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Features

The Science of What Makes People Care

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Effective communication is not simply about getting your message out. It requires you to strategically tap into what shapes people's feelings and values. Here we share five principles pulled from social science that will help you connect your work to what people care most about.

The Science of What Makes People Care

BY ANN CHRISTIANO & ANNIE NEIMAND

Illustration by Shonagh Rae

On March 10, 1748, John Newton, a 22-year-old English seaman who had worked in the slave trade, was traveling home on a merchant ship after a series of misadventures, including being captured and enslaved in Sierra Leone. On that day, a violent storm struck just off the coast of Donegal, Ireland. Rocks ripped a hole in the side of the ship, and it seemed unlikely that the vessel would make it safely to shore. Newton prayed and committed to devote his life to Christianity if the ship was spared. At that moment—the story goes—the ship's cargo shifted, covering the hole and allowing the ship to limp to port.

Newton kept his promise, eventually becoming an Anglican priest. Most famous perhaps for composing the hymn "Amazing Grace," the former slave trader dedicated himself to ending the slave trade. In 1787, he joined efforts with others to found the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Their members included Olaudah Equiano, a former slave whose storytelling abilities and autobiography made the horrors of slavery real. Josiah Wedgwood, an industrialist, created a logo for the campaign that inspired empathy and connected with the horrifying inhumanity of slavery. The emblem pictured

an enslaved man on his knees, in chains, encircled by the words "Am I not a man and a brother?" It appeared on snuffboxes, cufflinks, and jewelry throughout Europe. Newton himself wrote a pamphlet titled *Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade*, which detailed conditions on slave ships, and which he sent to every member of parliament.

Together they created what is often regarded as the world's first infographic: a cutaway map of the Brookes slave ship, showing how slaves were stacked and chained. They posted these images in taverns and pubs throughout Europe. (See image opposite.)

As part of their campaign, they launched a boycott of sugar, a product purchased mostly by women, who made most decisions about the foods and products their families consumed. The campaign reduced the demand for sugar by 30 percent, showing that the tie between economic dependence on slave labor and products in demand across Europe could be severed.

Their work eventually succeeded. In 1807, parliament passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, which banned British ships from engaging in the slave trade. Their efforts are widely regarded as one of the first social justice campaigns.

What these men accomplished contains the hallmarks of any effective campaign and conveys lessons we can apply today.

In what follows, we delve into the science behind what makes people care. We've identified five principles that are supported by research from a range of academic disciplines. Collectively, these rules offer a framework for building and assessing your communication strategy and designing efforts more likely to result in belief and behavior change. But, as with any effort to apply research findings to strategy, we have to be cautious not to overstate or oversimplify what the research tells us.

Perhaps most important, applying these principles doesn't require you to make a massive investment in new communications efforts. Rather, they offer a way to make the work you're already doing more effective. Since they are also easily mastered, people throughout your organization can embrace their roles as communicators regardless of their title or role.

FROM FEELINGS TO CHANGE

Social service organizations collectively spend millions of dollars each year on communications that focus on informing people. Sadly, these kinds of efforts ignore the scientific principles of what motivates engagement, belief, and behavior change. Consequently, a lot of that money and effort invested in communications is wasted.

We are required to do better, because challenges such as poverty, homelessness, and racial and gender inequity have endured in the face of lasting and robustly funded efforts. In our Spring 2017 article for *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, "Stop Raising Awareness Already," we implored organizations in the social sector to move beyond awareness objectives in their work, because awareness-raising efforts are expensive, labor intensive, and unlikely to result in better outcomes. Such campaigns typically have one of three kinds of results: They reach the wrong audience and therefore have little to no effect; they cause backlash; or, in the worst cases, they cause harm. The science of communications argues against it.

The corporate sector has long taken advantage of science to market products from tobacco to alcohol to dish detergent. For the most part, the social sector has not made the same shift. Social service organizations may conduct their own research through focus groups and surveys, but most lack the resources to root their communications strategies in published academic research. Scholarship that can help you understand attention, motivation, and emotion may be the most powerful and affordable tool you're not using.

