

10 Immutable Laws of Storytelling

Source: The Ten Immutable Laws of Storytelling, Free Range Thinking by Andy Goodman, June 2007

1. Stories are about people

- No matter what the topic, relate back to people (or animals)
- All about the individual, give them a name
- Eg./ Insurance Company – individual people are still effected

2. The people in the story have to want something

- Gives them a reason to care and follow the story
- What does your “hero” want to do or need?

3. Stories need to be fixed in time and space

- Gives audience their bearings so they can paint the picture
- Today, last week, 5 years ago -- Austin, New York, California?
- Allows us to engages the “emotional” brain
- Bonus – tie the story into current headlines or community issue

4. Let characters speak for themselves

- Lends authenticity and connection
- Makes them part of the scene

5. Audiences bore easily

- Hook them right away, like an action movie
- Make them want to know “How is this going to turn out?”

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6. Stories speak the audience's language

- Use the words and tone that your audience will understand
- Slang can establish connection between teller and listener

7. Stories stir up emotions

- Remember, its emotion first -->> then rationality
- You need to get above the noise, emotion is the hook

8. Stories don't tell – They Show

- Paint a vivid picture, as if they are right there
- Share all 5 senses
- Use photos and video
- May need help with this one

9. Stories have at least one “moment of truth”

- We all want to see the insight, the truth, and how it applies to us

10. Stories have a clear meaning

- What was this story all about?
- If the audience can't answer that question, then you did not do your job