

## **STORYTELLING IN A NUT SHELL**

August 2012

## **WE ARE ALL EXCELLENT STORYTELLERS**

Since we first learned to speak, we have spent our days telling stories to move our audiences.

Johnny why did you pick that candy up off the ground and put it in your mouth?

**You answered with a story.**

What possessed you to post that picture on Facebook?

**You answered with a story.**

Where were you? I've been calling all day?

**You answered with a story.**

It's the second time you called in sick this week. Do we have a problem?

**You answered with a story.**

You want me to do what?!

**You answered with a story.**

You did not reply by flicking on a PowerPoint. You did not reply with a litany of dry facts and figures. Can you imagine what would have happened if you had? The people you were talking to would have either thought you'd lost your mind, or they would have fallen down laughing, or worse become angry with you. None of them would have taken you seriously. In other words, you would have lost the attention of your audience.

Sounds a lot like what happens when a presenter pulls out a PowerPoint. Nowhere in our life do we rely on bullet point laden slides except when we deliver business presentations.

Think, when was the last time a PowerPoint made you do something, feel something, remember something, or connect with something or someone in a way that lasted?

What decisions do you make in your life based solely on dry facts and figures?

How often do you ignore advice or information when it's presented as statistics?

Stories connect you with ideas in the only place that matters, your emotions.

**Stories move you to action. Stories stop you from doing stupid things.**

## WHY STORY

A **story is** a fact or set of facts wrapped in emotions that cause an action.

The way we repeat what we have learned to someone else is through story. Stories may be based on facts but the facts aren't what we remember. It's the story that the facts are wrapped in that embeds in our minds.

**Stories make us feel.** Facts make us think. Decisions made from emotions last. Decisions based on facts can be altered by the next good set of facts.

Facts have no meaning without context. **Context** is the story of facts. People make their decisions based on what the facts **mean to them**. The context your audience gives your story comes from their unique experiences, and learnings.

Facts can be countered with other facts. **Emotional experiences** are not easily countered by other emotional experiences.

Humans work to make the facts fit their emotions, but seldom try to make their emotions fit the facts.

**Stories cause action.** The goal of every presentation is to cause an action. Even status reports require an action on the audience's part. The audience must both comprehend and remember what they are being told. Often they must repeat the information to others.

All **business is personal**. We do not do business with Apple or Microsoft, we do business with Susan from Apple, and Bob from Microsoft.

**Storytelling is personal.** We all have our own individual styles and we are all storytellers.

Choices, decisions, buying habits are all personal. For a presentation to be successful you need to get the audience to engage with you on a positive personal level.

### **YOU NEED TO GET THE AUDIENCE TO LIKE YOU.**

You want your audience to make a decision, to invest their emotions in your ideas, to take a personal action. If the **audience likes you** they will be open to investing in you and your ideas. If they don't like you, your road towards success will be long and rocky.

Stories paint pictures in people's minds. Well-told stories enable the audience to see themselves in your story and to find stories of their own that connect with yours.

### **Stories connect people**

**across every social, economic, and workplace divide.**

## **ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

Bullet Point Driven PowerPoints Versus Story: The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly

Let's start with the premise that **the purpose** of all presentations is to move your audience to take

an **action**. In order to take action the audience must make a decision to do so.

Common wisdom dictates that **before we make decisions** or take actions we weigh the facts in each situation, and then logically, and rationally make our decisions. In business there is no place for emotions when it comes to decision- making.

If this theory were true, then using bullet point filled PowerPoints that present a concise factual argument to your audience, if kept concise and focused, might be effective. Sadly, it is totally and completely false.

The majority of decisions we make based on an oral presentation are made in the part of the brain that governs basic emotions, the oldest part of our brain, euphemistically called **the "Lizard Brain."** This part of our brain served our caveman ancestors well. It helped

them process visual information and decide in a few seconds whether that object hurtling towards them was a friend or foe and then act on that decision.

Only after our Lizard Brain has made a decision, using the storehouse of experiences and information each of us individually has amassed over our lives and careers, does the logical part of our brain kick in to analyze the decision.

