

How to Captivate your Audience with Inspiring Stories
and Metaphors that give Meaning to your Message

A SPRINKLING OF MAGIC

Workbook for Communicators and Educators

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A Sprinkling of Magic

For my Parents
Henrietta May Hastie (1924 – 2001)
Kevin Wordworth Edwards (1929 – 2005)
In love, respect and gratitude

A Sprinkling of Magic

**How to Captivate your Audience with Inspiring Stories and
Metaphors that give Meaning to your Message**

2nd Edition



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INTRODUCTION

Stories have captured our minds, hearts and imaginations since before we could talk and they still hold that magic ability to transfer, transmit and transform our message so that it is uniquely understood by every listener.

The aim of this book is to take you on a journey of practicality balanced with imagination and to provide you with a selection of valuable tools, advice, ideas, tips, techniques and strategies to further enhance your levels of confidence and expertise in being a master storyteller - whether personally or professionally.

Storytelling today is as important as it ever was, if not more so. In this world of information overload, technology dependence and super speedy shortcuts, it is the stories that we remember. Stories bring to life the messages and lessons that we want to convey. It is through our stories that people will have their 'aha' moments, gain insights into themselves and their values and find ways to contribute to the world that will make the greatest use of their talents and gifts.

'A Sprinkling of Magic' is a special hybrid of a book and a course or guide. I have deliberately sequenced the content so you can follow the steps to creating your own metaphors and stories and, along the way, be able to capture your thoughts and ideas on paper. This is a workbook and is expected to be scribbled on, underlined, highlighted and used time and again so please don't worry about being precious with it! Also, I have used gender terms (he, she, his, her, him) interchangeably for ease of reading.

This guide is specifically designed to help business leaders, facilitators, speakers, teachers, trainers, writers and communicators deliver their message in a way that the meaning is understood and assimilated. It's a culmination of my years as a manager in corporate business and as an inspired public speaker and facilitator. I have included everything I have learned along the way, from my love of English at school to my years of learning, using and sharing Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), and what has worked (or not) during my years as a people manager on a mission to motivate.

When I talk about stories I'm not just referring to fairy tales and folklore, fables and parables; it's a far broader scope. I encapsulate how we can share our experiences with others for effect, and how we elaborate on facts and figures to give them meaning and context. People remember stories far more than dry data. I am inspired to help you not just engage your audience but to captivate them.

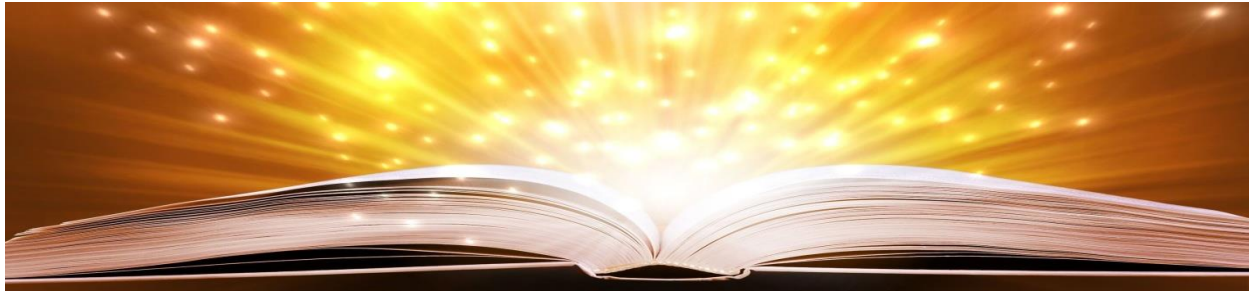
You don't have to be eloquent, you don't have to be polished and you don't have to be perfect, you just have to go out and start telling your stories ... preferably with a Sprinkling of Magic!

Read, digest, experiment, practise share and enjoy the journey.

Chapter One

The Power of Storytelling

CHAPTER 1. THE POWER OF STORYTELLING



“Are you sitting comfortably? Then I’ll begin ...”

My Early Experiences

These words were spoken every day at 1.45pm as my mother settled me down on her lap to hear a daily storytelling program on BBC Radio called ‘*Listen with Mother*’. Storytelling was a significant part of my childhood. In addition to ‘*Listen with Mother*’, my Father was a great storyteller and I would cherish our time together at the weekends when he would recount the adventures of Marco Polo, the marvels of the Aurora Borealis and many of the Hans Christian Andersen stories.

As an adult in business, I increasingly understood the power of stories in bringing people with me to work together as a team, understand one another better and accept and embrace difference. It was in sharing my own stories that people came to see the person behind the title, in all her strengths and vulnerabilities, and this led me to my lifelong quest to become a good manager.

In 1996 I was introduced to Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and another layer of sophistication was added to my storytelling repertoire. I learnt how to use a special type of metaphor to help people make the changes they desired in their lives and to find their own solutions to their unique problems.

We are well aware of the particular significance storytelling has in ancient and indigenous cultures. I was born in the United Kingdom and currently live in Australia where, for the indigenous Australians, stories are the essence of who they are, as the story of creation is passed down through the Dreamtime.

