

Episode 34



Nancy Duarte

Nancy Duarte is a communication expert whose firm, Duarte, Inc., is the global leader behind some of the most influential visual messages in business and culture. As a persuasion specialist, she cracked the code for effectively incorporating story patterns into business communications. Resonate, her latest book, spent nearly a year on Amazon's top 100 business book bestsellers list.

Voiceover

This is Business Reimagined. Every week, we talk with thought leaders and revolutionaries who are bringing innovation to their industries like today's guest, Nancy Duarte.

Nancy

Speech-making is normal. Presentation-making, you just state the facts, is easier. It's less risky than actually infusing something with story or ceremony because at that point, you're actually making a bigger moment and a bigger statement about endings and beginnings, and about where we're headed. Great leaders will have these moments of demarcation that are really, really clear, but they can't be contrived, and they can't be silly, and it can't be forced onto anyone.

Voiceover

This is Business Reimagined with Danny Iny.

Danny

Nancy Duarte is a bestselling author, TED speaker, and the CEO of the brilliantly successful presentation agency behind creative works like Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" and clients like Apple, HP, and even the Food Network. She



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appreciates these successes because they're a world away from where she thought she would end up when she was young because she floundered in academics early on, almost being placed in remedial classes. Despite all that, there were clues early on about her skills with organizing ideas.

Nancy

All the other girls would play with dolls, and Barbies, and all that stuff, and I found an old abandoned desk, and I put it in my room. I had a little drawer, and I would rake leaves, and then I would go to the local hardware store, which had a very tiny office supply section where I could buy 3 by 5 cards, and multi-colored pencils, and stuff. I would save my money, and go and buy little office supplies, and I would sit at my desk, and trace coloring books, and file them like I would trace over them, and trace over an ant, and file it in the A section, and trace over something else, and file it away, and try to come up with some sort of a little organizational system for my little drawings.

Danny

Despite her early academic trouble, Nancy's ability to visualize things eventually landed her a technical job in Silicon Valley. Everything was great, except that her husband wouldn't stop pestering her about putting her skills to even better use.

Nancy

My husband wanted to start this firm, and I thought it was stupid. I'd come home every day and be like, "That's a stupid idea," like I just really work hard to try to abort his dream, which eventually became mine. People ask me all the time like, "How did you know that you wanted to do presentations?" I'm like, "I didn't know. Presentations found me." I feel like... I work really hard to try to tell my husband to give up on this Mac computer thing that it was totally stupid. I would tell him, and then finally, I said, "Look, if I can sell it, you can keep it. If I can't sell it, it's not a



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good idea.” I picked up the phone one afternoon, and we literally won contracts at NASA, Tandem, which is now HP, and a division of Apple, and I never quit.

Danny

At the time, Nancy’s new firm offered all types of communications, web, multimedia, and print, but when the dot-com bubble burst, the phone stopped ringing for everything but presentations, so Nancy double-downed on the presentations and cut everything else. Things snowballed, and pretty soon, she had landed Al Gore as a client, hired a company president, and finally had some free time to look at the market around her.

Nancy

What’s blogging? This is how new it was. I was like, “Maybe I should blog.” I looked it up, and there was already a guy in Japan named “Garr Reynolds” who was already blogging about presentations, and we aligned so much. I sent him an email, and it said ... Subject line was, “Where have you been all my life?” He did his homework on us, found out we did “An Inconvenient Truth.” He blogged about it. He was the top presentation blogger, and that’s how the world found out. Now, the Valley knew about us well, but the world found out about us because this guy in Japan blogged all about our work that we did with Mr. Gore.

Danny

When her company went global, Nancy realized that she needed to write a book, and she did. First, “Slide:ology” about visuals, and then “Resonate” about storytelling. Now, her latest book is called “Illuminate,” and it’s directed at anyone who is a leader whether of a community, an industry, a team, or a company.

Nancy

Basically, Illuminate is about how every leader needs to be a torchbearer leader, and what that means is when you say, “Hey, I’m going to declare this new future,” people are scared of the unknown. Suddenly, you freak them out a little bit because



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you're saying, "Hey, where you're at today, that's not where we're going to stay. We're going to move on, and we're going to go into this dark, scary, future place that nobody understands yet. Oh, by the way, I want you to come with me."

