



The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion through the Art of Storytelling

Annette Simmons

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The new material for this revised edition offers an expanded case study of storytelling in action that focuses on one of Simmons's success stories. Over one hundred stories drawn from the front lines of business and government, as well as myths, fables, and parables from around the world, illustrate how story can be used to persuade, motivate, and inspire in ways that cold facts, bullet points, and directives can't. These stories, combined with practical storytelling techniques show anyone how to become a more effective communicator. From "who I am" to "I-know-what-you're thinking," Simmons identifies the six stories you need to know how to tell and demonstrates how they can be applied. This revised edition offers a guide to using storytelling in specific business circumstances, including corporate reorganizations, layoffs, and diversity issues.

The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion through the Art of Storytelling Details

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Clare says

Anyone who has an interest in how storytelling can be used for more effective communication (in business as well as personal situations) should read this book. It makes an incredibly compelling and clear case for the use of story and highlights a range of potential applications and benefits from using a story-based approach.

As I made my way through the book I was hoping for some more 'how to' information. The new chapter in the paperback edition, 'Story Thinking as a Skill', was certainly the chapter I found most useful. While this chapter stops short of providing a step-by-step guide on how to elicit, structure and present stories, I realised, after making my way through the book, that this would be impossible. There is no one-size-fits-all formula or approach to storytelling, and as the author writes in the last paragraph of the book - 'Agility improves with practice and coaching. This new chapter is my best shot at the coaching part. Now it's time for you to go practice'.

Notes from the book are at [Webby Clare](#).

Ed says

This book ran hot and cold for me. Some chapters I found boring and others inspiring. I think if it had some exercises or challenged me to think more about relating my personal experiences to the stories in the book it would have engaged me more. It did enlighten me to the power of storytelling and for that it was worth the read. This is not a 'read it and master it' type of book. It is a starting point and a good introduction.

Jim Peterson says

I read this book for work.

I would recommend The Story Factor to anyone interested in learning how to convert what they've learned from reading, writing and telling stories into a potential success factor in the world of work.

Simmons explains how to use storytelling as a way to influence others. It sounds tricky, and it is, but it's essential for people working in sales, marketing or, like me, copywriting. The author does, however, emphasise that it is important to use this skill for worthy causes that you believe in, and not for manipulative purposes.

The book was a bit repetitive and occasionally preachy, but I'd say overall it did inspire me to become a (better) storyteller. Can that be bad?

Will Jeffries says

I absolutely enjoy storytelling and believe this ancient art-form to be the foundation of civilization. If you are interested in storytelling, I would recommend you visit Doug Lipman, which the author of this book recommends as well: <http://storydynamics.com/>

Also, a famous storyteller that I have grown to love over the years is Leo Sofer:
<http://www.palaceofstories.com/>

He offers free downloads of his stories as podcasts before they make it to the "buy me" page - so, I would encourage you to hop on over and give his stories a listen. He caters to adults as well as children as has a hypnotic way of going story within story within story - then back out again. It is captivating.

Lastly, I would recommend Uncommon Knowledge "Storytelling" CD. It is packed with wonderful tales that will cause you to evaluate life from a different perspective: <http://www.uncommon-knowledge.co.uk/p...>

Enjoy Life...

Maria says

i'm extremely disappointed

i can't believe that a book about storytelling can be so boring. oh maybe it's my expectations that were wrong? basically, i wanted a kind of tutorial. like, here's how you build a story - 1, 2, 3. those are the types, those are the points, those are the tools. instead a whole book of water

well, they mentioned the story types in the very beginning, but that was it. the rest of the book was about "stories are so powerful, it's so awesome, omg, stories are cool". i was like - seriously, 200 pages?? i mean, i'd be happy to read more about psychological and biological basics of story perception but not the phrase "stories are so convincing" over and over again

i wonder, whether i'll read at least one decent business book this year...

Geoff says

After seeing it referred to in another book, I had this book sitting in my "wishlist" on Amazon for months. Then I slipped it into a shipment of books that I ordered and it sat on my shelf for several more months. Finally, during my summer holidays, I pulled it out and began to read.

Annette Simmons is inspirational about the power of story. I was reading the book as a ministry leader, rather than as a professional speaker. It reminded me of the power of non rational communication, the power of community, the power of personal connection. She addressed the issue of the ethics of the use/abuse of

this power. She hints that each mini story needs to connect to a meta narrative (and be congruent with our understanding of that great story if it is to be influential) - and as a Christian I affirm the power of the great story which Annette hints is "Truth".

Annette also draws stories from a diverse range of sources - religious, cultural and the different areas of life. In fact, the strength of Annette's book is her modelling of how to tell a story. She argues that trying to explain how and why a story works (beyond some simple principles) is like dissecting a kitten to see why it is cute.

