



HOW TO  
**SPEAK**  
SO PEOPLE  
**LISTEN**

Grab their  
attention and  
get your message  
heard

**MIKE CLAYTON**

## Speaker's Checklist: Story plots

### Undiscovered Weakness

The fatal flaw in a product or a person leads to their ultimate downfall – the basis of much tragedy and a surprising amount of comedy.

### The Price

A bargain is struck that seems too good to be true... and it later is shown to be just that as a price must be paid.

### Unrequited Love

Love or admiration at a distance, that can never be fulfilled – is resolved either by surprising fulfilment or by eventual acceptance.

### Doomed Love

Love or admiration sets the protagonists up for their own demise, because it can never succeed.

### The Trap

The hunter sets the trap and, despite many near misses, their prey is captured. The hunter and prey can be good and evil respectively – or vice versa. This is one of the structures for a love story.

### Undiscovered Treasure

The good or talented hero is unappreciated, even despised by those near to them, until their talent or goodness is uncovered. This is another of the structures for successful love. The classic rags to riches stories conform to this form.

### A Loss

Losing something is always more poignant than never having had it.



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### **The Search for what is lost**

Many quest stories are a search for what is lost – often accompanied by paying a price if it is found.

### **Triumph against adversity**

Whether it is a monster to slay or quest to fulfil, the hero must go on a journey and face their greatest fears.

### **The Return Home**

There is the potential for as much tension in the return journey and what awaits us at home as there is in the outward journey.

### **The Solution**

A puzzle or challenge is set, which the hero must solve – usually also at a personal cost.

### **Together in Adversity**

Unlike personalities are thrown together by a situation and must get along through a series of challenges.

### **The Underdog**

Unlikely hero turns out to be a hero nonetheless. This is a version of undiscovered treasure, where the hero's heroism is the treasure.

### **Succumbing to Fear**

The hero's fears lead them to an ill-advised action. This is a version of The Price that allows this list to have 14, not 13 items in it. The price here is intellectual honesty!