

IN THE CHAT:

**what is your primary
concern, question, or challenge
incorporating your own personal stories
into your work?**

help others feel seen + inform today's discussion + inform chef's table videos

[personal storytelling masterclass]

*FROM MEMORIES TO **MEANING***

drawing on your lived experience to teach and inspire others



presented by: **jay acunzo**

jayacunzo.com | creatorkitchen.com

reminder

SHARED FOCUS + GUIDED ACTION = PERSONAL MOMENTUM



**turn one thing
into a strength
by making it a priority
and pushing yourself
in your actual work
consistently over time**

reminder

SHARED FOCUS + GUIDED ACTION = PERSONAL MOMENTUM



**go a little further
into the water**

than you think you're capable of being in. go a little bit out of your depth, and when you don't feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you're just about in the right place to

do something exciting.


– *david bowie*

reminder

menus

creatorkitchen.com/currentmenu

- ✓ **intro video from jay & mel**
- ✓ **watch this class on-demand**
- ✓ **watch jay's own process each week**
- ✓ **create your work using our prompts, resources, and inspirational examples**
- ✓ **attend roundtables or office hours**




the MENU
PERSONAL STORYTELLING

IMMERSION

MASTERCLASS
(LIVE + RECORDED)
From Memories to Meaning: Drawing on Your Lived Experience to Teach and Inspire Others


CHEF'S TABLE
(NEW EVERY MONDAY)
Watch Jay apply this theme to his work in different ways



CREATION

PROMPTS & INSPIRATION
(SEE MENU URL)
Apply this theme to your process and projects.

CO-WORKING SESSIONS
MULTIPLE OFFERED - SEE CALENDAR
Work alongside peers for greater accountability and flow



FEEDBACK

CREATOR ROUNDTABLES
MULTIPLE OFFERED - SEE CALENDAR
Talk shop and swap notes with small groups

OFFICE HOURS
MULTIPLE OFFERED - SEE CALENDAR
Get 1:1 notes from Jay or Melanie

reminder

weekly emails

arriving every sunday

- ✓ see what's new & what's next
- ✓ never miss a thing
- ✓ no need to remember to log in

shared calendar



creatorkitchen.com/member-calendar-instructions

let's imagine

we want to inspire others to
take more risks in their work



4 ways we could say it



featuring brian piper
content strategy leader (higher ed)
public speaker (on content/UX using data)
author (*epic content*, with joe pulizzi)
member, creator kitchen



skydiving!

(like water diving, but instead of splash, you go splat)



thoroughly enjoying himself



4 ways we could say it

1. instruction



6 Ways to Be a Successful Risk Taker and Take More Chances

I've stood on the edge of my own personal cliffs many times. Each time I jumped, something different happened. There were risks that started off great, but eventually faded. There were risks that left me falling until I hit the ground. There were risks that started slow, but built into massive successes.

Every risk is different, but every risk is the same. You need to have some fundamentals ready before you jump, but not too many.

It wouldn't be a risk if you knew everything that was about to happen, would it?



Here's 6 ways to be a successful risk taker and open up more opportunities for yourself:

1. Understand That Failure Is Going to Happen a Lot



4 ways we could say it

1. instruction



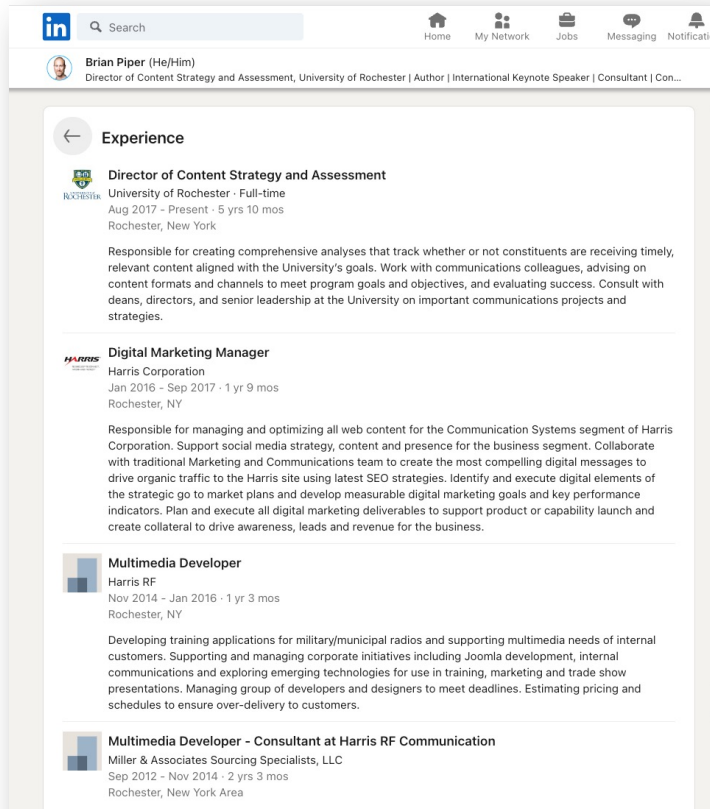


4 ways we could say it

1. **instruction** —→ no story (flat advice or prescription)
2. **illustration**



“I did it, and you can too! Here’s how...”



Brian Piper (He/Him)
Director of Content Strategy and Assessment, University of Rochester | Author | International Keynote Speaker | Consultant | Con...

Experience

- Director of Content Strategy and Assessment**
University of Rochester - Full-time
Aug 2017 - Present · 5 yrs 10 mos
Rochester, New York
Responsible for creating comprehensive analyses that track whether or not constituents are receiving timely, relevant content aligned with the University's goals. Work with communications colleagues, advising on content formats and channels to meet program goals and objectives, and evaluating success. Consult with deans, directors, and senior leadership at the University on important communications projects and strategies.
- Digital Marketing Manager**
Harris Corporation
Jan 2016 - Sep 2017 · 1 yr 9 mos
Rochester, NY
Responsible for managing and optimizing all web content for the Communication Systems segment of Harris Corporation. Support social media strategy, content and presence for the business segment. Collaborate with traditional Marketing and Communications team to create the most compelling digital messages to drive organic traffic to the Harris site using latest SEO strategies. Identify and execute digital elements of the strategic go to market plans and develop measurable digital marketing goals and key performance indicators. Plan and execute all digital marketing deliverables to support product or capability launch and create collateral to drive awareness, leads and revenue for the business.
- Multimedia Developer**
Harris RF
Nov 2014 - Jan 2016 · 1 yr 3 mos
Rochester, NY
Developing training applications for military/municipal radios and supporting multimedia needs of internal customers. Supporting and managing corporate initiatives including Joomla development, internal communications and exploring emerging technologies for use in training, marketing and trade show presentations. Managing group of developers and designers to meet deadlines. Estimating pricing and schedules to ensure over-delivery to customers.
- Multimedia Developer - Consultant at Harris RF Communication**
Miller & Associates Sourcing Specialists, LLC
Sep 2012 - Nov 2014 · 2 yrs 3 mos
Rochester, New York Area





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**“would anyone care? what have i experienced that’s notable?
why would they want to hear a story about me anyway?”**



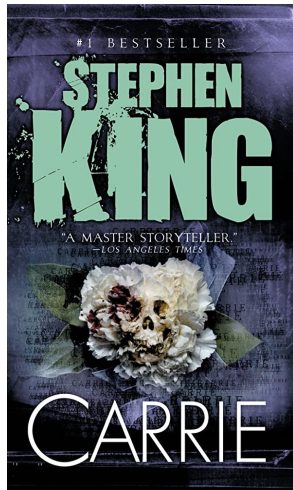
**effective personal stories
aren't actually about you.**

they're about the audience.

their goals. their needs. their pain. their success.

the topic of the story
can be entirely unrelatable,
but the story still resonates.

the **emotions** are universal,
because the emotions are **human.**



- loneliness
- abuse
- the dangers of ostracizing others



- loyalty
- the intricate relationship between violence & madness



- good vs. evil
- fate vs. free will
- the addictive nature of power

“why would they care about MY Precious?”

