

Leadership Through Strategic Storytelling

ASTD Webcast | April 7, 2014

Bill Baker | @StorytellerBill







BOYS' SWIMMING





Engagement

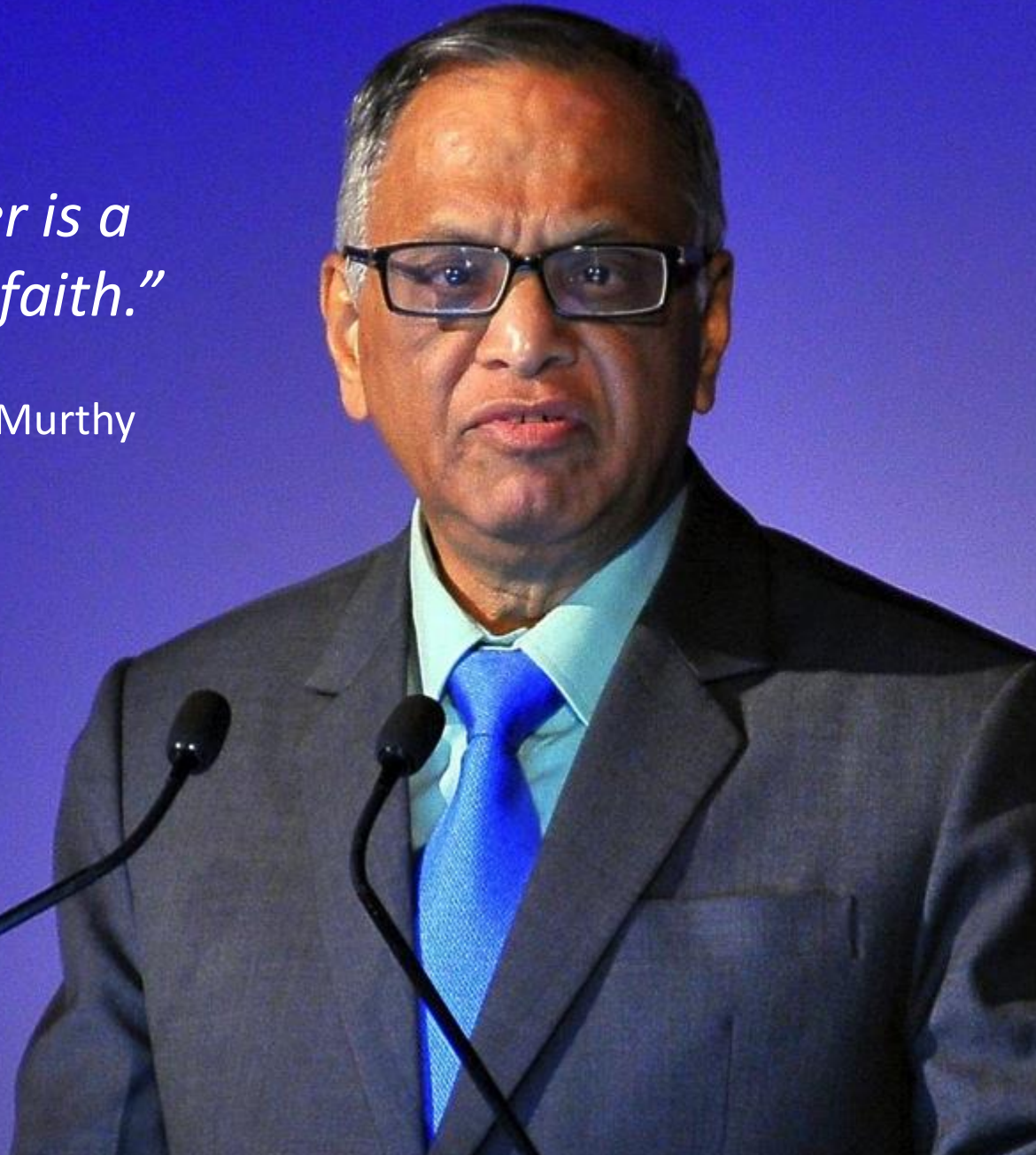
Alignment

Unity

Leadership

*“A leader is a
dealer in faith.”*

- Narayana Murthy





Communications

Storytelling

*“To **be a person** is
to have a story.”*

- Isak Dinesen





















WORDPRESS



The stories that move and captivate people are those that
the teller, the audience, the moment, and the mission.

The Four Truths of Storyteller

by Peter Guber

I'm in the business of creating compelling stories. As a filmmaker, I need to understand how stories touch audiences—why one story is instantly appealing but another falls miserably to connect. I've been fortunate enough to work with some of the world's most talented storytellers—gifted actors, novelists, screenwriters, producers, and other producers—and from them I've gathered insights into the alchemy of great storytelling. Make no mistake, a bit of magic is still at work here, and I've had my share of deep personal insights into the essential elements of how to tap into its power.

The power of storytelling is to my work as a business executive. Over the years, I've learned that the ability to articulate your company's mission, vision, and values is crucial in the business world. A storyteller knows how to tell a story that is the hero. A story

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW • FEBRUARY 2007

Harvard Business Review

www.hbr.org

All of us construct narratives about ourselves—where we've come from, where we're going. The kinds of stories we tell make an enormous difference in how well we cope with change.

What's Your Story?

by Herminia Ibarra and Kent Lineback

At a recent networking event, senior managers who'd been dismissed out of high-paying corporate jobs took turns telling what they had done before and what they were looking for next. Person after person stood up and recounted a laundry list of credentials and jobs, in chronological order. Many felt compelled to begin with their first job, some even with their place of birth. The accounting was meticulous.

