



Why Should Anyone Listen To Your Story?

"Everyone is necessarily the hero of his own life story"

~ John Barth, writer

Lance said it perfectly "Why would anyone listen to me? I'm just an ordinary guy from the Midwest. I've lived a pretty good life with just a few problems."

At first glance, this sounds like a legitimate question. Why would anyone want to listen to a speaker who hasn't accomplished an unusual feat or overcome great odds?

There is no doubt that hearing a well-told tale of surviving a near-fatal accident, climbing Mt. Everest, or winning Olympic Gold can be compelling. There is one problem, though.

Not many people have experienced these events. For this reason, it's difficult to *relate* to these stories. It's possible to link common themes to these tales – for instance, overcoming adversity or specifically focusing on one goal.

Unfortunately, few speakers effectively make this link.

Consequently, Lance's question is short-sided. The majority of people sitting in your audience consider themselves to be 'ordinary' because they haven't experienced those uncommon events.

That is to your advantage. You can connect with them by sharing lessons learned from your day-to-day life.

For example, if you've ever been around children, you've felt the pain of watching a child struggle and fall at various times (learning to walk, riding a bicycle, lying about who broke your favorite lamp).

Additionally, you've experienced the joy of seeing that child overcome those same challenges.



There are various lessons that can be taken from these stories: 'The Power of Persistence'; 'How to Make Failure Your Greatest Ally'; 'The Power of Patience When Your Kid is Driving Your Insane'.

When people relate to your story, they're more open to hear and use the message you're sharing.

Here's another idea that can help you connect at a deep level, and inspire others to take action:

Share your struggles and failures.

More often than not, people are either embarrassed or afraid to share their 'pain'. What they fail to understand is that these difficult experiences are what cause an audience to feel closer to you.

For instance, early in my career as a speaker, I was insecure and unsure of myself. Consequently, I focused on being 'perfect' each time I spoke. I made sure my suit looked perfect - my tie was straight and not a hair was out of place.

I also tried to memorize my speeches word-for-word, so that the flow of my presentation would also be perfect.

What is the problem when you're focusing on perfection?

There are two glaring issues:

- 1) Focusing on those details put my attention on me, and not where it belonged - on the audience; and,
- 2) Presenters who come across as trying to look perfect aren't real; people often see them as being too 'slick' or untrustworthy.

I didn't understand this until I walked into a Toastmasters meeting one day. I was asked to substitute for a fellow member who couldn't give his prepared speech. I was reluctant, but agreed and gave an impromptu 5-minute talk.



After the meeting, my friend Chris came up to me and said “Mike, that was the best speech I’ve ever heard you give. It was like I was listening to the real you. Keep doing what you did today.”

After that, I stopped worrying about my appearance and memorizing my talks. My focus shifted to the audience and the benefit that they could receive from me.

And that has made a huge difference in responses from audiences whenever I speak.

There is a connection and a sense of giving something valuable to others, even though I’ve never done anything extraordinary or special.

The next time you feel ordinary, like Lance did, embrace your “ordinary-ness” and keep this in mind:

Audiences remember the connection, not the Perfection.

Speaker Michael McKinley said it even better: "Audiences have seen smooth; they've seen slick. Don't fake who you are. When giving speeches, you can work so hard on the *what* that you forget the **who**, which is **you**. The audience wants to see your vulnerability and what you've done with your failures. They want you to offer hope that they too can overcome whatever obstacles come their way."

ACTION STEP: Revisit your story file. Record new events that have come to mind in the last couple of weeks, events that are important to you. Don't censor; don't judge whether it seems 'important enough.' There's a reason you remember it, so get it in your file. There will be time later to determine which stories you will turn into speeches.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:

A speech by Lance, mentioned above. Lance Miller is the 2005 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. His speech can help you understand how the 'ordinary' can become special. Click here: [Lance Miller: 'The Ultimate Question'](#)

Until next week, always remember, you have a story that someone needs to hear.

Other Recommended Resources

1) **52 Storytelling Tips**

In 52 weeks you'll learn World Class storytelling tools and processes that enable you to create stories that hold audiences in rapt attention, gain their trust, and compel them to take ACTION!

This series of content-rich lessons begins upon registration, and continues on a weekly basis for one year. You'll receive a weekly email with a 5-minute audio lesson and PDF copy of that week's lesson. This is a manageable dose of storytelling content each week.

You'll be able to upload each lesson and listen at your leisure whether in your home, office, or car.

This weekly program is absolutely FREE! You simply register, open the weekly audio lesson, and, if you choose, upload the PDF attachment which offers a transcription of that week's lesson.

To register, visit: <http://speakingcpr.com/52-storytelling-tips/>

2) **'THE Book on Storytelling'**

Public speaking and selling are two of the most essential business skills. Storytelling is the heart of each. 'THE Book on Storytelling' is designed to teach you the fundamentals of storytelling that gets results.

CEOs, salespeople, managers, and others who give presentations can benefit from this book. You'll pick up a series of proven, step-by-step process to discover, develop and deliver your unique stories.

Additionally, it is filled with recommended resources from other storytelling experts - authors, speakers, Hollywood screenwriters and more. This book gives you the tools to dig as deeply into this subject as you want.

When you implement these ideas, your stories will enable you to:

- => Become better-known in your industry
- => Create more opportunities
- => Advance your career
- => Increase your income
- => Reduce the stress and anxiety sometimes associated with creating stories
- => Develop deeper levels of trust faster with your audience

To get your copy, visit: <http://amzn.to/29MJEZF>

3) 'Sell More With Stories' Kindle book series

One of the biggest challenges for salespeople is quickly attracting new clients. For many, this is a daunting task.

