

## A word from the wise on speaking

by: *Damon Kitney*



Communications specialist Richard Greene, with David Smorgon yesterday, is bringing his talents to Australia. Picture: David Geraghty Source: TheAustralian

IT was deep into the English summer of 1996 when Richard Greene was summoned to London's Kensington Palace to lunch with his new celebrity client, one of the world's most famous women.

Diana, Princess of Wales, had requested the services of the California-based communications consultant who for two decades had coached presidents, prime ministers, US senators and governors, Fortune 500 chief executives and celebrities in 29 countries to overcome their problems with public speaking.

"During lunch, I literally stopped in the middle of the conversation and looked at her and said 'There are two of you, aren't there?' She paused, looked down for a long time, and then looked up at me and said, 'How do you know?' " Greene tells The Australian. "There were two side-by-side Dianas operating within the same body. There was that incredibly insecure, vulnerable woman. And then there was this charismatic, powerful, beautiful, determined woman."

A year later she was dead. Greene was only one of eight Americans to be invited to her funeral. "Had she lived longer, she would have blossomed into an even more natural, confident communicator. I just told her to be herself. I think she would have come to terms with and been at peace with that vulnerable side and integrated it instead of flipping back and forth," he says.

"Be yourself" is a popular Greene refrain. He teaches five secrets to become a world-class public speaker, including knowing that it is not the words you say, but your body language and voice tone that make the most impact on an audience.

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And his methods are now coming to Australia for the first time.

Last night, former Western Bulldogs AFL president David Smorgon and a member of the Smorgon dynasty launched a strategic alliance with Greene for Smorgon's new executive coaching firm, Pointmade.

The two met for the first time last year when Greene ran a session for 117 members of the World's President's Organisation, including Smorgon.

"It is an exciting new experience for me to partner with somebody like David," Greene says.

"People tell me there is a huge market in Australia for the cutting-edge public speaking coaching and advice that I have been doing my whole career."

Smorgon puts it more bluntly. "How many functions and events do we go to and listen to someone who has no idea what he is there for or how to connect with his or her audience?" he says.

"Pointmade over recent months has been working with a number of organisations to help explain themselves better.

"With corporates and senior executives."

His clients include Westpac, AMP, ANZ and Xstrata Coal.

Greene says the old paradigm of public speaking, where the speaker gives a finely tuned, polished performance, is rapidly being replaced.

"I think the new paradigm is a simple, authentic passionate address from the heart," he says.

"It is a winner 100 per cent of the time.

"Every human being is scared of being authentic."

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