



SELL MORE WITH STORIES
SAIL THE 7 CS TO
SENSATIONAL STORYTELLING

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'THE BOOK ON STORYTELLING'

Sell More With Stories

Sail the Seven Cs to Sensational Storytelling 7 Proven Steps to Stories That Inspire Action

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'Sell More With Stories'

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Other Books by Michael Davis

THE Book on Storytelling

Sell More With Stories: How to Create Interest in 60 Seconds

Sell More With Stories: How to Create Curiosity in 5 Minutes (or Less)

Sell More With Stories: How to Gain Trust With Your "WHY" Story

Sell More With Stories

Sail the Seven Cs to Sensational Storytelling

7 Proven Steps to Stories That Inspire Action

CHAPTER 1 — SAIL THE 7 Cs TO SENSATIONAL STORYTELLING

CHAPTER 2 — THE CHARACTERS

CHAPTER 3 — THE CIRCUMSTANCES

CHAPTER 4 — THE CONFLICT

CHAPTER 5 — THE CURE

CHAPTER 6 — THE CHANGE

CHAPTER 7 — THE CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 8 — THE CARRYOUT MESSAGE

CHAPTER 9 — BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

CHAPTER 10 — BUILD YOUR STORY WITH THE 7 Cs

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SELL MORE WITH STORIES

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7 Proven Steps to Stories That Inspire Action

PREFACE

Nicole Jeffries and David Michaels are meeting in his office. During the past six weeks, David has introduced Nicole to the '**Sell More With Stories**' selling process. She's been using it to attract more clients to her financial planning practice.

She's experienced remarkable changes. At one point, she was struggling to get *anyone* to talk with her about her services. Now, she's consistently meeting with qualified prospective clients. These people are serious about working with her to improve their financial situation.

Nicole is happier, enjoys her work more, and is having more fun in her career.

David has introduced her to the power of the *60-Second story*; the *Then, Now and How* (the most powerful storytelling formula) story; and the *WHY story*.

Today, they are meeting so that Nicole can pick up the foundations to create an "edge of their seats" storytelling experience.

David asks, "So, how have the past two weeks been?"

She answers, "Busy. *Really* busy, David. I've never had so much to do."

"What type of work are you doing?" he asks.

She says, "A lot of planning work. I've had so much that I haven't been able to attend as many networking events as I'd like. We've been so focused on planning work for our new clients that I haven't gotten out of the office to meet new people. That has me concerned."

David, smiling, says, "I understand. But, you have a good problem. You're doing the work you love. It just so happens that this work gets you paid, too."

They each laugh at this.

David continues, “Here’s what’s interesting about your dilemma, Nicole. The more you incorporate stories into your networking and social events, the less networking you’ll have to do.”

“What do you mean?” Nicole asks.

“Would you agree with me that storytelling creates a deeper connection with people?” David asks.

“It sure does!” she replies. “I can see that in the short time you and I have been working together. I’d call it ‘deliberate storytelling.’ My stories have a purpose. My clients open up to me quicker.”

David says, “What you’re going to discover is that your clients also recommend more people to you. Understand that with these deeper levels of connection come deeper levels of trust. When clients know you have their best interest at heart, word-of-mouth spreads.

“I’m frequently contacted by people I’ve never met before, telling me that, ‘Jane Smith said I need to work with you,’ or ‘Tom Jones at Company Z told me to call you.’ ”

“That’s what I want. Referred business!” Nicole says enthusiastically.

“It’ll happen. Not overnight, but it will. If you consistently tell your stories, and work with others from an authentic place, you’ll become an in-demand financial advisor.”

SAIL THE SEVEN Cs TO SENSATIONAL STORYTELLING

Nicole says, “That sounds great! Now, tell me about these 7 Cs you mentioned last time.”

David says, “Soon. First, I’m going to tell you a story you’ve already heard. Then, we’ll use that as a model to explain the 7 Cs to you. Fair enough?”

“Sure!” Nicole says enthusiastically.

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 smiles at this. “That’s still funny!”

He smiles, and continues, “Patti said, ‘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?’

“Here’s the 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.’ ”

“That still amazes me,” 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.”

