



SELL MORE WITH STORIES **HOW TO CREATE CURIOSITY** **IN 5 MINUTES (OR LESS)**

**WORK WITH BETTER,
MORE QUALIFIED PROSPECTS**

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"THE BOOK ON STORYTELLING"

The **‘How to Sell More With Stories’** series

Book 2: Create Client Curiosity in 2 Minutes

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The '**How to Sell More With Stories**' series
Book 2: Create Client Curiosity in 2 Minutes

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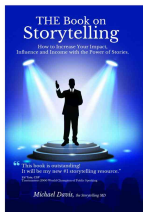
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A Note From the Author

I'm grateful for the feedback I've received from so many readers of this book series. It helps others make an informed decision before buying my books. If you enjoy this book, please leave a brief review at the following link: <http://amzn.to/2hm5iny>.

Other Books by Michael Davis



THE Book on Storytelling Become a storyteller who quickly attracts attention, gains interest and closes more sales. This one-of-a-kind resource provides 52 tips that save you time and frustration, while you develop storytelling skills that make you stand OUT from the crowd.



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Sell More With Stories: Book 5 - Sail 7 MORE Cs to Sensational Storytelling — Pick up seven more keys to develop a story that puts in the select company - Storytellers who inspire others to take action.

PREFACE

Two weeks after meeting presentation skills expert David Michaels for the first time, Nicole Jeffries is meeting him at a favorite local cafe. After a few minutes of pleasantries, David asks, “Well, Nicole, how are you progressing with your *60-Second Story*?”

“I feel great about it, David!” she replies. “Can I share it with you?”

“Oh, I insist,” David says with a big smile.

“Cool! We get to reverse role-play from last time. Let’s pretend we’re at a local Chamber event, and you’re the owner of a new home construction company.”

“Any particular reason you chose that industry?” asks David.

“Yes. My dad and his brother—my uncle Carl—were in the industry for years. It was so obvious, but I didn’t approach people in that field for a long time. Because of my family connections, it makes sense for me to concentrate on it now. Besides, I have a soft spot for the people who work in it. I want to see them succeed.”

“That’s excellent, Nicole,” David says. “It’s important to have concern and compassion for the people you work with. They sense it.”

Nicole begins the role play:

“Hi. I’m Nicole, I haven’t seen you at the Home Builders Association meetings before. What do you do?”

David says, “Nice to meet you Nicole. I’m David Michaels. I own Superior Home Construction—I’m in new home construction. What about you?”

Nicole replies, “Well, you know how a lot of residential builders have this problem—they’re often at the mercy of the economy, and their income goes up and down like a roller coaster?”

David, grimacing, says, “Boy, do I! Seems like that’s the way it’s been ever since I got into this 20 years ago.”

Nicole continues: "I understand. It makes it difficult to plan your kids' college education, your retirement, or even your day-to-day life because of the uncertainty.

"It's been my experience that this creates a lot of frustration, stress, and even fear. It makes it hard for you to create any type of long-term financial security. Does any of that sound familiar?"

David, with a serious look, answers: "It sure does, Nicole. It's something that's always on my mind; it feels like I'm always worrying about it."

Nicole, with a smile spreading across her lips, says, "I solve that problem, David."

Waiting to hear more, David eagerly says, "How do you do that?"

Nicole smiles and says, "I work with you to structure your money so that no matter what happens - live a long and healthy life to an old age, get sick and need care, or die too soon - your family and business can continue the way you envision. You all have the peace of mind that you can live the way you want, no matter what."

David stops the role play. "Nicole, that's very good! I'm proud of you. I can tell you've put the work in."

"Thanks, David," Nicole responds. "I'm a little frustrated because I didn't get more appointments...."

"How many did you set?" David asks.

"Out of the 12 people I talked with at four events, I only set three, and got one who wants to meet later in the fall, after his busy season," Nicole answers.

"How many did you typically set when you'd talk with 12 people?" David asks.

"If I was lucky, one!" Nicole replies with disgust.

"So, if I hear you right, you've improved from one—or none—to three, and maybe a fourth, by using only a small part of this new process?" David asks in mock irritation.

“I know, I know,” laughs Nicole. “I’m just a little impatient. The problem came when they would ask me for more information, and all I could do was use my old presentation from my company.”

David, nodding sympathetically, says, “It might not make sense to you to do it in pieces, but my experience has been that when you master this process in chunks, your odds of long-term success are much higher.”

After a pause, she adds, “I understand, and I’m *not* unhappy, David. I just see so much potential with this. I know I can get better results once I master the whole thing.”

“And you will,” David says with confidence. “Remember what I said when we first met. In the beginning, it’s not about the number of appointments you set. It’s about the number of times you give the *60-Second Story*. The more you present, the more comfortable and natural you’ll feel.”

“I know. You’re right. And I did begin to feel much more comfortable with it in the second week,” adds Nicole.

“I admire your desire to get better as fast as possible. You’ll get there with your work ethic,” David says with a smile.

REVISITING A DISASTER

“So, my fearless leader, is it time to learn about that five-minute story you teased me with last time?” asks Nicole expectantly.

“Almost. Before I share that with you, think about a presentation you’ve had that felt like a total disaster,” says David.

With a surprised look, Nicole replies, “You know how to make someone feel chipper first thing in the morning.”

“It’s what I do,” David says with a grin. “Can’t be rainbows and sunshine all the time!”

