

Story Telling



Stories are at the heart of being human. They captivate, teach and inspire us, especially when a hero overcomes a great conflict or adversity. It's this deep love for seeing success that leaders and presenters can take advantage of. Telling a story about a relevant hero or subject helps us engage and connect with our audience.

The hero's journey was developed by Joseph Campbell to show the stages a hero goes through in a story. We can use this framework to prepare the stories we tell. To see how it works, think of a famous hero (e.g., Nelson Mandela) and go through the four acts below.



WHY IS STORY TELLING SO IMPORTANT?

What's the point of a meeting or presentation if your message doesn't land? Story telling helps us arouse attention and keep it. People instinctively imagine themselves as the hero and share their experiences, helping them learn from the journey and feel satisfied by its successful conclusion.

TIPS ON USING STORYTELLING

- 1 **Be engaged yourself.**
Love the story you're telling and feel it. Connect with your audience and make it relevant.
- 2 **Keep it short and snappy.**
Too many details, sub-plots and characters can distract from the story and its message.
- 3 **Use emotive language.**
The more your audience feels, the more they'll feel connected to the story.
- 4 **Consider your audience.**
Keep in mind who you're speaking to when you choose the story and its tone.
- 5 **Follow frameworks.**
Stories can be anecdotes, metaphors, case studies, myths, news events, biographies, and more.
- 6 **Learn from storytellers.**
Listen to successful storytellers (e.g., podcasters or TV presenters) and note how they deliver stories.

Presentation idea: Tell your own story. Think back to a story that, when you've shared it in the past, got people's attention. Whether you overcame a stutter or finally started learning to play the saxophone, these stories can help you engage your audience and connect with them on a deeper level.

APPLYING STORYTELLING

Think about a presentation you delivered recently.

How did it go? Do you feel like your audience was engaged?

For example: I presented a new 'mentoring' culture initiative to the team leaders. They liked the idea, but I didn't feel much energy in the room.

If you told a story, what was it? If you didn't tell a story, which story could you have used?

For example: I didn't tell a story. I could've told them about my experience when I started my very first job. It was a terrible experience until one of the leaders took the time to get to know me and make sure I settled in.

How did the story land? Or how would it have landed?

For example: Telling this story would've connected me personally with the team leaders and given the 'mentoring' initiative context. I think this would've created a lot more energy to push the initiative forward.