

## Conflict is the Hook

In the movie series Star Wars, Darth Vader wreaked havoc on the galaxy. He was *the* prototypical ‘bad guy’. His son, Luke Skywalker, faced one obstacle after another until they had their epic showdown in the final movie.

The hook to this story was conflict. Through these movies, your interest is maintained because you knew that eventually they would have to meet in battle and settle the score. A big reason you can relate to this is because you’ve experienced conflict in your life.

Imagine, if early in the movie, upon learning that Vader was his father, Luke had thought “*Wow, that’s a bummer, but, eh, whatever. I’ll just hang out at the farm, and maybe we’ll run into each other from time-to-time.*”

Not very compelling, is it? Without conflict, your story is not worth telling.

What types of conflict are there? What kind should you consider?

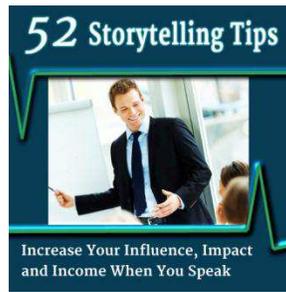
There are four main types:

### 1) *Person versus Environment*

A person[s] faces obstacles in his/her home, community or area. One of the best examples from recent memory is the story of the unnamed Chinese student who faced down tanks during the crackdown in Tiananmen Square in 1989. One person versus the military.

### 2) *Person versus Nature*

A man and his family do not evacuate their home in New Orleans in time to escape the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina. They face rising waters and the



threat of being stranded until help arrives. People versus Mother Nature.

### 3) *Person versus Person*

Luke Skywalker versus Darth Vader. Batman versus the Joker. Superman versus Lex Luthor. These are great literary figures, to be sure. They're also excellent examples of one person in conflict with another .

### 4) *Person versus Him/Herself*

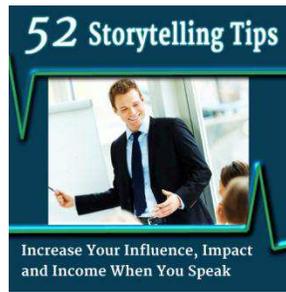
This is the most common and relatable of all conflicts. Movies and literature are filled with examples of this type. Dr. Jeckyl and his alter-ego, Mr. Hyde; Captain Ahab from Moby Dick; Bruce Wayne and his alter ego, Batman. Each of these characters faced internal conflict, uncertainty, or doubt. Why are these stories so powerful? Because *you* can relate to inner conflict.

You're probably not facing a murderous monster fighting to come out of you, the challenge of hunting a large whale, or deciding whether or not to be a masked vigilante. However, you do face internal struggles just like they did. Their solutions to their problems may give you insight into how your life can be better. *Your* story of overcoming conflicts and problems can help *your* audience in the same way.

Introducing the conflict is only the first step. There are two keys that maintain audience interest to the conclusion of your story.

One of them is to escalate the conflict. Think about a story you've heard that seemed long and boring. Chances are there was no relatable conflict, or the pace of the conflict was either too slow or too fast, and you didn't get emotionally involved.

The pace at which you increase tension is critical. Picture a moving walkway at an airport, or an elevator. If your story moves along at the pace of a moving walkway,



with no increase in tension, the audience is going to lose interest. No increase = no tension = no interest.

On the other hand, if your conflict escalates too quickly, your audience will miss it, and they won't feel a connection.

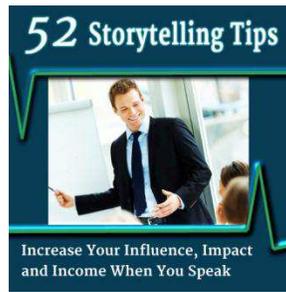
For example, in the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indiana Jones faces a number of obstacles as he deals with his nemesis, Dr. Rene Belloq. His difficulties increase as he gets closer and closer to the capturing the Ark of the Covenant.

He first must deal with a rolling boulder which is going to crush him. Later he's dropped into a pit full of poisonous snakes. Eventually, tied to a stake, he is threatened by the wrath of God and must protect himself and his woman from certain death.

Once you've established a properly escalating conflict, the second key to maintaining emotional involvement, is to resolve the conflict. Imagine reading a great novel, or watching a movie in which you've connected with the characters. You've become emotionally involved in an escalating conflict and then, suddenly, the story ends without telling you how the conflict was resolved.

How would you feel? Irritated at the very least, and maybe even angry. Don't leave your audience feeling this way. Just like we know that Luke Skywalker eventually saved his father's soul, and Indiana Jones survived the wrath of God, and the conclusion to every other great story, let your audience know how your story ends.

Conflict. It is at the heart of great stories. When you describe the inherent conflict, slowly increase it until it reaches a climax, and then explain the resolution, you'll have a story that will resonate with others, and leave them talking about you long after you speak.



**ACTION STEP:** Describe at least one of the four types of conflicts your character faces. Escalate the conflict at a steady pace until you reach the climactic moment. Then give the audience the resolution of the situation and the impact on your character.