After a pause, he says, “Seriously, does a bad meeting come to mind?”

“Oh yeah, I’ve got a doozy for ya,” Nicole says with a frown.

“Lay it on me,” says David.

Nicole starts, “I was meeting this man, Mr. Lopez, a few months ago. He owns several dry cleaning stores. He met me as a favor to my client, Janice.

“After we spent a few minutes chatting about Janice, I said, ‘Mr. Lopez, I appreciate the time you’ve given me today. To make the best use of our time, I’d like to tell you a little bit about me and my company, then ask you a few questions to see if there’s a good fit. Fair enough?’

“Mr. Lopez smiled and said, ‘Sure, Nicole, but remember, I only have 20 minutes.’

“I said, ‘I do, and I promise I’ll respect your time. I then started with my normal opening...’As I mentioned on the phone, Main Street Financial Mastery is the leading provider of personal and business financial planning. We’ve been in business since 1895, and are consistently ranked as a leader in customer service...’

“And I kept right on talking. 20 minutes into our meeting, Mr. Lopez stopped my presentation and said, ‘Nicole, I appreciate your stopping by today. This sounds interesting. If you can leave me some information about your company, I’ll look it over and get back to you. I’ll be sure to let Janice know we met.’

“I said, ‘Well, I’ve got some questions for you...’ ”

“He said, ‘Really, I need to get back to my work. Thanks again for stopping by.’ ”

“What did you do then?” asks David.

“I put my materials in my bag, zipped it up, shook his hand, and left,” said Nicole, still clearly upset by the memory.

“Then I sat in my car for a long time. I was so mad, I felt anxiety in my entire body. I got tears in my eyes. I remember thinking, *I hate feeling like this! I can’t stand this! These people are morons! Why can’t they see the value I’m offering?*”

David says, “Nicole, like I told you last time, I understand. I had those same feelings years ago before I discovered the *Sell More With Stories* system. **Every** successful financial professional I’ve met has, at some point, felt that same frustration, anxiety, and fear.

“They each had that point of decision of whether or not to continue in this career.”

“That’s essentially where I am, David,” says Nicole. “I know I can do this if I have proper training.”

“You can, Nicole,” replies David. “You have the right attitude, and I believe you’ll do it based on your work with the *60-Second Story*.”

“Why do you think Mr. Lopez didn’t want to hear any more?” David asks.

“Well, based on what I’ve been learning from you, I did all of the talking and didn’t take time to discover anything about him,” Nicole says.

David smiles, “I won’t belabor the point. You understand why that method of selling doesn’t work, don’t you?”

“For sure,” says Nicole. “I’m embarrassed to admit that’s what I did, but, as you’ve told me, that’s how the industry trained me.”

“And you’re on an excellent path to undo all of that training,” David says cheerfully.

THE MOST POWERFUL STORYTELLING FORMULA

“Now will you teach me the 5-Minute Story?” asks Nicole.

David smiles, “Yes, you’ve waited long enough.

“Actually, there are two types of 5-minute stories: The most powerful story formula - what I call *THEN, NOW & HOW* - and the *WHY* story. For now, you’ll learn about *THEN, NOW & HOW*.”

“*THEN, NOW & HOW*? Sounds....different,” says Nicole with a hint of skepticism.

“It is,” David replies, “and it’s effective, but only if it’s delivered in the correct manner, and for the right reasons.”

He continues, “Have you ever seen one of those diet ads that show a ‘before and after’ picture?”

“Of course,” says Nicole. “They all seem pretty goofy to me.”

“Excellent point. Many of them are. But they’re still very effective at generating sales,” David adds.

“Why is that? I’ve never bought one of those products,” asks Nicole.

“Because they create curiosity,” David responds. “They’re using the *THEN, NOW & HOW* formula. It’s **the** most powerful story telling formula I know”

“Enough teasing about this magic formula!” Nicole exclaims. “What is it? How does it work?”

“I’ll tell you a story, then we’ll dissect it so you can understand it,” David answers.

Nicole quickly replies with a laugh, “You know I love a good story!”

PATTI'S STORY

David begins, "I was at a Chamber breakfast four years ago, and as men usually do at those events, I was standing near the food. You could smell the aroma of sweet doughnuts and freshly brewed coffee in the air.

"While I was standing there by myself, I noticed a smartly dressed woman walking toward me—nicely cut hair, classy business suit, and beautiful jewelry—not ostentatious, just enough to let you know that she was a woman of means.

"But her face betrayed her appearance. She looked anxious. She got within five feet of me and blurted out, 'I understand you're a speech coach!'

"I was caught off guard by her abruptness. I looked at her name tag, which read 'Patti.' I said, 'Yes, Patti, I am. Can I help you?'

" 'Oh, I hope so. I've done something **really** stupid, David!'

" 'What did you do?' I said, expecting something really juicy.

"With a heavy sigh, she said, 'I agreed to give the keynote speech for the *Women of Excellence* dinner.'

"I was let down. I **love** opportunities to speak, but I just said, 'Why is that a problem?'

"She said, 'Because, when I give a talk, I don't know when to shut up!'

Nicole bursts out laughing at this. "That's funny!"

"That's what I said. But, all Patti said was, 'I'm not trying to be funny, David. This is a terrific opportunity for our Foundation. I don't want to embarrass it, or our people. This speech is stressing me out—I get knots in my stomach just thinking about it. I wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat. I get up in the morning sick to my stomach. David, I'm in my 60s—I'm too old to have morning sickness!'

