



BUILD YOUR STORYTELLING ABS

To this point in the *52 Storytelling Insights* program, you've been introduced to ideas about why stories are your most effective communication tool. We've touched upon the foundational elements and you've been shown why stories can make significant differences in your life.

In this insight, you'll discover the time-tested format of crafting memorable narratives. This structure provides the three foundational pillars upon which all meaningful stories have been written — from the oldest recovered writings 4,000 years ago to your favorite novels and plays to movies, TV shows, and viral videos.

They all share a common framework that captivates listeners and leaves a lasting impact. This framework, what I call *Storytelling ABS*, was championed by legendary Hollywood director, producer, and screenwriter, Frank Daniel. It found new life with Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the minds behind *South Park*, and I discovered this framework from Hollywood documentary Dr. Randy Olson.

I took his insights and molded and honed it to the public speaking, storytelling and business world that I work in. At its core, the ABS structure comprises three essential elements, the words “AND,” “BUT,” and “SO.” Let's unpack their significance:

Introduce The Aspiration With “AND”

Every meaningful story begins with a character who has an aspiration in the ABS structure, the word “AND” helps you set the stage. You introduce your main character (the protagonist), that individual's circumstances, and her initial goal. For maximum impact, the goal and circumstances should be similar to those of your listeners. Each of these elements is connected by the word “AND” (or the word is implied).

For instance, It's the summer of 2007, the early months of the Great Recession. I'm a Certified Financial Planner. I've been given the task of a presenting retirement planning workshops to attract new clients into our firm. If I do well in this new role, it will bring much needed revenue to us and it will supercharge my career.

You now have an understanding of the main character circumstances at the beginning of the narrative. Notice that I didn't have to repeatedly use the word "AND" to connect these ideas. I spoke in short, clipped sentences the way we do in everyday conversation. The word "AND" was implied to connect them.

Effectively delivered, the "AND" part of your narrative creates relevance and an initial connection.

Create Tension With "BUT"

It's now time to introduce the part of your story that triggers the first emotional reaction from listeners. This section is introduced by the word "BUT" or an antonym like "however," "on the other hand," or "yet." This sends your story into a new direction because it pushes the main character out of her ordinary life into discomfort.

Her immediate goal is to return to her comfort zone and get back on track to accomplishing her initial goal. It's important to give a glimpse into her failed attempts to do this by seeing her struggle. We feel empathy for and build a deeper connection with her.

To increase the emotional bond, give your character a deadline by which she has to accomplish the goal. Eventually, the character must face a low point where it seems that all is lost and the problem cannot be overcome.

This is where you introduce The Guide into your narrative.

This is the beginning of the turnaround for your main character.

For instance...

My boss, Joe sits down in his high back leather chair, pulls out a stack of papers, waves them at me and says, "These are evaluations for your last three workshops." After a long pause, he says, "We have a problem." I say, "Joe, what do you mean? Why is there a problem?"

"Going by all this feedback, I can only assume you're a lousy presenter, not a good salesperson, and your stories suck."

I am stunned.

"I don't know what you mean. I had no idea, Joe."

He continues. We've talked with you about this before and it's not changing. Here's the bottom line — You've got 60 days to turn this around or we're going to have to replace you.

This part of the story introduced the inciting incident — the review of the workshop evaluations. This immediately pushes the main character into a major discomfort zone.

The tension is then escalated by the threat of the character being replaced within 60 days.

I can then increase the conflict by saying something like...

“The next two weeks, I practice and rehearse the presentation. Then I get feedback from my colleagues. It isn't good. I panic. “What am I going to do?” I'm gonna lose my job.” That's when a friend happens to call me. I tell him what's happening with my situation, and he says, “Why don't you check out this group that helps people with their public speaking problems? It doesn't cost much and it might help you save your job.”

This completes the downward trajectory of the story. The main character has tried to solve the problem but is still getting negative feedback. At this point, it seems like this person is going to lose the job, and that's when the protagonist is introduced to an organization that can help solve the problem.

At this point The Guide (which is the organization) introduces some type of wisdom, insight, or plan. The main character begins to implement this but doesn't experience immediate success.

