



# Effective Communication Strategies

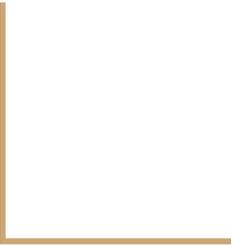
Merlin Huff, MFA • March 10th, 2018





*I argue very well. Ask any of my remaining friends.  
I can win an argument on any topic, against any opponent.  
People know this and steer clear of me at parties.  
Often, as a sign of their great respect, they don't even invite me.*

*You, too, can win arguments.*



*-Dave Barry  
Comedian*



Debate < Dialectic



# Outline

Introduction

The Problem

Narrative

Mood

Actionable Advice

Questions

# Introduction



# Studies

Rates of retention when...

- Sitting and listening  $\approx$  13%
- Taking notes  $\approx$  25%
- Participating  $\approx$  60%

Study finding: Citing statistics is an effective persuasion tactic.

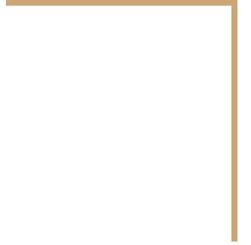
Study finding: Exactly 54.3% of statistics are fabricated.

# What's the difference?

What is the difference between those two stories?

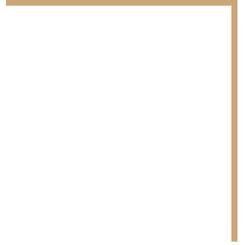
Narrative + Mood

# The Problem



My wife says I don't listen... or something like that.

Narrative



# Illustrating Narrative

**narrative** | 'nerədi:v | noun

A spoken or written account of connected events;  
a story: *the hero of his modest narrative.*

origin – from late Latin *narrativus* **'telling a story'**, from the verb *narrare* **'to tell'**