"She finished by saying, 'I'm really worried. Can you help me?'

“Nicole, there’s a twist to this story—Patti wasn’t scheduled to give her speech for another 11... *months!* She was looking at the possibility of nearly a year of Alka Seltzer, sleepless nights, and ‘morning sickness.’ ”

“Oh my goodness!” Nicole says.

“Jump ahead 11 months. On the night she gave her speech, I was sitting at home. My phone rang, it was Patti. I said, ‘How’d it go?’

“ ‘David you’re not gonna believe this! I got my first standing ovation! And *not* because I finally stopped talking. They really liked it.’ ”

Nicole laughs, “Patti should go into comedy!”

‘Maybe,” David answers. “She’s naturally hilarious. But she wasn’t finished. She then said, ‘That’s not the best part! When I was done speaking, **four** people walked up and gave me checks for the Foundation—**four!** And others came up and offered to volunteer their time to the group.

“ ‘I’m so excited! Thank you so much for working with me to make this a great speech! I can’t wait to do this again!’ ”

THE MESSAGE BEHIND THE STORY

Nicole, mouth open, says, “Wow! That’s incredible!”

After a long pause, David says, “I wonder, Nicole, what do you think made the difference? How did Patti go from a state of near depression to making such an impression on 350 people?”

“Oh that’s easy, David,” Nicole says with a giggle. “She hired **you** to coach her!”

David smiles. “I thought you’d say that. And even though I did work with her, that’s not the reason. Think a little harder about why she made such a dramatic transformation.”

Nicole thinks for a while. “Well,... she had to practice.”

“Yep,” David replies.

“She told good stories,” Nicole continues.

“Without a doubt,” David says with a smile.

“And I would think,” Nicole says after a pause, “that she had to learn how to write her speech in a new way.”

“All good points, Nicole. There’s an even deeper reason. Patti understood a basic premise of success. It’s a term coined by the author Marshall Goldsmith, who wrote, ‘What got you *here* won’t get you **there**.’

“Patti and her husband had built a very successful business and are pillars in their community—well-to-do, connected, and involved. But that wasn’t going to help her be an effective speaker. She understood that she had to invest her time, money, and emotions. She knew she had to step outside of her comfort zone to give a talk that influenced others to take action.”

David sees that Nicole, deep in thought, grasps the significance of his words.

He continues, “One of my coaching mentors taught me a valuable lesson when I first started speaking: ‘Sometimes people look at the price of doing something, and they fail to look at the cost of *not* doing it.’ “

“Wow, we’re getting away from storytelling and into some philosophy,” Nicole says with a smile.

“Well, I don’t mean to go ‘Socrates’ on you,” David says with a laugh, “but that is part of this formula. When you provide an underlying message that resonates, you stand a better chance of connecting with people and earning their trust.”

“I see your point, David. When we just talk about what we do, or how we do it, there’s no appeal to the other person, is there? It’s like you’re one of those never-ending messages you get when you’re put on hold on the phone,” Nicole concludes.

“Nice metaphor, Nicole,” replies David. “I’d never thought of it that way, Yes, that’s what it feels like to the others when you don’t engage in a conversation or tell a meaningful story.”

WHY THE FORMULA WORKS

“So, Jedi Master, tell me how this formula works,” Nicole says with a laugh.

With a raised eyebrow, “Jedi Master, eh? There’s hope yet for you coming to the Light side of the Force,” David says with a smile.

“Don’t get your hopes up,” Nicole quickly responds. “It was just a moment of temporary weakness!”

They both laugh at this, and David continues,

“Before I tell you *how* the formula works, Nicole,” says David, “I have another question. *If* you were in the market for a speech coach, would you consider talking with me one-on-one? I’m not asking if you’d hire me on the spot, I’m just curious if you’d be open to talking further with me about the work I do.”

After a pause, Nicole says, “Well yeah—sure!”

After a long pause, David says, “Why?”

Nicole looks confused by this unexpected question.

David continues, “You don’t know anything about me. You haven’t heard about my services, my product, my background, my process, my company’s history—none of those. Yet, you’re willing to talk further with me?”

Thinking for several seconds, Nicole finally says, “I’m curious...and... you told a compelling story.”

“Aha! That’s it, Nicole!” exclaims David. “I didn’t say one thing that organizations traditionally teach you to say about you or your company, did I? Instead, I shared a real and personal story about a client you could relate to. **That** is why you’re interested in talking further with me.”

Nodding her head, Nicole smiles and says, “It’s so subtle, but so powerful, I didn’t realize that you’re actually creating a connection with me. You weren’t selling me anything, you were just... taking *with* me.”

David smiles, “If more salespeople would do this, they’d have a lot more fun—and feel a lot less stress—selling their products and services to willing and eager clients.”

WHY YOU SHOULD SELL LIKE A DIET AD

“Now,” David continues, “let’s talk about how this process works. Remember earlier when I asked you about diet ads you’ve seen?”

Nicole nods in the affirmative, and says, “Sure do.”

“Think about them,” David continues. “The picture on the left is usually a grainy photo of a man or woman, usually very overweight. The person - let’s call him John - looks miserable. It’s a grainy black and white photo. It may even have his weight written underneath—something like: ‘This is John Smith at 323 pounds.’

