



Storyteller Tactics: Archetypes © 2023 Steve Rawling. All rights reserved. Published by Pip Decks. Storyteller Tactics: Archetypes and Pip Decks are a registered trademarks of Chxrles Ltd.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in any database or retrieval system without the prior written permission of Chxrles Ltd.

If you need permission, you'll have to ask. Ask, because you never know (we may say yes).

The information in this document is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing. As a reader you need to accept full responsibility for your actions and should consult with a professional about your own circumstances before following anything in the deck. Results are not guaranteed (heck, nothing in life is guaranteed).

Further, the author and publisher have used their best efforts to proof and confirm the content of the files, but you should proof and confirm information such as dates, measurements, and any other content for yourself.

The author and publisher make no warranties of any kind, express or implied, with regard to that content or its accuracy.

For more information, please write to:

Chxrles Ltd,
3 Torquay Grove,
Stockport, SK2 7BB

E-mail: support@pipdecks.com

Website: pipdecks.com | Twitter: @pipdecks | Instagram: PipDecksHQ

This PDF version of Storyteller Tactics: Archetypes was published in the UK.

Storyteller Tactics Archetypes



Connect with your audience on a deeper level; use characters they already know and love. Archetypes are characters who keep showing up in stories told down the centuries. The names change, but we still recognise a rebel or a ruler. Why? Because these are some of the people we meet – or become – on our journey through life.

Archetypes help us understand parts of our lives that are both *unique* and *universal*, like falling in love or becoming a parent. Draw from this cast of familiar figures to make your story more relatable.

Archetypes are shared and symbolic, not literal.

You don't have to be a CEO to act like *The Ruler*, you don't need to be Picasso to see like *The Artist*. These instincts are inside all of us. Successful brands know this. They use archetypes to help us bond emotionally with a faceless business.

How to use the Archetype cards

Each card depicts a common archetype – the hero of your story. But it also shows that archetype's dark sides:

↑ too much and ↓ too little.

Channelling *The Warrior* helps you be assertive, but:

↑ Too much *Warrior* = *The Bully*.

↓ Too little *Warrior* = *The Pushover*.

Combine cards to create over 100 characters to play with (e.g., *The Sage* + *The Explorer* = *The Mapmaker*).

Dive straight into the deck to find the right archetype for your own story, or choose one of the 📖 **Recipe** cards to walk you through the process:

- 📖 **The Way Ahead:** your hero is on a journey through life. Which archetypes will help them grow?
- 📖 **Raise The Stakes:** supercharge your stories with conflicts between archetypal good and bad guys.
- 📖 **Build Your Brand:** develop an archetypal character for your organisation that we can connect with.

Tip: not all archetypes are human. We easily relate to animals as story characters too. Brands like Ferrari, Puma, Playboy and Dove use animals as part of their identity.

*Psst! We've included some key cards from **Storyteller Tactics** to help you put your archetypes to work!*



The Way Ahead

**Form a strong bond with your customer or user.
What do they want to become? How can you help?**

Use archetypes to map out the *emotional* journey you want your user or customer to take. Offer a pathway based on their instincts and feelings. Make a connection that goes deeper than rational analysis. Grab them by the heart, and the head will follow.

Tip: explore the basics of this approach with  **Hero & Guide** from *Storyteller Tactics*.



The Way Ahead

Personal growth:

“Our user needs to be more like [insert archetype] in order to [insert goal].
And we’ll help them by _____.”

“Our user needs to act more like The Sage to impress her boss. We’ll help with daily tips in our newsletter.”

Regaining balance:

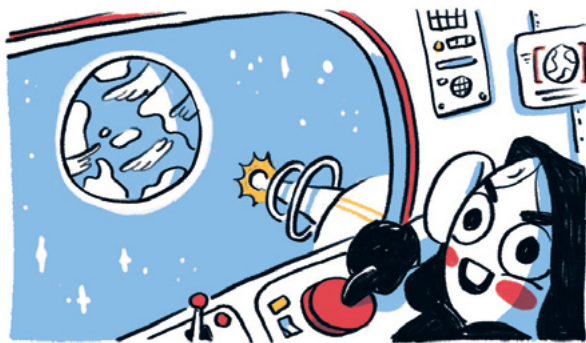
“Our user needs to be less of a [insert dark-side archetype  or ] in order to [insert goal].
And we’ll help them by _____.”

