



Powerful Storytelling for Web 2.0 **Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero & Kate Yandoh**

LORRIE: This is Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero of Red Hot Copy, and you're in the right place for Powerful Storytelling for Web 2.0.

I have a very special guest on with me today named Kate Yandoh and Kate is the owner of Business Storytelling, so I knew when it came time to do this topic she would be a perfect person to go-to to tell us about storytelling.

Let me tell you a little bit about Kate. First of all Kate Yandoh grew up in the frozen regions of upstate New York. She's an East Coast gal and when she was 22 she actually started her own business in the Netherlands creating and teaching customized English courses to European executives and diplomats.

She actually worked with clients like BMW, Royal Dutch Shell, the Dutch secret service – that's a little scary – and even the Vatican. Kate traveled quite a bit and she felt that she got more education than her students.

When she came back to the U.S. she started working for a little company called Coca Cola and she wrote presentations for the CEO as well as other senior execs. She worked very closely with their marketing department and led all sorts of projects for Coca Cola.

She continues working there. She's also helped co-manage Coca Cola Radio and she has other freelance clients as well. Her other clients are like Home Depot. These are corporate people; these are big time people trusting their copywriting assignments to Kate; Aflac, the Sea Island Resort, Harrah's Entertainment, and many others.

Kate also is the senior editor of Motto Magazine. I don't know if you've seen that or not, but it's a really fun magazine for our times. It's kind of green and funky and really does talk about Web 2.0 quite a bit. It's a very modern magazine.

She has blogs and podcasts that she does with her Motto and she is also a regular contributor to PINK Magazine and Atlanta Woman Magazine and is probably one of the few people, certainly none that I know of, who has actually written for both Jane Fonda and Mike Ditka; talk about the opposite sides of the spectrum!

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Kate has actually worked with me and my elite Platinum program for over a year now and she is a copywriter that I trust as really knowing her stuff, really making copy interesting and making it sing. She knows how to do it.

She is here to help us infuse storytelling into our copy. So, Kate, welcome to the line. Thank you for showing up.

KATE: Thank you. Thank you for that great introduction. I'm a little impressed by myself now.

LORRIE: You should be, exactly.

KATE: You make me sound great. I like it.

LORRIE: Well, you know you earned every bit of it. Speaking of storytelling, let's talk about your story. How did you get into using storytelling as the emphasis of your business?

KATE: That came from a lot of the work that I had done, both when I was teaching people abroad and very often my students were executives, they were at a certain level, but they really felt that they couldn't get things done in conducting business in English. Their English was generally good enough to travel and adequate, but they didn't feel they could really get their story, get their message across.

They'd say, "If I could just sit and talk like I talk to somebody over dinner in my own language, just really explain to them, tell them what we're about, I would be able to close this deal or do this presentation."

When I went to work for Coke and I wrote for so many different people, that is a company built on a story. Really, the product is sugar and some water and magic, but it's all about this story that people attach to it; for the moments that they have, the memories, the way it makes them feel. It's an expertly spun story.

So everything that I worked on for them always had elements of storytelling in it; a lot drawn from Coke's heritage but also they are experts in figuring out what connects with people and what makes them feel something. That's what makes it different. It's not so much the product; it's the feeling and the association that you

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have. People classify themselves, "I'm a Coke person," or "I'm a Pepsi person." It becomes part of their identity.

When a brand can do that it can really teach you a lot. So I would say those different ways of conveying something, both the people with the new language and then using this big brand really helped me kind of focus on it. That's the essence. No matter what you're doing; if you're making a postcard or a speech or a Web site. What's your story? What are you saying? Why should people care?

LORRIE: Right. "What's your story?" I like that. "What's your story?"

KATE: Yeah, and who doesn't want to hear that?

LORRIE: Yeah, or share their own story, right?

KATE: Right, right.

LORRIE: You told me a story once and I want you to share it with our listeners about – I don't want to give it away – but you were young and you were at a fair-

KATE: Oh, that one. Well, I guess that would probably be my earliest start with storytelling.