“The picture on the right is usually clearer, with vibrant colors. John is happy, with a huge smile on his face—maybe even has a beautiful woman next to him. Underneath the picture is written something like: ‘This is John, 5 months later, at 198 pounds.’

“Now - and this is crucial for the formula,” David says. “**If** you’re a person who wants to lose weight and you see that ad, what’s the first question that pops into your head?”

After just a slight pause, Nicole says, “How’d you do it?”

“Exactly!” says David with great excitement. “You’re curious, aren’t you? The entire purpose of that ad is to get you to keep reading so that you’ll build up enough interest to take action of some kind.”

“It’s the ‘before and after’ you mentioned earlier,” says Nicole.

“Precisely,” replies David. “Here’s how it works in my story about Patti.”

SHOW YOUR CLIENT'S DISTRESS

“*THEN* is the part of the formula where you introduce your character and the problems she faced before meeting you. In Patti’s case, what was she feeling?” David asks.

Nicole says, “She was nervous... scared... sick to her stomach.”

“Right,” says David. “Now, tell me, could you *relate* to Patti?”

“Absolutely,” says Nicole. “I’ve felt that way thinking about giving a speech.”

“That’s the first benefit of this step. It makes your character **relatable**,” says David.

“Those feelings connect with others because, just like you, most people have experienced them.”

He continues, “A key to this step is that *the worse the conditions and the more intense your characters emotions, the better the story*. It doesn’t get much worse than the feelings Patti experienced, does it?”

“Other than throwing up, no,” Nicole quickly responds with a laugh.

“That’s true,” David says with a chuckle. “A few people have done that, but most just experience the emotions. To make this aspect more powerful, it’s important to escalate the emotions the character is feeling. Can you think about how Patti’s emotions escalated?”

“She was feeling nervous....then scared....then sick,” Nicole replies.

“She was, but the escalation occurred when she *thought* about giving the speech in the future. Remember, she wasn’t scheduled to give that talk for almost a year. Most likely, her emotions would get more intense and she’d feel worse as the day of the speech got closer,” says David.

He continues, “The escalation of emotions doesn’t have to have already happened—they can be feelings that people experience when they *anticipate* a future event.

“This is very useful in the financial world. Share a story about a client who’s afraid of the future - not being able to provide an education for his kids, not providing for his family if

he gets sick or dies, or not being able to retire with the lifestyle he dreams about. *Those* types of fears escalate when they're not addressed. And, they're highly relatable."

"That makes so much sense," says Nicole. "I've had several clients talk to me about this. The longer in the future they think, the more intense their fear seems to be. Their imaginations run wild sometimes."

"Excellent point," David responds. "Escalation is relatable because everyone has done it."

He continues, "One other element to point out about the *THEN* part of the story: The words you use to describe the character's feelings should be emotion-specific. This means avoiding saying things like, 'She said, I feel bad,' or 'She said, I'm having a bad day.'

"Those are too generic. Instead, say something like, 'She said, I'm feeling really anxious,' or 'I'm scared to death,' or 'I'm feeling sick to my stomach.' Those phrases are more specific—it's everyday language we'd use, and it's more emotional."

"So, if I paint a clear picture of how the other person was feeling, people are likely to feel sympathy, or even empathy?" Nicole asks.

"Precisely, Nicole! That's the hook that creates curiosity and keeps them listening," David says.

"Wow. I never realized so much can go into a short story," Nicole exclaims.

David smiles. "Properly structured and delivered, a story can create a powerful emotional punch for the listener. It can create an almost insatiable need to know more. In fact, research has proven that the human brain does **not** like uncertainty. This formula taps into that need to satisfy curiosity."

TEASE YOUR PROSPECT WITH HOW IT COULD BE

David continues, “Now it’s time for you to learn about the second piece of the formula—the *NOW* story. This is the step that highlights the improved circumstances of the character.”

“Tell me, Nicole, how was Patti’s life better after she gave her speech?”

“Well,” Nicole replies, “she got a standing ovation.”

“Right,” David says.

“She also had people give her money for her group,” Nicole adds.

“She did!” David adds.

“What else happened?” he asks.

After a long pause, Nicole says, “She felt better about herself and her speaking, I think.”

“You’re on the right track. Think about the big change she experienced. It’s something she said at the end of our phone call,” David says.

After thinking for a few seconds, Nicole says, “She said she was really happy, that she enjoyed herself.”

“You’re right, and there’s one more thing she said: ‘I can’t wait to do this again!’ ” David says. “Think about that, Nicole. She transformed from feeling high levels of *distress* to feeling a high level of **success**.”

“That’s pretty remarkable,” Nicole says.

David says, “It is. It’s a major change, the type that my prospective clients are looking for if they’re interested in improving their speaking skills.”

“Now, I wonder,” continues David, “if you were interested in improving *your* speaking or presentation skills, what is the first question you’d ask after hearing the change Patti experienced?”

“How'd she do it?” Nicole blurts.

“Exactly. Just like with the diet ad. Patti experienced three positive outcomes: One, she made an impact; two, she enjoyed the process; and three, she created more income. For a speaker, it doesn't get better than that.”

“I see that,” Nicole interjects. “The process is designed to create the need to know *how* she did it, isn't it?”

“Precisely,” answers David. “It makes you hungry for more.”

“A key to this part of the story is to show the client enjoying as many benefits as possible from the work you do. This step has to provide a completely different emotional feeling than the client felt before she met you.

