

Obama e lo Storytelling

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<http://speakingppt.com/2011/01/28/storytelling-lessons-from-obamas-we-do-big-things-speech>

There are five storytelling principles Obama executes masterfully, which you can consider the next time you prepare an important presentation.

1. **Introduces a hero (0:16-0:26).** Every story needs a hero; someone the audience can identify with. Obama not only introduces Brandon Fisher by name, but the video captures him sitting humbly in the audience. Obama elaborates that he owns a small drilling equipment business in Berlin, Pennsylvania. Why is the city important? Because it's a humble city from a humble state. Surely many in the audience consider themselves ordinary people and can relate to this ordinary business owner, who will soon prove to be extraordinary.
2. **Introduces conflict (0:28-0:48).** Obama introduces the Chilean miners with the troubling statement "and no-one knew how to save them." The situation seems dire, doesn't it? Brandon is an unlikely hero, and his plan is even known as "Plan B", which makes the challenge even more daunting. Increasing the odds against the hero is a great technique to capture your audience's interest.
3. **Uses pictures...sparingly (0:43-1:58).** President Obama shows two pictures during his description of the successful rescue: a picture of the drill designed by Fisher's company, and a picture of the drill in action in the barren Chilean desert. Why those two pictures? Because it helps the audience visualize what the drill looked like, something they otherwise would have had no mental image of. The second picture drops them right into the middle of the story, as if they were actually there as part of the rescue team. Both of these techniques help the audience visualize what's going on and deepen something called the "storylistening trance" (explained next).
4. **Uses picture words, and (sparingly) actual pictures (0:16-1:58).** A good storyteller engages an audience by [helping them visualize the story, paying attention to their inner visions and ignoring distractions around them](#). This is called a "storylistening trance", where people's eyes get a faraway look, their breathing becomes shallow and seem to experience a semi-trance while their minds visualize being inside the story. Limited pictures help keep the audience's attention on their own internal images (*actually, the second picture was shown too long. It should have ended at 1:22 so the audience could direct their attention back to Obama's storytelling and resume the storylistening trance.*)
5. **Uses analogy as a bridge (1:56-2:58).** Obama uses the ending phrase of the story "we do big things" as a bridge to his final message – ordinary Americans can do big things. When we hear two stories that are analogous, we unconsciously transmit the features of one story onto the other. For instance, when you compare a first kiss with a sports car, [research shows you automatically transmit the feelings of excitement and newness of a first kiss onto the car](#). By telling the story of an ordinary American who did big things, the audience can naturally transfer those feelings and thoughts onto themselves.

It's especially impressive that Obama packed all this efficiently into under three minutes. An amazing feat of technique and science by an engaging speaker. And 5 great lessons for anyone who wants to use storytelling in their own presentations to communicate more clearly, convincingly and memorably.