

# PC 212: Storytelling: Leading, Teaching and Transforming in a New Way

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## **Storytelling: Leading, Teaching and Transforming in a New Way**

A leader's job is to influence, and stories persuade and inspire more effectively than reports, studies, statistics or PowerPoint presentations. Stories bring people together and unify them for specific purposes. Storytelling is a vital component in the toolbox of presenters, facilitators, teachers, and all leaders.

Based in premier presenter Bob Garmston's book, *The Astonishing Power of Storytelling*, participants will actively engage in the what, why, and how of storytelling that teaches and transforms.

### **Outcomes**

Participants will:

- Explore and develop stories that shift perception, invite learning, inspire action and change behaviors;
- Initiate/launch a habit of story writing and telling;
- Acquire scaffolds and engage in skills practice to deepen storytelling repertoire;
- Increase personal efficacy as a storyteller.

### **Presenter**

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Michael Dolcemascolo is a Director Emeritus of Thinking Collaborative, the home of the Adaptive Schools Seminars and the Cognitive Coaching Seminars®. Michael regularly presents workshops on Cognitive Coaching<sup>SM</sup>, Adaptive Schools, as well as presentation and facilitation skills to national and international audiences.

Michael is co-author with Robert Garmston of the *Storytelling Study Companion* (Corwin, 2019), *Study Group Facilitation Guide for The Presenter's Fieldbook* (Rowman Littlefield, 2018), *The Focusing Four: A Consensus Seeking Activity DVD Viewers Guide* and *Dialogue DVD Viewers Guide* (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2009). With Carolyn McKanders, Michael has co-authored the *Developing Collaborative Groups Study Guide*, and co-edited the *Adaptive Schools Foundation Workshop Learning Guide* (Thinking Collaborative, 2017). Michael and his wife, Diane, delightfully split their time between Skaneateles, NY and Royal Palm Beach, Florida.

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## STORY PURPOSES

SHIFT PERCEPTION	INVITE LEARNING	INSPIRE ACTION	SEEK A DESIRED STATE
<p>These stories invite listeners to move beyond current frames of reference, to entertain new ways of observing and interpreting their worlds.</p>	<p>These tales offer learning opportunities about presentation skills, courage, and internal processes.</p>	<p>This set of stories inspires, encourages, and reveals how leaders influence those around them.</p>	<p>These stories illustrate ways presenters and leaders lead others to more productive states, attitudes, and behaviors than what currently exists.</p>
<p>Examples:</p> <p><i>Domino's Pizza, 34</i>  <i>Is There Something I Can Do?, 35</i>  <i>Peugeot Confusion, 121</i>  <i>The Alien Hand, 150</i>  <i>Omar the Squirrel, 152</i>  <i>Learning to Forgive, 153</i>  <i>Contextual Empathy, 154</i></p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p><i>Let Me Tell You a Story, 4</i>  <i>Leading Through Narrative, 7</i>  <i>Million-Dollar Story, 19</i>  <i>Riding the Bus, 42</i>  <i>The Prince and the Parables, 58</i>  <i>Superintendent in Shock, 156</i>  <i>The Mindful Monk, 157</i>  <i>Student Teacher, 158</i>  <i>Cramming Content, 159</i></p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p><i>A Seat at the Table (M. Markle), 9</i>  <i>Disliked by the Chair, 37</i>  <i>Bear in the Cage, 101</i>  <i>Choosing a Profession, 160</i>  <i>What to Wear, 163</i>  <i>Taking a Stand, 164</i></p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p><i>Wetting the Bed No More, 22</i>  <i>The Neat Freak, 37</i>  <i>Shouting at a Parent, 99</i>  <i>A Strong, Yet Delicate Rose, 105</i>  <i>Principal Gonzales, 116</i>  <i>Break the Pot, 119</i>  <i>Third Man Out, 132</i>  <i>How Green is My Garden, 140</i>  <i>Baseball to Improve, 165</i></p>

## Story Purposes “Each Teach”: Inspire Action

*Partner A—Read, then share key ideas with your partner:*

One reason a leader tells stories is to motivate others, to **inspire action**. These stories inspire and encourage others, and reveal how leaders influence those around them. Because most people suffer from information overload, messages intended to influence us have a dismal rate of effectiveness, with the exception of messages sent through the oldest communication pipelines in the world—gossip, rumors and stories. Stories help us to remember data better than a presentation of facts and are more persuasive to listeners than advice. Through stories, listeners adopt ideas as if they were their own.

