



## How You Can SHARE Through Your S.H.A.P.E.

By Erin Kerr

Ever wish you were as evangelistic as say a Lee Strobel or a Rick Warren? Or just more of an extrovert with the people around you? Ever wish you could have someone implant a smart chip into your brain to help you remember all of the answers to common objections to Christianity – well, yeah me neither. But I think it is safe to say if you are a follower of Jesus, and you love God, you care about what He cares about. He wants lost people to be found and so do you [Luke 15]. Jesus challenges his disciples to pray for more workers for His harvest [Matt 9.36-38] and constantly modeled a lifestyle that was reaching out regardless of who they were or where they came from.

<sup>31</sup> *Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.*

<sup>32</sup> *I have come to call sinners to turn from their sins, not to spend my time with those who think they are already good enough." **Luke 5:31-32 (NLT).***

He expects nothing less from His followers. When we receive Christ as the leader and forgiver of our lives, we are commissioned to make disciples [Matt 28.19-20] and be a witness for Christ [Acts 1.8]. This is not an option and is one of the most exciting and challenging purposes that God has for us – to be his ambassadors to a lost and dying world.

So why don't more people share their faith with their neighbors, coworkers, friends and family members? The reasons range per person from fear, apathy, to a lack of training but many times it is the misguided belief that we must share it in a style that doesn't fit "me".

### Good News: You are Supposed to Be YOU

Contrary to our church experience or personal experience about there being only "one way" to share your faith, the bible lists several examples of people who shared the Gospel depending on their life experiences, personalities and abilities... think about how vastly different the twelve disciples were from one another in personality [Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, Thomas] and even experience [tax collector, fisherman]. Thankfully, God uses us all to be messengers of hope to our world.

Let's begin liberating you by understanding how your God given S.H.A.P.E. affects how you SHARE your faith.

**S - SPIRITUAL GIFTS** – How can I SHARE through my spiritual gifts?

If you have never figured out what your spiritual gifts are, I would suggest discovering them in Ministry Metro found on [www.saddlebackfamily.com/ministry](http://www.saddlebackfamily.com/ministry) or taking a spiritual gift test available through most Christian bookstores.

**To those with the gift of evangelism:**

First things first, we want to address a common misunderstanding about having the gift of evangelism. “It’s not MY spiritual gift” is often the response to those who don’t feel like they can share the good news but the bible says the gifted evangelist is given the responsibility of equipping and teaching other believers!

**Ephesians 4:11-12 (NLT)**

<sup>11</sup> *[God] is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

<sup>12</sup> *Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ...*

So if this is YOU, you may have a new sense that you are called to equip the people around you to be prepared to share!

**To those who have other spiritual gifts:**

Congratulations! You can be a witness through using your spiritual gifts, even indirectly. Here are some ways you can be a witness to people:

1. **Your excitement** - When you are using your gifts people see your excitement about your faith – it testifies about God’s design and desire for purpose. Your sharing of your experiences can be a testimony!
2. **Your sacrifice** - When you are using your gifts people see your time commitment to serve others and it tells them about your priorities in life.
3. **Your impact** – People want to make a difference in this world that lasts. If your neighbors see or hear about your serving adventures and the life changes or social injustices that are addressed by your service – this bears witness to God’s work!

**H – HEART - How can I SHARE through what I have a heart for/motivated by?**

Pastor Rick says personal evangelism is as easy as picking the top five things you love to do and do it with non believers! Think about it – whether you love to cook, love technology, working on motorcycles, reading with a book club, playing basketball, involved in the PTA or coaching your kids soccer team – this is your sphere of influence! You are going to do it anyway – why not be intentional and see what God does?

**Write out the FIVE** hobbies, activities or sports you regularly love to participate in:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **REFLECT**

Identify one or two people that you can build greater relationships with doing these activities. They are the people God is calling you to reach out to. Find out their life stories, get to know them, find out ways to serve them and just love them. Pray for them and ask God for opportunities to share with them.

## **A – ABILITIES - How can I SHARE through my abilities/professional training?**

Your abilities and/or professional training is another avenue for:

1. Building redemptive relationships with others who share your training or abilities [1 Cor 3.5-6] and
2. Serving others [and as a result God’s Kingdom].

Any ability you have can probably be used to share about God’s love and grace through using it to serve others or the church.

