

# Telling stories

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# The importance of telling stories

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## The power of stories

- Stories are one of our most fundamental communication methods
  - We tell stories in any moment of our lives
  - We learn languages by listening and telling stories
  - We talk about what happens to us telling stories
  - We dream in stories
  - ....

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## Also...

- We elaborate and memorize our experiences and actions through stories
- We think in narratives
  - Our conversations are made up of stories
    - Personal stories and gossip make up 65% of our conversations\*

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## Effects of telling stories

- Stories connect people, get people engaged and interested.
  - we love going to the movies and reading books because we love to be engaged by stories
- Stories make people listen to you
- It is stories that people remember about you

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## Telling stories in professional presentations

- Storytelling skills are essential for integration in any environment: workplace, academic, or social.
- A good story can make or break a presentation, article, or conversation.
- Stories make your audience listen to you and make your speech memorable

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## An example (part 1)

In 1748, the British politician and aristocrat John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, spent a lot of his free time playing cards.

He greatly enjoyed eating a snack while still keeping one hand free for the cards.

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## An example (part 2)

So he came up with the idea to eat beef between slices of toast, which would allow him to finally eat and play cards at the same time.

Eating his newly invented "sandwich," the name for two slices of bread with meat in between, became one of the most popular meal inventions in the western world.

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## Result on the audience...

The audience is very likely to never forget the story of who invented the sandwich ever again. (or much less likely to do so)

If the same story had been presented in bullet points or other purely information-based form it would be more easily forgotten or not remembered at all

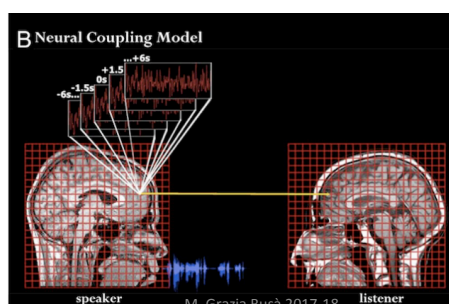
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Why do we feel so much more engaged when we hear a story?

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## It all has to do with the brain

Listening to data **only** activates the language processing parts in the brain (Broca's area and Wernicke's area), where we decode words into meaning.



Jonathan Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

## It all has to do with the brain

Listening to stories activates the language processing parts in our brain, **but also any other area in our brain that we would use when experiencing the events of the story are too.**

- A story about delicious certain foods activates our sensory cortex
- A story about motion, activates our motor cortex

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## So...

When we tell a story we activate our listeners' sense of vision, of smell, of hearing, of touch...



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<http://speakfearlessly.net/the-secrets-of-storytelling-why-we-love-a-good-yarn/>

## At the hormonal level...

Story telling releases hormones and neurotransmitters.

Here's some of the hormones released

- Vasopressin
- Oxytocin
- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- Endorphins

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## Dopamine

Effects:

Increases

**Focus Motivation Memory**

through

**building suspense  
cliff-hanger**

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## Oxytocin

Effects:

Increases

**Generosity Trust Bonding**

through

**creation of empathy**

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## Endorphins

- Look at this video
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pCp7pLQn1c>

(credits: David Phillips)

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## Endorphins

Effects:

Increases

**Creativeness Relax Focus**

through

**laughing**

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## At the hormonal level...

Story telling lowers levels of

- Cortisol
- Adrenaline

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## High levels of cortisol and adrenaline

Effects:

Causes

**Irritability, Intolerance**

**Uncreativity, Sense of criticism**

**Memory impairment, Bad decisions**

also called the stress hormones

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## The rise of storytelling...

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### Story telling in marketing and sales

- It has been shown that when speakers tell stories, listeners synchronize.
- Stories are actually effective in influencing listeners:
  - They can modify listeners' ideas, thoughts, emotions and behavior



Story telling is used in marketing to improve sales

<http://www.fastcreate.com/302044/the-science-of-storytelling-how-narrative-cuts-through-distraction>  
<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/storytelling-why-stories-attract-more-customers/>

Listen to some experts' advice:  
why telling stories is important in  
business, research, etc...

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## Expert 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY3u6QuZXE8>

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## Story Forms

Stories can take many forms, from brief anecdotes, to detailed descriptions of mishaps, encounters, and adventures.

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## How to... (1)

- Stories should be used to **illustrate points** in the speech
  - Should be **relevant** to the subject
  - In addition to telling the story, the **point needs to be stated.**

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## How to... (2)

- Stories should be selected that match the intelligence, experience, occupation, and age of the audience as well as the nature of the occasion.
  - Should be **appropriate** to the subject
  - Should be **not too simple nor too complex** for the audience

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## How to... (3)

- Stories about your **mistakes, troubles, or ignorance** are effective because people like to see themselves mirrored in other people's weaknesses.
- Stories should use **simple, conversational words** and convey the message in an interesting fashion.
- Stories should **use humor cautiously**, in case people don't appreciate or miss the point.

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## How to...(3)

- Stories should talk about **people, places, and things the audience can relate to.**
  - Familiarity with the elements of the story makes the audience more involved

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## Delivery

- Emphasize the **adjectives** and **verbs** in your stories to make them sound more interesting.
- Use **specific** and **interesting** verbs and adjectives. Use emotional language.
- **Practice** your story before you deliver it
- Slant your story to the audience
  - a group of colleagues vs. executives

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amazing amazon story

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- <https://bumbukucreatives.com/storytelling-affect-audiences-brain/>

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