# Illustrating Narrative

*Create your characters.*

*Let the audience fall in love with them.*

*Put your characters up a tree.*

*Then start throwing rocks at them.*

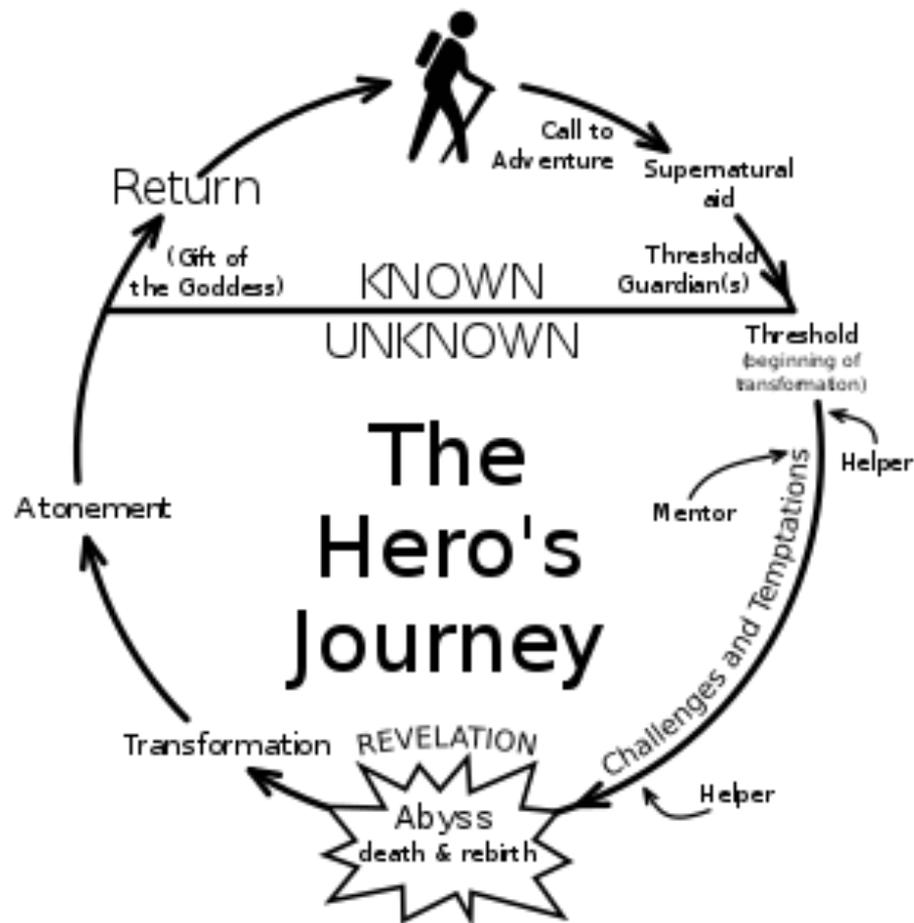
# Illustrating Narrative

Plot = Facts

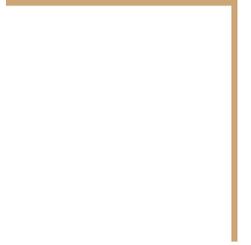
Narrative = Relationships

# Illustrating Narrative

# The Hero's Journey



Mood



*Mood.*

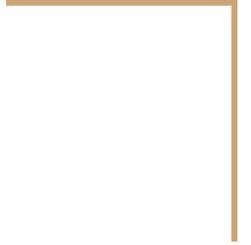
*Mood is everything.*

*It's not the only thing...*

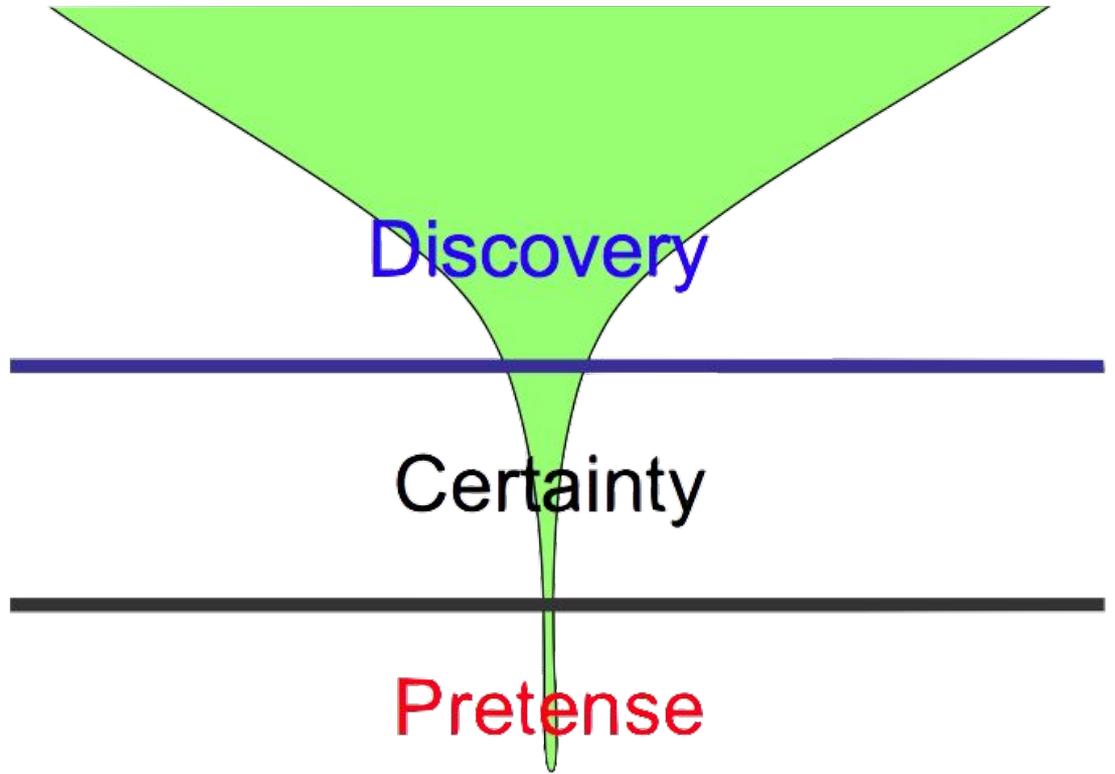
*But it's everything.*

*Having the right conversation  
in the wrong mood  
is the wrong conversation.*

Mood



# The Green Valley



No amount of rational argument will  
change a deeply held, emotional belief.

**INTERVIEWS**

**JORDAN B PETERSON ON THE  
PAY GAP AND THE PATRIARCHY**

**4 News**

No amount of rational argument will  
change a deeply held, emotional belief.

Time  
Setting  
Mood



# Actionable Advice



# So What Do I Do?

## Mood

- Pay attention to your breathing. Is it fast or slow? Deep or shallow?
  - If you're in fight or flight, breathe, center, and balance.
- Notice the mood in the room.
  - Is it curious and exploratory, or is someone trying to win?
  - Can you shift the mood in the room?
- Engage in dialectic, not debate.

# So What Do I Do?

## Hero's Journey

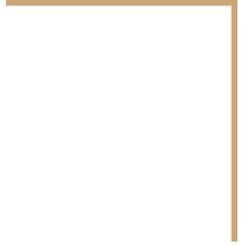
- Realize that the person to whom you're speaking sees himself as the hero.
- Be his mentor. Help him to explore his path.
- "What do you care about?"
- Given the opening, tell your own story.

# So What Do I Do?

## Pragmatics

- Are you fighting to win?
- Seek openness - start with yourself.

In Summary



# Questions

