



The
Business
of
Stories

B O N U S

C O N T E N T

Examples and exercises to accompany
'The Business of Stories' book

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Welcome

This is the bonus content I have put together to accompany my book **The Business of Stories**.

It is something I will likely add to in the future, so feel free to come back any time and download the most up to date version.

I've sorted it by chapter, so you can refer to it as you go through the book and I've included a list of contents - so you can see at a glance what is included and, if you're looking for something in particular, go straight to it.

I've added some further reading suggestions at the end, as well as info about the challenges, courses and coaching programs I'm currently running.

You can also find up to date info at www.thebusinessofstories.com

Any questions about anything, feel free to email me at susan@thebusinessofstories.com

Susan x

Founder of The Business of Stories

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Chapter 2

Your Personal Story

Example: The river of life

Everyone's River of life is unique, so don't worry if yours looks completely different to mine. Focus on the events, people and moments that feel significant and highly relevant for you. It's your journey, and only you know the milestones that were the most important to you.

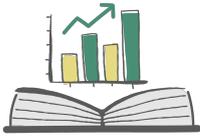




Bonus exercise: Unpack your story

Here are some more questions to help you unpack your personal story. You can answer them one by one, or you could read through them and then sit quietly and journal. Just write about whatever comes up for you. Let it flow. Don't overthink it. Write from the heart.

- ♥ What kept you going when the going got tough?
- ♥ Who has influenced, inspired or guided you along the way?
- ♥ What did they teach you?
- ♥ What have been your biggest life lessons?
- ♥ What are your battle scars? We all have them. We rarely get good at anything without falling over a few times first.
- ♥ When did you step up and take bold action?
- ♥ What motivated you to do it?
- ♥ Where does your drive come from?
- ♥ What's really important to you, and why do you think that is?
- ♥ How would your friends describe you?
- ♥ What do your personal stories say about you? What qualities and characteristics show up time and time again?
- ♥ What, for you, is the most important thing that needs to be included in your story?



Chapter 3

Your Business Story

As well as building a business, you're building a brand. When you know what kind of brand you're building, it will be easier to know what stories are a good fit, and how you want to share them. These exercises will help you think about what kind of brand you want to be.



Bonus exercise: How do you feel?

Think about how you feel when you come across these well-known brands:

Disney Apple Heinz McDonalds Virgin

- ♥ Notice how you feel, just thinking about each brand. Is the feeling for each positive or negative?
- ♥ How are they different?
- ♥ What other brands do you feel a certain way about, and why do you think that is?
- ♥ What brands feel luxury or aspirational?
- ♥ What about warm and fuzzy?
- ♥ Rigid and corporate? Nostalgic? Traditional?
- ♥ Why do you think that is?

Now think about how you want people to feel when they come across and engage with your brand.



Bonus exercise: Brand personality

As you think about your business - why it exists, what you want to be known for and what you stand for - think about your brand personality. As David Ogilvy, founder of Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency says, *“It is the manufacturer who builds the most sharply defined personality for his brand that will get the largest share of the market, at the highest profit”.*

Harley Davidson are rebels, proud to be bold, independent and non-conformist.

Landrover are pioneers, seeking fun, adventure and discovery.

Jo Malone is quintessentially British, timeless and elegant, but infused with a charming dash of wit and whimsy.

- ♥ So, what is the personality of your brand?
- ♥ What is the look, voice and tone you want to project to the world?
- ♥ What characteristics and qualities does your brand have?

Think about your response to the previous bonus exercise. You'll want a brand personality that fits with how you want your ideal client to feel when they come across your brand.



