

***The Pen is Mightier  
than the Statistic***



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# Writing Workshop

**Book Three—The Science Behind the Brain**

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*In memory of Carol T. Falkowski  
who always reminded me to live out loud.*

The Pen is Mightier than the Statistic—Story-Wheel  
Book Three—The Science Behind the Brain

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Order additional books by contacting  
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[www.StoryWheel.net](http://www.StoryWheel.net)



# Content Structure

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This content is divided into three downloadable books. Each stands alone but gains full momentum when combined with the others. For the best experience, print out *Book One*—it's your hands-on Workbook.

## Book One—Spinning Skills into Insight

Workbook. Create your story using prompts and templates. To help you understand the concepts, the Radiant Residence case study example is provided.

Introducing the Story-Wheel Model

How to Create Your Story-Wheel

Radiant Residence Case Study

1. All Good
2. Oh, Shift!
3. Wish-Back
4. Running In Place
5. Eureka!
6. Restorify
7. Wiser

Story-Wheel Generator—*Write it! Tell it!*

Story-Wheel Generator—*Practice Templates*

Certificate of Completion

Personal Mission

Additional Workshops

Let's Chat!

## Book Two—Case Studies from the Real World

Reference Guide. Showcases various stories from entertainment, business, and personal experiences.

Radiant Residence (reprise)

The Barbie Movie

The Listerine Legacy #1

Flex Seal

Post-it Notes

Water Alarm

The Listerine Legacy #2

Zoom

Chevrolet

Amazon.com

Novo Nordisk

Groundhog Day Movie

Personal Mission

Additional Workshops & Let's Chat!

**Disclaimer.** As Case Study examples, I present several fictional stories and marketing campaigns under educational Fair Use guidelines. My views are my own; I do not endorse any brand, nor have the companies had any input. Publicly available marketing materials are shown with the understanding that specific campaigns may change over time. Apply the overall strategies to your own products and services.

## Book Three—The Science Behind the Brain

Core Concepts. Academic exploration of the storytelling model as well as thinking processes.

A Story First

Story-Wheel

Storytelling Science

Additional Workshops & Let's Chat

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# ⊗ Book Three—The Science Behind the Brain

## A Story First

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Stories are integral to our humanness, our evolution as a culture, and our advancement as a civilization. From *Gilgamesh*, the first epic, to *Game of Thrones*, a popular TV series, there's power in storytelling. Stories convey emotions as well as facts, and lessons as well as warnings. It's how we learn, decide, and act. To persuade begins with putting forth an idea. Done correctly, our listen then adopts that idea, that is, internalizes it. Action follows as they manifest it in their world. Authorities agree: Stories are essential to communicating effectively.

The challenge is learning how to find, write, and tell a story that moves listeners to action. I once asked a storytelling expert that very question.

“Stand up straight and speak with confidence.”

“No, that's not what I mean. *How* do I story tell?

Their vague response referenced *Hero's Journey* and *Pixar Way* in a roundabout way. In truth, they misunderstood what makes a story, and how to create one's own. As an Emmy-nominated documentary maker for PBS, I knew there was more to it. A lot more.

Like you, I needed a practical formula, an underlying construct that I could put into action. And so began my quest. I joined a writing group, read books about plots, and rewatched Joseph Campbell. I wrote, and I wrote, and I wrote.

One sunny afternoon at the baseball park, I pondered what made the game so engaging. A ball is thrown, a bat swings, and we hang on to what happens next. In a blush of excitement, I realized that *this* is story: Context—Complication—Resolution. Suddenly, I recognized *what* is story is.

But *why* do stories work? That led me into the rabbit dens of brain science. Simply put, our brains combine memories with incoming information to create a brainwave that I call a Theta Signature™. When we tell someone a story, our brainwave pattern is replicated in their brain. Our goal as storytellers is to sharpen the story so that it stimulates our listener's imagination.

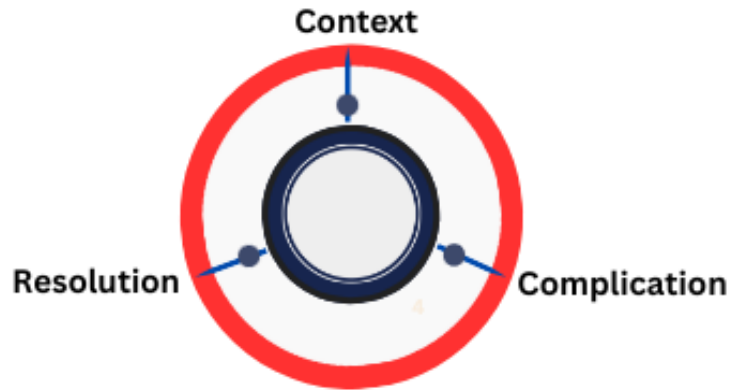
The final question is *how* to tell a story. A writer's function is to lead readers on a journey of transformation. Imagine a bicycle rolling down a pathway. The spinning wheels are held together from hub to rim by spokes. In storytelling, the three primary spokes are Context-Complication-Resolution. Yet, four more are necessary to align the wheel, straight and true. All together, they form the seven spokes of the Story-Wheel™.