“Our user needs to be less of a Pushover in order to make his kids’ bedtime easier. We’ll help with parental controls on their games.”

Changing life stages:

“Our user needs to leave behind [insert archetype] and become [insert archetype], because their life is about to [insert change].
And we’ll help them by _____.”

“Our user needs to leave behind The Ruler and become The Innocent because they are starting a new career. We’ll help them by running workshops to improve listening skills.”



Raise The Stakes

**Make us root for the ‘good guys’ in your story.
Give them a great ‘bad guy’ to contend with.**

Put an archetypal hero into conflict with a dark-side villain to create tension in your story.

Heroes: are selfless, creative and nurturing. They act for the group and the long-term good.

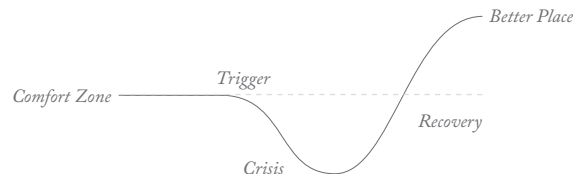
Villains/dark side: are selfish, destructive and cruel. They act for themselves and short-term gain.

Raise The Stakes

1. Your user is the hero

Plot your user’s journey with the Structure cards from *Storyteller Tactics*, like 🗡️ *Man In A Hole*.

Which archetype (or combination) best represents your hero at the start? How might this change?



2. Give them a strong villain

Which dark-side archetype wants to stop your hero? Perhaps the hero is fighting his/her own dark side.

3. You are the ally

How do you help your hero overcome the villain? Which archetype best represents your role in the user’s journey? What gift do you offer your hero? How do you help them grow?

“Our hero is a mature student. She’s The Innocent/ Companion. Her villains are imposter syndrome (“I don’t belong here”) and a Hedonist room mate (“work is dull, let’s party!”). We’ll help her join a network of mature students and become The Sage.”



Build Your Brand

Tell consistent stories that build trust with colleagues and customers.

Everything you do, from the way you run meetings to the colour of your logo, tells a story about you. Use archetypes to define your workplace culture. Establish your public-facing brand on the same solid foundations. Tell stories inside and outside your workplace that show your *corporate* character in action.

Tip: use 🎬 **Movie Time** from to create a range of ‘for example...’ stories that bring your brand characteristics to life.

Build Your Brand

Pick an archetype (or combination) that creates a strong link between your organisation and its audience.

1. Align your values

As a [insert archetype] brand:

- We believe _____ matters more than \$£€.
- Our mission is to _____.
- We expect each other to _____.
- We hate it when _____.

Find out if your colleagues/customers see you this way too.

2. Be consistent and authentic

As a [insert archetype] brand:

- Our tone of voice is _____.
- Our style is _____.
- Our mood is _____.
- If we had a theme tune, it'd be _____.

Write your next social media post in this archetype's voice.

3. Show your character in action

As a [insert archetype] brand:

- We always _____.
- We would never _____.
- We love it when you _____.
- When things go wrong, we _____.

Tell a story about you helping one user achieve their goal.



The Ruler

Take the lead. Be the commanding presence. Lay down the laws. Protect fragile order.

You take centre stage. You have authority, you call on tradition, you seek mastery. You expect and show loyalty. Preserver of all that's good and reliable in the status quo. You thrive when your realm thrives.

Characters: Queen Elizabeth II, Barack Obama, Aragorn, Mufasa in *The Lion King*.

Brands: Hugo Boss, Rolex, LinkedIn.

Dark sides

⬆ The Tyrant: power-crazed dictator, the Selfish Giant.