I was in kindergarten. It was my last day of kindergarten and I was very much the runt of the litter. I started school a year early. As you know, you've seen me, I'm short to begin with, and I also, just like now, like to overdress.

So on the last day of school I had this beautiful white smocked dress that I insisted on wearing and our class went on a little trip to a local farm. You know, we walked around and we saw the animals.

At the end of the day there was this game and it was called the Greased Pig Contest. There was a fenced in area, a pen and a pig that they put Crisco on and then the kids could run around and you had to try to catch it. Whoever caught it, the teacher said, would win this prize.

Well, the prize was this giant box of saltwater taffy. It was huge; it was literally like the size of my body. And I thought, "Oh, I want that." Think of it, like your body made of candy. What could be better?

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But the teacher was like, “No, Katie, you stay here and sit with me.” You know, little people are always the pet. “Sit right here. You’ll get all dirty.”

So I sat at the beginning of the contest, but the minute she looked away I thought, “That’s it. I’m going for it.”

I went through the slats of the fence, I ran, and because I really liked stories about horses I thought, “You know what? I’m going to jump on top of the pig and I’m going to ride it.”

So I jumped on top, I rode it, I slapped away all the other little hands on it, and so I was the last person on there. But right at the end, the pig decided he would teach me a lesson and he stopped really fast right before his trough, and flipped me off into the pig trough.

LORRIE: This is such a visual.

KATE: It’s just like Charlotte’s Web, you know, with the place where the rat lives; kind of like that. So that’s where I went. You can imagine I was a mess, but to her credit the teacher did give me the candy and I had to go home on the school bus because we were later.

I remember sitting on the bus and all the kids were like, “You stink! Gross!” which I did. I didn’t care but I remember thinking, “Oh my gosh, when I get home I had better have something really good to say because when my mother sees me, you know, hair, dress, filth, the apple cores and who knows what, I’m going to have to have a really good story.”

LORRIE: You learned how to tell stories to get out of trouble early on!

KATE: Exactly. Well, my family is story people. They’re all big talkers, so you learn that you have to have something good if you want to stay in the mix; so you can hold your place at the Thanksgiving table.

LORRIE: So let’s bring it back around to Web 2.0 and why storytelling is so critical for us as marketers.

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KATE: What's cool, what fascinates me, one of the many things is that storytelling, of course, is as old as time itself. It's like cave people sitting around. It's part of what makes us human, really.

But in this new world and the world that's coming, that's so networked and so techy, not only is it critically important because it's always been, but it's even more critically important because of the way we live now. We interact with so many different people in a different way online. We live our lives online, we don't talk to people in the office, we e-mail them; we can go and see what people in India are doing.

So first of all, we have this interactivity where we just have all these other connections to people.

We also live in a world that seems really uncertain. We have so much information and we don't really know who to trust and that kind of takes us back to those cave people roots and the good story. A story can really absorb you. Even though we have so much information swirling around us, if there's something that's really good, we'll sit.

You know how this is, right? You should be working and you get on a Web site and all of a sudden you're sucked into the vortex.

LORRIE: Totally.

KATE: You look up and you're like, "Wow! Half an hour, gone!"

So if there's something that gets you, it will get you no matter what else you have going on. Once a good story gets your attention, all of a sudden you have time. Nobody has time. We're busy, busy, busy until there's really something that makes us care. Then all of a sudden, we're listening.

Another element about listening is that we can't really force people to listen to a marketing message anymore. It's not like in my parent's day where your TV show is sponsored by General Motors, or even in my own childhood where you had to watch commercials because there was no TiVo and things like that. You had to get a lot of messages

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But now we don't really need to get anything and we have so many things to choose from, you can't force us to care. You have to make us; you have to connect with us and make us care.

LORRIE: Yeah, I agree. It's so funny. I wonder if one of the reasons why I love reading about celebrities is like the unfolding stories in the press. I love reading about Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan, what are they up to today? Or how about Britney Spears?

KATE: Exactly, and I think those are all stories that we can all share. You can talk to anybody about Paris Hilton, it doesn't matter. You could be at the boardroom or the gas station. You could just be like, "Oh my gosh! Did you see that Lindsay video?"

"Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." They're like our virtual neighbors.

LORRIE: They are; they are. At least that's when I get a say is when it's about...

KATE: It's a good excuse to use.

LORRIE: It's a good excuse; if I'm a little embarrassed that I do get all of the celebrity rags.

KATE: I hear you. I always say like, "Well, I need to know other people in our culture are thinking because I might write about it."

LORRIE: Exactly. Also, I save it for my swipe file, too, but I'm telling you the stack is just ridiculous. I try to hide them.

Anyway, let's talk about the elements of a story that some of the listeners can actually recognize.

KATE: Sure, sure. I think this is one of my favorite quotes. It's from Anne Lamott who wrote a great book about writing called Bird By Bird, and she talks about how good writing or a good story is about telling the truth; telling the truth in an interesting way.

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So we put interest into it, but the structure of a story is pretty much the same whether you're talking about Hamlet or Spiderman III. It kind of follows a basic sequence.

First you'd have the introduction, the setting. If we're going back to the greased pig story, for example, there's this runty little girl in a white dress at the side of the trough.

The situation is that I want to get in there and grab the pig. "No, you can't. You have to sit here." Usually you have your protagonist, the hero, and an obstacle to overcome, in this case the teacher's hand/fence. There's some kind of imbalance; "Can I get it? Can I win it? Is that candy going to be mine?" Then there's the resolution.

It's that basic, "Once upon a time there was the story." I think it was Ian Forrester who said, "Facts are the king died and the queen died, and the story is the king died and the queen died of a broken heart."

So the story has something that says, "Here's what happened and here's the tension and that conflict ties into some kind of feeling."

I know on the calls with you we've heard from Harlan Kilstein. He's great about this. He talks about how people place themselves in stories. We become that person in our head that we're listening to.

LORRIE: Yeah, that's interesting. That was really important, actually, really important information. I want to clarify that to make sure the listeners understand that.

Harlan was saying that if you're reading a story you're actually putting yourself in the setting of that story. You're kind of transporting yourself into the story that you're reading which makes it so absorbing, like you were talking about earlier, right? That's what keeps your attention. I think it's called transference; I may be wrong on that; but where you overlay yourself, your experience into that story.

You're like, "I would do this; I would do that; or I wouldn't do that." Anyway, you get absorbed because you see you, and as we know in marketing or in anything, frankly, it's all about me and what's in it for me.

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KATE: Right, exactly; even if it seems really far-fetched and strange.

Think of the movies that we like to watch. Robert McKee, the great screenwriting, storytelling guy talks about how we'll pay hard-earned money to sit in the dark with strangers, we're not supposed to talk, we're not supposed to bring our own food, and we're experiencing these emotions and experiences. We're going to war, we're getting blown up, whatever, experiences that we'd never want to have, but yet we're in it for those two hours because we're absorbed by that story.

LORRIE: Right. You said something else earlier about the conflict or the friction. It's much more interesting to read something such as the king died and the queen died of a broken heart. If you look to stir up a little juice, a little emotion, I think that's going to make it a lot more powerful.

KATE: Definitely. It has that conflict and it has a real voice and a personality.

LORRIE: Right. So where do you find ideas that will appeal to your audience? Is there an "Idea Store?"

KATE: Well, yes. It's at this Web site. Write it down. I wish! Or maybe a pill. But that's kind of where the Internet, the Web comes back in. I don't know what people did before, I'm glad I didn't have to work then. I guess I would have been in the library a lot.

I think you can find so many of the ideas on the Web or you can get out and see people and talk to people; that's fantastic. But a lot of times I can't do that because I'm on a deadline and I have to immerse myself in a world that's not mine and I have to do it really, really fast.

Normally, if you just Google Google Search Tricks you'll see little tips to get better results. One of my favorite ones is a Google search option where you can choose to search blogs. I know we're going to talk about blogs a little later on, but I find if you can get blogs, say you're writing about pathological gamblers, there are blogs where they talk about their world. You'll see what their controversies are, what people write back about, their language. It gives you a sense to get inside their head. So I'll read that.

