The Hero’s Journey: Storytelling in Networking
Today’s Joke: What did the drummer call his twin daughters? Anna One, Anna Two!

Please DM your clean jokes / Dad jokes to us! (@BizNetworkingMentor and @NetworkingSteve) and you may hear your joke on one of our episodes!

Now, without missing a beat, let’s get into our topic today. 😊 The topic we want to explore today is how to articulate the problems you solve so others will be able to introduce you to the right people.

You may have heard of The Hero’s Journey as it relates to mythology or literature. To refresh everyone’s memory, I’d like to start with a story many of you will be familiar with: The Wizard of Oz.

The elements of the tradition hero’s journey include a call to adventure, some challenges and trials, encountering a mentor or helper during the journey, and then transformation and a return to home or happiness. In the Wizard of Oz we see Dorothy swept up in the cyclone that takes her from Kansas and brings her to Oz, where she meets Glinda, who sets her upon her quest to meet the Wizard, who will enable her to return to Kansas and the loving arms of Auntie Em. She meets the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Lion to help her along the way as she runs into flying monkeys, poisoned poppies, and other obstacles on her journey. Finally, she discovers that she has had the power within her all along to return home, so she clicks her heels together and returns home, but with a renewed appreciation for all the good things in life. All is well. The end.

In our businesses, as we think of story elements like a call to adventure, a mentor or helper, some sort of challenges and then a revelation and transformation to a higher quality of life and enlightenment, we can use these elements to help us tell stories and talk about a problem we solve with our products or services. Having past clients’ stories in our story bag is a great way to do this.

Similar to, but not exactly the same as a literary hero’s journey, elements of the Problem-Solving Story include:

A. CLIENT AND ISSUE (Consider this the call to adventure.)
B. STRUGGLE described through pain points and search for solutions. (These are the trials and tribulations of the consumer’s journey.)
C. ENCOUNTER WITH YOU, your business, your products / services (Congratulations! YOU are the helper / mentor here!)
D. HOW YOUR PRODUCT / SERVICE HELPED CLIENT. (This is part of the transformation process of your client. How / when did they see the light? What was the revelation?)
E. **IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE NOW.** (There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home.)

Example:

*My client Louise was worried about her son staying on the basketball team and getting into college because his grades were so low. He was bright but was having a hard time keeping his work organized and turning in papers on time. He wanted to be an engineer, and his math and science grades were ok, but he was really struggling every night with everything else. Arguments every night over dinner and on the weekends about homework and grades were starting to wear on the family. And he HATED sitting on the bench during games.*

*Then Louise got Jason started with a tutor with us at Learning Academy. Since we help high school students with subject matter AND organizational skills, kids are able to bring up their grades with tools we teach WHILE we’re working on assignments together.*

*Now Jason is starting on the basketball team and is feeling much more optimistic about his college options. They even just stayed home as a family last Friday night and watched a movie together – with no arguments about homework!*  

Try it at home!

Stories like this are good to have on hand because they’re so powerful when you’re networking. Whether it’s part of a weekly presentation you do at a BNI meeting or something you say at a Chamber luncheon or at the bus stop with the parents while you’re waiting for the school bus, stories aren’t threatening and they convey the heart of what we do by telling about the problems we solve. Then other people can think of folks they know who have those same problems and make a connection for you!

We would love for you to share with your colleagues the episodes you found helpful. Better yet, mention the podcast at the next networking event you attend!

If you want more networking tips or you want to share a joke, follow us on IG: @biznetworkingmentor or @networkingSteve.

Remember, your network is your net worth, so make it count!