(tricksy marketerssss)



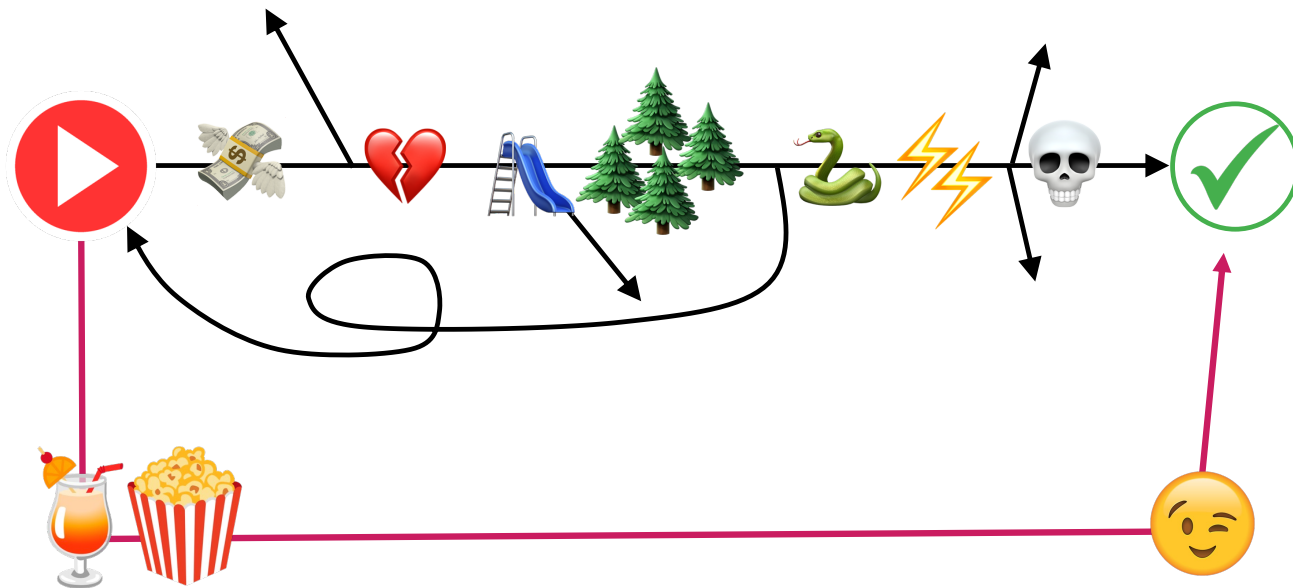
they don't!

(silly gollum)

**your audience
cares about themselves.**

they need to see themselves
reflected in your personal stories.

your stories can be more effective at
inspiring action in others
than talking directly about *them*





4 ways we could say it

1. **instruction** —> no story (flat advice or prescription)
2. **illustration** —> a story as an example or case study

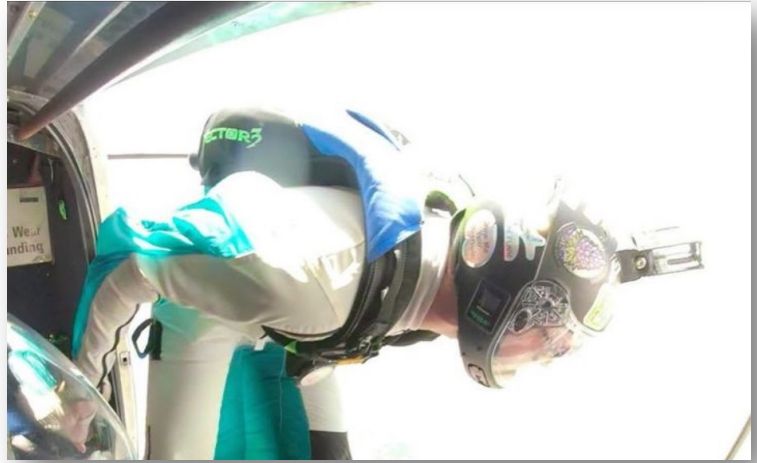




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3. **metaphor**







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3. **metaphor** —> a comparison which reveals a lesson*

*if the lesson is nonobvious, it feels more profound & memorable





↖ “make the leap” version



useful, but obvious

to find powerful, nonobvious lessons
in your personal stories,
ask this question:

**“what’s something you’d only know if you
lived it, which most don’t realize?”**



“enjoy the view” version

“open up” version



a metaphor template

1

“this happened...”