LORRIE: Are you serious? There are blogs on that kind of topic?

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KATE: There are blogs on everything pretty much.

LORRIE: There are hooker blogs?

KATE: Yes, I'm sure!

LORRIE: I never thought about there being such a variety, but you're right. The blogosphere is extensive.

KATE: Oh, yeah. And it's just www.BlogSearch.Google.com or you can just put in Google Blog Search. You can put in almost anything. You'll get some blogs if you just do a Google search, and it will come up with all kinds of stuff. The blogs might be from that community; it might be someone who writes about hookers or gamblers or whatever.

It's a quick little task for it. I know when you and I were collaborating on the project that was in England and we wanted to know why it was so horrible to get a parking ticket in London; like what's the big deal? It was something that this product was going to help people to avoid.

When I searched for blogs I put in something like "parking, London, problems" and I got all these things from tourists who were like, "This is horrible. It's so ill-marked and it cost me like \$100 and it ruined my vacation."

All of a sudden it's like, "Oh, well there's our pain. There's our hook."

LORRIE: Exactly. That's true.

KATE: And it was from a real person, so it enabled us to get that in our head because I was thinking, "Gosh, I've been in London. I've never driven in London; I don't know." There it is.

Another one that I love and you don't have to be electronically connected to access, you just have to get yourself to a bookstore, are magazines. I write for magazines, I subscribe to everything, I love magazines. But this I got from Dan Pink who wrote this fantastic book called The Whole New Mind that has a lot of great information and also a whole chapter on story.

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When you go look at a magazine, a magazine is like a roadmap to what the target audience wants, you know? People read O because they want to live like Oprah. We're looking at In Style because really we'd like to be that celebrity and have that house. The guys who read Motorcycle Monthly want that Harley Davidson or that BMW. So you get a direct overview of who these people are and what they want.

What Dan tells you to do, actually, is a little bit different. If I go back to my example and I were writing something about gamblers, they have magazines and in there it's kind of like with the blogs. You can see what they're interested in, what the issues are, what the words are that they use, and what fires them up.

What he says is that if you are kind of stuck for ideas, you go to the bookstore and you get five magazines. They have to be random magazines, stuff that you would never pick up. You say, "I'm going to sit down with Cat Fancy, Horseracing International, Photography, Chihuahua World." I'm kind of making those up, but there are magazines that are almost close to that, right?

So you sit down and you start looking through those and it loosens up your mind and you start making connections. You might see something in Cross-Stitch World and you're going to go, "Wait a minute, the way they explain that actually makes sense in this way." Or you might see even a color or a pattern. It's a great way to get around your old, "All right, let me try to think of something," with a blank screen. It takes you off and breaks you out of that.

So those are two of my very favorite ways to get ideas and to start to get into character, to get inside of the head of the person that I'm writing for.

LORRIE: I hadn't thought of that as far as stories, but I do that exact same trick for copy. I look at how other people do ads in the different magazines that are their target market. Now I have another purpose for those magazines.

KATE: Yeah! There could be a great anecdote in the gambler magazine. I could tweak that a little bit and make that the opening story of my sales letter.

LORRIE: What do you think of a magazine like Reader's Digest that has so many different things thrown in? Can you find stories in those kinds of magazines?

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KATE: I guess you could. When I use those I am generally looking for a specific target audience or a specific demographic or feeling. That one, because it's meant to appeal to a broad audience, I think it definitely has utility if you're looking for kind of classic stories. Reader's Digest probably always has someone who overcame an illness. They seem to be a lot about redemption type stories.

LORRIE: Yeah, very formulaic.

KATE: But you can find classic things that are classic because they work. I think that could be a good source if you could maybe take that framework and then put something on top of it that applies to your target audience a little more.

LORRIE: Exactly, that makes sense. What else? How else can we find ideas?

KATE: Those are good ideas. I would say to read everything. You never know where a great idea is going to come from or where you'll find something. You never know what's going to be useful.