I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in thinking about how to be a better leader by developing the skill of influencing others through story telling.

Omar Halabieh says

As the title indicates, this is a book about the power of storytelling as an influencing tool. As Annette best tells it: "People don't want more information. They are up to their eyeball in information. They want faith...Faith needs a story to sustain it - a meaningful story that inspires belief in you and renews hope that your ideas indeed offer what you promise...Story is your path to creating faith. Telling a meaningful story means inspiring your listeners...to reach the same conclusions you have reached and decide for themselves to believe what you say and do what you want them to do. People value their own conclusions more highly than yours. They will only have faith in a story that has become real for them personally. Once people make your story, their story, you have tapped into the powerful force of faith. Future influence will require very little follow-up energy from you and may even expand as people recall and retell your story to others."

The author then goes to summarize what the remainder of the book is about: "The rest of this book is dedicated to proving to you the things you already know about storytelling and filling in whatever gaps might be missing. Storytelling is not rocket science. It is very easy and incredibly rewarding to practice."

A very enlightening, practical and applicable book - no matter what it is that you do in life. You will find inspiration and learn numerous techniques to improve your storytelling abilities and consequently your influence. Highly recommended read!

Below are key excerpts from the book, that I found particularly insightful:

1- "There are six types of stories that will serve you well in your efforts to influence others. 1) "Who I Am" Stories, 2) "Why I Am Here" Stories, 3) "The Vision" Story, 4) "Teaching" Stories, 5) "Values-in-Action" Stories, 6) "I Know What You Are Thinking" Stories. "

2- "Other methods of influence - persuasion, bribery, or charismatic appeals - are push strategies. Story is a pull strategy. If your story is good enough, people - of their own free will - come to the conclusion they can trust and the message you bring."

3- "People need story to organize their thoughts and make sense of things. In fact, anyone you attempt to influence already has a story...If you tell them a story that makes better sense to them you can reframe the way they organize their thoughts, the meanings they draw, and thus the actions they take."

4- "Policy can't adapt, but a story can give guidance, make sense, and without ruling on either side of an

unresolvable conflict, invite someone to think through her own creative solution to a tough problem."

5- "A good story helps you influence the interpretation people give to facts. Facts aren't influential until they mean something to someone. A story delivers a context so that your facts slide into new slots in your listener's brains."

6- "However, if you tell sustaining, guiding stories like this one, people will feel empowered to stop asking you for answers and to think for themselves. An answer only gives them a fish, whereas a story teaches them how to fish for themselves."

7- "Influence is a function of grabbing attention, connecting to what they already feel is important, and linking that feeling to whatever you want them to see, do, or feel. It is easier to let your story land first, and then draw the circle of meaning/connection around it using what you see and hear in the responses of your listeners. Influencing is a real-time activity."

8- "Traditional models of influence are linear and focus on power that is first gained, then exercised, and in the end either reinforced or lost. Story favors a circular model of power where influence is passed back and forth and where beginnings are endings and endings are beginnings."

9- "A wonderful way to find influential stories is to review the personal experiences that brought you to the place where you now want to influence others."

10- "True influence changes behavior without relying on constant reminders. Any agreement that depends on policing future behavior is not addressing some force or dynamic still working against your desired goal."

11- "No builder would start building without first understanding the foundations of the terrain. Neither would a successful influencer build a new story without first understanding the old stories. Influence will require either a new foundation that can coexist with the old stories or excavation and removal of the old outdated stories."

12- "Storytelling tracks vital deviations that inspire growth - meaningful personal experiences, creative solutions to conflict, and paradoxical truths."

13- "After all, organizational values form behavior. Stories about your values in action create and sustain the organizational culture (for better or for worse). When you live the vision and values you profess, you need only tell people what happened last week or last month. If you aren't living your vision and values daily, well, you can't dress a pig in a ball gown and expect people to call her princess. Story telling operates as a litmus test of accountability that simultaneously inspires and reminds us to stay true to our values."

14- "Storytelling is the most valuable skill you can develop to help influence others. It is your birthright to be a good storyteller. In a sense, your life is a story and you are already telling that one perfectly. "

Jocelyn Paige says

My favorite book written about storytelling and storytelling techniques. The six types of stories help anyone understand how useful stories can be in communicating with people who are you and what you stand for. A must-have for entrepreneurs, I can also recommend this to writers, artists and specifically for anyone who

blogs.

Mark Ruzomberka says

If you are familiar with the movie Inception then you know the line "What is the most resilient parasite? Bacteria? A virus? An intestinal worm? An idea. Resilient... highly contagious. Once an idea has taken hold of the brain it's almost impossible to eradicate. An idea that is fully formed - fully understood - that sticks; right in there somewhere."

