What’s Your Story?
The Power of Narrative

Walk This Way
Key Steps to an Effective Patient Safety Culture

Tracy Granzyk
MedStar
Using Stories to Influence Change in Healthcare
Stories Influence & Inspire
How Stories Influence & Inspire

USA TODAY, "NEW VOICES," 7/31/2008

Why it's notable: Written by a practicing Seattle anesthesiologist, the novel goes inside the operating room to describe hospital hierarchies,... the relentless pressure for profits and the fear of malpractice suits.
3 Goals and a Challenge

Goal #1: Share examples of the power stories hold

Goal #2: Share the science behind story

Goal #3: Share ways to use stories in healthcare

Challenge: Commit to honoring patient and caregiver stories through action
Before we start…

• Close your eyes
• Think about your favorite story
  – Book, Movie, Play
• Jot it down
How Powerful Are Stories?
“We’re going to sell Jack like soap flakes!” Joseph P. Kennedy
The War of the Worlds, Mercury Theatre on the Air, 1938 Original Broadcast

by HumbleAntagonist
Character Archetypes - Intro

- The Hero – Luke
- The Mentor/Sage – Obi Wan
- The Villain/Shadow – Darth Vader
- The Shapeshifter/Rogue – Han Solo
- The Trickster/Jester/Fool – C3PO
Power of Story in Healthcare...but We Have Research!

- Back surgery vs non-surgical treatment\(^2\)
- HRT for menopausal women\(^3\)
- Vitamin E to reduce heart disease risk\(^3\)
- Coronary stents to prevent heart attacks\(^3\)
- Leeching
- Lobotomies

Why Are We So Ready to Believe Stories?
The Storytelling Animal
Jonathan Gottschall on Story

- Past few decades, psychologists have studied how stories affect the mind
- Results show good stories—in classic story structure—can infect minds with ideas, attitudes that spread
- Stories can slide past our resistance
- Fiction more effective at changing beliefs than persuasive argument and evidence

The Power of Myth

• Bill Moyers & Joseph Campbell Series: The Power of Myth: The First Storytellers
Character Archetypes

• Reflections of us, our environment
• Symbols, themes, character-types that recur throughout time & place in literature
• Children’s Fairytales
• Help us understand life
Character Archetypes in Culture

• Come to life in culture

Archetypal images signal the fulfillment of basic human desires and motivations, and release deep emotions and yearning.

Character Archetypes in Culture

Edgar Schein, PhD

- Society of Sloan Fellows
  Professor of Management Emeritus
- Professor Emeritus at the MIT Sloan School of Management

Schein’s 3 Levels of Org Culture

Most observable → Observable Artifacts
Less observable → Espoused Values
Deeply engrained → Tacit Assumptions

Source: Adapted from E H Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2nd ed (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), p 17.

MedStar Health Institute for Quality and Safety
Knowledge and Compassion Focused on You
Character Archetypes in Culture

Tacit assumptions

- Influence & drive observable behavior/culture
- Unconscious
- Ultimate source of values/action
- Beliefs
- Archetypes active underneath observable behavior

Stories as Dress Rehearsal

- Learn from others in real life or fiction
- Avoid same mistakes or emulate action
  - I’ll have what she’s having (or I won’t!)
- Stay safe
  - Kids learning
Dress Rehearsal #1

What’s the worst thing that could happen if I had an affair while my wife and daughter were out of town?
Dress Rehearsal #2

• Action and inaction
• Human passion is paradoxical
• Importance of good character & moral choices
• Devotion to family is universally respected
• Trust
• How to act in a socially complex world
Dress Rehearsal #3

- Power of friendship
- Acceptance of those not like us
- Open to learning
Share Your Favorite Story
The Science Behind Story
Culturally Appropriate Storytelling to Improve Blood Pressure
A Randomized Trial

Thomas K. Houston, MD, MPH; Jeroan J. Allison, MD, MSc; Marc Sussman, MHA; Wendy Horn, PhD; Cheryl L. Holt, PhD; John Trobaugh, MFA; Maribel Salas, MD, PhD; Maria Pisu, PhD; Yendelela L. Cuffee, MPH; Damien Larkin, MA; Sharina D. Person, PhD; Bruce Barton, PhD; Catarina I. Kiefe, PhD, MD; and Sandral Hullett, MD, MPH

Background: Storytelling is emerging as a powerful tool for health promotion in vulnerable populations. However, these interventions remain largely untested in rigorous studies.