When people working on behalf of social causes have rooted their strategy in science, intentionally or not, they have tended to be highly successful. In the last several decades, we've seen significant social change: the fight for racial and gender equity, the reduction of smoking and drunk driving deaths, and the passage of marriage equality laws. You might look at these changes and see them as a reflection of a naturally changing society. But in fact, these changes were designed by thoughtful communicators who used practices that we now see are supported by behavioral, cognitive, and social science, and that you can apply to enlist people in your cause.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel," poet and writer Maya Angelou once said. Research backs her up. To gain influence on your issue, you'll need to understand what compels people to invest their attention, emotion, and action. If you're going to make a difference, you have to use the science of what makes people care as the foundation of your strategy.

Before we jump in, one more point: The research we share reflects years of study and the themes that emerged from our exploration of the science of strategic communication. Even though these recommendations are supported by studies from a range of academic disciplines, it is important to note that what we share here is our interpretation of the research theory and findings. Research can never claim to be conclusive. The recommendations here reflect suggestions of the scientists based on their work, and our perspective on how you may apply or experiment with some of those insights.

PRINCIPLE #1: JOIN THE COMMUNITY

When you walk into a crowded cocktail party, you do not loudly introduce yourself and spout facts and opinions from the middle of the room. Instead, you grab a drink, scan the room, and look for a conversation or group that interests you. You sidle up, listen for a while, and—when you have something to add—join the conversation. Organizations often aim their communication efforts toward building their own profile with messages and tactics that are more about them than about the issue they've set out to address and the audience they are addressing. They are essentially walking into a party, announcing their presence, and asking people to pay attention.

Research from multiple disciplines tells us that people engage and consume information that affirms their identities and aligns with their deeply held values and worldview, and avoid or reject information that challenges or threatens them.[1] This requires

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advocates to move beyond a focus on building and disseminating a message to stepping into the world of their target community. Think of communication less as a megaphone and more as a gift to your audience. Does it help them solve a problem? Does it make them feel good about themselves or see themselves as they want to be seen? Does it connect to how they see the world and provide solutions that are actionable? If we want people to engage and take action, we have to connect to what they care about and how they see themselves.

When information is perceived as threatening or contradicting how people see themselves and their deeply held values (which are often shaped by their community), they will find a reason to ignore that information or rationalize why it is wrong. Researchers have found that people who are more conservative tend to have an individualistic worldview. They value respect for authority, preserving the sacred, and protecting their own group. By contrast, people who are more liberal tend to have an egalitarian worldview and value justice, fairness, and equality.

On the other hand, when messages are framed in a way that connects to their deeply held beliefs, people are more open to changing their stance or taking action. This has been found to be true on a range of issues, including marriage equality, solutions to climate change, and health care.[2]

At the same time, people also consume and engage with information that affirms identities that are important to them. Being a nature lover, activist, scientist, or bodybuilder may be a better indicator of what people engage with than the information itself. Our social networks, or social groups, instill the norms and taboos of the group. On a psychological level, people seek to affirm and prove that they are who they say they are by engaging in the norms of their groups. Information that asks them to question or go against these norms and values will likely be ignored.[3]

People seek information that makes them feel good about themselves and allows them to be a better version of themselves. If you start with this understanding of the human mind and behavior, you can design campaigns that help people see where your values intersect and how the issues you are working on matter to them.

For example, climate experts believe that one of the best ways individuals can make a difference is to reduce meat and dairy in their diet. Nutrition experts also believe a plant-based diet rich with natural whole foods is best for your health. Yet diets rich in meat and dairy are deeply ingrained in American habits, so asking people to give up their favorite foods for the survival of the planet is unlikely to be effective. Science tells us that people will ignore your information, justify why it is wrong or irrelevant to them, or give in to the immediacy of their own cravings rather than work toward the preservation of a future that is abstract and far away.

