



THE 'SELL MORE WITH STORIES' SERIES
**SAIL 7 MORE CS TO
SENSATIONAL STORYTELLING**

Seven ADDITIONAL Steps to Create a Story That Sells

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The **'How to Sell More With Stories'** series

Book 5: Sail 7 MORE Cs to Sensational Storytelling
Seven Additional Steps to Create a Story That Sells

by Michael Davis, *the Storytelling MD*

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the **'How to Sell More With Stories'** series of books

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Book 5: Sail 7 MORE Cs to Sensational Storytelling
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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>.

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NICOLE'S STORY

David Michaels and Nicole Jeffries are meeting in his office. Nicole has been working with David to learn how to effectively use stories to attract more clients to her financial planning practice.

In their last visit, Nicole learned about the first Seven Steps to Sensational Storytelling. David asked her to create the first version of a story that she could use to introduce herself to prospective clients.

David says, "Nicole, do you have your first version?"

"I sure do," she answers.

"Let's hear it," he says.

She begins, "I grew up in a middle class neighborhood. Looking back, there was a lot of tension in our home. I remember my parents arguing about money a lot.

"My parents both worked hard, but they were each 'downsized' from their corporate jobs more than once. Eventually, the strain got to be too much, and they divorced when I was 17."

"That must've been tough," David says.

"It was. I hated to see them go through that. They're great parents, but they always struggled with money.

"What was even tougher was watching them lose their jobs. It's given me a bad feeling about large companies. There was a lot of pain we experienced every time one of them would walk through our front door after they'd been let go again."

"Too many people go through that scene," David says.

Nicole, obviously still pained by the experience, nods in agreement and says, "I know. I've talked to enough people about that in my practice."

Continuing her story, she says, "What was worse was the worry and anxiety my parents lived with. They used up most of their retirement money to make ends meet between jobs."

"How were you able to go to college?" David asks.

"I was fortunate. I earned scholarships and grants, so most of it was paid for," Nicole answers.

“I earned my accounting degree, and worked with a big accounting firm for four years out of college. But, I realized I didn’t love the work. Plus, I had that distrust of large companies.

“After watching my parents go through their struggles, I felt like there was more I could do to help people who were having difficulty with basic financial challenges.

“It was around that time that I met a successful Certified Financial Planner - Susan - who persuaded me to look into a career in financial planning. I liked the idea. I don’t want to see families go through the experiences mine did. If I can help them avoid that, then my work is fulfilling.”

With that, Nicole sits back and takes a sip of her coffee.

“Nice first effort, Nicole!” says David with a smile.

“Thanks,” she replies. “I had to do some thinking about it, but I feel like it represents my reasons for doing the work I do.”

“And that’s where you have to start,” David says. “Are you ready for some feedback?”

IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

“Sure thing. But, be nice,” she says with a smile.

“Since you’re such a terrific student, OK,” David says with chuckle.

“Here are some points that stand out:

“First, you have relatable characters - you, your parents, and Susan. She can connect with people who’ve had mentors or individuals who inspired them to find new careers.

“Second, many people will understand the circumstances of your story - financial struggle is all-too-common.

“Third, there were clear conflicts - your parents with money and with one another, plus your decision to change careers.

“And fourth, there was a cure in the story.

“That’s a good start,” he concludes.

After jotting some notes, Nicole asks, “Where do I need work?”

David says, “The main conflict needs to be more clear. In it’s currently structure, the listener could take away your parents divorce or their financial struggles or your unhappiness with accounting as the main conflict. There must be one that stands out.

“Which do you want it to be?” he asks

After a long pause, Nicole says, “I think it needs to be my struggle with my change from accounting to financial planning.”

“Why?” David asks.

She thinks for a moment, then says, “Well, if I want people to understand why I’m a financial planner....

“Wait, that’s not it. If I want people to know why I’m a planner, I have to connect something that happened when I was younger. That would be the money struggles my family experienced,” she says.

“Very good,” David says with satisfaction. “Our experiences early in life tend to be the source of our best lessons.”

He continues his feedback. “The story also needs to show a stronger influence from Susan. She could be the guru who shows you a new way of thinking, feeling or acting if you become a financial planner.”

“I can see that,” Nicole replies. “More of how fulfilling my work is.”

“And,” David adds, “Possibly how much more money you’re earning.”

“Thanks to your teaching, that’s actually a true statement now,” Nicole says with a grin.

David smiles and continues, “That leads to change - we need to hear how your life is better as a financial planner, as opposed to being an accountant. That would be the fulfillment and higher income we just discussed.”

“The last improvement would be use of dialogue. There wasn’t much. It was more of a report. Remember, when characters are heard, the listener is much more likely to feel an emotional connection to them.”

David sits back, sips his tea, and then says. “Overall, it’s a good first version.

“Oh! One more thought. I do like your carryout message. You talk about your desire to make sure no other families go through your family’s experience. That resonates with people, and creates trust faster.”

Sitting back in her chair, Nicole lets out a long, slow breath. “Wow, there’s a lot that goes into making a memorable story.”

David laughs, “There is, my friend. You’re well on your way to a good one that will attract new business, though.”

