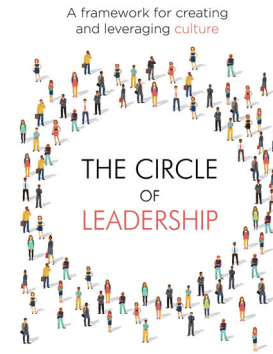


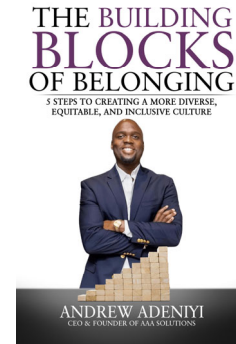
# The Art of Storytelling

Andrew Adeniyi  
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(He/Him/His)





Andrew Adeniyi



ANDREW ADENIYI  
CEO & FOUNDER OF AAA SOLUTIONS



About Me

# Objectives

1. Unpack why stories matter and the science behind stories
2. Learn storytelling frameworks that resonate with diverse audiences
3. Develop techniques to craft stories that elevate organizational culture



# Ground Rules

1. Be respectful
2. Be present
3. Listen to learn, not to respond or persuade
4. Be curious
5. Have a growth mindset
6. This is a safe place to speak your truth, just say it kindly



# Ice Breaker Reflection

- What problem within your organization would you most like to see solved?
- How would solving this problem improve your workplace culture?





# Objective #1

Unpack why stories matter and the science behind stories



# What is a Story?



sto·ry<sup>1</sup>

/ˈstôrē/

*noun*

1. an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment.  
"an adventure story"

Similar:

tale

narrative

account

recital

anecdote

chronicle

history



2. an account of past events in someone's life or in the evolution of something.  
"the story of modern farming"

# Storytelling is an Art

- **Narratives that transport** readers or listeners to imaginary realms and experiences
- **Evokes powerful emotional responses**
- **Introduces novel concepts**
- **Inspires action**





# David Novak



# Bob Story



# Bob Story Cont.



# Recognition Deficit

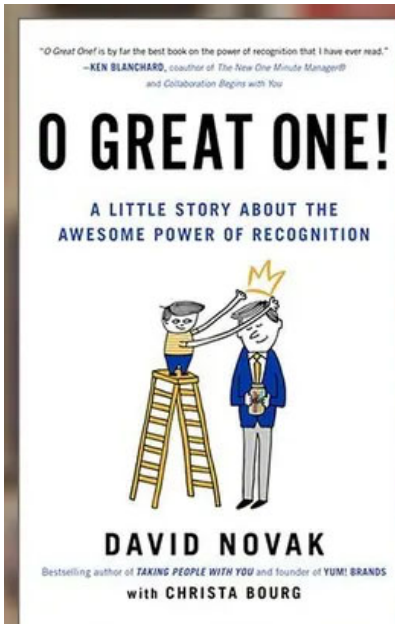


# Give Your Team A.I.R.

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- Everyone needs A.I.R.
  - Appreciation
  - Inspiration
  - Recognition

# The Power of Recognition





# The Right Amount of Recognition

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- **22% of employees strongly agreed. (2024)**
- **Only 33% of employees in the U.S. and 23% of employees globally are engaged (2024)**



*\*The Human-Centered Workplace | Building Organizational Cultures That Thrive (Gallup & WorkHuman)*

# Well Recognized Employees

- **45% less likely to have turned over** two years later (2024)
- **80% of employees** who say they have **received meaningful feedback** in the past week **are fully engaged**, regardless of whether they are working in the office or on-site, hybrid or remotely.

*\*The Human-Centered Workplace | Building Organizational Cultures That Thrive (Gallup & WorkHuman)*



# Strategic Recognition



*\*The Human-Centered Workplace | Building Organizational Cultures That Thrive (Gallup & WorkHuman)*

# Thank You Notes



# Appreciation For The Win

- Boosts morale
- Increases productivity
- Improves retention



# Appreciate Your People or Someone Else will





# What made this story resonate?

- Compelling Character
- Clear Purpose
- Relatability
- Emotional Connection
- Conflict and Resolution
- Clarity and Focus



# Storytelling Statistics

- People retain only 5%-10% of information that consists of statistics alone. When they hear a story, they remember 65%-70%

[\\*\(The London School of Business\)](#)



# What is the science behind stories?



- Mirror Neurons
  - Empathy & Connection
- Neural coupling
  - Brain activity synchronizes
- Dopamine
  - Suspense and resolution enhances focus and motivation
- Oxytocin
  - Strengthens trust and connection
- Cortisol
  - Increases attention during climax



# Why do Stories Matter?

- They influence and inspire
- They help to visualize topics
- They connect with the heart
- They can be memorable
- They are vehicles for change







## Objective #2

Learn storytelling frameworks that resonate with diverse audiences

# How to structure your story

## Structuring Your Change Story



**\*From G. Riley Mills, author of *Synergy And Sparks***



# Storytime

- One rainy Thanksgiving morning, a retail manager needed to return to his store — a big box retailer — on an errand.
- He was irritable at the prospect of returning to the workplace on a family holiday. When he arrived, his suspicions were aroused by a truck at the store door with two men lingering nearby.