⬇ The Abdicator: shirks responsibilities.

The Ruler

Take the lead, this is your time.

This is you when: you know you've got this. You are on top of your brief. You understand the tradition you're part of and why it's right to take a tried-and-tested approach. You give clear instructions and have high expectations.

You say: "Follow me", "This is how we do things", "Don't be hasty", "Stick to what works", "I need you to...", "Do your best".

Your gift to others: order, security, structure. A goal to follow. A chance to serve. A tradition to belong to. A body of law. Permission to develop.

Combined with other archetypes

The Ruler + Sage = Judge

+ Companion = Mentor

+ Warrior = Strategist

+ Explorer = Pioneer

+ Caregiver = Matron

+ Rebel = Revolutionary

+ Artist = Patron



The Caregiver

Protect and nourish. Be the supportive arm around our shoulder. Allow others to thrive.

You focus on others, even to the point of sacrificing yourself. A good listener, keeper of wisdom from the past. You create comfort zones and put safety first. You delight in the young and respect the old.

Characters: Florence Nightingale, Patch Adams, Gareth Southgate, Mrs Weasley, Mama Bear.

Brands: Persil, Volvo, Nivea, BUPA.

Dark sides

⬆ The Nanny: smothering, infantilising, risk averse.

⬇ The Neglector: indifferent, hard hearted.

The Caregiver

There's no place like home.

This is you when: you feel pride in the achievements of 'your people'. You listen and pay close attention to feelings. You give with no strings attached. You are the safe harbour at the beginning and end of adventures.

You say: "How do you feel?", "I'm listening", "How can I help?", "Safety first", "When you're ready", "I feel...", "Might we..."

Your gift to others: protection and nurturing. A wholesome meal, prepared with love. Unconditional support. Space to grow.

Combined with other archetypes

The Caregiver + Sage = Therapist
 + Ruler = Surgeon
 + Warrior = Advocate
 + Lover = Matchmaker
 + Magician = Healer
 + Companion = Samaritan



The Innocent


Born anew. See the world with fresh eyes. Vulnerable but wondrous, full of potential.


You value what is pure, good and right in a tired old world. Eyes wide with wonder. You are a fresh start, the green shoots of recovery. Mighty oaks grow from tiny acorns, if only they are given the chance.

Characters: new-born babies, Greta Thunberg, Forrest Gump, Maria in The Sound of Music, Spring lambs.

Brands: Dove, baby food, organic products.

Dark sides

 The Victim: vulnerable, needy, dependent.

 The Cynic: jaded, pessimistic, distrustful.

The Innocent

Keep it simple, keep it pure.

This is you when: everything seems fresh and new. You feel a childlike wonder in the world. You value purity and simplicity above shiny sophistication. You seek a safe haven. You are gathering your strength, ready to grow.

You say: “Keep it simple”, “So much to learn”, “Is this safe?”, “Can you help?”, “How does this work?”, “Back to basics”, “Let’s start again”.

Your gift to others: a chance to see without cynicism. Innocence regained. A fresh start. Something to watch over. Permission to care.

Combined with other archetypes

The Innocent + Warrior = Underdog
 + Ruler = Apprentice
 + Sage = Learner
 + Companion = Playmate
 + Jester = Free Spirit
 + Caregiver = Sibling
 + Artist = Naive/Folk Art



The Jester


Let the games begin. Roll the dice and take a chance.
There's always a funny side to life.


You happily play for fun, rather than playing to win. Boredom is your Kryptonite. You love being in the spotlight. Make 'em laugh, but remember there's many a true word spoken in jest.

Characters: Tina Fey, Chris Rock, Mr Bean, Loki, cheeky monkeys, playful kittens.

Brands: Haribo, Old Spice, betting companies.

Dark sides

 The Fool: prankster, trickster, gambler, show off.

 The Bore: solemn, self important, dull.

The Jester

It's only a game. Have fun, take a chance.

This is you when: you play fair. You're lost in the joy of a game. You laugh out loud as you realise something new and unexpected. You see the upside, the funny side, the flip side.

