

YOUR STORY YOUR VOICE

Lesson One

GOOD Life
Recipe SHOW



Your Story, Your Voice

by Vivien McKnight & Ron Wheatley



Vivien McKnight is a Creativity Developer who hails from the UK and is often found in Spain.

Vivien believes that we all have a creative being inside, and she encourages people to release this gift so that they can enjoy a life in which our own unique skills and passions are valued and harnessed. She carries out her work with sensitivity and humour, which is a winning combination for her.

Vivien trained as Life Coach with New Insights (UK) and as a Creativity Coach with Dr. Eric Maisel (USA).

She is currently writing new work and is the author of several ebooks and on-line courses.



Ron Wheatley is a creative artist and a web media professional dedicated to helping others connect with their audience and discover

their online voice. An actor/director/writer/composer and a muppeteer wannabe from way back, Ron is co-founder of www.goodliferecipeshow.com as well as running his own web media business www.ronwheatley.ca

Ron has studied creativity coaching with Eric Maisel and theatre arts at Neptune Theatre, The Banff Centre and Dalhousie University. He is currently working on a his new musical “American Duchess” and will launch a new theatre site www.intermissiontalk.ca in 2014.

When things get really busy Ron copes with a good laugh.

Introduction

What does the course contain?

“Stories are told eye to eye, mind to mind and heart to heart.”
~ Scottish Proverb

We put this course together because we have both been down the road of having had the cat get our tongue and being stuck for words. It is a course that comes from our hearts.

Three of the things that scare people most are dying, going bankrupt and speaking in front of others. We can't do anything about you dying or going bankrupt but we can help you with your fear of speaking in public situations.

Any empty space might be thought of as a stage. You enter, somebody else is looking at you and listening to what you have to say. You can call it an audition, a product presentation and interview, a networking event, a date but whatever name you give it, it is an act of theatre. Remember Shakespeare's immortal words “All the world's a stage...”

“Your Story, Your Voice” gives you an opportunity to learn how to fill that empty space. You have got this far because you know that you have to change. You recognise that there are so many challenges out there and you are not quite sure how to deal with them.

This is where we come in. We help you to understand what story is and why it is so powerful. And, from our own experiences, we equip you to get the job done.

You have immense power and resources inside yourself just waiting to be tapped. This course will help you release the power and wisdom that you have.

Alongside this opportunity, is the knowledge that you are supported as you grapple with the learning that is required for you to make change. The result for you, the creative being, is that you emerge from behind the fear.

This course will give you a guided tour through your villains and heroes - your desires, fears, dreams and hopes. During the journey you may feel angry, sad, scared, happy and hopeful – but most of all, by the time you we reach the end, you will be free to enjoy life as it is intended to be enjoyed.

Last, but not least, you have our respect.

Overview

Lesson Breakdown

Lesson One – What is a story?

In this first lesson, you begin to learn exactly what a story is, it's ingredients and how powerful stories are. You start to reflect on the huge quantity of stories you possess in your own life.

Lesson Two – Why use stories today?

In this lesson we continue to see how powerful stories are and we explain the effect that your stories can have on your listener. You learn how stories can influence in ways that facts and figures cannot. You begin to examine the influence that your own stories could have.

Lesson Three – Kinds of story

This lesson takes a look at the wonderful array of stories available for you to tell and gives you lots of opportunities to begin to practice your storytelling skills.

Lesson Four – Crafting your story

Lesson four gets you into the right frame of mind for you to produce great stories. It is a set of guidelines for you to reflect on and put into place.

Lesson Five – Remembering your stories

Her Ron leads you through some of the important points that you need to take on board if you are to tell your stories with confidence. He gives you a series of activities, exercises and tips that will help you cement your stories into your mind without the necessity to learn parrot-fashion.

Lesson Six – Telling your story

In this lesson we get down to the business of actually starting to tell your stories in the world. It is a very practical lesson with lots of things to make you into a first-rate story-teller.

Lesson Seven – Owning and living with your story

You get a chance now to make your stories your own. You are asked to think about how to personalise the stories you have crafted and practised and you begin to learn how these can be adapted to a great many situations. Your stories have your name written on them now.

Lesson Eight – Staring down the jitters

In this last lesson, we don't forget that speaking in front of others is so often an ordeal no matter how well you have prepared. So in this lesson we inspect some of the demons that might still be haunting you, and we give you some great techniques and exercises to minimise the fears.