Bob shares this personal story that influenced him:

### *Choosing a Profession*

*Taking a break from junior college after the Navy, I worked for a while for the Press Democrat in Santa Rosa, visiting schools and talking with fourth- through sixth-grade kids. I told them that if they were able to sell their folks a subscription to the newspaper they would earn a nifty set of steak knives. One principal, Howard Rolfe, would not let me in his school. Instead he stood in the hallway explaining why he would not turn his classrooms into a commercial enterprise and telling me what he was trying to accomplish in his school. I was thrilled with his vision and passion and knew without a doubt that I would return to school and study to be a teacher.*

What might be an example of a story intended to inspire action that you have used yourself, or heard others use?

## Story Purposes “Each Teach”: Seek a Desired State

**Partner B**—Read, then share key ideas with your partner:

One reason a leader tells stories is to lead others to more productive states, attitudes, and behaviors than what currently exists. These stories begin by meeting groups where they are, nonjudgmentally acknowledging that existing state, then helping them envision a possible desired state that represents something listeners would want to move toward. Finally, the story assists the listeners in accessing the internal resources needed to make the transformation from existing to desired states. In Cognitive Coaching terminology, the story first “paces,” then “leads.”

Bob shares this personal story that illustrates the process:

### Shouting at a Parent

*The first time I witnessed the application of the desired state was through a hole in the wall of my principal's office in Marin County. Because I was studying to be a principal he would periodically invite me to peek at some interaction from which I could learn. On this day, an Air Force officer and parent was seated in Ross' office. From my vantage point, I could see him clearly. His voice was raised, and all of a sudden his fist swept from over his head to pound on Ross' desk. Clearly, Ross sensed the existing state was far less than desirable. Ross responded in kind, with his own fist slamming the desk, and in a voice that started loud but tapered off to a conversational tone. At the end he said, "You're at the end of your rope with this teacher and your son, and if we were to sit and talk this out I believe we can get a solution." The officer nearly melted into his chair, and from then on the two had a normal conversation.*

*Ross matched the energy and anger in the officer's voice with his own, then gradually decelerated until he was at a conversational level. In other words, Ross chose a response that let the officer know he was totally understood (existing state), which contributed to an understanding between the two men. This (the resource) was necessary to move to a (desired state), which Ross did, by modeling tone and language at the end of his statement.*

What might be an example of a story intended to acknowledge an existing condition, then seek a desired state that you have used yourself, or heard others use?

## PIXAR STORY STRUCTURE

<i>Six Stage Story</i>	<i>Your Example</i>
Once upon a time there was...	
Every day...	
One day...	
Because of that...	
And because of that...	
Finally...	

<b>Personal/Signature Stories</b>	<b>Organizational Stories</b>
<p><i>Notes:</i></p> <p>Connects your humanity to others  Sources in childhood, family or recreation  Sources in work experiences</p>	<p><i>Notes:</i></p> <p>Believable  Commonly known  Conveys a core value or norm distinctive to this organization</p>
<p><i>Examples:</i></p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p>

**Garmston on Metaphor**  
(Excerpts taken from *The Astonishing Power of Storytelling*)

Metaphor travels neural pathways of actual experience, "...they evoke...sensations in the brain, causing us to recreate experience as if we *were* experiencing what was being told." (51)

"Metaphors are yarns in which parallels exist between the listener and the fabric of the story." (51)

"Metaphors are glimpses into unstated perceptions of the world." (53)