“Do you have ideas to improve it?” Nicole asks.

“Grinning broadly, David says, “You now I *always* have an opinion or two, Nicole.”

“Consider centering the story more around your family’s financial struggles when you were a kid. This can be highlighted by dialogue, opinions your parents shared that give insight into their emotional struggles with money. The ideas about money that influenced you. These will be relatable to the listener.”

“OK, makes sense,” says Nicole.

David continues, “Use dialogue when you introduce Susan. A few sentences that tell us how she inspired you to change. This needs to tap into your frustration as an accountant, and highlight the hope she gave you to become a financial planner.”

“Oh, there’s plenty she said that inspired me,” Nicole says enthusiastically.

David says, “Good. Crafting dialogue isn’t difficult when you think back to influential experiences. An important point to remember here is not to worry about recreating verbatim what someone said to you, or what you said. Many speakers labor over a scene, worried that they won’t say the right words. Don’t sweat over that.”

Nicole interjects, “Don’t we need to say exactly what the other person said? Wouldn’t I be lying if I don’t?”

David smiles, “I understand why you ask. You never want to lie to an audience. They’ll sense it.

“Think about this, Nicole. Do you remember what people said to you word-for-word, years ago?”

Nicole starts to answer, then hesitates. “Well, there are some things I can remember, especially hurtful words that people used.”

“I agree with that,” David says. “There are some painful memories that we all carry. They’re so vivid we remember them verbatim. Those are typically short and emotional phrases.

“What I’m referring to are the longer conversations we had. Typically, we don’t remember the words exactly as they were spoken. What you’re looking for is what is called the ‘emotional truth.’ When people spoke, how did their words make you feel?

“That feeling is what the listener will connect to.”

REVISITING PATTI

After a pause, David says, “Think about the story of when I met my client Patti,” he says.

“At this point, I could tell that one myself,” Nicole says laughing.

“I’m sure you could,” David agrees. “Do you think that those are the words Patti and I specifically said?”

“Probably not,” Nicole says after some reflection.

“You’re right. Those are the words I remember to the best of my recollection. If you ask Patti, she remembers different dialogue.

“Who’s right?” David asks.

“I’m not sure,” Nicole replies.

“Both of us are,” he says. “People recall experiences through their own filters. I have my interpretation, she has hers.

“Here’s what’s important about this. The story should convey the **emotional truth** of a situation. People don’t recall the specific words you say. They remember **the emotions the story stirred in them** when you said those words.”

After thinking about this, Nicole says, “I think I understand. Can you tell me a little more about that?”

“Sure,” David replies. “What do you remember about Patti when she first met me?”

Nicole quickly answers, “She was nervous. Worried. She was sick to her stomach just thinking about giving a speech.”

David says, “Right. Do you remember what was going to make this more stressful for her? When was the speech scheduled?”

“Oh, yeah,” Nicole replies. “She wasn’t scheduled to give it for another year.”

David says, “OK, you’ve hit on the emotions she felt. And it would get worse because she wasn’t even going to give the speech for a long time.

“The fact is, Nicole, she didn’t have to wait a year. Technically, it was 11 months. Also, she never said the word “nervous” when we talked. Those two parts of your recollection aren’t true. Does that fact lessen the emotional impact on you?” he asks.

“No!” Nicole says emphatically. “I still feel empathy. I relate to her and want to see her do well.”

“Precisely,” says David. “The **emotional** truth of that story is 100% true. And that’s what leaves the greatest impact.”

Nicole leans back thoughtfully, then says, “That makes so much sense, David. I look forward to working on version number two.”

After taking a sip of her coffee, she continues, “So, you told me last time I’d learn how to sail seven more C’s to storytelling.”

David corrects her with mock sternness, “That’s **sensational** storytelling!”

“Oh, I’m sorry. Don’t want to shoot for anything less than the best,” Nicole says with a laugh.

“You better believe it. Go big or go home!” he says. They both laugh at this.

He continues, “Before I share the seven additional C’s, let’s re-visit Patti’s story. I know you just told me you could retell it yourself, but bear with me. When I’m done, let me know if you notice anything different about it.”

“Fair enough,” says Nicole.

David begins, “I was at a Chamber event in December. I was standing by myself when 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, 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. I looked at her name tag, and said, ‘Yes, Patti, I am. Can I help you?’

“She said, ‘I hope so. I’ve done something **really** stupid, David! I agreed to give the keynote speech for the *Women of Excellence* dinner.’

I said, ‘Why is that a problem?’

“She said, ‘Because, when I give a talk, I don’t know when to shut up!’

Nicole chimes in, “Still a funny line, David.”

David smiles and says, “She then said, ‘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!’ ”

Nicole laughs at this.

David continues, “She finished by saying, ‘I’m really worried. Can you help me?’ ”

I said, “I think so Patti, but we need to talk further. By the way, when is the speech?”

“She said, ‘Oh, not until November.’

“I was stunned. She was looking at the possibility of a year of Alka Seltzer, sleepless nights, and morning sickness! ”

Nicole shakes her head in amazement.

“Jump ahead 11 months. I was at home on a Friday night, and 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! They really liked it.’