David pauses, then continues, “Then she 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.

“After a little more chit-chat, Patti ended the call by saying, ‘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!’ ”

“What I took from this experience, Nicole, is that Patti was a living concept I originally learned from the writer Marshall Goldsmith: **‘What got you here won’t get you there.’** Patti was willing to invest her time, money and emotions in order to stretch out of her comfort zone. She became a more influential communicator because she understood she had to find a better way.”

Nicole says, “David, I still love that story.”

“Many of my clients do,” David replies. “They often ask me to tell it, even though they’ve heard it before.”

“Now let’s take Patti’s story through the 7 C’s so that you can understand *why* you and many others love to hear it more than once..”

“Sounds good to me,” says Nicole.

David says, “I learned these steps from one of the most brilliant speakers in the world. He’s a master speaker and salesperson named Craig Valentine. He has taught me much of what I know about speaking.

“One of the most important formulas he’s shared with me are these seven foundational steps to a story. If you implement these, they’ll create an emotional connection with other people.

“I want to be clear about this, Nicole. Not every story has each of these seven elements. However, the more you incorporate, the greater the chances your stories will have an impact.”

“OK,” Nicole says.

He continues, “The seven elements are: Characters, Circumstances, Conflict, Cure, Change, Conclusion, and Carryout Message.”

“Now, let’s discuss each one so you understand it’s purpose.”

THE CHARACTERS

After taking a sip of his ever-present tea, David says, “Your **Character(s)** are the people involved in the story. There are always at least two - the main character, and the guru, or the sage.

“Your main character is the individual who learns the lesson that you want to impart to the person listening to your story. This character will undergo some type of change. The critical part to this change is that it has to be one that the person listening to the story also wants to experience.”

“Otherwise, there’s no purpose to the story, is there?” asks Nicole.

“Correct,” says David.

He continues, “The guru is an important character. This is the individual or thing that provides the wisdom that leads to the change in the main character.”

“Thing?” Nicole asks with a confused look.

David laughs as he says, “That’s a highly technical term I use. The source of wisdom doesn’t have to be a person. It could come from a book, a movie, a pet. Just remember is that the person undergoing the change should *never* be the guru.”

“Why is that?” asks Nicole.

“Think about it. Have you ever heard a speaker who talked about all his great accomplishments?” he asks.

“Sure,” she replies.

He probes further, “Did he talk about one success after another?”

“I think he did,” Nicole says.

“Do you remember how that made you feel?”

She thinks for a few seconds. “I was definitely impressed.”

David says, "But, could you relate to him?"

After a long pause, she says, "Not really, come to think of it."

"Why do you think that is?" David asks.

"It made me feel like he was...special. I couldn't relate to him," Nicole says.

"Bingo! That's what happens when people brag about their accomplishments. They don't connect. There's one main reason for this - it doesn't feel *real*."

"In all my life, I haven't met anyone who didn't struggle in some area of his life. The more successful people are, the more more obstacles they've had to overcome."

"What these self-congratulatory speakers fail to grasp is that they're not believable," David concludes.

"Now I understand why I've never felt comfortable listening to people like that. I didn't *trust* them," Nicole says.

"Now that you understand, you won't ever make that mistake in your stories, will you?" David says with a smile.

"Never!" Nicole says.

"Think about Patti's story. Who were the characters?" David asks.

"There was Patti, and you," Nicole quickly answers.

"Yes, there was one other type of character that was important to the story," David adds, with a questioning look.

After a pause, Nicole quizzically says, "The audience at her speech?"

"Yes! Very good, Nicole. Why do you think they're important to the story?"

"Well... they gave her money on-the-spot," Nicole says.

“Yes, they did,” says David. “And that’s important for me, when I’m talking to prospective coaching clients. That’s because it demonstrates the end-result that people can expect from working with me.

“When your story demonstrates a tangible benefit people want, they’re much more willing to buy what you’re selling.”

“That makes sense, David. The more I think about it, I realize I’ve spent a lot of time talking about the wonderful work I do,” Nicole says with a hint of sarcasm.

“Now I understand why people haven’t responded to me. They’ve probably heard the same words from every other financial person they’ve met.”

