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# WAYS TO MAKE YOUR STORY SELL

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# GET TO KNOW YOUR TRAINER

SISTER *Mothyna*

Mothyna James-Brightful is described as "energetic, passionate and inspirational" by audiences. Affectionately known as Sister Mothyna her personal motto "community development is a lifetime commitment," stands as proof of her intense belief in the communal family. "A Nation can rise no higher than its woman," a quote by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad edifies the passionate belief that Sister

Mothyna has in her mission to work with women and girls. She truly believes that healthy and whole women produce healthy and whole communities. In the last thirteen years, Mothyna has trained over 100,000 individuals in the field of sexual violence prevention

During the past, few years she has worked with several communities and national organizations, including Urban Alliance, National Council of Negro Women, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children which are also committed to community development. As co-founder of Heal a Woman to Heal a Nation, Inc. (HWHN, Inc.) has been recognized by Mayor Rawlings-Blake, Senator Mikulski and Governor O'Malley has proclaimed April 13th as Heal a Woman to Heal a Nation Day

Mothyna is a certified facilitator of the Dare to Be Queen and She Ain't Mad for Nothing curriculums by Urban Leadership Institute. Through service to organizations such as Butterfly Sistas Mentoring and Leadership Academy, Mayor's Young Women in Action Initiative, and QUEENDOM T.E.A., Mothyna has over 13 years of mentoring experience and has worked with thousands of girls and teens. She personally mentors youth to this day.

Mothyna was awarded the 2009 Governor's Award for Volunteer Service in Maryland. In 2013, she was recognized as one of 50 Leading Women in Maryland by The Daily Record and received the Lifetime Service Award from the White House.

Holding a strong belief in continuing education and training Sister Mothyna taught undergraduate courses at Coppin State University. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in English from Morgan State University and a Master's in Human Service Administration from The University of Baltimore. In recognition of her works, she has appeared in publications such as Black College Today, Ebony, Trends Magazine, Be What I Want to Be Magazine, and The Afro-American Newspapers. Sister Mothyna is also the co-author of [Because I am a Queen...100 Affirmations for Daily Living](#). She is the author of [Engage. Inspire. Prevent. Strategies for Educating Teens on Sexual Violence](#).

In addition to her commitment to her community, Sister Mothyna currently works as the Director of Community Education and Training with TurnAround Inc. a non-profit that works with victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

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## **Get Your Storytelling Basics Down**

Have a clear introduction, middle, and conclusion.  
structure your story digestible and easy to follow.

Structuring your speech can be overwhelming, even for experienced public speakers. I have encountered a lot of talented aspiring speakers and storytellers that don't even make it past this stage because the stress can have you questioning your abilities. The overall journey can be scary, as you can never really know how and where this career path will take you. Before you withdraw from your dreams entirely, answer these super easy questions first.

- Who is the main character of your story?
- What main challenge does the character face?
- How will the character overcome the challenge?

Of course, there's so much more that goes into creating your signature or origin story, but these questions will become the bare bones of your story. Your answer to these questions will build that connection with your audience as you deliver your speech. It will make you more relatable and your story digestible.

If you feel like you're still struggling past this point, I offer coaching and support for crafting your Origin Story and Signature Story. (Yes, these two are completely different from each other... crazy right?) But if you feel like you're all good, let's move on to TIP #2.

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## **Narrow the scope of your story.**

If you're telling a true story from your own life, it can be hard to choose the important main points that you should include. Many people have a tendency to include every detail and end up inundating their audience with facts that dilute the central story arc. Define a clear and concise beginning and end to your story, then position key plot events as bullet points between them. Trust that your audience will be able to follow your story, and don't overwhelm them with unnecessary backstory or tangential plot points.



## **Time to get personal**

**Personalize your story for your audience to build a real and honest connection.**

This is probably the most critical portion of storytelling. It takes a little work but pays off big when carrying out the story to an actual audience as it creates a more meaningful pitch.