You know, as a copywriter, when you write for so many different audiences and different types of people, you never know where you'll find that little nugget where you'll go, "Oh, you know what? That's perfect!"

Think about the stories that you love and the stories you remember. What are your favorite movie and books that you've read a million times? Think of those stories in a more critical way. What is it about that? What kind of story is it? What kind of concept is it? Why does it stay in my head?

Then use those elements. For example, if you want to write about your own business, you can use those same elements to write something about you.

LORRIE: I was at a Mastermind meeting last week and one of the things they mentioned was that to really, really know what's in the head of your target audience, ride the bus or go to Wal-Mart or go to the mall and listen to what people are talking about. I don't know if you can find story elements in something like that, listening in on other people's conversations.

KATE: Absolutely. Oh, yeah, I have that on my cheat sheet that I have at the end as one of the ways to think like a writer is to eavesdrop on everyone. You always get something even if it might just start something in your head. You know, you're

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in line at the coffee shop. It makes life more interesting, too. I find that I, especially, tend to be impatient and instead of standing there going, "Oh God! Why can that person go a little faster?" I need to see what's going on over here, "Oh, that freaks me out."

Again, I get into a story and I don't care what time it is, because I've got something that's captivating me, at least for a little bit.

LORRIE: Right! That totally makes sense.

KATE: I'm in the story. "Oh, you should dump him," I say, and then, "Oh, yes, yes, I wanted a Latte."

LORRIE: I often try to see stories around my regular activities, too. If we go skiing with my family. It's just a starting point and then I'll build on it and take it in the direction that I want to.

KATE: Yeah, and you do a great job of that. I think that's what gives your writing so much personality. Even though people don't know you, they feel like they know you. You've created this great character and it's real because it's obvious that you do, this is your life. It's really entertaining and compelling. It's like, "Oh, yeah, what's she up to? Oh, that's cool!"

LORRIE: Thank you. Let me ask you for our listeners, where do they start? They're looking at their blank page and they have ideas, what's the first thing they do?

KATE: Well the very first place you need to start, and it may be obvious but it's really not obvious to a lot of people, is with your audience. Who are these people? You do a great job in your classes of illustrating the concept of the "target." You create that individual character. What are their characteristics? What do they look like? What do they dream about? What do they think about?

Know who you're talking to and then know what you want them to do at the end of your story. It's almost like a trip. Starting point A is the audience right now; their hopes, dreams, cares, objections, whatever. Then the destination point is what you want them to do when they finish reading this; buy your product, sign up for something, visit your Web site.

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When you have the start and you have the destination, now your story, your material, comes in in the middle. Well, what's going to get them there? What's going to get their attention? What's going to overcome their objections? What's going to give them enough information to be intrigued but not so much that they're overwhelmed?

It's about not getting caught up in ourselves. This is so classic, but we always get caught up in us because we are interesting to ourselves. If we get caught up in what we have to say, "Oh my gosh! Did I say that right?" then we forget. Wait a minute. What do we want them to do? We're not talking to ourselves; we're talking to this other person. How can we get them?

It's funny because it reminds me how not too long ago, you know how I like karaoke, and I went out with a group of people. It was after an engagement party and it was a mixed group of people. Two of the guys from the party had gone up to sing and they were all like, "Oh, I'm great at singing. I'll bring the house down," and they stunk out. People were quiet.

Going back to the bar I was thinking, "Tough, tough crowd." I wasn't really paying attention, but my husband, being a loving and fun character that he is, had gone up to the karaoke host, gave him \$20 and said, "You need to call on her and just announce her name and then she has to get up." He saw that I wasn't going to sing now. I was just going to sit back and laugh at people.

He called my name and I walked up and he said, "You know what? This had better be really, really good." I thought, "Uh-oh."

I thought, "What do I do in my life all the time? Know your audience."

So I looked around at the people that were standing there and I was thinking, "Okay, 90% men; nice hair, good clothes, nice skin; a couple people have a boa. Okay, this is not the time for hard rock or country music."

LORRIE: Was it a gay bar?

KATE: Yes, yes it was.

LORRIE: Are you serious? I love it!