“Not just financial professionals,” David adds. “Trust me, most salespeople from *every* industry have fallen into the ‘features trap.’ The ones who’ve escaped are successful because they focus on what the customer will get from working with them.”

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

David says, “Now that you know about the characters, let’s talk about the second C - **Circumstances**”

“This is the situation that your characters are facing. For a story to be memorable, the circumstances need to be difficult. As one of my coaches says, ‘The road has to be rough!’ ”

“Why is that?” Nicole asks.

“Think about the most memorable stories you’ve heard,” David answers. “Whether they’re fairy tales, movies, or books, the ones that you remember have the main characters in difficult circumstances.

“It could be the tortoise facing the challenge of outrunning the hare, Romeo and Juliet dealing with the adversity of their warring families, or Luke Skywalker battling Darth Vader,” David says.

Smiling, Nicole says, “Why did I know you’d bring that one up.”

“It’s a sickness, I know.” David says with a laugh. “But, it is a classic story of good versus evil which is woven through human history.”

“The key to the circumstances is that they have to be a *relatable* difficulty that the character wants to overcome.” David says. “In your world, there are many types of these challenges. Families struggling to educate their kids; couples worrying about retirement; business owners concerned about paying too much in taxes. There is no shortage of difficult financial obstacles people face.”

Nicole chimes in, “I’m thinking about a few others right now.”

“Good,” says David. “Add them to your story file. Keep in mind that the circumstances need to be overcome in order to create a ‘happy ending’ - a result that your prospective client also wants.”

“You mean like getting their kids educated, enjoying their dream retirement, or being able to afford the house they’ve always wanted?” Nicole asks.

“Precisely,” David responds.

“Think about Patti’s story. What were the circumstances?” David asks.

“Patti had to give a speech, and she was really nervous about it. She wasn’t sleeping. She was getting sick to her stomach,” Nicole says.

“Right. Is that relatable to many people?” David asks.

“It sure is,” says Nicole. “I felt bad for her. I’ve had to give speeches and felt like she did.”

“Interesting,” says David. “Would it be fair to say you felt empathy for Patti?”

“Oh, yes. Definitely!” she says.

“That’s one of the keys to the circumstances. It can create a quick emotional connection with your characters.

“One other key to your circumstances is to give details. Don’t write a novel, but offer two or three details that the listener will be familiar with. Don’t simply say ‘She was nervous about the speech. Instead, through her dialogue, say ‘I’m scared,’ ‘I’m waking up in the middle of the night’ or ‘I wake up with morning sickness.’

“Being specific makes your story memorable. Make sense?” he asks.

“It sure does,” says Nicole.

THE CONFLICT

David continues, “Your characters and their circumstances are the foundation for your story. To get and keep the audience’s attention, though, you *must* have the third C - the **Conflict**.”

“Think about the best stories you’ve heard - *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. *Little Red Riding Hood*. *Star Wars*,” David says with a grin.

“Again with *Star Wars*?” Nicole says kiddingly.

“Think about it, Nicole. It’s a classic story. The reason it resonates with so many people isn’t because it takes place in space. In the series, Darth Vader wreaked havoc on the galaxy. He was the prototypical bad guy. His son, Luke Skywalker, faced one obstacle after another until they had their epic showdown in the final movie.

“The hook to this story was conflict. Through these movies, your interest is maintained because you know that eventually they’ll have to settle the score. A big reason you can relate to this is because you’ve experienced conflict in your own life.”

David pauses as he sees that Nicole grasps his point.

He continues, “Imagine if, upon learning that Vader was his father, Luke had thought, “Wow, that’s a bummer. Ehhhh, whatever. I’ll just hang out at the farm, and maybe we’ll run into each other from time to time.”

Nicole nearly spits out her coffee when she hears this. “That would be pretty funny, David!”

“Yeah, but, not very compelling, is it? Without conflict, your story is not worth telling.

“In Patti’s story, what was the conflict?” he asks.

After thinking, Nicole says, “Well, she was concerned that people might not like her.”

Davis says, “That’s true, but, there’s a much stronger conflict she’s dealing with. I think it’ll help you to understand the four kinds of conflict before you answer my question.