“I said, ‘Patti, that’s fantastic. I’m really happy for you.’ She then said, ‘That’s not the best part! When I was done, **four** people gave me checks for the Foundation — **four!** And others offered to volunteer their time to us.’

“I said, ‘Wow! That’s more than we could’ve hoped for.’

“We talked for a couple more minutes, and then Patti ended the call by saying, ‘David, I’m so excited! Thank you so much for working with me to make this a great speech! I can’t wait to do it again!’ ”

Nicole says, "I still enjoy hearing that story."

David says, "A lot of people do. What, if anything, was different?"

Nicole thinks for a long time. "I really didn't hear anything different."

He says, "There were several subtle changes. For instance, at the beginning of the story, I mention it's December. I didn't do that in the old version. Later, I asked Patti when she was scheduled to give the speech. She told me 'November.'

"In the old version, I just told you that the 'interesting twist to her situation was that she wasn't scheduled to give the speech for another eleven months.' In the new version, this key piece of information is shared through dialogue, rather than me telling you through monologue," he concludes.

"I hadn't even noticed, but I can see how it makes a difference with her telling you through the dialogue," Nicole adds.

David adds, "The best storytellers, public speakers, and sales professionals are continually improving their presentations. They test, get feedback, and make changes to shorten and impact the power of their stories.

"The version of Patti's story you just heard is 64 words shorter than the original. The changes are subtle enough that you didn't notice because the **emotional truth** of the story hasn't changed.

"Always remember, Nicole, your stories are never finished. They're constantly evolving. Leonardo DaVinci is quoted as saying 'Art is never finished, only abandoned.' I take that to mean that at some point, you have to give the story you've got."

"I like that quote," Nicole says, grabbing her pen and writing. "That's a great piece of advice for keeping me from trying to be perfect all the time."

After a brief break to take a call, David returns and says, "Now, let's look at the second set of 7 C's that will make your story memorable."

"Cool! I'm ready," says Nicole.

CURIOSITY

David says, “The first C could easily be in the first set of seven Cs. It’s critical to ensuring you grab and keep people’s interest throughout your presentation. It’s called creating **curiosity**.”

“Curiosity keeps people guessing, wondering what’s coming next. It compels them to ask questions and stay engaged.”

“I’ve never thought of that. Can you give me an example?” Nicole asks.

“Sure can,” David answers. “Think about the conversation we created in our first meeting, the one where you meet someone at a networking event.”

“My 60-second connection talk! How could I forget that, it’s tripled my activity since we first met,” Nicole says enthusiastically.

“Remember, we talked about the traditional method people use to introduce themselves: ‘Hi, I’m Bob. I’m a financial planner. I work with company x and we help you blah, blah, blah.’ ”

Nicole laughs at this, “Yes. I’m guessing you’re going to say that doesn’t create any type of curiosity?”

David smiles and with a bit of sarcasm says, “I don’t know. You tell me. That’s a pretty unique introduction.”

More seriously, he says, “There’s nothing compelling about those words that makes people want to hear more.”

After a pause, he says, “Wait. That’s not totally true. There is one question that it does create.”

“What’s that?” Nicole asks.

He answers, “How can I get away from this guy as soon as possible?”

They both laugh at this, and then David continues, “If the other person isn’t curious, the conversation is dead. Creating questions in their minds keeps them engaged.”

“Do I do this just at the beginning, or all the way through the story?” Nicole asks.

“All the way through,” David answers. “Use it to create interest up front, throughout the story and all the way to the end to keep the interest level high.”

“Can you give me an example to help me understand?” Nicole says.

“Absolutely,” David says. “Let’s revisit Patti’s story. When I introduce her, I describe how she’s dressed - clearly a woman of means - but, her face betrays her appearance. What questions does this create?”

Nicole says, “My first thought was ‘How did she become successful?’ then I wondered why she looked so nervous.”

“Good,” says David. “So you were already curious before she said a word to me?”

“Yes, come to think of it,” she answers.

A couple of other examples are when she said “I’ve done something really stupid” and “can you help me?” Didn’t you wonder what was the stupid thing she did, or whether I was able to help?”

“Yes, I did. I don’t think I consciously asked ‘I wonder if David was able to help her?’ but I wanted to hear more,” Nicole says.

“And that’s the point,” David says. “The idea is to create a series of little questions in the mind of your listener, until you reach the cure scene of the story, and let that person know what happened.

“That’s a critical point to storytelling - create curiosity. But - and this is important, Nicole - be sure you answer all of their questions by the end of the story.”

Nicole says, “How will I know if I’ve done that?”

Pausing, David smiles and says “It’s a pretty sophisticated process, but I highly recommend it.”

Leaning forward, Nicole expectantly asks, “What is it?”

Breaking out in a big grin, David says, “Ask!

“When you get feedback for your story, ask people ‘Are there any unanswered questions you have?’ ”

Sheepishly, Nicole says “Well, duh! That’s pretty obvious. I can’t believe I didn’t think of that.”

Laughing, David says, “That’s why I’m paid the big bucks! Don’t be too hard on yourself. Overlooking the obvious is common. We all have moments where we believe we have to create a complicated solution to a problem.

