

# Introduction

## *What if...*

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*What if you had a story that someone else could learn from and be inspired by?*

*What if your story, with its ups and downs, bumps and bruises, successes and failures, touched someone deeply and inspired them to keep going?*

*What if the low points of your story gave someone else hope, or optimism, or the courage to step up and follow their dream?*

*What if the bits of your story that make you feel vulnerable gave someone else strength?*

*What if your openness and honesty created a space where someone else felt they too could be open and honest?*

*Wouldn't it be a tragedy if that story was never told?*

## **We all have stories to tell**

Marion Ellis wanted to tell her story, but she wasn't sure how to.

'I love stories,' she told me. 'Who doesn't? I know telling my story could really help me connect with my ideal client but,' she sighed, 'I don't know which stories to tell, or how much I should share, or even how to tell them so that my clients want to engage with them.'

There are a lot of Marions. I've had the same conversation with many business owners over the last few years, from founders and freelancers to coaches and consultants, all experts in their field who understand the importance of storytelling but feel utterly confused about where to start, let alone how to 'master the art'.

It's a minefield.

Maybe you've tried but were disappointed that no one engaged. Maybe you've given it a good go but got little or no response. Maybe it felt awkward or forced.

## INTRODUCTION

I feel your pain. No one wants to do it badly or tell stories for the sake of it. That would be ‘dumping’ – or therapy! I get it. I founded The Business of Stories back in 2016 because I get it.

The problem is, if you’re not doing it, your marketing could be completely out of kilter with the people and work you want more of. You could be attracting the ‘wrong’ clients, getting work you don’t love or finding sales conversations excruciatingly uncomfortable.

That’s exactly where I was a few years ago.

I had launched a group called The Business of Mums, offering coaching to help members get their new businesses up and running, but it was hard. I was struggling to get clients because I wasn’t giving people anything to connect with. I was busy delivering a ton of useful content that lots of people were engaging with, but I found it difficult to get anyone to actually buy, and I ended up doing work that didn’t light me up.

In desperation, I spent a ridiculous amount of money with a local marketing agency, but it didn’t help. Nothing was working. Until, that is, I told my story.

It might sound dramatic, but telling my story completely transformed my business, and my life. From the moment I started sharing it, people – some of whom had been members of my online community for months but had never engaged with it – were

responding and posting in my group. Many commented on how much they related to my story and thanked me for inspiring them to embrace and share theirs. I was no longer just a name. They got what I was about. They felt a connection.

Why does that matter? Because when people feel connected to you, they'll trust you to help them. Several people messaged me to ask about working with me, and within days I had more paying clients than I had had in the previous six months. I was blown away.

Sharing my story was such a game-changing experience for me that I got busy telling everyone who would listen to 'harness the power of storytelling'. I soon realised, though, that while lots of business owners bought into the idea and wanted to do it, they struggled to know how.

I get that too. If writing isn't your 'thing', you may not feel confident that you could craft a story that will attract your ideal clients, build meaningful connections, create raving fans and elevate your brand. That's fine. Don't worry. I'm going to show you that storytelling doesn't need to be hard – or scary – and take you step-by-step through a process to reveal the three key stories you need to unpack first:

1. **Your personal story** – who you are, how you got to where you are now and why it matters

## INTRODUCTION

2. **Your business story** – what your business stands for and what problem it exists to solve
3. **Your customer story** – who they are and where *you* fit into *their* story

Unpacking those stories will give you a ton of clarity and a deeper understanding of your own motivations, your business proposition and your target market.

Then, you'll discover that between your personal story and your business story lies your *why*: the reason you do what you do. Between your business story and your customer story lies your *value*: how you help your customers win. And, between your personal story and your customer story you'll find your *people*: the 'ideal' clients you feel passionately called to serve.

And that's not all. As these stories start to merge and overlap, you'll find the sweet spot in the middle where there is pure goosebump-inducing *magic* just waiting to happen. It's why I call my process The Circles of Storytelling Magic.

