



Since the dawn of time...



Humans have been telling stories

Stories transcend age, nationality, language... we tell them with words, pictures, music, movement, emotion...

80% of parental communication with young children is story-based



Stories connect us through a shared experience in the present

Making us feel something, we laugh, we cry, we reminisce, we relate



They teach us about our past.

From generation to generation. Stories help people and cultures to survive and thrive.



They prepare us for our future.

Shaping the way we see the world, interpret things and anticipate next chapters...



They provoke, inspire & influence us to believe & take action.

We slay Dragons, Seize Golden Eggs, Climb the magic beanstalk... we believe

Our brains are not hard-wired to understand logic or retain facts for very long.

Our brains are wired to understand and retain stories.

Stories overcome the inertia of the rational with the energy of the emotional.





Storytelling is a skill that needs to be intentional, practiced and refined.



Story Collecting

- a. Identify & bank stories for different topics that are important to you.
 - i. Your Values. (To create a shared experience, build trust, to be authentic)
 - ii. Your Vision. (The dream, the ambition, the strategy, embark them on the journey)
 - iii. Your Vulnerability (conviction to change something, the impact on you.)
- b. Stories that YOU land well and land YOUR POINT well.
- c. Anchor it "I must remember ... rarely works → Tell someone quickly & write it down.



Story Shaping

Pick a structure. Research it to make your facts are straight. We work with 3 story structures:

- a. The Narrative Story
- b. The Trust Story
- c. The Spotlight Story



Story Telling

- a. Know your audience & Intent (Clarity – 1 rally cry, 3 killers messages) (Empathy – how do I want the to feel? What's worrying them? The voice in their head saying)
- b. Make it personal to you and them (Empathy)
- c. Read your audience. Take them on a journey. Check in with them, use questions if you feel you are losing them. (Emotional Awareness)



Story Shaping

The Narrative Story is used to take people on a journey into the **FUTURE** with a vision of what is possible. We use this structure to share or co-create with others a Vision for something that is yet to happen. It is used to engage, inspire and influence them and the support of others in a quest we are trying to take ... big or small.

The Trust Story illustrates something about you as a person and is often a journey into the **PAST**. It might speak to one of your values, an event or person that shaped who you are today, something that you are proud of, or a time when you faced a set-back and how you responded. It is a story that allows you to show some vulnerability and authenticity around an important topic – who you are!

The Spotlight Story is used to shed light on something that is not working and needs to be addressed in the **PRESENT**; an opportunity that can be seized or a success that needs to be amplified. Your audience may not know or care about these events yet and need to hear your story to learn, understand the significance and be nudged into action.

A Trust Story

A Trust Story is a story about you, it has happened in the PAST and you are telling it in the present to connect with people and share who you are. It illustrates something about you as a person, maybe speaking to your values, an event or person that shaped who you are today, something that you are proud of, or a time when you faced a set-back and how you responded. It is a story that allows you to show some vulnerability and authenticity around an important topic – who you are and what you have done!



1. The Reflection:

Describe the scene - here you are aiming to set the context and ground us in the where, when and who of this story. You might start with the words ... "I remember when ..." or "When I was 22 years old and at university in London or My first job was with xyz company..."

2.The Provocation:

Every story needs to have an incident that provokes or disrupts the status quo. In this section, you are describing that incident. So, this section might begin with "I met or I decided to or xyz happened".

The provocation could be an external event, a decision you took, a person that came onto the scene that changed things and caused you to act ... which is the next part of the framework.

3. The Action:

Describe how you felt, the thoughts in your head, what you did next, what you realised or appreciated, and what became possible or impossible. Start with the words: "I realised ..." or "I had to..." and then describe the events.

4. The Resolution:

Describe how things panned out longer term, how you look at that event now, and why we are telling us that story. This is the 'so what' of the story and it articulates why this event matters and why it is worth telling. You might start with the words: "I am telling you this story because it illustrates something about me or something relevant to our situation ..."

A Spotlight Story

A Spotlight Story is used to shed light on something – good or bad – going on in the PRESENT. It is a story about something that you want to shed light on so that you can galvanize others to care, share learning and spotlight excellence. An opportunity that can be seized or a success that needs to be amplified. Your audience may not know or care about these events yet and need to hear your story to learn, understand the significance and be nudged into action.



With a Spotlight Story, you want to change how your audience feels about the topic, moving them from indifference, opposition or ignorance to an emotion that will cause them to act. We need to inspire a sense of urgency. This can be done by evoking emotions like anger, fear, hope and excitement to engage and connect others in what needs to be done. Another way of thinking about Spotlight Stories is that you as the storyteller are shining a light to illuminate an outlier: the maverick, pioneer, or entrepreneur who is doing something differently; or a problem about which others need to be aware.

1. The Scene:

Set the scene so your audience knows when and where the story is taking place and who the characters are.