“The first type is **Person versus Environment**. A person faces obstacles in his home, community, or area. An example of this is Mahatma Ghandi in India or Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States. Individuals who were at odds with their societies.”

“Those are famous people with big ideas. Not sure if I can come up with a story like that,” says Nicole.

Smiling, David says, “I understand. That type is less common in the business world, but, I still wanted you to know about it.

“The next conflict is **Person versus Nature**. A person faces the danger of a natural disaster.”

“Would that be like the stories from Hurricane Katrina, or earthquake survivors?” Nicole asks.

“Absolutely,” says David. “Again, not the most common type. It could be part of a “WHY” story, though. Perhaps a family member survived an ordeal that taught her survival skills. This type of story might be useful.

“The third type of conflict is **Person versus Person**. A man has a disagreement with his boss. A woman is at odds with a co-worker.

“Or Luke Skywalker having issues with his father?” Nicole says with a huge smile. “I thought I’d beat you to the punch with that one.”

“Nicely played, my friend,” David says. “ I know you’re mocking me, but Star Wars does include that classic element of child versus parent,” David says.

Laughing, Nicole says, “I hear you. I get your point.”

Continuing, David says, “The fourth type of conflict is the most common, It’s **Person versus Himself/Herself**. This is also the most relatable of all conflicts.

“Movies and literature are filled with examples of this type: Dr. Jekyll and his alter-ego, Mr. Hyde; Captain Ahab from Moby Dick; Bruce Wayne and his alter ego, Batman. Each of these characters faced internal conflict, uncertainty, or doubt.

“The reason these stories are so powerful is because you can relate to inner conflict,” David says. “You’re probably not facing a murderous monster fighting to come out of you like Dr. Jekyll. You aren’t hunting a large whale like Captain Ahab. And, you aren’t deciding whether or not to be a masked vigilante like Batman.

“However, you do face internal struggles just like they did. The solutions to their problems may give you insight into how your life can be better. Your story of overcoming conflicts and problems can help your listener in the same way.”

“I see,” says Nicole. “I never knew I had so much in common with these great literary figures!”

They both laugh at this, then David continues, “Now, with those four types in mind, what type of conflict was Patti facing?”

Nicole quickly says, “Person versus herself. She was having trouble sleeping, and really worried about bombing in front of that group.”

“Exactly,” David says. “And, you could relate to her, couldn’t you?”

“I sure could,” Nicole says.

David says, “Introducing the conflict is only the first step. There are two keys that maintain interest until the conclusion of your story.

“One of them is to **escalate the conflict**.

“Think about a story you’ve heard that seemed long and boring. Chances are there was no relatable conflict or the pace was either too slow or too fast. You didn’t get emotionally involved.

“Sounds like a lot of the financial talks I get to hear every week,” Nicole says with a frown.

“I’m too familiar with that,” says David. “The pace at which you increase tension is critical. Picture a moving walkway at an airport. If your story moves along at the pace of a moving walkway, with no increase in tension, the audience is going to lose interest.

“Remember this rule:

“No increase in tension = no rising conflict = no interest.”

“Let me write that down,” Nicole says while grabbing her pen.

After she finishes writing, David says, “On the other hand, if your conflict escalates too quickly, your audience won’t believe it. It’s like an elevator that plunges to the bottom floor, or soars to the top floor too fast. It’s unnerving for the listener.

“For example, imagine you’re telling the story of a couple that was in your office. They mention that they’re concerned about educating their kids. Within 30 seconds, the mother is crying hysterically and the father is in a rage because they learned that they don’t have enough money. How would you feel if you heard that kind of immediate escalation?” David asks.

“It certainly doesn’t feel like normal behavior,” Nicole answers.

“Exactly,” says David. “The key is to gradually escalate the conflict. Think of it like an escalator. Slowly and gradually increase the conflict to its point of resolution.”

“I’m gonna write that down, too,” Nicole quickly says.

David waits, and then adds his next point. “The second key to maintaining interest is to **resolve the conflict**. Imagine reading a great novel or watching a movie, You’re connected with the characters. You’ve become emotionally involved in an escalating conflict. Then, suddenly, the story ends without telling you how the conflict is resolved.

