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Book offers tips to hone speaking skills

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If you have a business, a blog or a product to sell, then Ty Bennett's new book, "The Power of Storytelling: The Art of Influential Communication," will be useful for you.

If you give speeches, presentations or teach, this book will change the way you present your information. It's a well-organized, how-to guide about how storytelling can affect people's lives and move them to action.

Bennett begins his book appropriately with a story of meeting one of his heroes, Dr. Stephen Covey, the author of "The Habits of Seven Highly Effective People." The point is that Covey said people who tell stories need to tell them for their audience and readers, not for themselves. And that's what Bennett has managed to do in this book.

"The Power of Storytelling" is organized into three sections: Mindset, Skillset and Toolset. He dedicates three chapters to each section with an introduction for each section.

Mindset deals with the way an audience member and speaker interact and communicate with others. The author also points out that if storytellers don't have the passion and values that match their message, then the most well-crafted story will fall flat.

The Skillset section discusses the two parts of storytelling: structure and delivery. Bennett states, "I will show you how you can find your voice and perfect your craft. We will learn the nitty-gritty of storytelling. This is where we study ... the three-step formula to craft a compelling story."

Finally, the Toolset is a helpful section in which Bennett explains six tools a storyteller can use to make stories compelling, dynamic and memorable. He points out several times that stories are what people remember from a speech and what they also will repeat to friends, family and co-workers.

Each chapter has "Expert Tips." These are set aside in boxes and emphasize the points that the author is making in each chapter.

For example, he suggests recording and listening to your speech and making your talk interactive so the audience stays engaged. One of the best tips is: "Wrap facts inside your stories, and they will add to the credibility of your story, be understood in context and be remembered."

He also includes links for readers, where they can watch him use his storytelling techniques live. For example, one of his points is opening a speech with a story, and he opens with the one about Starbucks CEO Harold Schultz and his customer service ideas. Interested readers can go online and see this example live.

When Bennett was 21, he started a business with his brother, and it grew to a more than \$20 million-a-year corporation while they were still in their 20s.

Today, he is the president of The Mountain West chapter of the National Speakers Association. Bennett speaks around the world and has written the book, "The Power of Influence," and the video training program, "Facts Tell, Stories Sell." He lives in Utah with his wife and kids.

Bennett shares several interesting stories within the book, such as how Subway became the largest franchise business in the world and The Great Blondin who crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope. These are the stories and points you will remember after you finish this book. This also is his point throughout the book, and he shows how it works.

Readers will find themselves changing the way they give presentations and putting his advice into practice. That's the best recommendation a how-to book can receive.

Margo L. Dill is the author of "Finding My Place: One Girl's Strength at Vicksburg," a middle grade historical fiction novel. She often reviews books as a columnist for "WOW! Women On Writing" e-zine and her blog, "Margo Dill's Read These Books and Use Them" (<http://margodill.com/blog/> [2]). She lives in St. Louis with her family.

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