(a true memory or moment)

2

“which made me realize...”

(an insight sparked by what you experienced)

3

“which means...”

(a topic they care about → a hidden lesson you reveal)

a metaphor example

topic:
personal storytelling

1

“at a pizza place, the waiter taught me that no two starters make the same dough”

2

“which made me realize that WE are the starters in our creative work”

3

“which means every creator has a way to produce more original work: draw from our own personal experiences and stories when we start to create. (it’s the biggest advantage we’ve got.)”



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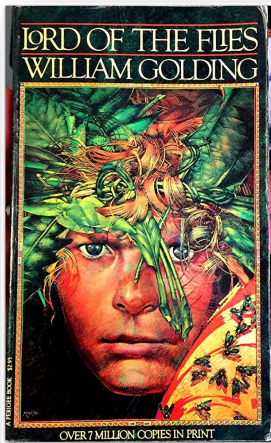
1. **instruction** —→ no story (flat advice or prescription)
2. **illustration** —→ a story as an example or case study
3. **metaphor** —→ a comparison which reveals a lesson*
4. **allegory** —→ a story which reveals a lesson*

*if the lesson is nonobvious, it feels more profound & memorable

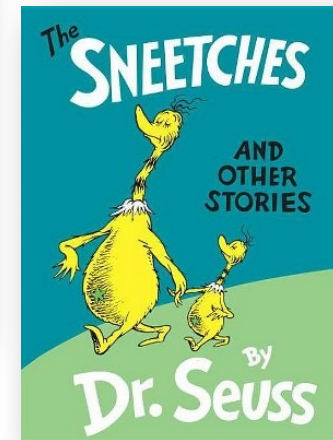
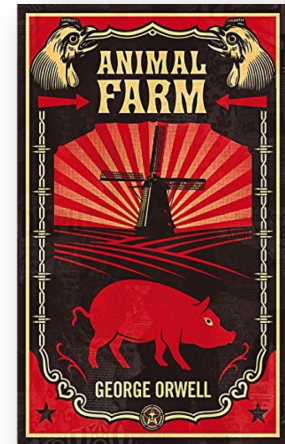




Allegory of the cave
(Plato)



The six blind men and the elephant
(Author Unknown; written in Buddhist text in 500 BCE)



allegory:

from latin “allegoria,” meaning
implying something else

the difference between allegories & metaphors:
allegories are told as **complete stories**, with
characters, settings, chronology, and stakes.

(allegories are more than brief comparisons)

“open up” ~~version~~
metaphor



a different audience experience

METAPHORS

make the lesson clear through comparison.

“in your career, if you don’t write your own script,
someone else will write it for you.”

ALLEGORIES



(and yes, this
is a metaphor)

take you on a journey to the lesson.

to evolve a metaphor into an allegory:
place me there and raise the stakes

(character, setting, chronology // tension)

1 find the nonobvious

“what’s something you’d only know if you lived it,
which most don’t realize?”

2 place me there

“the other day / a few years ago...”
(nut graf: who, what, where, how, why // sequence of events)

3 raise the stakes

“i was...” “when suddenly...” “and I felt/thought...”
(describe feelings or list questions to increase tension)

4 share what you learned

“as a result...” “and that’s when I realized...”
(conclude the story // describe why the realization mattered to YOU)

5 reveal the lesson

“that’s the thing about...”
(topic → meaning // describe why the lesson matters to US)

1 find the nonobvious

We're told what success is (directly or implicitly in the culture). It's an external thing, related to specific jobs or fields, so we pursue that. But success is self-defined. This means, when you live out someone else's definition, you can feel bad and think something is wrong with YOU. That's untrue, AND you should pay attention to that feeling.

