



Title: **Leadership is Story-telling, Story Listening and Story Noticing**. – David M. Boje dboje@nmsu.edu

April 1992, on a Saturday, the day after Rodney King verdict, when 4 Los Angeles police officers were acquitted by a jury, I did a presentation “Positive Mental Attitude Stories” a 90 minute-lecture to Annual Toastmasters Convention, Marina Del Rey, CA.

In the lobby, selling books was Don Johnson, with 15 years as member of Toastmasters International and winner of 1989 World Champion of Public Speaking, as well as Humorous Speech and Tall Tales contests.

His 1991 book is titled “Would You Like to Swing On a Star?” How you can create, prepare, and deliver a winning speech.

“Professor Boje, remember me,” He says? He signs the book “To Dave. It was great seeing someone again who had an influence on my life. Thanks Don.”

In 1979, I was hired at UCLA as a professor, a big deal for a 1st generation college student. I was paid \$30,000, which with a wife and 2 children, does not go far. I taught engineers to be managers at the old Hughes Aircraft Building 17. Don Johnson was one of the students I trained. The course was on becoming an Assertive Leader, by doing Story-telling, Story Listening, and Story Noticing.

ABCDEF staircase of Assertive Storytelling Leadership

Starts with “I have a problem” then begin at A, and only climb as many stairs as needed

F – Feelings – Speak from your heart to their heart.

E – Effect of non-compliance – this is where punish and reward come in

D – Desire – tell them what you desire them to do now

C- Consequences of this continuing, not in terms of punish, but situation

B- Behavior – past and now, observations without any evaluation or judgment

A- Antecedent events leading up to this, and see if they change

Please spend 5 minutes and write down a situation, a problem you are having with boss, co-worker, subordinate, spouse, child, student, shopkeeper, roommate, etc. Begin with phrase, “I have a problem.” Then write out who, what, when, where, why, and wow. Make it a problem where there is need for an assertive communication that has yet to happen on your part.

A EXERCISE: ANTECEDENT STORY-TELLING THE PAST

Instructions: Pick a partner. One is storyteller leader, & buddy is the antagonist.

A (Antecedents) – use storytelling of events leading up to a problem you are having with boss, co-worker, subordinate, spouse, child, student, shopkeeper, roommate, etc. Begin with phrase, “I have a problem.”

B EXERCISE: BEHAVIOR – STORY-NOTICING THE PRESENT

Instruction: Pair off with new partner.

B (Behaviors) – Use story noticing. I notice your voice is high. I notice you are shaking. I notice you are late, I notice you are not saying anything, etc. Be in the moment, and be noticing the behavior that led to this event.

C EXERCISE: CONSEQUENCES – STORY-TELLING THE FUTURE

Instructions: Pair off with new partner. This is not about punishment. It’s charting the course of the future. Its what I call ‘antenarrative.’ Ante is a ‘bet’ and it’s ‘before’ narrative rigidity sets in. You are betting that the future will unfold, not as a straight line but as a cycle, or spiral.

D EXERCISE: DESIRE THEY DO – STORY-TELLING

Instructions: Groups of Three – Leader Practice in Giving Commands to Do, 2nd person is a Follower, and & 3rd person is a Coach.

E EXERCISE: EFFECT – STORY-TELLING & STORY-NOTICING, & STORY-LISTENING COMBINED

Instructions: New Group of Two – Improvisation – We will choose one event of unresolved conflict from the audience to improv.

F EXERCISE: FEELING – STORY-TELLING FROM THE HEART, plus STORY-LISTENING, & STORY-NOTICING

Instructions: New Partner – Improv a scene with a partner where you each speak from the heart.

David M. Boje holds the Bank of America Endowed Professorship of Management (awarded September 2006), and is past Arthur Owens Professorship in Business Administration (June 2003-June 2006) in the Management Department at New Mexico State University. He did a keynote presentation to the 1992 Annual Toastmaster Convention in Marina Del Rey, California, on storytelling and positive mental attitude. His focus is on study of ethics, leadership, and storytelling in organizations. His reputation corporate social responsibility ethics in academia and industry is widely known and respected in the United States and internationally. Peers describe him as an international scholar in the areas of narrative, storytelling, postmodern theory & critical storytelling ethics. He has published 14 books and 119 articles in journals, including the top-tier journals such as *Management Science*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Leadership Quarterly*, and the international *Journal of Organization Studies*. See <http://peaceaware.com/vita> for contact info.

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