Elders around the world continue to educate the younger generations and pass down their values, heritage and traditions through story. In many cultures still today these laws are not written, yet they have lost none of their gravitas.

Today I use stories and metaphors liberally, yet selectively, in my workshops and speaking engagements. Each and every story I recount is delivered in a different way, according to the audience’s needs and of all the positive feedback I receive it’s the stories that seem to resonate most. My aim for you is to reconnect with the power and magic of story, just like you did as a child.

Why is Storytelling so important?

“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten”

Rudyard Kipling

Stories enable us to share truths without the confrontation. We give and are given permission to uncover ‘the elephant in the room’ - without naming it. We can begin to address challenges, issues, problems and conflicts without coming across as preaching, condescending or having an ‘I know better’ attitude.

For example, have you ever been on the receiving end of a diatribe, a patronising ‘telling off’ from the boss, where it’s been made very clear that “*things have to change around here*”?

What impact has this had on you? Have you ever come away from a dressing down feeling great? Have you ever been hauled over the coals and given orders to “change your attitude or else”, then walked away in gratitude and immediately changed your behaviour?

NO

There’s a good reason why stories have been used for centuries to convey laws, values, traditions and, in more modern terms, best practice. It is because they are a **respectful and universally accepted mode of communication**.

I’m not advocating never getting to the point, yet in my experience, storytelling can be a most effective foundation layer for the subsequent conversations that need to be had. An invitation to reconsider our thinking or behaviour is often best wrapped up in the form of story.

To illustrate my point, I would like share a story with you that illustrates the importance of storytelling:

There once lived two amazing creatures, one called Truth and the other called Story. Each was beautiful in her own way, but how could they determine which was the most beautiful? They decided that each would walk down the street and whichever creature was befriended the most would be considered the most beautiful.

A coin was tossed and Truth was to go first.

Along the street Truth paraded, sashaying here and there, but rather than gathering friends, doors were closing behind her until she found herself at the end of the street, alone and crying. “I know,” she said, “I shall show myself totally naked and the villagers will not be able to resist me.” So off came the clothes and Truth returned along the path in all her naked glory.

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Far from the welcome she was expecting, not only did people return to their homes, they closed the shutters on their windows and locked their doors. Everyone hated naked Truth.

Truth, naked and cold, had been turned away from every door in the village. Her nakedness frightened the people. When Story found her, Truth was huddled in a corner, shivering and hungry. Taking pity on her, Story gathered her up and took her home.

“Here Truth, take my mantle and go once again into the streets of the village,” said Story.

Clothed in the mantle of Story, Truth walked once more down the village street and watched as the doors and shutters opened and the villagers came out into the street smiling and ready to hear what Story had to share.

[This story is based on a Jewish parable attributed to Rabbi Jacob Kranz, an 18th century Eastern European storyteller and teacher who was also known as the Maggid of Dubbno]

Reading this parable needs no or little explanation (in my opinion). It conveys the message beautifully and paints a vivid picture for the listener.

Stories are unique to the Individual

It is for good reason that I do not provide an interpretation of each of the 101 Inspiring Stories and Metaphors for Business and Life (which is a standalone e-book available on my website www.asprinklingofmagic.com). No, it's not because I am lazy.

As unique individuals with varying histories, experiences, perceptions, beliefs and backgrounds, our interpretation of the story being told is equally unique. You only have to watch 2 politicians going head to head after an 'event' or listen to 2 passionate football fans, each defending why and how his side lost, to see that it's all in the interpretation.

If I tell you my version of the moral of the story directly, I am potentially limiting you, the listener from finding alternative meanings and making additional learnings. I may also come across as undermining your intelligence which could break rapport.

There is a small caveat here which is linked to the next section and to personality, so be sure to read on to get the whole picture.

We are born Experts in Storylistening

How long have we been listening to stories? Hopefully, for the majority of you, the answer would be 'most of our lives'. We are conditioned from very early on, sometimes from the womb, to listen to stories and be whisked off into new worlds of learning and creation, so much so that, like Pavlov's dogs who ended up salivating at the ring of a bell (because they knew that food was coming) the very mention of the word 'story' brings our awareness to attention - which means we are open to listening.

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I am not talking about manipulation or putting groups of people into trance to accept whatever you have to say (which as a qualified hypnotherapist I know isn't possible anyway); I am talking about using a medium for communication that allows the receiver of the message to develop and subsequently therefore 'own' her individual interpretation and lesson.

We remember Stories



When we listen to stories we engage our whole brain, i.e. both left and right hemispheres.

Different parts of our brain are responsible for different functions e.g. the logical sequence of the story, the literal language, the facts, the chronological development and the rationale are functions of certain areas of the brain. Separate areas of our brain are responsible for painting the pictures, making patterns and connections, seeking meaning and finding the emotion in the story. Together they create the memorable story.

We store these memories in different parts of our brain. For example, long term knowledge and facts are stored in the cerebellum, recent knowledge and facts in the pre frontal cortex, experiences of the past in the hippocampus and certain emotional memories in the amygdala. The memory of learning a skill resides in the basal ganglia.