***\*From “Mastering the Art of Leadership Storytelling” from UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School Professor Heidi Schultz***

# Storytime Cont.

- His fears were calmed when one of the men explained they were looking to purchase a new oven to cook their Thanksgiving meal. The manager apologized — he was sorry, the store was closed.
- But he told them that they could return tomorrow instead when the store would be open for post Thanksgiving sales. The man continued: they were two brothers and their grandmother's old oven had stopped working.



*\*From "Mastering the Art of Leadership Storytelling" from UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School Professor Heidi Schultz*

# Storytime Cont.



- She was upset that she would be unable to cook the turkey for the family as she had done for so many years, and the brothers were upset, too. One of the brothers said, “If the doctors are right, this may well be grandma’s last Thanksgiving. So we need the oven today.”
- Moved to help, the manager allowed them into the store to select an oven. After they paid for it, he helped load it into the back of the truck, even offering to follow them home to hook it up. Happy to have a working oven, the brothers declined the manager’s kind offer of continued help.

# Storytime Cont.

- A few months later, one of the brothers came back into the store to tell the manager how truly grateful they had been that he had gone out of his way to help them with the oven. It had, indeed, been their grandmother's last Thanksgiving, and the whole family had been thankful that they had been able to share it together.
- What makes this story resonate?



***\*From "Mastering the Art of Leadership Storytelling" from UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School Professor Heidi Schultz***

# How to structure your story

## Structuring Your Change Story



**\*From G. Riley Mills, author of *Synergy And Sparks***





## Objective #3

Develop techniques to craft stories that elevate organizational culture



# 5 Steps to Developing Leadership Storytelling

1. What is the purpose of the story?
2. Ground the story in a specific moment in time
3. What is the challenge, conflict, problem to be solved, etc.?
4. What was the outcome?
5. Bring it home by summarizing the takeaways



## Story Activity

- Use the framework to write out a story you'd like to share with someone in your organization.
- Share the story with a partner using the 5 steps to developing leadership storytelling



# Where can you practice/implement storytelling at work?

- Recurring meetings
- Implement kudos, gratitude, shoutouts, etc. on the meeting agenda
- Leverage existing practices, processes and routines
- Recognize people internally and externally from the organization
- Cross functional collaboration groups



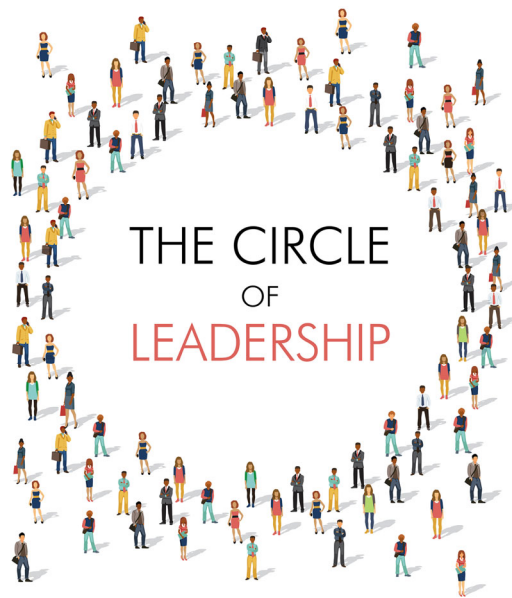
# 3 Habits of a Master Storyteller



# Books



A framework for creating  
and leveraging **culture**



Andrew Adeniyi

Available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)

[www.AndrewAdeniyi.com](http://www.AndrewAdeniyi.com)

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF BELONGING

5 STEPS TO CREATING A MORE DIVERSE,  
EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE



ANDREW ADENIYI  
CEO & FOUNDER OF AAA SOLUTIONS



# Closing Thoughts

- “Tell me the facts and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.” – Native American proverb
- “Sometimes reality is too complex. Stories give it form.” – Jean-Luc Godard





# Stay Connected



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# Satisfaction Survey