You say: "Come play", "Your turn next", "Haha!", "Have you heard the one about...", "Only kidding!", "Cheer up!", "Give them a chance!".

Your gift to others: a playground, fun and fair play. Boundless optimism. Laughter, the best medicine. Truth in jest. Forget your troubles.

Combined with other archetypes

The Jester + Caregiver = Therapy Clown
 + Innocent = Merry Fool
 + Warrior = Hactivist
 + Sage = Riddler
 + Magician = Shapeshifter
 + Rebel = Provocateur
 + Explorer = Taboo Breaker



The Rebel

**Demand more. The status quo is not good enough.
Some rules are meant to be broken.**

You are an agent of chaos, raging against the machine. You defy the old order, to usher in the new. You are impatient, an early adopter, a fire starter, an icon breaker. You bring giants to their knees.

Characters: Rosa Parks, Han Solo, Fantastic Mr Fox.

Brands: Virgin, Harley Davidson, Extinction Rebellion, Black Lives Matter.

Dark sides

↑ The Cheat: liar, fraudster, breaks rules for selfish gain.

↓ The Stickler: rule-bound, always by the book.

The Rebel

Move fast and break things.

This is you when: you're itching to get started, but you're being held back. You know the rules are stopping you from doing the right thing. You've spotted a gap in your opponent's armour.

You say: "Some rules are meant to be broken", "Revolution, not evolution", "Something's gotta give", "Are you gonna take that?".

Your gift to others: a crowbar, a lock pick, a placard, a protest song. A good kick up the backside. Permission to experiment and take risks.

Combined with other archetypes

The Rebel + Ruler = Usurper

+ Caregiver = Tough Love

+ Jester = Gambler

+ Explorer = Prototyper

+ Magician = Heretic

+ Sage = Innovator

+ Warrior = Liberator



The Warrior

**Fight the good fight. Actions speak louder than words.
Rally others to your cause.**

You stand in harm's way if it's the right thing to do. Disciplined and determined, you train hard and lead by example. You pick your target, then strike. Defend those who cannot defend themselves.

Characters: Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Margaret Thatcher, Muhammad Ali, Henry V, crouching tiger.

Brands: Nike, Royal Marines, McAfee.

Dark sides

↑ The Bully: mercenary, thug, brawn over brains.

↓ The Pushover: unassertive, avoids conflict.

The Warrior

Fight the good fight with all thy might.

This is you when: you're aiming high. You're sparring, enjoying healthy competition. You feel strong. Head down, gritted teeth, get on with it. Doesn't it feel good when that training pays off?

You say: "Where there's a will, there's a way", "Fight fire with fire", "Less talk, more action", "Just do it", "I need ammunition, not a ride".

Your gift to others: a banner to follow, a cause worth fighting for. Weapons and armour. Strategy and tactics. Training, discipline, boot camp. Esprit de corps.

Combined with other archetypes

The Warrior + Ruler = Captain

+ Rebel = Freedom Fighter

+ Companion = Comrade

+ Caregiver = Guardian

+ Explorer = Invader

+ Jester = Spy

+ Innocent = Conscientious Objector

+ Sage = Campaigner



The Lover

Seek beauty and pleasure. We're here for a good time, not a long time. Live in the moment.

You bring harmony and intimacy. You thrive in the realm of the senses. What matters is right here, right now, not the long-planned future. Seek pleasure and share it with others. You hold our hearts in your hand.

Characters: Helen of Troy, Romeo & Juliet, Jessica Rabbit, the Cadbury Bunny.

Brands: Victoria's Secret, L'Oréal, Lindt.

Dark sides

⬆ The Hedonist: shallow, easily tempted, over indulged.

⬇ The Utilitarian: cold, calculating, unfeeling.

The Lover

Can you feel it?

This is you when: you have a song in your heart and the sun on your skin. You delight in how it feels, not what it means or costs. You lose yourself in something or someone. You share secrets, reveal vulnerabilities, build intimacy.