When we recall a memory it's a complex process of filtering from different parts of the brain and often this memory can be 'enhanced' as it is recalled. This may not be exactly the biological or scientific explanation but it is one that you and I can both understand

To illustrate my point, can you ever remember arguing with a sibling because you have both recalled the same event from the past and are describing it completely differently? In a way you are both right, as each person has a unique interpretation of the event and, having taken 'the long road to recall' from different parts of the brain, it's no wonder.

So, if this happens, just agree to disagree and laugh the next time it occurs!

Stories can bypass the Conscious Mind

When we are in storylistening mode we actually move into a state of altered consciousness; a light trance so to speak. When were you most read stories to as a child? Probably at bedtime; and why did our guardians read to us at bedtime? Usually to get us to go to sleep. The brain forms and deepens connections from all the times we have listened to stories and creates a relationship to the original stimulus e.g. relaxation, escapism, fantasy etc.

Our memory acts like a string of pearls, where experiences are linked together and strengthened every time they are repeated. This 'wiring' is particularly strong in the

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first seven years of our life when our brains will make more neural connections than at any other time of our life.

Think back to a time when you read your favourite book – did it become more boring with every reading? No, in fact it was quite the opposite, with excitement building - so much so that if the reader dared to skip a chapter or miss even one word, regardless of how sleepy you were, you catapulted them back to the present moment and corrected them!

When we are in this mild trance state, our subconscious mind is more open to receiving and our conscious mind, together with our (potentially limiting) beliefs, attitudes, opinions and values, takes a 'back seat'. We get out of our own way, so to speak and become more receptive. Don't underestimate this fact when it comes to wanting to help people see a particular situation from a different perspective. No-one will ever do what they don't want to do; however they will be more open to considering new perspectives when in this receptive mode.

In business, think about when you are bringing a disparate group of people together for a new project or you are embarking on a major change initiative. How useful, effective and important is it to have everyone more open to alignment of the strategy, objectives, values and behaviours that will maximise the success of the project?

Stories Stick



**Graphic representation of
Synaptic Connections**

When we're presented with a story, a metaphor, or any learning which is new to us, the brain kicks into gear and literally lights up.

Our brain contains around 79 billion neurons, each with around 10,000 synaptic connections - that's about a quadrillion, give or take a few. (Quadrillion = 1,000,000,000,000,000). These synaptic connections fire off and we create new neural pathways when we learn something new.

The first time we learn something new it's like a human leaping a huge chasm – the first leap is the hardest. Once we repeat the learning (or something very similar to it) it becomes easier each time, as does our ability to recall the information or make use of it. This is why we always encourage people to share or teach what they have just learnt so they can cement those learnings in their own neurology.

The more captivating the story, the more our neurology will fire, the deeper our learning is embedded and the more thoroughly the message is understood and the lesson is learned.

When it comes to lighting up our brains, there's a memorable saying that originates from Hebb's Law:

"What Fires Together, Wires Together"

Stories go Deep

When we listen to a story we are listening on multiple levels, both consciously and subconsciously. As creatures of meaning, our brains start to sort for similarities with the story that is being told and start to make connections. These connections might bring up memories that are stored in distributed areas of our brain and, as mentioned previously, each time they are recalled, they are slightly changed.

Because stories infiltrate at the deep structure or subconscious level, they can make a strong impact on us and inspire us to change behaviour where other methods of imparting information have been less successful. The deeper the lesson is learned, the easier it is to change behaviour or thinking as new neural pathways are formed and shaped.

We connect with Stories

Why do many people love soap operas? (I'm an exception here). It's often because they can relate to the characters and see themselves in the plots and storylines. Soap operas often reflect the real life trials, tribulations and triumphs of our own lives. This is no different from the stories we tell and why we find our audience so quickly synthesising with the storyline.

Because we are creatures seeking meaning, as we listen, we start to identify with the characters, the situation or the message. This is a fundamental success criterion for why stories work. Once we've identified with the story, we can then link it back to our unique reality and we may be more open to discussing the meaning in the message and expanding our levels of understanding.

Stories give us permission to be human, to have our quirks and foibles and to relate to the rollercoaster of life. We see ourselves as victim and victor, hero and villain. Stories let us know that it's okay to be us, warts and all.

² From 1929 - 1950 the behavioural psychologist Karl Lashley conducted a series of experiments on rats to identify the part of the brain where memories are stored. He trained the rats to find their way through a maze then removed different parts of the cerebral cortex to identify and locate the 'memory trace'. He was unsuccessful as the rats that had parts of their brains cut or removed were still able to find their way through the maze. He concluded that memories are not stored in any single area of the brain; rather they are distributed throughout it.

We all want to be the Hero at some stage

Joseph Campbell in his book 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces' (first published 1949) takes us back to the beginning of time, of stories and tales of mythology that all follow a structured path and have done so for thousands of years, across all cultures.