If you wanted to get people to eat less meat and dairy, you could develop a communication strategy that taps into the deeply held values and identities of a community with the power to affect the beliefs and norms of others in their social group. *The Game Changers*, a new documentary film that follows elite athletes, ultimate fighters, weightlifters, and bodybuilders, is seeking to do just that. The film undermines the myth that meat consumption is critical for building a strong athletic body. It shows that many of the strongest men and women in the world are vegans and that the viewers too can achieve their fitness goals by eating a plant-based diet.

Copies of this cutaway map of a slave ship, created in 1787, were posted in taverns across Europe. Regarded by some as the world's first infographic, it made a powerful case against slavery.

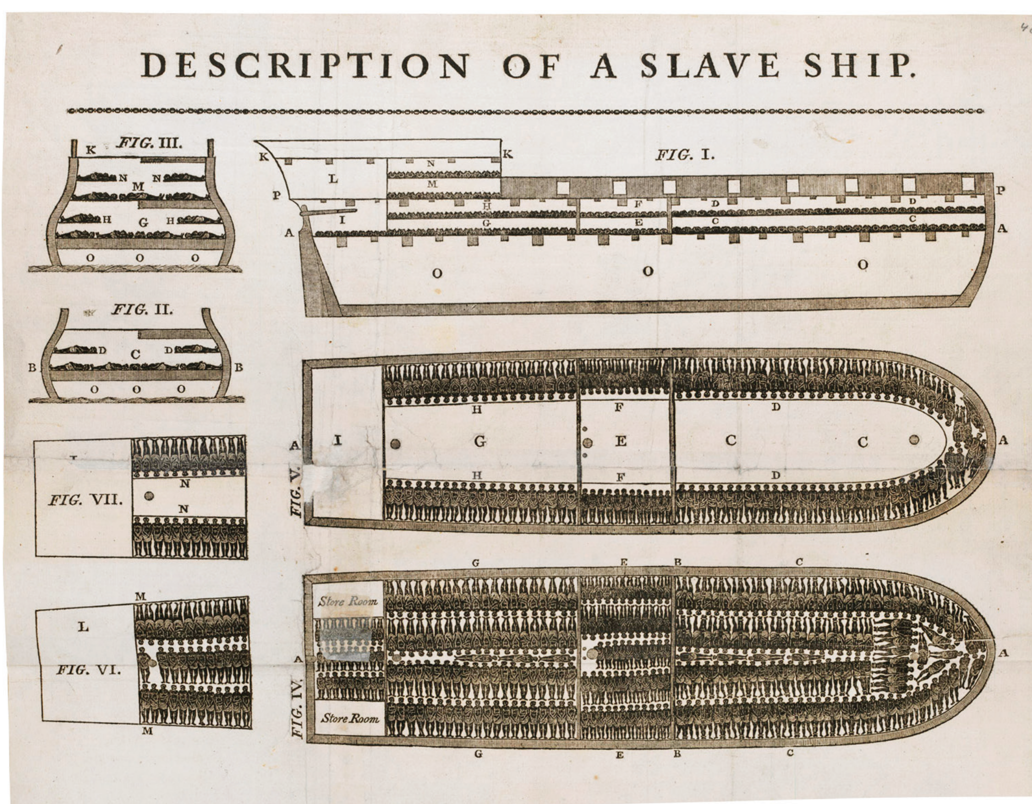

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Approaching a group of bodybuilders and asking them to stop eating meat because it is good for the planet is unlikely to result in success. Eating meat, for this community, after all, has historically been recommended practice and a sign of masculinity.[4] But if influencers in their world tell stories about the power that veganism has played in their own lives and how it has helped them build strength, those who aspire to be like them are likely to pursue veganism, too. The filmmakers acknowledge the group's values and goals, and show how eating a plant-based diet can help. This approach doesn't obligate viewers to sacrifice something; it gives them the control to become a better

version of themselves. It's possible that these influencers and their followers will share this new norm within their community and spread the perspective that veganism is the path to strength.

