

Storytelling

The Power of metaphors

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Great presenters and leaders use storytelling as a powerful tool to motivate, inspire, educate, and sell products or ideas. In this special report you will find tips and ideas that will help you create stories to make a positive impact.

Be aware that stories presented correctly create emotion. If you want your audience to feel motivated and excited tell an appropriate story. This is one major mistake I see most unexperienced presenters do. They tell a story that is not consistent with the outcome. For example, the presenter will tell a war story to motivate. A story about war, battles, and courage will tend to have a negative result because the audience will also reflect on the negative damaging effects of war. Pick your stories wisely. Listed below are some more important dos and don'ts that will make your storytelling persuasive.

- Use stories during public speaking engagements to illustrate points and state the point in addition to telling the story. Always make your story relevant to the subject at hand.
- Select stories to match the intelligence, experience, occupation, and age of the audience as well as the nature of the occasion. You don't want to talk over the heads of the audience members and you don't want to bore them with stories that are too simple.
- Space stories at intervals to provide a change of pace and to reemphasize your message.
- Eliminate inconsequential detail. Use the fewest number of words that convey the message in an interesting fashion. Writing the story out will help you see words that can be eliminated without hurting the story.
- Keep your humorous stories short during your public speaking engagements. The size of the laugh is inversely proportional to the number of words used to get to the punch line.

Rule: The longer the story, the funnier it must be. You must make jokes and humorous stories believable up to a point. Use factual, specific details that the audience can relate to, i.e., say the brand name like Lots-o-Suds rather than a laundry detergent. The more truthful and specific the story sounds the more your audience will get caught up in what you say.

- Specify the location of a joke or story. If your story takes place in a restaurant say, "I was at Togo's Shop in downtown San Jose, the other day." This gives the audience something concrete to think about, which makes them more involved mentally.
- When crafting a story, use people, places, and things the audience knows. When the audience is familiar with the elements in your story, they will become even more involved. As soon as you mention the company cafeteria, their minds race to the cafeteria to meet you and find out what happens. However, don't use humor that is too inside. Only a few people will understand it.
- Emphasize the adjectives and verbs in your stories to make them sound more interesting. Try it. Look around where you are right now and describe anything you want. Really put punch behind the adjectives and verbs and see how your description comes to life. Use specific and interesting verbs and adjectives. Say I was exhausted, not I was tired. Say, her head was nodding and drooping, not her head was down.
- Learn your stories. In a normal speech if you forget the exact thing you wanted to say, you can improvise and go on. But if you leave out an important detail in a story or if you accidentally give away the climax too soon, you have a mess on your hands. I tell a story at least 30 times in private before I'll test it in front of an audience.
- Use true facts from your own life. This makes it easier for you to tell the story because you lived it and you can learn it faster too. Also, someone else can't steal your story as easily if all the facts have to do with your life.
- Use appropriate emotional language to hook the listener. Use sensory words like; feel, taste, sound.
- Construct a humorous story so that it concludes abruptly with a climactic word. Don't utter another syllable or sound after this climactic word. You might squelch the laughter you worked so hard to get.
Exception: Some stories get laughter all along the way. More

of these stories are used by humorists who are expected to be funny all the time.

- Work out different lengths of the same story to fit different time segments. Don't memorize your stories word-for-word. This way you won't feel forced to say every word, every time you tell the story. You can change the length of the story easily by adding or subtracting detail. Super Trick: Have a quotation ready that makes the same point as your story. If your time is shortened, you can cut out a story and replace it with a quote.
- Slant your story to the intended audience. When telling a story to a group of executives you would probably want to use different language and emphasis than if you were telling the same story to a group of secretaries. Change nonessential elements of the story to make a better connection.
- Use terms like Imagine this, Have you ever had an experience where ... Let me take you with me to ... to draw the audience into your stories.

Don't

When setting up a story:

- Don't say the words funny, reminds me of, or story. These words are so overused they alert the audience that a story is coming. This causes audience members to resist your story rather than get caught up in your story. They say in essence, Let's see you make me laugh, or OK here comes another story.
- Don't say, I heard a good one the other day for the same reason you don't say it reminds me of. The audience will resist and challenge you to make them laugh.

- Never say, I don't know if I should tell this one. If there is any doubt whatsoever that a story is not appropriate for a particular group, leave it out.

Better ways to set up a story

The best way to start a story is to get right into it. You should be into the story before anyone realizes it is a story. That way they are already deeply involved and don't have time to resist. You could say:

There was this man ...

On the flight here ... Don't say, A funny thing happened on the way to the meeting today.

Driving in this morning ...

In the cab today ...

I was talking with ...

Let me take you back ..., Come with me ... Imagine ..., Visualize this ... These are a little different because they do alert the audience that a story is coming, but they get them so involved emotionally that any resistance is counteracted.

When getting out of a story

- Never say, But seriously folks. If it was a funny story you don't have to say, Hey Stupid! That was a joke. It also implies you were lying.
- To exit a story, don't say anything about it being over. Just make a slight change in delivery, tone, rate, expression, etc., and go on.

Here Are Some More Don'ts

- Use too many stories on the same topic. Each successive one will lose impact.
- Tell a story where you are the hero. If you are the hero, make it appear that it was dumb luck that made you so (self-effacing humor). If you are a bonafide hero, forget what I just

said, but make sure you add a healthy dose of humility for best connection with the audience.

- Use terms foreign to the experience of the audience.
- Die of printed page poison. Written stories must be changed to be recited aloud. When you find a story that you like in a reference book, you cannot say it exactly as it is written or you will sound stupid. You must knock out the he said and she said.
- Don't give a history lesson when telling a humorous story. Put yourself into the story to make it believable. Fake truth is essential to humor even if story is totally false. The exception to the need for fake truth is when you are telling an exaggeration. Then anything goes.

Example:

I had a terrible day at the beach. I came home with 14 harpoon wounds.

Make your story memorable with the use of characters. Characters entertain and add dimension.

Tip 1: Look in different directions to indicate different characters. The audience will associate a stage right or stage left look with the different character.

Tip 2: Use above trick along with changing your voice tone to indicate different characters.

Tip 3: Do what the written story says. If it says Joe cleared his throat, you clear your throat at that point in the story.

The power of anticipation

Keep them sitting at the edge of their seat

Split your story. Start a story near or at the beginning of your talk, but don't finish it. Build suspense by cutting off the story at a key point or just before the climactic finish. This builds anticipation. Finish the story at the end of your talk.

When you use this technique skillfully, you will have every single person there at the end of your speech because they want to know what happened at the end of the story.

Practice the use of storytelling and make them a powerful part of your presentations. Be sure to visit <http://MikeAguilera.com> for more information on presentation and communication skills and one-on-one coaching.

"We could all use a little coaching. When you're playing the game it's hard to think of everything."

-Jim Rohn