You say: "How does this feel?", "Find your passion", "Do what you love", "You're worth it", "You and me, against the world", "I feel so alive".

Your gift to others: indulgence, luxury, a well-deserved treat. A trip to an art gallery or a spa. Pleasure taken seriously. Lust for life. Permission to be intimate.

Combined with other archetypes

The Love + Companion = Go-Between

+ Artist = Muse

+ Magician = Intoxicant

+ Rebel = Forbidden Love

+ Caregiver = Party Host

+ Explorer = Pleasure Seeker

+ Jester = Temptation



The Companion

It's good to belong. We stand together, equals in a circle of friends. You're one of us.

You are happiest among friends. You're one of the gang, down to earth, authentic and humble. Stay real. Keep our feet firmly on the ground.

Characters: John Watson, bridesmaids, Friar Tuck, Sancho Panza, Winnie the Pooh, labradors.

Brands: eBay, KFC, most DIY products.

Dark sides

⬆ The Slob: lazy, unambitious, small-town attitude.

⬇ The Snob: aloof, elitist, reserved, stand-offish.

The Companion

Down to earth.

This is you when: you are with old friends. No nonsense, no airs and graces: the real you. It's more important to get along than to get ahead. You feel loyal to the group. They've got your back. You always do your share.

You say: "Keep it real", "No frills", "One of us", "Can't we just get along?", "Too big for your boots", "Fine words don't put food on the table".

Your gift to others: a place to belong, folks to hang out with. Humility, fallibility. Remind us that nobody's perfect. Space to be authentic.

Combined with other archetypes

The Companion + Ruler = Networker

+ Caregiver = Servant

+ Explorer = Sherpa

+ Warrior = Ally

+ Sage = Academician

+ Jester = Carnival Troupe



The Explorer


Discover by doing. Keep on moving. Imagine what you'll find over the next horizon.


You travel light. You pore over maps, but they're no substitute for being there. Curious and resourceful, you point the way for others. Here be monsters. But there's gold in them hills too.

Characters: Indiana Jones, Lara Croft, Amelia Earhart, Ernest Shackleton, the condor, the albatross.

Brands: Jeep, navigation apps, North Face.

Dark sides

 The Wanderer: rootless, homeless, lost. Eternal tourist.

 The Homebody: incurious, dwells in the comfort zone.

The Explorer

Get out of your comfort zone.

This is you when: you are staring out of the window, wishing you were somewhere else. You're curious about what's beyond the map. You've found something other people will want to see.

You say: "Keep moving", "What's over there?", "Come see", "Let's try", "It'll be an adventure", "We've gotta get out of this place".

Your gift to others: map and compass, boots and backpack. Trusted guide. Knows the map and its limits. Permission to hit the road.

Combined with other archetypes

The Explorer + Artist = Translator

+ Rebel = Trespasser

+ Sage = Navigator

+ Warrior = Vanguard

+ Ruler = Settler

+ Companion = Guide

+ Caregiver = Basecamp



The Artist

Find patterns in the chaos. Free your mind and the rest will follow. Show us a new way.

You delight in seeing “*a world in a grain of sand or heaven in a wildflower*” – William Blake. The most important ideas can be hardest to express, but you teach us signs, symbols and metaphors.

Characters: Picasso, Frida Kahlo, Lennon & McCartney, the bird of paradise, the spinning spider.

Brands: Apple, LEGO, Post-It notes.

Dark sides

↑ The Poseur: style over substance, irrational, impractical.

↓ The Pedant: logical, literal, tin-eared.

The Artist

See with new eyes.

This is you when: you can't wait to put pen to paper. You're captivated by beauty, lost in the moment. Look beneath the surface. Dance to a different beat. Join the dots for the rest of us.

You say: “It's like...”, “Picture this”, “Look closer”, “Do you see what I mean?”, “It's really hard to put into words, but...”.

Your gift to others: a new way of seeing. New light. Perspective, abstraction and choreography. Signs, symbols and metaphors. Blank canvas and a palette of colours. Space to develop talent.