How to apply this insight: Find your vegan bodybuilders. Identify a group whose change in behavior could make a profound difference for your issue or inspire others to take action, and figure out how to bring that group value.

Five Principles for More Effective Communications

Join the community: Identify a group whose change in behavior could make a profound difference for your issue or inspire others to take action, and figure out how to bring that group value.

Communicate in images: Use visual language instead of abstract concepts to help people connect with your work.

Invoke emotion with intention: Think about what you're trying to get people to do and how they would feel if they were doing it. Then think about stories that would make them feel that way.

Create meaningful calls to action: Review your calls to action to make sure they ask communities to do something specific that will connect them to the cause and that they know how to do.

Tell better stories: Go beyond simply sharing messages to telling interesting stories with a beginning, middle, and end.

PRINCIPLE #2: COMMUNICATE IN IMAGES

People in the social sector work on complex issues that are fairly abstract: justice, equality, wellness, fairness, and innovation. One of the challenges with these abstract concepts is that they leave space for people to make assumptions about what these terms mean to them. For example, someone hearing the term "innovation" might worry about how innovations in tech could make their job unnecessary, while another might interpret it as a way to apply fresh thinking to stubborn challenges.

But concrete, visual language engages the visual and emotional areas of our brains. "We are primates, with a third of our brains dedicated to vision, and large swaths devoted to touch, hearing, motion, and space," Harvard cognitive scientist Steven Pinker writes in *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. "For us to go from 'I think I understand' to 'I understand,' we need to see the sights and feel the motions. Many experiments have shown that readers understand and remember material far better when it is expressed in concrete language that allows them to form visual images."

A study by Princeton University linguist Adele Goldberg suggests that "metaphorical sentences may spark increased brain activity in emotion-related regions because they allude to physical experiences." Her study showed activity in the emotion area of participants' brains when they heard metaphors that connected to experience. "Sweet" drew a stronger response than "kind." "Bitter" drew a stronger response than "mean." Goldberg's coauthor, Francesca Citron, a psychologist at Lancaster University, suggests that figurative language creates a rhetorical advantage.[5]

One could hardly find a better example of this principle at work than Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered August 28, 1963, in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Nearly every sentence includes vivid imagery, from "Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred" to this stirring visual: "I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."

We use this speech in class and workshops to help people see just how powerful figurative language can be. In a workshop with senior military officials from countries surrounding the Lake Chad region in central Africa, one of the men said after watching an excerpt of King's speech, "All I can see is freedom, but if you had asked me what that looked like before I listened, I could not have told you. King gave me image after image after image of freedom, and now I can see nothing else."

How to apply this insight: Are you using abstract concepts to describe your organization, issue, or solutions? Try creating a picture in the mind of your audience of what that concept looks like. Use visual language to help people connect with your work. The next time you write a presentation for yourself or someone else, try printing it out with wide margins. Can you create drawings of the images you're creating in your listeners' minds? If not, go back and add visual language that will keep their attention and stick in their memories.

PRINCIPLE #3: INVOKE EMOTION WITH INTENTION

People who work for social change want others to feel as strongly as they do about their cause. And most of us recognize the importance of telling stories that invoke profound emotion. We see many organizations striving to make people empathize with those they're trying to help through sad stories. In some of the work we do with a humanitarian relief organization, staff members often tell us, "I just want people to imagine what it would feel like to leave everything behind and run for your life." The staff care deeply about the organization's mission, and they want the world to care just as much.

But getting people to care requires a more nuanced approach to emotion. Relying on sadness as a way to "pull on heartstrings" may actually result in your community tuning you out entirely. People tend to avoid or remain unmoved by stories and situations that attempt to make them feel bad. If you've changed the channel or gone to make a sandwich when that commercial comes on featuring singer Sarah McLachlan with the heartbreaking images of animals in shelters to the strains of "In the Arms of an Angel," you know what we mean.

