

29 Favorite Quotes About Stories/Storytelling to Use in Business

From Karen Dietz, www.juststoryit.com

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Use these quotes to think about the nature of stories/storytelling, their impact in organizations, their connection to with marketing & branding efforts, their sense-making qualities, and the social nature of story sharing.

Share these quotes during presentations or in other content you create.

1. "People think that stories are shaped by people. In fact it's the other way around ..." *Terry Pratchett, novelist*
2. "Humans are not ideally set up to understand logic; they are ideally set up to understand stories." *Roger C. Schank*
3. "Tell me the facts and I'll learn. Tell me the truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever." An old Native American proverb
4. The world is shaped by two things – stories told and the memories they leave behind. *Vera Nazarian, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writer*
5. "We live in a world where bad stories are told. Stories that teach us life doesn't mean anything, that humanity has no great purpose. It's a good calling, then, to speak a better story. How brightly a better story shines. How easily the world looks to it in wonder." *Author Donald Miller*
6. "Social engagement begins when we share our stories...Social change happens when we agree together to change the ending." from *The Needmore Fund: 50 Years, 50 Stories*
<http://www.needmorfund.org/history.htm>
7. "The ability to articulate your story or that of your company is crucial to almost every phase of enterprise management. It works all along the business food chain. A great salesperson knows how to tell a story in which the product is the hero. A successful line manager can rally the team to extraordinary efforts through a story that shows how short-term sacrifice leads to long-term success. An effective CEO uses an emotional narrative about the company's mission to attract investors and partners, to set lofty goals, and to inspire employees. Sometimes a well-crafted story can even transform a seemingly hopeless situation into an unexpected triumph." *Peter Guber, author, American film producer & executive and Chairman and CEO of Mandalay Entertainment, from HR Magazine September (2008),*
8. "Many of the estimated 33 million PowerPoint presentations given daily in the US do not achieve their potential. In fact, the Wall Street Journal recently reported that bad PowerPoint presentations cost companies \$252 million per day in wasted time. Most presentations contain

powerful information, but are presented with a slew of PowerPoint slides leaving the audience with a bunch of data that they have to interpret themselves." *Tomayo Consulting.com*

9. Stories are not indicators, they ARE the organization. *David M. Boje, Professor of management at New Mexico State University*
10. "When you begin to talk in stories, your black-and-white words turn into color. Your drab requests turn into a mission. People find you to be more compelling. And once that happens, others will see that stories work, and they'll start telling stories, too." *Annette Simmons, author & business consultant*
11. "Stories tell us of what we already knew and forgot, and remind us of what we haven't yet imagined." - *Anne L. Watson, author*
12. "We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling." *Jimmy Neil Smith, Director of the International Storytelling Center*
13. "Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives -- the power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change -- truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts." *Salman Rushdie, author*
14. "Stories knit together the realities of the past and future, of dreamed and intended moments. They teach us how we perceive and why we wonder." *Joan Halifax, Zen Buddhist roshi, anthropologist, ecologist, civil rights activist, hospice caregiver, and the author*
15. "Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released." *Robin Moore, author*
16. "Storytelling is where we share what we've discovered; all of us have discovered a little secret about life." *Michael Cotter, storyteller*
17. "Stories constitute the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal." *Dr. Howard Gardner, Prof. Harvard Univ.*
18. "No tribal Chief or Elder has ever handed out statistical reports, charts, graphs or lists of facts to explain where the group is headed or what it must do." *Peg Neuhauser, author & business consultant*
19. "And do you know what is the most-often missing ingredient in a sales message? It's the sales message that doesn't tell an interesting *story*. Storytelling . . . good storytelling . . . is a vital component of a marketing campaign." *From direct marketing guru Gary Halbert's March 2002 newsletter*
20. **Robert Shapiro:** "If I wanted to predict behavior, I could still predict it better with the stories told around the company than I could with any mission statement or five-year plan."
Stuart Kauffman: "We can't deduce what the future holds by extrapolating or by algorithms. So what do we do? We tell stories. I think a story is a context in which an autonomous agent could act on its own behalf."

Robert Shapiro: “Stories may have that power of keeping the organization together which encourages continuous change. Having a common foundation, a common set of beliefs, enables people to interact in ways that are not chaotic. By determining some fundamental core understanding – a commonly recognized truth, a story – you could really have a pretty good template for a creative institution.”

Discussion between Dr. Stuart Kauffman, Chief Scientist of Bios Group LP and researcher at the Santa Fe Institute, and Robert Shapiro, former Chairman and CEO of Monsanto Corp and Nutrasweet Group, in *Perspectives on Business Innovation* published by Ernst and Young, 2000.

21. “The story – from Rapunzel to War and Peace – is one of the basic tools invented by the human mind, for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.” *author Ursula K. Le Guin, 1979*
22. “Narrative imagining -- story -- is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend upon it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, or predicting, of planning, and of explaining.” *Mark Turner, The Literary Mind, professor of Cognitive Science, Case Western Univ.*
23. “When human beings get into collaborative patterns of action, whether it be teams or communities of interest, or networks -- they all have one thing in common: they contain individuals who share the same stories. It is the shared stories that enable the members of the collectivity to understand each other, their motivations, the habits, the expectations, the fears, the dreams, and this understanding enables the members of the group to anticipate each other’s actions and intentions and so start to move in unison and harmony. Without this pattern of shared stories, the members of the group may appear as hostile, unfriendly, whimsical, capricious or difficult. Starting out by telling a story, and then the sharing of stories is an age-old method of building up this common libraries of shared stories and understanding in the minds of the members of the group.” *Steve Denning, The Springboard: Using Storytelling for Igniting Action in Knowledge Era Organizations*
24. “Perhaps the most powerful role of stories today is to ignite and drive changes in management policy and practices.” *Booz Allen*
25. “The LAW OF REQUISITE VARIETY is well understood in ecology -- if the diversity of species falls below a certain level then the ecology stagnates and dies. Excessive focus on core competence, a single model of community of practice or a single story are all examples of ways in which organizations can destroy requisite variety.” *IBM Cynefin Center for Organizational Complexity*
26. “Most people can’t hear until they’ve been heard.” *Red Scott, businessman*
27. “If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am.” *Dan McAdams, Ph.D. Professor Department Chair Clinical Psychology, Northwestern University*
28. “Community is formed only by *shared* stories, not by monologues. Empathic listening is followed, in time by reciprocal storytelling. I know I have a place in the community not only as I hear and accept its stories but as it hears and makes room for mine.” *Daniel Taylor, author & Professor of English, Bethel Univ.*

29. "The purpose of the storyteller is to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comforted." *Elizabeth Ellis, storyteller*