Combined with other archetypes

The Artist + Sage = Storyteller

+ Ruler = Trendsetter

+ Jester = Entertainer

+ Rebel = Iconoclast

+ Explorer = Avant-Garde

+ Warrior = Propagandist

+ Magician = Illusionist

+ Companion = Artisan



The Magician

Attempt the impossible. Dream up things that don't exist. Transform the mundane world.

You make our jaws drop. You imagine new worlds, hiding in plain sight. You show us that change will come. Anything is possible. You meet every challenge with “what if” and “why not?”.

Characters: Houdini, Penn & Teller, Sabrina, Mary Poppins, Dumbledore, the butterfly, the unicorn.

Brands: Disneyland, AI, ‘miracle’ diets.

Dark sides

⬆ The Illusionist: snake oil, sleight of hand. Unicorn chaser.

⬇ The Sceptic: unimaginative, rationalist, in denial.

The Magician

Nothing is impossible.

This is you when: you're dreaming, your mind wandering free. You've spotted something new. You've granted somebody's wish. Your work makes people say: “Wow, how did you do that?”.

You say: “Imagine”, “What if”, “Why not?”, “Let go of that, try this”, “It's a long shot but...”, “What might this mean?”, “Do you realise?”.

Your gift to others: wish fulfilment. Transformation from one way of being to another. New possibilities. A window into another world. A break from relentless certainty.

Combined with other archetypes

The Magician + Artist = Visionary

+ Ruler = Shaman

+ Warrior = Entrepreneur

+ Explorer = Scientist

+ Sage = Alchemist

+ Lover = Enchanter

+ Caregiver = Faith Healer

+ Innocent = Idealist



The Sage

**The truth will set you free. See it first, tell it straight.
Gain wisdom and understanding.**

You study hard to discover how things really are. You feel grounded and certain when you know your stuff. People regard you as an expert. Truth is the path to wisdom. Everyday is a school day.

Characters: David Attenborough, Marie Curie, Yoda, Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, wise owls.

Brands: Google Analytics, BBC News, Websters.

Dark sides

↑ The Ideologue: dogmatic, inflexible, blind to nuance.

↓ The Idiot: ignorant, blinkered, unwilling to learn.

The Sage

Speak truth to power.

This is you when: you know your stuff, inside and out. You trust your method. You just had a lightbulb moment. You're proud when others recognise your expertise. You're aware of your own biases. Your dishonesty detector is finely tuned.

You say: "Know thyself", "Follow the science", "Trust the technique", "We've been here before", "See for yourself", "You can't argue with facts", "There's no mystery".

Your gift to others: the whole truth. Data and the tools to understand it. Crystal ball, magic mirror, X-ray specs.

Combined with other archetypes

The Sage + Explorer = Mapmaker

+ Ruler = Lawmaker

+ Rebel = Reformer

+ Warrior = Engineer

+ Caregiver = Tutor

+ Companion = Citizen

+ Magician = Inventor

+ Artist = Stargazer



Hero & Guide

Stop talking about yourself. Make your user the Hero of your story. You play a supporting role: the *Expert Guide*.

For every Luke, there's a Yoda. And as the little green fella might say "Hero of every story not you are." Tell us what your *Hero* is trying to achieve. Then show us how you guide them on their journey and what special gift you offer them along the way.

Hero & Guide

Get a fresh perspective on your user's journey and how they might respond to your ideas.

1. Map your user's journey: where are they now? What is their problem? Where do they want to be?
2. Where do you come in to their journey as an *Expert Guide*?

The Explorer

You value: new experiences

You say: "leave your comfort zone"

You give: map or compass

The Sage

You value: wisdom, knowledge

You say: "educate yourself"

You give: book and crystal ball

The Muse

You value: creativity, imagination

You say: "express yourself"

You give: paint and canvas

The Rebel

You value: disruption, radical change

You say: "break the rules"

You give: crowbar or lock pick

The Defender

You value: safety, security

You say: "protect your treasures"




You give: armour and padlock

The Warrior

You value: putting things right

You say: "fight the good fight"

You give: weapons and tactics

3. Use the story arc cards from *Storyteller Tactics* –  *Rags To Riches*,  *Man In A Hole* or  *No Easy Way* – to develop your *Expert Guide* story.