Research tells us that people are really good at avoiding information for three reasons: It makes them feel bad; it obligates them to do something they do not want to do; or it threatens their identity, values, and worldview.[6] From lifesaving health information to climate change to mass violence, people avoid information that makes

them feel sad, fearful, or guilty when there isn't a way to resolve those feelings. That's why it can be so hard, for example, to communicate on issues of climate change. If humans are responsible for the warming of the climate, talking about the causes and solutions may leave them feeling guilty. As Ezra Markowitz, professor of environmental decision making at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, told us last year in an interview:

> A lot of the [climate change] messaging we have heard for decades now is each of us needs to take responsibility for the emissions that each of us are responsible for; our use of electricity to driving our cars around makes us all responsible. The implication there is that we should feel guilty about this problem. The problem is we are really good at getting out of feeling badly since nobody wants to feel badly about themselves. We have a guilty bias. People are really good at trying to avoid feeling guilty. And so we downplay the issue, we downplay the loss of victims, we kind of play up the fact that there is lots of uncertainty to get us out of feeling badly about it.

Studies have shown other, similar tendencies. People are more likely to avoid learning about their risk for obesity if it obligates them to have a pill regimen forever. Women are more likely to choose not to find out their risk for endometriosis if it requires a cervical exam. In one study, patients said they would even pay $10 to avoid finding out if they had herpes because of the anxiety they did not want to feel.[7]

Although people avoid information that makes them feel bad, they are attracted to things associated with pleasant emotions. For example, awe—the feeling of wonder that comes with seeing a brilliant landscape or sunset—opens us to connecting with others because we feel smaller and more connected to other humans. The film *Human*, by director Yann Arthus-Bertrand, juxtaposes breathtaking landscapes and images from throughout the world with conversations with diverse individuals from different cultures and viewpoints who share their stories. It profoundly demonstrates the power of awe to open us to new perspectives. Research by Melanie Rudd, consumer behavior scholar at the University of Houston, and her colleagues seems to show that feeling awe can increase openness to learning and willingness to volunteer.[8]

Another pleasant emotion, pride, can be exceptionally powerful. Researchers have found that people anticipating feeling pride in helping the environment were more likely to take positive action than those anticipating guilt for having failed to do so.[9]

Several organizations and movements have shifted to invoking pleasant emotions, with great effect. Greenpeace, for example, has focused on hope rather than fear, anger, or guilt. In the early years of their work, Greenpeace was known for angry acts by a small group of champions chaining themselves to trees to demonstrate their anger toward environmental offenders. More recently, however, they have moved toward a strategy that includes optimism and inspiring others. Their message strategy now includes this passage:

> Now, to save the world, we're going to get a billion other people to smash their own impossibles.
>
> We will tell stories using language that is optimistic, bold and includes a humorous wink. We will rebel against convention and make beauty in the face of dreary and stale.[10]

Communications strategists know they have to be deliberate in identifying their goals and target community. We have to use the same intention with the emotions we choose to invoke. Each emotion can lead people to different actions, and pleasant emotions can be especially effective. As you think about what it is you want people to believe and do, use emotion with intention.

How to apply this insight: Think about what you're trying to get people to do and how they would feel if they were doing it. Then think about stories that would make them feel that way.

PRINCIPLE #4: CREATE MEANINGFUL CALLS TO ACTION

"Sign our petition." "Follow us on Facebook." "Click here for more information." Do these calls to action sound familiar? As common as they are, they don't tell anyone how to make a difference. They may leave people feeling like their efforts will be mere drops in a bucket. They don't inspire.

It is also easy to conflate goals with calls to action. But they are not the same thing. The 1955-56 Montgomery Bus Boycott aimed at Jim Crow laws in public transportation sought to end segregation of the bus system as a step toward ending racism. But the call to action was not "end segregation" or "end racism." How would the community even begin to know how to do that in an organized and strategic way? Instead the call to action was "Don't ride the bus." People knew how to do that: They rode bikes, set up carpools, or walked.

Calls to action that leave people feeling that they will not make a difference on the issue will likely result in inaction.

So how do we create calls to action that motivate people to take action and will make substantial progress toward our goal? Effective calls to action follow three rules: They are specific; the target community sees how the solution will help solve the problem; and they are something the community knows how to do.