Lesson One

Why Use Stories Today?

“Stories are told eye to eye, mind to mind and heart to heart.”
~ Scottish Proverb

We often think of stories as merely something that we tell children, or a book we read on the train or at bedtime. But do we ever really think about stories in more detail – how these stories came about and what they really achieve? You’ll soon be writing your own stories and so it’s good to know a little bit about them.

At its most basic level, a story, whether fact or fiction, is a narrative account of an event. Story is a way of passing on information that offers a real connection between teller and listener. It touches the emotions and the senses, and often brings the teller and the listener closer - and from this closeness an empathy develops. The listener might hear something that resonates with him/ her directly and a common bond is forged. The listener may say to him/ herself “Well, if you’ve been through this, I want to hear what you have to say”. He/ she may start to think: “If you can help me with this, I want to hear more of what you have to tell me.”

Scottish storyteller David Campbell reminds us of our responsibility to “awaken” listeners with our stories. He suggests that we awaken the body, the mind, the heart, the voice and the spirit. We should take his

advice and use stories to start a fire inside our listeners.

Stories from the Past

Stories existed long, long before books, newspapers, information technology and other sophisticated forms of communication. We saw stories depicted in cave paintings and we heard them in fairy tales. They are our common bond. They cross cultures and speak to our emotions and values. Throughout Europe and beyond, from its origins in ancient Greece, theatre has been used as a medium for storytelling, and the skills of the players were convincing and much envied.

Stories delivered news to people long before the printed word. They delivered political opinion, the state of the nation, the fortunes of war. They caused people to ponder on what they had seen and heard, and to form their own views. They were ways of connecting with others, and this remains true in the present day. The convincing comes later.

When we are talking about connecting, here's a neat little formula which speaks volumes:

Know + Like = Trust

If you don't know someone, how can you like or trust them?

If you know someone but don't like them, how can you trust them?

If you know someone and like them, in all probability, you will trust them.

Once the trust is established, there is no need to set out to convince

people of anything. Your listener will make his or her own decision based on their own opinions and needs.

Truths – Naked or Otherwise

“Truth, naked and cold, had been turned away from every door in the village. Her nakedness frightened people. When Parable found her, she was huddled in a corner, shivering and hungry. Taking pity on her, Parable gathered her up and took her home.

There, she dressed Truth in story, warmed her and sent her out again. Clothed in story, Truth knocked again at the villagers' doors and was readily welcomed into the people's houses. They invited her to eat at their table and warm herself by their fire.” Jewish Teaching Story

Naked truths, especially when they come in the form of facts and figures, are not necessarily the best way of getting your message across.

They can be too direct, sometimes even discourteous, and they may cause resistance that never goes away. Stories are truths clothed in a way that make facts, figures and other information palatable and acceptable.

Organisational charts and mission statements give me the heeby-jeebies. They make me cringe. Why? Because they change, whereas values and truths do not. Guidelines and rules isolate creative thinkers, so go through life looking for rules to break (or at the very least bend) and give your creativity a chance.

I do not have a policy statement or a rigid business plan because I don't want one. People discover who I am, what I stand for, and what I have come through to reach my present situation by hearing what I have to say, in spoken or written form. Then they decide whether I am the kind of person they would like to work with.

Many companies are now throwing their inflexible five and ten year plans out the window in favour of more elastic strategies that can support change, if it becomes necessary. They are using metaphor and creating more visual scenarios that employees can relate to. Stories sell not only products but visions and ideas.

Facts need a context in which to become truths. You can give people facts and figures, graphs and charts until the cows come home, but unless you present them in a real and worldly context for your listeners, they will have little or no effect.

Activity to Try:

What rules are you clinging onto that do you no good at all? How could you have fun breaking them and make life more pleasant for yourself at the same time?