Why?

Because old school methods don't work - they fail to quickly break down barriers and earn trust.

If you'd like to double, or even triple, your number of new clients, then the new Kindle series 'Sell More With Stories' is for you.

Read this series and you'll discover the keys to:

- => Quickly earn trust from prospective clients
- => Shorten your sales cycle
- => Create more selling opportunities
- => Work with more qualified prospective clients
- => Enjoy the process of attracting new business
- => Work only with people you want to
- => Feel more confident in networking and social situations

To begin your journey to gain these benefits, get your copy of the first book in the series. Visit: <http://amzn.to/29nlMrn>

4) 'Go Ahead and Laugh: A Serious Guide to Speaking With Humor'

Eleven professional speakers and humorists share over thirty techniques to get your audiences laughing.

Speaker and presentation coach Rich Hopkins analyzes each speech, and walks you through each titter, chuckle, and guffaw. He shows you how to apply each technique to your next speaking opportunity.

If you don't think you're funny, if you don't think your topic could possibly create a laugh - this book is for you - and your audiences that desperately want to Go Ahead and Laugh!

To get your copy, visit: <http://bit.ly/2jrS8K9>

Michael's Raving Fans

"I would **highly recommend** Michael to anyone that has to give a speech. Michael is **the** guy that you have to get and work alongside. I've done a lot of speaking and never had an experience like I did with him to get ready for my Ted X talk. The guy's **amazing**, and I hope to work with him again in the future."

~ Anthony Muñoz, **NFL Hall of Fame**
Founder, **Anthony Munoz Foundation**

"I'm **thrilled with the results** of our work together. Michael **patiently worked with me** to narrow down my stories to a relevant message that tied-in with the theme of the event. I **highly recommend** Michael for presentation skills coaching. He knows how to speak and teach **at a level that few can match**."

~ Justice Richard Bernstein, **Michigan Supreme Court**

Our attendees were pleased with Michael's ideas about how to develop and deliver a World-Class Story. They left the event with a repeatable process that will help them create stories that will impact and influence others.

Michael helped us to present a **content-rich workshop** that our attendees have come to expect. I **highly recommend** Michael for speech and presentation skills coaching for your group or organization. He knows how to **speak and teach at the world-class level**, which is rare."

~ Darren LaCroix, **CSP** and **2001 World Champion of Public Speaking**
Founder & President, **The Humor Institute, Inc.**

"Investing in Michael is one of the **best investments I have ever made**. I speak on the subject of diversity in the workplace, which can at times be a difficult topic to discuss.

Michael taught me a repeatable process that allows me to create a foundational concept, a logical structure, an opening that grabs the audience's attention, and a conclusion that **encourages my audience to take action** that will save them time and money.

I found Michael easy to work with, flexible with his schedule, and a wealth of information about the art of speaking. If you need to improve your presentation or speech, I **highly recommend you consider hiring Michael**. It is **one of the best investments** you can make in your own growth."

~ Natalie Holder, Founder, **QUEST Diversity**

"Mike has an easy way of working with you that isn't intimidating... Amazing, insightful feedback... My presentations are now far more interesting and result in **additional sales of my services**. No matter what the level of speaking at which you may be performing, **you're sure to improve with Mike Davis**."

~ Joanne Westwood, **Westwood Virtual Associates, LLC**

"Michael has completely opened my eyes! I'm performing at an entirely new level. I went into my last event with the utmost confidence thanks to him. He even called me the night before with a few last-minute

reminders! If you speak for a living — if your revenue depends on your ability to communicate, you NEED Michael Davis!”

~ Brennan Scanlon, Co-Executive Director, **Business Network International**

“Tonight, Michael Davis and Daniel Matthews presented a program for our NSA chapter on ‘How to Deliver Outstanding Presentations.’

“Boy, did they deliver for us! We are a group of mostly veteran speakers, with a few who are new to the business. Michael and Daniel taught each of us so much that we can use to develop our presentations and how to better tell our stories. We learned how to create our presentations in a better format. There was so much that we can use to **elevate our talks** so that we engage our audience.

I **highly recommend** Michael Davis or Daniel Matthews for your next program.

~ Vivian Blade, President 2014-2015, **National Speakers Association, Kentucky Chapter**

“From the very beginning of time, we have been telling stories. Stories are engaging, motivating, compelling, memorable. That’s why **everyone must read** Michael Davis’ ‘THE Book on Storytelling.’ It is an amazing cornucopia of tips and ideas he has collected over the years from some of the best in the field.

The title says it all. **This is ‘THE Book on Storytelling.’** There are 52 chapters, each a gem. What follows each chapter is a “Recommended Resource.” **This alone is worth the price of the book.** I can guarantee you it is THE best. And I’ve read them all.”

~ Jarold Panas, Co-Author, ‘**Power Questions**’

Michael's Background

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. I have 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 a 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 carried over 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 public speaking and storytelling. 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 help you 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.

He has produced audio programs, is a contributing author to three public speaking books, has recently written his first book, 'THE Book on Storytelling,' and presents public speaking and storytelling skills workshops throughout the year.

Michael also works closely with speakers in the Ted X Cincinnati event, and has successfully coached several speakers in 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.

If you need a speech coach, workshop leader, keynote speaker or emcee, you are welcome to contact him by clicking the link below: