



## Next Steps

**You Can Do It!**



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to Access All Your Speech Checklists,  
Tools and Resources**

**[www.StoryAcademy.ca](http://www.StoryAcademy.ca)**

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## Next Steps

How you communicate with your clients can take your business from good to great. It is essential that you can give smooth, confident presentations with all of the proper planning to make them effective. You can use the communication strategies you learned and practiced throughout this course in a variety of situations to help your business.

Practice is the key ingredient. As you go through mastering the skills in this course and working through the activities, it may be difficult the first time. Few people are excellent public speakers or presenters naturally. Everyone gets there by practicing and preparing. Rehearse your Supercharged Summaries, Stories, your signature talk, questions and responses to objections, and then rehearse them more.

While all of the material of this course is still fresh in your mind, look for venues where you can perform your engaging presentation. Look for local chapters of networking groups, upcoming conferences, and opportunities to speak at colleges or universities. If your storytelling is for sales, book some calls with prospects right now. Do not hesitate to take the next step.

### **It is Time to Put Your Learning into Action!**

Look for opportunities in your everyday life where you can practice your Supercharged Summary. Start trying it with people you meet at coffee shops, restaurants, parties, networking events, and anywhere else possible. Tweak your summary to discover what really works and what does not.

Get your story out there and start sharing with the world what you have to offer.

Review your notes from the learning activities in this course and write down your next steps. Include the following, where relevant, and attach deadlines to your to do list:

- a. Revisit and refine your Supercharged Summary, to reflect the newest version of your talk.
- b. Let Paul and Jennifer know if you would like to renew your membership and continue with the Stage Time meetups and work through the stories and speeches again for more practice.
- c. Schedule into your calendar some time to put yourself at places where you can refine your Supercharged Summary. Attend some Connect Now meetups and other networks: [www.CNBN.ca/calendar](http://www.CNBN.ca/calendar)
- d. Research and find some opportunities for you to present your engaging presentation at upcoming events and conferences.
- e. If you need further help with creating your opt-in offers, programs, marketing funnel, or other aspects of your marketing, talk to Paul and Jennifer Henczel about their Inner-Circle Mastermind Level: [www.inspireinfluencers.com](http://www.inspireinfluencers.com)

**Learning Activity:** Schedule your next steps to be sure you get them done

Task	Notes	Deadline

**Learning Activity:** What types of upcoming opportunities do you have to present a persuasive presentation? (Keynote, TED Talks, etc.)

## Upcoming Opportunities

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## Delivering Your Story

In this module, you will learn different methods for practicing and telling your story so that you will be ready to deliver your complete speech by the end of the course.

A story is meaningless unless it is told to others. Telling a story is not as simple as relating the details or following the structures and templates outlined previously. You need to practice telling your story so that it will have the most impact. Practice saying it aloud. Start with small audiences and gradually build to larger audiences.

### The Right Story for the Right Audience

You will need not just one, but several stories. These might detail different important parts of your life that made an impact on who you are today. However, even more importantly, they should each be tailored to a different audience. You have learned that when creating stories and choosing which ones to tell, you should always keep your audience in mind.

For example, the story that you would tell to your business associates would be different from the one you would tell to your customers. For your business customers, you may choose a story that focuses more on the specifics of your life as an entrepreneur, or the specific business problems you solved. Your story for potential customers might be about the change you want to make in the world, a story to communicate your vision.

Remember the avatar you worked on earlier in the Story Academy program. Identify each type of audience you may be telling your stories to, and create a profile or avatar for that person. Once you have some profiles, you can look at each of them and decide what kind of story would be most appropriate and effective. Some stories might work for more than one persona.

For each persona, here are a few things to consider when creating or choosing a story:



- **What do they think of you?** For example, a visitor to your website does not necessarily trust you yet. On the other hand, your audience may see you as a mentor or more experienced person; or vice versa.
- **How connected is your audience to you?** Do they feel a kinship with you? For example, a person at a networking event may feel that you are already a member of their in-group.
- **How well does the person know you?** You should have different stories for a person who does not know you at all, as opposed to someone you have a deep relationship with already.
- **What are the person's interests?** Your story should be appropriate for those specific interests.
- **What emotions are most important to the listener?** Whatever emotions you identify should be key elements to your story, and especially to its choice point or turning point. This will also influence how you choose a protagonist and how they are portrayed in your story.

- **Is the listener pragmatic or idealistic?** This one trait is a major factor in how well they will relate to a particular story.
- **What problem or challenge can your audience relate to?** This should be the key problem or challenge in your story's plot.
- **What are the listener's possible expectations for a good story?** For example, what do they expect to happen next? How do they expect the story to end?

