can type so fast after we've learned and why we can ride a bike, numerous things that we do, because our bodies learn. When our bodies are involved in a learning, we are going to remember much more deeply and much faster, but that's one of those things people don't want to hear from me, but physical movement of your audience is crazy important.

**Peter:** Wait a minute, are you suggesting that during your presentation you have people in your audience stand up and move around.

**Lizbeth:** Absolutely. That's called state change. There's something called a state change where you remember the other day he had us stand up and do the massage thing which I rolled my eyes out, because that's so overdone, but there are certain ways to get a state change.

**Peter:** Just so the audience understands it, I guess halfway through his presentation, everyone had to stand up and give the person next to you a shoulder massage and then turn around and get a shoulder massage from that person.

**Lizbeth:** Right and it doesn't work. I mean it is fine. It gets us going a little bit, but you actually need to have for a state change to really work which means that you're changing the state of people. He noticed we were all falling asleep a little bit, that's why he had us do it but it's important to have state changes frequently actually just imbedded in a presentation but that's not really what we're talking about. I'm talking about movement in learning.

Like for instance, I teach in my public speaking training five types of questions to be asking and rather than showing the five types of questions on a PowerPoint, I have hand movements for each of the five, so each of the five has a different hand movements, and they start off by just learning the hand movements and then I teach them how that hand movement applies to one of the question types and at the end of it, they get it fast and they never forget the five types of questions they should ask, so I'm asking – I'm having their bodies learn with their intellect, does that make sense?

**Peter:** Yeah, it's interesting. It's like close encounter to the third kind, right?

**Lizbeth:** It is. Yeah, people say I'm from outer space for sure.

**Peter:** This is the kind of stuff people really need to ponder, and say, "Alright, yeah she makes sense." I think everything you've said really when you think about it, it makes sense and again, we're so conditioned especially in corporate America to conduct a meeting in a certain way or a presentation in a certain way. You have your PowerPoint and you have your boardroom and what happens is everybody is sitting there sneaking looks at their BlackBerry during the presentation, right?

**Lizbeth:** Right, yeah. One of the 10 also that is just worth mentioning right on the heels of the body movement because it's radical too is vocal expression. The fact of the matter is when we're speaking, our body vibrates and that affects all the nerve cells in our bodies. Millions of signals are being sent through the nerves to the brain when we speak, so that's why I have people repeating things that I say. There's lots of vocal expression because I know that it is activating millions and millions of nerve cells in their brains and so when you're sitting there and you're listening only, there's no learning going on. I mean very little learning going on which is why I ask people and I tell them upfront why they're going to be doing things a little wacky and crazy is because it's going to imbed everything that I'm doing with them so much more deeply.

**Peter:** Well, you're engaging them in your presentation. You're making them part of the presentation rather than being passive, they're actually active participant.

**Lizbeth:** Yes, and that's why they have the time of their lives, really. They really do because of that, because they feel that they are a part of the whole process.

**Peter:** This has been really interesting Lizbeth, and just so our listeners know, you can find the complete list of explaining the 10 factors of rapid and deep brain based learning on Lizbeth's feature page in the Leadership Channel of TotalPicture Radio. To wrap up

here, I'd like to have you tell us something about your services, the Brain Sticky Institute workshops that you put on.

**Lizbeth:** Yeah, I do my secrets of impact and influence is this public speaking training, that's in September, and then I do a lot of virtual event because a lot of the work that I do requires some processing and really thinking and planning and strategic work. So I do virtual events with people, virtual trainings and I definitely do one-on-one consulting for public speaking and then for also brain sticky business building and that inspirational message building, marketing messages, that kind of thing.

**Peter:** Is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important for people to know about the work you're doing?

**Lizbeth:** What I believe so profoundly is that we are moving and we're in very historic times and I believe that we're in for a ride coming in the next few years and that everything is going to be changing and the way that we do business and the way that we market is going to shift dramatically because we're going to be shifting and inspiration I believe is the wave of the future. Inspiring your prospects and your clients to higher ground is really going to be the role of businesses. I don't know if corporate will ever get it but small businesses, medium-sized businesses, it is the ticket to really building not just trust but creating that tribe, the people who love you because you have a message that inspires hope and empowers them and I guess that's what I want to leave everybody with, is I just think that we're in for some dramatic changes and that if you're not on that bandwagon of being an inspirational leader, an inspired leader, you're going to fall behind and I know it's in you. It's in every single one of us to be inspired leaders.

**Peter:** Well, on that note Lizbeth, thank you so much for speaking with us today on TotalPicture Radio.

**Lizbeth:** Oh thank you Peter. It was so much fun.

**Peter:** Yes it was, thanks.



Lizabeth Phelps is CEO of Inspired Leadership Training. Her website is [www.InspiredLeadershipTraining.com](http://www.InspiredLeadershipTraining.com). We welcome your comments on our interview with Lizabeth. Please join our Facebook group, TotalPicture Radio to voice your thoughts and opinions. You'll find Lizabeth's interview in the Leadership Channel of TotalPicture Radio, that's TotalPicture.com. While there, please sign up for our newsletter and remember, you can subscribe to TPR on iTunes, just do a keyword search for TotalPicture Radio and join me on Twitter @peterclayton. Thanks for tuning in to TotalPicture Radio, the voice of career and leadership acceleration.