“We talked about this in a previous meeting. Don’t create unnecessary work, or labor over developing your story. Ask your listeners. They’ll usually tell you how to solve the issue.”

“Makes sense to me,” Nicole says.

“As you craft your story, look for opportunities to develop a series of ‘curiosities’ rather than simply re-telling the scene. This will increase interest, and keep the other person focused on your narrative.”

CLARITY

David continues, “The second C is similar to curiosity. If you don’t do this, your listeners will walk away confused.”

“What is it?” Nicole asks eagerly.

After a long pause to create a dramatic impact, David says, “**Clarity**. You *must* be crystal clear about your main point.

“In the real estate world, the mantra is ‘location, location, location.’ In the selling world, the mantra *should* be ‘clarity, clarity, clarity.’

“Why do you think I say it *should* be?”

Thinking for a moment, Nicole says, “Probably because most salespeople aren’t totally clear about their message, or what they want the other person to do?”

“Very perceptive, Nicole!” David says. “That’s the heart of the matter. People usually aren’t clear about the important parts of the story, or how they want people to think, feel or act differently. They also don’t clearly state the point of the story. If *you* don’t have clarity, how can other people possibly have it?”

“I hadn’t thought of that,” she replies.

David continues, “Think about Patti’s story. Because I’ve told it to you several times from a teaching perspective, I haven’t done well with being clear about the purpose of it. Now that you’re so familiar with it, what do *you* think the purpose of it is?”

Nicole sits back, sips from her coffee cup, and thinks. “I believe your point is that if you’re willing to do the work, to invest your time and money, you can become a better communicator.”

“That’s one message,” David says. “There are others, though. It could revolve around the benefits of hiring a coach; the importance of clarity in your message; or the potential benefits of networking. Dozens of messages can be taken from one story.

“The key - and this is critical - is to center your story around **only one point** you want others to walk away with. Remember the wisdom of one of my coaches, “A clear mind says **go**, a confused mind says ‘**no**.’”

“Another bit of wisdom I need to capture,” says a smiling Nicole as she grabs her pen and writes in her notebook.

“As you review your story, or when you get feedback, ask these questions:

“What could be confusing about this?”

“Is there more than one message?”

“Am I clear about what I want people to Think, Feel or Do when the story is done?”

He continues, "The answers to these questions will make or break the impact of your story. Remember, it's not what you say, **it's what they hear**. Take the time to understand what they're hearing, and your message will be more impactful.”

CONCISE

David continues, "You've heard about curiosity and clarity. The third C has to do with getting to the point. That's a challenge for many speakers. If you want to keep attention and interest, your stories need to be **concise**."

"That's a problem I seem to have. I'm detail oriented, so I put a lot of information in my presentations," Nicole interjects.

"It's not uncommon for analytic or detailed-oriented people to struggle with this issue," David says. "They're not sure what to prioritize - which information is critical, and which can be eliminated."

"How do you do that?" she asks with a hint of frustration.

"I won't lie to you, Nicole," David responds. "It's not easy. There are two keys to crafting a short story that conveys enough information to get their attention, but not overload them.

"The first is to use sensory details. If possible, use one visual detail, one auditory, one smell, and one feeling."

"Why is that important?" Nicole asks.

"Science has proven that the brain reacts positively to sensory-rich stories. In one experiment, researchers connected MRI devices to test subjects. They had them listen to presentations filled with data and information. Then, they listened to sensory-rich stories."

David stops to sip his tea, then continues, "When the images were studied, the researchers discovered that brain activity was minimal when the subjects heard data-filled talks. Only a few parts of the brain were activated.

"Then they reviewed the images of activity when the subjects listened to the stories. Most of the brain was engaged. The brains lit up like a Christmas tree. It was as if the person listening to the story was experiencing the story in the same manner as the story teller," David concluded.

"That's incredible," Nicole says.

"I agree," David says. "It's not surprising, though. Think about a memorable speaker or salesperson you've heard recently. A good one," he adds with a smile.

After a pause, Nicole says, "I remember a story our company Vice President told last month. It was a terrific presentation about the impact his grandfather had on him. The

way he talked about being on the farm - the smell of the chicken coop down the road, and the fun he had driving their tractor in the summer. I felt like I was there."

David quickly says, "Notice you mentioned two different senses - smell and feeling. My guess is he included sounds and sights that made the story more of an experience."

After a few seconds, Nicole says, "Come to think of it, he did. Wow! I never would've guessed that creating a memorable story was so simple."

David laughs at this. "Simple, but not easy! It's a new way of writing that is tough - at least at first - for most people."

He continues, "The second key to honing down to the essential parts is using a **five-sentence structure**.

Think about the first 7 C's you picked up. They're each important, but, if you're struggling with too many ideas, you can begin with this process."

"Just five?" Nicole asks with a surprised tone.

David replies, "Yes. Here's the format:

"Start with a sentence about your main **character**.

"Then describe the **conflict**.

"Next, explain the **cure** scene.

"Then show the **change** - the new way your character is thinking, feeling or acting.

"Lastly, share your **carry out** message - the one sentence that captures the essence of your story.

