

**“An Absolute Must-Read!!”**

David Nottage- World Champion of Public Speaking

# OUTSTANDING PRESENTERS



A <sup>TM</sup>CERTIFIED SPEAKING  
PROFESSIONAL REVEALS THE  
**10 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS**  
TO WINNING PRESENTATIONS

# What Others Are Saying About

## “OUTSTANDING PRESENTERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES”

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"This book is a timely and practical guide to mastering the art of persuasive presenting. Glen is a master of the craft and offers powerful insights into how to leverage your authenticity and passion on the platform to genuinely move an audience."

**Michael McQueen**

**Certified Speaking Professional, Multi Award-Winning Speaker inc. PSA Speaker of the Year, Past President of Professional Speakers Australia, Trend Forecaster and Bestselling Author Of 8 Books**

“When I entered professional speaking I sought Sharkey for his expertise in keynote delivery. As a former professional athlete it was important to be mentored and coached by the best in the business of speaking. He taught me to write and deliver a keynote including story composition, slideshow design and presentation, and stagecraft. The small things are so important for Sharkey and this book will highlight numerous points that we worked on to make me the professional speaker I am today.”

**Filipo Levi**

**Professional Speaker and Former Professional Rugby Player (Captain of Manu Samoa, Highlanders Super Rugby, NZ Colts)**

“Glen has masterfully translated his prowess from the stage to empower others in techniques that engage, educate and entertain. In this book, he shares stories, strategies and scenarios to illustrate how to craft an impactful presentation. If you are serious about making a difference through the spoken word, Glen has wisdom (and experience) for you.

**Karen Tui Boyes**

**Certified Speaking Professional, Multi Award-Winning Speaker inc. NSANZ Speaker of the Year 2019, NZ Business Woman of the Year, Author, Educator**

"A Winning Presentation is one that is carefully researched, planned... and delivered. With a plethora of real-life examples and simple practical tips garnered over years of professional speaking, Glen Sharkey, CSP, gives you a compelling blueprint to the art of eloquence on a silver platter. "

**Nabil Doss**

**2016-17 President of the Global Speakers Federation, Expert in Influential Communication**

"Glen Sharkey is a master communicator. In his latest book, "Outstanding Presenters Speak for Themselves", he manages to distil decades of experience speaking to and facilitating for audiences big and small. By reading this book, you will pick up gem after gem and you will walk away with an expanded arsenal of tools to use within your speaking and training business. This is a MUST-READ book if you are serious about impacting your audiences!"

**Elias Kanaris**

**President of the Global Speakers Federation (2018-2019)**

"Glen is the consummate professional when it comes to presenting to groups. I've seen him present days on end and have them still begging for more because of his interactive, humorous and educational style.

It is rare to find someone with his wonderful ability who is able to challenge while holding people safe, and all the while changing behaviour without people even knowing it's happening. He is a master that you should learn from if you want become better at presenting."

**Bill James**

**National Speakers New Zealand President (2013-15), NSANZ Speaker of the Year (2015), Business Speaker of the Year (2012), Certified Speaking Professional**

"I had been working professionally part-time as a speaker for a number of years, but I knew I was nowhere near world-class level. I started looking for a professional coach, mentor and educator and I found them in Glen Sharkey. He provided me with the constructive feedback that I needed to totally re-set my speaking and presentations. Then he worked with me to build a completely new talk that now captures any audience in the first fifteen seconds. His

latest book “Outstanding Presenters Speak for Themselves” is full of the strategies he worked on with me and is absolute presenting gold!”

**Mike Allsop**

**Airline Pilot, Everest Mountaineer, Adventurer and Extreme Marathon Competitor (7 Marathons in 7 Days on 7 Continents)**

“If you want to put some true action into your presentation’s interaction...then read this book! Example after example after example...bam. This is how-to at its best for speakers. But you could really say this is a book that future audiences want their future speakers to read and act on!”

**Brian Walter**

**Certified Speaking Professional, NSA Hall of Fame Speaker  
2017-2018 USA National Speakers Association President**

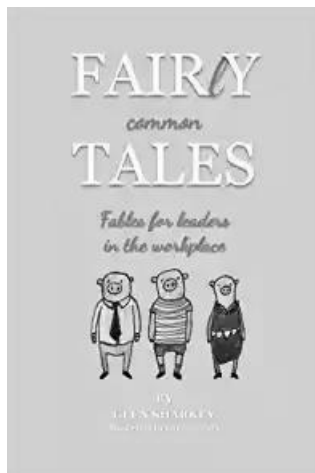
“Glen Sharkey does it again- this guy is a prolific author and a prolific speaker. This book is a culmination of years of hard work as a speaker, carefully distilled into a detailed manifesto for anyone aspiring to be a great speaker. As he says in the book "The needs of the audience should be the presenter's Number One Consideration". Glen has carefully considered the needs of the reader and delivered on this promise- this book has everything you need to be a great speaker.”

**Lindsay Adams**

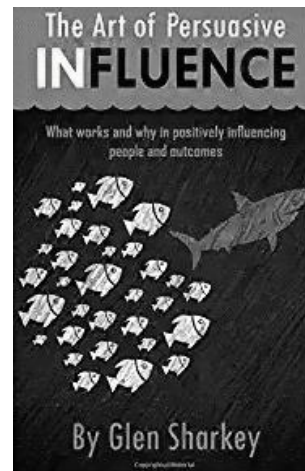
**Certified Speaking Professional, Global Speaking Fellow, Nevin Award Winner, Past National President, Professional Speakers Australia (PSA), Past International President, Global Speakers Federation, Life Member PSA**

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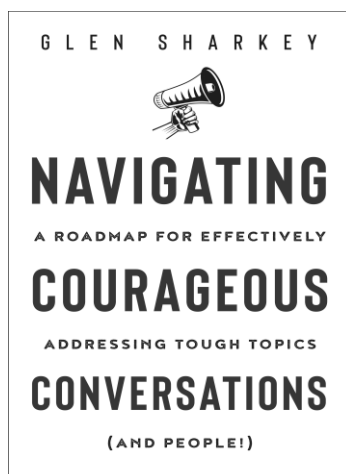
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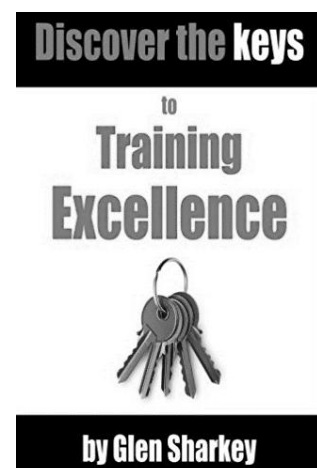
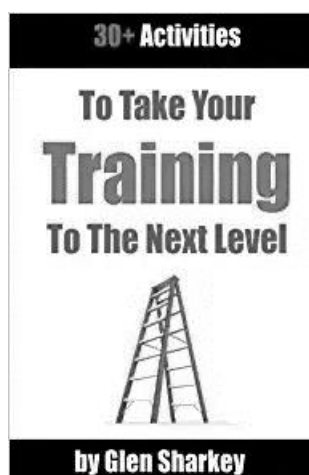
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# Outstanding Presenters Speak for Themselves

**10 Essential Elements to  
Winning Presentations**

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By Glen Sharkey

The Lifeworks Co Ltd.

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## ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5

### The Power of a Great Story Well Told!

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#### Introduction

Recently I was delivering a presentation skills workshop to a corporate audience who had little to no concept of how important and effective it is to include stories in presentations.

**WHEN LISTENING TO  
STORIES, CHEMICALS  
SUCH AS DOPAMINE  
AND OXYTOCIN MAKE  
US MORE FOCUSED**

Firstly, we discussed the kind of chemical reactions that happen as a result of storytelling which are fantastically summarized in a TED Talk by a friend of mine, David JP Phillips entitled “The Magical Science of Storytelling.” When we are experiencing chemicals such as

dopamine and oxytocin as a result of listening to stories we become much more focused and warmer towards the storyteller’s technical content.

One of the workshop participants began to deliver a very technically laden slideshow including text-heavy slides and I asked him instead to begin by telling any story that he could think of that was about his family. He had a quick think to himself and then began to tell us how much his son loved travelling on train (this gentleman worked for New Zealand’s national rail business). He talked about how his son loved that mode of transport because, compared to when dad was driving a motor vehicle, he would have Dad’s full attention and they could even hold hands. The presenter also talked about his home country and how his family had always travelled by train to any of their holiday destinations, so rail travel had some very special memories for him as a child also. Before he had a chance to continue on with this technical presentation, I asked him to pause and then asked the audience, his fellow workshop participants, to give them some feedback about how they felt about his presentation beginning with a very personal story. The comments were overwhelmingly

positive, with one person saying that they felt relieved that he started with a story rather than leaping straight into all his technical content. Of course the degree to which you tell stories, and the nature of those stories will depend on the type and needs of your audience- if you are presenting to your own team of highly informed practitioners who are very hungry for a lot of technical detail, then you may not be appropriate for you to have a string of stories throughout your presentation but the more distant you are from your audience, and the less familiar they are with your material, the more it makes sense to include stories. Having said that, even weekly team briefings get much greater audience interaction when they start with, or include, personal stories that are somehow able to be related to the subject matter being presented.

### **“Taking No Prisoners”- Painting a Vivid ‘Word Picture’**

Annah Stretton is one of New Zealand’s top fashion designers and was one of our presenters at the Global Speakers Summit in 2018. Anna is the founder of RAW- a not-for-profit enterprise whose aim is to assist with the rehabilitation of female prison inmates to maximise their chances of not reoffending when they are released. Anna spoke at the Summit about her journey with the RAW program and introduced one of the women on the program who told her moving and inspiring story.

A short time after the speaker’s summit Annah contacted me and asked if I would be prepared to deliver pro bono presentation skills training to the women who were increasingly asked to tell their story in public settings. I arranged to meet with Annah and the women from the program, which is in another city, immediately after a day’s training- it would be a chance to meet the women and get a sense of the “fit” of my nature, the women, and their presentation skills needs. I arrived around 5 p.m. and shortly after we sat down and began formal introductions. I was the final person out of the group of 10 or so to introduce myself and then I sat down. The room went silent for a short period and then Annah said “Well? It’s your show now!” I really had no idea what she was talking about, until with some explanation I then exclaimed “Oh! Are we doing this right here right now?!?” There had been a misunderstanding on my part and rather than it just simply being an initial “Meet and greet”, this was actually the first session that I was to deliver on presentation skills. I was



completely unprepared and had just come off the back of a full day delivering high performing team content to a group of 40 people, so I may not have been in the sharpest headspace.

Having said that, I also have three decades of presenting and facilitating thousands of people so I should be reasonably capable of adding some value with very little notice to people's ability to present publicly. So once I got over the surprise that this really was happening "Right here, right now!" I began by asking permission to take a critical look at the one presentation I had heard from one of the RAW women at the Global Speakers Summit. In particular I wanted to look at the nature of her opening and to query the fact that she had presented her story in absolute chronological order, as many people do, starting at the beginning in terms of a timeline and slowly working their way through various high or low points of that timeline in relation to the topic or the intent of the presentation. I told the woman and others that you ideally want to have a strong opening and a strong close and often starting at the very beginning is not only a slow way to start, but it misses out on an initial opportunity to hook the audience right from the word go. Instead I made the suggestion that they start at a much more impactful or dramatic point in their journey and then once they had gained the audience's attention they could go backwards in time describing how their life and the choices that they had made had led them to that dramatic point.

Having suggested that they start with the story or a 'word picture' of one particular slice of their life such as a pivotal point in the journey or a particularly low point, I then wanted to show them how a crafted story is can shift from being just a sterile set of facts to a dramatic and emotional encounter both for the presenter but especially for the audience. I then gave them this example as their presentation opener:

"Imagine for a moment that this is your life- a 6 m by 4 m grey, cinder

block prison cell" and as I said those words I stepped out 6 m x 4 m as if I was on a stage presenting to an audience. "Imagine this was your world for four years. No carpet. No

**NO CARPET. NO  
ARTWORK. NO MUSIC.  
NO FAMILY. NO  
FRIENDS. AND WORST  
OF ALL- NO FREEDOM.**

artwork. No music. No family. No friends. And worst of all- no freedom. No freedom to choose where you go, who you talk to, what you experience. Every minute of every day mapped out for you for four years of your life”.

I then asked the women how that opening compared to the opening of the presentations that they had previously been using and they were easily convinced that the emotive nature of a story is a very powerful way to start compared to dates and lifeless facts. I have never personally been in a prison cell, so that imagery that I created on the spot was derived from images of prison cells that I have seen on television programs and in movies. But even what little information I was suddenly able to dredge up from my memory bank was enough for me to create a very vivid word picture on the spot.

