

PERSUADE WITH A STORY!

HOW TO
ATTRACT CLIENTS
AND CUSTOMERS

*With Heroic
Storytelling*

HENRY J. DEVRIES



INDIE BOOKS
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*To my Indie Books International Family
and Friends*

Our brand is generosity, family, and growth.

*This book is also dedicated to the memory of
my mom and dad, Jack and Janice DeVries,
who encouraged me to finish and publish my
fiction stories one day (sorry you never lived to
see that), and to the matriarch of our family,
the beloved Aunt Carla Lee DeVries, who had
a wacky idea in 1936 in Berlin that created
an international incident. But that is another
story for another time.*

[PREFACE]

In 1857 Henry David Thoreau wrote a letter to a friend that offered commentary about story length:

“Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short.”

Dear Reader: I took the time to write you a short book instead of a long one. Remember, like TNT, great power can come in a small package.

Henry J. DeVries
June, 2016

[CONTENTS]

1	The Quest to Persuade with a Story... 11
2	The Simple Six-Step Heroic Storytelling Formula 17
3	Three Must-Have Characters 25
4	Eight Great Stories 37
5	Monster Stories 49
6	Underdog Stories 57
7	Comedy Stories 67
8	Tragedy Stories 75
9	Mystery Stories 83
10	Quest Stories 89
11	Rebirth Stories..... 97
12	Escape Stories 109
13	Your Story 115

Appendix

A	Bonus Rebirth Story: Jeff Robertson and Tel Control, Inc.....	123
B	Bonus Escape Story: Mark LeBlanc's Mom.....	129
C	Bonus Mystery Story: Gary Schafer and SIVOX Technologies.....	137
D	Bonus Quest Story: John Morgan and Winthrop Resources	139
E	Bonus Monster Story: Bob Oliver and Lucent Public Safety	143
F	Bonus Underdog Story: My Mom ...	147
G	Acknowledgements	157
H	About the Author	161
I	Other Books by Henry DeVries	165

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**“We’re adjusting our dress code to facilitate greater diversity.
Who’s your favorite Star Wars character?”**



[CHAPTER 1]

The Quest to PERSUADE WITH A STORY

Humans are hardwired for stories. Storytelling helps business leaders persuade on an emotional level. Maybe that is why companies like FedEx, Kimberly-Clark, and Microsoft are hiring storytelling experts to teach their executives to tell relatable stories.

Nothing is as persuasive as storytelling with a purpose. In this little book are the keys to proven techniques for telling a great story employed by Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and Wall Street.

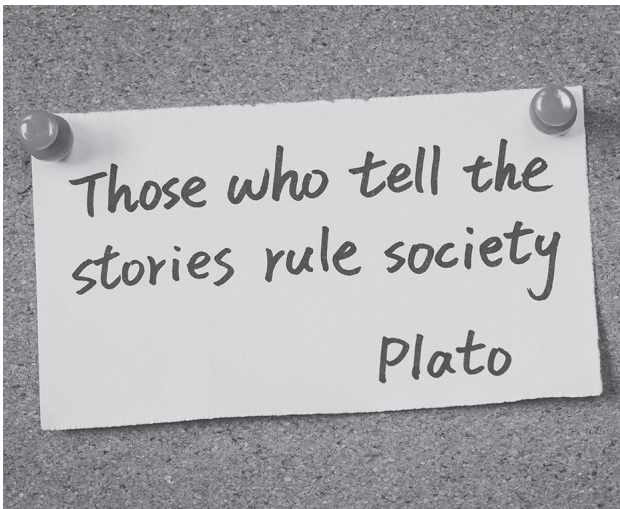
In addition to humorous ways to remember the eight great metastories, this book reveals how to include must-have characters into each story, including the hero, nemesis, and mentor (spoiler: smart leaders should not make the dumb mistake of making themselves the heroes of their own stories).

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF STORYTELLING

In September 2008 *Scientific American* published an article by Jeremy Hsu titled, “The Secrets of Storytelling: Why We Love a Good Yarn.” You should read the entire article, but here is a summary.

According to Hsu, storytelling, or *narrative*, is a human universal, and common themes appear in tales throughout history and all over the world. The greatest stories—those retold through generations and translated into other languages—do more than simply present a believable picture. These tales captivate their audiences, whose emotions can be inextricably tied to those of the characters in the stories.