"We discussed each of these parts in our last meeting. Having tested them a couple of times, which do you think is the most important...if you want to leave a lasting impact?" David asks.

After thinking a while, Nicole says, "It's gotta be the carry out message. That would have the long-lasting impact."

"Good guess, but, not what I'm looking for," David says.

"I'm surprised," Nicole says. "Which is it then?"

"It's the **change** in the character," David answers.

“Why is that?” she asks.

“Think about the discussion we had about a ‘Christmas Carol.’ The story is engaging, entertaining and even memorable. However, unless the listener learns how Scrooge changed in the end - the way he thinks, feels, and acts differently - the story doesn’t have much impact.”

“Yeah,” Nicole says, nodding. “I thought about that after our last visit. I think that’s why people watch movies like that over and over every year. They want to be reminded of the message.”

“Precisely,” says David. “Without showing the change, I doubt people would do that.”

He continues, “The listener wants hope — a new way of experiencing the world. It doesn’t have to be a major life-changing situation. It could be something as simple as discovering a less stressful route to drive to work.

“Or, it could be as important as uncovering a new strategy to ensure that person can retire when s/he wants, and never worry about running out of money,” David concludes.

After thinking about this for several seconds, Nicole says, “OK, I see your point. The person listening probably won’t change her behavior unless she sees a compelling reason. The change in your character gives her that.”

“Well said,” David adds. “Think about Patti. When you see how she got the unexpected results, **and** her attitude about speaking changed, isn’t that compelling, to use your word?”

“It sure is,” says Nicole. “It made me want to look further into speaking to increase my business.”

David smiles at this. “I can help you with that, but, one challenge at a time. Let’s focus on stories first, then we’ll get into the art of public speaking.”

“Sounds like a deal,” says Nicole. “I’ll hold you to that.”

CONTEXT

After a quick break, David says, “Alright, my friend, you’ve heard about creating curiosity, clarity, and being concise. Now it’s time for the fourth C - **context**.”

“When we met, Nicole, how would you have felt about this version of Patti’s story:

“I have this client who, when I met her, wasn’t feeling so enthused about a speech she had to give. She didn’t have to give it for a while. But, after doing some work together, she felt better. The night she gave her speech, she called me and told me how well it went. She was very pleased with the results and thanked me.”

“What do you think your reaction would’ve been?” David asks.

“Hmmm, probably... I would have been looking for some caffeine to wake me up from that snoozer,” Nicole says with a laugh.

David says, “Why? The facts of the story are the same, aren’t they?”

Giving this some thought, Nicole says, “Come to think of it, yes, they are.”

“Then why was it boring?” David asks.

After further reflection, she says, “It was a report. Facts only. It wasn’t compelling.”

“I’m glad you said that. You’re right,” he says.

“There’s another aspect, too. Think about the words I used in this version - ‘wasn’t feeling enthused.’ ‘She felt better.’ ‘She was very pleased.’

“What do those phrases tell you?”

Looking a little confused, Nicole says, “Well, I know she didn’t feel good in the beginning, and she was thrilled after she finally gave the speech.”

“You’re right, but can you **feel** the difference? Do you have *any* emotional reaction? Do you experience any empathy for her?” he asks.

“Not really,” Nicole says after thinking about David’s questions.

“One of the reasons is because there’s little contrast between Patti’s emotions in that boring version,” David says. “ ‘She wasn’t feeling enthused,’ followed by ‘She was very pleased’ doesn’t create a huge emotional shift, does it?”

“No,” says Nicole. “It feels....clinical, or sterile.”

“I like that,” says David. “If you’ll excuse me, I’m going to write **those** down,” he says while grabbing a pen.

“Nice to know the student can teach the master,” Nicole says with a huge grin.

“You better believe it,” says David with a smile. “Some of my best insights have come from people I coach.”

Returning to his point, David says, “You’re correct, Nicole. There’s no emotion to that version.

“Think about the original version of Patti’s story:

‘I was at a Chamber event in December. I was standing by myself when 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, she looked anxious. She got within five feet of me and blurted out, ‘I understand you’re a speech coach!’ ”

David says, “This gives us the context of setting. We’re in a business environment. It’s December. She’s professionally dressed, but looks stressed.’ These give you a picture without going into too many details.”

He continues, “Later, she said, ‘when I give a talk, I don’t know when to shut up!’ followed by ‘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.’ She then finished by saying, ‘I’m really worried. Can you help me?’

“This gives you insight into her frame of mind. She’s concerned about her Foundation, and the negative impact her speech could have on it. Again, not too much detail, but enough to let us know why she’s feeling the way she is.”

After taking a sip of his tea, David concludes with, “The next piece of the story gives us the context into the potential for Patti’s stress levels. I asked her, ‘By the way, when is the speech?’ ” Her response was, ‘Oh, not until November.’ ”

“And that creates a lot of emotion because we have specifics about the time-frame she’s looking at, doesn’t it?” asks Nicole.

With a smile, David says, “Absolutely! We now have context for what Patti is feeling, and why. That’s the reason we feel an emotional connection with her. We relate to her circumstances because we clearly understand what the situation is. That is the power of context.”

CONTRAST

“This is great information, David. I see how this takes storytelling to a deeper level,” Nicole says.