My Story

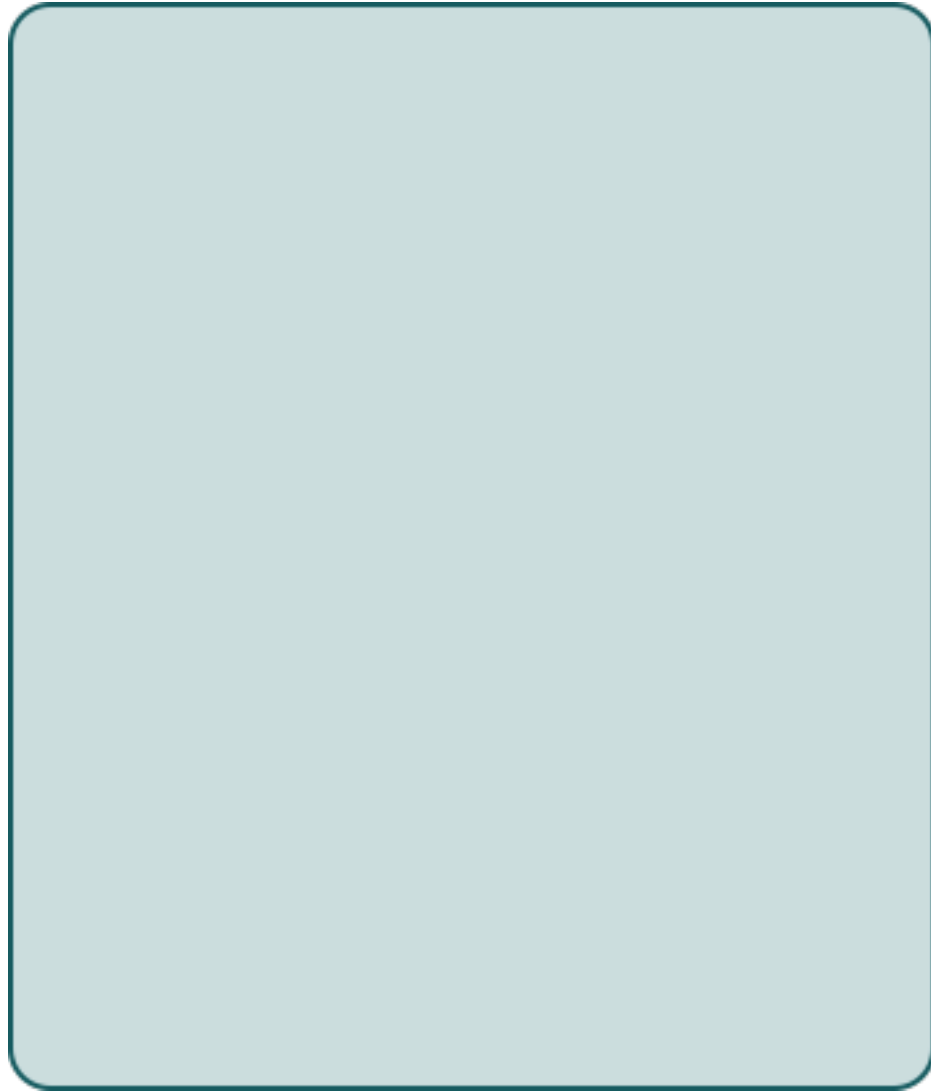
Each of us has a turning point in our lives, an opportunity to take a new direction. In 1993, I decided that it was time for ME. Both my parents had died and I was one half of an unsatisfactory marriage. Not everyone needs to take the same drastic action of leaving an unsatisfactory marriage, and their native country, but I left. Trouble was, I took some very poor habits with me on the journey. I had developed the martyr syndrome and my favourite mantra was “Nothing ever goes right for me”.

I kept saying this over and over, and for a long time I didn't do anything to change my situation. Then when I did, I wanted to be that new person there and then. My enthusiasm for change went from zero to overdrive. One habit I needed to sort out pretty quickly was my habit of avoiding social situations. I was very shy and awkward and really felt overwhelmed when I met new people. I really had little alternative other than to make a start on introducing some change into my life. The change took time because, instead of jumping in at the deep end, I never, ever went out of my depth. I wore my life jacket. I had a plan. I asked for the support of others. They became a lifeline. My own personal process of change had begun and there was no turning back. Things are quite different now.

