

Annotated reading list

Marketing, communications and storytelling persuasively (especially for academics)

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Story, Robert McKee

A quintessential text for writing a screenplay (in case that also interests you!), this book also has applications for understanding more deeply how to build drama through values shifts in stories and persuasive writing—a lot of academic work is about culture and values. I don't always agree with McKee but he makes me think and has deepened my clarity about story design.

Science of Generosity, Notre Dame

<http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/>

I'm curious about values and the degree to which philanthropy (or any kind of funding structure) is rooted in generosity—what makes a person or a culture generous? Is that value contagious, and can we influence it as communicators? The Notre Dame Science of Generosity initiative is combining research in fields of psychology, economics, sociology and communications to learn more about generosity, and I've used their research to influence my work in communications. Plus I'm curious about generosity.

Free Range Thinking – The Goodman Center

<http://www.thegoodmancenter.com/resources/newsletters/>

Andy Goodman and The Goodman Center have a monthly e-newsletter called *Free Range Thinking* with insight and helpful tips on strategic and cause-related communications, storytelling, presenting, and more. I once spent an entire weekend catching up on back issues. Storytelling is a hot topic right now in marketing circles, but Andy builds a fantastic case about why it works and how it works well. His background is in film as well, and he often recommends books I've enjoyed.

The Story Factor, Annette Simmons

A very readable book, this speaks to the persuasion, influence and inspiration of story. It speaks to what story can do that facts can't, and deepens the discussion of what story you need to tell to win over an audience—is it one of vision, of education, of establishing credibility, etc. It also leans a bit into the psychology of why stories can trump facts.

Wired for Story, Lisa Cron

The brain science behind storytelling. This book argues a good story trumps beautiful writing every time. (If anyone else gets hooked on junk TV the way I do, you might find some truth in the idea that I just want to “find out what happens” even as I know I'm wasting my life, and not in the James Wright way.)

Tell Me A Story, Roger C. Schank

The most theory-heavy book of the bunch—where does story intersect with intelligence? Learning our own stories is a process of self-definition, and learning a culture's stories is how we fit in (as graduate students, you're all deeply familiar with learning how to fit into a unique subculture!) Particularly interesting is the concept of the “gist” of a story, and this book asks if events don't add up to a story, and constructing a story takes effort, when and why do we put forth the effort?