Nobody loves to just jump in. Some do. Some are pretty adventurous, and they'll just jump in like balls to the wall. Some jump in. Others, not so much, and so it's really about a torchbearer leader who casts enough light. He illuminates enough of the future that makes it less scary for your travelers to go there with you, so you've got the torchbearer and the travelers, and you roll through this transformation together, and the really effective leaders will get everybody there.

They'll be at the right place in the future, that place where your customers are, that place where your employees need to be, that place where you need to be positioned in your industry, or that social movement that really needs traction in a certain country. Like whatever that is you're trying to accomplish, the torchbearer leaders are the ones that get their travelers there in the right place in the future. Does that make sense?

Danny

It makes sense. I'm quiet because I'm processing and I'm... I'm processing and I'm fascinated, so there's this internal tension of, "Do I now ask you all the things that I want to know, or do I... I'm the listener?"

Nancy

It's funny. You realize that in seasons of transformation, there's the people who are motivated and the people who are not, so what we did is we took speeches, stories, ceremonies, and symbols and realized, "What does it mean? How do you motivate through these tales, and how do you warn people through these tales?" There's a



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polarity there. That's very important to understand, the right climate of when it is you need to warn them and when it is you need to motivate them.

The structure of a transformation has a 5-act structure. It's a story structure, and you need to know what stage you're in and whether you're travelers need to be warned or whether they need to be motivated, and so it's a really beautiful way to move through time with a pretty extensive toolkit that's really clever, and I'm just super excited about seeing what happens with this new piece of work.

Danny

How does one go about reading your book? Like is it the kind of book that you ... Like Malcolm Gladwell, you sit back. You're like, "I'm going to read it beginning to end. It's engaging like a story," or is it more like, "I'm going to read the index. It's like, oh, I think chapter 3, that's super relevant to where I am now. I'm going to read that and apply it?" Like what kind of book is it because I feel like the subject matter could be ... it could be interesting and inspiring, but it feels to me like you want to tell us ... have a very practical, "Here's how to do it," element.

Nancy

It's fun. It has both, so I think the way ... The way it will happen is I think people will read it through, and then they'll keep it on their desk, and they'll be like, "Wait, I'm really struggling and my travelers are really suffering," and they'll be like, "Oh, that's right. I have this book," and then they'll pull it out and be like ... they'll use it as a diagnostic tool. First, they'll read the whole thing, so there's 8 really lovely case studies. They're pretty short. They're about 4 pages each, maybe 6, 6 ... I don't know.

Anyway, there's a handful of stories where there's a story about each stage, but then we have like quick, brief like, "And here's a bunch of other stories at that stage that



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are very short, more anecdotal.” There’s one that walks you through the entire phase as a longer case study that’s like Starbucks. When Howard Schultz came back, he had to rescue Starbucks because it was in rapid decline. We have a case study about Steve Jobs, how he really needed the developers to migrate from Mac OS 9 to Mac OS 10, the largest software migration in history.

Then, we have a simpler story about Rackspace, how he had to convince his employees it was okay for them to move their office into a dilapidated mall in the bad part of town. It was just like it’s different every time. Each case study brings to light a different point that’s important, so there’s the bigger case studies, and then there’s these little small bits like how Alibaba... Jack Ma got everybody to show their commitment to his start-up. They all stood on their heads, and he explained to them how they need to look at the world from a different angle. Just interesting, fun little, anecdotal bites of ways other leaders have enlisted a volunteer army to help with their cause.

Danny

Talk to me about... because this all sound... I’m familiar with some of these stories, and they’re fascinating, and they’re inspiring, and they make for a great toolkit of tools the leader can refer to, but I think a lot of the strength of a leader is not in having the tools, but knowing which tool to use when.

Nancy

Exactly, exactly. You know what else the hard part is? Is there’s a lot of the travelers that sometimes know better. They see...

Danny

In quotation marks? Yeah.



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Nancy

Yeah, and so what's been fun is the early reports from the people who've gotten the book. The leaders are saying things like, "Wow, for the first time in my life, I feel like the scales have fallen off my eyes because I understand what I'm asking my travelers to do and how hard it is on them." Right? Now, who doesn't want to be a follower that follows a leader like that, right? You want to have these poignant moments with the book where they're not only picking up a skill to make them a better communicator short-term, but now, they're seeing everything from a different vantage point, and it's one of empathy. They're suddenly empathetically being like, "Oh, wow, I've been treating them like I should be doing a war cry, rally cry, and in reality, I need to give them some time to lick their wounds."