Good & Evil

Tap into strong feelings of right and wrong in your audience. Bring a moral conflict into your story.

In a simple story, you set up a battle between *Right vs Wrong* (with you on the side of the angels). But you can also show tough choices: when two *Rights* collide or we must choose the lesser of two *Evils*. We love this kind of complex storytelling, which is why *Breaking Bad* won so many awards!

Good & Evil

Jonathan Haidt identifies six basic moral conflicts:

- care vs harm;
- fairness vs cheating;
- liberty vs oppression;
- authority vs subversion;
- loyalty vs betrayal;
- purity vs filth.

Simple Conflict Story


Which side does your project take in any of these battles? For example, if you're trying to reduce plastic waste, the conflict is *purity vs filth*.

Complex Conflict Story

The German philosopher Friedrich Hegel said that "genuine tragedy is not a conflict between right and wrong, it is a conflict between two rights."

Does your project try to balance one competing good against another, or help us choose the lesser of two evils?

For example, if you're developing a way to encourage whistleblowers to report abusive behaviour at work, that involves *care vs harm*, but also *loyalty vs betrayal*.

Use  **Five Ts** from *Storyteller Tactics* to play around with ways to highlight the conflict at the heart of your story.



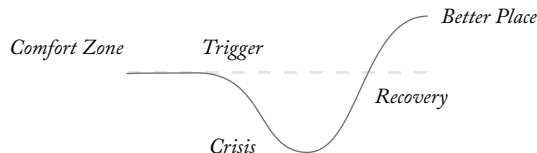
Man In A Hole

This is the story of your first day at school or your first job. It's every fear you faced and every lesson you've learned.

You're doing OK minding your own business. Suddenly, something takes you out – a pandemic strikes, you lose your job or get divorced. You pick yourself up and carry on, a little older and wiser. Anyone can fall into a hole, but you can't fall out. You've got to climb. This is where you show your strength.

Man In A Hole

American novelist Kurt Vonnegut said “nobody ever lost money telling the story of a man in a hole.” It has five basic beats:



- *Comfort zone*: this is not a bad place but something is missing, some potential is going to waste.
- *Trigger*: something knocks you down. Either you were unlucky or you weren't paying attention.
- *Crisis*: you're down in a hole, but in stories we find treasure in the dark. This is where you find or learn something valuable.
- *Recovery*: you put what you've learned to good use and start climbing back.
- *Better place*: you are older and wiser, you won't get knocked down so easily next time.

Think about your own project in these terms.

What's your version, as innovators?

What's the version you could tell about your user?

For example, can you tell a 2020 story about the pandemic, using Man in a Hole?



Movie Time

Tell me a story and a little movie starts playing in my head. I literally “see” what you mean.

Your brain processes language by running a visual simulation. Abstract concepts, theories and data are hard to visualise because nothing actually happens. What’s the movie playing in your head when I say “sustainability” or “accessibility”? There isn’t one. Give me a moment that brings those abstracts to life.

Movie Time

1. Start with the key concept or main point you want to get across. Find a movie moment that helps me “see” what you mean.

a. “ACTION”

- Where are we?
- What is happening?
- What happens next?

b. Emotion

- Who is involved?
- What is at stake?
- How does it feel?

2. Once you’ve set the scene with *Action* and *Emotion*, we’re ready to listen to the point you’d like to make.

a. Meaning

- What has changed, what have we learned?
- Why does this matter?
- What do you want us to think or do differently now?

Get into the habit of movie-checking your own writing. At the end of a paragraph, ask yourself “what’s the movie playing in their heads now?” If the answer is “none”, you’re not telling a story.

Develop stories for visual presentations or video content using ✂ *Show & Tell* from *Storyteller Tactics*.