A wise man once told me "Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story." I think that applies here. It reminds me that people simply do not understand fact or analytical thought process and often forget numbers. This makes it hard for them to compare products or ideas and determine which one is better. Why did betamax lose, not because the specs were worse than VHS. Because they didn't tell as good of a story.

What people do not forget are stories. Why because those stories create ideas, ah yes ideas those resilient little parasites. Often stories create other stories, and those who can tell a good story can often exert influence over others. Don't believe me, then say to someone "Let me tell you a story" and see how they are immediately drawn in, and set themselves up to really listen to what you have to say. In this day and age people have so much access to information, they no longer crave it but are overloaded by it. They want you to tell them a story so they don't have to sift through all that information, and instead can easily remember your story. Think about how many people whose names you forget but remember their "story". Most of have at one time or another tried to remember the guy from Texas or the Girl who drives a VW Beatle, and just could not remember their name.

This book has helped me tell the story each of us tell thousands of times in our lifetime. That is the "Who we are any why we are here" story. When I meet new people for the first time I've changed my "Who I am story" to explain how I am from Pittsburgh and my great-grand-father was a butcher. Next, I say I'm just glad I learned how to program computers so I do not have to cut up cows for a living or work in a steel mill. This tends to be a bit better of a story than I have a Comp. Sci. degree and I'm from Pittsburgh. I like it because it gives me some context, but also sets the listener up to think I'm hard working and thankful to be in the field of technology.

I was also happy to learn that some stories can even be a single sentence. My favorite from the book was "The man who beats his horse will soon be walking." I will try to remember that to my boss if he ever starts overloading me with work. But, more than anything I liked the story from Nelson Mandela in one of the final chapters of the book about hope.

In the end who among us does not want to be a better story teller. So, in closing let me tell you a story about the what I learned from this book...

Anatoly v01 says

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Brett says

A must read for salespeople, business owners, politicians, and anyone who needs to learn how to influence others (which is basically everyone on the planet).

This is an incredibly good book, explaining very clearly how to use the power of stories to help people see things your way.

As I said, YOU NEED TO READ THIS BOOK.

Nancy says

A great tool to have in your library if you are part of leading a company or organization. Simmons does a marvelous job gathering stories that really truly get the point across. I use this book in my storytelling class and the students love it.

Wendy says

What did I learn from this book? What do I want to remember? Story of 3 men - 1 laying bricks, 1 building a wall, 1 building a cathedral . . . storytelling can help us see the cathedral. Ask a 5-year-old if she can draw and she will enthusiastically say 'Yes!' Ask a group of adults the same question and they will hesitate . . . our lives are a story and we are already telling that one perfectly. Jewish Teaching Story – naked truth is rejected at every door. Clothe the truth in parable and it is warmly received. Stories house truths that can resonate. I think of David McCullough's quote from Undaunted - about how we can have all the facts and miss the Truth in history whereas we can have limited facts or incorrect facts and reach a larger Truth. 'Story lets you be congruent in a metaphorical way when facts seem diametrically opposed.' A fact is like a sack – it won't stand up if it's empty. To make it stand up, first you have to put in it all the reasons and feelings that caused it in the first place. – Luigi Pirandello

Laura says

I did not find this book useful. Annette Simmons focuses on why story is important and its effectiveness as a tool of influence and persuasion, but not so much on how to construct and use story effectively. At one point she argues that one can't really tell another how to tell a story - it's too instinctive and individual a process. So not much help there. She also continually intertwines "telling stories" with "living our story." The result is confusing, abstract, and more philosophical than practical. I much prefer Paul Smith's "Lead With a Story."

Taka says

Not very helpful--

I was very excited to start on this book after reading so many good reviews about it. I had my pen at the ready to underline valuable passages and take notes. I expected it to give me specific techniques and tips to improve my storytelling skills.

But alas, my expectations were too high and unreasonable. I came away with a little bit more of appreciation for story and what it can do, but that's about it. No specific techniques or tips that could improve my skills as a storyteller.

The main reason for this deficiency is that story as a form defies "rules" and "models." The author compares story models to dissecting a kitten to understand why it's cute.

Touche.

Story is specific, emotional, personal, and subjective. Good to know that. But that's specifically why it by its nature can't be modeled, codified, or broken down into a bunch of rules.

Although I do believe there could have been more specific tips that might have helped me improve my storytelling skills, it comes down to this: listen to stories and tell stories.

That's the only way to get better at it.

Duh.

I felt the book was too long and underdelivered. It gave some good stories but didn't give me enough information on the specific points it was making (see for example, how to influence the unconcerned and unmotivated).

Overall, despite a few nuggets of golden advice, I was disappointed.