“I agree,” David says. “These seven Cs transform your story to a memorable and meaningful experience.

He continues, “The fifth C is powerful because it heightens the conflict, and creates that stronger emotional hook. It’s **contrast**.”

“Isn’t that where you highlight opposites?” Nicole asks.

“In a sense, yes. Think back to the Then, Now and How formula. What you want to show is the difference between the *Then* part of the story, and the *Now*,” David says.

“If I remember right, the more contrast between the two, the better the story,” Nicole confidently says.

“So you **do** pay attention!” David teases.

“A wise man once told me that listening is the key to selling, even before telling stories,” says Nicole.

“Wow, must be a smart guy,” David says.

“ ‘Smart’ is part of a word I sometimes use to describe him,” Nicole quickly retorts.

David roars with laughter at this.

“Alright, now that I’ve been put in my place, let’s revisit Patti. When I first met her, how was she feeling?” he asks.

Nicole says, “She was nervous... anxious... stressed. A lot of negative feelings when she was thinking about her speech.”

“Right,” David says. “And the fact she wouldn’t be speaking for nearly a year was going to increase those negative feelings.

“Like we talked about before, it doesn’t get much worse for a speaker than to feel like that, does it?”

“No. I think it’s why I felt so much empathy for her the first time I heard it,” Nicole says.

“That’s right,” he replies. “And that connection gets driven even deeper on the other side of her story. How did Patti feel after her speech?”

“Like I said before, she was thrilled - even euphoric,” Nicole answers. “She got unexpected results - money, donations of time, a standing ovation.”

“Yes. For a speaker, it doesn’t get much better than that,” David says. “And that’s a huge contrast from how she felt eleven months earlier, isn’t it?”

“Definitely,” says Nicole. “I can’t think she could’ve experienced more contrasting emotions than those.”

David adds, “One of my coaches taught me that the gap between the two emotions is where your prospective client’s pain is. He says:

“Your solution is the bridge that spans that gap.

“It represents the change we talked about earlier, the one that transports them from their old life to their new, better way of living.

“I see that,” Nicole says. “If there isn’t contrast, then you don’t have a memorable or enticing conflict, do you?”

David says, “Excellent insight. If the story had been ‘When I met Patti, she was a little nervous about giving a speech. It wasn’t scheduled for about a year, and she wanted some help. When she finally did give the speech, she was pleasantly surprised at the positive reaction she got from the audience. She hopes to speak again.’

“How ya feeling about that version?” David asks.

“Same as before, I’d still be looking for caffeine to wake up from that excitement,” Nicole answers.

They both laugh at this, then David says, “Exactly. The language is boring. There’s no emotion **and** the contrast between the two is vague. She went from ‘a little nervous’ to ‘pleasantly surprised.’ Not compelling, and definitely doesn’t inspire you to take action, does it?”

“No,” says Nicole. “I think it also explains why most of the stories I’ve heard are forgotten so quickly. And, I now understand why *my* stories have been forgettable.”

“Yes,” I agree,” he says. “The key to creating compelling contrast is to use emotional words, and to make them as opposite as possible. A client should transform from emotions like ‘stressed,’ ‘scared,’ or ‘angry’ to ‘relaxed,’ ‘confident’ or ‘overjoyed.’ The more extreme the difference in emotions, the better and more powerful the contrast.”

COMMON EMOTIONS

David says, “The first five of these Cs involve additional ways for you to craft your story. The next one is a combination of crafting and delivering it. It involves using **common emotions.**”

“Common emotions?” Nicole asks. “What do you mean?”

“Those are emotions that all people share. There are many, but six of the more common are: **Happiness, Anger, Disgust, Fear, Surprise and Sadness.** Think about any memorable story, Nicole. It will have at least one of those emotions,” David says.

After writing down the six and looking at them for a long time, Nicole eventually says, “You’re right. My favorite movie is ‘Avatar.’ I felt disgust, anger, surprise, and sadness at various points in the story. I also felt happiness when they kicked the bad guys butts!” she adds with a grin.

David smiles at this. “That’s pretty common in those ‘Good guys versus Bad guys’ movies. And it’s a perfect example of what I’m talking about. You felt an emotional bond with the characters, didn’t you?”

“I sure did,” Nicole quickly responds.

After a long pause, she says, “I understand how this works in books and movies, but is it as powerful with stories when I’m in selling situations?”

“Fair question,” David says. “Let’s go back again to Patti. Which of the six emotions did you experience?”

After quickly thinking about this, she says, “You could say a form of sadness because of the stress she was feeling, fear because of the possibility she could do poorly in the speech. I was surprised at what happened after her speech, and definitely felt happiness at the end because her talk was a huge success.”

David adds, “Exactly. Happiness is the overriding feeling at the conclusion. You bring up a good point about feelings like stress, or anxiety. Those are forms of fear. Ultimately, the emotions you experience can be traced back to one of those six.

“Think about your world of financial planning. Which of the emotions would be most common in your stories? Which would most likely create a bond with the listener?”

Without hesitating, Nicole answers, “Fear! People are definitely afraid of running out of money, not being able to pay for college, or leaving their families unprotected if the unexpected happens.”