More often than not, **the logical part of our brain** the part that controls higher thought processes, will look at the facts, and work to conform them to support the “gut level,” decision we have already made. Interestingly enough, this part of our brain is the last part to develop, it isn't fully formed until we are in our mid-twenties.

Our Lizard Brain doesn't read. It feels, it senses, and it sees pictures. In fact, it has to break down the letters in words into little pictures before it can even begin to process them.

Stories, which use emotion to convey facts, so that the audience can see themselves taking the action you want them to, speak to our decision making functions.

It is impossible for an audience to **not read** what is put up in front of them. If you project a slide, your audience is going to immediately start to read it even if you ask them not to.

People read almost three times faster than they speak. Once you put a slide up, your audience will have finished reading it when you are less than halfway through reading it to them, and substantially before you are done explaining it to them.

If an audience has finished reading your slide, often times they feel they have taken in the most important information that slide has to offer, and they tune out your oral presentation until another slide goes up.

Story told in a compelling fashion keeps the audience paying attention to the presenter. Story doesn't allow your audience to get ahead of you, and your points. Story doesn't allow the audience to form judgments about what you are going to say until you have said it.

Very few decisions in business are made by a committee of one. Most decisions are made by groups of individuals, many of whom may not have attended your oral presentation. Those who were in attendance at your presentation, have to be able to remember the salient points in order to repeat them to those who were not there.

More importantly, you want them to be able to repeat them using the context you have given the facts, imbued with as little of their own "spin" as possible.

PowerPoints where facts are presented in a logical fashion with little emotion behind them are hard to remember, and often don't embed themselves in the audience's minds. The facts that are recalled from a PowerPoint will be repeated to others in the decision making chain colored by the biases of the teller.

Decks read by others in the decision making chain are **mere renditions of facts** and are always open to the interpretation and biases of their readers.

Story, which paints pictures in your audience's minds by connecting sensory images with facts, makes the facts easy to embed into your audience's memory and easy for them to pull back out.

Using **pictures in your presentation** embeds your ideas even more firmly in your audience's minds.

When an audience member goes back to meet with others in the decision making chain and is asked what you, the presenter, had to say, if they reply by repeating the story you told, they are not going to be reciting it through the frame of their biases, they are going to

be repeating a story.

In other words, they are going to be conveying your information within the context you framed it, rather than coloring it with their own thoughts and ideas.

And one more thing...

The human **brain can only retain** somewhere between three and seven facts from any presentation. Dump more facts on your listeners and they just aren't going to be able to recall them. Bullet Point driven PowerPoints are a fountain of facts, pouring over the heads of their audience's, to no avail.

Stories with their specific messages, targeted to the audience's emotions are memorable, which means they can be repeated, which means they will influence decisions with substantially more impact than PowerPoints.

### **THE HOLLYWOODWAY MATRIX**

- 1. Define your goal in giving the presentation - Goals** and means to achieve them are often confused in the presenter's mind. Goals are the end results of means. They are bottom line base actions such as buy, sell, pay, sign up, acknowledge. For instance, your goal is never to educate unless your end goal is that your audience have acquired a piece of knowledge for the pleasure of knowing something. Ask yourself, once educated, what do you want the audience to do with that education? Buy your product, sign up for your service, understand why you are behind schedule and need more money. There is an action you want this audience to take with the information you have delivered this action is your goal. Educating them is the **means to achieving your goal**.

We are never presenting a status report to inform our co-workers where we are in a project, except in the rare situations where all we want from the meeting is an acknowledgement that you are in process. Even then, don't you want that acknowledgment so you will be left alone to get on with doing what you are doing?

Most times when we deliver a status report, we want people to: applaud us, give us money, forgive us, or take various other actions.

Knowing your goal, the action you want your audience to take, shapes the entire architecture of your presentation.