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there's no "right" way to do this.
build on the ideas that flow naturally.
start with what feels easy.



1 find the nonobvious



maybe instead of finding something nonobvious,
a moment instantly yields a metaphor, which you then
turn into an allegory



2 place me there

3 raise the stakes

4 share what you learned

5 reveal the lesson



Game 4 (LAL leads 3 - 1)

	Warriors	101
	Lakers	104 ◀

Final
Mon, May 8



Game 4 (MIA leads 3 - 1)

	Knicks	101
	Heat	109 ◀

Final
Mon, May 8



Schrödinger's Content



IP OS

Jay Acunzo IP Development OS

The flowchart illustrates the IP development process. It starts with 'frustration (problems, pain)' and 'curiosity (questions, mysteries)'. An 'IDEA' leads to 'CHEF'S TABLE', which involves 'telling and showing' and 'doing the practice'. A decision point asks 'do I feel the need to explore this further?'. If 'yes', it leads to 'NEXT IDEA'. If 'no', it leads to 'EPISODE' or 'NEWSLETTER'. The process concludes with 'SPEECH', 'SESSION', and 'BANK'.

Flowchart
1

Kitchen concepts: Push Yourself Creatively
1

+ Add a card

Ideas

Schrodinger's Content
1

IA > AI

Voice memo: Remembering why and where you started
1

Meaning from the progression

Approved for Chef's Table

{{ REMEMBER: "Tell and Show" }}

{{ TASTING FORMAT }}

Michelle Warner bonus material

Unthinkable production mtg 3/7 (in Butter)

Tasting: Heike Young

Tasting: Mia Q

Tasting: Madhukar Kumar

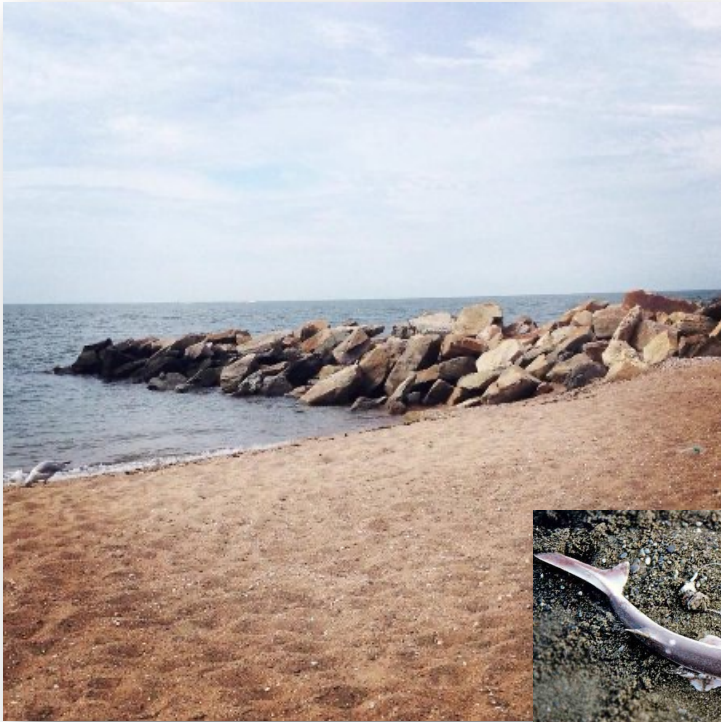
1 find the nonobvious

2 place me there  maybe something notable sticks in your mind, like a memory which keeps coming back to you or coming up in conversation, or a moment big or small you experienced which stuck with you

3 raise the stakes

4 share what you learned

5 reveal the lesson



My grandfather eyed the man who was eyeing me.

I was young, maybe 6 or 7, and my Poppie had proposed we walk down to the water while my family waited for a table at a local Connecticut seafood restaurant. There, we discovered Little Jay's favorite thing in the world: rocks. Specifically, rocks piled up along the water as a makeshift levee. Who knows what magical sea creatures could lurk just out of sight?