“How would you feel?” he asks.

“We’re in a public place, so I won’t say it out loud,” Nicole says with a laugh. “Let’s just say I’d feel irritated at the very least. Probably angry.”

“You’re right,” David chimes in. “Don’t leave your audience feeling that way. Let them know how your story ends.

“With all this in mind, how was Patti’s conflict escalated?”

After thinking for a several seconds, she says, “I think it’s when she actually gave her speech. She was nervous, but then, she got a standing ovation and people gave her money.”

“You’re partially correct,” says David. “The conflict is a little different in this story. It’s what I call a *future conflict*. Patti’s problem came from *thinking* about an event in the future. She imagined that it was going to be a bad experience.

“The closer the day of the speech came, and the more she thought about it, the worse she felt. This would’ve escalated all the way to the day of the event.

“Can you think of a way that type of conflict is common in your world?” he asks.

Immediately, Nicole says, “Absolutely! Retirement and college planning. Clients worry about those two all the time.”

“Perfect examples,” says David. “Whenever you tap into a conflict that your prospective clients are facing, your story will resonate with them.”

THE CURE

David says, “Your characters have now faced their conflict. Now it’s time for the fourth C - **the Cure**.”

“This is the scene where your character learns the lesson. That’s the main point you want to get across in your story.”

He pauses to wave at an acquaintance, then continues, “Think about the story ‘A Christmas Carol.’ In the beginning, he’s a miserly and miserable old man. With the visit of each succeeding ghost, his internal tensions increase. It’s only after the final visit from the Ghost of Christmas Future that he gets the message.

“How is it that he finally learned the lesson?” David asks.

“Well, the ghosts scared him so much he felt like he had to change, or he’d die all alone,” Nicole replies.

“Right. Their visits to Scrooge were the cure - they motivated him to change,” says David. “The cure scene leads to the new life the character experiences. If you structure your stories correctly, and you’re speaking to the right people, this is the same change they want to experience.”

“And that makes the character relatable, doesn’t it?” Nicole asks.

“It sure does,” David says. “Think about Patti’s story. What was the cure scene?”

“I would think it was when she approached you about coaching,” Nicole answers.

“I see why you’d think that, but that’s not it. The cure was the moment people walked up to her and handed her checks and volunteered their time to her Foundation. **That** was the moment she experienced the power of a well-structured and expertly-delivered talk.

“Until she experienced that result, she wasn’t motivated to completely adopt her new way of speaking. In her case, that meant for future talks, she would use the processes and tools she’d picked up from her coaching.”

“Ok, that makes sense,” Nicole chimes in.

“I think you know this, Nicole, but it bears repeating. Just because someone invested their time or money into a project doesn’t mean that they’ll automatically adopt and implement all of the new ideas they pick up. There has to be a moment - an experience that creates an emotional shift - that instills long-lasting change.”

“I’ve never thought of stories like this,” Nicole says. “I’m starting to see why some stories are memorable, but most aren’t.”

“Excellent insight,” David says. “And we’re only on the fourth C.

He continues, “There’s one aspect to this scene that most salespeople don’t understand.”

“What’s that?” asks Nicole.

“You can’t be the source of the wisdom,” he says.

“What do you mean? Aren’t you supposed to be the expert when you’re selling?” Nicole asks with a puzzled expression.

“Yes, yes you are. But - and this is important - you don’t want to come across as a guru, or know-it-all.

“Remember when we first met and I asked if you’d ever listened to someone who had all the answers - who acted as if he’d never had a challenge?” he asks.

“Yeah, I do,” Nicole answers.

“Remember what you said about how you felt after listening to him?” Davis asks.

Smiling, Nicole says, “I think I said something about covering my purse - he’s coming after my money.”

They both laugh at this.

“That’s what you said,” David tells her. “**That** is why you don’t want to be the source of all the answers. Give that role to someone else in your story. That way, you are more like your audience.

“Another way to look at this is that the person or entity that taught you the lesson continues to instill that wisdom. It’s flowing through you to the listener.”

Nicole, with a look of revelation, says, “Wow, David! That’s so cool. I would’ve never thought of it that way.”