Chapter 4

Your Customer Story

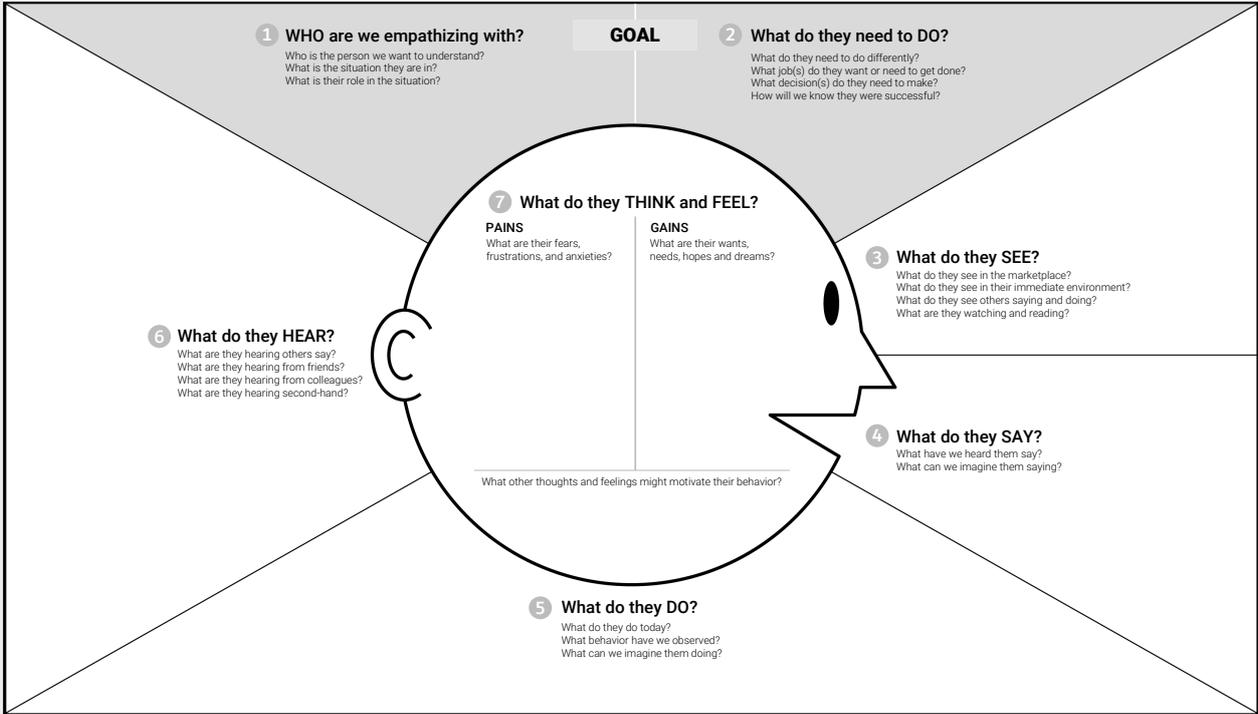


Bonus exercise: Empathy map

Using the Empathy Map is a great way to brainstorm thoughts about your customer's story. It helps you identify who the person is you want to understand, and what the situation is they are in. It explores what they need to do differently, and what decision(s) they need to make.

Empathy Map Canvas

Designed for: _____ Designed by: _____ Date: _____ Version: _____



1 WHO are we empathizing with?
Who is the person we want to understand?
What is the situation they are in?
What is their role in the situation?

GOAL

2 What do they need to DO?
What do they need to do differently?
What job(s) do they want or need to get done?
What decision(s) do they need to make?
How will we know they were successful?

3 What do they SEE?
What do they see in the marketplace?
What do they see in their immediate environment?
What do they see others saying and doing?
What are they watching and reading?

4 What do they SAY?
What have we heard them say?
What can we imagine them saying?

5 What do they DO?
What do they do today?
What behavior have we observed?
What can we imagine them doing?

6 What do they HEAR?
What are they hearing others say?
What are they hearing from friends?
What are they hearing from colleagues?
What are they hearing second-hand?

7 What do they THINK and FEEL?
PAINS
What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties?
GAINS
What are their wants, needs, hopes and dreams?

What other thoughts and feelings might motivate their behavior?