“Remember this: *Your story is more memorable—and more likely to create interest in working with you—when there is great contrast between the THEN and NOW parts of your story.*”

“Why is that?” asks Nicole.

“Because contrasting emotions highlight the pain and hope clients experience,” David replies. “The prospective client understands the negative feelings of the *THEN* step. It's possible he's feeling those same emotions now.

The *NOW* step offers *hope* that he can experience the same feelings Patti felt by the end of the story. Those contrasting emotions can be a stimulus for him to seek change. A change that *you* can provide, by the way!”

“Oh, I get it! And it doesn't sound sales-y, either,” Nicole points out.

“That's because it's conversational, and not pushing an agenda.

DON'T BE THE STAR OF YOUR STORY

"I'm curious about something, Nicole. Forget for a moment that I'm coaching you. Pretend we just met and I told you Patti's story," David says.

"Ok, I'll try." Nicole responds.

"Just one question, Nicole. Who coached Patti?" David asks.

"You did, of course!" Nicole answers.

"How do you know?" David asks.

"Because you told me," she says.

"Did I?" he responds.

"Well...yeah..."

After a long pause, she says, "Come to think of it, I'm not sure."

David smiles. "Actually, I never did."

Nicole brow furrows as she thinks about the story. She looks confused.

After a pause, David continues. "What about the story lets you know that I coached her?"

"She asked you for help," Nicole answers.

"Fair enough. But, just because she asked doesn't mean I gave it," David replies.

"Okay," says Nicole, before getting an idea. "Wait! She thanked you at the end!"

"Very good. She did," David says. "Here's my point. Most salespeople are taught to talk about themselves, right?"

"Sure," she answers.

“The prospective client *doesn’t* care about you, at least until a relationship has been established. With *THEN, NOW, & HOW*, you don’t have to talk about yourself—the client does it for you.”

“What do you mean?” Nicole asks.

“Think about it,” David answers. “Is it fair to say that most of the people you talk to are intelligent?”

Nicole smiles, and says, “*Most*, David! Not all, but most.”

He laughs at this. “I agree. With that in mind, don’t you think they’ll figure out that you’re the person who provided the solution to your client’s problem?”

“Yes, absolutely,” says Nicole.

“Otherwise, why would you be telling the story?” David points out.

“Also, as you pointed out, she said ‘thank you’ at the end of the story.”

“Do you see how powerful this is?” he asked excitedly. “You don’t have to brag about yourself. The focus of this story is on the client—the person your prospective client will most relate to. By not talking about yourself, you don’t sound like you’re selling, you’re simply telling a story with an outcome other people want. It just so happens *you* provided the solution.”

“That makes so much sense,” Nicole exclaims. “I never once felt like I was being sold.”

Smiling proudly, David says, “That’s the point, my friend. **That** is how you start long-term, meaningful business relationships.”

After a pause, David says, “One other key to point out to you. You figured out that I coached Patti, even though I never said those words, correct?”

“Yes, that’s true,” Nicole answers.

“Who told you?” he asks.

Thinking about this, Nicole eventually says, “Patti?”

“Yes! With one simple phrase—‘I can’t thank you enough for helping me make this a great speech!’—she lets the listener know all they need to know about me at this point. Her good feelings about being a better speaker are transferred to me without giving a laundry list of who I am or what I’ve done.” David concludes.

“That’s so cool!” Nicole responds. “I can see why this works.”

“At this point,” David continues, “the person you’re talking with should be very interested in what you have to offer. The next thing you do will either increase her curiosity, or it will put you back into salesperson mode.”

“I know I want to avoid that,” Nicole says with a smile. “What’s the best thing to do?”

“Excellent question, Nicole,” David says with a chuckle. “I’m so glad you asked.”

HOW *DID* SHE DO IT?

“A curious person is going to ask a question like: ‘What did Patti do?’ or ‘What did you do to help her?’ The best response here is **not** to answer that question—at least at this point,” David says.

Nicole looks troubled by this. “Won’t you look like you’re being evasive if you don’t answer the question?”

“Excellent point, Nicole,” answers David. “Yes, you *could* come across as avoiding the question if you don’t handle this correctly.”

After a pause, David continues, “Answer this: What do you know about this person you just met?”

“Ummm...nothing?” Nicole responds quizzically.

“That’s right,” David says. “If I launch into an explanation of what I do, or how I do the work I do, I’m shooting in the dark. I have no idea what the other person is about, why he’s interested, or how my work could possibly help him.”

“So if you start blabbing away, chances are you could break down the connection you’ve started to make,” Nicole interjects.

“Exactly!” says David with a big smile. “And this is where most salespeople fall down in the process. They start explaining the HOW too soon.”

“So, I’m guessing I should find out more about the other person by asking questions?” asks Nicole.

“Right again,” David replies. “Become a detective. Address the question he’s just asked, so you don’t sound evasive. What I typically say is something like: ‘I’m happy to tell you about my work. I’m just not sure what part of it would apply to you. May I ask you about yourself? Then I’ll know how my work could specifically apply to your situation?’ ”

“Makes sense,” says Nicole.

David continues, "Once your questions have been answered, you can then share the first part of the *HOW* step. This is where you describe your journey to learning the processes you teach."

"My journey?" Nicole asks, looking puzzled.

Smiling, David says, "Tell me about the formulas or strategies you've learned to help your clients. Did you learn them overnight?"

"Well, no," says Nicole. "It took me a couple of years to feel really comfortable sharing them."