A story isn't a recitation of facts and data but rather an invitation into a meaningful conversation. And a story is more than creative stringing of words, there is an underlying structure that you can learn to earn more time with your listener.

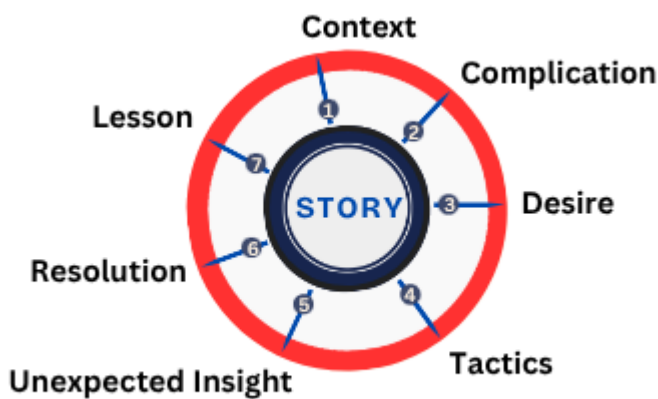
Storytelling may seem simple but is a delicately balanced collection of subtlety, nuance, and deeper meanings. We'll get to that. But for now, since a story usually returns to its beginning, I use the metaphor of a wheel, the Story-Wheel. Imagine a bicycle wheel with each spoke representing a specific piece of the story, each essential to rolling forward.

This is the Story-Wheel with three spokes. In the general model, every story is simply Context—Complication—Resolution.

Start with the way things *are now*, then make *something happen* followed by a *result*. Some marketers simplify Complication—Resolution into Problem—Solution.



But there's more to a dynamic story as seen from the academic perspective.




1. Begin with the *Context*, the way things *are now*.
2. The *Complication* changes everything.
3. Introduce a motivating *Desire* to solve the problem.
4. *Tactics* are conventional approaches that ultimately fail.
5. Reveal an *Unexpected Insight*.
6. The *Resolution* solves the *Complication*.
7. A *Lesson* is learned.

Stories are best served with a splash of style to draw attention. Let’s make it memorable with the seven-spoke Story-Wheel

- 1. It begins with *All Good*; life is good.
- 2. Then, an *Oh, Shift!* event changes everything.
- 3. The desire to *Wish-Back* things to before drives the story onward.
- 4. To fix it, you try conventional solutions that never work, leaving one to *Run in Place*.
- 5. Then, an unexpected insight is revealed in a *Eureka!* moment...
- 6. ...in which *Restorify* makes thing right again, in fact, even better.
- 7. The lesson learned along the way makes you *Wiser*.



This table illustrates the similarity of the Classic and Story-Wheel models.

 <b>Story-Wheel</b> <span>© Brad Cochrane</span>	
1. Context <i>All Good...</i>	The Normal World (desirable or undesirable). Aspirational World i.e. "yearning" for something better.
2. Complication <i>Oh, Shift!</i>	Change that disrupts the Normal World. Usually, an outside force. "Magic Spell" or "disaster."
3. Desire <i>Wish-Back</i>	Quest to solve the complication.
4. Tactics <i>Running in Place</i>	Conventional solutions can't overcome barriers resulting in setbacks.
5. Unexpected Insight <i>Eureka!</i>	A new point-of-view, a breakthrough invention, or a previously overlooked universal truth.
6. Resolution <i>Restorify</i>	The <i>Insight</i> applied to the <i>Complication</i> for success.
7. Lesson <i>Wiser</i>	The Moral: the story can't be completed without the product or idea.

## Fundamentals | Comparing Story Models

Because storytelling is universal, you may recognize connections with other models.

Story-Wheel	Classic	Three Act	Hero's Journey	Pixar's Story Spine
All Good	Context	<b>Act I—Set-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposition</li> <li>Inciting Incident</li> <li>First Plot Point</li> </ul>	Ordinary World	Once upon a time... Every day...
Oh Shift!	Complication		Call to Adventure	Until one day...
Wish-Back	Desire		Refusal of the Call	
Run-in-Place	Tactics	<b>Act II--Confrontation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising Action</li> <li>Mid-point (twist)</li> <li>Second Plot Point</li> </ul>	Meeting the Mentor Crossing the threshold Tests, Allies, and Enemies	Because of that...  (repeat)
Eureka!	Unexpected Insight	<b>Act III--Resolution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climax</li> <li>Falling Action</li> <li>Denouement</li> </ul>	Approach to the Inmost Cave Ordeal Reward (Seizing the Sword)	Until finally...
Restorify	Resolution		The Road Back Resurrection	And ever since that day...
Wiser	Lesson		Return with the Elixir	

To tell a story right out of the gate, follow the practical Story-Wheel process. It's the result of scientific research integrated with real world experience teaching thousands of students to communicate well under pressure.