Last updated on 16 July 2017. Download a copy of this canvas at <http://gamestorming.com/empathy-map/> © 2017 Dave Gray, xplane.com

This Empathy Map Canvas was created by Dave Gray at xplane.com as a framework to help users develop empathy with their customers. You can download the original version at

<https://gamestorming.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Empathy-Map-Canvas-006.pdf>

- ♥ **What they see.** What are they looking at that's already out there? What's going on around them?
- ♥ **What they say.** How are they talking about the situation they're in and what they think they need to do for things to be different.
- ♥ **What they do.** Are they currently doing anything to change the situation they're in? What behaviours are showing up, because of where they're at?
- ♥ **What they hear.** What are others saying? What are they hearing from friends or colleagues that may be impacting how they feel about the situation they're in?
- ♥ **And finally, what they think and feel.** What are their fears, frustrations and anxieties? What are their wants, needs, hopes and dreams?

Unpacking all of this will help you really get inside the head of your ideal customer.

It'll help you develop a much deeper understanding of the person you are speaking to in your marketing, and the stories that will deeply resonate with them.



Bonus exercise: Zero to hero

Movies are full of stories of transformation. Stories about how the main character went from underdog to champion. Nerd to superhero. Meek to mighty. Zero to hero. Think about Simba in The Lion King and the journey he had to go on before he was able to stand up to his uncle Scar and become the 'mighty king' he dreamed of becoming, just like his father.

- ♥ **What transformation** is your customer looking for?
- ♥ **Who do they want to be?** A confident parent? A savvy investor? An inspirational leader? A glamorous minx?

Understand that and your stories will have a richer, deeper connection with your audience.

You'll be able to tell stories that open a powerful story loop, that your audience will want you to help them close, like 'can I be that person?' and 'have I got what it takes?'

Amazon do a great job of showing the transformation they help their customers achieve in one of their ads for Prime Wardrobe.

You can watch it [here](#)





Bonus tip: Dig for Gold

I cannot emphasise enough how important and insightful it is to study the words your ideal client uses, around the problem your business exists to solve. There are many ways to do this.

- ♥ One is to go through all the **testimonials, reviews and feedback** you've had in the past.

Look for the specific words your clients used to describe the problem they had, the transformation they experienced when they engaged with your product or service, and what difference that made to their business and life.

Every time I do this for a client, I find absolute Gold, that can be used in the copy on their website or on social media.

If you haven't been getting feedback from your customers to date, start collecting it today. There are tips on how to do this in the book, on page 71 (Ask the audience) and page 167 (Testimonials). There is also a link to a video on How to get great testimonials further on in this pdf.

- ♥ Another thing you could do is **go into Facebook groups that are full of your target market** and search for previous conversations around your topic. See what questions are being asked and how people are describing the problem. Find where your target market is hanging out and go hang out there with them. They'll tell you what you need to know about your customer story.



Chapter 5

Your Why



Bonus exercise: Your two whys

Thinking about what came up for you as you worked through the exercises in this chapter, describe in a couple of sentences:

♥ Your **why**:

♥ Your **big why**:



Chapter 6

Your People

Examples: Customer stories

Once you know exactly who your people are, I highly recommend writing their story out. Here are a couple of examples to give you an idea of what that might look like

Laura's story

I understand my customer better than anyone, because I've been exactly where she is now.

I understand that she is sick and tired of worrying about her weight and trying numerous diets that are supposed to give her 'amazing' results. She feels like she has fallen into the All or Nothing trap and has times when she's "really, really good" and times when she just can't muster up the motivation to go on another diet. All of which, long term, affects her attitude and beliefs around dieting and nutrition.

She wonders what's wrong with her. She questions why she hasn't got the willpower to "stick at it" and why she feels so despondent about it all? Why is it so hard?

She's an intelligent woman who enjoys her food, doesn't eat a lot of junk food and prefers to cook proper food, rather than grab processed meals. But, even so, she suspects she may be doing some things wrong (she's just not sure what) and she struggles to shift the extra weight she has put on or find any sort of exercise routine that suits her and her lifestyle.