That day, I didn't need to ask that question. There were sea creatures sitting all along the rocks. And they were dying.

The man my Poppie eyed who eventually eyed me was just some guy who thought it would be fun to go fishing that evening — except he kept catching these annoying little sharks. Every time he'd catch one, he'd simply toss it along the rocks. Naturally, my already-overactive brain roared into even higher gear. *I get to see sharks AND touch them?!*

And so, despite the man's original intentions, I turned these sharks into slimy boomerangs. He'd put them on the rocks, and I'd send them right back. I ambled around the levee, dutifully returning each wiggly little fish to its home. Without so much as a glance at the fisherman, I'd approach one, pick it up by its tail, and slip it back into the water.

The man kept catching sharks, and I kept right on throwing them back.

Had I not been with my Poppie, I might remember this story differently. He's a Navy veteran who turned 92 this year, with tattoos on his arms and, recently, a cane in his hand. (Appropriately, given my Poppie's stereotypical swagger, the cane has a golden eagle's head as its handle. He balls hard.)

Did it matter? I have no idea.

Did I earn any karma points? Only enough for the lame toys at heaven's counter. Heaven is a sweet arcade.

(#NewAlbumName)

I have no idea if what I did mattered. All I knew was it mattered.

And I did it without fretting over what some gruff stranger thought of me.

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Today in our work, someone is staring at us, telling us we're doing it wrong. Sometimes, that feels like the whole culture around us. "That's not success. That's not the best practice."

We fight the good fight for what we feel is right, but does it matter?

Maybe that's not the point. Maybe the point is to live with ourselves a bit better. We spend so much time concluding things like, "I can't make a difference," or, "That's just the cost of doing business." But these thoughts only prevent us from taking action.

The thing is, ACTION is all a career really is. There's no finish line until we're finished. There's no "winning at business."

Like it or not, we can't say with total certainty if we'll get results, feel fulfilled, change their minds, win their hearts, or save the species.

The only thing we can do is try.

Keep throwing the sharks back.

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- ☆ ▶ Rachel, Jay 2 Inbox Re: The sharks and you 📧 - send you the sa
- ☆ ▶ Jay Acunzo 2 The sharks and you 📧 - skip all the noise & make v
- ☆ ▶ Josh, Jay 2 Inbox Re: The sharks and you 📧 - thanks for the n
- ☆ ▶ Lara, Jay 3 Re: The sharks and you 📧 - *Break the Wheel* *Ex
- ☆ ▶ tthomas@jobfitmatters... 3 Inbox RE: The sharks and you 📧 - the newsletter i
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- ☆ ▶ Steve, Jay 2 Inbox RE: The sharks and you 📧 - email you the signup page in the r
- ☆ ▶ Barb, Jay 2 Inbox Re: The sharks and you 📧 - you in the next week or two! *Jay,
- ☆ ▶ Ben, Meg, me 6 Re: 2/5: Throw the sharks back - E



 **Jay Acunzo** · You
Cofounder, Creator Kitchen | Helping creators resonate deep...
2mo · 🌐

A story for anyone disillusioned by the current business culture.

My grandfather eyed the man who was eyeing me.... [...see more](#)

 Beth Dunn and 38 others 21 comments · 1 repost

1 find the nonobvious

2 place me there

3 raise the stakes

4 share what you learned



**maybe this is where it begins for you:
something you learned was notable
and sparks an idea for a story**

5 reveal the lesson



"Thanks for using our valet service! Call us with the number above, and your car will be ready in **30 minutes.**"

And so, you call the front desk about a half hour before you need the car. You expect them to say thanks, the car will be ready in 30 minutes.

But then the man at the valet desk answers.
"34891? Got it. Car will be up in **10 minutes.**"

It feels like a gift. You were thinking 30, and they said 10.

You quickly grab your coat and head down to the lobby where, to your surprise, your car is *already* idling by the front door. You glance at your watch.

It's been five minutes.

