

“told

The Art of Story

Stories and photographs by Simon Aboud

Story principles by Paul Wilson



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Booth-Clibborn Editions



Art Director Alan Aboud
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Told is about the art of storytelling not the science. It celebrates the emotional rather than the rational. Great business, brands, fashion, art, film, advertising and design are brilliantly told stories. ***Told*** explains through words and pictures the importance of story and the universal role it plays as the secret of success. Reading ***Told*** and understanding the Twenty Principles of Storytelling will unlock the most amazing creative tool within you and open you up to a whole new world of possibilities.

This perceptive book reminds us that our conversations, songs, poems and even our very lives themselves are all stories and we, like the author, are the storytellers.

Paul McCartney

Anyone studying or teaching any form of advertising should read this.

Frank Lowe

An extraordinary new look at the art of storytelling.

Peter Blake

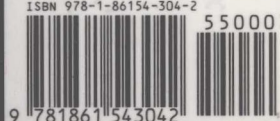


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Told is a celebration of story, its timeless principles and how they make you feel. This is a book about the emotion of storytelling. Storytelling is anything but logical.

It is designed to show you story's power: how it teaches us lessons and makes its points, how it moves the rational to the emotional, and how words, images and personal interpretation can work together to move you to new feelings.

Storytelling's own story is an epic one stretching back through time, across lost continents and diverse cultures, yet timeless principles may always be found at work in the most engaging stories. These principles represent clues to understanding story's power of communication.

We have opened the book by outlining the twenty key principles we use as a creative toolkit for effective storytelling. They are followed by 32 stories written and illustrated to bring these stories to life.

Finally we look at the business of story. Great storytellers understand how story works for them. This book is about unlocking and sharing the power of story with you.

We hope this book will take you on a journey.

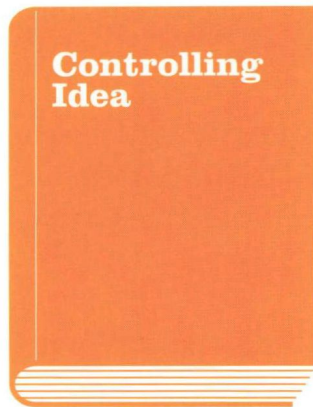
Remember the greatest story may be the one you've never told.

The Twenty Principles of Storytelling

The twenty principles we have outlined are grouped into five areas that we feel are critical to successful engagement . They range from ‘First Principles’ that are associated with establishing a compelling storyline through to more executional aspects such as dialogue and exposition that are grouped under ‘Craft’.

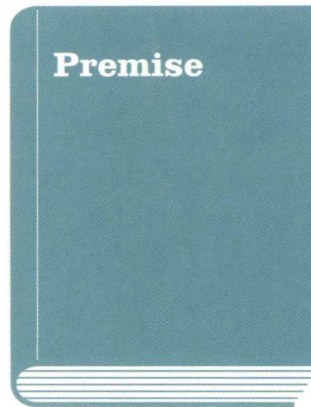
FIRST PRINCIPLES

1.



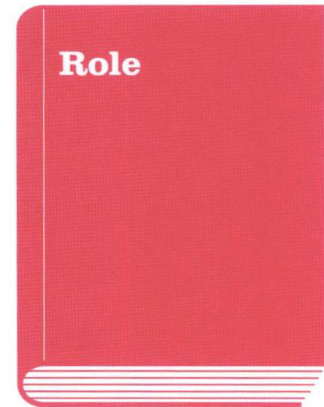
Stories are questions not answers. Controlling ideas are loaded. They may take the form of questions, invitations, visions or challenges. But the one thing they all have in common is their ability to grab our attention. They are the central idea that everything hangs off. But very rarely do they give us all the answers.

2.



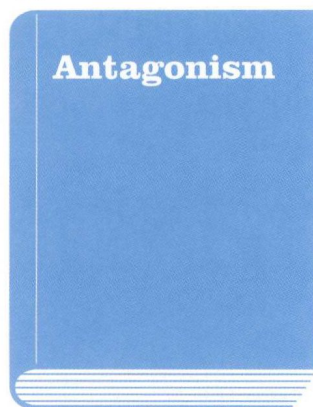
What's at stake? The premise lives at the heart of a great story - what it's really about. By experimenting with the meaning of a story you can, in turn, change 'what's at stake' for the audience. A great premise taps into a unifying need or truth and is a great start point for pro-actively managing engagement.

3.