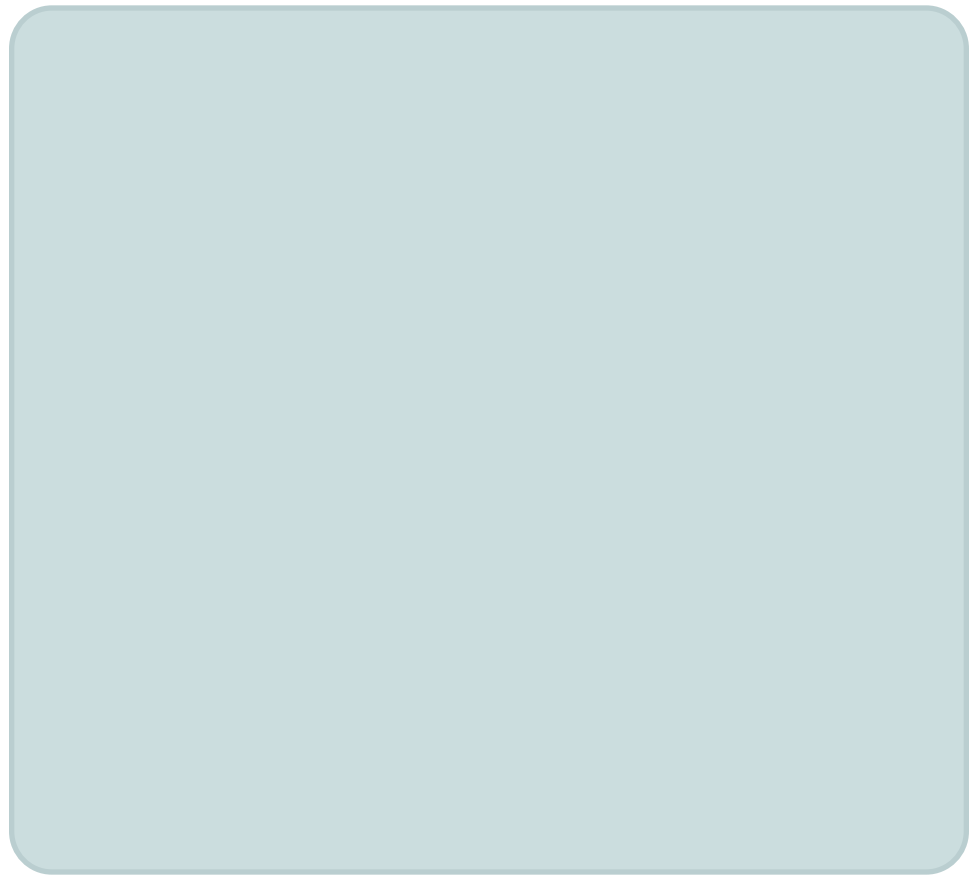
Story gives people space to think things through for themselves and take from it any message they want to hear. Stories speak to the imagination and lead to creative and artistic action.

Activities to Try:

Think of some of the stories that you have enjoyed over the years. Make a list. What is the message that you have taken away from each of these stories?

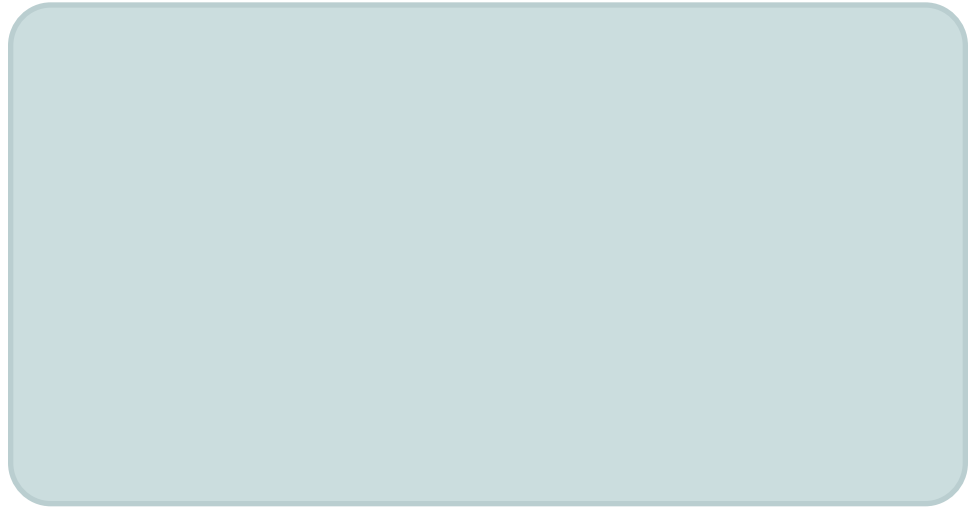


Think about a time in your own life when changes happened. Start to turn these thoughts into a story (you can use My Story to get you started). Stories have a beginning where there might be some kind of problem, a middle where there is some kind of action, and an end when we see the result of that action. More about this later, but just get started and get into the habit of creating stories.