# Storytelling Science

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Storytelling has a solid basis in science. By understanding how the brain works, you can create more engaging and effective stories that start a conversation with your audience.

The human brain can hold about seven facts that can be easily recalled. Yet, our brain can hold thousands of stories in its consciousness and is looking for more. The fact-path is jammed but the storytelling super-highway is wide open. According to one academic study, only 5% of people remember facts while 63% recall stories. Additional research found that stories are remembered up to 22 times more than facts alone.

Homeowner Brian W. wanted a new deck. Because he's a smart decision-maker, he asked three salespeople for estimates. The first, he can't remember, the second wore a red hat, and the third told a memorable personal story of their family business. Which one got the job?

In a crowded too-much-information world, if you aren't remembered, you're history. A high-quality story will get you further than any number of low-value fact lists. Layering your message with feelings as well as facts triggers more of your listeners' brain—turning an external word dump into internalized ideas.

## *Brain Science* | **Theta Signature™**

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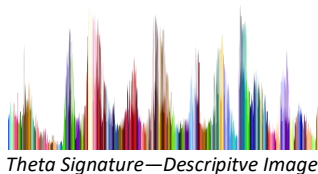
Before action, comes planning. In the pre-frontal cortex, intent is formed by combining memory with the current situation to create a task set.

The brain is very smart and very dumb at the same time. It can process vast amounts of information, but that data is limited to what enters through your senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and fingers. The incoming data stream travels along unique neural pathways.

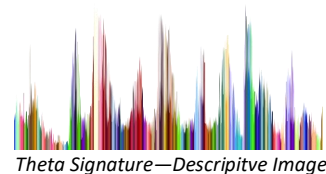
Along with the new is the old. Our memory system underlies all our knowledge and perceptions. It's how we call up facts, remember experiences, and understand the meaning of things.

As the brain collates information, the hippocampus and the pre-frontal cortex cycle evidence back and forth. Within tens of milliseconds, a unique brain wave is formed into the unique, irregular profile that I call the *Theta Signature*. Here's the astounding thing: that same pattern is duplicated in the listener's brain.

### Teller



### Listener





What does a thought look like? An MRI scan can show you.

A well-layered story is a repeatable pattern. In a sense, stories are pre-constructed memories that are passed from person to person. The more robust a story, the more contoured, the more likely it becomes an ingrained memory in the listener.

A story can hijack this transportation system by substituting descriptions of sensations for sensations themselves. That's why teachers want their students to "paint a picture" with words that describe sensations. The imaginary is made real to the brain.

It's the secret to storytelling because details and data stick as well as meaning. Ideas become integrated into thought, feeling, and action. In truth, people make decisions emotionally and then seek out the facts to support their decision.

Leveraging the Theta Signature is a novel approach that competitors miss, and storytelling is the gateway to your customer's decision-making method.

As you read this your brain just went through a process of receiving data, interpreting information, and storing memories. Later, when recalled, a memory converts into a rule set that guides actions. Underneath is a worldview, a set of beliefs with meaning. A story becomes a memory, becomes a belief, becomes an action. And it happens in a specific scientific process that can be observed, measured, proved, and used.

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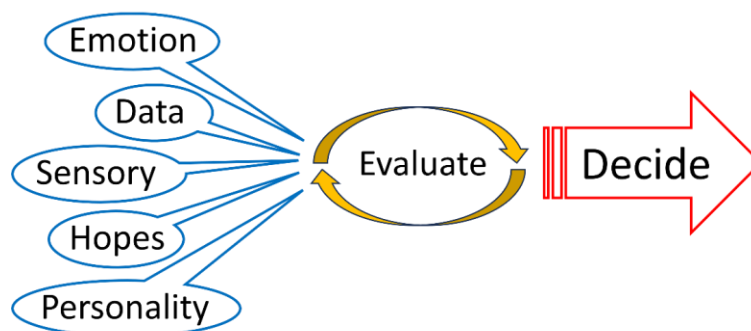
It's the secret to storytelling because details and data stick as well as meaning. Ideas become integrated into thought, feeling, and action. In truth, people make decisions emotionally and then look for data to support their decision.

To influence how people think, feel, and act, would you rather lead with a fact or a story?