“Exactly,” says David. “My coaches taught me that they can touch the lives of people they’ll *never* meet. They do it through me.

“In fact, It just happened to me. One of my clients, Rob, told me he’s teaching the *Then, Now & How* to his co-workers. My coach, Craig, taught me this concept. I passed it on to Rob. He is now sharing it with others. Craig is touching people three steps removed. That’s power!”

THE CHANGE

Taking a deep breath, David says, “This is a lot for one day. Are you ready for a breather?”

“You know, it is a lot, but, I’m really excited to pick up these new ideas. You’re not overwhelming me. It helps to refer back to Patti’s story. Let’s keep going,” Nicole says enthusiastically.

“Great” says David with a big smile. “Now it’s time for the 5th C - **The Change**. This is a critical part to the story that most people leave out.

“Even if they’ve painted a clear picture of the circumstances and characters, escalated the conflict, and then presented the cure scene, if they leave out the change, the story will have little, if any, impact.

“Wow, that makes it sound important,” Nicole says.

David continues, “It is, and here’s why. The change shows the listener the new way of thinking, feeling or acting of your character.

“Think of it like this, Nicole. In ‘A Christmas Carol,’ imagine watching Scrooge go through the experience with the three ghosts. He’s right at the point of his revelation. All of a sudden, the credits start rolling. You didn’t see a change in his attitude. How would you feel NOT seeing how he changed?” he asks.

“Pretty irritated,” Nicole answers. “No one wants to be left hanging after giving their time and emotions to a story.”

“Precisely,” says David. “The same is true with your stories. It’s critical that you show the change in the characters. Otherwise, the listener will be frustrated, and will walk away not caring about your story.

“In Patti’s story, what was the big change?” he asks.

After several seconds, Nicole says, “My first thought was when people gave her donations, but, that’s not really a change in her.

“Wait! It’s when she said ‘I can’t wait to do this again,’” Nicole says with confidence.

“Very good!” David says with satisfaction. “She transformed from sleepless nights and morning sickness to looking forward to speaking. **That** is a dramatic shift.

“It’s the type of change my clients are looking for. When they hire me, they want to experience the change Patti made.

“Now, there is one other, more subtle change. It’s not as important as Patti’s emotional shift, but it’s a result that people want. Know what it is?” David asks.

After a long sip of her coffee, Nicole says, “I guess it would be the time and donations she received after her speech.”

“Those are desirable, but, there’s an even bigger benefit I mentioned when I first told the story. It’s the part where today, she is giving speeches that are literally raising millions of dollars for local charities. Now **that** is a result most people only dream about,” David says.

“I imagine it’s appealing to a lot of people you talk to,” says Nicole.

“It is, and it’s a perfect setup for the sixth C.

THE CONCLUSION

David says, “The sixth C is **The Conclusion**. Keep in mind that this is the end of your story, not your overall presentation.

“This is where you wrap up. There are three keys to an impactful conclusion:

“First, **make sure that all of the listener’s questions are answered**.

“Second, **review the change in the character**.

“Third, **transition to the Carryout message**,” he concludes.

“That sounds like a lot,” Nicole says.

“It’s not as much as it sounds. Keep in mind that you’re not introducing new information at this point,” David says. “You’re summarizing what you’ve shared with the listener, and then setting up the point of the story.”

“I’m not sure I understand the importance of the unanswered questions,” says Nicole.

“Good point,” says David. “Have you ever listened to a talk, and felt frustrated, but weren’t sure why?”

After thinking a few seconds, Nicole answers, “Yes, come to think of it, I have.”

“Chances are, you had unanswered questions,” David says. “For example, I was just coaching a woman who’s preparing for an important talk to city leaders.

“During her first sub-point, she mentioned one of the biggest challenges for people in her position. She said that private developers often have control over city leaders on major commercial developments. Then she moved on.

“After she was speaking for about a minute, I stopped her. I said, ‘Karen, you can’t go on.

“She said, ‘What are you talking about?’

“I told her, ‘It was that line about private developers often have control over city leaders. I can’t stop thinking about it.

“Karen looked confused,” David adds.