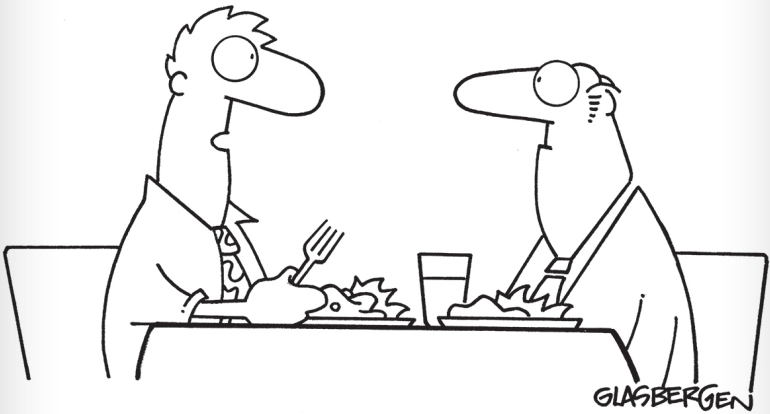
By studying narrative's power to influence beliefs, researchers are discovering how we analyze information and accept new ideas. A 2007 study by marketing researcher Jennifer Edson Escalas of Vanderbilt University found that a test audience responded more positively to advertisements in narrative form, as compared with straightforward ads that encouraged viewers to think logically about arguments for a product. Similarly, Melanie Green of the University of North Carolina coauthored a 2006 study showing



that labeling information as “fact” increased critical analysis, whereas labeling information as “fiction” had the opposite effect.

Studies such as these suggest that people accept ideas more readily when their minds are in story mode as opposed to when they are in an analytical mindset.

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“I’m looking for a mentor who can show me how to get rich without boring me with a lot of advice.”



[CHAPTER 2]

The Simple Six-Step HEROIC STORYTELLING FORMULA

The first person to analyze the myths, legends, tales and stories of the world and present a theory of an overarching storytelling formula that resonates across all human societies was Joseph Campbell, in a now-classic 1949 book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In the early 1970s, a young filmmaker named George Lucas, who was writing a screenplay about space cowboys fighting against an evil empire, picked up Campbell's books and writings on the hero's journey during the course of his own research

on stories and was thunderstruck to realize the film he was writing, at the time titled *The Star Wars*, followed the very same motifs and structure. Years later, the two men finally met and became good friends when PBS filmed a multipart series about Campbell's life and work at a little place called Skywalker Ranch. You can't find a much higher recommendation than that.

- 1 Start with a main character.** Every story starts with a character who wants something. For your story, this is your client—either a real one, or an ideal one. Make your main characters likable so the reader or listener will root for them. To make them likable, describe some of their good qualities and make them relatable.
- 2 Introduce a nemesis character.** Stories need conflict to be interesting. The nemesis doesn't have to be human; what person, institution, or condition stands in the character's way?

- 3 Bring in a mentor character.** Heroes always need help on their journey. They need to work with a wise person. This is where you come in. Be the voice of wisdom and experience in your story.
- 4 Know what specific kind of story you are telling.** Human brains seem to be programmed to relate to one of eight great metastories. These are: monster, underdog, comedy, tragedy, mystery, quest, rebirth, and escape.
- 5 Have the hero succeed.** In seven of the eight great metastories, the main character needs to succeed, with one exception: tragedy. The tragic story is told as a cautionary tale. (Great for teaching lessons, but not great for attracting clients.)
- 6 Give the listeners the moral of the story.** Take a cue from Aesop. Don't count on the listeners to get the message. The storyteller's final job is to come right out and tell them what the story means.

EXAMPLE: PATTY VOGAN'S STORY

This tale is told by my buddy, Patty Vogan, who is a Vistage chair in Southern California. Vistage chairs are a worldwide network of executive coaches who bring together successful CEOs, executives and business owners into private peer advisory groups. Patty uses this story to recruit CEOs to join her group.

The funny thing is, when we think about David, we really think about how he went from almost closing his business to realizing his dream of buying a 55,000-square-foot building. The story starts with his peer advisory group at Vistage. We had been working with David about issues of diversification, but it came up a little too short. There came a time when we needed to pull together a tiger team, so we invited five members of the bigger group to come to my house, and I made a big Italian dinner. We digested and worked through his financials, and the tiger team came up with short-term profit centers that he could increase. They also found

some really good ideas for expenses to slash and cut for the short term. David continued to work his issues, and his best-practices increased and increased throughout the time he was in the group. He was able to make profit after profit. It is one of those things that we think about—that all leaders have blind spots. David had a huge one, but he was able to come out on top. Eventually, David was able to buy his dream building, and it really is 55,000 square feet. So when we think about it, Vistage works.

It's not *Star Wars*, but can you see the similarities? Patty's story is short and sweet, but it still follows the formula.

- 1 Start with a main character.** The main character is business owner David. We like David because of his undeserved misfortune—almost having to close his business.
- 2 Have a nemesis character.** In this case the nemesis is a lack of diversification for his business.

- 3 Bring in a mentor character.** The five-member tiger team, called together by Patty, and that big Italian dinner she made. (Patty cleverly gives credit to the team in the story—not herself.)
- 4 Know what story you are telling.** This story could be a monster story, a quest story, or an underdog story. But Patty tells it as a mystery. David had blind spots, and the tiger team and the ongoing work with the peer advisors were what cracked the code.
- 5 Have the hero succeed.** David got his dream: to purchase a 55,000-square-foot building. In storytelling, we call that a *visible finish line*.
- 6 Give the listeners the moral of the story.** Patty ties a ribbon on the story. All leaders have blind spots, and peers can help you succeed. “So when you think about it, Vi-stage works.”

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“I was very ill and my HMO wouldn’t pay for human parts.”