## Brain Processing | Emotion-Imbued Choice

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People make decisions through a brain process known as Emotion-Imbued Choice (EIC). The brain evaluates facts AND feelings, incoming data AND memories as well as sensory stimuli—one is as important as the other.



People crave stimulation. Expert storytellers understand that success depends on tickling their listener's brain. Carefully chosen words can tell a story on the surface while triggering brain processes underneath. Review the areas below and start to incorporate them into your writing.

### Anticipation

- Humans operate on incomplete information
- Leaving gaps force the reader to guess at a solution and then check it for accuracy after the fact

### Comparison

- As a survival characteristic, humans are scanning the environment looking for what's different. Different could be dangerous.
- Therefore, the brain is always categorizing as a quest to separate the safe same from the dangerous different.
- Describing something through a metaphor triggers the categorization part of the brain.

### Memory

- Efficiency. What worked before will most likely work now.
- Use a common memory (like sitting at a school desk) to create a shared connection.

### Sensations

- The brain processes incoming sensory information to understand the world around themselves. Describing a sensation in words can hijack the pathways... (not as strong as real sensations but effective nonetheless).
- Describe smells, tastes, hearing, etc... as well as temperature fluctuations.

### Emotions

- We are a bundle of emotions. Some are chemicals, some are memories, and some are our belief systems.
- Relaying the emotional journey of a character can create a shared experience with the reader.

### Movement

- The brain comprehends physical movement through balance, up or down, forward or back. Speed can be indicated by sound, sight, and touch of the wind upon the skin.
- Use movement words to create physical movement as well as psychological movement.

## **Place**

- The brain is always determining its location, the sense of place.
- A general description of a specific place helps the brain center itself. A specific description of relationship to objects or people, using words such as near or far, does the same function.

## **Time**

- Time cells within the brain fire at different rates thus mark the passage of time.
- Describing time—yesterday, today, and tomorrow—stimulates those cells.

## **Music**

- Variations in tonal quality is the basis of human language.
- Describing music speaks to that capability.

## **Rhythm**

- Another aspect of language is rhythm, that is, the sound patterns of pace.
- Writing a sentence in which the syllables create a rhythm or beat, engages on a subliminal level.

## **Symbology**

- Symbols are a shorthand for basic human communication. For instance, a frog symbolizes change because of its transformation from tadpole to adult.
- Use symbology to convey underlying messages.

## **Culture**

- Humans have created universal beliefs for over 200,000 years. For instance, the sharing of water is rife with meaning.
- Use cultural assumptions to create a shared connection.

## Let's chat! | Brad Cochran

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Changing the conversation through undeniable storytelling. Story Coach, Copywriter, Author, Speaker/Trainer, and Communication Professional.

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## Workshop | Sell Under Pressure

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“They’re ready for you.”

You’ve waited hours, weeks, and even months just for this one appointment; your chance to pitch your product and you’re ready. You stride into their office, desk piled high with paperwork. The prospect looks up and snaps, “Make it quick!” So, you speed through features before being ushered out. The conversation is over before it begins.

How’s that working for you?

Think of your investment in marketing, funneling, and sheer persistence needed just to get one-on-one time with a prospective buyer. And it’s all been wasted. What if you could turn it around so they ask, *can you tell me more?* Instead of racing the countdown clock, you’ve earned more moments for a real sales conversation. It’s about winning the first two minutes—rare and short—that happen quickly and are gone. Saying the right thing at the right time makes the difference between a pass and a purchase. That’s effective selling. That’s performing under pressure.

Curiosity may have killed the cat but for humans it’s an essential survival characteristic; it’s hardwired into us. When entering a new environment, our brain goes on alert looking for danger or opportunity. The moment a customer identifies a sales environment, they subconsciously ask seven questions.

The program is organized around the *ECLIPSE Sales Stratagem*™ which provides those answers before they’re even asked.

Start here at [www.TwoMinuteSale.com](http://www.TwoMinuteSale.com).

## Workshop | Copy Selling Secrets

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Is your copywriting a monologue? A one-way dump of product features? Or are you engaging your customer by conveying ideas in unexpected ways that surprise, stimulate, and validate?

If you tell someone a fact, you’ll trigger two parts of their brain. If you engage the brain’s natural processes, you’ll trigger seven. As a professional who wants to influence how people think, feel, and act, would you rather lead facts or something more?

In truth, people make decisions emotionally and then seek out the facts to support their decision. It’s a novel approach that competitors miss.

Writing well is a skill that you can learn. But just as a football player lifts weights to build strength, you’ll need to stretch your creative muscles. Learning how to contour elevates your writing to a whole new level. Release your creativity as you develop writing skills. Follow the path to effective copy selling by enrolling in the exclusive *Copy Selling Secrets Workshop*.

Start here at [www.TwoMinuteSale.com](http://www.TwoMinuteSale.com).

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