



# The Don Hutson Report

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## Leveraging the Power of Focus

**The great Og Mandino** was addressing The National Speakers Association in Phoenix on this topic years ago. He told the story of the little boy who was so disappointed when he reported to his dad that he could not start a fire on a sunny day with a magnifying glass. His dad said “Come outside with me, Bruce, and let’s see if I can help you.” His dad seized the opportunity to make a life lesson out of this event.

**They got down** on the ground together and Bruce took the magnifying glass and put it between the old newspaper and the sun and moved it around slowly. Nothing happened. His dad said, “Bruce this is the way life works. People move around from thing to thing without concentrating on one thing at a time and for some reason nothing happens! That’s the way this magnifying glass works. If you hold it still and don’t move it at all, I’ll bet something happens.” Bruce held it very still and within only a few seconds the newspaper starting turning dark, and then it flamed up! Bruce said, “Wow, dad, look what I did!”

**Naturally dad said**, “You see, Bruce, when you patiently focus on something for the right period of time, things happen! And I don’t ever want you to forget that.”

**That was great advice**, and there are so many ways we can apply this example to the concept of focus in our personal and business lives. There are a lot of sayings that were designed to help us remember the power of focus, like....

- Remember to make the main thing the main thing!
- Know the difference between urgent and important!
- Keep first things first!
- Don’t let shiny objects get you off track!

- Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize!
- Stay in your lane!
- The more time you waste, the less time you have to achieve!

**One the best lessons** I ever got in appropriately focusing on something important came from my mentor, Bill Gove. When I was struggling with the use of humor in my speaking activities he offered to help me. He said, “Don, you have got to have some fun on the stage. That is the only way your audience members will enjoy your program!”

**He asked me,** “Don, if I take the time to coach you, will you follow my lead and make it a priority? If you’re not willing to do so, I’m not going to get involved in the process!”

**I eagerly agreed.**

**He advised me** to do today’s equivalent of a “Deep Dive” on the topic of Humor in public speaking. I am forever indebted to Bill for helping me transition from a rather mundane trainer into a seasoned professional speaker who competently uses humor. During the deep dive he recommended, he directed me to study several different people, mostly comedians and humorous speakers. He had me study such areas as... sources of humor; how to think funny; timing in humor; interspersing humor throughout your talk; writing humor; and techniques of improvisation. All of these areas are key if you are going to learn the craft.

**Bill also checked in** with me at appropriate intervals to make sure I was still working on these critical skills. Every time we talked he would give me a few more tips. In less than a year I was using humor much more effectively and I continued to learn to improve the process over time. This focus on the correct application of humor became a habit. To this day it continues to make me a better presenter.

**Internalizing a new skill** is about prioritization, deep dives, and having a disciplined learning process. That’s what focus is all about! It is also how we develop productive habits. What area in your life or career needs more focus? Re-commit to advancing your goals through this basic but critically important topic.

**What an honor!** I gave a speech last week with appropriate humor in it. I was privileged to participate as the (closing) speaker for the USPS as they sponsored the unveiling of the FOREVER LOVE STAMP at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. You can go to #lovestamps and watch a video of this historic event.

Don Hutson is a #1 NY Times and Wall Street Journal International Best-selling Author, a Hall of Fame Speaker, and Globally Renowned Sales Expert.

He is CEO of U.S. Learning based in Memphis, TN

[www.DonHutson.com](http://www.DonHutson.com)

901-767-5700