First, make your call to action concrete and super-specific. In one study, marketing professor Melanie Rudd and her colleagues provided two different calls to action to two distinct groups. One group was asked to "support environmental sustainability." The other group was asked to "increase the amount of materials or resources that are recycled or reused." The 70 participants had 24 hours to complete their tasks. In a follow-up survey, the researchers assessed how happy the participants were with their action. Participants who had the concrete goal of increasing resources for recycling reported greater happiness. They conducted similar experiments for "make someone happy" versus "make someone smile," and "give those who need bone marrow transplants greater hope" versus

"give those who need bone marrow transplants a better chance of finding a donor." Rudd and her colleagues argue that concrete calls to action make people happier because the gap between their expectations and reality becomes smaller. They are left feeling good about what they were able to accomplish. The researchers theorize that when people are more satisfied and happy with their action, they are more likely to help again.[11]

Second, people need to see how their action will help solve the problem. Calls to action that leave people feeling as though they will not make a substantial difference on the issue will likely result in disengagement or inaction. Paul Slovic, social psychologist at the University of Oregon and president of the Decision Science Research Institute, and his colleagues argue that when people feel as though their actions will not make a difference, they are less likely to take action. The negative feelings outweigh any positive feelings they might have had from the action. The researchers refer to this as "pseudo-inefficacy." In one study, Slovic and his colleagues found that people were more likely to give to one child in need than to a group of children because as the number of children increases, people's sense of efficacy and impact decreases. In another study, when people were asked to donate to a single child facing starvation, the number of donations decreased as they were made more aware of millions of children who would still be in need of aid.[12] "Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency," writes Stanford University social psychologist Albert Bandura. "If people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen."[13]

Third, people need to know how to do the thing you are asking them to do, and be able to easily incorporate it into their daily routines and habits. If your call to action is not easily incorporated into your target community's everyday life or is not easily achieved, they may not take action. When you're designing calls to action, it will be important to understand the habits and routines of your target community. The Ice Bucket Challenge—a viral social media campaign that persuaded people to post videos of themselves pouring ice water over their heads to raise money for additional research about ALS—did this well. People habitually scroll through their social media feeds. Asking people to post videos of themselves dumping ice water on their heads or donating money to ALS and nominating others in their social network taps into these habits. Sander van der Linden, a social psychologist at the University of Cambridge, argues that this campaign went viral because it taps into the psychological habits of the mind, including engaging in behavior to fit in and follow the norms of your social group, and the desire to feel good about one's actions—both internally for participating and externally through likes and comments.[14]

How to apply this insight: Review your calls to action. Are you asking communities to do something specific that they value, that will connect them to the cause, and that they know how to do?

PRINCIPLE #5: TELL BETTER STORIES

Storytelling is the best tool we have for helping people care about issues. People are more likely to remember information they get in narrative form.[15] Stories have the unique power to convey new perspectives and thereby lower counter-arguing, increase perspective-taking and empathy, and capture and maintain people's attention.[16]

Gregory Berns, a neuroscientist at Emory University, and his colleagues suggest that reading a novel creates new connections in the brain, which leave us thinking about the story long after it ends. When we experience a captivating story, we emerge from it changed and often remember the events and experiences in the story as if they were our own.[17]

While the social sector has embraced the importance of storytelling, many people are not actually sharing stories. Instead, they use vignettes or messages. Stories have characters; a beginning, middle, and end; plot, conflict, and resolution. If you do not include these elements, you are not telling a story.

Scholars and data scientists have studied thousands of stories to understand universal themes. When we tell stories to help people care about our issue, we should figure out which plot structures we wish to use. In his 2004 book *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, journalist Christopher Booker outlines some basic plot structures, such as "Overcoming the Monster," "Rags to Riches or Riches to Rags," "The Quest," and "Voyage and Return."

Leaving some specific details out of your story creates an empty space for your readers to insert their own experience.