- 2. Know your audience's needs – What does your audience need?** How will taking the action you want them to fulfill that need? Do they need a new computer system? Do they need to understand why paying you more this year than last year for the same services is a smart idea? Do they need to outsource their sales team? Avoid the trap of over estimating your audience's awareness of their own needs. Often times, an audience knows on a subconscious level what they need, but are not yet aware of it on a conscious level. **Preparation** will often tell you what your audience's real needs are. If, during the course of your presentation you can deliver something to the audience that they weren't aware they needed or wanted, but the minute you point it out they go, "of course," you will get them to take the action you want them to take.

The best example of this is when Steve Jobs introduced the I-Pod to the world. "A thousand songs in your pocket," he proclaimed. After hearing his presentation, audiences camped out over night to buy this device they hadn't known they wanted. Why? Because Jobs knew that people wanted to have access to their own personal music library when they were on the go, but to create and carry around CD's of all their music was an impossible task. In reading between the lines of the audience's needs and desires, he created an object that they discovered they couldn't live without. Millions ran out to buy an I-Pod, filling their needs, taking the action Jobs wanted.

By **knowing both your audience's needs**, and your goals you can design a presentation that draws a direct line between the two. The shorter the presentation, and the longer the time you devote to answering your audience's questions, the more engaged they will be in your solution. Questions are a sign that your audience is intrigued by your proposition. They are an opportunity to gauge how your audience has reacted to your presentation and reshape some of the concepts to better suit what they need to hear in order to take the action you

want them to.

3. Make it appear that by taking your action, the audience is fulfilling their needs.
  
4. Design Your Takeaway – Seldom in today's world is any decision made by one person. Often times members of the decision making team will not be present at your presentation. When this occurs you want to arm your audience with a few key lines that they can use to persuade their co-workers to take the action you wish to see taken. In order to do this you have to design a **take away that is short**, contains key facts, and can embed in your audience's minds so that they can remember, repeat and act on it. Job's takeaway was "A thousand songs in your pocket." My takeaway is "stories are memorable, repeatable, and cause your audiences to take an action." Once you have designed your take away be sure that you **repeat it several times** in your presentation, in several different stories, so that the lines embed themselves in your audience's minds.

## **SIMPLE STEPS TO EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING**

### **1. ALL STORIES NEED**

**A hero** - which can be you, your product, your business, or someone using them to great advantage. There are as many heroes as there are stories.

**An obstacle** - often times the situation the audience you are in front of is facing.

**The hero** conquering the obstacle.

### **2. SET THE SCENE: CREATE CONTEXT**

*I was meeting with a client last week in a small town in the middle of nowhere...*

Use Key Words: What if...Imagine that...You know when...

### **3. Create characters the audience can relate to then use them.**

“He’s got a hundred employees but he knows everyone of them by name.”

“He’s in the third month post launch of a start-up, so Saturday is just another work day.”

“She’s got a quota to meet that’s twice what it was last year and she has lost half of her support staff.”

Environment and wardrobe are also visual connections to characters, create as many as possible.

“He owned a store like Target.”

“She wore tied dye shirts and gypsy skirts.”

Paint a picture in words that immediately put the audience in the room with the characters and keep them there. This creates **a visual connection** for the audience.

### **4. SAY Only Enough To HOOK The Audience.**

When preparing your presentation, constantly ask yourself, could my audience learn what I need them to, in order to take the action I want them to, **without this piece of information?**

When preparing your presentation, ask yourself, is this piece of information, something

my audience is going to be able to remember and repeat.

Any information that doesn't receive a resounding, "YES" does not belong in your oral presentation. It belongs in your leave behind.

## **5. Tell Only The Parts You Are Enthusiastic About**

### **PASSION COUNTS**

## **6. TELL THE FUNNY, SCARY, DRAMATIC, EMOTIONAL PARTS**

Good stories take you on a ride. If the **audience connects** with the storyteller and what they are saying they will actually **see the story** in their mind.

In a product pitch, storytelling allows the audience to visualize themselves interacting with the product.

In team building, storytelling allows the team to see themselves, working together.