David says, “I agree. Now, think about the Then, Now and How story formula. Remember what we talked about - the bigger the contrast of emotions, the better the story. What is the opposite of fear that creates that different feeling?”

“It’d have to be happiness,” Nicole answers. “When you go from fear to happiness, that’s a big change.”

David says, “Yes, I’d say that’s it. When people shift from being uncertain - feeling fear about money - to feeling peace of mind or even happiness, that’s a huge emotional shift. It’s also an end result that nearly everyone is seeking.”

Nicole adds, “I see how these six emotions create a relatable scenario, where people can get pulled into your world.”

David smiles and says “That’s the point, Nicole. That’s one of the ‘hooks’ that transforms your story from a report to an experience that develops trust between you and prospective clients.

“You mentioned the delivery aspect of the six emotions,” says Nicole.

“Yes,” David answers. “It’s a common issue I see with storytellers. They tell tales filled with emotional words, but their delivery doesn’t match the emotion of those words.

“For example, think about the part of Patti’s speech where she says, ‘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.’ She then finished by saying, ‘I’m really worried. Can you help me?’

“Most speakers, given dialogue like that, don’t emphasize the words to match their emotion. They might say “I’m really worried” in a monotone voice. I’ve even seen people say a phrase like that with a smile.”

“And that has a negative impact?” asks Nicole.

David says, “Think about it. It’s sending a mixed message to the listener’s brain. The words contradict the emotion of the delivery. In that case, the listener almost always focuses on the emotion of the *delivery* rather than the words being spoken.

“If the speaker is smiling, the listener won’t feel Patti’s worry. It’s subliminal, but it destroys the impact you’re trying to create with your words.”

“I see,” Nicole says after giving this some thought. “Like you said earlier, a confused mind won’t take action.”

“Bingo!” says David. “You accidentally create an environment where your prospective client doesn’t connect with the emotions you’re trying to convey.”

“Sounds like it takes practice to get good at telling your stories,” she says with a sigh.

“It does,” says David. “You also have to be willing to accept constructive feedback. But, once you start doing that, you’ll get the hang of it. And, you’ll stand out quickly because many sales people never learn this. Of the ones that do, most aren’t committed enough to practice. I have a feeling you will,” he adds with a smile.

“At this point, I’m all in, so, yes, I won’t hurt my chances by *not* practicing,” Nicole says with enthusiasm.

CONVERSATION

After a brief interruption, David says, “We’re down to our last of the second set of C’s, Nicole. This one may be the most important of them all. That’s why I saved it for last.”

“Really?” Nicole says. “I’m intrigued. Tell me more.”

He answers, “I saved it for last because once the other parts of your story are in place, this piece will transform your story from a report to a memorable experience.

“The final C is **Conversation.**”

“You mean like we talked about earlier?” asks Nicole.

“Yes,” says David. “The dialogue that characters use in the story. There are three keys to conversation.

“We’ve already talked about the most important - the emotional truth of the story, as opposed to 100% facts.

“Here are a couple of additional tips for you:

“First, the dialogue should be *conversational*. I hear too many salespeople recreating a story that sounds like a novel, more than the back-and-forth that happens when we speak in everyday situations.

“In Patti’s story, for instance. This is how I say it:

“She finished by saying, ‘I’m really worried. Can you help me?’”

I said, “I think so Patti, but we need to talk further. By the way, when is the speech?”

If I wanted to sound intelligent, or highbrow, I could’ve written it like this:

“She concluded by saying, ‘I’m experiencing a tremendous amount of negative feelings about this. I need assistance. Do you have time available on your calendar to further discuss this matter?’

“I responded, ‘Most likely, I can provide some form of assistance.’ Then my curiosity got the better of me, and I inquired, ‘By the way, what is the date of the event?’

“Do you hear the difference,” David asks.

Laughing, Nicole says, “I sure do.”

“There’s nothing wrong with those words, but the fact is, we don’t speak that way in everyday conversation. That’s especially true when at least one of the people is under stress. In those cases, we revert to our most conversational language - typically in shorter sentences with emotional words.

“Remember this: **The more realistic the dialogue, the more believable the scene.**”

David pauses a moment to sip his tea, then continues...

“The second additional tip is to use a maximum of three sentences per character in each scene. Otherwise it tends to drag out, and the audience gets bored.

“One of the biggest mistakes storytellers make is to give too many details in their conversations. Notice in the last example, I use 30 words. The second version is 62 words. Thirty-two fewer words can make a huge difference between keeping and losing your audience.”

“I can definitely *feel* the difference between those two versions,” Nicole says.

David adds one more thought, “This discussion about conversation reminds me of a memorable point made by a well-known Hollywood screenwriting consultant, Michael Hauge. He says that the purpose of an story - whether it’s in a book, a movie, or a business setting - is to **elicit emotion**. Well-structured and well-delivered conversations enable you to do that.”

“Elicit emotion, I’m writing that one down,” Nicole says while grabbing her ever-present pen and notepad.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

David says “I can’t believe it, Nicole.” Time zips by whenever I work with someone to teach these storytelling and selling concepts. That’s especially true because of you. I’ve paid close attention — you’re going to do very well in business. You absorb ideas - you’re a sponge! And, you’re willing to do the necessary work.

