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Pamela Taivassalo

Speakers' Corner

Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm

Kristina Leon:

In the programme today:

Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm.

Our specialist and political rhetoric Doctor Nick Turnbull from Manchester University.

Meet Amina Jamil and Daniel Edmundson from the Debating Society at Parrs Wood High School.

This is Speaker's Corner.

Dr Nick Turnbull:

I'm Doctor Nick Turnbull and today we're going to talk about Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm. She was the first African American woman elected to the United States Congress, she served from 1969 until 1982. In 1972 she was the first black woman to run for nomination for the presidency of the United States.

Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm

Oh, I feel wonderful. It's one of the most marvelous things that could happen in our country at this moment and for the first time in the history of this nation a person of colour and a woman at that is running for the highest office of this land. It's a wonderful thing to know that in spite of the many obstacles in my past that there is such a large, large cross section of America, who is behind me and say; why not, why not dare to dream like so many others have dreamt before me. So, I am very excited...



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Dr Nick Turnbull:

A teacher turned politician - she has a way of speaking like a teacher I think. Also very authoritative. She was the first woman to run for a presidential nomination in the US and a black woman at that. Now she was speaking of [equal right amendments](#) in the 1970's.

She has a way of speaking that is very interesting because she also brooked an opposition, but she had to address the arguments of her opponents. She's making an argumentation in the parliament in the congress, in a lawmaking forum, so she's giving reasons to support the law of equal right amendments for women. So what she does is she presents her opponents arguments as ridiculous. She says how silly it is for people to make these spurious claims about why women shouldn't be included in equal rights or why the rights are already there. And she really ridicules the opposition and she makes them appear as old fashioned as very much in the past. She ridicules their arguments against equal rights amendments as nonsensical and not worth thinking about. She had a kind of a, an impatience with the opposition. Which is a very nice tactic if someone is criticising you ridicule their opinions not them personally, but you ridicule their opinions. And you make the opinions seem trivial which therefore seems at that your argument simply has to be carried.

Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm

And if nothing else, I'm finding all over America that people are sick and tired of the thetweedlededees and tweedlededums who constantly flip flap from one side to another. People are interested in having candidates that are truthful. Candidates that have, if you will, just a tiny bit of morality and a tiny bit of integrity, people that they believe they can go to sleep at night and know that they are not selling them out or selling out the communities in which they live.



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Kristina Leon:

In Parrs Wood High School in Manchester the debating society gathers every Tuesday. Our reporter Pamela Taivassalo paid them a visit.

LL Cool J from "What You Want":

*"...this my 12th album, but your man's not diz-one
This my second album, but your boy's not slipping
(Queens in the building) Philly is where I'm friz-om
(Let me get siz-ome, make sure she kiz-um)
(Bush is the prez, but I voted for Shirley Chisholm..."*

Pamela Taivassalo:

This is LL Cool J who wanted to vote for Shirley Chisholm. I'm here at Parrs Wood High School with Amina Jamil and you have read Shirley Chisholm's speech.

Amina Jamil:

I do quite like this one. Especially the rhetorical question at the beginning; "When a woman goes into a job interview and the first thing they ask is - do you type?", I think that is quite effective the way she goes directly at the speaker against her. It's kind of asking them a question, is that what do you think about this, like showing him what they face and as a woman she obviously may have experienced this herself. So it's obviously something she has, she's passionate about and she's using this to portray her passion and her emotion to the person opposite her. And I think that's actually a really good speech, I read it and kind of think it's one of my favourites in the collection I found because of the fact she's tackling something that is a problem in the world and that people don't really perceive as a massive problem sometimes like the women's rights they're usually seen racism as like a bigger problem, and it is a problem but I feel that women's rights, and equal rights for women is something that also needs to be tackled. And also something that people just disregard really in comparison to some other issues in the world.



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Pamela Taivassalo:

Do you remember any public speech in particular that you have given?

Amina Jamil:

One that I most enjoyed. Oh, there's a lot that was enjoyable. The one that stands out the most was one that I did recently in Durham. It was something that I had a lot of knowledge of with uprisings in the Middle East at the moment. I just kind of wrote down a lot of stuff and kind of crossed it off as I said it or just like developed it as it went along. And I got up there and I kind of knew, I kind of put all my energy into this argument because it wasn't as if I was just delivering some notes which I didn't really feel attached to, I'm standing up here and I'm making an argument for something I believe in so it obviously had a lot more impact to the audience because I had believed in this argument myself rather than it just being something that I'm delivering.

Pamela Taivassalo:

How do you know that you had the audience in your hand?

Amina Jamil:

The judges - they're nodding. But also because, sometimes if you give a very boring speech, people start to zone out, write little notes to each other or start like daydreaming or looking at the time and stuff. But I feel that if you're delivering a good speech you kind of know because everyone's looking at you, they're nodding, they're shaking their head if they disagree. There's like an atmosphere that ever everyone listens to you because there's no whispering or anything, kind of silent. You know that you kind of getting through making impact on whatever you're saying.

Pamela Taivassalo:

What if you see that the audience is now slipping away, how do you rescue the situation?

Amina Jamil:

Maybe just like a new point to kind of bring them back in really. One word sentences really something with like a bang like that is like shock shoot and sweet, kind of get the message across and kind of wakes them up



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and brings them back to the point because if you're saying long windy sentences they're going to lose interest. So you have to keep it snappy and bring them back to the original point that you're trying to make.

Kristina Leon:

And now, Doctor Nick Turnbull with a few tips on how to give a great speech.

Dr Nick Turnbull:

People remember the start and the finish. If you open weakly in a speech or if you conclude weakly, people are going to really have a poor impression of you. You can wander in the middle and you can digress and give all kind of detail, but it's important that the start and ending strongly, with a theme. Some kind of picture which will evoke an image for the audience of you the person who's speaking and what you're speaking about. If you can link the beginning and the end and this image in this narrative that tells a story, people can remember what you've said and take away with them the narrative which will direct their memory of the idea, rather than the detail of the idea itself. It's the same with a piece of writing. If you're writing a work for class or for university assignment, start and finish very clearly and very strongly. And consistently. And you get a good mark.

Unfortunately she died four years before Barack Obama became president of the United States of America.

Kristina Leon:

In Speaker's Corner today you've heard Doctor Nick Turnbull, Daniel Edmundson and Amina Jamil. And Shirley Anita St Hill Chisholm. This programme was produced by Pamela Taivassalo, Ingela Håkansson was our sound engineer and my name is Kristina Leon.