

Focus Your Stories on One Simple Truth

How can using the power of life stories change your culture?

To help see others see change, the leader must understand how to unlock the imagination. The very act of imagination is connected to faith. The author of Hebrews writes, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). When a leader articulates, or provokes, a follower’s imagination, he or she is serving both God and the individual by exercising the muscle of faith.

Solution - Focus your stories on one simple truth

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Communicating for a Change](#), Andy Stanley

Great stories capture and hold an audience’s attention from start to finish. Why should it be any different when you stand up to speak?

In *Communicating for a Change*, Andy Stanley and Lane Jones offer a unique strategy for communicators seeking to deliver captivating and practical messages. In this highly creative presentation, the authors unpack seven concepts that will empower you to engage and impact your audience in a way that leaves them wanting more.

Whether you speak from the pulpit, podium, or the front of a classroom, you don’t need much more than blank stares and faraway looks to tell you you’re not connecting. Take heart before your audience takes leave! You can convey your message in the powerful, life-changing way it deserves to be told. An insightful, entertaining parable that’s an excellent guide for any speaker, *Communicating for a Change* takes a simple approach to delivering effectively.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

It’s a good idea to keep your vision stories simple. The primary reason for this is that the human capacity to absorb multiple elements isn’t unlimited. When you are communicating a story, keep in mind the limitation of your listeners’ working memory. For the story to be useful, it must be neither too detailed nor too general. The simpler your story is, the more likely that people will comprehend and remember it.

Every time I stand to communicate I want to take one simple truth and lodge it in the heart of the listener. I want them to know that one thing and know what to do with it.

Determine Your Goal - What are you after when you speak or teach? What is the win? Smarter people? Changed people? People with more confidence in God? Your approach to communicating needs to match your goal.

Pick a Point – Point refers to one of three things: an application, an insight, or a principle. With this approach, the point serves as the glue to hold the other parts

together.

Create a Map – Follow a five-word outline, each representing a section of the message.

- ME (Orientation) – a dilemma the communicator has faced or is currently facing.
- WE (Identification) – common ground with your audience.
- GOD (Illumination) – transition to the text to discover what God says.
- YOU (Application) – challenge your audience to act on what they have just heard.
- WE (Inspiration) – close with several statements about what could happen if everybody embraced that particular truth.

Internalize the Message – you should be able to sit down at a table and communicate your message to an audience of two in a way that is both conversational and authentic.

Engage Your Audience – presentation trumps information when it comes to engaging the audience.

Find Your Voice – to develop an effective style you need to constantly ask yourself two questions:

- What works?
- What works for me?

Start All Over – when you get stuck, use these five questions to discover the one thing that the people God has entrusted to our care need to know.

- What do they need to know? INFORMATION
- Why do they need to know it? MOTIVATION
- What do they need to do? APPLICATION
- Why do they need to do it? INSPIRATION
- How can I help them remember? REITERATION

Andy Stanley, [Communicating for a Change](#)

A NEXT STEP

Think of a recent situation where you were stuck in the preparation of a presentation, sermon, or teaching element. Take this situation to your next leadership team meeting for a collaborative session.

On a chart tablet, list Andy Stanley's five questions from the "Start All Over" section above. For each of the five questions, solicit answers from your team in a true brainstorming session (no

judgments allowed).

After completing each of the five questions, go back through the lists and circle the three most valuable phrases and comments for each question.

As a group, decide on which single word or phrase is your team's best choice, and underline it.

To complete the exercise and make it useful for both individuals and groups in the future, spend 30 minutes talking through the process of the individual and team choices. Note any applications for future use when you are stuck in your preparation, and apply those applications to help you move forward.

As leaders, we communicate in all we say and do. We may be entertaining at times, we inform much of the time, and occasionally we must be directing in what we say. But in all situations, we can inspire and connect with our audience.

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