In a reporting situation, storytelling automatically gets the audience on your side.

## **7. USE YOUR BODY**

Body language, eye contact, vocal pitch, tone and pacing are all key elements in placing the audience in the world you want them to inhabit.

## **8. FINISH WITH A FLOURISH**

End on an "up" note even if it's a down story.

## **9. PUT WHAT IS IN IT FOR THEM (YOUR AUDIENCE) AT THE HEAD OF YOUR PRESENTATION**

Until they know **what is in it for them**, your audience is not focusing on what you have to say. Make sure that you start off your presentation letting your audience know how taking the action you want them to take is going to benefit them. DO NOT start your presentation with the history of your company, your relationship with the client, or the history of the problem you are going to solve. History as a preamble does not lock in your audience's interest.

## **TRADITIONAL STORY TELLING RULES**

(Caution: Works Best With Traditional Stories)

**Exposition** – Background information needed to understand the story. Protagonist, Antagonist, Basic Conflict and Setting.

**Inciting Incident** – The action that sets the story in motion.

**Rising Action** - Obstacles that prevent the protagonist from reaching his goal.

**Climax or Turning Point** – A change for better or worse for the protagonist.

**Falling Action** – Another turn where the protagonist wins or loses.

**Resolution** - The protagonist does or doesn't achieve their goal depending on whether or not it is a comedy, a tragedy or soap opera.

In film these steps take place in three acts.

A famous screenwriter friend told me to think of it this way:

Put the Cat Up the Tree

Watch The Cat Try To Figure Out How to Climb Down From The Tree

The Cat Falls Out of The Tree

The Cat Lives Or Dies

## IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

We hire the same way we make friends. It's all based on whether or not we think we will enjoy being with that person; do we like their sense of humor, do we have a community of interests with them, do we think we can talk to them, would we enjoy being with them?

The same sets of questions and answers apply to the speaker at a presentation.

In order for an audience to respond to your presentation in the fashion you desire, you must get the **audience to like and trust you**. Once an audience has made a judgment about you, everything you say or do is going to be filtered through that judgment.

An audience decides if they are going to like the presenter somewhere between eight and thirty seconds from first seeing them. Eighty percent of this decision is made based on non-verbal clues.

First impressions count. **You cannot not communicate**, body language broadcasts.

Your job as a presenter is to influence what the audience's thinks of you before you speak so that you can influence the actions they are going to take after you speak.

In a competitive situation, what you have to offer is **never so different** from your competitor's offerings that the audience will ignore the "want to work with factor."

### **If you want to stand out you have to be distinct**

**You must be yourself** not what you think the audience wants you to be. However, you must frame your unique personality within the context of your audience's comfort zone and what they expect from someone with your professional credentials.

**People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.** You MUST tailor your presentation to the specific audience you are standing in front of. An essential factor in preparing your presentation is to research your audience.

In small group presentation, research each member of the audience get to know their educational background, their professional history, if possible their leisure time passions. Find out if they have published articles and read them. The more you know about your audience the more you can influence the context within which they are framing your presentation. The more

you know about your audience the more you can point to commonalities between them and you.

In the case of large group presentations, question why you were asked to present. Ask yourself, what does this audience want from you? Ask what the demographics are of your audience, their age, professions, where they live. If it is a corporate audience read the company's website, try and find out not only what they are saying they need or want but what others who are informed think they really need and want.

Google, Linked In, Facebook, Wikkipedia and corporate websites are all easily accessible tools for this preparation.

**Don't tell** the audience you are a good guy or an expert. **Show** them.

People listen to who makes the most sense, not the person who knows the most.

**Believability** requires more than knowledge or facts.

**Believability** requires trust, confidence, and likability.

It's not what you say that counts it's what the audience hears.

The success of your story is measured by its effect, not it's technical brilliance.

In the context of a new business presentation you don't have to be right. You just need to appear to have the potential to be right. **People will "work with you" if they like you.**

In the context of a change situation giving people who don't agree with you reasons (facts) to cause change is not only ineffective, it often entrenches them more deeply in their own reasons (facts) for not changing.