Objective: To test an interactive storytelling intervention involving DVDs.

Design: Randomized, controlled trial in which comparison patients received an attention control DVD. Separate random assignments were performed for patients with controlled or uncontrolled hypertension. (ClinicalTrials.gov registration number: NCT00875225)


Patients: 230 African Americans with hypertension.

Intervention: 3 DVDs that contained patient stories. Storytellers were drawn from the patient population.

Measurements: The outcomes were differential change in blood pressure for patient in the intervention versus the comparison group at baseline, 3 months, and 6 to 9 months.

Results: 299 African American patients were randomly assigned between December 2007 and May 2008 and 76.9% were retained throughout the study. Most patients (71.4%) were women, and the mean age was 53.7 years. Baseline mean systolic and diastolic pressures were similar in both groups. Among patients with baseline uncontrolled hypertension, reduction favored the intervention group at 3 months for both systolic (11.21 mm Hg [95% CI, 2.51 to 9.99 mm Hg]; P = 0.012) and diastolic (6.43 mm Hg [CI, 1.49 to 11.45 mm Hg]; P = 0.012) blood pressures. Patients with baseline controlled hypertension did not significantly differ over time between study groups. Blood pressure subsequently increased for both groups, but between-group differences remained relatively constant.

Limitation: This was a single-site study with 23% loss to follow-up and only 6 months of follow-up.

Conclusion: The storytelling intervention produced substantial and significant improvements in blood pressure for patients with baseline uncontrolled hypertension.


Ann Intern Med. 2011;154:77-84.
For author affiliations, see end of text.
Purpose:

- To test an interactive storytelling intervention to control hypertension in a vulnerable population

Purpose based on research showing:

...stories can help listeners make meaning of their lives

...listeners may be influenced if they actively engage in a story, identify with storyteller & picture themselves in the action

...narrative communication can break down cognitive resistance to behavior change messages...

Results:

– Storytelling intervention produced significant improvements in blood pressure for patients with uncontrolled hypertension

Conclusion:

...our intervention produced greater changes than many behavioral interventions and performed similarly to non-pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical interventions.

...Storytelling can change attitudes and behavior by decreasing cognitive resistance...
Understanding Narrative Effects: The Impact of Breast Cancer Survivor Stories on Message Processing, Attitudes, and Beliefs Among African American Women

Amy McQueen, Matthew W. Kreuter, Bindu Kalesan, and Kassandra I. Alcaraz
Washington University in St. Louis
Purpose:

– Examine effects of personal narratives on mammography & breast cancer vs. traditional informational approach

– Explore narrative effects that could enhance health behavior

– 4 Hypotheses based on narrative direct/indirect effect on cognition, affect, message processing & behavior

Purpose based on:

...engagement, absorption, and transportation are three terms often used to reflect cognitive and affective immersion in a story...

...engagement can occur despite beliefs and depends on plot structure and character identification...

...emotions affect what people notice and remember...evoke physiological reactions...narratives may evoke more empathy

Results:

Narrative intervention resulted in...

1. Stronger cognitive and affective responses
2. Influenced message processing & behavioral correlates
3. Reduction in Counterarguing
4. Increase in Cognitive rehearsal
5. May ↑ acceptance and motivation to act on health information in populations most adversely affected by cancer disparities

Conclusions:

...narratives have several unique advantages over traditional informational approach and are likely to enhance health communication for cancer prevention and control...
Narrative Communication in Cancer Prevention and Control: A Framework to Guide Research and Application

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Purpose:

– Stimulate critical thinking around use of narrative in cancer communication
– Promote focused, systematic research to understand narrative effect
– Discuss narrative capabilities on:
  1. Overcoming resistance
  2. Facilitation of information processing
  3. Provide surrogate social connections
  4. Addressing emotional and existential issues

Purpose based on:

…the promise and appeal of narrative lies in its familiarity as a basic mode of human interaction

...people communicate with one another and learn about the world around them largely through stories...

