



## The 4 Story Types You Need In Business

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One of the biggest mistakes leaders make when they embark on storytelling in business is to rely on one story or one type of story. For example, only telling the same story over and over again or only sharing stories about your children or football career.

Over the last decade of working with people in business I have realised that there are 4 types of stories you need at work. They are stories of triumph, tragedy, tension and transition.

Critically, business storytelling is not just about telling stories involving work situations, the personal stories you share in business can be the most engaging and memorable.

### Triumph Stories

These are stories of achievement — the moments in your career and personal life that you are especially proud of. Triumph comes in all shapes and sizes and isn't just about winning... it could just be about having the courage to try regardless of the outcome.

Triumph stories also should not just be about you, they should also include how you have

helped other people succeed. To make sure you don't look like you are bragging, triumph stories should include a good dose of vulnerability and humility. This could involve sharing your fears at the time and identifying any challenges you overcame along the way.

*Any story you share in business must be authentic and purposeful.*

### Tragedy Stories

Like triumph stories, these stories vary according to your perspective of what you consider a tragedy. Some examples may truly be about tragic circumstances, while others may be stories of regret.

Stories of regret may be when you didn't have the courage to do something. This could be going for a promotion or taking that overseas assignment. The regret could be about not asking the love of your life out on a date or feeling like you didn't spend enough time with your parents when they were older.

Tragedy stories can also be a combination of when you have caused it or when it has happened to you. Try to not only focus on the tragedy but more importantly what you learnt from it.

## Tension Stories

These are stories of conflict that are driven by your values, loyalties or obligations.

Tension stories that compromised your values might create conflict because you were forced to choose between two different beliefs. Or a time when you did not stay true to your values. Ironically, sharing stories of when you did not uphold one of your values, and the regrets you have about that, demonstrates greater credibility than you may think.

**The personal stories you share can be the most engaging and memorable.**

Regardless of what you are torn about, don't just focus on the decision you made. Make sure these stories focus on your inner struggles and the internal or external tension the event caused.

## Transition Stories

These stories are about key transitions in your life. If work-related, they might include events such as changing jobs, companies, industries or careers. Non-work-related stories, on the other hand, may include moving countries, getting divorced, going back to study or having children.

The most powerful transition stories take the audience through what you were thinking and feeling at the time. Spending time highlighting

the anxiety you felt when you made the decision is crucial, as is outlining your fears or level of excitement. A story that just goes through the logistics is not a story — well, not a very engaging one anyway.

## Authentic and Purposeful

Finally, regardless of any story you share in business it must be authentic and have a purpose. Be very clear on the message you are trying to deliver and find a true story that will help you communicate it in a way that is memorable and engaging.

One of the key success factors for being a good storyteller in business is to have a variety of the four types of stories prepared and ready to share in different business situations.



### Gabrielle Dolan

Gabrielle Dolan is a global thought leader on authentic leadership and business storytelling. She has worked with thousands of high-profile leaders around the world, helping them to become better leaders and communicators using the art of business storytelling.

Gabrielle co-founded One Thousand & One, one of Australia's leading storytelling companies before launching her practice in 2013. She is the best selling author of Ignite: Real Leadership, Real Talk, Real Results, and other publications. Her newest book Gabrielle Dolan in an international speaker and trainer on business storytelling. Her latest book, Stories for Work: The Essential Guide to Business Storytelling is available online or in book stores. Find her at [gabrielledolan.com](http://gabrielledolan.com).