The next example vividly sticks in my mind as an example of how important it is to craft a story well and deliver it with impact. Once I had debriefed with the women what I had done, why I had done it, and how I suggested to them that I would demonstrate another example, one which was entirely fictitious with no reference to anything that I had experienced, seen or heard in any form ever before. I began like this, telling the women that I was imagining being them on a stage speaking to an audience, the majority of which had no experience with crime, let alone serving a prison sentence:

“Imagine that you are sitting at home in your lounge watching television and out of the corner of your eye, through the Venetian blinds you can see flashes of red and blue lights in the driveway. That was my experience six years ago and I was not at all surprised that this day had arrived given the level of my criminal activity. How would you have felt if you were me sitting on that couch? What would have been running through your head? You may be surprised to find out what I was thinking and what I felt at that moment. I had been involved in a number of criminal activities for several years and as a result had been waiting for this day, dreading this day...

In fact I felt the exact opposite of what you might be guessing- I felt a huge amount of relief and what I would almost describe as a sense of peace. My heart wasn't racing, my hands weren't sweaty, I wasn't shaking for the first time in a long time and my mind was no longer fearful of what was going to happen.”

I could feel myself getting really emotional as I was telling this entirely fictitious story and as I looked around the room at least two of the young women were in tears. It was a really powerful moment for me and such a poignant reminder that the most important aspect of

## **THE YOUNG WOMEN WERE MOVED TO TEARS BY A STORY THAT I HAD ENTIRELY MADE UP ON THE SPOT**

storytelling is the extent to which the audience connects with what is being told. On this occasion the young women were moved to tears by a story that I had made up on the spot- but the point for them (and clearly for others) was that

they were connected with the truth of the story in their own lives, and that's what we aim to do with effective storytelling.

### **“Just the Bear Facts”- Everyone Has Great Stories**

I delivered some leadership training and teambuilding workshops to a business in a very niche construction industry. As the client, the senior leader of this business unit, was driving me back to the airport so I could catch my flight home he told me of his desire to improve in his public speaking skills and confidence. As a result we stayed in touch in terms of his public speaking journey.

At some later stage in our conversations he indicated that he had been asked to speak at a symposium in which several other senior managers from the same industry had been asked to share their approach to solving the exact same problem of metallic corrosion. The manager was quite concerned that he would have very little to add with so many speakers already covering the same problem and potential solution, not only because it would be challenging speaking to his industry peers, but also for fear of being redundant. I suggested to him that the way that he could differentiate himself from the other presenters and also capture and maintain their attention, would be by sharing one or two stories during his short presentation. The problem that he was dealing with concerned a particular product common to the construction industry to which had one particular element with that consistently failed in certain circumstances.

Here are just a few of the benefits of well-crafted and well told stories:

- Stories are a fantastic “state change” giving audiences a chance to reset their thinking between academic concepts
- Stories have a capacity to engage the audience’s emotions in a way that seldom occurs by simply relaying statistics and facts (a Swedish friend of mine, David JP Phillips, does an absolutely brilliant job of explaining the kinds of chemical releases that occur in our brain when we listen to stories, in his TED talk “The Magical Science of Storytelling”- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj-hdQMa3uA>)
- The change in the chemical state of the minds of the audience as a result of effective storytelling is instrumental in cognitively setting people up to assimilate academic concepts
- Stories have the capacity to cause a connection with the audience on a very deep level, particularly if they are personal and involve some degree of vulnerability on the part of the presenter
- Personal stories in particular add an element of human credibility that doesn’t come from qualifications and a list of experience from a speaker’s bio

On the basis of the aforementioned concepts, I began to quiz the manager on other times in his personal life where he had overcome some kind of a challenge. I told him that it didn’t need to be in the area of construction or even work at all- it was okay to choose personal anecdotes from areas of his life such as parenting because that is a universal subject with the vast majority of people relating to the notion. It was very natural for this manager to initially consider stories that did relate to the construction industry, and although I encouraged him to expand his thinking into everyday areas of life, I was genuinely astounded at one of his examples where he had worked in another country, again in the construction industry, and one of the projects that he was involved in had a significant challenge with marauding grizzly bears that he and his team were forced to creatively solve. This was an absolutely brilliant story that clearly capture the audience’s attention and caused their brain chemistry to enter into a highly receptive state for his content on dealing with the current challenge of corrosion.