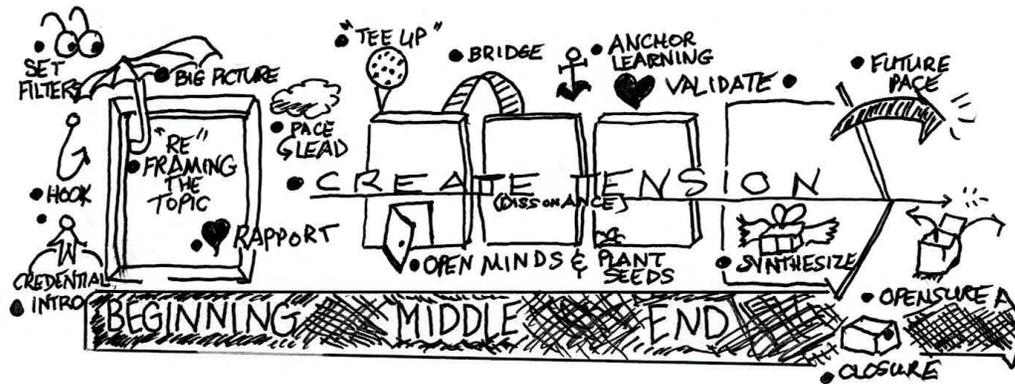
"Metaphor is the way the mind thinks." (54)

"Metaphor is a form of figurative language used to describe a certain use of a word or phrase standing in for a concept." (55)

"Metaphor is the process of the subjective, unconscious mind." (56)

Metaphors are culturally based. (57)

"To elevate metaphorical thought to a level that is equal with analytical thought brings heart to the work." (60)



**When and Where to Use Metaphor and Story in Your Presentations**  
 (See *The Astonishing Power of Storytelling*, Chapter 6)

Metaphors and stories can be used for a variety of purposes and to evoke different responses from a group during a presentation or meeting. As a facilitator of change and a designer of meetings, conferences and presentations, you can adroitly use metaphor and story to shift perceptions, invite learning, inspire action and seek a desired state.

In the BEGINNING of the event, metaphors and stories can be used to:

- Frame the topic and set the context for the interaction
- Capture and focus the audience’s attention
- Introduce the speaker and/or group members
- Credential the speaker in the eyes of the group
- Hook the audience’s mind AND heart
- Create rapport
- Establish a safe space to begin a difficult conversation
- Pace and lead the group into more resourceful states of mind
- Set the group’s perceptual filters for seeing in new ways

In the MIDDLE of the event, metaphors and stories can be used to:

- Tee up a new topic
- Bridge from one topic to another
- Anchor/ associate key teaching points to the learning outcomes
- Honor existing expertise
- Create useful dissonance or discomfort
- Punctuate a key concept
- Pace emotion, objections, or blocks that may arise
- Plant seeds of potential options

At the END of the event, metaphors and stories can be used to:

- Synthesize new learnings
- Create “open-sure” and pose direction for future reflection

- Reframe experiences
- Link new options to opportunities for future practice
- Ground the event in purpose and relevance
- Express gratitude

## Resources

In addition to Bob's book, *The Astonishing Power of Storytelling*, participants may be interested in the following resources:

For the presentation strategies used in this seminar, as well as over one hundred others, visit [www.thinkingcollaborative.com](http://www.thinkingcollaborative.com).

Costa, A. L., & Garmston, R.J. (2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). *Cognitive coaching: Developing self-directed leaders and learners*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Garmston, R.J. (2018, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). *The presenter's fieldbook: A practical guide*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Garmston, R.J., & Dolcemascolo, M. (2019) *Storytelling study companion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.  
resources.corwin.com/sites/default/files/garmston\_storytelling\_study\_guide.pdf

Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B. (2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). *The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

For a sample song list of music used in this seminar, contact:  
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For more on nonverbal communication, visit [www.michaelgrinder.com](http://www.michaelgrinder.com)