She's confused about what diet she should be following and what advice she should be listening to. So much of it is conflicting.

She's fed up of feeling tired and emotional. But lack of sleep and hormonal imbalances all affect her weight, so it becomes a vicious cycle.

She's frustrated by results that seem erratic and unreliable. At her lowest, she feels a failure and may even find herself avoiding social situations, either because she feels so crap about herself or

because she has no idea how to eat healthily AND have a social life. She has come to believe that losing weight and eating healthily means having to miss out, fight cravings and ignore the hunger pains coming from her stomach.

Even when she is “really good”, and sticks to a diet religiously, and throws herself into a demanding exercise regime, she doesn’t always get the results she wants. She feels completely demoralised when she is soooo good for a week, but doesn’t lose any weight.

She also recognises there are costs associated with being on this up-and-down rollercoaster journey and she worries about her long term health and what example she is setting for her children.

She’s not sleeping well and she hasn’t got the energy she used to have. She may also have aches and pains and despairs when another bug takes hold and leaves her feeling poorly and exhausted. She wants to make some changes. She really wants to do things differently. She wants to find a way that really works for her, but she’s genuinely confused about what those changes should be.

She’s not looking for a quick fix, she wants to get off the rollercoaster and she is open to ‘wiping the slate clean’ (in terms of what she thought she knew about diet and nutrition) and starting anew, working with someone who has a different, more holistic approach.

Getting her health and fitness back on track, once and for all, is definitely moving up her list of priorities.

She knows she needs to lose some weight, she knows she should do more exercise and she wants to give her body all the help and support it needs to keep her healthy. She wants to stop focusing just on the scales and feel more calm and relaxed about knowing that she is on track and doing what is right for her.

She loves the idea of having 1-2-1 support through this journey. Someone who really understands where she’s at and who will work with her to create an individual plan that is right for her. Someone who sees beyond the scales and the measuring tape and who has a gentle and sensible approach to finding what is right for her body, her lifestyle and her soul.

If she could find that kind of support, with someone that really gets her and knows how to help her get the long-term results she wants, she would be 100% up for diving in and getting started! And she would be extremely excited about how different the future could suddenly look and feel.

Jon's story

Jon has worked hard to build his B2B service-based business.

Through sheer hard work, guts and determination, he has already achieved success to be proud of, and a turnover of £1m+

He is looking to expand and hopes that, one day, he'll have a valuable asset, something to sell or a legacy to pass on to his children.

The problem is, as the business grows, elements of it are getting more and more complicated. He has a small team that has, to date, been focusing big time on the sales and delivery, keeping customers happy and finding the right people to join the team.

He hasn't been focusing so much on the numbers. Turnover looks healthy, but Jon's not entirely sure where the profit is coming from, what his costs are or even what his break even point is. And managing cash flow is becoming a major headache.

Finances are not his area of expertise and, with such a heavy workload, he is so busy working in the business, he doesn't have much time (if any) left to work on it.

He is working long hours, leaving him little time (as his wife is quick to point out) to relax, switch off or spend time doing the things he enjoys doing with his family.

But, he's not sure what he needs to do to improve the situation. He has an accountant and a bookkeeper, so the numbers are covered, right?

The problem with that though is that he only gets their reports when it's time to pay tax or VAT and so the reports are about what has happened in the past, not what is happening today and what might happen in the future.

So, Jon lacks clarity. And direction. He doesn't have clear goals or strategies or even the up-to-date financial information and accurate forecasts he needs to base his goals and strategies on.

He does have a business plan, but it's terribly long and complicated and tends to stay filed away in a folder somewhere.

He worries that without a clear strategy there's a danger that he'll waste cash, make costly mistakes and throw money at problems that he doesn't know how to solve.