**IF YOU KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AS INDIVIDUALS**

**IF YOU LET THEM KNOW YOU AND LIKE YOU**

**IF YOU TELL THEM A COMPELLING STORY**

## YOU WILL SUCCEED IN GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

### PRACTICAL TIPS

- 1. Always Be Yourself** – The audience is made up of individuals each of them have separate needs, desires and wants even in a corporate context. If you try and be what you think your audience wants you to be you will fail.
- 2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE – Do your homework.** Talk to their friends and co-workers. Look them up on the internet and in professional magazines. Find out about their wives, their children, their hobbies, and the last ten deals they made. Be current in their field, even if it is the barest bones of knowledge.
- 3. LET THEM KNOW YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM** – Showing an audience that you took the time to get to know them as individuals rather than the client, the boss, the IT department gets you a gold star every time.
- 4. REMEMBER THE AUDIENCE ISN'T LISTENING TO WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. THEY ARE LISTENING TO WHAT IT MEANS FOR THEM.**
- 5. INTERNALIZE YOUR PRESENTATION** – Memorizing increases your fear of failure. It causes odd body language as you kinetically struggle to remember something.
- 6. Speak extemporaneously** - If you drone on and on reading notes or PowerPoints you will put your audience to sleep or they will reach for their Blackberries and iPhones.
- 7. WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER ISN'T IMPORTANT** – How you act is. If the audience senses your unease, they will feel unease. If you lose the audience's attention, you have lost the chance to close the deal.
- 8. PRACTICE WITH PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.** Or, practice with people who have the same degree of familiarity with the subject as your audience. Practice in conditions as similar to what will exist at your presentation as possible. Practice often.
- 9. KNOW THE POINT OF YOUR PRESENTATION** – What do you want to leave the room having achieved.
- 10. KNOW WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE'S NEEDS ARE. KNOW HOW, WHAT YOU WANT TO**

**ACHIEVE WILL SATISFY THEM.**

**11. AVOID POWERPOINTS LIKE THE PLAGUE** – If the audience is reading what is behind your head or next to you they are not listening to you. If the audience is reading they are thinking rather than feeling and connecting.

**12. IF YOU HAVE TO USE A POWERPOINT, USE PICTURES** – Pictures keep the audience in the realm of the senses.

## **LOOK FOR THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**

It doesn't matter what you are talking about. **Find a way to love it.**

**Show your passion.** If the audience likes you, they will feel passionate about whatever you feel passionate about.

**DO NOT BORE THE AUDIENCE** - If you bore the audience you will not get them to feel passion, you will only get them to feel unhappy. Boring them a "little bit," so they learn a foundational fact, is still boring them.

**Make the audience feel.** We remember the things that make us feel. You can't get people to

do what you want if they can't remember what it is they are suppose to do or why they are suppose to do it. If the audience is bored by you, they will never feel what you are feeling or remember what it is you said.

**Make the audience want this to be the beginning of a long-term relationship.** If the audience wants to see you again, if they want to hear more from you, then you are going to get what you want from them, if not today then another day.

## **LOOK FOR THE SENSORY CONNECTION**

**ADJECTIVES ARE YOUR FRIEND** – Adjectives connect you on an emotional and visceral level with your audience. Abstract notions don't. Can you describe the house you grew up in? Can you describe justice? Can you remember the taste of watermelon? Can you remember the capital of Iowa? If you give the audience emotional and visceral references they will remember what you have to say.

**Your audience may have to repeat what you said to get “buy-in.”** Audience members can repeat things they remember in sensory terms with the same passion and excitement as they heard them. You want your ideas to be conveyed, as you presented them, so new audiences will share in the excitement.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN, JFK, AND MARTIN LUTHER KING**

**HAD NO POWERPOINTS**

**THEY HAD PASSION**

## **IT'S NOT ABOUT NUMBERS IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE**

Numbers don't tell stories.

**Numbers are boring!**

You are interesting.

People are interesting.

