



## Storytelling for Leadership Success

Facilitated by  
Eric Kaufman & Dalton Nelson

## Session Overview

- Identify specific reasons leaders tell stories.
- Explain the potential uses for different types of stories.
- Develop or refine a story in support of an Extension initiative.

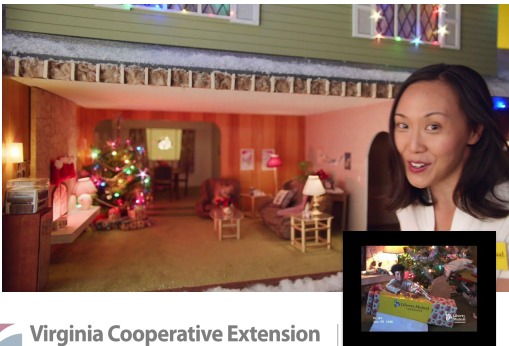
## What Is It About a Story?



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## Marketing Professionals Get It



## Tell Me a Story



“Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me the truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”

- Indian Proverb

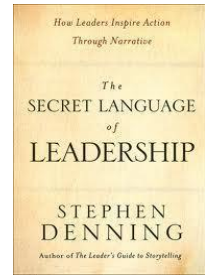
## Storytelling Can Make or Break Your Leadership (Gothelf, 2020)



## Language of Leadership

How do you:

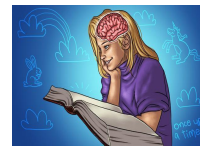
- inspire enduring enthusiasm for a cause?
- connect with diverse, difficult, cynical audiences?  
...at work, in the community, in the family?



## How Steve Denning Discovered the Power of Storytelling

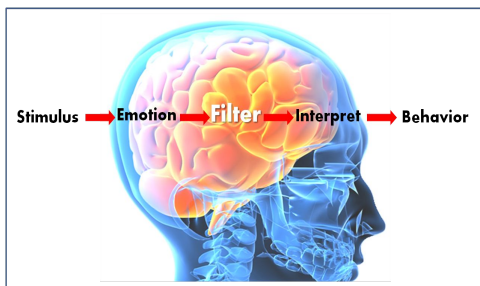


## Science of Storytelling



- Our brains are more active with stories
  - A story can put your whole brain to work
- Evolution has wired our brains for storytelling
  - We make up (short) stories in our heads for every action and conversation
  - Whenever we hear a story, we want to relate it to one of our existing experiences

## Why Giving Reasons Doesn't Work

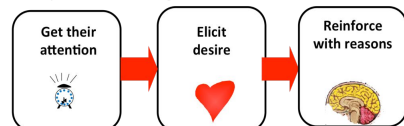


## Secret Language of Leadership

The western intellectual tradition

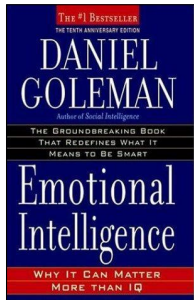


Effective presentation to get action



# Storytelling & Leadership

“Good storytelling is a hallmark of effective leadership.”



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# Springboard Stories (Denning, 2000)

Communicate a complex idea and spark action

1. Must be true
  - Not just a story without inaccuracy (e.g., 700 happy passengers reach New York after the Titanic's maiden voyage)
2. Must be positive
  - Listener wants to remember & share
3. Must be minimalist
  - i.e., free from distracting details

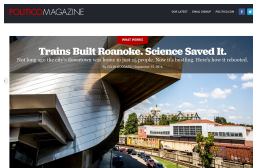


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# Power of Community Storytelling (Bradley, 2014)

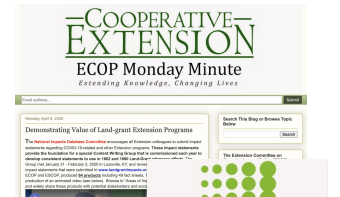
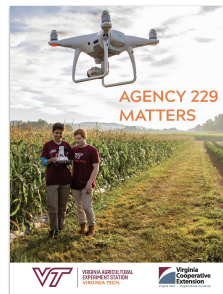
- Storytelling as Community
- Storytelling as a Force for Change
- Storytelling as Engagement
- Storytelling in Collaboration