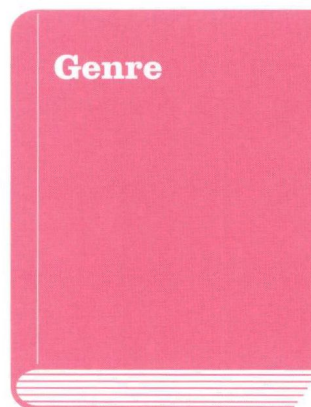
All the world's a stage. One of the great secrets of storytelling is to make sure you give the audience a role. We do this by providing opportunities for people to play their part in our world. It's critical that the story is 'handed over' so that it can take on new life in their world.

4.



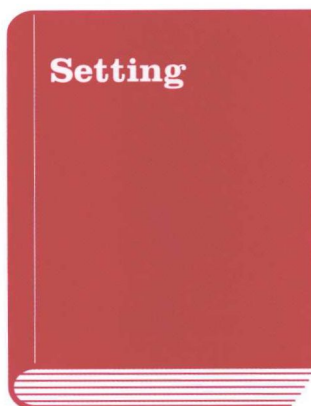
Using the dark side of story. Most stories we love revolve around a protagonist struggling against forces of antagonism. What you fight against defines what you stand for. It explains why you exist in the world and what you want to change for the better.

5.



Playing with expectations. In almost every story, there are dominant genres at play that the audience is expecting. By challenging traditional thinking with alternative, surprising genres you can often unlock fresh ideas

6.



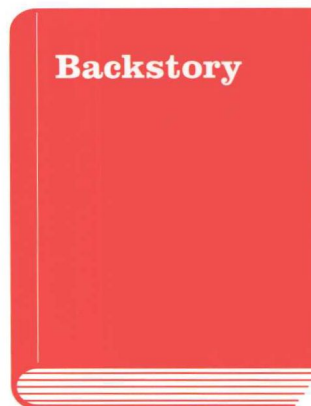
Where am I? Our job is to create an enticing world that people want to step into. We do this by defining the fundamentals such as geography, time and place then allow the audience's imagination to do the rest in line with archetypes.

7.



Character reveals character. Cast can be used to reveal information about the story world, raise tensions and much more. Sometimes it will be necessary to adapt the cast to heighten engagement or reveal something new.

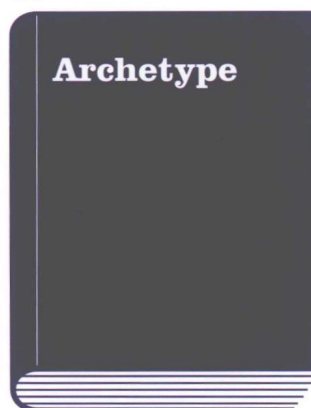
8.



Walking backwards for answers. Backstory is often used to add depth and colour to characters and plots. But, just as importantly backstory can provide 'reasons to believe' which all audiences crave.

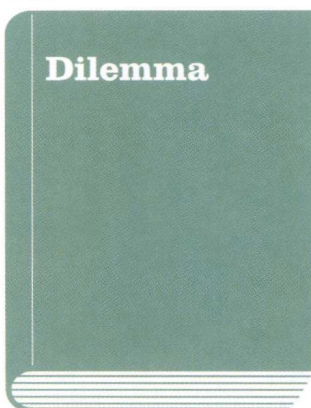
CHARACTER

9.



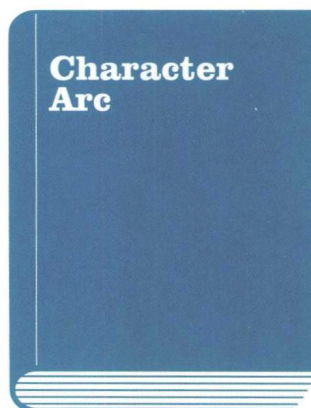
There's a hero in all of us. Authoring the roles that characters play is a creative exercise that holds great potential for identifying new opportunities for engagement. If you don't author a role with clarity and conviction the likelihood is that your audience will do it for you and your character will lose its impact.

10.



True character is revealed under pressure. People like to know what a character is really made of before believing in them. So our advice is to find ways of proving yourself. A hero's journey is littered with obstacles.

11.



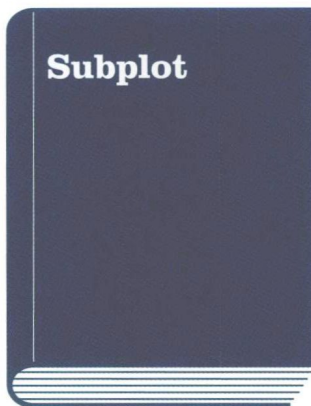
To thine own self be true. To create empathy a character must face inner and outer change and test their desire and commitment to win our hearts. The change in character from beginning to end is known as the 'character arc'.

12.