Those are 2 completely different types of moments in a longer journey, and sometimes, the leader doesn't know exactly how to map with their people are feeling. Like right after a layoff, sometimes, the management, they'll grab everyone and be like, "We can do it. Go, go, go," and they're like, "We wanted to sit here and cry for a little bit." You got to have the right kind of moment, and you string the right kind of moments together, and you have a movement.

Danny

How do you know because I would think some people have just an intuitive sense of they know and other people just don't? Like if you're one of the people who doesn't, how can you know?

Nancy

That's what we're hoping the book does. We have this whole 5 steps of a way to self-identify the stage you're in, and then you have choices. You have a motivating speech and a warning speech, a motivating story and a warning story, a motivating ceremony and a warning ceremony, and you would be able to... You'd base on what your people need, so there's a visualization of the story that they're in, and you can



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see what stage or what act of the story that they're in. The big thing is that the whole book kicks off by really trying to help people understand empathy.

When you look when a company, say particularly has had a really big shift like Lou Gerstner shows up as the new hired to turn IBM around. First thing they do is listen. He spent the first 9 months just listening, and I think that there's a lot of power to that. Steve Jobs, first thing he did, he came back. He started calling all the developers, just listening, just listening, just collecting information, hearing, and hearing, and hearing, and hearing, and then he could be like, "Wow, this is the sentiment I'm hearing," and then he could pull out the book, and you can actually say, "Wow, if this is how everyone is feeling, that must mean we're in this stage of the journey, and we need to move everyone along by doing these communication activities."

Danny

How do you like... I think that makes perfect sense, and I... You can't fix something before you understand it. I'm going to play devil's advocate because that makes for better insight and more interesting conversation.

Nancy

Yeah.

Danny

Let's say I'm a leader, and I'm taking over a project, and I need to turn something around, so there's a group of stakeholders, and I need to shift directions. It could be a customer base. It could be a team, whatever. I'm not totally new to the situation like I'm not being hired from the outside to come in and do a turnaround like I've been in the organization, but this is a new initiative to new direction. How do I know if I know enough about what is going on?



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Nancy

You know what? It's so funny. In the fall, I had to separate with the president of my own company, and that was part of the problem. As I went on a listening tour, I did surveys, I did client surveys, I did... I met one-on-one with teams, I met one-on-one with employees, and I created an actual chart that said like, "Well, this team believes this, but this team believes that," and they are polar opposite like the polarity of opinion in my own shop, in my own communications firm was astounding to me. It got comical at some point, and then I had to pick.

Actually, eventually, I just had so much resolve. I said, "You know what? I'm going to declare that this is the direction," and nobody in the whole place could say, "I did not feel hurt by Nancy," or, "I don't think Nancy did her homework enough," or, "I think she's just run off all rouge on us," because everyone watched me systematically, and then communicate clearly like, "Hey, I just want to let you know there's this polarity. It's like the fog of war here. I can't even see what's going on," but I did my best, and I think everyone that works here, my clients, everyone would say, "She did her best," so nobody could accuse me of that.

Then, finally, I had to just pick a direction. I had to pick a truth and rally everyone around it, so you... I would say the tool will get you so far, this assessment tool that we made, but most of leadership, a lot of it is intuition, so then I had to go back to, "Wait. Here's who Duarte is. Here's what we believe. Here's how we function." I had to go back to that set of shared truths and use that as my lighthouse for what we needed to do to move the organization forward.

Danny

Cool, so can you share... Obviously, people should just... I haven't read the new book, but I am familiar with your work, and I've heard you speak, and I'm sure it's



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great, and people should go get a copy, but between now and when they do, like what's the nutshell overview of like what are those 5 steps?

Nancy

Yeah, so there is a free executive summary too. If they go to my website, there's actually a beautiful multi-page visual summary, but basically, it follows the S-curve of innovation. Anyone who knows... Companies need to innovate, and then once you mature, you go into a state of decay, unless you reinvent yourself again. That is a story structure in itself, so there's 5 steps. First, there's a dream. You have to declare a vision. There's a dream, and then they leap. Picture it in the shoes of the travelers. They have to like listen and/or adopt the dream, they leap, and then there's become a fight, and then a climb, and then you will arrive. It's dream, leap, fight, climb arrive. Those are the 5 steps, and you should be able to be able to tell.