Most people spent their allotted two minutes (and lost the attention of those around them) before they even reached the punch line—the description of what they were seeking. Those who did leave time to wrap up tended merely to list the four or five (disparate) things they might be interested in pursuing next. In the feedback sessions that followed each round of presentations, these "fact tellers" were hard to help. The people listening couldn't readily understand how their knowledge and contacts might bear upon the teller's situation. Even worse, they didn't feel compelled to try very hard.

In our research and coaching on career or-

ientation, we've witnessed many people struggling to explain what they want to do next and why a change makes sense. One of us, in the context of writing a book, has studied a wide variety of major career shifts; the other has worked extensively with organizations and individuals on the use of narrative to bring about positive change. Each of us has been to enough networking events to know that the one we've described here is not unusual. But we've also seen a lot of people in the midst of significant transitions make effective use of contacts and successfully enlist supporters. What we've come to understand is that one factor more than any other makes the difference: the ability to craft a good story.

Why You Need a Story

All of us tell stories about ourselves. Stories define us. To know someone well is to know her story—the experiences that have shaped her, the trials and turning points that have tested her. When we want someone to know us, we share stories of our childhoods, our

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Storytelling That Moves People

A Conversation with Screenwriting Coach
Robert McKee

Persuasion is the centerpiece of business activity. Customers must be convinced to buy your company's products or services, employees and colleagues to go along with a new strategic plan or reorganization, investors to buy (or not to sell) your stock, and partners to sign the most deal. But despite the critical importance of persuasion, most executives struggle often, they get lost in the accretions of company speak: PowerPoint slides, dry memos, and hyperbolic minutes department. From the most carefully researched and considered efforts are routinely greeted with cynicism, lassitude, or outright dismissal.

Why is persuasion so difficult, and what can you do to get people on line? In search of answers to these questions, HBR senior editor Marygrove Fryer paid

a visit to Robert McKee, the world's best known and most respected screenwriting lecturer, at his home in Los Angeles. McKee moved to California after studying for his Ph.D. in cinema arts at the University of Michigan. He then taught at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema and Television Arts, to take his lectures on the art of storytelling worldwide to an audience of writers, directors, producers, actors, and entertainment executives.

McKee's students have written, directed, and produced hundreds of hit films, including *Forrest Gump*, *Erin Brockovich*, *The Color Purple*, *Good Will Hunting*, and *The Big Green*. *Storylines* is won 18 Academy Awards, 10 Emmy Awards, 19 Writers Guild Awards, and 11 Directors Guild of America Awards.

DIFFERENT VOICE



Organizations are human

Humans tell stories...

...to share ideas, make
sense of the world and
join forces with others to
accomplish great things.

Leaders that use storytelling
strategically **tap into the human
nature** of their organization...

...to bring more meaning, focus
and productivity to their work
and to their workforce.

