



Communication
SUCCESS

BEGINNINGS

VIDEO 6: CREATE YOUR EXPERIENCE ARC

KENNEDY:

Welcome back to the sixth video of Communication Success: Beginnings. You're making great progress!

You now have a set of powerful motivating conclusions supported by meaningful secondary messages.

And now it's time to create your Experience Arc. This is the process of organizing your messages to create a more meaningful experience. The Experience Arc is about taking your audience on a journey of both ideas and emotions. Because you can't have communication without emotion.

The world renowned poet, Maya Angelou, once said,

“I've learned that people will forget what you said,

people will forget what you did,

but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

This is how humans experience communication. It's as much about feeling as it is logic and reason.

One of my mantras is: Belief drives behavior. And, emotion drives belief.

What that means is that people act based on what they believe. That makes sense, right?

But this is the important part... Our beliefs are largely based on what we feel. Logic? Reason? Sure, they're important. But usually not enough to overcome emotion.

However, we do like to think of ourselves as rational beings. So what we're very good at is **post** rationalizing our beliefs and actions.

It's important to understand how your audience experiences your talk so you can create the Experience Arc that works best for them.

There are two types of experience arcs: logical and dramatic.

Let's look at Logical, first.

This is the experience arc that you were likely taught in school. It's about evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, therefore conclusion, right?

You build your case through logic and reason. This is a great approach when you know you're speaking to a primarily logical audience.

One of the drawbacks of this approach however is that your audience listens and then comes to a conclusion after the first or second piece of evidence. And then they stop listening to you. Also, once your audience has a conclusion, it's hard to change their minds. Their minds are made up. It's a lost opportunity.

A second way to engage your audience is with a Dramatic Experience Arc.

Humans love drama. Or as we say it in Chicago, (Draahma). We love stories. We love the whole conflict to resolution journey.

The dramatic Experience Arc may feature a more traditional narrative structure. Beginning with an exposition, introducing the characters and setting. And then there's an inciting incident that creates the conflict.

Maybe it's boy meets girl, boy loses girl. Or a hero faces a major setback. In business, this could mean a new competitor or a shift in the market. Then there's a rising action... the struggle...

The climax where the problem is solved,

And then a conclusion where everything wraps up and everyone lives happily ever after. (Or at least for a few weeks.)

Another way to create a dramatic experience arc is to use dramatic techniques. For example, flashbacks... Where you don't start at the beginning of your story, you start at the end or the middle and show your audience how you got there. Other dramatic techniques include parallel storylines and breaking your talk into Acts and Scenes.

There's also the cold open. Starting with a provocative statement or setting that pulls your audience in and makes them part of the story.

Use the Experience Arc Tool to create a meaningful experience for your audience.

First, you'll have some space to work on your logical flow.

And then there are exercises using dramatic structure and devices.

This is both a chance to outline your talk, and also a time to be creative, take some chances, and experiment with different storytelling tools and techniques that will engage, empower and energize your audience.

Have fun! See you next time.