"Would you say there was frustration along the way?" David asks.

"You better believe it!" Nicole answers. "Just earning my investment and insurance licenses was an ordeal. Several people I know gave up, they didn't think it was worth the effort."

"Interesting," David says. "Would you say that there was also a financial cost to your learning period?"

Thinking about this, Nicole finally responds. "Yes, you could say that. I was paid a small salary the first year. I had to pay for my licensing.

"Come to think of it, compared to some of my friends, I gave up a lot of income the first couple of years in this business," Nicole says with a frown.

"That's terrific!" David says.

"Why?" asks Nicole. "You've got me feeling bad about all of the time and money I've put into this business, and I'm still struggling to attract clients."

"Oh, I understand how you're feeling right now. Remember, I've been there.

LET YOUR PAIN BE THE BRIDGE TO THEIR SOLUTION

“Let me offer you a different perspective. When you meet prospective clients, are they typically frustrated by financial issues?” David asks.

“Sure,” Nicole quickly replies. “You’ve taught me that those are the reasons they’ll even talk to me - some type of pain in their financial world.”

David, smiling, says, “Absolutely. Now, I wonder, how likely are they to want to add to their pain by investing a couple of years of their lives, and an unknown sum of money, to learn the processes and strategies you provide?”

Smiling with an understanding of David’s question, Nicole says “They’re not! They can take advantage of the pain I went through to learn them.”

“Terrific, Nicole!” David exclaims. “That’s exactly my point. You can provide hope for them by sharing the story of your struggles - your journey - to acquire the knowledge you’ve gained. Rather than take all of that time and money to learn the information, they can work with you.”

“Wow! That’s a different perspective. I never thought about helping them by sharing my own story,” Nicole says.

She continues, “How exactly would you say that to another person without going on and on?”

“Excellent question,” David says. “What I typically say is something like: ‘After my own struggles over a decade of how to give effective presentations, I finally invested nearly \$10,000 and two years of my time to learn a better way. I worked with some of the best speakers and speech coaches in the world.

‘I’ve bottled-up the processes and strategies they taught me into a series of coaching packages. These can save you thousands of dollars and years of frustrating trial-and-error to learn the same information.’”

“Interesting, David, says Nicole. “I can see where that can strike an emotional chord in people.”

“That’s the beauty of the entire *Sell More With Stories* process. You’re providing a less painful way to solve people’s problems with real stories - yours and your clients,” David adds.

“One more point to make here, Nicole. When you share the story of your journey to gain your knowledge, remember this - **the road must be rough**. The more difficult your experience, the more likely they’ll work with you.

Other people don’t want to have to go through all of the lessons you’ve learned. They just want the end result. Your experience is their bridge to a fast solution.”

“That is so cool, David!” Nicole exclaims. “I see now why you told me this is a different perspective.”

David continues, “Now that you understand this part of the formula, there is another key point to remember. Once the other person understands that you can provide a shortcut to solving their problems, you’re not going to give a lot of details about how you do your work.

“You’re not?” Nicole says. “I don’t understand.”

David, laughing, says, “It’s still to soon. Your goal here is to provide just enough so that the other person wants to arrange a separate meeting.”

“Why is that?” Nicole asks.

“If you tell him everything now, he has no reason to meet with you further, does he?” David asks.

“I guess not,” Nicole replies, somewhat puzzled. “I’m still concerned that it’s going to look like I don’t want to answer his question.”

“Again, I know what you mean. There **is** a way to handle this so that you come across professionally, and still encourage the person to meet with you.” David replies.

“Tell me more!” Nicole eagerly says.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

“Gladly,” says David, with a twinkle in his eyes. “What I typically say is: ‘What I do is work with you - using specific processes and tools - to craft presentations that create an emotional connection. You’ll pick up ideas on how to structure and deliver them with a logical flow. This will keep the attention and interest of your audience. You’ll also find that your confidence and attitude about speaking increases significantly.’ ”

“That sounds like a good deal to me,” Nicole says with a smile. “I’d like to learn how to do that.”

“So, I’ve satisfied some of your curiosity?” David asks.

“Absolutely! I’m interested in learning more,” says Nicole.

David continues, “What I typically say at this point is this: ‘I don’t want to sound evasive, nor do I want you to feel like I’m avoiding your questions. Since this is a social event, I also don’t want to monopolize your time.

For me to start listing everything I do could take up a lot of your valuable time. Does that make sense?’ ”

David pauses, and then concludes, “Usually, Nicole, the other person will say, ‘Yes, that does. I appreciate you not doing that to me!’ I then say, ‘If this sounds like it might be of interest, let’s get together for coffee. Just a visit to get to know one another so we can learn more about our respective businesses. After coffee, we can decide if we want to meet again. Fair enough?’ ”

Nicole says, “If it was me, I’d definitely say ‘yes.’ That’s non-threatening, and I’m definitely curious to know more about what you do.”

“Nicole,” David adds with a smile, “**that** is the essence of this process. Remember, one small step at a time can lead to huge leaps forward in building mutually beneficial, long-term relationships.”

“It certainly feels like a better way to sell,” Nicole says.

“All I can offer is my experience,” David interjects. “It’s made selling more enjoyable for me. I’ve worked with some of my clients for over twenty years. We sometimes socialize, we know a lot about each other’s lives, and we enjoy one another. Our work together goes beyond salesperson-client - we like being around each other. It’s been a rewarding way to conduct business.”