Meaning

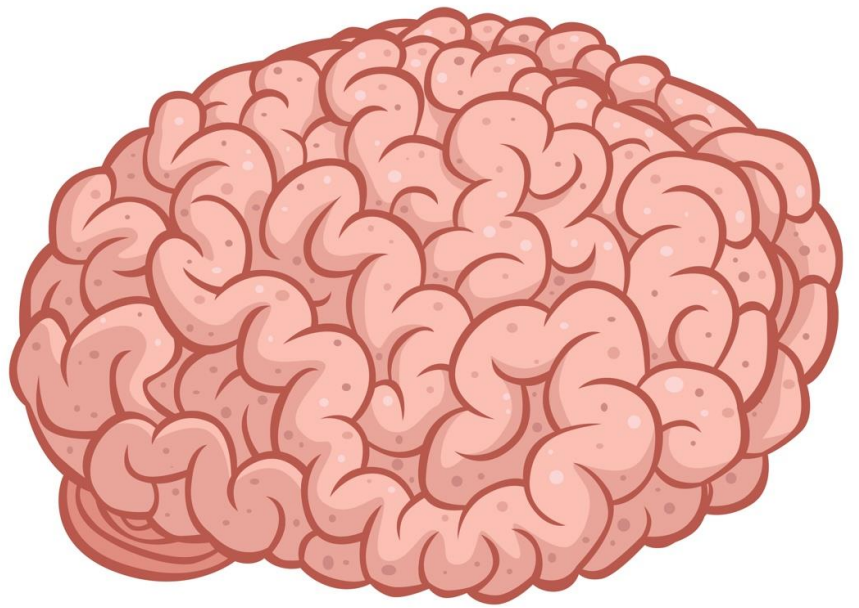
Change

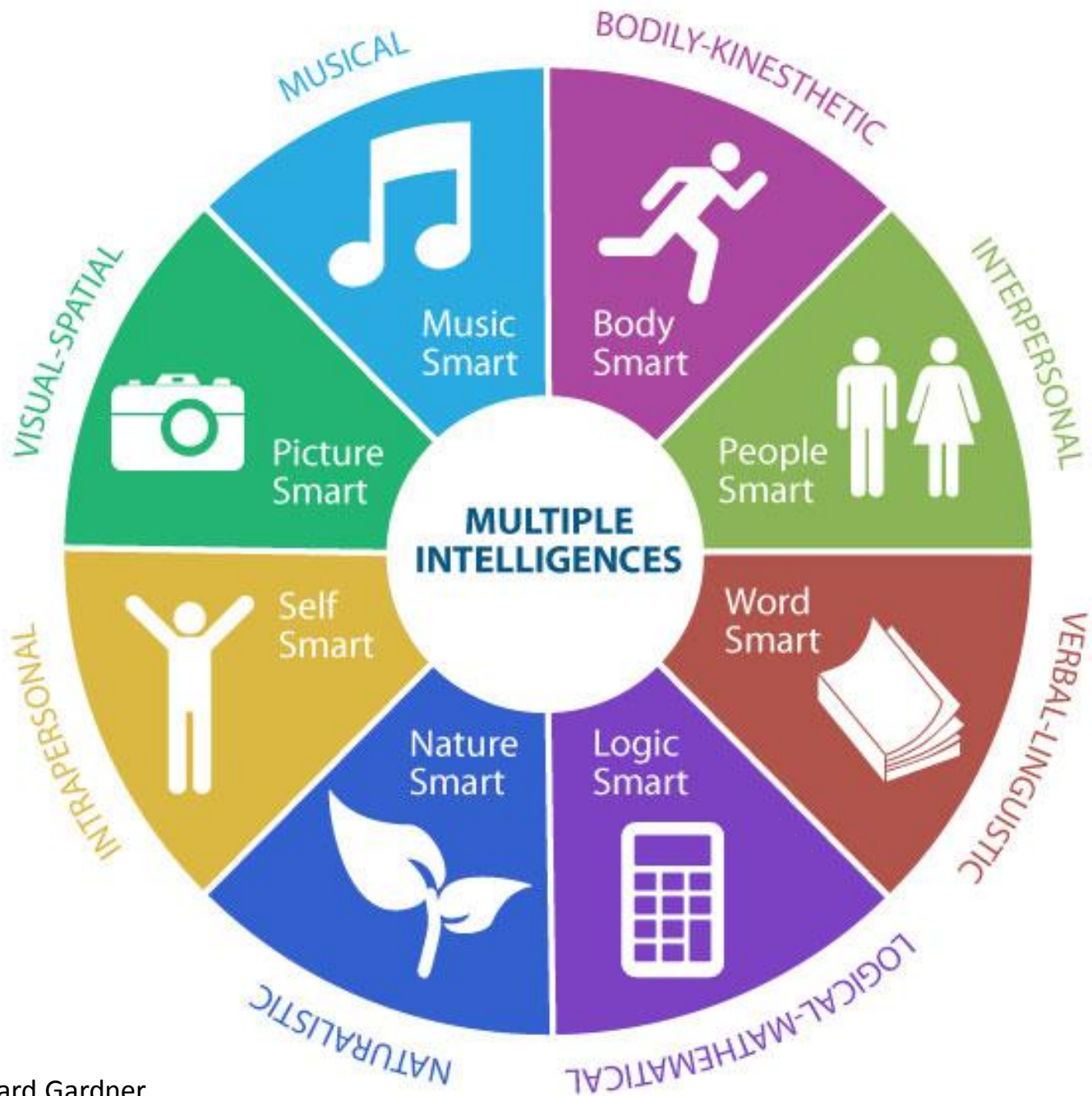
Taking people from
where **they are** to where
they **need to be**

Storytelling works because
it's already **in our nature**

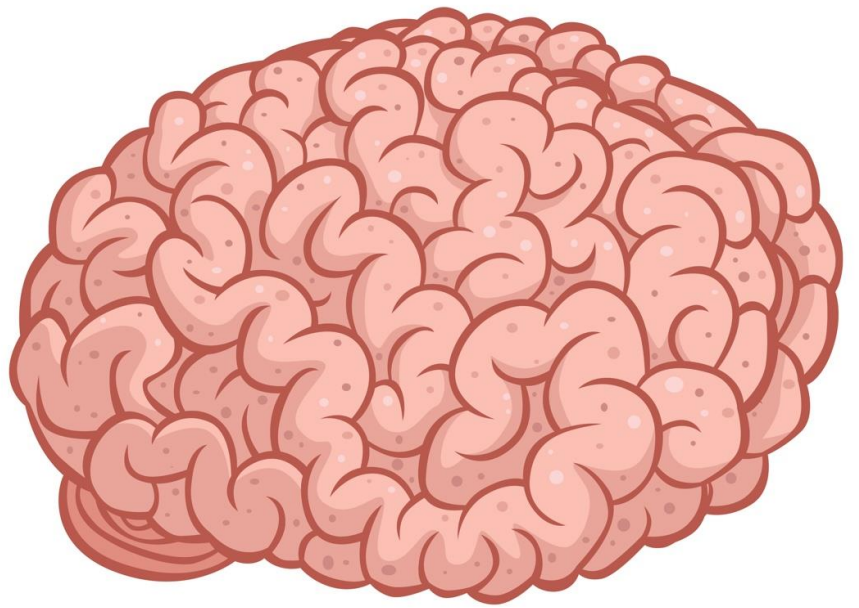
*“The single **most effective tool** a leader has is story.”*