### **Tell their stories.**

If you show me your numbers, I might just show you mine. The minute you introduce numbers or facts, the audience is going to do one of two things, nod off, or start thinking about their numbers and facts. You've taken your audience out of your presentation and put them into their analytical mind. **They've stopped listening and started thinking.**

If you win your argument, make your case, close your deal based on facts and figures and rational arguments you leave yourself open to attack. If today the audience buys your numbers, tomorrow they might buy your competitor's.

If your audience makes a decision in their gut, driven by their emotions it's very hard for someone else to come in and sway them. Think of the last time someone tried to talk you out of loving someone or something. How successful were they?

If you make an **argument** (facts), you are asking the audience to judge, debate and criticize.

If you tell a **story**, you are asking the audience to feel, relate, and connect.

Your personal experiences are worth more than a plethora of research.

Your personal experiences **connect the audience** to their own experiences and make your goals similar to theirs.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- 1. Talk about things that excite you** - When you do, your eyes, hands and body will project your excitement and excite your audience.
- 2. SET VISUAL GOALS** – Man on the Moon, I Have A Dream, A Thousand Songs In Your Pocket
- 3. BODY LANGUAGE IS KEY** – Use your hands, your body, your stance, to communicate. If you are stiff, your audience will feel stiff and constrained. Open the room up.
- 4. USE THE SPACE IN THE ROOM** – Where you sit or stand tells the audience a lot about you. When you first enter the room decide what space you want to occupy and if you want to sit or stand, then own that space. If you are standing move around. If you are sitting shift your posture.
- 5. DRESS FOR THE occasion** – Do not show up looking like everyone else. Find some way to stand out. Loosen a button, wear a different color, be less formal, **look comfortable**. If you look inviting they will be drawn to you. Authority does not come from a suit and tie or a black-pant suit it comes from inside of you.
- 6. SPEAK TO THE AUDIENCE AS IF THEY WERE FRIENDS** – Do not address the audience as an amorphous mass, a group of judges, the enemy, or your staff. Talk to them as individual human beings. Clients and bosses are people too.
- 7. DO NOT USE BUSINESS SPEAK** – If the audience has to do simultaneous translation from business to English to understand what you are saying, they are not going to be paying attention to the gist of your presentation.
- 8. Beware the curse of too much knowledge** – Make sure your starting point is where your audience's knowledge base begins.
- 9. ENTERTAIN THEM** –Humor works.
- 10. AUDIENCES REMEMBER BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS, AND A BIT OF THE REST**  
-Think about the films and books you love, the presentations you have attended in the past. If I asked you to tell me about them, what would you say? If you liked the story, you would know how to set it up, if you liked the story, surely you would remember the end of the story, but how much of the middle would you remember? Perhaps a little bit here and there of the most moving moments? The same applies with business presentations. Carefully craft your presentation so the beginning and end let the audience know what you want them to do, and why it will benefit them to do it.
- 11. do not tell people what you are about to tell them** – If you tell an audience what you are going to tell them, you have told them. When you tell the audience where you are going to

allows them to make the decision if they want to go there with you. If you let your presentation unravel like a good story does, you will require your audience to pay attention the entire time for fear they will miss something important.

Once you tell an audience what you are going to say and in what order, through the use of an agenda slide you give the audience the opportunity to judge your thoughts. They are able to decide which ones they agree with and disagree with, or which set of facts they already know and don't have to pay attention to. In cases where they may disagree with you, the use of an agenda slide gives your audience time to formulate their arguments against the points they disagree with instead of paying attention to the rest of your presentation.

**12. DO NOT BEGIN BY TELLING THE AUDIENCE THE HISTORY OF YOUR COMPANY-**

Unless there is a direct benefit to the audience in knowing the history of your company that will help you fulfill your goal, and you can relate the story in a captivating fashion do not start out your presentation by telling the audience the history of your company. They will be trying to figure out what is in hearing this for them, and it will divert their attention from your message.