But life is busy. His day is full and he seems to be spending more and more time dealing with issues and problems as they arise. Being re-active, rather than pro-active. He knows he is far too hands-on with the business and that he should be delegating more.

But the constant fire-fighting doesn't leave him with the time or headspace he needs to focus on the big picture stuff, his vision and where he wants the business to go. He doesn't feel in control. He doesn't feel like he is steering the ship. Rather he is busy down in the engine room, making sure the ship keeps going!

All of this is leaving him feeling frustrated, exhausted and lost. He's beginning to wonder if he has the skillset he needs to grow the business any further.

And he's working too hard for too little return.

But where does he turn for help? What sort of support should he be looking for at this stage? And who is going to understand him and his business and what he wants to do with it?

He would like to think that, one day, his business will be worth something but what if it doesn't reach its full potential, or worse still - it goes under - because he never managed to get a good handle on the numbers?

He's read the stats, and they're scary. 65% of businesses that fail blame financial issues.

That's worrying. That's keeping him awake at night. But, there's so many things to keep on top of. He's having to wear a lot of hats, master the intricacies of running an organisation and stay calm and in control!

And he doesn't feel like he's doing a very good job of it. It's all getting so overwhelming. What Jon wants more than anything is to understand the numbers. He wants clarity and a good

handle on the finances. And some goals. A simple plan and strategy. And some guidance. Someone to help him execute it all.

Someone who's done it before and knows what they're doing.

He wants up to date, reliable financial information that will enable him to see at a glance exactly how the business is performing. And some sort of cash management/forecasting system in place, so that he can look ahead and plan for the future.

And he wants more time to work on his business. Measure performance. Plan for the future. Recruit the right talent. Lead his team. Make sure everyone involved in the business understands the goals and the vision.

Build a successful and profitable business to be proud of.

**That's what he wants. But how?
And who can help him?**



Chapter 7

Your Value



Bonus exercise: Your process

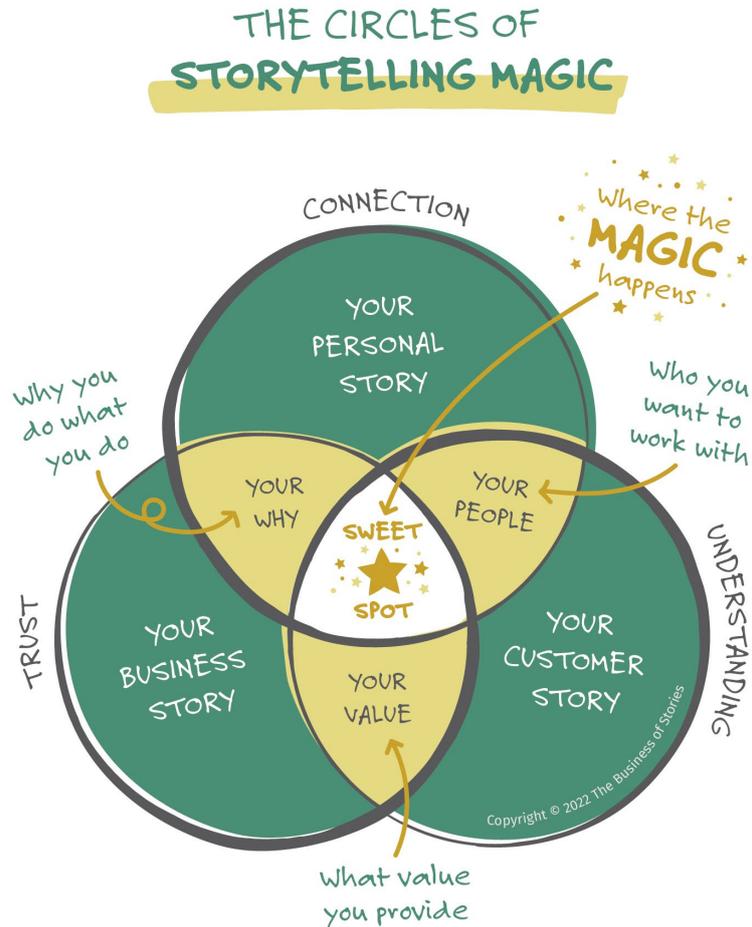
There is something reassuring about working with someone who has a tried-and-tested process. It tells you a number of things about them:

- ♥ They are an expert.
- ♥ They have insights around the best way to approach the problem you want to solve.
- ♥ They have found what works, and created a unique process/ methodology around that.
- ♥ They have experience and know what they're doing. They won't be 'making it up as they go'.
- ♥ There is a structure in place to follow, and a process that has been specifically designed to get you the result you are looking for.

A lot of my process was in my head before I started writing this book.

I had been talking about the three most important stories in your business for a few years, and the power of finding the sweet spot where those three stories intertwine, but it wasn't until I studied what I was intuitively doing with my clients in more detail that my process really came to life and The Circles of Storytelling Magic was born.

Here's what it looks like:



Defining that process led to me writing my book, *The Business of Stories*. You might not be ready to write a book about it, but do you have a process, model or framework to call your own?

Is it named? Is it clear? Does it help people see how you can help them, and what the journey will look like?

If not, think about how you work with your clients and what your process looks like. This will help you build authority and demonstrate your value.



Chapter 8

Your Sweet Spot

Example: Sweet spot statement

Here is Dino Tartaglia's sweet spot statement:

My clients are all brilliant at what they do. They know their topic well and already deliver a ton of value to their clients.

As someone who's built businesses both online and in bricks and mortar, I've had my fair share of hard lessons along the way. I know the challenges. Delivering value is one thing but knowing how to build a business around doing that is quite another.

Together we get really clear on what their 'brilliance' is, who that is super valuable to and how best to package it up

So that they can do what they do, brilliantly, whilst building a robust, successful and profitable business.

Remember your sweet spot statement should do 2 things:

- ♥ **Be clear and concise.** It really is about getting to the essence of what connects your story and your business story with your customer's story.
- ♥ **Help you to go back through all your stories** and pick out the ones that are highly relevant. It will also help you keep your stories consistent, around your key message.



Bonus exercise: Sweet spot questions

Here's some more questions to help you dive into your sweet spot.

Finish these sentences:

- ♥ All my clients want ...
- ♥ The thing that's getting in the way of them having that is ...
- ♥ I get that on a deep level because ...
- ♥ The part of my customer's story that I can empathise the most with is ...
- ♥ The part of my personal story that my people will resonate the most with is ...
- ♥ The thing about my business that my people will connect with is ...



Chapter 9

Crafting Your Stories



Bonus exercise: Man walks into a bar

Imagine you're sitting at a bar, quietly enjoying your favourite tippie (mine's a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc) minding your own business.

Suddenly you're aware of another person who has walked up and sat at the bar stool next to you. They've ordered a drink.

As the bartender serves them their drink, you hear him ask, "Hey, you look a little troubled. What's the matter?"

You look up, ever so slightly, to take in the person next to you.

They lift their drink up, take a mouthful, and let out a long sigh.

"You know. It's actually really very simple" they say. "I just want"

If this person happens to be your absolute ideal client, what might they say next?

"I just want someone who knows what they're doing to take care of all the techy stuff for me. I hate it".

"I just want to be able to speak on stage without feeling sick for 2 days beforehand".

"I just want to feel confident I know what I'm doing, instead of feeling totally out of my depth all the time".

"I just want to have a great relationship with my kids".

“I just want to be able to enjoy time with my family, without my head being somewhere else and feeling guilty that I’m not working”.

The beauty of this exercise is that it forces you to use simple, everyday language that anyone could understand.

Because no-one ever sat in a bar and said “I just want results-driven strategies”.