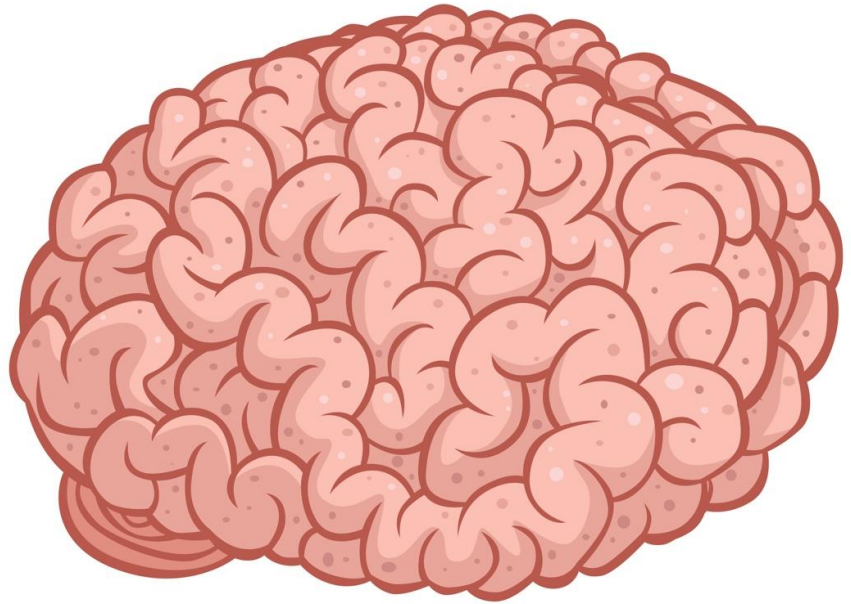
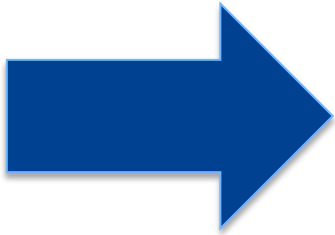
- Dr. Howard Gardner