....can be a powerful means of influencing behavior

...will be useful to have additional research...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Capabilities</th>
<th>Prediagnosis</th>
<th>Postdiagnosis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming resistance to cancer prevention behaviors, screening, and messages</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating processing of cancer prevention and control information</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing surrogate social connections to support cancer prevention and control</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing emotional and existential issues related to cancer prevention and control</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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**Stages of the Cancer Control Continuum**

- **Prediagnosis**
- **Postdiagnosis**
  - **Prevention**
  - **Detection**
  - **Diagnosis**
  - **Treatment**
  - **Survivorship**
Conclusions:

- Narrative may be well suited to address cancer prevention and control objectives by:

  1. Overcoming resistance
  2. Facilitating message processing
  3. Providing social connections
  4. Representing related emotional/existential issues to cancer diagnosis

Conclusions:

- Narrative may be unnecessary or inappropriate for certain communication objectives, obscure health messages & may be difficult to create

- Use of narrative in cancer promising and growing but still much to learn

fMRI Studies

• Viewers’ brains “catch” emotions of characters on screen or page
  – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly at Dartmouth lab

• Anterior insula (seat of disgust) lit up when viewing short, disgusting clips
  – Mbemba Jabbi’s lab at NIMH

• Neurons fire as if we were:
  – Making Sophie’s Choice
  – Stalked by Jason
  – Landing on the beach at Normandy

Why Do Observed Experiences Feel Real?

• Specific areas light up when we perform a task, or experience joy, sorrow, anger.
• Similar areas are recruited when observing another perform similar actions or go through similar emotions.
• 'Shared circuits' transform what we see into what we would have done or felt.
• We are wired to understand others--
Stories Can Activate & Rewire the Brain

- Trigger neurotransmitters that keep us turning the page, watching the screen
- Activate motor, touch, taste & olfactory neurons
- Create empathy
Dramatic Stories Can Change Behavior by Changing Brain Chemistry

- Paul Zak’s Lab looked at the effect of story on neurochemistry

Zak, P., et al. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHeqQAKHh3M
Zak’s Research

- Asked subjects to watch story of Dad and 2-year-old son dealing with cancer
- Took blood samples before/after story
- Asked subjects to donate money
- Looked at story structure effect on neurochemistry
- Found…
2 primary emotions were elicited
Distress
Empathy
Cortisol focuses our attention
Oxytocin

Care, Connection, Empathy

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Knowledge and Compassion Focused on You
Oxytocin + Cortisol

Donated money to charity
The amount of oxytocin released predicted how much money people would share.
Changing behavior by changing our brain chemistry
 THEORY OF MIND

Understanding of what others are doing

OXYTOCIN AREAS

MAKE US FEEL EMPATHY
How Stories Are Being Used to Inspire Behavior Change
In Business

• Meaningful brand identity
• Sharing not telling
In Business

• Inspiring innovation
About The Future of Storytelling

Introduction to Future of Storytelling

Stories will never die, but the ways we tell them are changing.

The Future of Storytelling summit (FoST) was founded on the belief that stories—in the broadest sense of the word—shape the meaning and momentum of everyday life.

FoST brings together top executives, creative talent, and technologists with the vision and influence to change the way that stories will be told tomorrow and beyond. As technologies continue to evolve, how will we create, share, and experience the most fundamental unit of human culture—the story?
The Future of Storytelling: The Influence of Fiction on Science

What do Star Trek, Motorola, Stephen Spielberg, Minority Report, Raytheon, @ElonMusk, @JonFavreau, and Iron Man (the movie) have in common? All are examples of how science can influence fiction, and fiction can influence science.

@RobertWong, a graphic designer by training and a driving force behind Google Creative Labs, tells the story of how art, technology & design lovers come together with engineering experts to create the future. Think Google Glass, cell phones, tricorders and more–What a way to kick off 2014!

For those interested, Wong also hosts a Future of Storytelling Virtual Roundtable Speaker Series weekly on Wednesdays, 12:00pm ET. Click here for more information.
In Healthcare

• Red Cross
How Stories Are Being Used to Teach and Inspire Culture Change
A broader analysis of three years of top ten prime time television shows indicates nearly six in ten episodes featured a health storyline.

