



Written by
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“Construction Zone”

Scripture: James 3: 8

Dramatic Category: “Metaphor Skit”

What is a “Metaphor Skit”?

A “Metaphor Skit” is a drama in which concrete items represent abstract ideas. Physical objects (props) help state the theme of the message. The image might be a physical prop, like the “Crown of Sovereignty” worn by the person who is dominating an argument. It may also be a physical position assumed by an actor that seems unusual, like falling over dead, when spoken to harshly; or a ball-and-chain may be placed on a person who exhibits a bad habit. These skits use a surrealistic style to make their point. Concrete objects become symbolic representations of abstract meanings.

Topic: The power of words

Performance Time: 6 minutes

Number of Players: 6 players (*3 men and 3 women*)

Objective:

The goal of this skit is to use people, who uncoil and recoil, to visually represent the broken relationships brought about by harsh words spoken from a prideful heart. Words can both build us up and tear us down depending on their intent.

Synopsis:

In this skit, Sandy, a new employee is being given a tour of the company by her boss, who warns her not to let her new “Junior Executive” position go to her head. She is no better than anyone else, so he cautions her against becoming prideful and harsh.

On the tour they enter a “construction zone,” where people are being built up and torn down by the power of words. Sandy watches people respond physically to the egocentric motives and the content of words, as they coil up into a little ball when spoken to harshly, and uncoil when they receive encouraging words. With the help of her boss, Sandy learns how to repair people through carefully chosen words of encouragement.

Cast:

Ken: *begins contorted, and ends uncontorted*
Beth: *begins uncontorted, and ends up contorted*
Nancy: *builds Ken up with her kind words*
Mark: *tears Beth down with his harsh words*
Boss: *interprets the power of prideful words*
Sandy: *a young executive*

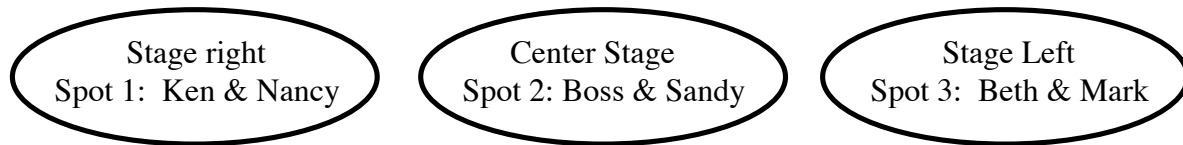
Props:

2 sets of several pieces of typing paper, stapled together
2 chairs
A clipboard for the boss
A clipboard for Sandy

Costumes: Dressed as office workers, business style

Lighting Note/ Stage Configuration:

This skit is most effective if you can isolate three light pools, as illustrated below; however, it is extremely effective with no light pools as well.



The lights should switch on when each pair speaks and off when they are quiet. Sandy and the Boss should be in dim light during the couple exchanges.

SCRIPT NOTE:

The lines for Sandy and the Boss could be **placed on the clipboards** each of them carry onto the stage. They could glance down now and then, particularly the Boss because he has some rather complex speeches. Sand could carry a pen and appear to take notes, while she is actually checking her lines. This is just an option; you may have super-minds who can handle the complexity of this dialogue effortlessly; if so, congratulations.

The Script:

(Sandy and the Boss walk onto the stage. They see two sets of people; one person in each set stands behind the other who is seated in a chair. The person seated in the left pair is grossly contorted, with a paper lying at his feet. He looks twisted as he sits. The person on the box in the right pair is holding a paper in her hands while the other stands over her and looks on. Both pairs are in a frozen tableau.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 2, SPOT 1 AND SPOT 3 AT 50%

Boss:

(entering the stage talking to Sandy as he checks things off on his clipboard. Sandy is taking notes on her clipboard as she walks.)

All right, you're checked out on the copier;
you got your key to the executive rest room.
(He stops and faces her.)

Sandy: What?

Boss: The executive rest room.

Sandy: I know where it is.

Boss: I know, but you've never been an executive before, have you?

Sandy: No, but I've been to the rest room before; I'm sure I'll be fine.

Boss: It's not that. Just don't let it go to your head.

Sandy; *(gazing at him oddly)*
Okay, I won't let the rest room go to my head.

Boss: No, not the rest room.
Being an executive; don't let that go to your head.
You're no better than anybody else.
You just have a different job.

Sandy: I know that.

Boss: I know you know, but will you remember when you get to the construction site?

Sandy: What construction site?
Don't we sell computers?

Boss: *(ignoring her question)* They never put the cones out.

Sandy: Cones?
What are you talking about?
What cones?

Boss: You know, those orange cones they put on the road,
so you don't run into 'em while they're tearing' things up!
We've got construction sites all over this place, and I keep running into them.

(He stops her right behind and between the two pairs of frozen people.)
Here's one now; just our luck.
Oh, well, at least I'm here to check you out on this, too.

Sandy: *(looking really confused)* Check me on out on this?
There's no construction going on around here.

Boss: *(pointing to the frozen pairs)* There's construction going on all right,
and destruction, too!

Sandy: What are you talking about? There's nothing!

Boss: Watch. It's starting.
(They both stare as the first pair on the right comes to life.)

LIGHTS: UP SPOT 3, SPOT 1 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Mark: You call that a month-end report?
Do you have any idea who I am?
If you are going to work with me, you are going to be excellent;
have I made myself clear?