You may also choose different stories for written vs. oral presentations. For written text, you might choose stories that are longer and more involved, considering that your audience is the type that will settle in and read.

On the other hand, a written story, such as a story for your website's Home or About pages, should be immediately attention grabbing. If you are telling a story in-person, this may not be quite as important since you have a captive audience. The web surfer can easily click away while it is much harder for a person to disengage when face-to-face.

Use audience personas and the above ideas when you go back to write more stories, refine the ones you have written, and choose which story to tell and when.

## Perfecting Your Story

Although it seems strange to talk to yourself, this is exactly how you should practice telling your story. Pick a quiet time when you are alone, close the door and begin your story. A commute to work or any other time when you are alone works great. Eliminate all distractions and tell your story, noting as you go the areas that could be changed or improved.

Once you feel comfortable and your story is starting to sound natural and authentic, you should try recording yourself. This is terribly embarrassing for many people, but it is something you can get over if you try it a few times. Recording helps you refine and perfect your story. It also gets you used to saying it aloud and hearing yourself deliver it.

The easiest way to record yourself is on your phone. However, it is even better to do a video recording, even if it is just a simple recording using your PC's camera. Video is good because you can refine not only the audio qualities like your tone of voice or the "ums" and "errs," but also your eye contact and body language.

The key when reviewing your recording is to make sure that you look and sound comfortable delivering your story. It should look natural and personable, and not fake or contrived.

Another reason to make a recording is so that you understand the timing of your story. A good story does not include every detail, you are not writing a book. If it goes too long, you will lose the listener and you may lose the impact.

If you have a longer story to tell, make sure that the entire story flows together nicely. You can then tell parts of your story or the whole story as the situation demands or time allows.

## Go Live with Your Story

Once your story is formed, natural, and properly timed, it is time to start practicing in front of a real audience. Consider low-risk opportunities where you can try out your personal story. Try practicing it with a friend or colleague. Tell them you are practicing your story and you would love their feedback.

Gradually start trying out your story for real with local groups, associations, and meetups, such as Connect Now Business Network ([www.cnbnc.ca](http://www.cnbnc.ca)).

Your story is never exactly finished. You will always find ways to tighten it up, tweak it, or make it more relevant. Always pay attention to feedback as you tell your stories and look for areas of improvement.

In addition, remember that whenever telling your story, you must start with your audience. Consider your audience and position your story for them. For example, the age, gender or background of your audience may affect how you will tailor it to them. If you have a story that involves golf, the details of the game will be more interesting to people who actually play golf. However, an overly detailed explanation of your golf game will risk losing the interest of those who do not know the sport well.

## Opportunities to Tell Your Story

Once your story is finished, you will want to start looking for more real-world opportunities to tell it. You have already told it to select groups of people as a sort of trial run. Now, it is time to start using it with a wider audience.



**Presentations.** If you have an upcoming presentation, you can use this as an opportunity to tell your personal story. If you have a story that relates to the subject matter of your presentation, you can open with this story instead of just talking about your company. A personal story as an opener can help to set the tone of the presentation, as it often does during a TED Talk. If you are using PowerPoint, consider devoting one slide to your story.

**Meetings.** Look for any upcoming meetings with new people where you have to introduce yourself. If you will be introducing yourself to a new person or group of people, this is a good opportunity to tell your story. Personal stories make great professional introductions.

**Groups.** Are there any groups where you could share your story? For example, do you belong to a local business group, an entrepreneurial group, Toastmasters or something along those lines?

**Conferences.** Conferences offer a great opportunity for sharing your story. You can share your story as part of introducing your business. You can also use the condensed form of your story

that you created in the “Stellar Summary” section, when introducing yourself to new people you meet at the conference.

**Interviews.** Any time you are interviewed by any media, whether offline or online, you should have a good story prepared. This is an excellent chance to tell people what you are all about.

**Online Opportunities.** Take advantage of as many online opportunities as possible to tell your story. A few good opportunities include:

- Your websites About Page
- Social media profiles
- Introducing yourself to new online forums that you join

If you do not have an online opportunity to tell your story at length, look for ways you can take an excerpt or snippet from your story and use it. For example, a social media profile may not give you enough space for the whole story. In this case, use a salient part of your story that shows who you are and what you are about.

## Changing Your Story to Suit the Listener

As mentioned earlier, you will want to consider your audience when not only creating and choosing stories, but also as you tell them. You may find it expedient to change a story slightly to better suit the audience. You might change the timing by making it longer, shorter, or emphasizing certain parts.

You might change the protagonist slightly so that he or she is more relatable to your audience. For the same story, you might emphasize that the protagonist is an entrepreneur or businessperson when telling it to investors; but when telling it to customers; you may emphasize the protagonist's role in their family as a father or mother.