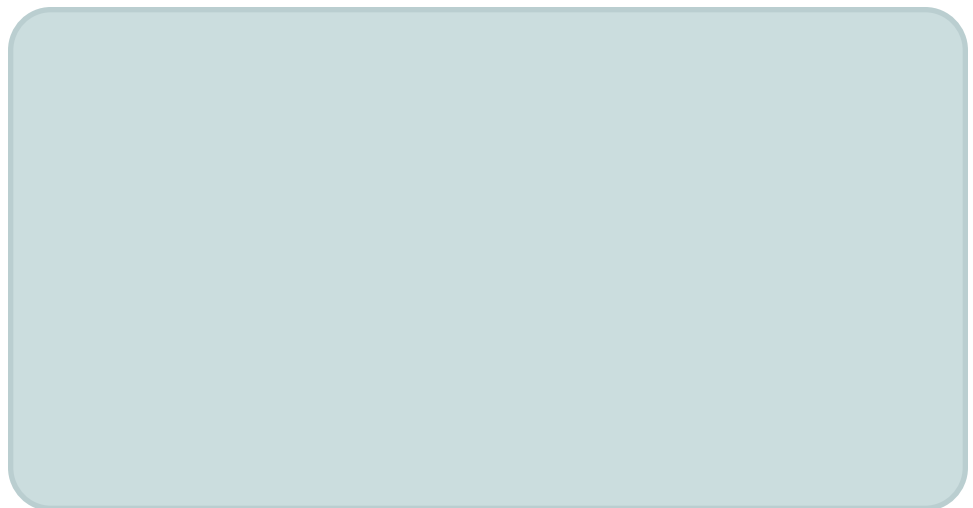


Quiz

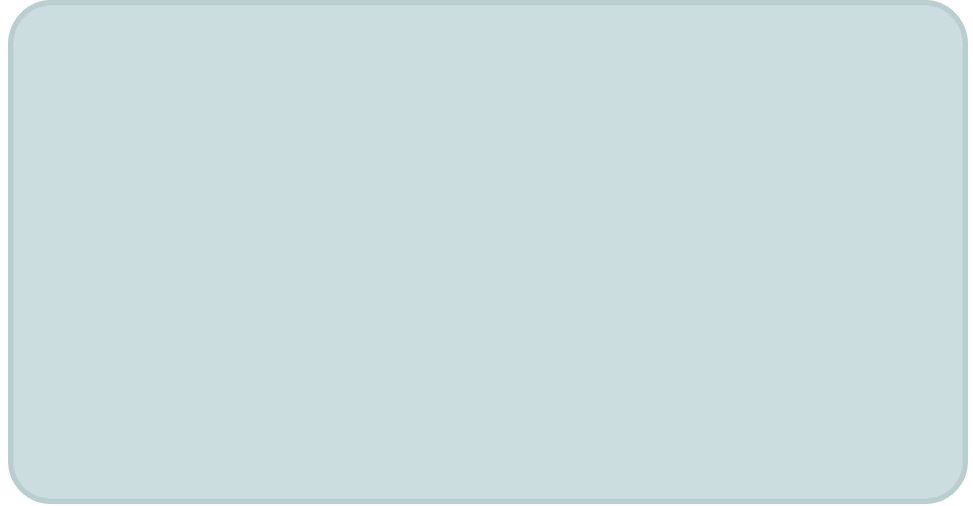
(the answers are all in this lesson) What are the some of the origins of storytelling?



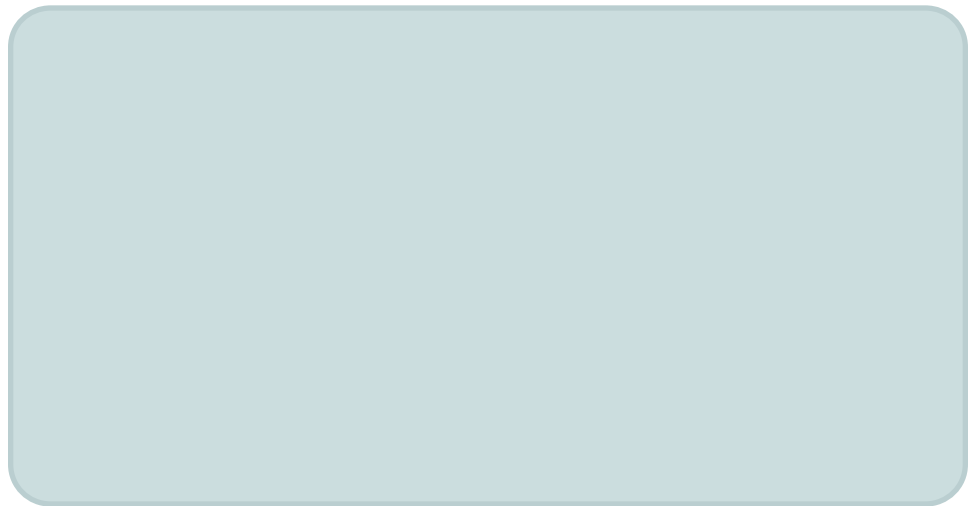
What formula is useful to remember when you are hoping to connect with people?



