

Do you like stories? I can't imagine someone who doesn't like stories. We all remember a story from our childhoods. Do we remember because we care so much about our childhood, or did the storyteller was so gifted that we didn't forget? What are the ways to make the story attractive and catchy? Interestingly, everybody has the ability to make their life experiences charming. The only thing we need is knowing what to do and when to do.

In his bestselling novel, Matthew Dicks gives the tips about how to fascinate your audiences with your key moments in your daily life, business life, or even in the time when you are raising a child. He gives the formula for you to be an excellent storyteller. There are things to do and not to do when you are telling the story. You'll learn every bit about the storytelling, for instance how to start and how to finish your story.

There should be an important change and the protagonist should be you in the story.

The author does not have a specific audience in his novel. He aims to help everyone, in every age and in every profession. Because he thinks that storytelling is the key point in establishing good communication. For instance, in the book, you can see a grandpa who tries to have a bond with his grandchildren, and a sales executive who tries to charm his potential client.

Of course, there are some absolute rules to follow for being an effective storyteller.

First of all, you need to have an important change happening to someone or on something in your story. If there are only succession and marvelous things happening in your story, it's not enough, sadly.

No worries, though. The change doesn't have to be a big one, all right. But, the audience wants to hear things that surprise them. Think about a poorly-written book you've read. Even though the book is not good, somehow it has an important change in the character's life and it holds you for a couple of pages, right?

Generally, anecdotes, travel stories, drinking stories etc. don't have any important change in them. Even though the stories include feelings, they are not permanent. You just listen to it and it goes in one ear out the other. So, it is in vain to expect to engage your audience with these kinds of stories. You can make them happy or sad, but is it enough?

Also, you should make sure that you should be the protagonist in the stories you tell. The audiences want to hear something related to you, not to your best friend.

What is the reason for that?

Certainly, listening to the story of the person right in front of you is naturally appealing, enduring and instant. It is braver to tell your own story than telling someone else's.

Moreover, it consists of harsh truths and reality – which will make your audience appreciate you.

For sure, this doesn't mean that you can't tell another person's story, all you need is to use your own perspective while telling the story. For instance, the writer instructed Holocaust survivors' children about how to tell the stories of their parents, with the help of his work with Voice of Hope Organization.

Essentially, children learned how to form their parents' stories and so the stories were related to their lives at that moment while also touching to the past for including their parents' experiences. Thereby, instead of sounding like historical lessons from the past, their stories became catchy. Moreover, they circle around how their own lives changed because of their parents' experiences.

While telling your story, be as natural as possible and don't use too much exaggeration.

Author Dicks has a test called "the dinner test". In order to see if your story is good enough, ask this question to yourself: "Is this the kind of story that can be told a friend over dinner?" If you can, then it probably is a good one.

While planning about how to tell your story, there is one thing that you shouldn't forget. Your style of storytelling shouldn't differ from person to person. You should be telling your story in the same way to everyone.

For instance, some storytellers use a lot of hand gestures and body movements while telling their stories. They exaggerate their narratives. But, ask yourself this question: "Can you do these acts at the dinner table sitting with your colleagues and your boss?" So, don't forget that you're just telling your story, not performing a show for America's Got Talent.

Besides hand gestures, they use exaggerated poetical flourishes in their stories when they are telling their stories – or when they write. Again, ask yourself: "Would you spend time with someone speaking like this: 'Blossoms hang round the brows of morning, and flourish down the bright cheek of modest eve.'"? All right, you might. But one time only, right? So, remember: you are a storyteller, not a Victorian poet.

In the same way, don't start your story with dialogue, especially if it is a needless one. Let's imagine, starting a story in a dinner party by telling "Uncle Jack, did you buy me a bicycle?" or with a random noise like "Whoopsies!" It would sound really odd and they wouldn't invite you over for dinner again. And still, on the page and on the stage, lots of storytellers assume that it's okay to start their story in this absurd, distractive way. Instead of that, before dive into your dialogue, give an introduction of your story and its characters.

Essentially, storytellers are wrong about this one. They think that if they act their story out, the audiences would more like their stories. But that's not even true. They know that you

rehearsed, but they want something from you. That is the naturality. They want to feel that you are spontaneously telling your story, not by heart. If they feel that you are telling it by heart, I am sorry your connection with your audience is lost.

In fact, the key in the good story is the five-second moment.

In the art of storytelling, there is one thing that you should definitely know, and that is the five-second moment. As a storyteller, your primary mission is to show that moment as clear as crystal.

What is this five-second moment, which one?

Especially, we're talking about the permanent changes in our life. It is possible that you lose someone in your life. Maybe you decide to think vice versa about something important, or you love someone, or you are not loved anymore. These moments are instant, strong and small which are the creators on the basis of great stories.

Do you still have doubts? Just think about the story below from the writer's life, which has made people shed tears.

As an adolescent, Dicks had involved in a horrible car crash. Half of his body was thrown from the window. It was so horrible that his heart stopped beating when he was dragged from the vehicle and fortunately he was resurrected by paramedics on the side of the road.

Do you think this is the five-second moment that made people cry?

Nope, not this one. We will see that moment later. Surprisingly, the writer's parents rushed to see how the car was, instead of rushing to the hospital to see their child. He was so scared and alone when his five-seconds came in and suddenly his teenage friends came up from nowhere in the waiting room, shouting and feeling happy to see their friend alive while he was being taken to the operating room.