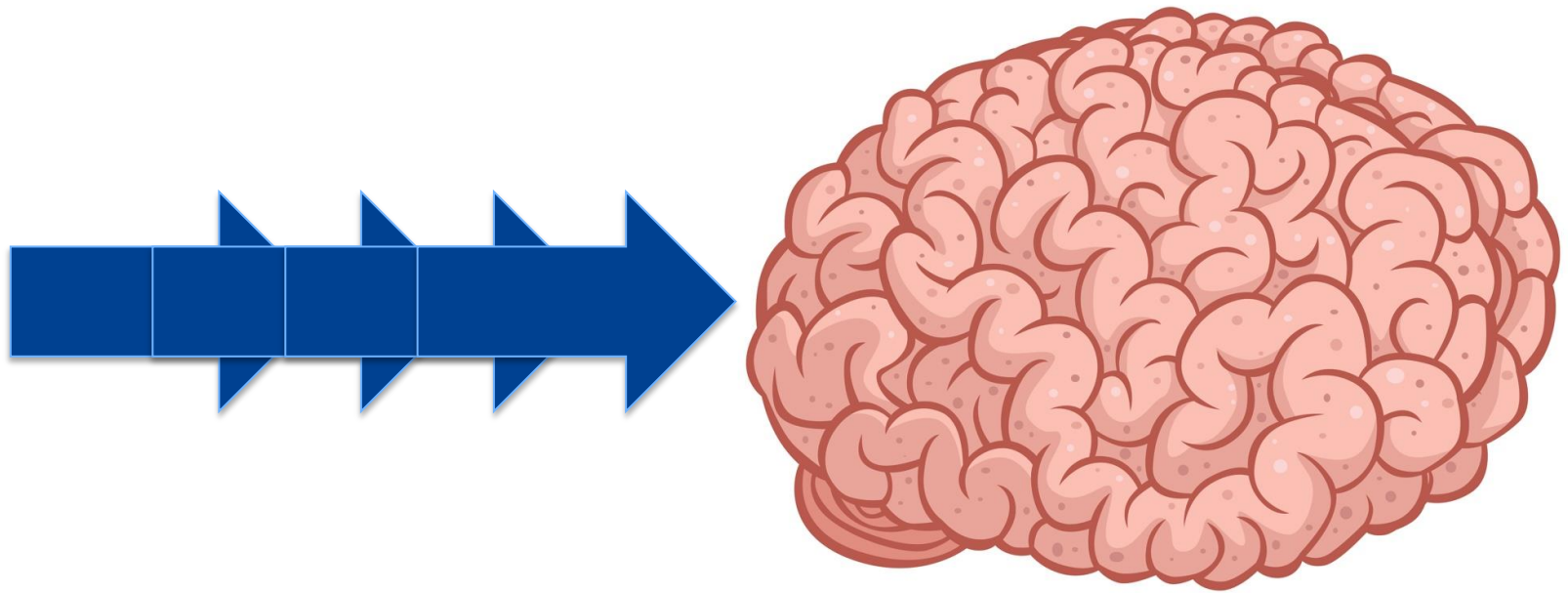


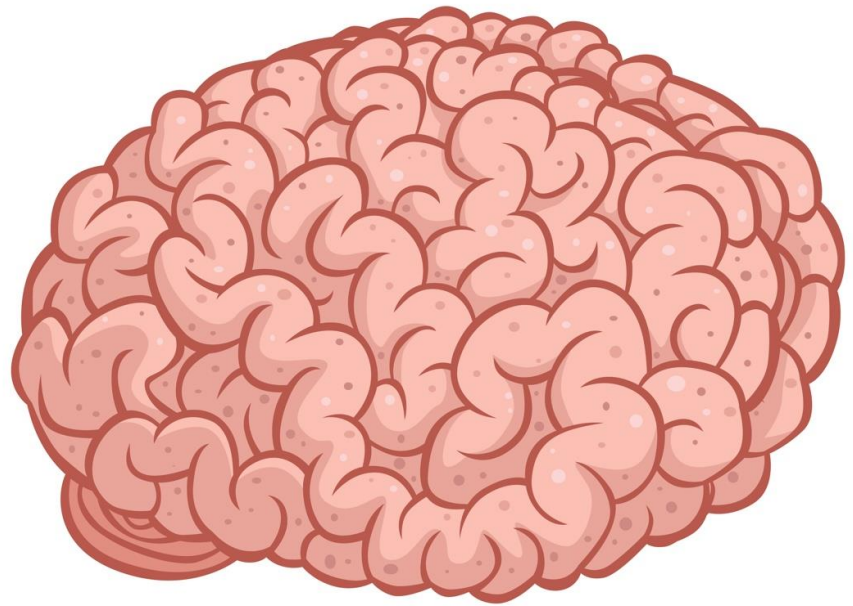
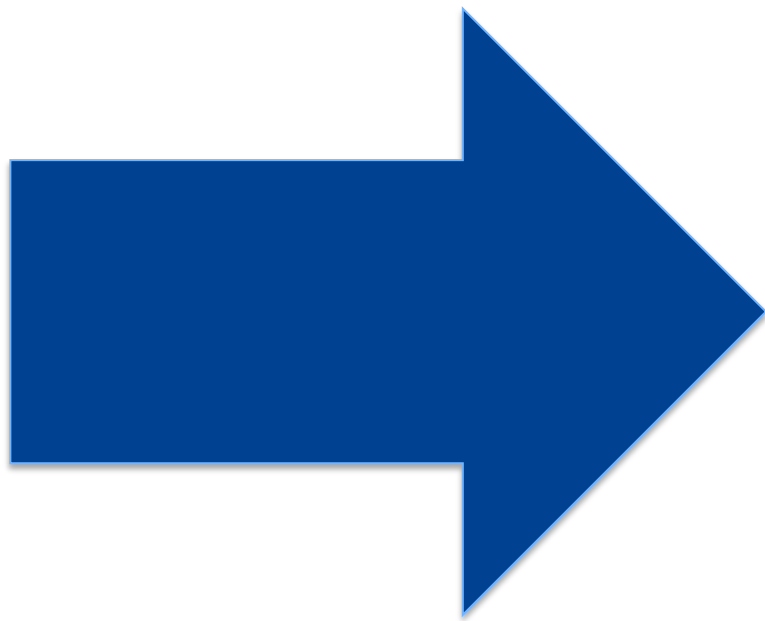


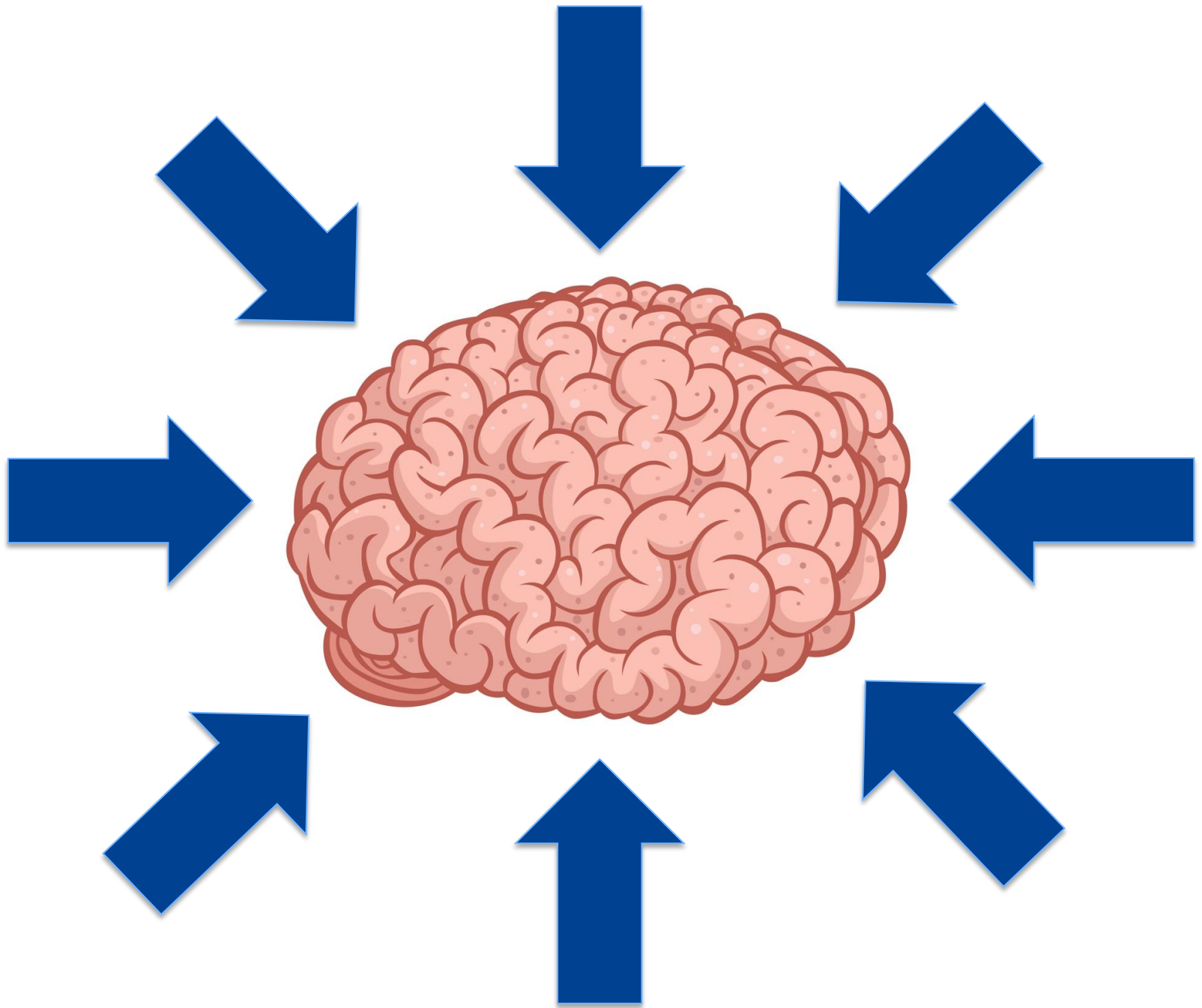
Source: Dr. Howard Gardner

















I.U.E.
FOR
FULL EMPLOYMENT

WE MARCH FOR JOBS FOR ALL NOW!

