

## Story Selection

In selecting a story that is appropriate for any given circumstance, there are three fundamental questions you must ask yourself. First, does the story fit your audience? How does it support and underscore your main message? Second, is it a story you love, have lived or have learned from firsthand? These are key elements if you want your story to be as compelling as possible. Third, can your story be related in a way that your audience will not only appreciate it, but also identify with it and be able to relive it? Remember that the more you can draw your audience in to you and your message, the more you can connect and persuade them.

Depending on the message you wish to convey, your story could take on any number of different tones or moods. Review the list below and check those characteristics that would be most instrumental in making your message more compelling:

Humorous	Contemplative
Witty	Disturbing
Spiritual	Fear
Surprising	Motivational
Teamwork	Heartwarming
Charitable	Enlightened
Inspirational	Scary

After you've determined the mood that best supports your message, you should have many different *kinds* of stories to pick from. The best kind of story is a true story, one that is based on your own personal experience. If it's not your own personal story, try to

have it be the story of someone you know. Outside of personal, true-life stories, there may be times when yet another kind of story is appropriate. In these cases, you will again have many different genres to pick from. Consider the following:

Folktales	Fairytales
Myths	Oral traditions
Heroic tales	Love stories
Ghost stories	Historical accounts
Bible stories	Childhood adventures

Sometimes you have a pretty good idea of the type of story you want to use, but you're not sure where to come up with a good one. Again, remembering to always draw on your own firsthand experiences as your best resources, try this list to help jog your memory:

Embarrassing moments	Proudest moments
Saddest moments	Family vacations
Growing up years	Travel (family, business, etc.)
Year by year events	Sports
Dating	Boss, workplace
Schooldays	Hobbies
Disappointments	Heroes (sports, business, family)

Photographs

Journals, diaries

Victories

Defeats

Failures

Overcoming obstacles/challenges

When drawing on experiences other than your own, you might try:

Books

Friends

Internet

Family

Movies

Observation

Once you've narrowed down the mood you wish to convey, the type of story you want to use and where you want to get it from, you then have to begin focusing on how to most effectively tell your story.

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