Audiences think that this moment is more powerful than the near-death experience. Why is that?

Because this is a realization moment in his life in which is relatable to everyone. Probably we will never feel in the same way with the writer in this near-death experience, except the loneliness, negligence and the strong friendship. These are relatable to everyone. We all felt it, that's why the audience had a real connection with the story. Interestingly, when the audiences talk about this story later, they occasionally mention the crash – they only remember the fact that when he was feeling lonely, his friends showed up for him.

Knowing the end of your story gives you the beginning of it.

When you know your realization moment of your story, you'll realize that you know how to end your story. How? Because this moment is both the core of your story and the peek and goal of your narrative. Thus, closer to the end the better.

Don't wind down yet because you haven't come to the hardest part of the storytelling. Right now, you know how to end your story, it is high time you to learned how to begin.

Certainly, you should look back to your experiences to find the most transformative moment for the story. But there are lots of it. How can you decide which is the best for the audiences?

First of all, you should know how your story ends. I mean, what is going to happen in your five-second moment? Then, answer this question: What's the opposite of my five-second moment? Basically, your story should start totally different from the end of it. This opposition is very crucial because it will give your audiences a plot-twist, which they love the most.

Think about a sci-fi thriller movie, for instance. The guy with superpowers deals with regular criminals every day. Then there is a world attack of the creatures from outside the world. Our guy has to beat them and save the world. No matter it seems like the evils will take over the world, we all know that our guy will save the world and everyone will be safe and sound.

Put it differently, If you simply think what's the opposite of the first 15 minutes in the movie, you'll probably have a clear answer on how it will end. The same thing applies to your story.

If you want to engage your audience, you should know that there are some things to do and not to do.

If you want your audiences to engage in your story, you should have a good telling of your story, with the help of this way, your audiences can feel the same way you feel. They can see, hear and feel what you are telling them.

However, if all this sounds like a big deal, relax. Fortunately, there are some things to do and not to do that will help you give an engaging experience for your audience.

Significantly, using the present tense is one of the ways to take your audience with you. Instead of starting your story with "Last week I was on a camp trip..." start with something like "Now, I am inside of my tent and my whole body is shivering from the air breeze coming from the ground."

The technique of using the present tense in telling your story produces a feeling of an instance for your audience. They are also inside of that tent, feeling cold. The present tense drags the audience into the time the teller was on and he gives them a closer look at the key moments.

Now you learned what to do to engage your audience in your story, but what about the things you shouldn't do?

Importantly, avoid asking your audience rhetorical questions. If you do that, your audience will try to answer the question. Thereby, you convert your telling into a Q and A session. Your audience would realize they are not in that tent with you, but in the room with you thinking about your needless rhetorical question.

Another off-limits thing is addressing the audience. For example, by saying "Have you ever been in this situation before?" you address your audiences and it is over for the listener. They realize that the teller standing in front of them and they are being addressed.

Thus, avoid talking to your audience and surely asking any questions. Just tell the story, – remember, in the present tense.

There is a long way ahead of you in the art of storytelling if you avoid swearing and vulgarity.

On his blog, the writer is careful about the words he uses in the stories. Why so? Because he is aiming to reach wider and wider communities. You can't find any swearing or vulgarity in his stories. Obviously, it works. In conclusion, if you want to have a good career in storytelling, you should be careful about what to say and how to say to your audience.

The audiences will judge you from the way you talk and what you talk to them. So no matter where you are, avoid using no-no words too much.

If you avoid swearing in your stories, the audiences that have a great time will increase. To illustrate, the author has been invited to the popular radio show 'The Moth' and after he shared his swear-free stories in the show, he gained millions of audiences. Thereby, don't expect to get a call for speaking at corporate, family or school events if you don't avoid swearing. He basically implies that the using f word decides for you to rise or fall in this career.

Plus, not only avoid swearing but also avoid vulgarity to have an effect on the audience.

When you describe blaspheming events, whether sexual in nature or involving any other sort of bodily fluid, you become vulgar. Even though you might think that it is helpful for the audience to form a mental image by describing these things in a lot of detail, you are probably wrong and just disgusting them.

For example, one of the author's friends had a chance to speak at a StorySlam. He had a bad stomach while on a first date, and it resulted in an unfortunate situation on the sofa he was sitting. He described every detail, smell, texture, even the color, instead of simply telling the story and letting them imagine it for themselves. Surely, he didn't get a high score by the judges on that evening.

Think carefully when choosing which words to tell in your story, be sure that what seems reliable and genuine to you should do the same effect on the audience too. They shouldn't think your words as profane. Don't forget, a little limit on you can give you a great lead to your storytelling career.

Storyworthy by Matthew Dicks Book Review

With the help of the right techniques, you can be an expert on storytelling. While telling your story you should add the element of change in your story, avoid impertinence and needless flourishes; and use the simple present tense to take the audience with you.

Celebrity references are also in the no-no crew.

When you are referring to a celebrity in your story, you should be aware of the fact that your audience might not know that celebrity. In that case, they become confused and start to think about that celebrity they don't know. Even the author experienced this - with the similarity between his sister and Zooey Deschanel - and he stopped using celebrity references since then. You can just simply describe your character, but using a reference for it seems lazy, believe me. So, the question here is: What's my character really like beyond the boring similarities.

<https://goodbooksummary.com/storyworthy-by-matthew-dicks-book-summary/>