**Research objective:** The Kaiser Family Foundation and the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center’s Hollywood, Health & Society examined three seasons (2004-2006) of top-ten-rated prime time scripted shows to measure the prevalence of health content on entertainment shows and to categorize the type of health content on prime time television.

**Methods:** To assess the frequency and type of health content found on TV, every episode of the top 10 prime time shows among 18-49 year olds for Nielsen’s General Audience from the spring seasons of 2004, 2005, and 2006 were recorded and content analyzed. In the end, a total of 723 hours of television content were analyzed for the study, including 947 episodes across 33 different series.

**Findings:** Viewers who tuned in to the top-rated entertainment shows on TV over the past several years were treated to a wealth of storylines concerning health and health care—an average of one and a half health-related storylines per episode. Most included at least a moderate amount of educational content on the health topic (61%), and many included strong educational content (32%).
Medical Humanities Programs

• To reconnect medical education with the humanity of medicine

• Penn State
  – “TimeSlips” narratives with students and dementia patients
  – Graphic narratives creation
Perspectives by Trey Banbury, M2, Penn State Medical College

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Knowledge and Compassion Focused on You
Advancing to 3rd year was the BEST! No more power points. No more poorly written exams. Just patient care.

Like a boss

Playish smile
(just put in my first epidural)

15-pocket white coat
Every med student's utility belt
The following Monday I started my rotation in labor and delivery. I met the team in the sign-out room.

Who is the senior this month?

HER...

Senior resident covering as intern... not happy about it.

EXIT

Intern... cool dude.

Me. No idea what's going on.
Perspectives by Trey Banbury, M2, Penn State Medical College

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Knowledge and Compassion Focused on You
My last day was slow and quiet. I hadn’t seen Chief all day, when I heard...

As I struggled to suppress my pity for her my perception of her changed.

I still can’t believe it *sob* they are sending us 7,000 miles away *sob* no family *sob* you’ll have to find a new job in this economy *sob* what about the girls? what about our parents? Ugh! I just hate the military right now! *sob* we’ll miss the wedding! *sob* I just can’t believe it.

WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY

She was getting shipped off for loan repayment. It made me think of my own difficulties moving across the country for medical school.

Bye bye Rockies! Peace out Family!

Reflecting on this experience I realized that we all carry baggage. Even doctors. We don’t always choose what we carry.

The important thing is to choose to see each other as we truly are—human beings.
Narrative Medicine Programs

- Columbia University – Rita Charon MD, PhD
- Georgetown University – Margaret Cary MD
- Reflective Writing
  - To make sense of medical education
  - The healthcare environment
Sharing the Healthcare Experience

- Tina Campbell
Good Catch Program at MedStar

• Recognizing stories from the front lines of care
• To embolden a learning culture
• To encourage transparency
• For Safety Moments
• Response is overwhelming
Why Embrace Story in Healthcare Work?
Stories...

- Level the playing field between provider & patient
- Connect us with our humanity
- Ground us in who we are
- Define where we’re heading
- Expand or limit our destiny
- Teach us about the world
Learning to Tell Good Stories is Easy...
Learning to Tell Good Stories is Easy..
Learning to Tell Good Stories is Easy...

• Care
• Know your audience
  – Understand what is significant to others & why
• Take a writing and/or video production class
  – Mediabistro
  – Story Studio-like
  – MOOC
Where to Use Stories in Healthcare?

- Move an initiative forward
- Inspire those you lead
- Reduce fear / Lower anxiety
- Elevate another
- Understand what successful treatment means
- Influence treatment adherence
- Change culture
How to Find Your Story
Storytelling for Change Practice

• Break up into groups of 3-5 (5-10 min)
• Discuss a healthcare story that...
  – Touched your heart
  – Changed the way you do something
• Discuss with group
  – Why did the story touch you?
  – Was there a hero? Why?
  – Did you share this story with a colleague?
  – Why/why not?
FEEDBACK!

1. What did you enjoy about today’s presentation?
2. What was your biggest takeaway?
3. What can I improve?

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Please reach out, share your story or ask a question!

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www.educatetheyoung.wordpress.com
References