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KATE: This is a time for the little black dress of karaoke; this is time for Abba, "Take a Chance on Me." I am not a great singer, but I generally have a good time. I like to make people laugh. It's kind of like sky-diving, "Now I'd better get up and do it."

So with that, of course they love it. I needed a few men to sing the backup part. It was very easy to bring up two men, and by the end, there was a big staircase by the stage and they had all come up to the staircase and they were kind of hanging from the ceiling just singing, with their drinks. It was so fun.

It's the same principle. Take a second and think about who you're talking to and what would really push their buttons.

LORRIE: You really do have to know who is on the other end, the other side of the page.

KATE: When you do that, when you're writing, it's kind of the same thing. You have to get warmed up a little bit. You can play certain music that you think these people might like; you can use your trick of setting the timer and say, "Okay, I'm just going to write for 20 minutes and see what comes out."

Just get something moving and then, very often, you'll find out. Then you can go back and look at it and say, "Okay, is this going to get me to my destination? Is this selling?"

It's a process like anything, you know. People think writing can be so arty, but I think it's more like a skill like a shoemaker or something. Don't you think? It's a craft, so the more you do it the easier it becomes and the more adept you get. You figure out things that work and you're always evolving and trying to make things better from what you did before.

LORRIE: I agree. Also, I forgot about this, but as far as getting ideas, Dan Kennedy is a huge, huge proponent of telling stories and if you read a lot of the great copywriters like Gary Halbert and John Carlton, they're always weaving stories into their copy.

At one of Dan Kennedy's events he recommended that, once a week, we get a photograph, whether clipart or a photograph; probably not of your family but it could be, but in general just random art. Write a mini story about it and at the end

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of the year you have 52 stories that you can pull from and use as starter for your copy.

KATE: Cool! That's great. It's like a habit. It's like, "Okay, I've done this 50 times. I can do it again."

LORRIE: Exactly. I want to bring up one other thing because I can almost feel the fear of people going, "You don't want me to talk too much about myself, but you want me to talk about myself. What's the balance?"

KATE: You mean how to avoid the pitfalls of talking too much?

LORRIE: Yeah, exactly. I've read stories that are rambling on. They're like, "Let me tell you about my life story."

I have a friend, I love her to death, she's great, and when I talk to her she's funny and super smart. When I read her story it's three full Web pages long. It's really, really long and it's practically from her birth into everything she's ever gone through.

I just want to hear the moment that changed you and why you're doing what you are doing today. Who you were before, what happened, and who you are now. That's all I want to know.

KATE: It's like that basic structure. A lot of times I've read people who say that when you write something go back and take out the whole beginning; cut out those paragraphs.

LORRIE: I totally agree.

KATE: You know, you're just warming up. It's fun to drop somebody in the middle. It was a couple of weeks ago you had that fun story about how you were going to get to go to the spray tan salon and you met the woman there.

We were laughing about this earlier. You talk about dropping in the middle, you could have started that story also with something like, "And there I was, standing naked like John Wayne waiting for the cool jets to hit my body."

LORRIE: Absolutely!

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KATE: You do that in your stuff all the time like your one that you sent out, "This is scandalous! Watch out!" You've got to touch people with something. And also, the people who kind of get down on themselves, you know, we have so much bad stuff we hear. I wouldn't want anymore, you know.

LORRIE: Not unless you could turn it around and kind of laugh at yourself.

KATE: Exactly.

LORRIE: I totally agree.

KATE: A little bit goes a long way. That self-deprecating, a little bit is funny, you know. It humanizes us, right? It's like salt; a little bit is tasty, but if there's too much, "I'm done."

Don't detail overload; don't get too much of a downer. Maybe cut off that beginning and always focus on the audience. Maybe show your stuff to people, read it to people, your husband, your kids or whatever. Watch and see when their eyes start to glaze over.

LORRIE: Exactly. Anything else about where to start?

KATE: I think that will kick you off pretty well.

LORRIE: I think so as well. I actually just wrote an article about this in my Ezine that you'll see later when it comes out today about personality. Personality in your writing is underrated and sometimes people get a little nervous about that. How do you actually put personality into writing?