## **“Made to Measure”- Most Stories Have Countless Applications**

Far too many people choose to tell a story because of its obvious connection to the purpose of the talk which vastly limits the scope of their options. If the previously mentioned manager had chosen his stories on that basis, he would have chosen a story that related to specifically to failed products in the construction industry, and because of how difficult that choice might be he could have easily failed to come up with a story at all. Because I broadened his subject area to “Effectively solving a challenge” rather than being about a specific construction material, it meant that I was able to ask him for stories from times in his life where he has faced a challenge and overcome a challenge. It is hard work to come up with an engaging story that relates to a specific topic or set of criteria. It is much easier to come up with a very captivating and engaging story that somehow relates to the general theme of a presentation, and then to do the much simpler work of joining the dots between the superb story in the key subject matter of the presentation.

Often audiences look at professional speakers and are highly impressed by the stories that they use in their presentations- how

the story seems like a perfect fit and almost seems ‘made-to-measure’ for the subject. What the audience may not see is that speakers have worked hard to generate a large bank of engaging stories that can be applied to numerous topics, with the main work being in the crafting of how

to tell the story, and in creating a meaningful connection between the key point of the story and whatever theoretical concept the speaker wishes to link it to in their presentation. The same skill can be honed by intentionally ‘mining’ your own journey for interesting stories, crafting them with vivid ‘word picture’ aspects, then doing the final work of choosing an appropriate connection between stories and content.

**INTENTIONALLY ‘MINE’  
YOUR OWN JOURNEY  
FOR INTERESTING  
STORIES, CRAFTING  
THEM WITH VIVID  
‘WORD PICTURE’  
ASPECTS**

### **“That’s the Story of My Life!”- Include Time, Place, and People**

There is both a huge lack of awareness and an undervaluing of the power of stories, particularly in corporate settings. There is a prevailing thought that facts and figures are the genuine ingredients of a corporate presentation and very little effort is made firstly to include stories at all, but secondly to spend any time and effort effectively crafting those stories. I was approached by a celebrity speaker some time ago and asked if I would be prepared to coach him. He’s an incredible adventurer having climbed Everest and run seven marathons in seven days on seven continents. Not only has he achieved those two incredible pinnacles of physical achievement, but he has also taken his three children on adventures when they turned seven years old, and then turned 14 years old also. During this process he has assisted two of his children to achieve world records as part of their adventures. As is generally the case, I request either to be able to see people presenting live or as a secondary option to be able to view a video of them presenting to a live audience. I contacted him after viewing the latter and said you really have some great stories, but we need to do some work to help you become a great storyteller- they are certainly not one and the same.

No doubt you had seen people at social gatherings attempt to retell a joke and do such a horrible job that in the end the laughter is more so aimed at their attempted effort than the joke itself. In the same way a great story can be told in a very poor fashion which allows no emotional connection with the audience, and likewise a story that seems quite mundane on the surface, can be told in such a fashion as to absolutely captivate and enthrall an audience. Over the last three decades I’ve trained thousands of people, particularly workplace leaders. As part of that I’ve done a lot of speaker coaching for people who would be presenting continuous improvement projects to senior management audiences. As part of these leadership programs, management personnel are very interested to hear of the changes that have occurred in the course participants both professionally and personally. I therefore mandate that people need to present on several of the key areas of the training program that have been particularly useful for them, and to also tell associated stories or anecdotes because it’s one thing for people to say, for instance, that they have found the content on courageous conversations, and dealing with different personality types to be really useful but it adds an entire other dimension for people to tell a story that illustrates the impact of those

content areas. Often when these course participants deliver draft presentations, their stories are extremely generic with very little detail. I've learned to be very clear with people regarding what a story is and isn't. In particular a story has a time, place, and one or more

## **IN PARTICULAR A STORY HAS TO HAVE A TIME, A PLACE, AND ONE OR MORE PEOPLE**

people. So it's not enough for people to say that they are now relating better in the workplace with people whose personality types are opposite to the theirs. I will ask the presenter to think of a specific example which

demonstrates this change in behaviour, and often the stories begin by identifying approximately when the incident occurred with opening statements such as "Just the other day...", or "We had just finished our Monday morning meeting several weeks ago...". By establishing the fact that there was an actual incident and giving an approximate time stamp, I know that the presenter has begun to tell a real live story rather than just making reference to generic events.

