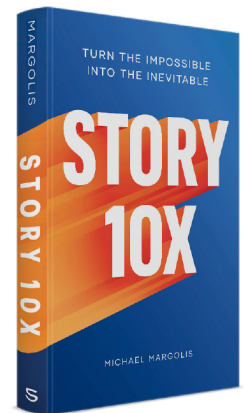


Story 10X

Turn the Impossible Into the Inevitable

by **Michael Margolis**



Contents

Introduction

Page 2

The Heart of
the Storyteller

Page 2

Storytelling in the
Age of Disruption

Page 2

From Outsider to Insider

Page 2

The Feel-Good Principle

Page 3

Conclusion

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

After twenty years of learning and experimentation, working with hundreds of organizations while training tens of thousands of people and developing messaging, pitches, and presentations for the most iconic leaders in the world, Michael Margolis has distilled what he knows into *Story 10X: Turn the Impossible Into the Inevitable*.

Margolis expands on his approach that's been proven in the dojos of Silicon Valley, the conference rooms of Fortune 500s, and the town halls of local nonprofits. He answers questions like: How do you tell the story of disruptive innovation? Why do so many world-changing ideas get lost in translation? What makes social and cultural change so difficult?

The key factor in all of these questions is the power of story, and whether leaders are telling those stories or allowing the stories to be told for them. Only those who develop the heart of a storyteller, through the principles in this book, will be able to take command of their story and their world.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why storytelling is so vital in the age of disruption in which we live.
- What separates bad stories from truly great ones.
- How to take yourself from an outsider of a group to an insider.
- How to believe in your story and make your audience do the same.

Introduction

At Amazon, executives sit in silence at the beginning of meetings, reading a six-page memo on the topic at hand. The document must consist of a coherent narrative. After everyone has digested the ‘six-pager,’ the discussion begins, and decisions are made.

Every six months at Facebook, product team leaders do the same thing. They must create a written narrative about their work and present it to Mark Zuckerberg, Sheryl Sandberg, Chris Cox, and the rest of the executive team.

Wall Street analysts and the media pay as much attention, if not more, to Warren Buffett’s carefully written annual letter than they do the financials in the Berkshire Hathaway shareholder report. Buffett’s principled storytelling is legendary, encouraging investors to hang on every word from the “Sage of Omaha.”

Leaders like Bezos, Zuckerberg, and Buffet are onto something. They recognize that the story is everything. Meaning doesn’t come from numbers. Meaning comes from the story about what those numbers represent or tell us. The brain seeks patterns and connections. It needs context to put things into perspective.

When a group of people are all aligned in the same bigger story, you can move mountains. That’s what makes storytelling a force multiplier. 2X. 5X. Even 10X.

The Heart of the Storyteller

Storytelling is much more than cute anecdotes or once-upon-a-time fairy tales. At its heart, storytelling is about meaningfully communicating what we see, feel, and believe. An inspiring vision. The world we think is possible. The experiences we care about improving. And why it matters. Presented in such a compelling and attractive manner that we can’t help but say yes.

The heart of the storyteller becomes the heart of the story. Communicating ideas is not a lost cause. You just have to find and craft a story we can all agree on, that reminds us of what we share in common and transcends where we stand apart.

The key to creating an undeniable story, a story your audience cannot resist, is to learn how to think in narrative. A narrative mindset is at the heart of all successful innovation and transformation. If you know how to change the story, you can change anything.

To change the story, you have to get personal. Authentic connection and point of view are increasingly the currencies of our time. It also requires faith in the future, a belief in forward progress no matter the evolutionary constraints. Finally, it requires curiosity and humility, as storytelling is nothing less than an examination of the human experience. To become a master storyteller is to master life itself. It’s an endless process, especially in disruptive times. The best stories are the ones that inspire possibility and unleash human potential.

Storytelling in the Age of Disruption

We live in extraordinary times, where is a shorter half-life between ideas and reality than ever before. Imagine if, a few hundred years ago, you were told that one day you would fly through the sky in a large metal tube, covering thousands of miles in just a matter of hours, at a time when traveling such distances took months or years.

That’s why every great leader must be both a storyteller and a magician. The very best leaders are well-versed in the art and science of story. They make magical things happen with their words. In short, language is reality. How do you help people see a new view when it involves disruptive ideas that challenge assumptions and expectations?

The truth about storytelling is that you only have about five minutes to get 90% of a group of people on your side. What you say or do in those first few minutes determines everything that follows. If you can’t inspire your audience, make them curious, and capture their imagination, chances are you never will.

Your success depends on how readily people embrace your ideas, yet stories of disruption are among the hardest to tell. What you need is a story that captures people from the get-go, that cuts through their resistance, that shows them why your vision matters and why they should care.

An anecdote likely won’t do that. An undeniable story can. It’s all based on your ability to think in narrative and to present complex situations in a simple yet compelling manner.

To tell that persuasive story, you have to know your audience. They are the reason your story exists. You must focus on who your audience is and shape your story around them.

From Outsider to Insider

If you’re asking people to go on an epic journey with you, they

want and need to know who you are. What are you made of? How do you see the world? What are you willing to fight for?

If you're asking people to enter your world, you need to know who you are and how you come across. You need to understand how to turn your quirks and idiosyncrasies into unique, appealing attributes. When your audience is rooting for you, you'll be amazed at how much more forgiving they are of your imperfections. If you're asking people to see, feel, and believe the same things you do, they want and need to know your motivations.