From that sweet spot, you can write words that will sing to the person you want to work with; music that will fill their heart so that working with *you* feels like a perfect fit. When your ideal clients hear your stories, they'll be captivated. Spellbound. They'll stop shopping around, because they'll know they've found 'the one'.

Don't worry if you've never considered yourself a storyteller. You don't need to be an expert copywriter or super-talented wordsmith. I'm going to show you how you can quickly and easily become proficient in the universal language of storytelling, so you can stop worrying that you're doing it wrong and, instead, feel confident that you know how to inject a little storytelling magic into all your marketing.

Together, we'll unearth your unique treasure chest of precious stories and compile the ones you're going to share. We'll look at writing tips, structure, how to start and end your stories, and how to inject them with personality. I'll be sharing resources, tips and templates I've put together over many years as a storyteller, copywriter, messaging geek and, since the beginning of 2019, a StoryBrand Certified Guide.

I'll walk you through the process and some of the exercises I've been taking clients through since 2016 and, with their permission, share some of their stories – so you'll have lots of real-life examples to bring the process and exercises to life.

Clients like Marion.

### **Exciting plans and a big vision**

Marion was an expert in her field. She had qualified as a chartered surveyor in 2004 and had twenty+ years' experience in the residential property sector.

She'd worked in both corporate and small to medium-sized enterprise environments, before getting off the exhausting treadmill and working for herself.

Marion truly understood the challenges faced by many in her profession and was feeling called to create a community to provide support, coaching and connection for those in her industry who didn't want to have to figure everything out on their own.

She had exciting plans and a big vision; she wanted to make an impact; she wanted to start a movement; but she wasn't sure how to go out to her audience and talk about it, what her core message should be or what stories she should tell.

Working with the process I'm going to take you through in this book, Marion got the clarity she needed. She deepened her understanding of the value she provided and how to share her personal story in a way that felt totally aligned with her brand and the kind of purpose-driven individuals she wanted to work with.

With her newfound clarity, and feedback from her ideal clients that they totally resonated with her message, she confidently launched a community, a

website, her first mastermind and an engaging brand that was a perfect fit for her and her audience.

Everything felt congruent and true to who she was and what she wanted her business to stand for. Her business was able to grow and thrive, because getting clear on her stories had ensured she connected with the right audience to make it happen.

That's what I want for you.

This book is designed to demystify the sometimes overly complicated 'art' of storytelling and equip you with a simple, practical way to craft and share stories like a pro. Work through it in order and you will have everything you need to tell the stories that will attract your ideal clients in a way that feels aligned and true to who you are and what you stand for. I'll also show you all sorts of other magical things that can happen when you share the right stories in the right way, such as attracting more of the people you love working with, no longer having to compete on price (or compete at all) and actually enjoying sales conversations, without ever feeling 'salesy'.

Be sure to enjoy the process. Take it step by step, and you'll sharpen your storytelling skills as you go. Storytelling is fun. It's magical. It's a superpower.



## INTRODUCTION

I would recommend you don't jump ahead. You may want to read through the book to get a feel for the journey and where it's all leading you, but then work through it, chapter by chapter, as it follows a logical order. Some steps may be quick for you, some you may need to spend longer on, so give yourself the space to do that. I highly recommend you block some time off in your schedule so that you can think, reflect and get lost in the joy of storytelling – without all the distractions of a busy modern life.



*You'll find a companion workbook waiting for you at [www.thebusinessofstories.com/magic](http://www.thebusinessofstories.com/magic). Print it off now so that, as you work through this book, you can capture your thoughts and ideas, ready for when we craft and share your stories in Part Three.*

Now that you can see what the journey we're going on together looks like you can relax, trust the process, enjoy the ride and know that you've got this. If you're ready to stop wasting your precious time, money and energy on marketing that isn't working for you, and instead attract your ideal clients with the simple magic of storytelling, I'm ready to show you how.

Let's do this!