KATE: That's a great element. If people aren't reading your stuff already, they should read the stuff that you write because you do a fantastic job with that. There are a lot of people like Wendi Friesen who spoke to us at the retreat you had awhile back. She's a hypnotist, hypnotherapist; Wendi with an "i."

LORRIE: She's at www.Wendi.com.

KATE: These people are authentic and those of you and people who are good, are not afraid of their view of the world. You put it out there and imagine, for

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example, that you're talking to a good friend. You're looking at them in the face; you're not B.S.-ing; you're not telling something that's not true, this is real.

Keep it entertaining, so play with words to keep interest; maybe drop them in the middle, maybe don't tell them everything. You mentioned reading other people like John Carlton and Dan Kennedy. They're really good.

Maybe you're thinking, "Okay, I can read all these people, but what's me?" If you're having trouble figuring out what your own writing personality might be, you can think about how you talk, you can ask people close to you to describe you.

Say, "If you had to sum me up in five words, if you were going to get on Match.com or something, what would you say?" Find that and sometimes it helps to take your writing and read it out loud. Does it sound conversational? You catch so many things if you read it out loud. I don't read as often as I should being in haste to get stuff done, but sometimes you're like, "That's so clunky," but when I'm reading it it looks perfectly fine. But it's not. It kind of takes you outside yourself and you get to hear it like another person would hear it.

Really, if none of this is working, then you can always try something like "borrow" a personality; you know, get into character. "I'm going to write this as if I am whoever." Just to kind of teach yourself and get yourself into a voice and get yourself to take some risks.

But again, don't take risks that are going to be in conflict with your audience and what you want your audience to do. Some people will say there is no line between completely offending people; everything is good publicity. I know a lot of the male copywriting giants just think you should just put it all out there and make them mad.

I'm not quite so sure. I think there are other approaches. For something to be a definite personality, it has to get attention.

LORRIE: It does have to have personality. I don't fully disagree with that. I don't try to put people off just to do it, but I also think that you shouldn't worry so much about offending somebody. If everything is plain vanilla, how boring is that? You've got to stretch yourself a little bit.

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Don't worry about what other people think about you, especially if you did what you said which is create a personality. It's kind of like a role; it's like a heightened version of you and that's one of the things I wrote about today.

In fact, I came up with a new phrase. It's called a "yarget." A yarget is a play on my famous target technique where you establish your target market and distill it down to one person and that's who you write your copy to.

Well, a yarget to me is creating the persona. It's the you.

KATE: I love it!

LORRIE: Isn't that funny? It's like, who do you want to be? Do you want to be perceived as gruff or irreverent or approachable? How would you like to be perceived? You create that shell around yourself. It doesn't even have to be you.

Dan Kennedy is not as grumpy as he appears in his writing at all. But he knows that he needs to pump up the qualities of his personality in order for his copy to stand out.

So creating a yarget; that's my contribution.

KATE: Oh, I love it! That's it! People get so afraid. It's like first of all, no one really thinks about you as much as you think about you. We have so much to think about, read, and catch up on, if it's too vanilla, just the same thing that I've seen 100 times, then it's very easy for me to click and send that right to the Delete.

LORRIE: Exactly.

KATE: Bye-bye. There's five million other things that I could be looking at. Give that personality; be that character.

Maybe you're not in your face-to-face, 3-D interaction quite like this, like you said with Dan Kennedy, but it's great to be able to do this in another arena. It's like your alter ego, like Clark Kent and Superman.

LORRIE: I love it. That's exactly what it is. It's like your alter ego and it doesn't have to be all you but it has to have parts of you and the qualities that you want to highlight, you highlight.

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KATE: Yeah, exactly. Bring them out and whatever makes sense for you and your brand and your product and how you want people to think about you, to describe you.

LORRIE: Exactly. And there's another thing that is sort of a copywriting tool. You don't have to be you. You could be like your pet writing. Your computer mouse could be writing about "how overused I am."