“That’s the way I want my practice to be,” Nicole enthusiastically chimes in.

“It will be, once you put these processes into place,” David says. “Now, we’re not yet done with the *HOW* step. There are two other keys of this step if it’s going to work to maximum effect:

“The first is that this part is about the lessons, processes, or tools that led to your client’s success. Like I said before, most salespeople make the mistake of bragging about themselves as the solution or source of the cure. They’ll say something like, ‘I taught Patti the speaking processes and tools that she used’ or ‘After working with me, Patti was able to get a standing ovation and donations of time and money.’ ”

“I’m still a little confused about this part—I’m not sure why that’s bad. It’s true, isn’t it?” Nicole asks.

David says, “Are these statements true? Yes, they are. But, do they create a connection with the listener?”

“I’m not sure what you mean,” Nicole responds.

“Think about this. How do you feel when you hear someone brag about his successes?” David asks.

After a pause, Nicole says, “I guess...well, I’d say it’s a turn-off,”

David asks, “Why?”

“Because it feels like it’s about the salesperson” Nicole says.

“That’s it, Nicole. The story is about the salesperson, when it should be about the person who received the benefits. **Prospective clients are more impressed—and more interested—in the *solution* than the person who provided it.**”

After a long pause, Nicole says, “That makes sense. That would feel more like I’m working with someone who is an advisor or consultant than a traditional salesperson.”

“Exactly,” David adds. “When you brag about the processes or the tools the client picked up, you increase the audience’s desire to learn that same information. It just so happens that you are the person who can provide those solutions!”

After a pause, David adds, “Remember this point: **People will trust and buy into a proven formula or process much faster than they’ll buy into you.**”

“Wow, David,” Nicole says. “This is all so simple. I never thought of it this way. It seems like...a more natural way to promote what you do. A lot like the dating analogy you shared with me when we first met.”

David, smiling, says, “It certainly keeps you from coming across as special, or someone who is so talented no one can relate to you.”

He continues, “Nicole, there is another other key aspect of this formula. It’s the order in which the ideas are presented. It must be *THEN, NOW, & HOW* for maximum effectiveness.”

“Why is that?” Nicole asks.

David says, “The order creates curiosity and suspense. For example, if the order was *THEN, HOW, & NOW*, you would first meet Patti and hear about her struggles. Then, you’d hear about the cure, or the processes and tools that she learned. Knowing the cure before hearing the end result, are you still going to be curious?”

“I’m not sure,” says Nicole, “but it seems that I’ve already got an answer to how she solved her problem, so probably not.”

David, nodding his head, says, “Exactly. When you’re told first about all the great tools and processes she picked up, you’re probably going to guess the speech went well, so there’s no suspense.”

By her reaction, it’s obvious that Nicole grasps the power of this idea.

David adds, “By knowing that her speech went well **before** you learn the cure, aren’t you now curious to know how she was able to make such a drastic change?”

“Definitely!” says Nicole.

“This is why the *HOW* step works best when it is presented last.”

NICOLE SEES THE LIGHT

“David, this is so cool,” Nicole says. “I understand why the sales scripts my company taught me can alienate people. At their heart, those talks are all about me and my company. Now I can create a foundation that builds trust and lets the other person know I really am here to help.”

David says, “You’ve got it, Nicole. Are you ready for your homework?”

“Am I!” Nicole says with a huge grin. “Fire away, Boss!”

“Like last time, I want you to let these ideas sink in. When I get back to the office, I’ll send you a link to the outline for your *THEN, NOW, & HOW* story. It’ll have the outline and key reminders. Your job is to write the first version of your *THEN, NOW, & HOW* story. Then go out and practice it.

“Go to your networking events, open with your *60-Second Story*. If the other person engages, ask permission and then share your *THEN, NOW, & HOW* story.

“Don’t worry about how smooth it is. Just like in the first two weeks of your *60-Second Story*, you’re going to stumble through. At this point, your goal is simply to say the story - out loud - to other people.”

“Ok,” Nicole adds. “I understand the power of practice. Practice makes perfect!”

David slowly shakes his head from side-to-side with a slight frown. “Nicole, I’d lose that belief.”

“What do you mean? Isn’t practice important?” she asks.

“Absolutely! It’s the ‘perfect’ part I disagree with,” David says.

“Have you ever heard a salesperson or speaker who came across as too polished?” he asks.

After a pause, Nicole says, “I sure have.”

“How did that person make you feel?” David asks.

“Cover my purse—he wants my money!” she says, and they both burst out laughing.

“Yes!” David says. “There’s something inauthentic about ‘perfect’ or ‘polished.’

“A great professional speaker named Patricia Fripp has a fabulous belief about this: Selling—or any type of communication, for that matter—is about **connection, not perfection.**”

“Oh, I *like* that,” Nicole says. “Can I use that?”

“Sure,” David says with a chuckle. “Just be sure to credit Ms. Fripp. She’s a genius.”

“I’d say,” Nicole agrees.

“Before we close this meeting, there’s one other benefit to your homework, Nicole,” David says. “You’ll also be repeating your *60-Second Story* every time—you’ll be internalizing it even deeper.”

“Makes sense,” Nicole says.

David leaves her with one last piece of wisdom: “**Repetition is the key to mastery.**”

“I like that!” Nicole enthusiastically responds.

“I thought you would,” David says with a grin. “Feel free to use it - no charge!”