**13. DO NOT TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD THEM –** If you spend the time at the end of your presentation telling your audience what you have told them, you will be wasting the opportunity to inspire them to take the action you want them to take.

**14. DO END WITH A CALL TO ACTION –** A call to action is not a direct appeal to fulfill your goal. A call to action is a story that enables your audience to see how taking the action you want them to will fill their needs. The more stirring the story, the better chance you have of the audience remembering it, being able to repeat it, and wanting to act on it.

**15. DO NOT TELL PEOPLE WHAT TO THINK –** Create an environment where the audience draws their own conclusions. When you tell the audience how to do something, or what to think of something, instead of showing them how it is becomes your idea to take the action. When an audience draws it's own conclusions it becomes their idea, once fulfilling your goals becomes their idea they will be loathe to let the idea go.

**16. PAINT PICTURES WITH YOUR WORDS –** Tell a story full of verbal pictures, **images they can grasp and relate to**. If you have been successful they will know what you have told them. If you have to tell them what you've told them, either you've failed or they are idiots.

**17. PUT THE AUDIENCE IN A CONTEXT –** Another way of painting pictures with words is placing the audience in a setting or giving someone in your story attributes the audience can relate to. For example: He was a "Chef At The White House." 1

**18. USE ANALOGIES THAT PAINT PICTURES –** *Fatal Attraction* is a movie where a one-night stand turns into a nightmare. *Mrs Doubtfire* is *Mary Poppins* in drag.

**19. TELL A STORY THAT HAS MEANING TO YOUR SPECIFIC AUDIENCE –** If your story

has meaning to the audience they will know what you want them to take away from the story in the context of your presentation. This occurs naturally when the audience relates to you and the people in your story.

**21. PAINT A PICTURE YOUR AUDIENCE CAN SEE THEMSELVES OCCUPYING** – If you tell a story of success or failure it will go much farther in making an impact than if you recite statistics of success or failure. If you can make your audience **see themselves** succeeding in your story, or dread their own failure as your characters fail, your story will work to change behavior.

**22. LIKE A FIRST DATE YOU WANT TO INTRIGUE THE AUDIENCE** – Don't tell them everything. **Create a space** for the audience to ask questions, fulfilling their own needs.

### **LEAVE THE AUDIENCE WANTING MORE**

**23. QUESTIONS ARE A POSITIVE SIGN** – If the audience is so engaged that they want to know more you have hooked them. Now that the audience is engaged you can answer fact based questions with facts.

**24. DO NOT READ YOUR POWERPOINT TO THE AUDIENCE** – the audience can read. Instead, talk to them in simple conversational words and tell them stories. If they require a PowerPoint give it to them after your presentation. If you read the audience what is written on a slide you are being redundant and wasting their time.

**25. READ THE ROOM** – While you are talking get out of your head and into the audience's. If you need to juggle your presentation to meet their needs you will sense it.

**26. Pitch to the most junior person in the room** – You have no idea where the locus of power is in a situation. The most junior person can be your biggest advocate or your worst enemy. Keep them on your side.

**27. THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF LEARNERS TRY AND CONNECT WITH ALL OF THEM** – Some people are auditory learners, they learn best by listening to your presentation. Some people are visual learners they learn best when they can process visual information along with the auditory information. In presentations visual means pictures, not words. Finally, some people are kinetic learners they learn best by doing. If you are showing people how something works, or if you have a product you can hand around for people to try, you will be connecting with kinetic learners. The more tools you use to convey your message the more chance you have of it being memorable, repeatable, and cause an action.

**28. FRAME THE TAKEAWAY FOR YOUR AUDIENCE** – Think of what it is you want your audience to be able to repeat from your presentation, it should be a phrase or two at the most

that contain your call to action and why it will be beneficial to your audience. Steve Job's "A thousand songs in your pocket," is a perfect takeaway. Mine is "stories are memorable, repeatable and cause an action. If you use story instead of PowerPoint your audience will be able to tell others why they should do what you want them to." Once you have created your takeaway use it several times, in several different ways in your presentation.