WE MARCH FOR JOBS FOR ALL NOW!

WE DEMAND VOTING RIGHTS NOW!

WE DEMAND AN FEPC LAW NOW!

LAW SAYS - END SEGREGATED RULES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

END SEGREGATED RULES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WE MARCH FOR JOBS FOR ALL NOW!

The exchange of something
meaningful, shared from one
person to another...

...for a purpose

Strategic Storytelling

Increasing the effectiveness
of communications...

...to forge action

What do I want them to **do**?

What do I need them to
think and/or **feel**?

What's the **message** I want
them to hear?

Is there a **story** I can tell to
foster all of the above?

What do I want them to **do**?



What do I need them to
think and/or **feel**?



What's the **message** I want
them to hear?



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What do I want them to **do**?



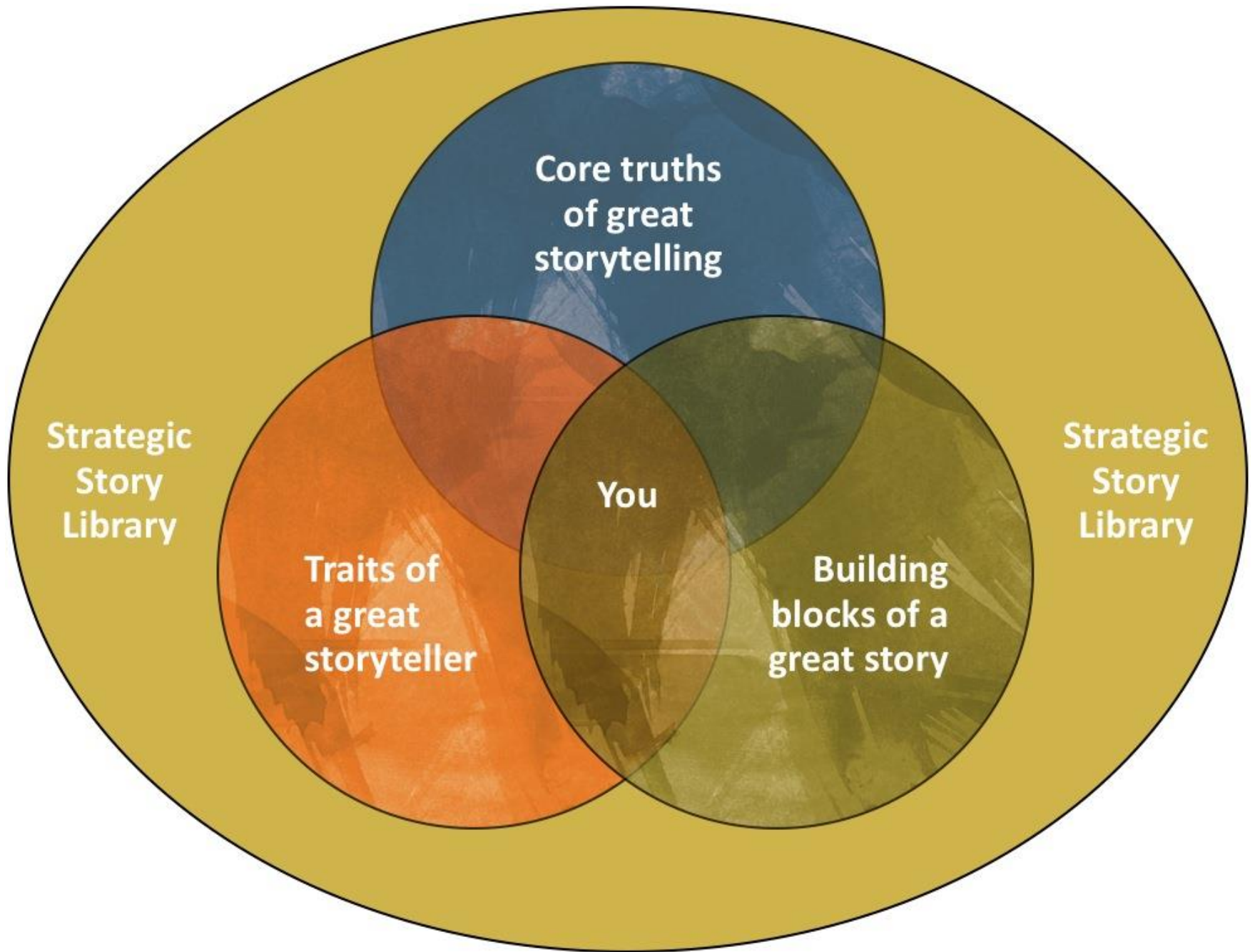
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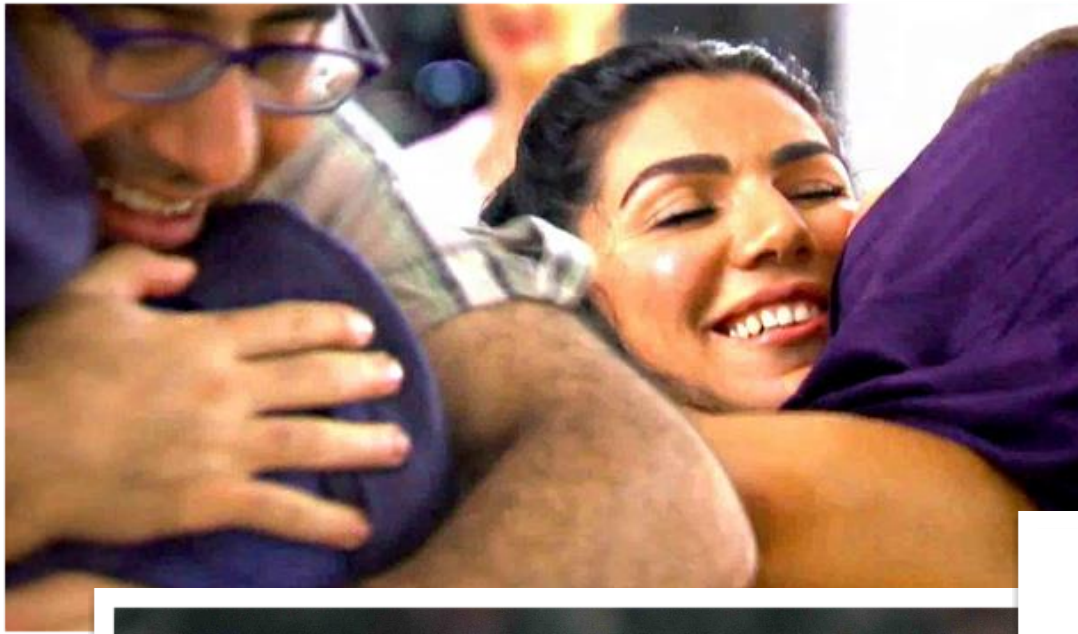