Laughing, they shake hands and David says, “See you in two weeks, my friend.”

TEMPLATE FOR YOUR ‘*THEN, NOW & HOW*’ STORY

Step One (*THEN* story)

- 1) Share a story of a client who was in “distress” when you first met.
- 2) Tell the story through the client’s words.
- 3) Use strong emotional language to convey how intensely the client felt.
- 4) Use specific language to describe the problem.
- 5) Escalate the problem to intensify the pain the client experienced.

Step Two (Transition to the *NOW* story)

- 1) Use one sentence that transitions from your THEN to your NOW story. (examples: “Jump ahead six months” or “Fast forward three years.”)

Step Three (*NOW* story)

- 1) Share the client’s current condition.
- 2) Tell the story through the client’s words.
- 3) Use strong emotional words to convey how good the client feels about the new situation.
- 4) Use specific language to describe the benefits received from the client’s perspective.

Step Four (Transition to the *HOW* step)

- 1) Ask the person you’re talking with how s/he thinks your client made such a dramatic change.
- 2) After the person responds, focus your comments on the actions the client took, not the work that you did. Make the clients the “hero” of your story.
- 3) Share a short story of the rough road you took to learn the solutions you provided the client. Remember, the more difficult the journey, the more likely the person will want what you have to offer.
- 4) Don’t give specific details about the solution you provided—these might not apply to the person with whom you’re speaking. Focus only on the benefits and emotional improvement your service/product provided.
- 5) Invite the person to meet at a later date to discuss your work more in depth.

Step Five (brief discussion of *HOW* the change occurred)

- 1) Ask questions to learn more about the other person
- 2) Explain that you don't want to monopolize the other person's time
- 3) Offer a brief overview of the solutions you provide (examples: "Patti learned processes to craft stories that grabbed attention and kept interest" or "She learned how to keep the audience on the edge of their seats with a dynamic delivery.")
- 4) Focus on the actions your client took - new ways of thinking, feeling, or acting. Avoid the temptation to talk about what you did, or what your company provided.
- 5) Maintain the order of the process - *THEN... NOW...HOW.*

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- **Quickly get past** the walls of distrust and skepticism of prospective clients
- Create a **deeper connection** with others
- Lay the foundation for **long-term mutually beneficial** client relationships

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When asked how he earned the moniker “The Storytelling MD,” Michael Davis replies, “Although I greatly admire the work doctors do to earn their MD, I took a different route. I didn’t go to school for 8, 10, or 12 years. Instead, I studied public speaking and storytelling skills since 2001. Also, I was born with the initials ‘MD.’ Combine the two, and you get ‘The Storytelling MD.’ ”

Michael’s passion for storytelling and public speaking was not obvious early in his life. As a child, he was shy and reserved—not an indication he’d grow up to be an author, professional public speaker and presentation skills coach.

This is especially surprising because of an incident in first grade that caused so much embarrassment he became afraid of speaking to groups of any size. That experience affected him well into adulthood.

As a young financial planner, his seminars about money were poorly delivered. He was given an ultimatum: “Become a better presenter ... or ELSE!!” This stirred up all of his anxieties about public speaking.

Because of that threat, he joined [Toastmasters International](#) in 1994. There he quickly discovered a passion for the art of public speaking. He learned that crafting and delivering impactful presentations is a learnable, repeatable skill.

In the years that followed, he became a voracious student of the craft. He also realized that he loves to help others improve these skills. That inspired him to start the company, [Speaking CPR](#).

In 2011, Michael earned the designation Certified World Class Speaking Coach. The processes and skills he teaches increase your visibility, create more opportunities for advancement, save you time, and may also increase your income.

To keep abreast of new ideas from the speaking world, he works closely with World Champion and Hall of Fame speakers. He also studies the work of Hollywood screenwriters and professional comics to expand his knowledge of presentation skills and offer a unique perspective on these topics. Because of his dedication to the craft, Michael is sought by speakers all over the world.

In addition to the ‘**How to Sell More With Stories**’ series, he’s produced numerous audio programs, is a contributing author to three public speaking books - including the Amazon #1 Best Seller [World Class Speaking in Action](#) - and is the author of [THE Book on Storytelling](#). He coaches speakers around the world, and conducts public speaking and storytelling skills workshops throughout the year.

Michael also works closely with speakers in the [TedX Cincinnati](#) event, and has successfully coached several speakers in the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking annual contest.

Michael is a candidate member of the [National Speakers Association](#) (Kentucky Chapter) and a member of [Toastmasters International](#).

For more information, or to contact Michael about coaching your group or speaking at your next event, visit his website, [SpeakingCPR.com](#), or email him at: mike@speakingcpr.com.

ONE LAST THOUGHT

You may not have climbed Mt. Everest, won Olympic gold medals, or discovered famous ships at the bottom of the ocean. That’s good, because neither have most of the people you meet.

Chances are, you **have** had problems like: relationship issues, financial struggles or feeling unhappy with your job or career. These are relatable to every person you meet.

My point is, your life experiences are far more impactful than you realize. When you learn how to craft them into meaningful and memorable stories, you’ll create a lasting impact on others. You can improve other people’s lives, even if the impact is as small as helping them find a new way to drive to work that reduces their stress levels.

You have stories that other people need to hear. Tell your stories. Someone needs to hear them.

Warmest regards,

Michael Davis, *the Storytelling MD*