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The Power of a Well-Told Story

Your Subject Needs to Be of Interest to Your Audience

Everyone is more interested in themselves than us.

Use “You” focused language.

Don’t trust inspiration, trust techniques, collaboration and best practices.

Adapt your message to your audience.

For combined technical and non-technical audiences begin with big picture.

What is Your Origin Story?

Personally, and professionally.

The Principles in One Discipline are the Same

As in any other discipline.

There Are Three Types of Heroes

Occasional, every day, and super.

By performing acts of quality, we become a hero.

Remember Your Everyday Heroes

Everyday heroes make the world work.

They do what is expected of them - plus 10%.

Look for the story behind the statistics.

We Become Heroes by Performing Acts of Quality

Perfect 3 minutes of your speech and quality spreads.

By doing so you improve an hour of your speech.

Leaders Need to Inspire a Hopeful Future

Tell us the truth.

Tie past lessons to our future.

Look for outside ideas.

Show the person behind the position.



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Stories Are the Best Way to Do the Following:

Teach and train

Inspire and motivate

Inform and educate

Convince and persuade

Story Principles

“Stories are the creative conversion of life itself . . . into a powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience.” - Robert McKee, Author of *Story*, Screen Writing Teacher

Stories help us remember what we see.

“Populate your stories with flesh and blood characters that the audience can relate to.”

“Characters speak, and we want to hear what they say.”

How do you explain the complex or an ideal to children?

When, Where, Who, What Happened

“Stories must be true . . . not 100% accurate,” and “Get into the scene late.”

Michael Hague, Hollywood Story Consultant

Three Story Structures

Once upon a time...

In medius res.

Begin with the end in mind.

Edit Every Word That is Not Necessary

“I will invest an hour making an eight-word sentence five.” Jerry Seinfeld

In comedy there is a set up phrase and a punch word or punch phrase.

In business use a set up phrase and an impact word or impact phrase.

Time is 99% of the time a “set up.”

Specificity Builds Credibility

If it is not a fruit, it is not a “bunch.”

If you can't weight it, it is not “tons.”

If it were not a “thing,” what would it be?

Who are those “people”?



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There is more than one adjective.

Forget “super.”

Leaders do not use “kind of,” “sort of,” or “stuff.”

Simplify the Complex with Picture Words

Words communicate images and emotion.

“He promised her many things.”

Compared to Patricia’s recommendation of “He promised her a life of romance and adventure.”

Words are \$10 each; sentences are \$30. Not every word is of equal importance.

Structure Your Presentation

The creative process is messy. Your PowerPoint is tidy.

Begin your process on a white board or flip chart.

Your Opening is to Arouse Interest in Your Subject

Question, Statistic or Little-known Fact, Statement, Story or Example, transport your Audience to the Future or Go Back to the Past.

How to Close Your Presentation

Even in the best of times leaders are often perplexed about how to close their presentations in a way that acknowledges a situation and yet gives hope.

When my internationally acclaimed guitarist brother and I deliver presentations called “How to Be a Hero for More than One Day,” he closes in a way that may serve as a good example.

If my brother Robert Fripp were here, he would close our presentation like this: “In strange and uncertain times such as those that we live in, any reasonable person may despair. However, hope is unreasonable, and love is even greater than this. Let us trust in the inexpressible benevolence of the Creative Impulse.” And his sister Patricia would say, “Never let us underestimate the impact of well-intentioned leaders who realize the power of their well-chosen words.”

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