“Up until 2005, it was always, ‘Woe is us, and it’s so bad, and there was this star, which was kind of an embarrassment,’ ... Now there’s a groundswell of love for the place, of community pride. We’re celebrating that star.” (Woodard, 2016)



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# Stories of Agency 229 Impact



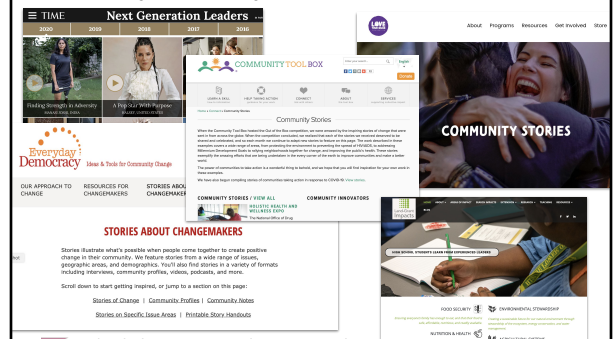
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# Extension’s Brand Promise (National Extension Branding Initiative, presented by Greiner, 2013)

Virginia Cooperative Extension provides practical education you can trust,  
To help people, businesses, and communities  
Solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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# Identify a Story to Consider



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## Small Group Sharing

- What story or topic did you identify? Why?
- Who needs to hear this story? Why would they benefit?

## Types of Stories



## Storytelling Criteria



- Clear
- Focused
- Persuasive
- Positive
- Relevant
- Conversational
- Humorous

## Storytelling Tips

- Tell the stories you already love to tell.
- Tell a story you heard from a friend or colleague. Give credit to the original storyteller.
- Books, fables, fairy tales, parables, current events or historical tales are good material for storytelling.
- Be honest when you tell a story.
- Be sincere about feelings and emotions.
- A good story has three parts – the beginning, the middle, and the end.
- Visualize your story and tell it as you see it.
- Incorporate the five senses into your story – sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch.
- Make eye contact with your listeners and gesture naturally.
- Pauses are powerful.
- Speak clearly, but loudly enough to be heard. Breathe normally.
- Practice telling your story out loud.
- Use a story only when it is appropriate.
- Use your story to create a bridge to the main message.

## Marketing Cooperative Extension Organizations and Extension Local Foods Educational Programs:

What are the key steps to strengthen Extension's branding and online marketing?

1. Make Extension clientele the hero of the story... focus on their problems instead of showcasing only programs...;
2. Connect Extension clientele with marketing messages that are clearly focused on showing empathy and authority...;
3. Market Extension programs as solutions to Extension clientele problems...;
4. Market Extension programs as solutions that transform Extension clientele's lives into better lives....

## Nonprofit Storytelling 101

(from The Modern Nonprofit)

1. Tell stories about your cause and who you are helping rather than your organization.
2. Keep your message simple.
3. Make some element of your message positive, evoking amusement or inspiration.
4. In your conclusion, convey urgency and a clear call-to-action
5. Include photos and videos!
6. Share simply and meaningfully on Pinterest and Instagram
7. Allow your supporters to tell their own stories.

## Tips from The Modern Nonprofit

1. Set clear goals.
2. Stay flexible.
3. Ask if your stories pass the 'so-what' test.
4. Make it easy for people to participate.

## Opportunities with eXtension

The Impact Collaborative's  
Innovation Skill-Building  
Experience Online Series

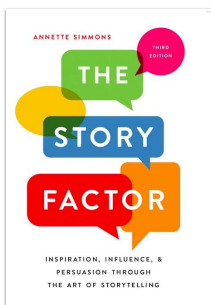
### Storytelling

The Pitch. Tell your team's project idea in a compelling way whether you have only 1 minute, 3 minutes, or 5 minutes.

<http://bit.ly/ISBEworkbook>



## A Follow-Up Resource



<http://annettesimmons.com>

We have three copies to mail!

To express your interest, email [EKK@VT.Edu](mailto:EKK@VT.Edu) with a take-away point from today's workshop.

## Debriefing Insights Gained

What are your takeaway points from this session?

How will you apply storytelling?



## Thank you! Let us know how we can help

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