Beth: *(recoils slightly)*

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 1, SPOT 3 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Nancy:
(The pair on the left comes to life, and the pair on the right freezes. Peeking around the corner and approaching Ken with hesitation. Ken is grossly contorted. He has his paper hidden under his foot. Nancy finds the paper and reads it.)

Hey, that's really well done.
Did you write this up all on your own?

(At her gentle comment, he uncoils slightly.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 3, SPOT 1 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Mark: *(Coming closer to Beth. He looks into Beth's face, then back to the paper.)*

Did personnel send you up here as a joke?
If they did, it's not funny.
You're not working for just anybody, you know.
I am Mark Perkins.
Do you know who I am?

Beth: *(Begins to contort even more)*

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 1, SPOT 3 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Nancy: *(continuing to read the report)* You approached this problem very creatively.

(Ken uncoils and finally faces Nancy.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 3, SPOT 1 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Mark: *(to Beth)* You are on the executive floor, Missy.
We don't operate like the people you are used to.
You'd better go back to where you fit in.

(Beth contorts into a little ball that looks very much like Ken looked at the start.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 1, SPOT 3 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Nancy: *(looking at the report again)* Actually, your solution is better than mine.
Can I ask you a few questions about this?

Ken: *(uncoils fully to talk with her)* Me? Sure...

Nancy: How did you come up with this?

Ken: I... ah... well, I was just thinking...

Nancy: Well, you just keep on thinking.

Ken: Really?

Nancy: Yes. You've got a lot of talent for problem solving.
(They leave the stage together to the right.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 3, SPOT 1 OUT, SPOT 2 AT 30%

Mark: My time is too valuable to waste trying to decipher this mess.

(He throws the report down at her feet. Beth is left in a horribly contorted ball as Mark exits left.)

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 2, SPOT 3 OUT

Sandy: *(to the Boss)* What was that all about?

Boss: That's what I was talking about.
They never warn you when you're gonna' run into one of these construction zones.
Blast those cones, anyway.

Sandy: *(following the Boss around as he looks for cones)*
I don't know what you're talking about, Sir.
We just saw two people being....

Boss: Torn apart, and built up.
That's what I'm getting at.
You never know if you're gonna' be walkin' into a construction zone,
where they're building each other up,
or a demolition zone, where people are getting blown to bits.
I wish they would warn ya.'
Don't you think that would be fair?

See, there should have been a sign up here that says,
"Caution, people under construction" or,
"Warning: people being destroyed: next 50 yards."
But, do you see anything? No, they never even put the cones out!

(He continues looking around.)

Sandy: You mean to tell me that people are being built here?

Boss: Sure, built up or torn down.
It's done entirely by other people who never tell you when they're gonna' do it.
Drives you crazy.

You can be walking along, minding your own business, and "Pow!" out of nowhere
somebody will drop right in front of you.
Destroyed!
Out of the clear blue sky.
No warning, no cones!

Sandy: Just with words?

Boss: Oh yeah, words are the most powerful weapons we have to use on each other.
Our words are fueled by our pride, and pride is a very dangerous thing.
Words can build you up or tear you down.
(snap) Just like that!

Sandy: Oh, come on.
Words aren't that big a deal.
It's not like you hit them or something.

Boss: Words hit harder than fists!

Sandy: They do not!

Boss: Sure they do!
(He motions over to the coiled up Beth.) Try it.

LIGHTS: UP ON SPOT 3 AND 2

Sandy: Try what?

Boss: Try building her up with words.
The tearing down's already been done.

Sandy: Are you kidding?

Boss: No, go on. Try it.

Sandy: *(approaching Beth who has been coiled up on her chair)* Hi.

(Beth coils tighter.)

No, it's okay, really.

(looking at the Boss) This is stupid!

Boss: Don't give up.
Sometimes it takes a little longer when they've really been destroyed.
Go on.

Sandy: *(looking at Beth again)* Ah...my name is Sandy. What's yours?

(She still gets no response, and looks helplessly at the Boss)

Boss: Try talking about something that matters to her.
(He points to the report.)

Sandy:
(She grabs the report that was thrown on the ground. She reads a few lines, then looks at Beth.)

This is really good.

(Beth uncoils slightly. Sandy looks with hope at the Boss, who encourages her.)

Ah.. Do you think you could explain some of this to me?

(Beth uncoils more so she can see her face.)

See, you're not too dumb to work here.

(Beth coils up; Sandy looks at the Boss with frustration.)

Boss: See, I told 'ya. "Pow"! Right out of the clear blue sky!

Sandy: *(kindly to Beth)* You're really smart.
I'm sorry.
I don't know why I said that.
I guess I was trying to be funny.

Boss: Lots of destroying goes on when people try to be funny.

Sandy: I ah... Would you tell me more about this?

(Beth begins to uncoil slowly.)

I think you're a good writer, really.
(Studying the report as Beth slowly uncoils.)

Really, you are.

Beth: Do you mean that?

Sandy: *(shocked that he is speaking)* Yes!
You've made a terrific start.
Let's go talk about how you can make it even better.

(She looks at the Boss, who checks off his clipboard as Beth and Sandy exit off.)

Boss: New executives don't usually get checked off on this one quite that fast.
They get a little too proud of their title, *(laughing to himself)*
and then they wonder why they're so lonely.

Dynamite stuff, those words!
So why can't they just put out the cones?
(He exits.)

The End

LIGHTS: SPOTS OUT, UP ON SERMON LIGHTS