Most everyone can tell that's read the book. They're like, "Oh my god, we're in this phase. I've been treating them like we're over here or whatever," and it's been really easy for people to say, "Oh my god, we just finished the fight. They need a bonding ceremony," or, "Oh my gosh, we need a revolution speech." Sometimes, instead of a vision speech, they need a revolution speech. They need to rage against something instead of having this new vision that draws them into the future. It just shows you the different kinds of speeches, different kinds of stories, and helps you diagnose what your people need to hear from you based on where they're at on this track, on this big, epic tale.

Danny

Do you always like... It's 5 steps. Do you always move forward through the steps, or do you start over?



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Nancy

Yeah. You're asking really good questions. I'm like, "Are you sure you haven't read the whole book?" Yeah. What we find is the dream and leap phase happen very quickly sometimes. You declare a dream, and you have your adventurous ones that leap. Sometimes, that can happen in the same moment. It's the fight and climb that wind up feeling like an eternity, and it's not like then you fight for 6 months, then you climb for 6 months, and then you will arrive. It's not like that at all. It's like fight, climb, climb, climb, fight, climb, fight, climb. It's like switchbacks, right? Switch back, switch forth, switch back and forth. Sometimes, then you have a setback, and then you have to re-climb what you just climbed, so it's really that messy middle.

If you look at a 3-act story structure, basically, the beginning is the dream, leap phase. In the beginning of any great story is you're establishing the hero as likable, and then they jump into this new world, right? They jump into an adventure, so that's what that is, "Hey, you guys are likable. We need to jump into this adventure together." That's dream, leap. It's the fight, climb that's the middle of the story. There's where all the action happens. There's where people are in danger. That's where they're scared. That's where sometimes they have to reload their equipment and their ammunition and like it's hard. That's where relationships get strained, and then they have misunderstandings, so you think about the middle of a story.

Every romance-comedy is about miscommunication, right? It's about, "Oh, but I thought you loved me. I thought you loved her." That's where the messy middle happens, and we... That's the hardest part is the fight, climb, and then arrival is the resolution. It's hopefully a happy ending, but in some organizations and some



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movements, they fade or die, but hopefully, not... if you really need... you still live on, you come to a place of a positive resolution instead of a tragedy, right?

Danny

And, I guess, declare a new dream and start over.

Nancy

Exactly, re-dream for infinity.

Danny

I totally see that as the narrative arc of both stories and our experience when it's a well-crafted and well-led experience as you're teaching people how to do.

Nancy

Right.

Danny

What about when you go to the theater and you start watching a movie or you're reading a book, and you're like two-thirds of the way in? You're like, "This story hasn't even gotten off the ground like nothing is happening." Like I'm thinking of business context like let's make this really relevant for the people who are listening to this or in most cases, online entrepreneurs and business people, so the context can be down in the people they're working with.

Maybe they have a team. Maybe they have a partner, and there never was a dream that everyone bought into. It's like you've been caught in the climb and the fight without it ever having gotten off the ground or in the context of marketing. Maybe they've been doing some stuff and putting out some content, and people are following their work, but not really engaged. What happens if you find yourself alternating between the fight and the climb, and there was never a dream, and there was never a buy-in?



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Nancy

What happens is then in the communication matrix, there's crossroads. You had a crossroad. A crossroad speaks sometimes might be like, "We were headed this direction, and we need to change direction or pivot into a new thing." I feel like you wouldn't have a company if at one point, there wasn't a dream whether it was a dream of a product or a dream of a future, or when people actually joined your organization for summaries and a quest of meaning, and you need to tap into that. I do think that sometimes, you're plowing for so long on the dream and fight phase that you need to create closure.

You need to milestone it out, so people are like... they feel a sense of accomplishment because you can't fight, climb, fight, climb, fight, climb forever, so you have to... and I'm not saying manufacture a moment, but you have to have reprieve in there where they feel like, "Well, we pushed the needle far enough to pause, celebrate or pause and cut." We're built... we are hardwired as humans for beginnings and endings. When things end, it makes room for beginnings. That's why we have winter and spring, right, that we've ended one season, we begin another one, and so when we look at anthropologically cultures, we realize back as far as we could find or as far as scientists could find.

The earliest artifacts you could find from civilizations were from rituals. Mostly, the ritual of the rite of passage. The rite of passage is simply a ceremony around transformation like it's in every culture. Jewish people celebrate the bar mitzvah. It's like the boy walks in, and he's a boy, and 10 minutes later after ceremony, he's a man. Same with the quinceanera in Hispanic cultures. The little girl walks in with a dolly, and 10 minutes later, she's passing her doll on and gets to wear high heels. A marriage walks in single, leaves married. All that's happened is a ceremony that



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said, “Your life as a single person has ended. Your life as a married person has begun.”

