
STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER HUMANS

Michael Kass
michael@michaelkass.co
www.michaelkass.co

Terrible at sports

Appeared in all Black film

Grew up in DC

adaptation of Henry IV with Heavy D

Won all the science fairs in middle school

Went to college in Texas

Kicked out of Hebrew School for blasphemy

15 years at nonprofits

Meditation teacher

Lived in Chicago for 7 years

Certified coach

MA degree in theater

Hebrew school teacher

Award winning storyteller

Worked with flesh eating bacteria @ NIH

Did stand up for a while

Professor at American Jewish University

Accidentally helped a cab driver smuggle drugs
out of Peruvian rainforest

Fell off raft into Grand Canyon

Managed a high end strip club

Had my eyeballs licked in

Nationally recognized solo performer

Emergency stairwell at

Train station in DC

- (re)Defining Story
- Characteristics of Strong Stories
- Building Your Story
- Discovering Their Story
- Q&A
- Wrap Up

DEFINING STORY

WHAT IS STORY?

**STORY IS THE BASIC BUILDING
BLOCK OF COMMUNITY**

WE ARE WIRED FOR STORY

Example

Person 1

Where's John?

Person 2

Well. . .I didn't want to say anything, but the baseball bat is missing and I saw a blue Prius parked in front of Megan's.

WE ARE WIRED FOR STORY

- We filter information through a Neural Story Net

Example

A group of anti-vaccine parents attended a meeting in at which all the evidence supporting the safety and necessity of vaccination was presented. . .

WE ARE WIRED FOR STORY

- › Neural Coupling
 - › *Storytelling is mind control!*
- › Chemical and hormone release
 - › *Stories promote empathy!*

WHAT MAKES A STRONG STORY?

WHAT MAKES A STRONG STORY?

What did you want?

What stood in your way?

How did you confront this challenge?

What happened?

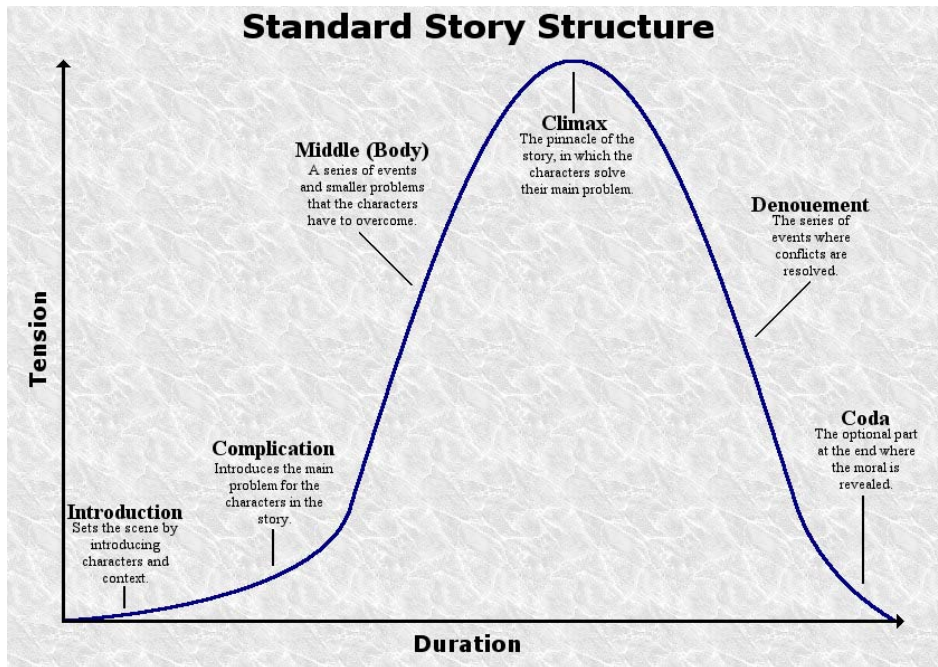
What did you learn?

Pro-tip 1:
Show is stronger than tell.

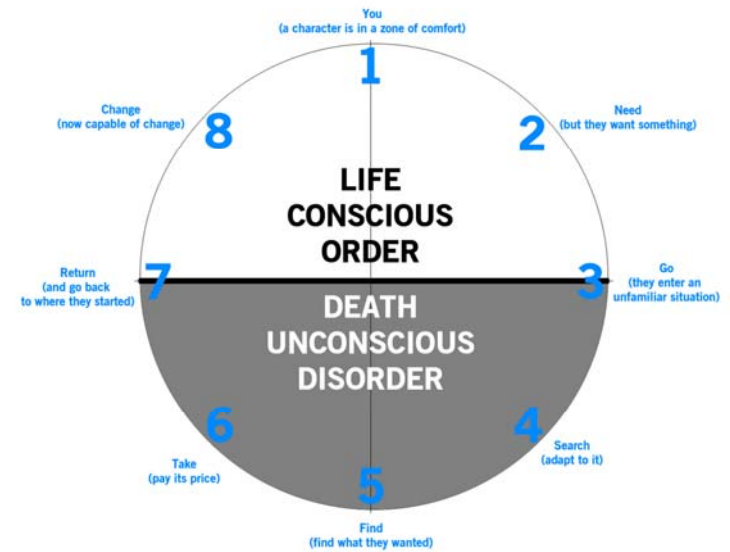
Pro-tip 2:
Use senses and details to help bring the story to life.

Pro-tip 3:
Listen as you speak.

STRUCTURE



STORY STRUCTURE CIRCLE



SPECIFICITY

- › Details allow us to live in the story AND every detail comes with a price
- › Beware of 'flood-lighting'
- › Experiment with different senses

AUTHENTICITY

- › Stories match actions
- › Appeals to universal humanity
- › Vulnerability

NOTE:

Authenticity and vulnerability are not the same as full-disclosure or over-sharing!

**BUILDING
POWERFUL
ORGANIZATIONAL
STORIES**

1. GENERATE RAW MATERIAL

16

1. Story Files
2. Peaks and Valleys
3. Origin, Transformation, Growth

1.5 GENERATE RAW MATERIAL

17

The Six Story Types

Who Am I

What Am I Doing Here

My Vision

Values In Action

'I Know What You're Thinking'

A Teaching Story

**adapted from *The Story Factor* by Annette Simmons

2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

18

1. Who is your audience demographically? Politically?
2. How much do they know about you and your work?
3. What is their relationship to you and your work?
4. What are they passionate about?
5. What communities are they a part of?

CALL TO ACTION



4. PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

20



UNCOVERING THEIR STORY

WHAT'S THEIR STORY?

2
2

The Delta Model

1. Where are you right now?
2. Where do you want to be?
3. What is standing in the way of you getting from where you are to where you want to be?



**Build
relationships
with
contributors**



**Build &
Maintain and
strong team**



**Diffuse
conflict**



**Teach &
Inspire**



**Cultivate
Powerful
Presence**



**Organically
discover core
values**

Q&A

THANK YOU & KEEP IN TOUCH

WWW.MICHAELKASS.CO

MICHAEL@MICHAELKASS.CO

[@MICHAEL_KASS](#)