That's because in real life, anytime we attempt some new venture, we struggle at first, no matter how good it is.

It's important to show that challenge in your narrative, but don't stay in it too long, just enough to convey the idea that the character didn't wake up the next day and all the problems were solved. It's important to demonstrate that this individual is making progress. This will lead us to the third part of the ABS structure.

Give The Listener The BIG Payoff With “SO”

The “SO” element of this framework serves two purposes:

One, resolve the initial conflict, and,

Two, reveal the lesson learned. After employing the wisdom of The Guide, the listener wants to see the main character overcome the problem and succeed. This happens very quickly.

For instance:

After writing, tweaking and rehearsing this presentation for 30 days with knowledge I picked up from the speaking organization, I'm ready to present. I'm speaking to a group of 24 perspective clients and my talk isn't perfect, but it's better than any other one I've ever given. At the end of the night, five people schedule a one-to-one meeting with our firm. This is better than any result I've ever received to this point, and it ensures that I get to keep my job.

In one paragraph, the listener experiences the accomplishment of the goal, which is to save the job.

You don't want to stop at this point though because if you do, you've presented an entertaining story, but you've shortchanged the listener. The most valuable part of the story is what comes next.

This is where you demonstrate the transformation of the character and deliver the lesson that will help the listener.

For instance:

After that presentation, I realized I was less stressed and anxious about giving the workshop. I enjoyed the experience and I was looking forward to doing it again. This is a huge contrast from how I felt 60 days earlier sitting in my boss's office, terrified that I would lose my job.

*The valuable lesson I took from this journey is that **every business professional can be a highly impactful and influential presenter if they're willing to learn and implement proven methods of effective presentations.***

The ABS framework isn't a theoretical construct. It's a proven roadmap for transformative stories. Employ this narrative structure and you'll captivate your audience. Inspire them to take action and give them hope that they, too, can overcome their biggest challenges. Build your Storytelling ABS and become the storyteller others can't resist.

ACTION STEP:

Create the first version of your story using the ABS framework. Introduce your Main Character and that individual's goal. Describe the circumstances - where and when does the narrative take place.

Then introduce the inciting incident that pushes the Main Character out of her comfort zone and threatens accomplishment of the goal. Increased attention by giving a timeline to achieving the subjective.

At the low point of the story, introduce The Guide provides wisdom and insight to the Main Character. Share the Main Character's experience incorporating these new ideas until the goal is accomplished.

Be sure to share the lesson learned from this journey, and how it may benefit the listener.

FEATURED RESOURCE

Unleash The Power Of Your Story

High Impact Storytelling ABS Mini Course

Imagine captivating your audience from the first word, holding their attention throughout, and leaving them inspired and motivated. This is the ideal world you can create with effective storytelling. If you master this skill, then you will see your influence and impact skyrocket, whether you're speaking in front of a large audience or in a one-on-one conversation.

But how do you achieve this level of storytelling mastery?

Many people struggle to connect with audiences because they lack a clear structure and compelling narrative. Without these, your message falls flat, and you miss the opportunity to make a lasting impression and effectively convey your message.

So, what's the solution?

The High Impact Storytelling ABS Mini Course. It increases your storytelling abilities by teaching you the proven ABS framework. This course shows you how to:

- **Craft a Compelling Narrative:** Hook your audience from the start and keep them invested in your message so they stay fully engaged and receptive to your ideas.
- **Create Conflict And Resolution:** Engage audience emotions that make your message memorable and impactful so that they take action.
- **Engage With Dynamic Delivery:** Enhance your confidence and presence to making every story you tell more persuasive and influential, whether you're on stage, in a meeting, or in casual conversations.

With practical exercises and real-life examples, this mini course provides you with the tools and techniques you need to become a more engaging, compelling, and effective storyteller. By the end of the course, you'll have a clear and powerful storytelling framework that you can apply to any situation, ensuring your message is always heard and remembered.

Enroll in the High Impact Storytelling ABS Mini Course today and take the first step toward becoming a master storyteller. Your audience will thank you, and you'll see the difference in your ability to influence and inspire. **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