



THE KEY TO CRAFTING A RELEVANT STORY

Imagine a lighthouse on the coast of Maine. Solidly built on the rocky coastline, standing up to the pounding waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

What is the purpose of that structure?

Obviously, it's a beacon that tells ships if they're off course.

Have you ever heard a story go off course?

Have you ever *told* a story that went off course?

Anyone who's ever presented has, at some point, needed help to get a story back on track. Wouldn't it be great if your story could have a lighthouse?

What if that lighthouse was available before you ever presented to a live audience?

Actually, that kind of beacon does exist. It's called a **Foundational Phrase**. It's the measuring stick by which every part of a presentation or story is compared. It will help you create a message which resonates with your audience, and help them remember it long after you speak.

Every part of your speech – your stories, questions, exercises – should each be measured against this phrase to determine if it belongs in your speech.

Consider some of these Foundational Phrases:

'Stand Up, Stand OUT!'

'Take ACTION Toward Your Passion!'

'Coke Is It!'

What do these have in common [aside from the exclamation point at the end of each]?

They are short.

They are declarative.

They stir emotions.

The first two are programs that I've created. The third was created by a small bottling company you may have heard of, based in Atlanta, Georgia.

The messages should be short because the fewer the words, the more likely they are to be remembered.

The words should be emotional because those are the type that connect with people.

The message must be clear. Otherwise, the audience will just walk away confused.

To give your messages the best chance of being remembered, they should be short, emotional, and clear. If they're not, you and your story will quickly be forgotten. Ask me how I know this!

My program *Stand Up, Stand OUT!* focuses on how to create and deliver meaningful and memorable messages. The early version of this program had a slightly longer title:

"Create a meaningful and memorable message, and deliver it in a dynamic style so that people remember you long after you speak, and you'll be invited back time and time again."

You think that's just a tad bit long?

There is no way you can remember that title three seconds after hearing it, much less three days, three weeks or three months later.

But, just like building a lighthouse from the foundation up, it was a starting point.

After repeated testing, and cutting, further testing and cutting, more testing and more cutting, the title was whittled down to its final version...

Stand Up, Stand OUT!

At their core, both titles say the same thing. The shorter version is simply easier to remember.

When it's easier to remember, people are more likely to use and share it. If you're not convinced of the power of a short Foundational Phrase, try this short test.

If you're over 45 years old, you'll probably pass. If you're younger than 45, you'll probably fail.

But that's OK. Keep listening! There's a valuable lesson here for you, too!

Here's the test:

Fill in the second half of this phrase: “Winston Tastes Good _____”.

What words popped into your head? If you’re familiar with those first three words, the phrase “like a cigarette should” immediately popped into your mind.

“Winston Tastes Good Like a Cigarette Should” was a popular advertising slogan of the Winston cigarette brand for 18 years.

Here’s the twist. As of this recording, which is March, 2013, that ad has not run for 42 years!

Yet, if you were alive then, the words immediately popped into your brain. That is the power of a strong Foundational Phrase.

So why is your Foundational Phrase important?

Because, for your story to have long-lasting impact, it must wrapped around a foundational message.

Remember, it’s easy to get caught up in a story because you like it. Use this Foundational Phrase to ensure that your story supports the message you want your audience to take away.

Avoid the fate of other presenters who are adrift, telling stories without a beacon to guide their way. If you want to be a storyteller whose stories are remembered long after you speak, create your Foundational Phrase.

ACTION STEP: Create the first version of your Foundational Phrase. It should center around the main message you want your audience to walk away with. Don’t edit, simply write down the emotional impact you want to create.

Then, go out and test. Analyze your feedback. Test it again. Make adjustments. Test it again. Eventually you will find your Foundational Phrase.

FEATURED RESOURCE

How to Overcome The Five Biggest Challenges to Effectively Presenting Online

Virtual presentations can be a game-changer if done right. If you keep them actively engaged, they will stay interested and attentive.

But, many presenters treat virtual presentations like in-person ones, leading to disinterest and disengagement. This can cost you opportunities, money, and reputation.

Download our report on overcoming the five biggest virtual presentation challenges and unlock the secrets to captivating your online audience. [**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