



Storytelling

"I believe it is the easiest thing in the world to tell a story ~ and the hardest to be a fine story teller."

Ruth Sawyer, *The Way of the Story Teller*

Storytelling's power is timeless ~ spanning generations and connecting lives. For years human beings have gathered around campfires, in saloons, conference rooms, classrooms, executive suites and homes to listen and tell stories. Great leaders have moved millions through vivid, dramatic story telling while passing along **wisdom, values and beliefs**. Grandmothers and grandfathers build lasting memories with grandchildren through story telling, allowing children to fantasize safely and realize dreams. It is a task shared by both story teller and listener ~ the interaction of both these entities that ultimately brings the story to life and moves us to smile, cry, laugh, become angry and when appropriate, take action.

According to Meeting Planners International recent analysis entitled *Making Meetings Work*, "When information is presented in a stimulating and challenging manner it generates emotions within us as we try to make sense of what is occurring. Emotions are critical in determining whether we pay attention, learn, process and **retain** information. We tend to remember best those experiences in which we had some **emotional** involvement and forget those in which we had little or no emotional involvement. Attendees will be as passive as a presenter allows them to be or will be as active as the presenter requires them to be ~ both of which **impact learning**."

One of the theories for why stories are **remembered** so well is because we use our, "whole brain" to take in the information. Stories provide **meaning** and allow a person to feel and see the information as well as factually understand it.

Meetings – Events – Communications

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The assumption is that because you “hear” the information factually, visually and emotionally, it is more likely to be imprinted on your brain in a way that sticks with you longer with very little effort on your part.

Essentials for Good Story Telling (aka, keeping your audience interested) include:

- Appropriateness to listeners (aka audience research)
- Dramatic appeal (aka audience needs and pain points)
- A single theme, clearly defined (aka goals)
- A well developed plot (aka clear, concise message)
- Style: vivid word pictures, pleasing sounds and rhythm (aka provocative, moving message)
- Characterization (aka involve key players in the presentation)
- Faithful to source (aka integrity and honesty)

Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, “... a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were telling a story.” If we as adults consider our lives to be stories, what a delightful and **creative** life we will live.

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