

About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

Are you following me on [twitter](#)?

To receive my weekly tips on how to communicate more effectively, [click here](#)¹⁰

Short of time? Here are my [Quick Wins](#)¹¹

Co-ordinates

E-mail: andy@andybounds.com

Web: www.andybounds.com/tips



"See, what you're meant to do when you have a mid-life crisis is buy a fast car, aren't you? Well, I've always had fast cars. It's not that. It's the fear that you're past your best. It's the fear that the stuff you've done in the past is your best work."

Robbie Coltraine (born Anthony Robert McMillan, 1950 -), Scottish actor, comedian and author.



"Give it to me straight - warts and all."

When Andy Murray hired Ivan Lendl as his coach, he told Lendl, "Give it to me straight - warts and all."

"You've got the game to win Wimbledon, but at the moment you're going *onwards and sideways*. You're listening to too many opinions and trying to play a game others think you should play. You have to trust yourself, play your own game and take a few more risks," was Lendl's advice.

Fast forward two years of playing more adventurously, winning two Major titles, and Murray is Olympic champion with a little help from his Czech mate.

Whilst it's not always easy to be yourself in a world that is trying to make you conform, the reward for conformity is that more people who don't matter like you, but you don't like yourself.

The paradox is that when we care less about winning the affection of our audience and instead focus on being creative, more people will be affected by what we do. It's why:

- Steve Jobs didn't listen to focus groups.
- It's why Henry Ford said, "If I had asked people what they wanted they would said faster horses."
- It's why Head of Marketing for Cirque du Soleil, Mario D'Amico said, "If we had asked our audience what they wanted, we would end up doing Swan Lake every year."

Seeking congratulations is natural. But ultimately it corrupts our art and contaminates the creative process.

Besides, when the vast majority talk, they don't tend to say anything - at least nothing that's worth listening to. Social media channels seem to be platforms for sellers of the soporific, brokers of bland and dealers of dull.

If you want to escape the cult of the average and the race to mediocrity, then as Dr. Jonas Ridderstrale says in his book *Karaoke Capitalism* (see <http://www.jonasridderstrale.com/>): "You have to take a risk to be authentic and practice business as unusual, because normality is the route to nowhere."

This isn't about thinking that you're better than everyone else. It's about knowing you're not the same as everyone else.

Down the centuries it's always been the same. It's the people who have been prepared to take a risk and challenge the status quo who have made a difference to people's lives... if Michelangelo had decided to play it safe, he would have painted the Sistine floor, rather than the ceiling.

I'll leave the last word on this subject to my friends the giraffes, who say, "If you don't stick your neck out, you won't get any leaves."

Contributed by Sunil Bali - see page 4 for his profile.

[Andy Murray is now coached by Amélie Simone Mauresmo - the French former professional tennis player, and a former World No. 1.]