This path includes a call to adventure and the initial refusal of that call, through fear or a sense of obligation. There then follows the many trials, challenges, adventures and temptations and at some point, following commitment to the journey, a wise guide appears. When you share your story, you are effectively being that wise guide and enabling your audience to embrace and uncover the hero within.

Authors, scriptwriters and film producers have used Campbell's structure called 'The Monomyth' to great success in films such as 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Star Wars', 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Harry Potter'. When we enter their world we become lost in the story and emerge from the cinema feeling strangely strong and, well, rather heroic!

George Lucas, the Director and Producer of 'Star Wars', worked actively with Campbell in the development of the characters and the plot. He also used ancient temperament theory (personality type) when developing the personalities of his main characters.

Songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison (The Doors) and Jerry Garcia (Grateful Dead) consciously used the heroes' stories and weaved them into their song writing.

Stories transcend Time and Technology

Fads may come and go. Who knows through which medium we will be accessing our information, knowledge and entertainment in 30 years' time? What will still be alive and kicking I imagine (including myself), will be the power of the story, told face to face, in families, communities, offices and on stages everywhere.

With the advent of interactive internet, people can become even more immersed and engaged in stories, helping to shape the storylines and advertisers are using this to huge advantage as they tease their fans ; for example before the launch of a new book or movie. See also the section on stories for business and in Chapter 7.

In Summary

Stories are as old as the human race and are hard wired into our neurology as an engaging, respectful and effective way to communicate our message and the lessons of life. As you read through the book your scope of what constitutes a 'story' may expand.

If, at this stage, you are more comfortable listening to stories than telling them, follow the progress through each of the chapters to build skills, structure and style.

Chapter Seven

Storytelling in Business and Public Speaking

CHAPTER 7. STORYTELLING IN BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SPEAKING



“Storytelling is the single most powerful tool in a leader’s toolkit.”
Dr Howard Gardner, Harvard University Professor, author of ‘Changing Minds’

By now you should be well aware that storytelling takes many different forms. If you are a manager or leader in business, I wouldn’t advocate that you get the board members around the table and kick off with: *“Once upon a time, in a faraway land”!*

Great leaders are effective communicators, or certainly need to be. If you think about the role of storytelling in indigenous cultures, it is usually the elders and shaman who gather everyone around to share their insight and wisdom and who pass on the rich history and culture through story. They also pass on the laws of the people, the culture, the expected norms and the consequences of going against those norms and they do so in the form of parable and sharing their own journeys through life.

The greater percentage of business leaders by their nature are logical, rational and analytical (as opposed to subjective, emotional and metaphorical) and so may at first be uncomfortable with storytelling as a concept for communication. We also know however that this is the age of the emotionally intelligent leader and there is a need for stronger connection between a leader and her people.

Stories are the bridges that leaders can use to build powerful connections, demonstrate their humanness, vulnerability and strength and the ‘I’m just like you’ analogy. They can also use stories to inspire in challenging times.

At first you may think that there aren’t many stories inside of you, however it’s just a case of accessing those parts of the brain that hold certain memories and, once you start, you’ll be amazed at the volume, quality and depth of stories you have to share.

Remember from previous chapters that a story can be as simple as recounting an experience or using an example. It doesn’t have to be complex.

As soon as you move from ‘third party’ to ‘authentic me’ – you have a captive audience.

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Classic stories that reside in leaders' heads can answer the questions that many of us can learn and develop from. Example questions include:

- ❖ How did you get started?
- ❖ What were the greatest lessons from your earlier career and how have they impacted the way you lead/run your business today?
- ❖ What was your biggest failure or mistake, what impact did it have and what lesson did you learn from it?
- ❖ Who was your most inspiring boss and why?
- ❖ What did you learn from your most challenging boss?
- ❖ How do you motivate yourself on a daily basis and in challenging times?
- ❖ What strategies do you have for prioritising and decision-making and how did you develop them?
- ❖ What's the greatest risk you've ever taken and what was the result?
- ❖ What's the most innovative project or idea you have ever embarked upon?
- ❖ If you had your time again, what would you do differently?
- ❖ If you could work in any industry (other than this one) what would it be and why?
- ❖ Did you ever doubt your ability and how did you overcome the doubt?
- ❖ What's the craziest thing you have ever done in business?
- ❖ What story from business has had the greatest impact on you?
- ❖ Who do you look to as mentors and examples of exceptional business leaders?
- ❖ Tell us about the biggest goal you achieved and how you went about it?
- ❖ Who do you mentor or coach and how has it helped them grow?
- ❖ What's the best piece of advice you've ever received and what action did you take?
- ❖ What's the most inspiring biography you have read and why did it inspire you?

See also the question table in 'Your Stories' in Chapter 8.

One of the most inspiring bosses I ever had was a master of metaphor and storytelling. He used stories to bring us together as a management team, to inspire

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us to think about what was achievable and to instil in us a sense of pride and ownership.



"One bite at a time"

Back in 2000 I was working for an international Internet Service Provider in the 'dot com' boom period. We were executing a US\$2 billion European expansion plan and our business plans were changing daily.