THE PARADOX OF EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS (AND HOW TO DO IT REGULARLY)

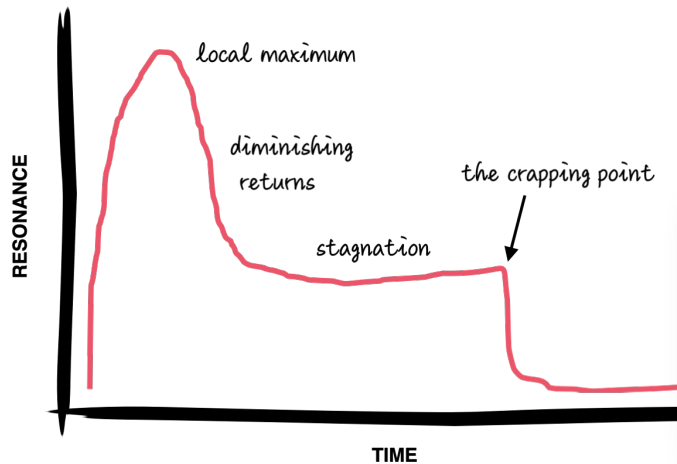
MARCH 6, 2019



There's a hotel in downtown Boston that, like almost every hotel in every city, offers a valet service for your car. Pull up, leave the keys, and take your ticket.

On this particular ticket is a number. The number uniquely identifies your car to the man at the valet desk.

Imagine it's later in the day, and you feel like taking a drive over the river into Cambridge



UN THINK ABLE

The Paradox of Exceeding Expectations

Unthinkable with Jay Acunzo

Marketing

[Listen on Apple Podcasts ↗](#)

If you work through the logic, you arrive at a shocking conclusion: if you exceed expectations even one

UN THINK ABLE

Expect the Unexpected

Unthinkable with Jay Acunzo

Marketing

[Listen on Apple Podcasts ↗](#)

Want to exceed the expectations of your audience? Get ready for a paradox. Maybe the best way forward is, in a sense, to never try to exceed their expectations.

[Episode Website ↗](#)

[More Episodes](#)

when you tell stories to lead,
to serve, to inspire reflection + action:

your stories aren't about you.
they're about the meaning
you're there to share.
they're about the audience.

the **who** behind our content matters more than ever

generative a.i. pushes commodity content's value to zero

social media orgs are increasingly incentivizing sameness (because CPM)

infinite choice means clients, employers, and subscribers cut anything that doesn't feel vital

creating more personal work is how we
stand out, earn trust, and become irreplaceable.

“

AI cannot, will not, and will never be able to give me what I actually want to read which is your *personal perspective*.

Why do blue M&M's remind you of your dad? What was the turtle story your sister used to tell you before bed? What happened when you were in foster care? Who was your grandmother? What was it like in Louisiana in 1886? What stories came through oral traditions? Why does your mom always use the same challah cover? What was it like to be orphaned at 7? How did you feel when you did stand-up for the first time? Tell me the story about when you ran into Madonna doing coke in the bathroom (this is a real story)? Or when Jason Mraz *literally* fell on you and accidentally kissed you (also a real story, not mine, my friend S's). What was it like to be photographed by Andy Warhol? How did it feel when you found out Santa wasn't real?

There are a million questions a machine will never be able to answer because it's not *you*.

margo aaron
cofounder, brainstorm road
writing: thatseemsimportant.com



if you imbue your work with
personal perspective and meaning
A.I. is your intern.

if you offer generalized expertise
on a familiar set of topics,
A.I. is your replacement.



4 ways we could say it

which makes you irreplaceable?

1. **instruction** —→ no story (flat advice or prescription)
2. **illustration** —→ a story as an example or case study
3. **metaphor** —→ a comparison which reveals a lesson*
4. **allegory** —→ a story which reveals a lesson*

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nobody will ask you to tell personal stories.
you have to decide for yourself.

yes, there's a practice and process,
but mostly, this is about your posture.

act "as if,"
(because it has never been more urgent)



(Brian: you're the best, and yes, you can steal this.)

THANK YOU!

keep making what matters



presented by: **jay acunzo**

jayacunzo.com | creatorkitchen.com