Yet, in businesses... businesses are larger than most historical kingdoms. Yet, as a culture, as cultures, we don't celebrate endings and beginnings, and that's where ceremony comes in. What happens is if they feel like they're in the drudge of being sick of fighting and climbing, it's because they're in a season that needs to end, and they need a new beginning. Those moments of demarcation happen around ceremony. You need to know, “Hey, we're passing out of the 5-phase now. That has ended. I promise you, and we're moving into a new era.”

In fact, Steve Jobs, the story like I tell, it's the climax of that story is he was fighting hard to get everybody to move to Mac OS 10, and there were still stragglers. He was just done. He was tired, and so he held a mock funeral for Mac OS 9. There was a coffin on the stage. It came up with smoke out of the grounds, stained glass on wall. This is the opening keynote of Worldwide Developers Conference. He took a big box of Mac OS 9, put it in the coffin, closed the lid, put a red rose on it, and actually eulogized the ending of Mac OS 9 in front of thousands of people.

He was basically saying, “It's done. It's over. I'm not going to talk about Mac...” He didn't talk about Mac OS 9 again after that moment, and he said, “You know what? The train has left the station. This is over. It's dead. It's done,” because people were still straggling on. This moment of time needed to be demarcated that it was over, done, and move on to Mac OS 10 or you're not a developer for Apple anymore. I don't think everyone has to be that dramatic and hold funerals and everything, but it was a big important thing, and he made it... needed to make it very, very clear



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that everyone needed to have moved on by then. It's not a story. It's not a speech. It was a ceremony.

Danny

I love that. I love the poignancy of it, and I love how... There's a Steve Jobs-ish thing to it where it's like it's just deciding and they can happen.

Nancy

Yeah, yeah.

Danny

Because Steve Jobs is... You can prove and you can break a lot of rules using him as an example.

Nancy

Yeah, yeah.

Danny

What comes to mind for me is, "What if you do that? What if you create that rite of passage, but you flub it?" Like what if I'm inspired of the example Steve Jobs and how he basically drew this line on the sand and says, "Look, now we're on the other side of it, and there's a change that I want to make happen?" Maybe it's within my organization. Maybe it's within the culture of my audience, my community. People listening to this kind of story, we all like to gloss over the hard work part. He had done the talks, and he had spoken to his developers, and they've done the campaign like they did all that stuff. This was the last part.

Nancy

Yup.

Danny

What if I didn't do as thorough of a job on that part as I should have done that I was like, "Okay. I'm just..." I'm creating facts on the ground. I'm drawing this line on the sand, and then it doesn't stick because people aren't there, and there's only so



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much that... there's a limited extent to which saying it as so will make it so, and I did this with the best of intentions. What do I do now? Like am I just screwed?

Nancy

Yes. No. I think that what's hard about... Speech-making is normal. Presentation-making, you just state the facts, is easier. It's less risky than actually infusing something with story or ceremony because at that point, you're actually making a bigger moment and a bigger statement about endings and beginnings, and about where we're headed. Great leaders will have these moments of demarcation that are really, really clear, but they can't be contrived, and they can't be silly, and it can't be forced onto anyone. Otherwise, then they'll rebel against that. Your symbol that you thought would rally them will suddenly become a symbol of anger and outrage, right? It's very tender.

I think travelers are more tender than leaders think. That's why you have to be a bit more thoughtful in what stage you're at. We try not to do work that's so formulaic that you just... like a bingo card, you're like, "I'm at B-17," or whatever like you shouldn't be that formulaic. You really need to be thoughtful about what the people need to hear, but it's not even so much what they need here. You also have to move things forward, and it's the leader's job to do that, and I think that... I have another piece I'm working on about how is it that a leader sees. How is it that I know? Like I know that I know that I know what my organization needs to do for the next 18 months with conviction as if it's fact like you can just see it. I don't know how else to describe it.

I'm starting to interview other leaders like, "How do you know that you know that you know what you're supposed to do because the really brave, bold leaders know?" I'm trying to get to the bottom of that because people can make these crazy,



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seemingly crazy declarations that are true, and then their people rally behind it and get there in the next 18 months. I think it comes with practice because I've been right a lot. I've been much, much, much more right than I've been wrong, and I think it just... you get bolder, and bold, and bold as you really learn to read the signs, and it's a real art. That's the art part of leadership. It's not a science at all.