Is there a **story** I can tell to
foster all of the above?



Four truths of great storytelling

Great stories tap into **emotion**



Great stories are universal





Great stories are relevant

Great stories are never
completely told

Building blocks of a great strategic story

PREMISE
(The context for your story)

PLATFORM
(The setting for your story)

PREMISE
(The context for your story)

PERSON
(The people in your story)

PLATFORM
(The setting for your story)

PREMISE
(The context for your story)

PLOT
(The events unfolding in your story)

PERSON
(The people in your story)

PLATFORM
(The setting for your story)

PREMISE
(The context for your story)

POINT

(The key take-away from your story)

PLOT

(The events unfolding in your story)

PERSON

(The people in your story)

PLATFORM

(The setting for your story)

PREMISE

(The context for your story)

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PLATFORM

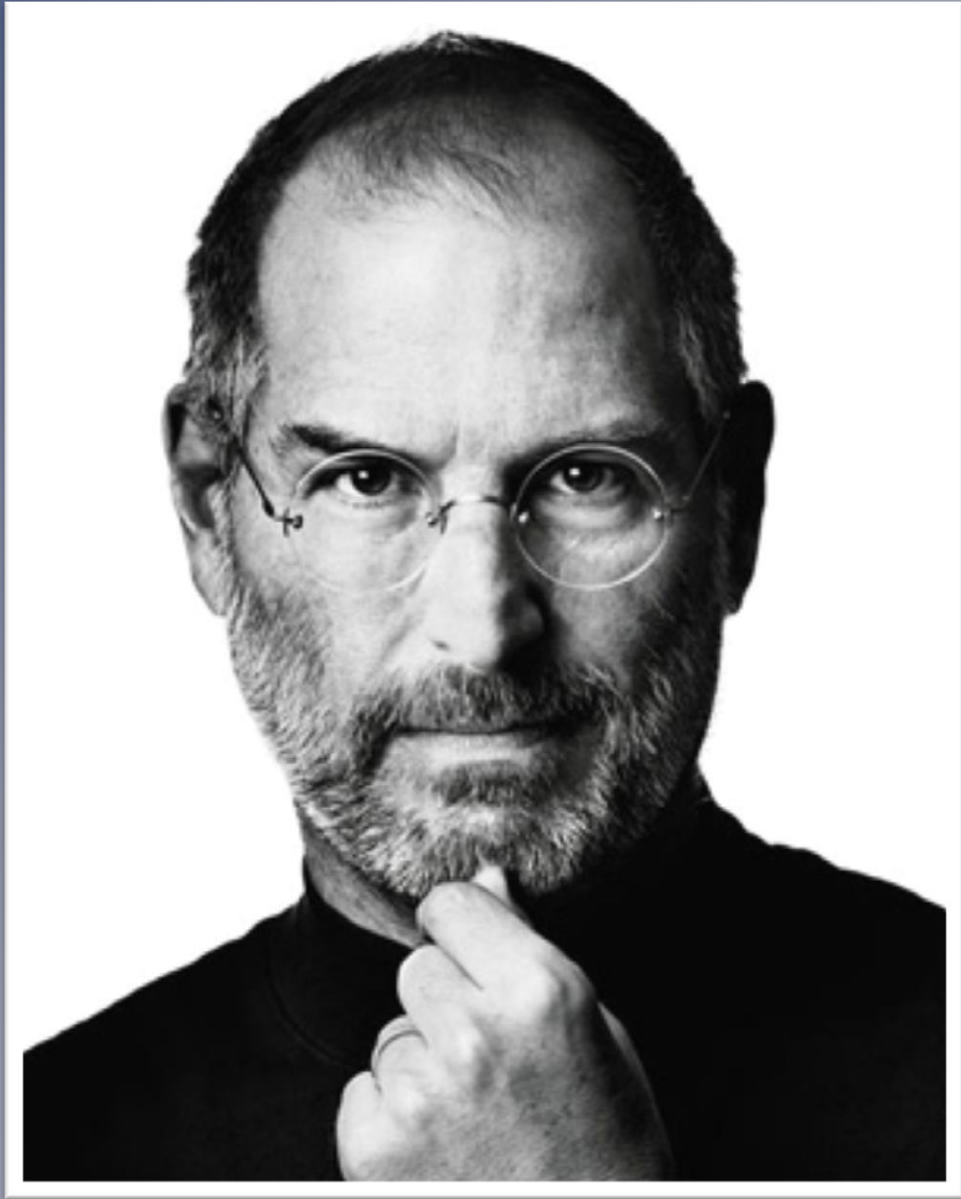
(The setting for your story)