Structure

Bringing stories to life. Structure is about organising story events with engagement in mind. The approach centres on plotting activity to see climaxes, identify gaps in engagement and foreseeing issues that must be addressed in advance to ensure the story satisfies throughout.

13.

Subplot

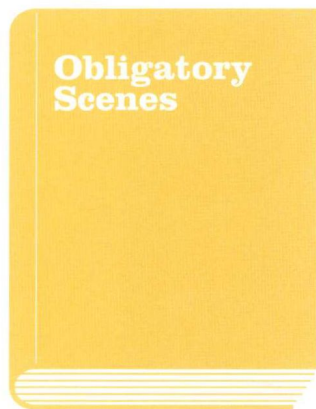
Weaving the story together. Subplots are invaluable for dramatising a point, highlighting contradictions and exploring big themes. They are a common objective of heightening engagement in the central story.

14.

Inciting Incident

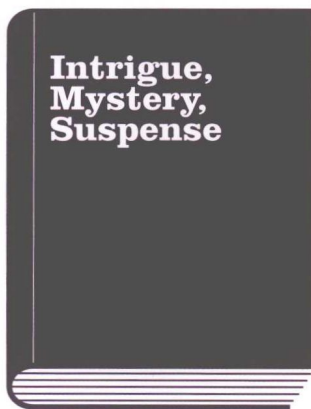
Start with a bang. This principle is specifically designed to change story direction and force re-appraisal. An inciting incident stops us in our tracks and makes sure there is no going back. From this point on, everything will change.

15.

Obligatory Scenes

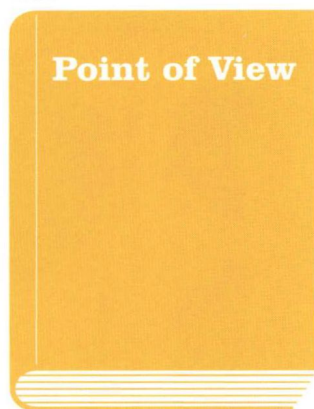
Give them what they want. Humans are blessed with the ability to predict what might happen next. Indeed, trying to figure out twists, turns and climaxes is one of the most enjoyable experiences for an audience.

16.

Intrigue, Mystery, Suspense

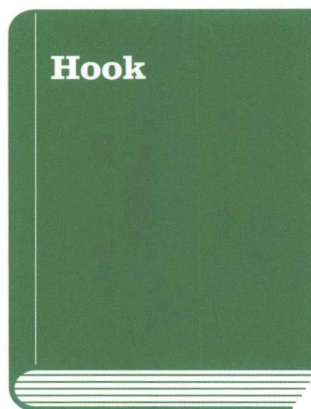
What was that noise? Audiences love the great unknown. They seek new experiences, heightened emotions, dark mysteries and startling revelations. We may maximise engagement by allowing our story to unfold with dramatic revelation (as opposed to simply telling it).

17.



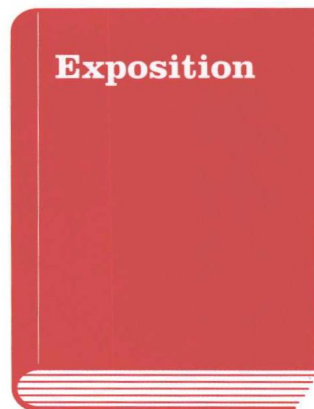
Walking the line. There's always more than one side to a story. Exploring alternative points of view is one of the best ways to see a familiar story with fresh eyes. It can reveal more compelling angles and insights for developing new opportunities.

18.



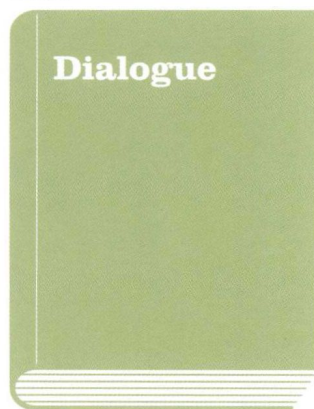
Making stories irresistible. Hooks have become increasingly important in such a fast, cluttered world in drawing the audience in. In fact, nowadays, stories start before the beginning with hooks.

19.



Show not tell. The power of story is subtle. It dramatises so that the audience can see, hear and feel things. Actions almost always speak louder than words.

20.



Use the force. Dialogue is the result of hundreds of decisions around character, motivation, backstory, casting, intention and can transform character and story. In an increasingly two way world, dialogue and its mastery are critical.

CHARTERS

RAC-

TITLE

She Waits

A Story of Stories

CONTEXT

The simple image of a woman observed on a street in New York City is open to any number of suggestions and back stories that can bring an unknown character to life and make us engage with her situation.

PRINCIPLES AT PLAY