As people hear a story, they seek cues about how the story will unfold and who the protagonist is. Familiar plot structures—such as "rags to riches" ("Cinderella")—help orient the audience's expectations about the events to unfold and whose team they should be on. This is particularly important for communicating with audiences that may not be familiar with the issue you are working on. But for audiences that are very familiar with the issue, playing with plot structures that break expectations and surprise them may be more important for capturing their attention and avoiding fatigue from hearing the same story one too many times.

But simply using these different plots doesn't guarantee that people will engage with the tale you want to tell. Organizations that have adopted a strategy of incorporating stories in their work frequently reuse the same plot structures, emotions, and types of characters. As a result, many organizations tell stories that just aren't that interesting. Gain your community's attention and engagement with unexpected twists, less-used plot structures, and unusual characters.

Keith Bound, media scholar at the University of Nottingham, studies horror films and consults with the movie industry to make horror films scarier. "People want stories that operate just at the edge of expectation," he says. In other words, we enjoy the comfort of knowing where a story is headed, but surprise keeps our attention. Similarly, computer scientists at MIT recently found that false news stories can travel faster than true stories because they defy expectations. They found that stories were more likely to be shared when they included a surprise or caused disgust.

Despite what you learned in your high school writing classes, the most powerful stories aren't necessarily the most richly detailed. Great stories leave space for the audience in two ways.

One is allowing people to put the pieces together for themselves. "The audience actually wants to work for their meal," says Andrew Stanton, a Pixar director and screenwriter, in his 2012 TED talk "The Clues to a Great Story." "They just don't want to know that they're doing that. That's your job as a storyteller, to hide the fact that you're making them work for their meal. We're born problem solvers. We're compelled to deduce and to deduct, because that's what we do in real life. It's this well-organized absence of information that draws us in." Stanton's observation finds support in academic literature. For example, a study that offered readers the opportunity to experience three different stories found that the one that forced them to put the story together for themselves was seen as most interesting of the three.

Because we fill in missing details with what is familiar to us, leaving some specific details out of your story creates an empty space for your readers to insert their own experience—what is known and familiar to them. When Aylan Kurdi's tiny body washed ashore on the Greek island of Kos on September 2, 2015, after his family fled the Syrian conflict, his image was captured by a photojournalist. The image and story went viral, and donations to support the Syrian refugees spiked. Why did his image capture the world's imagination? It may have been his universality. In his simple red T-shirt and blue shorts, with his face obscured and the absence of identifying details—we couldn't see his face, and his clothes were so simple that we might see them on any child—it was possible for us to imagine a child we loved in his place.

Detail is important, however, when you're working to use the power of storytelling to help people look at something in a fresh light. Adding specific, visual details about a character or situation where your readers may have bias, prejudice, or a set of assumptions helps get them to see things in a new way. When you're telling stories about social issues, the social forces shaping that problem should be the context of your story—a problem to overcome or a setting that shapes the decisions of the protagonist. The recently deceased chef, writer, and television journalist Anthony Bourdain was a master of this device. In his CNN show *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown*, which was ostensibly about food and travel, he went on quests to find delicious dishes and unique cultures that most people could only imagine, and uncovered injustice, poverty, conflict, and triumph along the way.

How to apply this insight: Are you telling stories with a beginning, middle, and end, or simply sharing messages? What new insights will your audiences gain from hearing these stories? Are your stories interesting enough in their own right to merit a listen—even if the listener isn't passionate about your issue? And are you using the empty and full spaces of your stories to help people gain new insights on topics and issues they assume they know well?

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

If you're finding that your communications strategies aren't working, consider this: People fail to act not because they do not have enough information, but because they don't care or they don't know what to do. If you start with this perspective as the foundation for your work, you can craft a strategy that helps people care and tells them exactly what you want them to do.

In your work to make the world a better place, you don't have a moment or penny to spare. Investing your communications resources simply in spreading information will not inspire anyone to get behind your cause. If you want people to get on board, you have to make them care, and you have to show them how they can make a difference. ■

NOTES

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