

# SPEAKING SESSION EXCERPT IDEAS

## THE RAINBOW PASSAGE

*Grant Fairbanks*

When the sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act as a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colors. These take the shape of a long round arch, with its path high above, and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon. There is, according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Throughout the centuries people have explained the rainbow in various ways. Some have accepted it as a miracle without physical explanation. To the Hebrews it was a token that there would be no more universal floods. The Greeks used to imagine that it was a sign from the gods to foretell war or heavy rain. The Norsemen considered the rainbow as a bridge over which the gods passed from earth to their home in the sky. Others have tried to explain the phenomenon physically. Aristotle thought that the rainbow was caused by reflection of the sun's rays by the rain. Since then physicists have found that it is not reflection, but refraction by the raindrops which causes the rainbows. Many complicated ideas about the rainbow have been formed. The difference in the rainbow depends considerably upon the size of the drops, and the width of the colored band increases as the size of the drops increases. The actual primary rainbow observed is said to be the effect of super-imposition of a number of bows. If the red of the second bow falls upon the green of the first, the result is to give a bow with an abnormally wide yellow band, since red and green light when mixed form yellow. This is a very common type of bow, one showing mainly red and yellow, with little or no green or blue.

# THE GRANDFATHER PASSAGE

*Van Riper*

You wished to know all about my grandfather. Well, he is nearly ninety-three years old. He dresses himself in an ancient black frock coat, usually minus several buttons; yet he still thinks as swiftly as ever. A long, flowing beard clings to his chin, giving those who observe him a pronounced feeling of the utmost respect. When he speaks his voice is just a bit cracked and quivers a trifle. Twice each day he plays skillfully and with zest upon our small organ. Except in the winter when the ooze or snow or ice prevents, he slowly takes a short walk in the open air each day. We have often urged him to walk more and smoke less, but he always answers, "Banana Oil!" Grandfather likes to be modern in his language.

# ALICE IN WONDERLAND

*Lewis Carroll*

ALICE: [Angrily] Why, how impolite of him. I asked him a civil question, and he pretended not to hear me. That's not at all nice. [Calling after him] I say, Mr. White Rabbit, where are you going? Hmmm. He won't answer me. And I do so want to know what he is late for. I wonder if I might follow him. Why not? There's no rule that I mayn't go where I please. I--I will follow him. Wait for me, Mr. White Rabbit. I'm coming, too! [Falling] How curious. I never realized that rabbit holes were so dark . . . and so long . . . and so empty. I believe I have been falling for five minutes, and I still can't see the bottom! Hmph! After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling downstairs. How brave they'll all think me at home. Why, I wouldn't say anything about it even if I fell off the top of the house! I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time. I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth. I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny that would be. Oh, I think I see the bottom. Yes, I'm sure I see the bottom. I shall hit the bottom, hit it very hard, and oh, how it will hurt!

# AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER (Intro)

*Bryan Konietzko & Michael Dante DiMartino*

Water. Earth. Fire. Air. My grandmother used to tell me stories about the old days, a time of peace when the Avatar kept balance between the Water Tribes, Earth Kingdom, Fire Nation, and Air Nomads. But that all changed when the Fire Nation attacked. Only the Avatar mastered all four elements. Only he could stop the ruthless firebenders. But when the world needed him most, he vanished. A hundred years have passed and the Fire Nation is nearing victory in the War. Two years ago, my father and the men of my tribe journeyed to the Earth Kingdom to help fight against the Fire Nation, leaving me and my brother to look after our tribe. Some people believe that the Avatar was never reborn into the Air Nomads, and that the cycle is broken. But I haven't lost hope. I still believe that somehow, the Avatar will return to save the world.

# WHY PEOPLE SHOULD GET DOGS

*Unknown*

I think people should get dogs because they are good companions. I also think pets, especially dogs, help you and improve your love. Some people say their dogs changed their lives because when you take care of a dog, you need to be unselfish.

People also say that dogs help them communicate better. When you have a dog, you have to try to find out what it wants and that can help you find out how to talk to other people.

An important thing about getting a dog is to find one that suits you. When I had my dog Jackson, he was my best friend. He always made my family and me laugh. Sometimes, he got all mixed up and ran into the wall. When we played music, he would try to sing. I loved him very much. I could tell him anything in the world as if he was my best friend.

Your personality is one of the many important parts of your life and dogs help improve it. My dog helped me improve my personality by making me be more open because it wasn't always about me. He also improved my knowledge because I did not know dogs needed so many things to be satisfied. I had to learn how to react to him and find out when to feed him and what he liked to eat.

Some people say that dogs need too much care. You have to feed them and take them for walks. Jackson was worth any work I had to do because he was my friend.

I think everyone should have a dog because they may improve your life. Jackson has taught me a valuable lesson I will need later on in life – he taught me to be a responsible human being. By getting a dog, you can learn a valuable lesson or two.

# PSALM 27

*New International Version*

The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the House of The Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the Beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His Temple.

For in the day of trouble, He will keep me safe in His Dwelling; He will hide me in the Shelter of His Sacred Tent and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at His Sacred Tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to The Lord.

Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of You, "Seek His face!" Your Face, Lord, I will seek.

Do not hide Your Face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

Teach me Your Way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

I remain confident of this: I will see the Goodness of The Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for The Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for The Lord.

# PSALM 91

*New International Version*

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of The Almighty I will say of The Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His Feathers, and under His Wings you will find refuge; His Faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

"Because he loves Me," says The Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My Name. He will call on Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My Salvation."