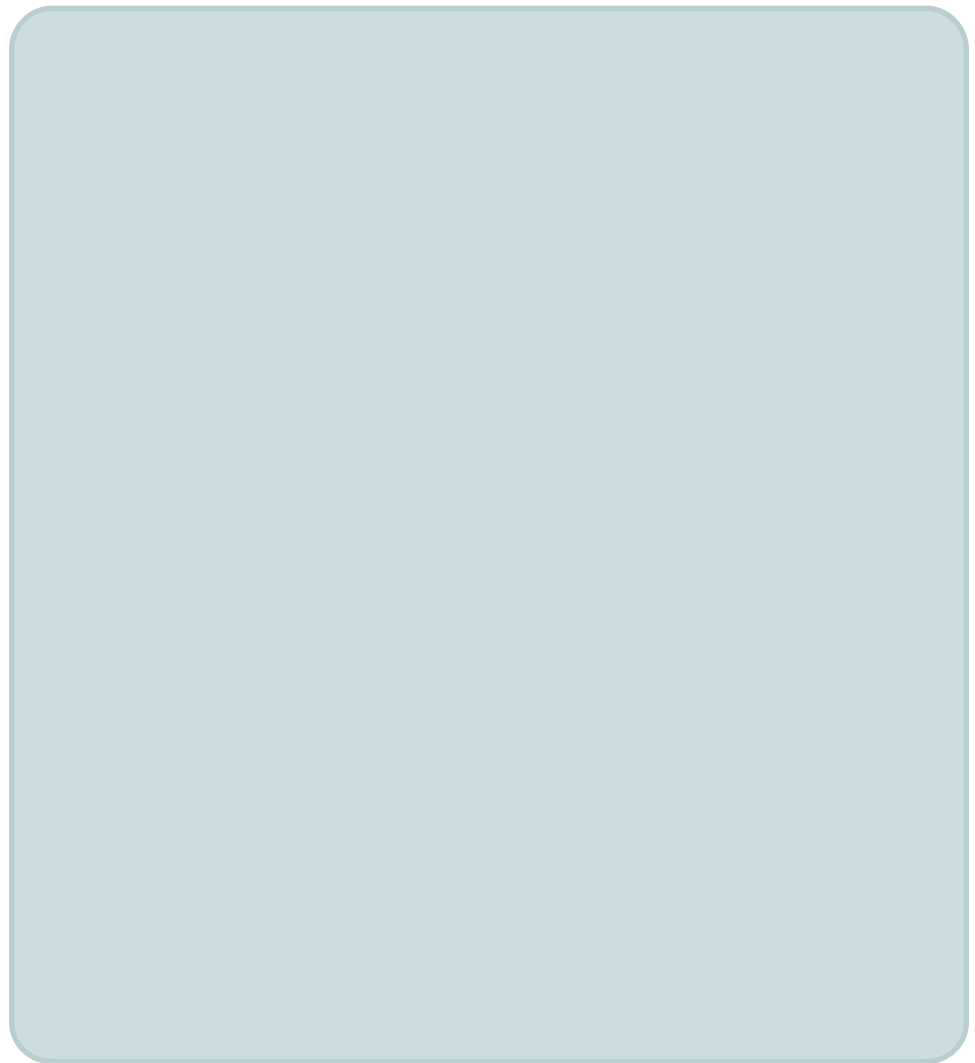
What can stories achieve that facts cannot?



Why should we awaken our listeners?



What are the three stages of a story?



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contact

vivien@vivienmcknight.com

or ron@ronwheatley.ca