

## Professional Communication - Speaking Request

**Subject:** Request for a Keynote Address in Toronto

**Date:** Saturday, May 19, 2012 8:30 AM

**From:** Grant Patten <gpatten@carp.com>

**To:** Eric Klinalski <eric@klinalski.com>

Dear Mr. Klinalski,

Please let me know if you'd be interested in delivering the keynote address for our *The Future of Aging in Place* conference to be held in Toronto, Ontario on November 10, 2012.

I work as the Communications Manager at the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP). CARP is sponsoring *The Future of Aging in Place* conference and I am helping to organize the event. We already have many reputable speakers and interesting sessions scheduled for the conference. A colleague of yours, Dr. Ken Dychtwald, will be presenting on his new film, *Arc of Life*. He'll be premiering this film at the end of the conference.

We at CARP came close to asking Dr. Dychtwald if he'd like to deliver the keynote. He is perhaps the more obvious choice, as he has been working on aging-related issues for longer than just about anybody. But I was personally impacted by your recent book, *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*. I think the "living alone" angle that you take in your book is very timely and relevant.

Dr. Dychtwald has written a lot about aging in place, but his research on the subject is fairly broad. *Going Solo* provides a more focused look at aging in place for those who are living alone. Like you, I think the negative societal view of living alone is very antiquated and unfair. But it is also a powerful view that has made many retired Canadians very scared and reluctant to even entertain the notion of living alone for an extended period of time. "Living alone is a sad, lonely and terrible way to die," society says. This negative societal conception of living alone continues to result in many unhappy retirement experiences.

People grow older and grudgingly accept to move into a retirement home, even though they don't really want to. In most cases, they didn't fully consider the possibility of aging in place and living alone. More people need to become aware of the benefits of living alone, especially retirees who are interested in aging in place. I realize that your book has done quite well in the United States, but I sense that it hasn't yet received as much attention as it deserves in Canada. For this reason, I feel that a keynote address from you that focuses on the ideas from *Going Solo* would be the perfect way to begin our conference.

As approximately 300 people will be in attendance, this conference will be a fantastic venue for you to showcase your work. Please respond via e-mail by June 1<sup>st</sup> so that I'll have adequate time to find an alternative if you decline.

Thank you,

Grant Patten (Communications Manager, CARP)

*Assignment #1, Grant Patten*

## Professional Communication - Thank You Letter

May 19, 2012

Mr. Grant Patten, Communications Manager  
Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)  
30 Jefferson Ave.  
Toronto, ON M6K 1Y4

Dear Mr. Klinalski:

Thank you very much for delivering the keynote address at *The Future of Aging in Place* conference. I heard from more than a few attendees that your keynote was their favourite part of the conference. I think it's fair to consider this a high compliment because there were many other fascinating sessions and presentations at the conference.

I wanted to apologize again for the microphone problems. It's amazing that after planning out every little detail, something always manages to go wrong. But it was a very minor inconvenience and the participant evaluations were definitely positive. A number of the evaluations noted your clear, well-prepared and engaging speaking style. And I was particularly impressed with how you tailored your presentation to a Canadian audience. You were right to point out that many retirement homes in Canada have been suspected of elder abuse and neglect. This is an ongoing problem that needs to be addressed and it is one of our main priorities at CARP to call attention to elder abuse.

You were right to point out that living alone does not have to entail social abandonment. The solo life should be thought of as a path for moving ahead and taking control of your life circumstances. I agree that for seniors who need assistance, then better funding programs should be made available to provide them with caretakers rather than thoughtlessly shuffling them into retirement homes. It's true that our federal and provincial governments have not been acting with enough seriousness on this issue.

Your positive messages about the development of communications technologies were particularly inspiring. You're right that retirees and seniors should not shy away from social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter. These tools and others like them can be used productively to provide a socializing experience whilst living alone.

Your keynote certainly helped to bring positive discourse about aging in place and living alone to a Canadian audience. This was desperately needed. On behalf of CARP, I thank you.

Sincerely,



Grant Patten  
Communications Manager, CARP

## Persona

### Eric Klinalski - 48-year-old sociologist from New York, New York



*“The communications revolution has helped make living alone possible, because it makes it a potentially social experience.”*

**Photo credit:** by Flickr user “toosuto” (Creative Commons license)

#### **Title Preference**

Eric. Has a PhD but never seems to use “Dr.” ... “Mr.” is probably best choice for initial e-mail.

#### **Personal Background**

Eric Klinalski was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1964. He was born into a Communist regime that was undergoing some major political and economic upheavals. He came of age in the 70s among constant public strikes and protests against the economic policies of the Polish government. Eric was one of the luckier ones because his father worked as a public servant and was able to benefit from government connections. But Eric witnessed much poverty in his time growing up and this made him very empathetic toward less fortunate people.

Eric always excelled in school in Poland but had a strong desire to explore the West. In 1982, he won a scholarship to study sociology at New York University. He resettled in NYC but still visits his remaining family in Poland regularly. Eric is one of the youngest baby boomers – part of Generation Jones. This makes him fairly cynical, unidealistic and distrusting of government.

Eric's father passed away in 1996, while Eric was in the middle of his PhD. After witnessing his mother's refusal to go into a nursing home, Eric decided to write his thesis on the “aging in place” movement. Eric met his ex-wife at NYU; they divorced in 2000. They have one daughter who lives in Connecticut with her mother. Eric is now single.

Despite being an excellent public speaker who has delivered many well-received presentations on his work, Eric identifies as an introvert. He isn't comfortable being the centre of attention. Income: about \$250,000/year, speaking fee: \$15,000

### More About Eric

#### **Goals/Needs**

Eric has a strong desire to connect to people with his research. He seems genuinely concerned to create socially beneficial work. His primary goal with a speaking engagement is to get people thinking differently about an important social issue.

#### **Expectations**

His blog reveals that he has a very low tolerance for tardiness and expects to be able to speak at the exact scheduled time.

### Engagement & Activities

**Computer Usage:** High but still prefers desktop over laptop

**Internet Presence:** Medium – has personal blog that is updated at least once per month

**Mobile Usage:** Medium – uses a mobile for talking; does not like texting

**Social Networking:** Preferred network seems to be Twitter; tweets are professional and academic in nature

**Favourite TV Show:** Tavis Smiley

**Favourite Book:** *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain

## References

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