STORYTELLING| PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Can I Tell You A Secret?

“Any story that begins with this opening will grab the audience’s attention.”

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“Can I tell you a secret?”

Who can resist?

Any story that begins with this opening will grab the audience’s attention.

This is what we want.

Want a few examples?

“Can I tell you a secret? I have been thinking about quitting smoking for the last few weeks. I lost another family member to lung cancer. I have no more excuses. Can you help me quit?”

“Can I tell you a secret? I think the world is dangerous. When I was a kid I would ride my bike around town until 8 pm. I rode the bus alone and would not think twice about it. Today we are not safe in our own home. This is why I have a security system.”

“Can I tell you a secret? I had a weight problem when I was a teenager. I couldn’t put on weight. It did not matter what I did, I was a bag of bones. Finally, I got the nutritional and psychological support I needed to eat properly and keep the weight on so I look healthy and have more energy.”

Secrets are the perfect story starter.

* People find secrets irresistible.

* People will lean in to listen to a secret.

* People love to gossip.

* People love the privilege of being told a secret.

* People love to be the first to hear a secret.

* People will stop everything else they are doing to hear a secret.

* Secrets hold special value higher than news and current affairs.

Secrets about our own lives are personal and powerful.

Secrets about other people are “gossip” - and are more powerful for grabbing attention.

Secrets are juicy and delicious.

Sharing a “secret” story about someone else.

“Let me tell you a secret. I learned this from my uncle who runs a music shop. He said that if we want to get ahead, we have to work multiple jobs while we are young and have lots of energy. Before we have a family and other responsibilities. He used to work a regular 8-hour day and then work three hours tuning pianos. He created a multi-million dollar business.”

“**Let me tell you a secret about Mandy**. She has not always been that skinny. Once upon a time, she weighed over 200 pounds. Do you know how she lost the weight?”

“**Let me tell you a secret.** That guy over there, Tim, is a multi-millionaire. Do you know how he did it? Became a rideshare driver in the first weeks the company launched. As a pioneer, he got a great reputation for service and quality. He was asked to speak about it and be the face of the company. Now he travels the world talking about ride-sharing as a motivational speaker.”

“Let me tell you a secret. I never used to be this popular. I took confidence classes and public speaking training. I read a lot of books and I learned to talk to people. I discovered personality styles and became a communication expert in two years. Now I train people around the world.”

Permission.

Getting permission to hear a secret makes people calm. They do not have to feel strange about hearing a secret. They will listen even more intently because the secret is a surprise.

“Can I tell you a secret?”

“Is it Okay if I tell you a secret?”

“Would it be Okay to share this secret of success with you?”

“When I heard this weight loss secret I knew you would want to know. Can I share it with you?”

“When I heard of this secret skincare ingredient I had to tell you. Guess what it is?”

Permission is a polite way to get the audience agreeing to be told a secret.

I do not think anyone would refuse to hear a secret. It is human nature to want to know. Curiosity kills the cat because it cannot resist.

It is like getting an unexpected gift.

A free bonus when you buy something at full price.

The surprise makes us feel good.

The element of surprise.

A secret should take people by surprise. It may even take their breath away. The melodrama around its ‘revelation’ is pure theater. The secret should be something almost scandalous with controversy, revelations, and drama.

Things to avoid in telling our secret stories.

* **Simple facts.** People can guess them on their own. There needs to be more background.

* **Someone else's story**. It must be original.

* **Being too long-winded**. Short secrets are more dramatic with shock value in a quickly told story.

* **Strangers**. Celebrities are considered to be people we know.

When we get people to stop what they are doing, to pay attention to a story, it has to be worth it.

Secrets give people something new.

Secrets let us inside the private world of famous people.

Secrets are perfect sound bites to share with others.

Secrets provide shock, surprise and a change in our day and give us something new to talk about.

Once someone knows a secret, they have to be the first to tell someone else while it is new.

When a speaker shares a 'secret' story, we sit in the audience and assume they have never told anyone before.

It will be special because it is new.

The story will be fascinating because it will be outrageous or controversial.

What is another way to open this type of story?

* I have never shared this before.

* I have never shared this with a big group.

* I have never shared this outside my company.

* I have never felt comfortable sharing this.

* I have not told this story outside Australia.

More about secrets.

Secrets are powerful tools when they are about a successful person. Or a celebrity. Or someone we hold in the public eye.

The more details we share with our secret story, the more exclusive it feels. The people hearing it feel lucky, even exclusive.

The Television infomercial thrives on telling stories to create sales. This is why they use celebrities, singers, movie stars and actors.

In the movie “Joy” featuring Jennifer Lawrence, we saw this principle at work. Her personal stories creating the self-wringing mop started a revolution in TV home shopping. Just a few years later she was a billion-dollar business on QVC and later to the Home Shopping Network.

With the secret of the self-wringing mop, she revolutionized not just cleaning, but how people sell products on TV.

What are some of the ways we can share just one secret?

* **This weight loss secret** is just for those of you who came here today.

* **This modem secret** will revolutionize how you use the internet.

* **This lighting secret** will change the way you make videos.