You could change something like the setting, or emphasize different aspects of the background of your story to suit the audience. For example, you can alter the background somewhat so that it more closely resembles the background of your listeners.

As mentioned before, consider any common ground you have with your listeners and bring this up in your story. Again, this makes the story you are telling more relatable, which will give it more impact and get listeners more engaged.

Other details of the story may include data, figures, or technical jargon. Exact sums of money may be more effective when telling a story to investors. When telling a story for disaster relief, figures such as those injured or the extent of damage will make it more effective. If delivering your story to an audience with a high level of technical knowledge, you should use this specific language and jargon.

Aside from the details of the story, you may also adjust its tone depending on the audience and format in which you wrote it. A written story may have a more formal, fiction-like tone and it can be told in a language that is more casual. Consider your audience when deciding which tone to use; written stories do not always call for a more formal tone.

Most of all make sure that you are comfortable with telling one story before you start altering it too much for different audiences. The process of writing and telling different personal stories will get easier as you continue to practice at every opportunity you find.

**Learning Activity:** Practice telling one of your stories to a close friend, colleague, or mentor. Ask for feedback about what was engaging and what was not interesting.

Story	Engaging Points	Alter Points

Revise your story versions. Go back to each type of story after practicing and implement any changes based on feedback or reactions you received.

**Learning Activity:** Now that you have practiced your story, what are your best opportunities for telling your story, and who are the key audiences you will need to consider for each? How will different types of audiences affect your story or the details you include? How many minutes is ideal for your story? Use the provided worksheet to take notes.

Method	Audience	Time (min.)	Personal Story
<b>Presentations</b>			
<b>Conferences</b>			
<b>Meetings</b>			
<b>Interviews</b>			
<b>Groups</b>			
<b>Other</b>			

Written story: Check your website and social media channels, like LinkedIn and Facebook. Review your ‘about us’ or other ‘about me’ sections of your social media. Add in pieces from your personal stories in each place where people might go to learn more about you.

## Refining Your Story

Now that you have created your personal stories, structured them and practiced them, it is time to wrap up. However, you should never stop creating new stories and improving old ones.

Practice your story wherever possible and pay close attention to the reaction of your listeners. Tighten up your story where needed, erase parts that are unnecessary, and sometimes add or change a bit to make it more effective. You may also discover that you have more stories to tell which are just as central to explaining who you are and what your values are.

In this course, you have learned how to practice your story, adjust it for different audiences, and find opportunities to practice and deliver your story to the world.

Creating a personal story is about more than just promoting yourself or your business. It helps you to identify your true values, in addition to helping you convey those values to others. The self-reflection you did during the course hopefully opened your eyes to who you are and what you are all about. This helps you to convey yourself authentically to others, which in turn helps you form a close connection with prospects and customers. That close connection is what helps you convert prospects to customers and build a loyal customer base, far better than any form of marketing can achieve.

## Learning Activity: Next Steps

Review all your notes, worksheets, and checklists from the course.

Next, create a list of next steps for refining your story; creating different versions of your story; continuing to practice your stories; identifying new ways and opportunities to tell your story; and implementing any changes to where you currently have or use your personal stories. (Social media, websites etc.)

Task	Deadline	Notes

**Learning Activity: Creating Different Versions of Your Story**

Task	Deadline	Notes

## Learning Activity: Continuing to Practice Your Story

Task	Deadline	Notes

**Learning Activity:** Identify New Ways/Opportunities to Tell Your Story

Task	Deadline	Notes

**Learning Activity:** Implementing Changes to Your Story

Task	Deadline	Notes

## Where to Distribute Your Story

***"No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time."***

Lewis Carroll, Author

Now that you have written and produced your story in at least one format, you will have to decide exactly where to distribute it. There are different outlets you can use, and we have already discussed some of the channels. The goal is to choose a distribution channel that will get your story in front of as many people in your target market as possible.

Just as you did when choosing which media to use, look at your audience to figure out which distribution channel to focus on first. Find out where and how they consume content online using the methods we discussed earlier.

### Your Website and Blog

An easy venue for your stories is your own website and blog. A blog is a "weblog," or an online journal. Many companies include their company story as part of their website's About Page. In fact, for good branding every aspect of your site should help to convey your brand story to your visitors.

Personal stories and customer stories make great blog content. Personal stories are the reason that blogging was invented. The key to blogging personal stories well is to add to the story takeaways, tips, or insights drawn from the story that can help the reader directly.

Even when writing text stories, it is always good to include images and visuals. Even a simple stock image that shows a smiling face can make blog posts more personal and engaging.