PREMISE

(The context for your story)

Traits of great storytellers

Great storytellers listen, **engage**
and interact with their audience



Great storytellers
empower others



JAMAICA

London 2012

WILLIAMS
MILLS

LAZOR

Great storytellers
are generous in spirit

Great storytellers are
expressive, animated and
highly descriptive

Boyd Varty TED Talk

“What I Learned from
Nelson Mandela”



Great storytellers
are human, vulnerable,
truthful and trustworthy







Great storytellers do not
hide behind PowerPoint





A Library of Strategic Stories



Your story

Marlo Reveley

2401 Arlington Blvd. #71 • Charlottesville, VA 22903 • (434) 972-9341
ReveleyM02@Darden.Virginia.edu

Charlottesville, VA

Education

Darden Graduate School of Business Administration
University of Virginia
Candidate for Masters of Business Administration, May 2002
Co-founder: Diversity Practice Forum; Brand Challenge Manager: Marketing Club
Member: Health Care Club; Entrepreneurs Club

Nashville, TN

Vanderbilt University
Bachelor of Arts in History, May 1996
Publicity Chair: Sarratt Art Board; Executive Board Member: Pi Beta Phi Sorority

Houston, TX

Experience:

Summer 2001

Bacterial BarCodes Inc. – a Baylor College of Medicine Technologies company
Summer Intern

Houston, TX

- Initiated, designed and developed 3 day sales force training program targeting 10% sales increase.
- Re-evaluated potential market size and identified inconsistencies of over 5% that contributed to overall strategy realignment. New strategy expected to capture additional 20% market revenue.
- Outlined multiple internal and external communication strategies currently under consideration and expected to increase productivity up to 20%.

1998 - 2000

Accenture (Formerly Andersen Consulting)
Senior Consultant - Organizational and Human Performance

Houston, TX

- Prepared over 5 electric power utility companies to maximize profits after deregulation through assessment, management, and implementation of power tracking, bidding and sales software.
- Led team of 6 consultants in the implementation of power management software that increased operational profitability over \$150,000 through first year of use.
- Designed strategy, operational, and training procedures for over 700 employees to gain compliance with deregulation legislation within 3 months. Expected to grow market share by 5%.
- Developed multi-media communication tools for multiple audiences of over 1500 employees.
- Selected by firm's senior leadership to design and implement e-business education strategy for over 200 consultants.

1998 - 1999

PDQ.Net
Part-time Producer - The Internet Zone and Marketing Analyst

Houston, TX

- Redesigned point-of-sales ("POS") sales strategy and structure to increase sales by 8%.
- Created, produced, and co-hosted a weekly 2-hour talk radio program about the Internet.
- Established key sponsors (e.g.: Compaq & Continental Airlines), solicited contributions of over \$15,000.
- Targeted and recruited key industry thought leaders to participate as guest speakers (e.g. Michael Dell).

Austin, TX

1996 - 1998

Trilogy Development Group **pcOrder.com**
Account Executive

- Conducted sales negotiations and strategic planning with Value Added Reseller executives. largest account was \$85,000.
- Created marketing and training materials used by over 200 nationwide customers.
- Customized web tools, trained employees, and managed accounts for over 50 clients.

Through Award 1998 and 1999 - awards from Accenture client for excellent implementation.
Award 1997 and 1998 - Bi-annual award given to team for superior
architecture and urban planning

Your company's story

Transformative stories
to **shape the way** people
think, feel and act

Ideal Stories for a Leader's Library

- Getting through **change**
- What it means to be a **leader**
- The true power of **teamwork**
- Remarkable customer **service**
- Stories to **inspire** and motivate
- Struggle and **success** (learning)
- Struggle and **failure** (learning)

Strategic Story Library Development Grid

Audiences	Desired Actions	Needed Thoughts & Feelings	Messages to Convey (Point)	Strategic Stories
One:				
Two:				
Three:				
Four:				



Finding great stories

Letting great stories to find you

Your own **life** experiences

Your own **work** experiences

The **experiences of others** (friends,
family, colleagues, partners, etc.)

Your consumption of media



**DRY
CLEANING**

909

IF YOU ARE
UNEMPLOYED
AND NEED AN
OUTFIT CLEAN
FOR AN INTERVIEW,
WE WILL CLEAN
IT FOR *FREE*



Plaza
SINCE 1951



Remember that a **story**, an
“exchange of meaning,”
can take **many forms**

Quote from wise dead person

Story about others

Parable or fairytale

Infographic

Story from sports

NEWS HEADLINE

Story from literature or mythology

Video clip

Analogy or metaphor

Story from movies, plays, opera

Cartoon

Personal story about yourself

Story from History

Arresting image

Identify **gaps** in the library

Listen and **observe**

Absorb and **collect**

Imagination



“...the power to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.”

- JK Rowling

Thank you

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