“So am I,” says Nicole. “Why was it a big deal?”

“I wouldn’t say it was a big deal, but, and this is important Nicole, it created a big question in my mind that she didn’t address,” David says.

“What’s that?” she asks.

“How?” David says with a hint of exasperation. “How can city leaders regain control from the developers?”

“After she brought up that issue, I didn’t hear the start of her next sub-point. Can you see the problem this creates?”

Nicole, nodding her head, says, “Yes, I do! You got distracted by that question, and you didn’t hear her next important point.

“Now I see what you mean. Don’t move forward until you’re clear about the idea you’ve sharing. Make sure you haven’t created questions without answering them.”

“Good,” says David. “Karen told me that the line about the developers was something she threw out in the spur-of-the-moment. You have to be careful about those types of thoughts. They can send the audience down a path you don’t want to take them.

“Once you’ve ensured there are no unanswered questions, craft your conclusion to summarize your main points. You can say something like, “You’ve heard how Patti has become a more influential speaker:

“First, she picked up tools to manage her fear.

“Second, she discovered the 5-step speech formula that grabs audience attention, keeps their interest, and compels them to act on her recommendation.

“Third, she learned the three dynamic delivery devices that created a deeper emotional connection with the group.”

“So, it’s a quick reminder about the key points,” Nicole says.

“Yes, it focuses on the benefits your character received - the same results your listener may also want,” David adds.

“Once you’ve summarized the points, you’re ready to transition to the last C,” he says.

“Transitions. I hear that term, but I’m not exactly clear how to use them,” Nicole says, with a hint of confusion in her voice.

“That’s not unusual, Nicole,” David says. “The transition simply provides for smooth passage from one point to the next.

“The easiest way to transition is to call back to previous points - quickly summarize them - then introduce the next point. As an example, I say ‘You’ve heard how Patti picked up the 5-step skeletal structure, how she structured her Big Bang opening, and the manner in which she closed with a memorable call to action. Now, let’s talk about how she created a dynamic delivery that kept her audience in rapt attention.’”

“Those few sentences set up the last C,” he says.

THE CARRYOUT MESSAGE

“That’s the message you want them to remember?” asks Nicole.

David smiles and says, “Absolutely. The seventh C is your **Carryout Message**.”

This step is important because it’s the Foundational Phrase you want your listener to walk away with. Remember when we talked about those?”

Nicole nods affirmatively.

“Within any presentation, you can have ‘mini-Foundational Phrases’ for each supporting point. Like your main phrase, a properly structured support phrase will cause people to remember you weeks, months or years after they hear your story,” David says.

“The key to the Carryout Message of each story is that it must quickly sum up the point of your story. It should leave a vivid picture in the mind of your listener of what her life can be like if she implements your recommendation,” David says.

“It’s like a mini-commercial, isn’t it?” Nicole points out.

“Good observation,” David responds. “That’s an excellent way of saying it. The best commercials leave a lasting imprint after just 30 or 60 seconds. A well-crafted Carryout Message will do the same.

“Do you remember the carryout of Patti’s story?” he asks.

“There were some good ones to take away,” she answers. “But, I do remember the one about ‘What Got You Here Won’t Get You There.’”

“And that’s the point, Nicole,” says David. “When you craft a memorable carryout message, everything else is secondary. When the listener acts, feels or thinks differently, your story has accomplished its purpose.

“Just as a reminder, the rules for a Foundational Phrase are the same ones you use for the Carryout Message. It should be fewer than 10 words. It should be focused on the benefit to the listener. It should focus on benefit and not features,” he says.

“This part of your story should come at the end. It puts a nice bow on your message.

Once you’ve shared the Carryout Message, you can transition to your next sub-point, or lead-in to your overall conclusion.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

“Wow, David!” Nicole says. “This is fantastic. I never knew so much goes into a good story.”

“There is a lot. Remember, every story doesn’t have to have all seven Cs. However, the more you include, the greater impact your presentation will have,” David reminds her.

After taking another sip from his tea, David flashes a mischievous grin. “Nicole, I have a confession. There are many more C’s you can sail to create a memorable story.”

“More? How is that possible?” she asks with a hint of disbelief..