**29. Audience's Attention Wanders Every Ten Minutes DO SOMETHING TO GET IT BACK.** Even in the most engaging presentations, an audience's attention tends to wander about every ten minutes. Change the rhythm and pacing of your story, tell a different type of story, ask your audience a question, do something to draw your audience back into your presentation and remind them why they are going to benefit from paying attention to you.

## **TRUST YOURSELF**

Public speaking ranks as the most common phobia across men and women of every age and demographic. Death is number two.

1. **MAKE A SPACE** – Make a space inside of yourself for you to just relax and internalize all your hard work before you start. **Stop rehearsing.**
2. **KNOW YOUR PRESENTATION IN YOUR GUT** – You should know your presentation in your gut not your head. Then any curve, any question thrown your way will have an answer and a solution. What you haven't internalized isn't worth knowing, it's something you can look up and you will know exactly where to look.
3. **PUT AWAY THE CARDS AND OUTLINES** – If you need a crib sheet it should be just that; **one card**, big letters, key words.
4. **DON'T LET IT BE A speech** – Every presentation should be a conversation with friends. If you are preaching from on high, you are creating a space between you and the audience instead of closing one.

You know how to talk to friends. You know how to tell a story to your mother/spouse/child.

**IF YOU MAKE THE AUDIENCE BELIEVE IN YOU**

**IF YOU BELIEVE IN YOUR MESSAGE**

**YOU WILL SUCCEED**

**MAKE YOUR MEETING THE ONE THING THEY MUST DO THAT DAY**

## **SHORT AND SWEET**

If you run on, the audience will run out. They will either leave the room metaphorically or else they are going to take a journey down Blackberry lane.

1. **KEEP IT SIMPLE** – Try and make no more than three major points in any presentation.
2. **IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY IT'S WHAT THEY REMEMBER.**
3. **TOO MUCH CONTENT OVERWHELMS** – If you overwhelm the audience nothing sticks.
4. **THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS WAS 300 WORDS.**
5. **USE CATCH PHRASES TO PAINT PICTURES:**

**“If it doesn't fit you Must Acquit.”**

**“ Yes We Can”**

**“Man On The Moon”**

### **FIRST DATE**

If you think of your presentation as a first date, you will give a successful presentation.

Why a first date? On a first date, we all have a goal, to get the person we are going out with to want a second date with us. Having achieved that goal, we can decide if we want to go out on that second date with them.

On a first date, if we do not know the person, we take the time to find out as much as we can about them. Today, most people would do some basic research either using Google, Facebook, Linked In or asking friends about the person we are going to meet. Some of us would do all of the above.

On a first date, we want to make a terrific first impression. We would try to dress appropriately, for where we are going and the type of person we are going there with.

On a first date, we would make eye contact with the other person when we are speaking to them.

We would try to steer the conversation to subjects of mutual interest, ask the other person questions to find out about them, and work hard to be both witty and intelligent. We would never go on and on about any one topic if we wanted to keep the person's interest.

On a first date, if we were the person planning the evening we would never start out by saying something like: *“Cynthia told me you like restaurants owned by big name chefs so I have made a reservation at Spago. At dinner, I am going to order the artichoke appetizer, the steak and asparagus, and then a chocolate mouse for desert. If we are having a good time, I thought we'd hit Roxbury for a drink afterwards. Depending on how that goes, when we get back to your house, I am going to ask to come in and once inside try and get that first kiss and maybe more.”*

Would you get in the car with that person? I doubt it. The first date would end before it began, or the

entire date would be tinted with your suspicion that this person was weird.

These first date behaviors are the same behaviors you want to use when making a presentation. Set your goals, research your audience, dress appropriately, make eye contact, talk less about your needs and more about your audiences, be brief and concise while at the same time being witty and engaging. Set a context for your presentation that the audience can relate to, start off in a fashion that brings your audience into your presentation instead of warning them that it is going to be a bore.

If you can keep the first date paradigm in mind when designing and delivering your presentation, you will definitely get asked back for a second date.