



The Seven Essential Stories Charismatic Leaders Tell is available on now.

1. Essential Story One – Creation and Origin

How did this begin? What was the catalyst for its creation?

“In the beginning...” – Genesis 1:1

Favorite Story: *“The Merchant of Death”*

People want to know your origin story. Who was involved? Where did it happen? When did it happen? What was the process? And the most critical question, why did it occur? As a leader, you must not only recount your organization’s creation story but also ask yourself what you want it to represent. If your audience connects to your creation story, you will become more emotionally significant and relatable to them, laying a critical foundation for your brand.



2. Essential Story Two – Our Identity, Beliefs, and Values

Who am I? Who are we? What do we accept as true? What principles guide our actions?

“Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else’s opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” – Oscar Wilde

Favorite Story: *“May You Suffer Unfair Treatment and Betrayal”*

Identity can be defined as the distinctive elements of who you think of yourself as; your characteristics, traits, qualities, the way you reason or speculate, your beliefs and values, all of which combine to make you unique. For the most part, our identity, beliefs, and values operate automatically to produce judgments and decisions. Our identity is the cumulative sum of the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and our place in a greater universe of related stories.

Can your people voice your organization’s identity, beliefs, and values? What stories could they tell to demonstrate how the company has lived these ideals?



3. Essential Story Three – The Big Idea

What is this all about? What is the central idea? Why does it matter?

“There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come.” – Victor Hugo

Favorite Story: *“The Great Horse Manure Crisis of the 1890s”*

A big idea is the central unifying message for your cause; it is what will attract new people, resources, and opportunities to your mission.

What is your company’s big idea? What is the coordinated action to achieve the big idea’s vision? Can your people convey the big idea persuasively to others?



4. Essential Story Four – The Enemy We Face

Who or what opposes us, and why?

“You my opposer when I want freedom. You my opposer when I want justice. You my opposer when I want equality. You won’t even stand up for me in America for my religious beliefs, and you want me to go somewhere and fight, but you won’t even stand up for me here at home.” – Muhammad Ali

Favorite Story: *“A Letter from a Freedman to His Old Master”*

Nothing unites people like a common enemy, but whom or what we determine is the enemy can result in dramatically different decisions and outcomes. For our purposes, a simple definition of the word enemy can be anything to overcome, e.g., people, conditions, issues, or situations. This definition can be clarified further to anything that might impede the future we desire. The stronger we can make the definition, the more we can invoke polarity in our narratives.

What does your organization fight for or against? Would your people be able to accurately state what this fight is about, and the reasons why?



5. Essential Story Five – The Mighty Winds

What are the macro forces that aid or hinder us?

“No wind serves him who addresses his voyage to no certain port.” – Michel de Montaigne

Favorite Story: *“Rise to the High Life”*

In the context of your organization, “wind power” for your ship’s sails is found by identifying the big macro trends that can propel your business. Identifying and employing these macro trends is fundamental to your strategy.

What are the mighty macro winds affecting your industry and markets? How are you aligning your organization to take advantage of these rising typhoons of free energy?



6. Essential Story Six – The Journey We Must Undertake

What we must now do, and why.

“What is the difference between a living thing and a dead thing? In the medical world, a clinical definition of death is a body that does not change. Change is life. Stagnation is death. If you don’t change, you die. It’s that simple. It’s that scary.” – Leonard Sweet

Favorite Story: *“Abolition”*

The stories told so far establish prologue. These narratives demonstrate where we have come from, who we are, what we believe, why we are here, what we fight for or against, what supports or hinders us, and a recognition that the world is an ever-changing place. If your stories are believable, there is a clear implication that sitting still will only bring about stagnation, and perhaps eventual death.

Because the first five stories establish prologue, we can consider them to be the left side of an equation, while “The Journey We Must Undertake” narrative fills the right side by declaring the necessary prescribed action. Your people crave persuasive conclusions, which will give them a clear direction to move to action; provide it to them.

What is the journey you must undertake, and why? What will happen if you do not embark on this journey? What is the evidence to support your claims?



7. Essential Story Seven – Why We Will Win

If we begin the journey, are we assured victory? Why will we win?

Favorite Story: *“Genesis Technologies Unlimited — Our Next 20 Years”*

The previous six stories set the stage for a compelling future. The first five establish prologue, while story six states the resulting action we must undertake. If people have believed your narrative so far, story seven will provide the final block to instill them with the confidence to begin (or continue) the journey. Story seven is a metanarrative that combines the previous six stories into a single telling, with the addition of keystone elements that ensure your people of victory. In a world of uncertainty, anything that reduces risk is attractive. The “Why We Will Win” narrative offers your people a clear story of why and how ultimate victory will be achieved.

Why will you win? What keystones do you possess that ensure that win?

