

An American Hostage's Inspirational Story of Survival



Rick Kupke

Keynote Speaker

Biography

Speech

Retired Foreign Service Officer **Rick Kupke** was the last of 52 Americans to surrender as militants overran the U.S. Embassy in Teheran on November 4, 1979. The next 444 days were filled with fear, hardships, and false hopes. However, Rick describes how he developed inner strength to survive.

Rick draws from insights derived from his 444 days of captivity and how it applies to each of us today. He demonstrates the power of **communication** in our lives and why the terrorist separated the hostages. Rick speaks of the shock of unexpected **change**, and how today we may find ourselves in a hostile environment with our only option being **inner strength**. Rick speaks of the keys for survival which include **faith in oneself, God, loyalty to each other, and trust and patriotism** for our country. Rick personalizes his program to his specific audience, from input from senior leaders and meeting planners. His message has universal appeal.

With humor and his down-to-earth style, Mr. Kupke describes how he and other hostages passed time, played tricks on each other, and even invented games. By drawing an analogy between terrorism today and the Iranian Hostage Crisis, Rick informs his audience that our manner in dealing with terrorism 25 years ago in Iran has affected our present situation with Al Qaeda and other splinter terrorist organization.

Rick currently lives in Texas, where he devotes much time to speaking and silversmithing.

- Member of the Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma
- Studied at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma
- Served with the United States Air Force in electronic intelligence gathering during the Vietnam War
- Assignments in Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Sinai Desert, Iran, The Philippines, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Mexico with the U.S. Department of State.



Awards:

- Award for Valor
- W. Averell Harriman Award
- Various other awards by the U.S. Department of State
- Personal letters of appreciation from both President Carter and President Reagan
- Sagamore of the Wabash Award

The successful author of **Blackhawk Down, Mark Bowden**, recently interviewed Mr. Kupke for his soon-to-be published book on the Iranian Hostage Crisis. The Discovery Channel also spent several hours interviewing Rick for their upcoming 4-hour series on the hostage crisis.