I felt completely overwhelmed at one point and went to see my boss Mike for some help and advice. His opening question was *"How do you eat an elephant Clare?"* I wasn't very impressed and thought he was teasing me for being a vegetarian. I believe my response was quite rude, which he thankfully ignored, then he proceeded to tell me that the answer was *"One bite at a time."*

We then spent the next hour together trawling through all of my projects and likening them to the trunk, ears, face, body, legs, until we reached the tail and I left his office feeling so much more in control. The elephant metaphor has stayed with me all these years.

This is a simple example yet one that was highly effective for me as I was able to make the comparison. I subsequently used the same metaphor to lead my team in times of stress.

Another of Mike's favourite terms was 'jungle arithmetic'. Finance and budgeting were probably not my greatest strengths and he used to ask me to imagine I was in the jungle without access to a calculator and computer. We would then go through the figures in a very rough way, but it had the desired effect of making me comfortable first and feeling competent before we needed to drill down into the more complex financial details.

Your stories and analogies don't always have to be complex, they just need to convey the most effective message at the most appropriate time. How might you be able to use simple metaphor and analogy to help someone who might be struggling?

Chapter Eight

Sourcing Examples for Business and Speaker Stories

CHAPTER 8. SOURCING EXAMPLES FOR BUSINESS AND SPEAKER STORIES

We know that being able to use examples of what we are looking to achieve can really help illustrate a point, provide benchmarks for best practice (both good and bad) and motivate people to believe that goals are achievable.

There are many role models from history that I use. In my emotional resilience workshops I run a quiz called 'The World's Greatest Bouncers'. There are 18 pictures of which participants have to guess the names and I read out a short biography of each and why they deserve to be on 'The World's Greatest Bouncer' list. This is often cited as one of the most memorable and inspiring sections of the workshop.

I am always looking for role models to both emulate and avoid in many categories and would encourage you to continue your research and maintain relevance and/or currency. Here are a few for starters:

Company/Person	Examples of Excellence and Success
2000 Sydney Olympics	Patriotism, project and operations management, motivation and vision
3M	Innovation – Post It Note story and bootlegging time
Apple	Product innovation, knowing your core purpose (WHY you are in business)
The Body Shop	Corporate and Social Responsibility (before it was known as that)
Flight Centre	Employee engagement and culture – families and tribes
Google	Culture, values and language, employee experience
Honda	Stakeholder Relationship Management – supplier engagement
IKEA	Culture – employees are members of the IKEA family = IKEANS
Innocent Drinks	Customer experience, innovation, risk, cheeky informality
Johnson & Johnson	The Transparent Organisation with a credo
Nick Vujicic	Life without limits. Australian motivational speaker born without limbs

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Company/Person	Examples of Excellence and Success
Nordstrom	Whatever it takes to delight the customer
Patagonia Clothing	Values – commitment to the environment and employees
Richard Branson	Entrepreneurship and possibility thinking, values and culture
Roger Bannister	Achieving what was 'scientifically proven' to be impossible
Southwest Airlines	Culture and customer experience. Even their stock symbol is LUV!
Superquinn Supermarkets	Customer experience, listening
Zappos	10 committable core values and culture focused on delivering happiness
Company	Examples of Mediocrity & Failure
Enron	Values and incongruence
De Lorean Motor Company	Values, strategy
Pan Am Airlines	Competitive analysis, strategy

Take your People to the Movies



Have you ever come into work in the morning and a colleague just had to tell you about an amazing film they had seen that really touched them to the core? We can use films as stories and in the same way that a story lays the foundation for conversation, so does a great inspirational movie.

I have been part of a team that came together for an after-hours evening of inspiration. We had some nibbles and drinks then watched a film and chatted about the key points afterwards. (The film was 'Touching the Void'). We all had a different insight into this cliff-hanger of a documentary and its message, and each manager's input was valid in its own right. We then took those key lessons and embedded them into our own personal and professional development.

As you read this, what films are coming to mind that have inspired you? Below is a list of what, in my opinion, are exceptionally inspiring films. You will have your own thoughts and opinions, so I won't share with you my interpretation; rather I will leave you with my suggested list of movies to watch and I would encourage you to keep a record of your own favourites in the open spaces.

Movie	Key Themes and Points to note
Braveheart	
The Bucket List	
Chariots of Fire	
Dead Poets Society	
The Help	
Invictus	

A Sprinkling of Magic

Movie	Key Themes and Points to note
Patch Adams	
In Pursuit of Happyness	
Touching the Void	
UP!	
The World's Fastest Indian	

Other People's Stories

I have been studying the Foundations of Positive Psychology with Tal Ben Shahar, lecturer at LPS College, Penn State University and now the most popular course at Harvard. Tal shared something that really struck a chord with me; he said that **the best self-development books are biographies and autobiographies**. I couldn't agree more.

When I study the lives of people who achieved the extraordinary, it inspires me to action. I can see myself in their predicaments and realise that mostly it is our limiting beliefs that hold us back, rather than external conditions. They also take me back to being the hero as mentioned in the beginning of the book.