Danny

That's, I guess, potentially the next book.

Nancy

Yeah, it is. I'm excited about it.

Danny

I'm excited about it now too. I've got to wait for a whole new book to come out.

Nancy

Yeah, yeah. This one took 4 years. I work on a major work and a minor work at the same time. Resonate and Slide:ology were major works, and I did a couple minor works. I did the HBR Guide, and I did an online book called "The Slidedocks." This is my big, major work that's getting released coming up, and it's pretty transformative. I tell you, it changed us. My co-author and I were really, really changed by writing it, and we're very pleased by that.

Danny

Rather than hold my breath for the next book, maybe 4 months out, I will sink my teeth and my brain into Illuminate, and I'll do it with a lot of excitement.

Nancy

Thank you.

Danny

I have a question about something that you touched on a little earlier. You were very careful and deliberate to say that it's not about manufacturing a moment so much as the fact that people need periods of reprieve, which I think is a very astute way of articulating the human condition around us, but it's telling an important choice of



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words because there is... I don't know if... It's on air of spontaneity. There's an affectation of spontaneity to a lot of good leadership where it's like as if it just came to you, and people don't like the idea that you might have thought this through, and run it through a 5-step matrix, and like calculated that.

Now, they... It's like it would seem to undermine the authenticity that we want in our leaders. It's a silly and baseless thing that we want. We want it. Is there a risk of a leader going through this with the best of intentions, and then the audience feeling like manipulated like you've been ... you've manufactured this rather than being for real?

Nancy

Yeah. I would say yes. Absolutely. It is really a little visualization, and journey, and empathy before it is... like this diagnostic tool, but yet it does diagnose. I would say I have a story. There's a version of a talk I gave where it was cheesy in a version of a talk I just gave where it was so meaningful and emotional that it resonated so deeply, I've never had an internal response like this. When we were... We decided to organize ourselves a little differently, and I used the Aesop's Fable, the bundle full of sticks.

What we were going to do is instead of like having individual groups, we were merging them together, and it is like... The moral of that fable is strength and unity. We're going to pull together, and by bending together, you can't break this stick, so I gave away as this little gift item this little bundle full of sticks that were actually little pencils. They were little colored pencils or whatever. Gave it away, "Yay, we're bundle full of sticks. Strength and unity, yay."



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Like 2 weeks later, I don't know why I was in on a Saturday, and I noticed I couldn't find any of these bundles full of sticks anywhere. I wasn't snooping on anyone's desk, but I was like, "Nobody had them out." Nobody had it out as a symbol of like pride or excitement around this initiative, so I walked up every single row here, and only... It's only out on the surface of 1 person's desk, which was interesting to me.

For this vision talk, I had to go back to our future, and a lot of finding meaning is in your culture, but you have to do an anthropological dig. You have to go and find the meaning and sweep it off, unbury it, and elevate it, so I just did that using almost every principle in Illuminate, and it was so heartfelt for me. The activities we did, the models that I came up with came from our past. It was really unbelievable. There were a few moments in the talk where people literally gasped, and then I had a standing ovation, and this is for the vision of the next year that's pretty demanding.

I've never had that happen, but because I did my homework and I found stories and symbols, they were already in my culture that people felt were true, I retold those, and it all knit together perfectly, beautiful, and then we gave away... Believe it or not, I did my whole talk in 35 millimeter slides, which is old technology. I literally output it. We rented an old, old 35 millimeter slide machine, and then as the giveaway, we took the model, this new operating model that I came up with, and everyone got a little tiny 35 millimeter slide as a gift, and they all looked at it. They hold it up. I see it out on everyone's desk because it resonated. It resonated in a way that was amazing.

Sometimes, people's agreement or disagreement with what you're saying will manifest by how precious the symbols are that were generated from your bit of communication, and that's a listening tool. I could actually visibly see that people



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didn't latch on to the Aesop's Fable story, but I can see that they latched on to this 35 millimeter slide. I don't know. That's a very short, brief version of that, but that is ...

Danny

No, I love that. I think that's great, and I love the meta lesson, which is that if you try something that doesn't work, it's not game over. You're still a person in relationship with other people, and you keep on trying.

