

## How To Make People Glad To See You: Advice From A Legend



Motivational guru Glenna Salsbury

When the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster occurred in Pennsylvania in 1979 – the worst accident in U.S. nuclear power history – pandemonium broke out as public health and safety concerns mounted. 140,000 pregnant women and children were evacuated – more than half the local population. Schools were closed. Farmers were told to keep their animals under cover and on stored feed.

And while panic and blame raged outside the walls of Three Mile Island, the employees inside the nuclear facility fell into an abyss of hopelessness and fear.

That is, until Glenna Salsbury arrived on the scene and helped them pick up the pieces and salvage their self-esteem.

In some circles, Salsbury is known as one of the preeminent motivational speakers of our time. In others, she's known as a transformational trainer and coach, helping leadership teams and employees raise their game in good times and bad.

Regardless of where Salsbury is – face-to-face with a CEO, in the trenches with a customer service organization or standing behind a podium at a major conference, she brings heart to the party.

“Now more than ever, people are craving messages that touch the spirit,” Salsbury says. “Business is nothing but groups of people working with people. And people have minds, bodies and spirit. You don’t go to work and leave your humanity at home. It just doesn’t work that way.”

It all began when she was 17 years old and interviewed her father, a life insurance salesman, for a school project. That’s when she learned that his purpose in life was to *make people glad they saw him*. It was a mission that resonated so deeply that it became the beacon for her own life.

Living by this one simple tenet, Salsbury has transformed organizations, departments, teams and individual lives. “I find that if you keep this goal in clear view, it gives purpose and meaning to everything you do. And you can make a real difference, *every day*,” she says.

### **Four Essential Principles**

Underneath this umbrella mission — *make people glad they saw you* – are Salsbury’s four essential principles:

- 1) Be interested in others. Ask questions and listen to the answers
- 2) Be willing to display enthusiastic support for others.
- 3) Find ways to rekindle individual enthusiasm for life and work.
- 4) Help people expand their horizons for what *might be* instead of what *is*.

With an unwavering focus on these four principles, Salsbury has helped more than 600 corporations and associations – including Merrill-Lynch, Kodak, IBM, Xerox and Aetna, to name a few – build more cohesive teams and effective managers. In fact, Merrill-Lynch was so impressed with Salsbury’s ability to transform teams that they began giving her as a “gift” to their clients such as Citibank, Ford, AT&T, 3M and dozens of others.

“I was there in the eighties and nineties when we offered Glenna’s services to our clients on Merrill’s dime,” says Paul Fitzpatrick, then vice president of operations at Merrill-Lynch’s Relocation Management Division. “It was clear she was having an impact on our people and business, and management felt it would be powerful for our clients to experience her magic.”

Some might call it magic. Others call it a positive energy that is positively infectious.

“Whether it’s dismal employment statistics, the debacle of Greece, the conflict in Afghanistan or the skyrocketing cost of medical insurance, we are bombarded with negativity. There’s not

enough positive energy in the world, and Glenna has that gift. She's the kind of person you want to be around. Her positive energy is a magnet," Fitzpatrick says with palpable affection.

Ask anyone who has been in her presence, and you'll hear that Salsbury doesn't just look at you, she looks *into* you. She doesn't just smile, she sparkles. She doesn't just communicate, she captivates. And she doesn't just teach, she touches you at a profoundly deep level.

With programs such as "Transformational Leadership: The Fine Art of Making a Difference," "How To Do the Impossible...And Make It Look Easy" and "How to Stay on the Cutting Edge Without Losing Your Balance," Salsbury uses powerful storytelling and heart-to-heart connection to bring her rallying cry and four essential principles to organizations across the country.

### **Tapping Into Basic Human Needs**

Salsbury credits her widespread success – which spans more than 40 years – to her ability to acknowledge and tap into basic human needs.

"The reality is that every person – whether or not they're in Corporate America — is a person with a hungry heart. And no matter what the discourse is, the reality of hungry hearts and aching people still exists. Healing hearts becomes a calling that is the essence of great leadership," she says.

Salsbury continues: "Aside from food and shelter, a person's greatest needs are to feel loved, valued and cared for. When you help them feel that level of support, you can unlock potential and realize performance beyond anything you can achieve by motivating through fear or intimidation."

And her clients agree. Jim Troebliker has hired Salsbury more than 70 times throughout his career at several organizations. "The bottom line is that Glenna gets results, and she does it by making everyone feel good about themselves. You gotta see it to believe it."

Troebliker first hired Salsbury when he was with GPU Nuclear Corp and needed to boost the morale of workers stationed out at Three Mile Island after the nuclear disaster in 1979. "It was us against the world. In the press, we were accused of causing radioactive water and dead cows. We were on an island – physically and emotionally. Glenna brought inspiration to a downtrodden organization and helped bring our game to the next level," he says. Troebliker then recruited Salsbury to help improve customer service and teamwork at the American Heart Association, where he was a vice president.

Salsbury's messages, though gentle and motivating, have a strong underpinning of accountability. "You are where you are because you haven't taken yourself someplace else," she emphasizes. She's developed a model to help people make decisions and take action to get themselves to a better place. In Salsbury's world, there's no room for whining or self-pity.

### **A Legend Among Speakers**

In addition to her corporate coaching and training, Salsbury has touched hundreds of thousands of people from the podium.

In 1990, she was inducted into the National Speaker's Hall of Fame, joining the likes of Zig Ziglar, Ronald Reagan, Jack Canfield, Norman Vincent Peale, Jeannie Robertson, Fred Pryor and Og Mandino.

“Glenna has the ability to hold an audience in the palm of her hand,” says Stacy Tetschner, CEO of the National Speakers' Association. “In an instant, tears. In the next instant, the kind of laughter that pulls joy from a place so deep, you can hardly identify it.”

### **75 Years of Insight And Still Going Strong**

At 75 years old, Salsbury bounds around the country with the vigor of a college athlete. She travels 150 days a year, a pace she has maintained for the past several decades and plans to continue “at least until I'm ninety-five.” Athleticism has been part of her life. Her three brothers were football players, and she married Green Bay Packer Jim Salsbury, who passed away in 2002. She is mother to three daughters who are her “best friends in the world.”

Salsbury lives her life and runs her business “from the inside out,” with an unwavering faith and a keen ability to listen and act on her intuition. She rejects conventional wisdom and conventional paths – a pattern that started early in her life and picked up steam as she went along.

“If you're really successful, you're not part of the pack. You're one of a kind. Daring to be one of a kind requires courage and self-knowledge, in leadership and in life,” she says.

“I've always had an inner sense of what I needed to do and resisted the party lines about how to be effective, how to build a business, how to work with people. I did what I felt was best, and whenever I went against that inner voice, I experienced anxiety. I made a decision not to live in anxiety and to stay in my own inner flow.”

Indeed, staying in one's own “inner flow” — in an environment of incessant chatter, noise and stimulation – is one of Salsbury's most emphatic pieces of advice. “You can drown in all the messages, all the voices, all the distraction,” says Salsbury. “Stay centered in who you are, and stand for what you know to be true. Everything else will fall into place.”

*[Susan Tardanico](#) is CEO of the [Authentic Leadership Alliance](#), a leadership and communications consultancy. She is also Executive in Residence at the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) as well as a professional speaker. A former corporate senior executive and broadcast reporter, Susan has a passion for authenticity, reinvention and courageous career management.*