Here are some biographies that I would encourage you to read:

- Anita Roddick – Business as Unusual (The Body Shop)
- Anne Frank – The Diary of Anne Frank
- Ghandi – My Experiments with Truth
- Marva Collins' Way
- Nelson Mandela – Long Walk To Freedom
- Perry Cross – Still Standing
- Richard Branson – Losing my Virginity
- Yvon Chouinard – Let my People go Surfing (Patagonia)

Your Stories

Whether you know it or not, you are full of amazing stories! We are all full of amazing stories and it's just a case of extracting them. When I first started running team development workshops I was shy of sharing my stories with people. It wasn't until it happened inadvertently and I received the response that I did, that I realised the power of my own stories.

The three most respected qualities (you have to trust me on this because I can't find the source) of a speaker and storyteller are **authenticity, vulnerability and spontaneity**. When you are prepared to give of yourself and show your humanness, this is when you will connect the most with your audience.

Let me give you an example. I am an avid fan of Ingham and Luft's Johari Window model (just type it into your browser and there are tons of sites that describe it). I use it to illustrate the importance and implications of developing self-awareness. The second pane of the window is called the 'blind spot' and looks at information others know about us but that we don't know about ourselves.

A Sprinkling of Magic

I use a story from my days as a manager in the hospitality industry to illustrate my then rather large blind spot. I was managing a team of receptionists for a large hotel chain and I was extremely proud of my team and considered myself to be a good manager.

Have a read of this story and be aware of your conscious and subconscious responses:

Picture this: I'm at the typewriter (yes, it was 1987, before word processing came to the masses) typing another memo. My nails are almost flying off as my fingers hit the keys with my 'tut tut tuts' in sync with my 'tap tap taps' on the keyboard. My boss asks me what I'm typing the memo for and I respond, "It doesn't matter how often I remind the girls (the team was all female), they consistently fail to obtain passport details from guests wanting to cash travellers cheques."

At that moment, Felicity, our trainee receptionist, a beautiful young girl from the Welsh countryside, popped her head round the door, looked at me with her huge brown doe eyes and said, as a tear trickled down her cheek, "Clare, it doesn't matter what we do or don't do because nothing we do can ever match up to the standards you set us"- and with that she went back to attend to a guest.

OUCH! I felt like someone had just dropped a medicine ball on my heart. I was totally unaware of my reputation with the team. I found out that I was secretly known as the Memo Queen and there were competitions between the girls as to how many memos per week they would find in their pigeon holes!

I went home and took a good hard look at myself and my management style and made a decision to face up to the girls the next day and arrange to get together and talk about what we wanted collectively as a team. From that day forward my management style changed beyond recognition. I became more consultative, more trusting and always remembered to give genuine praise and honest feedback where it was due.

Can you see how this story illustrates a theoretical point and brings it to life? I was prepared to let people know that I stuffed up. This is how you can become so much more engaging as a leader and a speaker, when you are prepared to disclose and divulge.

Brainstorming and Extraction

So how do you source your stories? Our minds are like a huge computer hard drive and contain many databases. We just need a way to be able to get back to those dusty old filing cabinets and retrieve the records. In NLP stories are called 'reference experiences' and, in addition to previous prompter questions in Chapter 7, I have put together additional prompters and triggers that will help you to re-access that

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database and find examples that can become your signature stories. You'll be surprised if not amazed at the amount of material you have that can be embellished into a memorable story with a meaning in its message.

Can you remember a time when ... (Just jot down notes on the right hand side as and when they come up), you can embellish later.

Trigger/Question	Reference Experience
You not only achieved a goal – you absolutely blitzed it	
You underperformed beyond your worst expectations	
You took yourself way out of your comfort zone and it paid off immensely	
You took yourself way out of your comfort zone and ended up in pure Panic	
You made gross assumptions, with consequences	
You wanted something so badly, you never once doubted that you wouldn't get it	
You were totally 'in flow', in the zone, time disappeared, you felt masterful	
You were so emotional that the decisions you made were irrational and had consequences	
You were empathetic, actively and respectfully listened to someone and it resulted in ...	
You took a major risk and it paid off	
You took a major risk and it dive-bombed	

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Trigger/Question	Reference Experience
You faced up to someone and had 'the real conversation' and it resulted in ...	
Your intuition kicked in and you just knew ... and acted on your gut instinct	
You made a major decision based on your values	
You made a decision that compromised your values and it resulted in...	
You decided to leave a relationship, unsure of the consequences and it resulted in ...	
You decided to stay in a relationship, unsure of the consequences and it resulted in ...	
You stuck to your guns and the impact it had was...	
You did something so silly that you wanted the floor to swallow you up (but you can laugh about it now!)	
You received a piece of advice that you acted upon and it turned out to be gold	
You developed a new and resourceful habit and did it by.....	
You made a judgement call on someone and they turned out to be completely different	
You decided to let go of the outcome of a decision and	
You were so proud you thought that your heart would burst	

Additional ways to Source your Stories

Let yourself be interviewed – a good friend interviewed me last year and I was amazed at what I could remember and the value these experiences could add to my message. Amber would start with a question similar to the ones in previous tables then drill a little further down to elicit my feelings, more detail and hence more contrast.