Nancy

Right, and that's what ... I did have this moment where I was like digging through my archives, and I'm like literally ... It sounds really weird because the books are a lot about that. Go into your past to find truths that are shared truths. I'm digging through my archives going, "Oh my god, I just wrote a book that says I'm supposed to do this." It wasn't like, "I'm going to follow my book, and I'm going to manipulate this whole thing." It was like I found myself yearning for meaning in the past, so I went into my archives, and then I realized, "Oh my god, my book says to do this." It was this meta. Just totally a meta moment that I had, and to your point, it wound up resonating in a way like nothing I've ever done.

Danny

It's a cool moment that ... Anyone who's listening to this who's written a book or created a work that ... You finish creating it to a certain extent because as much as it's a living document and idea, it's like you finish writing it, and with you sending your manuscript or you hit "Publish," it's up there, and you get a little bit of distance from it. Not a ton. You're still steeped in that, but you get some distance. I'm sure that it's a traditionally published book, so it's ... Like you send the manuscript to the publisher and it's out the next month. It's like it takes time. Having that moment where you stumble back on to it and you're like, "Hey, this is actually a really ... This is a good idea. This holds up." this is awesome because you find yourself in the moment. It's a cool moment to be in.



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Nancy

Yeah, yeah.

Danny

Nancy, we're almost up on our time, but of course, I want to respect the gift and generosity of your time for our audience, so as a 2-part wrap-up question, the theme of the show is "Business Reimagined" and we've talked a lot about ... a lot of the ways that you are showing people how to lead their people into better and brighter future, how would you articulate the difference in how you see business versus what you see most other people see around you?

Nancy

How I see business versus how my peers, my other leadership peers may see business? Is that... ?

Danny

What's the unique perspective that you're bringing?

Nancy

I feel like this will manifest more in my next book, but I feel like people today, travelers today will fight hard. They'll fight and climb for a long time when it's a quest for meaning. Society has broken down to the point where people are looking to their employers to bring hope and fulfillment. People used to go to church. They used to be part of community centers. They used to do a whole lot of other things. That and the family unit has even gone into a state of decay, and so what I felt like my job this time with this new vision that I just laid out was to create more meaning at my company than the public company has across the street, right?

Again, the competition for talent. I'm having to do that, and so I'm ... I really feel like what's on my mind right now is, "How do we care for the poor?" I have in my shop the ability to not only raise someone up out of poverty, but to completely change their trajectory in life based solely on how they communicate. How do we



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find those people, invest in them, and then watch them, just watch them change the world?

My team, that's what we want to do, and so that's one of the things we're going to build this year is an infrastructure to identify, and find, and heavily invest in those who this... Silicon Valley overlooks. You have to have an MBA. You have to be an engineer. You have to do... What do we do for the disenfranchised that all they need is a chance? We're excited about that, and that brings more meaning to our work.

We already get to write the messages for some of the most powerful and influential people and causes in the planet, but to be able to see our work actually change at the micro level someone's life to where you bring light into their eyes, and you give them the capacity to earn their own keep in society and the team we're just brimming with excitement to see how that become something real.

Danny

That was Nancy Duarte reimagining the role of a leader as the one who illuminates forward for the travelers around them in a way that is considered powerful and above all, resonant and respectful of the true journey that they're on. There was so much packed into this episode that I strongly encourage you to come back and listen again, especially if you're in a position of leading people, and really, who isn't? Glean as much as you can here. Grab your copy of Nancy's new book "Illuminate" and visit Duarte.com. That's D-U-A-R-T-E.com to learn more about all of her work.

Voiceover

This has been Business Reimagined with Danny Iny. Join us next time as we talk with Ari Meisel.

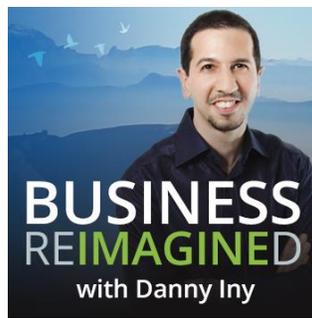


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Ari

I'm constantly trying to not outsource things like I love saving 3 seconds on a process if I can because something was able to be automated. Really, what changes is that the rate that technology is improving and expanding is just at whirlwind speed, and we can literally automate things now that 3 months ago, a person had to do manually, so that's the big thing. We can just automate so much more for free in most cases than... I mean, certainly, you couldn't 3 years ago, but even the last 3 months.

Voiceover

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