* **This productivity secret** will save you 2 hours a day.

* **This algorithm secret** will help you spot the best stocks to invest in.

* **This automotive jargon secret** will give you the inside track on the best car to buy.

* **This engineering secret** will explain why China is taking over the world.

* **This frequent flyer secret** will debunk all the myths you've heard about traveling in Asia.

* **This pheromone secret** will give you the magic touch with women.

* **This posture secret** will help you be more confident around men.

*** This wrinkle removing secret** ingredient will give you younger looking skin in just 2 minutes a day.

* **This eye contact secret** will help you give powerful presentations.

*** This amino acid secret** ingredient will make your energy levels skyrocket.

Let us add an object to our magic words, and see how it makes the story we are about to tell more compelling.

* This secret ingredient…

* This secret Facebook trick…

* This secret photography tip…

* This secret system…

* This secret connection…

* This secret active wear fabric component…

* This secret lasagna preparation method…

* This secret shaving tip…

* This secret investing strategy…

* This secret antioxidant…

* This secret energy pill…

* This secret skincare routine…

* This secret face mask ingredient…

* This secret fat-burning exercise…

* This secret power phrase…

* This secret sequence of words…

Secrets are compelling listening.

What are some better storytelling openings?

Magic.

Magic is mystical and wonderful. While people may not believe in magical tricks, illusionists, and sleight of hand, they do want to believe amazing things can happen.

And when they do happen, it is like magic.

So we all become childlike in the presence of magic, and magical things.

This is why it is a great word to use in our story opening.

“I’m going to share with you the magical secret of the Dead Sea Salts.”

“I’m going to share the magical three words that will get any woman to fall in love with you.”

“I am going to share with you the magical secret world of celebrity fitness trainer Mr. X.”

“I am going to share with you the magic skincare secrets of “famous movie actress”.

“I would like to tell you the magic ingredient in this bottle of Super Vitamins.”

“I would like to give you the magic phrase that makes women fall in love with you.”

“I would like to tell you the magic numbers that unlocked the key to success in Investing.”

“I would like to give you the magical secret sentence used by professional salespeople to get higher value sales.”

“I would like to give you the magical secret shared by entrepreneurs to attract good staff.”

“I have to give you this secret. It is magic and it will change your life.”

“I can not believe this magical secret has remained this way for so long. Here, now, is the key to eternal youth.”

“ I can not believe this magical secret has been hiding right in front of our eyes. The key to long-lasting energy.”

We can use the word magic and watch the audience’s eyes light up.

This is because of the element of surprise they feel. And this feels good. That is another keyword we can use.

Surprise.

“I have a surprise for you today.”

Every audience loves a surprise. When they have trust in the speaker or the salesperson or the lecturer or the CEO on stage.

Surprises tap into our childhood. Most surprises were positive. Events like Christmas and Birthdays.

The visits from our friends and family. Grandmothers arriving out of the blue. Brothers flying back from overseas.

Sand from the Sahara.

Silk scarves from Thailand.

Smoked Salmon from Alaska.

All these gifts are unexpected. Surprises. And they have a positive effect on our feelings and emotions.

So let us use it in a series of story openings.

*** "I have a surprise for you today**, not one but two great stories of success with this product."

* "I have a surprise for you today, not one but five guest speakers to share their stories about how to be successful."

* "I have a surprise for you today, the most successful trader in the company is here to tell his story. It will be easier for you to make money from today onwards.

* "I have a surprise for you today. It is attached to someone's seat. Please reach under and see if there is anything stuck to your chair? If so, you have won a 5-night vacation to the Bahamas."

* "I have a surprise for you tonight. It is your entry ticket. We will have a lucky draw now, and someone will win $99 of skincare just for showing up."

* "I have a surprise for you tonight. The story that I am about to tell you goes back over 4000 years. It has been handed from generation to generation, father to son. And now I will share it with you."

* " I have a surprise for you tonight. The story I am about to share is incredible. You are the first people in the country to hear it."

* "I have a surprise for you tonight. The people in the front row are going to become actors in the story I am about to tell."

* "I have a surprise for you tonight. The story I just told, was true. And it was my story."

Just like with magic, people love a surprise. When something unexpected sneaks up on us, we feel the thrill of the surprise. This is a positive emotion and releases serotonin which also makes us happy and relaxed.

After the thrill is gone, we have an audience ready to listen to us.

So we must make the stories in our surprises count.

Announcements.

Stories can use the announcement method. This tells the audience we are about to share something interesting or important.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I have an announcement to make. This next story is top secret and I would like you to all be paying attention, as I can only share it once.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, I have an announcement to make. The secret you have all been waiting for is on this table under this sheet. I am about to reveal it, but first, let me tell you a little about it.”

“Ladies and gentlemen. I have an announcement to make. The story you are about to hear deals in ghosts, extra-terrestrials, conspiracies and more. Strap yourself in, it’s going to be a wild ride.”

“Ladies and Gentlemen. I have an announcement to make. Tonight’s story begins in a town just like this, in a room, just like this, and with people who looked just like you do. Let’s begin.”

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