### Social Media

Any content distribution strategy is bound to include social media. Social media use is massive among all demographics and is only growing year by year. People use social media to enjoy and share content. People want to be entertained and engaged, and that is why social media a perfect venue for sharing your stories.

However, each social media website has different demographics and different limitations on content sharing. You should know which sites your audience uses, as well as the general demographic for each social media channel you use.

Also, know the limitations of the particular channel. You can share virtually any type of content on Facebook, which is the world's most popular social media site. Twitter, another one that is extremely popular, imposes a character limit, which means that you have to tell a compelling story in 140 characters, or provide a link to that story. Some social media sites like Instagram and Pinterest share videos and photos, while YouTube and Vimeo share videos.

## Directory Sites

Directory sites are good for certain types of content. For example, there are article directories or websites for sharing images like Flickr. These are good places to get your stories out to people who are not connected to you, or do not already know about your brand.

## Emails

If you are doing email marketing, make storytelling an integral part of the emails you send to your subscribers. This will boost your open rates and help to spread your brand image. Any time you create and distribute a story on another channel, be sure to let your email list know about it too.

## Advertisements

If you have a budget for paid ads, this is a great place to use your stories. A story is much more powerful than a promotional advertisement, as we have seen through the examples given in this course. Advertising with stories is a good way to get the most for your money.

## Tips on Posting Stories

You should look at every communication channel where you are in touch with your audience to see if there is a way you can add your stories there. If you participate in online forums, use a story to introduce a thread or topic. If you are doing an offline direct mail campaign, create a great story to use as an introduction.

It is good to vary your media types and distribution channels. However, it is best to first choose one and get it going before adding the next one. Simply spraying your stories all over the web takes great effort and produces minimal results. It is better to identify the media type and channel you feel is the best, and start there.

One of the reasons it is important to start small is that you need to track your results carefully. Set goals for what defines your success, like views, shares, purchases, or whatever other metric you choose. You can then monitor the results of your efforts and see clearly which is working and which is not. With this data, you know which distribution channels to focus more of your efforts on because they are producing results and which other one to drop.

Although each story may focus on an individual channel, it is good to modify your stories so that you can tell them on other channels as well. For example, if you are producing videos, you can take still images from your video at key moments and release them on Instagram. When you modify and use your stories on other channels, you get the most mileage out of them and reach other audiences.

Finally, always encourage your audience to share your stories. If you are lucky, one just might go viral and bring a great deal of business your way. Make it easy to share your stories with buttons and add-ons for social media sharing. Come right out and tell your audience to share if they like it.

**Learning Activity:** Which distribution channels will you focus on first for distributing your story?

Channel	Specific Sites/Lists/Locations	Call to Action for Sharing
<b>Website and Blog</b>		
<b>Social Media</b>		
<b>Directory Sites</b>		
<b>Emails</b>		
<b>Advertisements</b>		
<b>Other</b>		

**Learning Activity:** How do you need to modify your story to work best on each channel?

Channel	Story Modifications to Make
<b>Website and Blog</b>	
<b>Social Media</b>	
<b>Directory Sites</b>	
<b>Emails</b>	
<b>Advertisements</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Other</b>	

## Conclusion – Create Your Action Plan

***"A story is based on what people think is important, so when we live a story, we are telling people around us what we think is important."***

Donald Miller, Author

Once you create and start delivering your stories, it is important to monitor feedback from your audience about them. Few people can get it right the first time. Through feedback from your audience, you will constantly refine your stories until they have the desired impact. Big brands have been telling their stories for a long time and this is why they can do it so well.

Now that you have worked through the course, it is time to draft your plan for finishing and producing your complete speech. You have everything you need right here to do this. You now know:

- Why stories are important
- How stories work to build an emotional connection
- Some ideas on what type of stories you can tell
- The basic storylines that are the most effective, whether it's an advertisement or a classic work of literature
- The elements of a good story and basics of creating an engaging plot
- How to make your stories as effective as possible
- How to create a plan for producing and distributing your stories

Now it is time to get to work on your complete talk. Focus on making transitions for the stories you created in this course. It may not be as perfect as you would like if it is your first one, but you will get better and better at storytelling the more you do it.

If you need help with the production side of things, you can always work with people who are experts in the skills that you lack. Just make sure that your stories sound like you!

**Learning Activity:** Use the following table to plan the tasks you need to complete and finish your talk and start distributing it in different channels. Refer to the Storytelling Checklist from this course to remind yourself of what was covered.

To Do	Tasks	Deadline
<b>Select Your Story Formats</b>		
<b>Identify Which Stories to Tell</b>		
<b>Outline Your Stories</b>		
<b>Write Your Stories</b>		
<b>Produce Your Talk</b>		
<b>Distribute Your Talk</b>		
<b>Other</b>		