### **Galatians 6:9 (NLT)**

*<sup>9</sup> So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.*

Here are a few examples:

- A background in positive hip hop music, can be used in teaching kids at an after school program targeting underprivileged kids.
- Volunteering to organize your work’s new basketball league will give you plenty of ways to serve and build relationships around hoops that can lead to sharing.
- Gardening can help others in the neighborhood grow better gardens, maybe turn into a gardening ministry.
- A CEO uses organizational/managerial skills to help develop church teams for service projects to improve community programs.
- Moms create a babysitting coop for the neighborhood for free to families who can’t afford child care.

Jesus placed a high value on caring for the poor, the needy and serving in general. You have abilities that can easily translate into serving opportunities to non believers that ultimately, will speak powerfully about your love for God and give you opportunities to share [Gal 6.9-10].

## **REFLECT**

List 3-5 abilities, including your professional training. Brainstorm ways in which you could focus on relationships and serving others through those. Find others that may have similar abilities and desire to work with you on making this a powerful ministry... two are always better than one [Luke 10.1-2].

## **P – PERSONALITY - How can I SHARE through my personality type?**

You've seen him before. Out on the street corner with the sandwich board sign that says: "Turn to Jesus or Spend Eternity in Hell! Repent!" Becky Pippert calls this "drive by evangelism"-where there is plenty of truth, but not a lot of relationship. Ironically, as brash and insensitive as this can be to the average non believer, there are some people who might ONLY come to Christ by a very very forward approach.

Some people are wired for this. I am not and my guess is, most of you aren't either. I am not a "door knocker" either – I am sorry. It just isn't me. But playing sports together and building Christ into our conversations – that is me!

It takes different kinds of personality types to reach different types of people. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, an academic or a person of practicality, a promoter or a melancholic, a "gatherer" or a "one on one" type of person... you probably have a preferred evangelistic style.

One of the best resources that articulates the various styles of evangelism is *Becoming a Contagious Christian* by Mark Mittelberg & Bill Hybels. In this book, the authors identify six different styles of evangelism based on examples out of the bible. This is not necessarily an exhaustive list but illustrates a very important point – God doesn't expect you to share your faith in a way that isn't you.

Here is a summary of the styles mentioned: Read the biblical examples and then determine which ones you tend to relate to more than the others. These may be how you are wired to share.

1. **Confrontational Style** – example: Peter in Acts 2
2. **Interpersonal Style** – example: Matthew in Luke 5.29
3. **Intellectual Style** – example: Paul in Acts 17.16-34
4. **Serving Style** – example: Tabitha in Acts 9.36
5. **Testimonial Style** – example: Blind Man in John 9

**6. Invitational Style** – example: Woman at the well in John 4

**REFLECT**

Circle your top two – for some of you, you may use all of them depending on who you are with and trying to reach. Now ask a fellow believer or your small group - do they agree with the top two styles you chose? Your next step is to develop those styles – notice how much more exciting evangelism becomes as a result.

**E – EXPERIENCES - How can I SHARE through what I have gone through in life?**

The apostle Paul’s experience of being a Roman citizen, part of a very religious sect of Phariseeism and his education made him the perfect person to engage in evangelistic dialogues with heads of state [Acts 26] and Greek philosophers [Acts 17]. He also had a mystical encounter with Christ [Acts 9] on the road to Damascus so he was able to share with others based upon ways in which his experiences opened doors and hearts to hear from him. In many ways, this might have been painful for Paul since prior to Christ he persecuted believers and even witnessed Stephen’s death [Acts 7]. But Paul’s encounter with God’s amazing grace turned these tragedies into opportunities to do good for the Kingdom.

Your experiences can touch upon any host of human emotions with people you are sharing your faith with – through trial, tragedy, trauma, to triumphs...

**Romans 8:28 (NLT)**

*<sup>28</sup> And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

**Reflect**

What experiences may help others in knowing God’s grace, hope, power, love, community, purpose, plan from your life?

Are there existing ministries you know of that utilize your common experiences to help others?

If you have never written out your testimony, this may be an important part to include in your faith journey?

Hopefully, this has been helpful to you in understanding that God can use YOU to reach people wherever you are and whoever you are! It may be through our gifts, our common hearts, abilities, our personalities, our experiences or a combination but God will use YOU.

As you step out in faith to share-remember Paul's words-you just may find yourself surprised at how fun and exciting sharing can be.

**1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (NLT)**

*<sup>22</sup> When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, **I try to find common ground** with everyone **so that I might bring them to Christ.** <sup>23</sup> I do all this to spread the Good News, and **in doing so I enjoy its blessings.***