



WHY TELL STORIES?

In the introduction to this course, you learned that human beings tell stories because they create an emotional connection. This is an important aspect, but is only one of many reasons why storytelling is so effective.

Have you ever heard a story that left you wondering *“What is this guy talking about? Why should I care?”* If you haven’t, you’re the only one. More importantly, have you ever told a story that left others wondering, *“What are you talking about?”* and *“Why should I care?”* If your answer is ‘no’, then you’re not telling enough stories.

Every one of us, at some point, has told a story that didn’t go over well.

So what are the other reasons you should tell stories? In his book, [*Lead with a Story*](#), author Paul Smith highlights 10 compelling reasons to tell stories:

Reason 1: Storytelling is simple. In the introductory lesson, you learned that human beings have always told stories. Anyone can do it. You don’t need a college degree to tell stories.

Reason 2: Storytelling is timeless. Because human beings have always told stories, it is not a fad, unlike many other ideas that come along in the business world. Storytelling is especially powerful for leaders, and it always will be.

Reason 3: Stories are demographic-proof. Everybody— regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, or gender— likes to listen to stories.

Reason 4: Stories are contagious. The best stories spread by word-of-mouth. Before human beings invented the written word, the only way to pass on their stories was to tell them. One person told another, and they were passed down through the generations.

Reason 5: Stories are easier to remember. According to psychologist Jerome Bruner, facts are 20 times more likely to be remembered if they are part of a story.

Reason 6: Stories inspire. Have you ever heard someone walk out of a business meeting and say, *“Wow! You’ll never believe the PowerPoint presentation I just saw!”* Probably not, because most of the people walking out of a Power Point presentation are just trying to wake up. You *have*, however, heard people say, *“Wow, you should hear the story that I just heard”*. This is especially true when people see great movies.

Reason 7: Stories appeal to all types of learners. In any group, about two out of five people will be predominantly visual learners. They learn best from videos, diagrams, or illustrations.

Another two out of five will be auditory. They learn best through the spoken word, such as lectures or discussions.

The remaining one out of five person is kinesthetic. They learn best by doing, experiencing, or feeling.

Storytelling has aspects that work for all three types of learners. Visual learners appreciate the mental pictures that your story creates. Auditory learners focus on words and the storyteller’s voice. Kinesthetic learners remember the emotional connections and feelings from a story.

Reason 8: Stories fit better where most of the learning happens in the workplace. According to communications expert Evelyn Clark, *“Up to 70 percent of the new skills, information and competence in the workplace is acquired through “informal learning”* such as what happens in team settings, mentoring, and peer- to-peer communication. And the bedrock of informal learning is storytelling.

Reason 9: Stories put the listener in a mental learning mode. According to best-selling author and training coach Margaret Parkin, storytelling *“re-creates in us that emotional state of curiosity which is ever present in children, but which as adults we tend to lose. Once in this childlike state, we tend to be more receptive and interested in the information we are given.”*

Author and organizational narrative expert David Hutchens points out, *“storytelling puts listeners in a different orientation. They put their pens and pencils down, they open up their posture, and just listen.”*

Reason 10: Telling stories shows respect for the audience. Stories get your message across without arrogantly telling listeners what to think or do. Regarding what to think, storytelling author Annette Simmons observed, *“Stories give people freedom to come to their own conclusions. People who reject predigested conclusions might just agree with your interpretations if you get out of their face long enough for them to see what you have seen.”*

To underscore the reason **why** to tell stories, especially in the workplace, corporate storyteller David Armstrong suggests, “*If there was ever a time when you could just order people to do something [at work], it has long since passed. Telling a story, where you underline the moral, is a great way of explaining to people what needs to be done, without saying, ‘Do this!’*” This answers the question, **why?**

ACTION STEP: In the file that you started last week, **record the names of stories** that have affected your life. They can be fictional or true. Next to each, record the reasons why these stories impacted you.

For example, you may have been motivated to action by a movie you’ve seen; encouraged by a speech you’ve heard; or inspired by Bible stories you’ve read. The reasons you write will likely be the reasons audiences will want to hear your stories.

FEATURED RESOURCE

Five Keys To Gain And Keep Audience Interest In Your Story

For public speaking, engaging your audience is crucial for leaving a lasting impact. If you capture and keep their attention from start to finish, you’ll have a lasting impact.

But, grabbing and maintaining their interest can often feel like an uphill battle because they’re more distractible than ever.

So, we created the complimentary report, ‘*Five Keys To Gain And Keep Audience Interest In Your Story.*’ It offers a practical roadmap with actionable strategies that will transform your storytelling.

This ensures your audience stays hooked from start-to-finish. To download the report (no-cost and no-obligation), **[CLICK HERE](#)**.

RAVING FANS

*“Michael’s coaching sessions were amazing! I **learned more about storytelling in six weeks** than I have in my last 16 years as a speaker. Michael gave me the skills and confidence to speak to an audience of over 3,000 people.”*

~ Michael Pope
Certified Maxwell Trainer and Speaker

*“Your presentation on TED talks was the **very best I have heard** on the subject. Congratulations on a **content-rich, superbly-presented** program.”*

~ Patricia Fripp
NSA Speaker Hall of Fame, Executive Speech Coach

*“Thank you for your presentation. It had an outstanding turnout. I received an **unprecedented amount of extremely positive feedback** on both the program content and the way you presented it.*

*Through your efforts our members have gained important knowledge and **expanded their project management skill sets**; which ultimately serves to **improve project management** at AT&T”.*

~ Terri C. Kidd, ATT

*“Michael Davis was **one of the best coaches** I ever worked with. I would recommend Michael, as a story and speaking coach to **anyone with a high stakes talk to give**. Michael will help you take your speech from **good to great!**”*

~ LTC (Ret.) Scott Mann
Green Beret, TEDx Speaker, Author, Speaker, Trainer

*“Michael session helps you gain clarity on your presentation and your entire message. His points are **valuable, easy to understand and quick to implement**. Watching his session was a **master class on how to give a presentation**.”*

~ Jody, Ohio Real Estate Investors Association