2. The Ambition:

Help the audience understand a bit about our character's ambition. What is he or she striving for, what's their hope or goal, the problem or challenge they want to overcome

3. The Action:

Tell us what they did, the struggles they faced, how they had to persist despite obstacles

4. The Result:

Bring the story to an end or conclusion by telling our audience the Result and what was learned.

The Narrative Story



How did Mandela change the destiny of a nation, from behind bars, with no money, no political position and no army?

He shared a vision - clearly and simply – of South Africa as a Rainbow Nation where everyone was accepted no matter what their colour or orientation. He brought hope for a life where blacks and whites were equal, sharing the same opportunities, respected and welcomed by all nations of the world.

He laid out how to get there, carefully managing expectations. We are not going to do this using arms and aggression – we are going to change a nation with our behaviours and the way we think. It will be a difficult journey and it will not be quick; I will be doing this from prison, with no resources and many people against us.

He addressed the context and reality. Why must WE do this? Because apartheid is wrong. Many people continue to suffer, being denied basic rights and respect, whilst others prosper. Because all children deserve the same opportunities, the chance of an education to better themselves and build a future. We believe this and our neighbors in other nations believe and support this with speeches and with actions – our nation is denied access to the global economic, social and sporting stage – because apartheid is not welcome.

He explained what was in it for you and me? This will be hard and dangerous. I am appealing to you as a human beings. We have an opportunity to make a difference. To do the right thing. To fight for the basic rights of equality and leave the legacy of a better world for our children and our grandchildren. Of a South Africa that is accepted as a respected part of the world.

And he committed to how he would measure his success? We will know we have succeeded only when we see black and white children at the same schools, working together side by side, playing with each other in the parks, learning at universities, leading this great nation - then we know we have succeeded.

Together we can create our Rainbow Nation.

The Narrative Story

With authenticity, balance emotion and intellect to inspire, engage & empower. Always stick to the structure.

Repeat the chorus, often. Celebrate. Learn. Recognise. To drive accountability and momentum

1. What does success look like?
 - What are we trying to achieve? The vision. The battle cry. The chorus.
2. How will we achieve it?
 - The Plan. What are the top strategic priorities / areas of focus?
 - The Expectations. What can you expect from me? What I need from you.
3. What is the context?
 - Reality check! Importance? What is the big picture context, challenges, opportunities? What is happening externally & internally?
4. What are the benefits?
 - When we succeed, what is in it for you, me and others?
5. What are the milestones of success?
 - How can we measure success? KPIs and milestones, hard and soft?

The Narrative Story; learning the tool

This model was built over a decade of researching great leaders from the past and present and coaching those who aspire to be great leaders of tomorrow. We looked back at leaders who had worthy causes and some not so worthy causes and yet managed to inspire people to follow them and their cause. They inspired people to give them their discretionary effort, their passion and energy. They inspired others to shift from being followers, to believers and leaders of their vision.

There were a series of learnings that were consistent in the way in which many of these great leaders engage with their audiences to bring them on the journey and elicit such loyalty.

1. **They start with their vision of what success looks like.** And they consistently repeat it like a chorus of a song.
 - i. So often in companies we start our presentations with what's wrong, the problem, the competitors, the regulators, the economy.... The trajectory of your audience is then emotionally looking down, even weighted down by the heavy reality you have presented, which most of the time the audience already know. You then need to haul them back to look up at the possibilities, from staring into the depths of reality this can be another heavy load.
 - ii. Great leaders know to start with a vision for success, so that the trajectory of the audience is looking up feeling inspired and engaged from the start
2. **They dance between intellectual and emotional engagement,** feeding both sides of the brain
 - i. Once they have laid out what success looks like, they get straight to the HOW we will achieve our vision for success
 - ii. This is strategy, the intellectual plan of how. You need to boil this down to 3 killer messages, which you repeat in your presentation, or no one will understand or remember it.
 - iii. And the behaviors and expectations – the emotional ask of what you can expect from the leader, and what they expect from the audience should they choose to come on this journey. This contracting is a key point of emotional engagement. Where the leaders can show vulnerability or have a mea culpa moment to acknowledge what needs to change from the past, as well as conviction of what will be required to achieve success from a mindset and way of working perspective.
 - iv. Then throughout the storytelling they weave their authentic self; they bring vulnerability, maybe some mea culpa, ask for help, they make it personal, tell an anecdote or story from your life that animates why this matters or is meaningful to you. Be authentic, why this connects to your values, is important you or not, admit what you don't know or cannot promise, what really excites you and what scares you.
 - v. They are bold and share their passion and conviction which is inspiring. **They know the only true failure in life is not trying**
3. **They start with the Rally Cry of success, and they repeat it often**
 - iii. They know that one speech does not change history. It starts a movement. You then need to repeat the chorus of Rally Cry often
 - iv. They craft the elevator pitch with the Rally Cry + 3 killer messages
 - v. They Celebrate. Learn. Recognise. To drive accountability and momentum. Celebrate the milestones of success on the journey, learn from set-backs and successes to course correct and add fuel the journey, and they recognise the people, and the good and bad behaviours, in the moment to coach more of what we need and less of what we don't.