David says, “Oh, there are many other methods to craft and deliver stories. I’ve been studying this subject for 15 years. Sometimes I feel like I’ve just scratched the surface of what I know. We’ll talk about these other Cs in our next meeting.

“The good news is that you picked up seven foundational Cs today. If you use them, they’ll give you a huge leg up on the competition.”

“Oh, I definitely will. It’s a lot to absorb, but, it makes so much sense. I look forward to incorporating them into my presentations,” Nicole says. “So, what’s my homework?”

“I’m so glad you asked,” David answers. “Remember the story I asked you to start working on after our last meeting?”

“I sure do,” Nicole says.

David says, “Take that story, and run it through these seven steps. Keep in mind - and this is important, Nicole, don’t focus on making this perfect. You just learned these seven tools. Your first version will *not* be great. And it shouldn’t be. Think of this as your version 1.0 - you first step down an exciting new path.”

“I hear what you’re saying, it’s just that, I can sometimes be a perfectionist. I want it to be the best possible story,” Nicole responds.

David says, “Oh, believe me, it will be the best version - for where you are and what you know *right now*. With repeated presentations, feedback and corrections, you’ll gain a

deeper understanding of the process. Future versions of the story will be better. Focus on the best version that you can today. The key to the process is to **get started**.

“The problem with many people is that they want to wait until everything is just right - conditions are perfect - before they begin. The problem with that is, it’s *never* a perfect time to start.

“One of the most important lessons I’ve received in my life was from one of my coaches. He taught me that **‘done is better than perfect.’** Write your first version. Test it. Get feedback. Make adjustments. Tell it again.”

“I think I’ve heard that from you before,” Nicole says with a smile.

“You definitely have,” David says. “It’s become a foundation of my life. If you’ll simply get out there and follow this formula, you’re ahead of 99-1/2 percent of the world. Most successful people tend to be the ones who make the most mistakes.

“But, they get feedback. They don’t keep making the same mistakes. In one sense, they’re the biggest failures because they keep pushing forward. I don’t consider them failures, by the way. What they’re really doing is learning.”

“Wow, I get the seven Cs **and** a philosophy lesson all in one day,” Nicole kiddingly replies.

“I guess I do tend to get on a soapbox at times,” David says with a grin.

“That’s one of the reasons I love working with you, coach!” Nicole says with a laugh.

“Alright, enough with the accolades. You have work to do. Take your story through the seven Cs. I’ll see you in two weeks,” David says.

With that, they shake hands, and Nicole leaves David’s office.

BUILD YOUR STORY WITH THE 7 Cs

Characters: Who are the main players in your story? You should have the person who learned the lesson - the 'hero' of the story. That individual should pick up wisdom from the guru. This can be a person, a book, an animal. The key is that the hero should never be the guru.

Circumstances: Describe the circumstances with enough detail to flavor the scene, but allow the listener to fill in the remains details. This allows that person(s) to become part of the story.

Conflict: Conflict is the hook that keep the interest of the listener. Remember to escalate the conflict to the point of the cure in the scene. Escalate too fast or slow, and the story becomes unbelievable or boring.

Cure: This is the scene where the hero of the story changes. This is the lesson learned.

Change: This is the new way of thinking, feeling, or acting by the hero. Show the listener how the hero is living a new life. This should be the new way of living that your listener also wants.

Conclusion: This is the wrap up of the story. It answers any questions that are still in the listener's mind. It summarizes the story, and sets up the Carryout Message.

Carryout Message: This is your "gift" to the audience. It's the takeaway message that will improve their lives. Properly structured, this sentence will cause them to remember your story and it's main point.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

I'd love to hear your thoughts about this book, or selling in general. Please feel free to email me at: mike@speakingcpr.com

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About the author, Michael Davis, *the Storytelling MD*

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. I have 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 a 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 public speaking and storytelling. 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 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 offers a unique perspective on these topics. Due to his dedication to the craft, Michael is sought by speakers all over the world.

He has 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. He 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

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Most importantly, do contact me to let me know how these ideas help you in your journey to become a storyteller who impacts and influences others.

Warmest regards,

Michael Davis, *the Storytelling MD*