“Change isn’t easy, but, it can pay off if you’re willing to step outside of your comfort zone. If you ever do feel uneasy about doing something new, remember this:

“ ‘Every activity or belief that you’re now comfortable with was at one time new and uncomfortable.’ With time and repeated action, they became comfortable.

Nicole, writing down this latest gem, says, “Another terrific point of wisdom, David.

“This has been so helpful. I get the sense that these seven new Cs are finishing touches on your story, like icing on the cake.”

“Good way of putting it,” he replies. “When you incorporate them into your stories, you’ll stand out so far from your competition that people won’t be able to resist working with you.”

She smiles at this thought, “So, I know you have homework for me. What is it?”

David says, “It’s a little different this time. We’re going to take some time off between meetings.”

Nicole frowns at this. Looking slightly dejected, she says, “Really? I love our get-togethers. I pick up so many great ideas.”

“I understand,” David says. “I do, too. You’re one of the best students I’ve ever worked with. This doesn’t mean we won’t be meeting again. You did mention something about needing to work on your public speaking skills, didn’t you?” he asks with a twinkle in his eyes.

“Definitely,” she quickly answers. “I’ve been told I might be speaking to groups around town, and it has me nervous.”

“Maybe I should have you talk with Patti,” David jokes. “I hear she does well.”

“I’d love to talk with her,” Nicole replies. “I’m sure we’ve both had to suffer through too many of your Star Wars references,” she says with a laugh.

“Oh, that hurts. I thought you were finally coming around. But, I can take it. I’m strong with the Force,” he says with mock defiance.

“Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to go test your stories. Attend networking events. Use your 60-second story. Share your Then, Now & How and “WHY” stories.

“Test. Get feedback. Make changes. Repeat the process.

“This is the only way you’ll improve and become a master storyteller.

“I’ve already seen the benefit of doing that, and I accept your challenge,” Nicole confidently says, smile spreading across her lips.

“Now, I’ve got a tool that can help you as you prepare each story,” he says, handing her a sheet of paper. “This is a [storytelling checklist](#). It’s useful in reviewing your stories to make sure they have as many relevant parts as possible.

“Read through your stories. Check off every item on this list that you feel should be in them.

“Then, create a list of businesses you want to work with. Go through your story file and ensure that you have either your own or another advisor’s story to customize to each business on your list.

“If you put in the practice, and consistently strive to improve, you can’t help but succeed.”

Nicole says, “I’m so excited by the possibilities. I can never thank you enough for what you’ve done for me.”

He quickly responds, “You can thank me by continuing to do what you’re doing, and work the process.”

He then adds, “You know, you’re not getting rid of me that easily. I expect a monthly check-in phone call. Plus, there’s a new Star Wars movie coming out soon, and I’m sure you’ll want my perspective on it.”

“Umm, doubt it,” she quickly replies.

“Despite your stance against the world’s best movies, I want you to know I’m proud of you, Nicole. You have what it takes to be a great success, not just in sales, or financial planning, but in life. I’m proud to call you my friend.”

With this, they stand and hug. Nicole leaves with a smile, feeling much better about her prospects for a successful future in sales, and in her career.

ADD LIFE TO YOUR STORY WITH 7 MORE Cs

Curiosity: Are you creating a series of ongoing questions in listeners' minds that keeps their interest? Are you also answering all of those questions by the end of your story so that the listeners aren't feeling frustrated or confused?

Clarity: Are you clear about your main point? Do your supporting points also clearly support your main idea? Are you giving clarity about what the one next step is for the listener when you are finished?

Concise: Are you providing just enough information to create interest, but not so much that you lose their attention? Are you keeping each scene short and moving the story forward?

Context: When setting the circumstances, are you giving listeners enough information so they understand the scope of the problem presented in the story? Do they understand why these are challenges for the characters?

Contrast: Are you providing enough difference between the problem and solution? Are the characters' emotions about the problem believable? Does the contrast provide an opportunity for the listeners to develop an emotional connection to the solution you provide?

Common Emotions: Are you tapping into the six emotions (*Happiness, Anger, Disgust, Fear, Surprise and Sadness*) both with your story and the manner in which you deliver it?

Conversation: Are you telling your story through your characters words, as much as possible. Look for every opportunity to transform monologue into dialogue.

For a more detailed checklist that you can use to review your story, [click this link](#).

Your Help is Appreciated!

I greatly appreciate the feedback I receive from readers. It helps others make an informed decision before buying my books. If you enjoyed this book, please leave a brief review at the following link: <http://amzn.to/2hm5iny>

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- Lay the foundation for **long-term mutually beneficial** client relationships

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- Keep audience interest from start-to-finish
- Avoid overloading your listeners with too much information
- Immediately grab attention and keep them on the edge-of-their-seats
- Conclude with a clear message that compels people to take action
- Appeal to every personality type in your audience

Once you master the skill of public speaking, you'll dramatically increase your business and become a speaker who is in demand. Watch out for the series **'Sell More With Public Speaking,'** coming soon to the Amazon Kindle store.

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*