### **"The Elephant in the Room"- Adding a New Twist to An Old Metaphor**

Many, many years ago I was contracted by a website design company to present two-hour seminars for small to medium businesses on developing a website. I had no previous technical knowledge of website development and had only been involved at minimal levels in website design with companies that I worked for in the past so I was really just a hired as a professional speaker to present these seminars on behalf of the company. When I took over the seminar it was 120 minutes of fairly solid information in layman's terms but still it needed aspects of 'lightening up'. I remember when I was at Bible College doing a preaching class and the lecturer used the example of buildings to represent sermon structures. He said that a sermon that was all Scripture and no illustrations or stories was like a concrete bunker: very solid in nature but with very little light coming in or view of the outside world. Conversely a sermon that was very light on Scripture and heavy on stories and anecdotes was like a glass house: plenty of light but not very solid in structure. He concluded by saying

that a great sermon was one that was like a solidly constructed home with solid structure, but with plenty of windows.

In my opinion the website seminar that I was handed was very much like the concrete bunker analogy and did not allow people enough time to digest and reflect. The first thing I did was insert a 10 minute break in the middle which I described at the start of each seminar as being a short break for people with “CSA” or for those not familiar with the condition, “Cellphone Separation Anxiety!” At the same time as explaining to people the meaning of the abbreviation CSA, I would press the slide change and bring up a photo of a person hugging a metre long cellphone. This was my way of letting people know that there would be a break so they needn’t check their cell phones during the entire presentation, but also to inject some humour at the start of the presentation and let people know that it wasn’t going to be a dry and tedious, technical offering.

People tend to chunk information in the same way that we might separate various courses of a six-course meal, and transitions between one piece of content and another often referred to as segue. One of the changes that I made to the seminar was to insert a segue in between each chunk of content that was in some way relevant but also allowed people the chance to take a breath before the dived into the next piece of meaningful content.

One of those segues or transitions was prior to a new piece of content on the overwhelming task of planning for, designing, and developing a website through to optimal effectiveness. Naturally for those people who attended our seminars and who were yet to create a website, the entire challenge could obviously seem daunting or even overwhelming. The concept that the content aimed to emphasise was the need to break down the various aspects of the process into bite-size pieces that were manageable over time. The common analogy that springs to mind to illustrate this might be “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!” So at this point in the proceedings I injected this question for the audience “How do you eat a Cessna aircraft?” I can still see the faces of the people in the hundred or so seminars that I delivered being jarred to alertness by this bizarre question and even stranger concept. Someone would eventually volunteer the answer “I suppose one bite at a time”. Ironically, I delivered a number of these seminars in an aviation Museum and whenever I used this illustration at that venue I would make a comment about how strange it would be to see seminar participants leave and start taking bites out of the wings of planes! As a result of



capturing (and in some cases recapturing) the audience's attention, I would go on to talk about the French man who actually, literally consumed an entire Cessna aircraft over a period of two years. People were absolutely fascinated by this true life illustration as I told them that the man, who was no longer alive as a result of "Death by natural causes" according to the French government. This is an example of a fun and engaging micro-story or anecdote that I injected to reenergize the audience to indicate the end of one piece of content and the beginning of another.

### Summary

As part of the effective craft of storytelling it is useful to give the audience both some physical details in order to paint

a clear word-picture for them to imagine, such as the weather on the day, or some details of the venue where the story occurs.

But more importantly, in order to allow the audience to fully engage in the story, it's

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necessary to clearly articulate some of the feelings of the participants in the story, especially yourself if you are the lead character. As human beings we are designed to be able to emotionally connect with other peoples' stories and this makes for a much more engaging presentation but also heightens the focus of the audience to equip them better absorb content. If you're one that has never used stories in any presentations, consider including one or more to give the audience a chance to emotionally connect with your presentation- and as a lecturer once said to me, facts and figures in a presentation are like concrete walls providing the necessary structural strength, but stories and illustrations are like windows in the concrete structure that provide much needed light. Now that I understand the power of storytelling, I think my lecturer may have undersold their potency!

**ELEMENT 5**  
**IN A NUTSHELL**

**“Don’t Mistake a  
Great Story with  
Great Storytelling.  
Stories Don’t Tell  
Themselves- They  
Deserve Crafting!”**