Ask friends and family – ask family members and close friends what their most vivid memories of you are and why – you'll be surprised at what they know and their take on things.

Ask for peer feedback – you might be pleasantly surprised at what people come up with and it's also an opportunity for your peers to feed back to you those areas that might be in your blind spot. Be kind to yourself though and start by asking about your strengths.

Re-read or write your résumé – by doing this you are taking your mind back to those experiences and accessing specific areas of memory. Allow yourself to daydream about the jobs you have had in the past, what the key challenges were and how you overcame them, what the major wins and achievements were and why they were successful.

Reflect on your life's turning points – I live close to Australia Zoo and, in honour of Steve Irwin, I like to call these 'CRIKEY' moments! Think about a chapter in your life where you had an epiphany, a revelation or a change of mind/heart that had a major impact, and write about it.

Journal – if you have kept a journal or diary in the past, re-read it as it's a great memory jogger. If you haven't it's not too late to start and what will happen is that as you describe new experiences, memories of similar experiences will pop back into your head.

Sharing your stories with a little Caution - As much as we may love stories, be aware that they need to have a purpose and be used with volition. I have witnessed too many speakers use story after story after story and, in isolation, they could have been so powerful, but layer upon layer for the sake of it could result in you losing your audience and their respect for you.



If you want to share your story and it's been a challenging journey, make sure you are fully ready, willing and most importantly able to share without breaking down or re-associating into the pain. Your intent may be to inspire people but, unless you can keep your composure, your story may end up having the opposite effect.

Choose, use and tell your stories wisely

MY STORY IN A NUTSHELL



As I write this final section of my book I am looking outside my office window at two large white sulphur crested cockatoos bullying a handful of rainbow lorikeets, and listening to the newly hatched clutch of four noisy miner birds in a nearby tree. I feel truly blessed with my story so far ...

I grew up in the city of Liverpool, UK, the youngest of five. My life's dream was to be a ballerina but that was short lived – about as short as I turned out to be which is 4 feet 10 and three quarters or 1 metre 47centimetres!

Unsure of what career direction to take, I followed two of my elder siblings into the hospitality industry where I worked in the front of house section with various hotel chains.

Working in hospitality took me to jobs in Holland and Switzerland and left me with lifelong friends. After nine happy and hard-working years in hotels, it was my dogged determination to become fluent in Dutch that became my passport to the corporate world where I worked for 13 years as a manager in Publishing and Information Technology.

The internet boom and bust year of 2001 led me to reconsider my vocation in life and I transitioned into people development, working for two of the UK's most prominent team development companies. My corporate career, though very successful, left me little time to find that special person in my life and it was in 2002 that I met my Mr Right at a music festival in the UK. He turned out to be Australian, thus began the next adventure!

In 2004 I left the UK to settle in Australia, on the stunningly beautiful Sunshine Coast of Queensland where I set up my business BrainSmart. Jason (Mr Right) and I made several attempts to expand our little family of two but it wasn't to be, hence my goal to have a global family of 20 sponsored children by 2020.

Like many others, I have had my share of challenges; an abusive relationship in my teens, the mental scars of which I carried for too long; the death of both parents (2001 and 2005) and our struggle to have children. I have used these challenges and how I learned to bounce back to develop my workshops on emotional resilience and positive change in the form of my Practically Positive Programs.

My story continues; each night before I go to sleep I count my blessings and look forward to each new page and every exciting chapter. I have no idea what the future chapters hold yet I will embrace the uncertainty with excitement.

A SPRINKLING OF MAGIC – YOUR FEEDBACK IS APPRECIATED

My intention for this workbook is to provide you with confidence, knowledge, tools and information to go out and use stories effectively in both business and life. The degree to which I have succeeded in my intention lies in your responses. I am keen to find out what value you have derived from the guide, how practical and informative you found it, was it useful and easy to follow? What, if anything would you want to add or change?

If you are interested in the accompanying “Magic of Storytelling” workshop please email me as below.

There are a couple of ways to provide me with your feedback:

1. On my A Sprinkling of Magic facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/asprinklingofmagic>
2. Directly to my email: clare@asprinklingofmagic.com

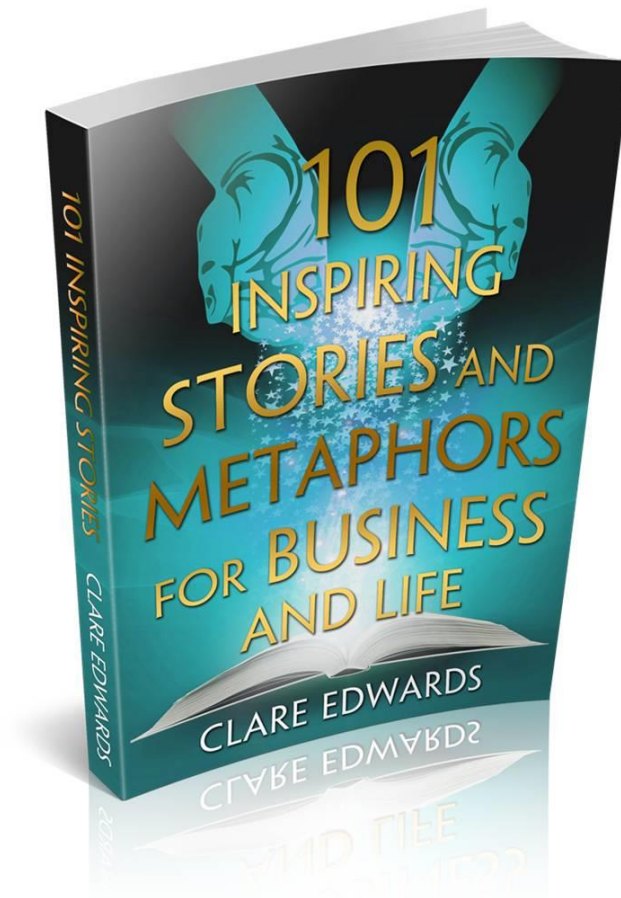
Also please head over to my website www.asprinklingofmagic.com

If ‘A Sprinkling of Magic’ has helped you in any way, I would value and appreciate your feedback in the form of a testimonial, no matter how short. If your feedback is of a constructive nature then I would appreciate that too – you may even want to wrap it up in a story! Please use either of the routes above to share with others what you got from ‘A Sprinkling of Magic’!

When I’m not writing books about storytelling I’m working with businesses as a Facilitator, Speaker and Coach. If you are interested in developing your people then visit my BrainSmart website www.brain-smart.com or email clare@brain-smart.com

THE END!

101 INSPIRING STORIES AND METAPHORS FOR BUSINESS AND LIFE

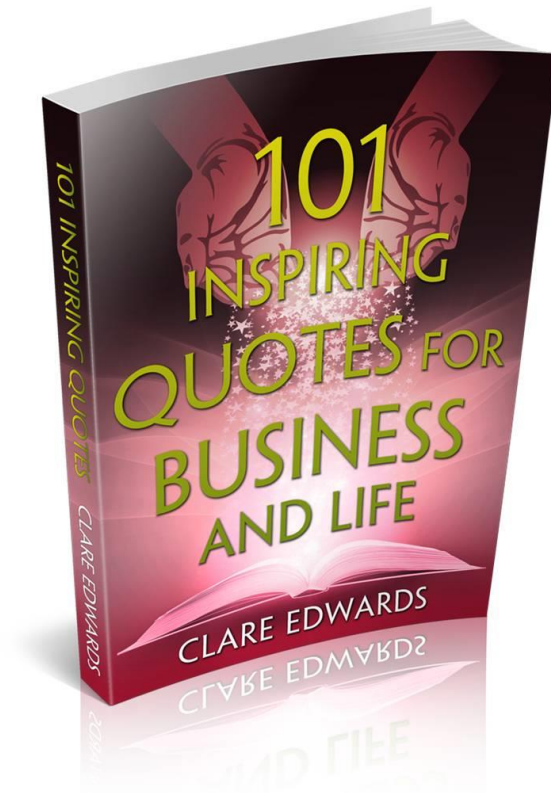


Where 'A Sprinkling of Magic' has taken you through the steps of constructing and delivering your stories for maximum effect, the aim of this e-book is to provide you with a rich and varied database of stories, some well-known and others lesser known, that have been categorised according to differing messages and meanings. These categories are ones that I have found to be useful and you may find a much wider application as you use them, so they shouldn't be restricted to the ones I suggest. Category examples include leadership, resilience, changing perspectives, values and accountability.

In addition to the categories, I have sometimes added my own notes, based on my experience of having told a particular story. This is designed to enhance the context for you in using the story and it is not my intention to provide you with an interpretation, as that of course, is down to you and your listener!

May you find an appropriate story for every message you wish to deliver, enjoy telling them, and always with A Sprinkling of Magic! www.asprinklingofmagic.com

101 INSPIRING QUOTES FOR BUSINESS AND LIFE



A quotation is like a mini power-packed story. It can be the magic ingredient in the recipe that brings out all the flavours of the metaphorical dish. If you want to credibly support your theory, then to do so with a powerful quote sets the scene perfectly.

For your convenience I have created links to the Wikipedia encyclopaedia of every original author of the quote so you can add to the credibility. All quotes have been categorized under themes such as accountability, attitude, business, change, integrity, mindset and many more.

101 Inspiring Quotes for Business and Life includes my personal collection of favourite quotes. I have heard these quotes in workshops, speeches, on the radio and television; I have read them in books or heard them being shared by family and friends. Every single quote in this list has, in some way, inspired me to take action or behave in a more effective way.

This e-book is available exclusively to those who purchase both 'A Sprinkling of Magic' – The Essential Storytelling Guide for Communicators and Educators and 101 Inspiring Stories and Metaphors for Business and Life.