Chapter 10

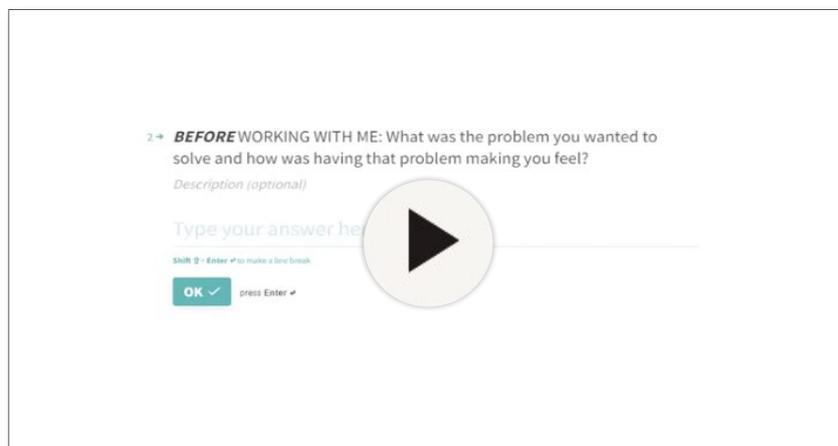


Sharing Your Stories

Bonus tip: How to get great testimonials

In this 16-minute video I walk you through my highly effective process for collecting feedback from your clients and customers, that allows you to do two things:

- ♥ **Craft carefully structured testimonials**, that will be utterly compelling to your target market.
- ♥ **Capture the words your clients use** to describe where they are, and where they want to be.



Chapter 11



The Most Important Story



Bonus exercise: Soundtracks

Simply write out some soundtracks that you would like to have 'playing' in your mind for each of the following areas:

- ♥ Your mindset
- ♥ Your business
- ♥ Your health
- ♥ Your relationships
- ♥ Your day
- ♥ Something you're working on right now
- ♥ Where you're at
- ♥ Where you want to go

And anything else that having a positive and empowering soundtrack for, would help you step up and step out.

This is about setting yourself up for a day of untold opportunities, packed with honesty, generosity, laughter and bravery.

*This exercise is from Soundtracks by Jon Acuff



Want Help?

- ♥ If you want my help to work through these exercises, craft your stories and share them in a way that will demonstrate your value, attract your ideal clients and ensure you get paid what you're worth, email me at susan@thebusinessofstories and simply put **Better storyteller** in the subject line.
- ♥ I'll keep you in the loop about the workshops and challenges I'm running, and send you details of my group coaching programme, so you can get the support, help and feedback you need as you embark on your own storytelling journey.

Happy storytelling
Susan x



Further Reading

- ★ **Building a StoryBrand by Donald Miller** - If you want a simple but powerful framework to help you unpack your customer story, I highly recommend reading this book. If, after reading it, you would like help implementing it into your business, look no further. I've been a StoryBrand Certified Guide since February 2019.
- ★ **Own The Room by Viv Groskop** - If giving talks is one of the ways you want to share your stories, this book is definitely worth a read. I have a love/hate relationship with public speaking. I love the idea of doing it, but hate the anxiety I get when it's time to get up on stage. This book really helped me.
- ★ **The One Hour Content Plan by Meera Kothand** - The Solopreneur's Guide to a Year's Worth of Blog Post Ideas in 60 Minutes and Creating Content That Hooks and Sells. If you struggle to know what content to write, or your content doesn't have a strong link to the products and services you offer, this book will help you unlock dozens of content ideas with ease.
- ★ **Soundtracks by Jon Acuff** - This book was such a game-changer for me that I talk about in my book, in chapter 11 - The Most Important Story of All. You're unlikely to want to put yourself out there and be honest, real and vulnerable if you're telling yourself you're not good enough. This book can help you change the 'soundtracks' running in your head
- ★ **Superfans by Pat Flynn** - Amy Porterfield's quote about this book says it all: "Platforms will change. Technology will change. But the one thing that will remain the same is that if you can help people, and make them feel seen and heard, you're going to win". This book shows you how to create superfans, by creating magical moments.