Your recommended resource this week is a video from Ed Tate, called [How to deal with bullies](#). Ed is a highly successful professional speaker. This particular clip continues this week's message of conflict. It offers a powerful message on how to deal with person-to-person conflict. Listen not only to the message, but watch a master professional deliver in a powerful style.

**Until next week, always remember, you have a story that someone needs to hear.**

**See below for additional resources...**



## Recommended Resources

- 1) *3D Storytelling Workshop* Click on this link: [3D Storytelling Workshop](#)
- 2) *Inject More Humor into Your Presentations*  
Click on this link: [Inject More Humor into Your Presentations](#)
- 3) *Go Ahead and Laugh!* Click on this link: [Go Ahead and Laugh](#)
- 4) *Stand Up, Stand OUT!* Click on this link: [Stand Up, Stand OUT!](#)
- 5) *EDGE of Their Seats Storytelling*  
Click on this link: [Edge of Their Seats Storytelling](#)
- 6) *Hollywood Presentation Skills*  
Click on this link: [Hollywood Presentation Skills](#)

## Michael's Background & Raving Fans

For many years, Michael Davis gave presentations and speeches that were, in a word, ineffective. Mistakes, confusing messages, and failed attempts to capture the interest and attention of audiences created tremendous frustration.

Then a chance meeting with World Champion speaker David Brooks opened the door to meeting many other World Champion and Hall of Fame speakers. Investment of time, energy and thousands of dollars in training and coaching helped him develop the skills to become a speaker and leader who influences, impacts, and inspires others. In 2011, he earned the certification of World Class Speech Coach. He also studies the art of comedy and movie making to learn new skills that can take speech creation and delivery to new levels.

*"Last summer, when I spoke and promoted to subscribe to [my email newsletter] Hot Marketing Tips, I got a big fat zero sign ups.*

***At your wise suggestion**, I passed the signup clipboard around the room this time. When you first mentioned it, it felt very old-fashion and not trendy or technology driven. I set a goal for 50 new sign ups. Probably 2 times more than I have ever had sign up at one time.*

*When I tallied the new subscribers after the lunch yesterday, **we hit a total of 72!** I think that is about **46% of the room**. THANKS!"*

**Drew Dinkelacker**  
President, The Marketing Accelerator

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Evaluate to Elevate is a **powerful program**. Every speaker should hear it... twice!"*

**Darren LaCroix**  
2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Mike helped me fine tune a 10-minute presentation from "too much information" into a **clear, to-the-point focus** that has not only **given me more confidence**, but generating **more positive feedback** from the audience NOW than I did before meeting with Mike.*

*Mike has a unique ability to help you focus on the main point(s) of your presentation and then how to present them in a way that is **easy for those in the audience to understand**."*

**Doug Smith**  
Sr. Account Executive  
Hubbard Interactive

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Mike has an easy way of working with you that **isn't intimidating**... Amazing, **insightful feedback**... My presentations are now **far more interesting** and result in **additional sales** of my services. No matter what the level of speaking at which you may be performing, you're **sure to improve with Mike Davis**."*

**Joann Westwood**  
Westwood Virtual Associates, LLC

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Mike Davis **breathed life** into a topic that many of our group of trial lawyers take for granted, that public speaking is both an art and a science. It is clear that Mike is himself **passionate about this topic** and his insights are **invaluable** for those facing the daunting task of public*

*speaking for the first time and for those seasoned veterans behind the podium”.*

**David Williamson**  
Attorney

\*\*\*\*\*

*“The **success** I enjoyed in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking is **the result of coaching I received from Mike Davis**. He helped me **refine** and **deliver** a speech that carried me **all the way to the finals**. His tireless dedication is **outstanding!** Mike Davis will help you communicate better and be more successful.”*

**Phil Barth**  
Portfolio Manager  
International Paper

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Michael has completely opened my eyes! I’m **performing at an entirely new level**. I went into my last event with the **utmost confidence** thanks to him. He even called me the night before with a few last-minute reminders! If you speak for a living — if your revenue depends on your ability to communicate, **you NEED Michael Davis!**”*

**Brennan Scanlon**  
Co-Executive Director  
Business Network International

\*\*\*\*\*

*“I recommend the coaching services of Michael Davis. He helped me to put a new, more **meaningful spin** on my existing presentations that enabled me to **connect with my audience**. He provided me with tools and resources that allowed me to **gain confidence, decrease my anxiety**, and more effectively **get my message across**. Most importantly, he taught me how to **have fun** with public speaking!”*

**Dr. Laura Ward**  
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Thank you for your coaching with my LULAC Awards Gala speech... I received compliments from many people both for the speech content and for the delivery.*

*Thank you for helping make it **sharp and to the point**. Your suggestions to slow down, take my time reading the names of VIP attendees, the intro paragraph, etc. were **invaluable** as well as the coaching at the auditorium.*

*I look forward to working with you on my next big presentation”.*

**Lourdes Ribera**  
State Director – LULAC Ohio  
President – LULAC Cincinnati