Your personal story is the engine that propels your Undeniable Story.

In Storied workshops, a technique called StorySparks is used to get participants to reflect on their life and career experiences, then share a 90-second story with a partner. People are often moved to tears as they recognize the influences and defining moments that have made them into who they are. They also make unexpected connections that deepen their bond and sense of shared experience with the partner in the exercise. In less than two minutes, their sense of self and the world is redefined. That's the magic of storytelling. If you can open yourself to people and allow them to connect with your story, you build an incredible bridge of trust.

But before you can determine how much of your personal backstory to share, you must look more closely at how story affects the 21st-century brain, heart, and body.

The Feel-Good Principle

If you want to transform how the world thinks about your product, cause, or message, try making people feel better about themselves.

Most leaders have people bringing them problems every day—all day long. The real boss move is to come bearing a positive, feel-good story of possibility and opportunity. Give people faith in the future. More than anything, that's what people are looking for from their leaders and from the vendors or solution providers they buy from. They want to know, at the end of the day, that there's a better future ahead. You're the one to paint that picture, and with an Undeniable Story it's impossible to resist.

We tend to pay attention to the stories that make us feel good. We ignore the stories that make us feel bad, wrong, or stupid. When you open your story about change and disruption, you need to do so in a manner that makes

people feel deeply connected. Help them to identify with the context you've presented in a way that makes them feel good and offers hope for the future.

We are living and working in extraordinary times, times that call for an evolutionary leap in how we construct and tell our stories for the context of innovation. Help people see how the future already exists and the new, exciting potential that comes with change.

Step 1: See It

The most critical element of storytelling is to help others see what you see in order for them to embrace your story and make it their own. You have to find the right hook for your story, one that captures your audience's attention right away. Change creates story, and your job is to narrate that change.

It's important to pick the right battles to fight in your story, using your energy efficiently. It's rarely wise to open with something contentious, controversial, or debatable. Instead, present a compelling context for change that is a generally accepted truth. Focus on what everybody wants. What will create a natural momentum of yes?

You should also focus on what's right rather than what's wrong. Why put people into a fight/flight/freeze state? You want the context for change to be aspirational, filled with an opportunity statement that is exciting.

You should also avoid making your opening statement of your story so complex that it makes your audience disoriented. Focus on a clear premise, including the most dramatic and compelling way that the world is changing.

Finally, don't get ahead of your story. Remember you live and breathe what you're working on, which means that while you might mentally already be on Chapter 9 of the story, your audience is likely still on Chapter 1 or 2.

Step 2: Feel It

To feel your story, and get your audience to feel it, you have to bring soul to the data you're presenting. This involves building a character. Sometimes the character is you, sometimes it's someone else, sometimes it's your audience, and sometimes it's the entire world.

The best approach is to make your customer your hero, then put that character into conflict in order to make them more compelling, interesting, and real. You need to craft a relatable avatar that your audience can look to and identify with. The result? When you present your solution to the character's

problem, your audience will feel emotionally invested in that solution and want to play a part in helping deliver it.

Emotion is a key ingredient in any compelling story. Combined with the context for change, you're now two-thirds of the way to crafting your undeniable story and multiplying your outcomes. What's missing is the third ingredient: the evidence of truth.

Step 3: Believe It

Storytelling in a business context is about emotion, connection, and narrative, but it's also about data. Your story is won or lost based on the supporting evidence.

In storytelling, there are many sources of evidence that can strengthen your story. They include:

- Performance metrics
- Personal story
- User research
- Scientific proof
- Pilot projects
- Historical precedent
- Product demos
- Customers
- Testimonials
- Third-party endorsements
- Case studies

That said, truth is in the eye of the beholder. It all comes down to who's telling the story. Truth can be elusive and

hard to pin down in black-and-white terms. There are often many shades of gray. Here are some tips to consider as you shape the evidence that will inform the truth at the heart of your Undeniable Story.

Don't have enough data to prove your progress so far? Focus on other proof points, such as research that validates demand and unmet need.

Finding a metaphor can also be a powerful way of telling your story, by comparing your new idea to something that exists in a powerful way. Just remember that this strategy can become cliched if used incorrectly or overused.

Telling a personal story about social impact is a powerful way to connect numbers to real people (or, even better, a single real person who is representative of a larger group.)

Remember that if you're not telling your story, somebody else is telling it for you.

Conclusion

Everyone has a story, and everyone gets to tell that story. We live in truly remarkable times, where we all get to story ourselves into being. No matter the stories of our past, we can reimagine, recreate, and reinvent a new future. This is your birthright, and the demands of the age we live in. The stories we tell literally make the world. If you want to change the world, you have to first change your story. The heart of the storyteller becomes the heart of the story.



Michael Margolis is the CEO and founder of Storied, a strategic messaging firm specializing in the story of innovation and disruption. As a trusted advisor, Michael helps executives to demystify the complex and deliver on the promise of transformation. Michael operates anywhere there is a story worth telling, especially in Silicon Valley, Fortune 500s, and global change. Michael is a frequent keynote speaker at top conferences around the world. He's trained tens of thousands on narrative intelligence and how to build storytelling as an organizational capability.

Story 10X: Turn the Impossible Into the Inevitable by Michael Margolis. © 2020 Michael Margolis. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Storied. 208 pages, ISBN 978-1989025581 Summary copyright ©2020 by Soundview Book Summaries®