Personalize your story depending on who will hear it. Mine your personal experiences. Whether or not you are telling a real story directly based on a personal experience, you can always look to your life for inspiration when coming up with new stories. Think about important experiences in your real life and how you might be able to craft them into narratives that your audience will be able to relate to.

Here's an example: Use past clients' experiences (such as case studies) to tailor the message to your audience.

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## **Determine the Takeaway**

Understanding the key takeaways of your message will make building out the framework for the story easier.

What's the key takeaway you want the listener to get after you finish your story? Or, why should your audience care? Choose a clear central message. An answer might go like this: Your audience will care because, by the end of the story or speech, they'll see how you will be able to help them either improve their quality of living, understand their career objectives - or whatever your product, brand or service offers, that may hold an essential purpose for them.

Also, consider that a great story usually progresses towards a central moral or message. When crafting your story, you should have a definite idea of what you're building toward. If your story has a strong moral component, you'll want to guide listeners to that message as you're delivering your speech through tone, modulation, and metaphors. If you're telling a funny story, you might want to build towards a twist that will leave your audience in stitches. If you're telling an engaging story, try to increase the dramatic tension and suspense right up until the climax of your narrative and leave them at the edge of their seats.

Regardless of what type of story you are telling, it's important to be very clear on the central theme or plot point that you are building your story around which can also be what they take away from your message.

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## **Discover or Uncover what lands with your audience.** (and Hold It)

Stories must be captivating and informative. Put yourself in the listener's shoes and ask yourself if this is a story you'd want to hear. Use familiar (not-boring) phrases, and keep the language short and punchy.

Do avoid using unfamiliar jargons that your audience may not be able to relate to, as that will defeat the purpose.

When you're telling a story, you need to remove any complications or barriers that will prevent listeners from understanding the overall message.

Here's a tip, once you have your story built - go back to TIP#3 and have someone; a close friend, your partner, or co-worker - deliver the speech for you, so you can literally put yourself in the shoes of your audience.

You'll also want to consider that great storytellers craft narratives that have all sorts of obstacles and hardships, in order to be satisfied with a happy ending. Create an opportunity for your audience to visualize these struggles by using examples or anecdotes they can relate to. Take this conflict as an opportunity to personalize and be more relatable. Doing so will make your audience actually want to listen until the end of your story as they would feel a sense of value to your message being that, it could be them.

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## **Engage your Audience**

Engaging your audience depends on who your audience is, how you intend to deliver your speech, your message, and your endgame objective.

If you're reading from a script, for example, you may want to play around with bringing your gaze off the page every so often and make eye contact with your audience. You may also experiment on different hand gestures and your posture - but not so much that it will look unnatural. Your facial expression will also draw in that emotional connection with your audience, regardless of whether you're reading out of a script or otherwise.

When you're recording a podcast, however, so much of the engagement depends on the expressiveness of your voice and your ability to evoke emotion through the tone and translate your personality through your voice.

To engage your audience, you may also make use of visual aids, music, and other elements that would entice the sensory of your audience while supporting your message through relevant content.



## Observe Good Storytellers

Your personal story will always be unique and specific to you. But that alone won't make your audience stay to watch and listen to you deliver your speech whether it's a 15 minute to an hour on stage - much more if you're taking on a 3-day event or a week-long training session.

Not to worry. What's amazing about the public speaking industry is that most of the content or speaking demos are available for viewing for free. Granted it won't offer you a comprehensive or detailed review of the overall experience of actually sitting through the event, but you'll get snippets here and there.

Pull up a chair, grab your laptop, notebook, and pen - and start reviewing different speaking demo's from your favorite speakers in different environments or event settings. Takedown notes, and make sure to highlight where the audience is most engaged, how they move up to their key takeaways and how they end their presentation.

You can also consider the tools that they used and compare them with the type of event they are hosting and their main role in the event.

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