

Abe Lincoln on the Power of Story

By Bonnie Budzowski
President, InCredible Messages, LP

You are preparing for an important presentation before an executive committee or customer. Chances are you've spent hours crunching numbers for this event. You've probably prepared PowerPoint slides and graphics. But have you spent equal time on your images? Have you carefully prepared word pictures or stories to illustrate and support your points?

For most of us, analogies and word pictures are like icing on an already tasty cake—a nice addition but not essential. The most powerful communicators have a different view. Check out the following quotes shared by Dr. Terry Paulson, Certified Speaking Professional and award winning communicator, in a recent talk:

I do not seek applause...nor to amuse the people. I want to convince them. I often avoid a long and useless discussion by others or a laborious explanation on my own part by using a short story that illustrates my point of view.

Abraham Lincoln

Every one of his [Lincoln's] stories seems like a whack upon my back. Nothing else—not any of his arguments or any of his replies to my questions—disturbs me. But when he begins to tell a story, I feel that I am to be overmatched.

Stephen Douglas

Examples, stories, and metaphors are far more than icing on the cake. They are the very substance of compelling communication. Next time you prepare a speech, a report, or a proposal, remember to invest time in images and stories. You'll be following in the footsteps of the master communicators.

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