You can stretch a little bit, and that's perfectly fine and acceptable. One of my friends who's a copywriter, Michelle P.W., has her dog, Nick, write a column. So he writes "Woofs from Nick."

KATE: And people respond to that, don't they? It's like, "I love my dog. Oh! My dog does that!" You've already tapped into something that they care about.

LORRIE: Exactly. Or you could just swipe an identity. You could find some copy that you resonate with and kind of overlay your personality with their's.

KATE: Yeah. It's like who do you really want to be in real life if you had the boldness?

LORRIE: Like what would Paris Hilton write?

KATE: Who knows? Maybe Paris is just working with her persona and underneath it she's really very nuanced and literate. She just knows that's not going to sell anything.

LORRIE: That would be shocking and hysterical.

KATE: Maybe she could come out of prison with a really good book like when Martha Stewart went to prison.

LORRIE: That would be a miracle.

KATE: People are full of surprises, you never know.

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LORRIE: That is so true; it is so true. Let's talk about features and benefits of storytelling because there is actually a lot of structure that's similar to regular, traditional copy that you can just overlay into storytelling, don't you think?

KATE: Exactly, and you have a great way of teaching people to lay out those features and benefits. You might figure them out and make them into a list which you train people to do. But once you have that, you can take it and use a story to dramatize it.

Nobody really likes to be sold to, but if we're being sold to and we don't know it we don't mind. It's like the people sitting in the dark watching that war movie. It's like I'm interested.

I think once you figure out what they are, for example, we had the woman at one of our workshops that has that special Serenity pillow and I think we used that as an example. Remember that? It had all these different elements that you could take; it was organic and natural and it doesn't mess up your neck. You could introduce that with a story.

It's like, "I have never slept through the night; there have been ten years where I've never slept through the night and I was beginning to think that I was turning into a monster, and then I brought home this pillow. It didn't make me sneeze," or whatever.

You can take that as your framework and weave into it; that's one way you could do it. I'm sure you have some other ways you could bring those to life.

LORRIE: You could also say that you gave it as a gift to your friend or "My friend gave me this gift because I was cranky and she said, 'You just need a good night's sleep.' She gave me this amazing pillow and the very first night I tried it I woke up the next morning refreshed and it was like I'd had a massage."

You could take it in any direction. You did focus on what the benefits are meaning the emotional component of what the story is, it will really serve you in copy in particular because people, again, want to know what's in it for them.

KATE: And they can put themselves in there. It's like when I was writing speeches, a lot of times they start with a story. You stand up there and it was like, "Okay, people of CARE International, all these children are dying, and there's a

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crisis. There's X-billion dollars and we'll run out of water in five years." Things like that we automatically will kind of shut down, right? We think, "Oh, God, I can't even process that. I don't want to think about that."

But if it starts with a story about one person in a village in Kenya and this is her day, but then this project came and here's what happened and now she goes to school and her mom now has a business, then we're in it. We'll say, "Okay." And you'll remember that. We won't remember that in 2025 they'll run out of water. We'll remember what it was like for that person that we heard about.

LORRIE: That's really true and that's another great thing about storytelling. You're right. You remember a story much better and you can tell it to another person much more clearly than just facts and statistics. It sticks in your brain a lot more clearly.

KATE: Yeah, and that reminds me, I wrote this down here. This is a quote from Dan Pink that I love. It's from that book [A Whole New Mind](#), and this kind of ties into the whole Web world, Web 2.0, and he says, "When facts become so widely available and instantly acceptable, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in context and deliver them with emotional impact. That's the essence of story; context enriched by emotion."

Anybody, a kid can find the same information that a reference librarian can. If I want to know what is the temperature in Belgium right now I could find it. Who cares? Anybody could find that.

But the context and the emotion of how you frame it, that's the magic. That's what connects.

LORRIE: Exactly; that is the magic. So again, what are some of the pitfalls? We touched on a few like don't be too negative and do too much of a downer. It's okay to create pain when you express a solution right away. That's okay, but just don't go on and on.

What are some other pitfalls about storytelling?

KATE: Maybe I can talk about some of the immediate things that are out there. It kind of comes to life with some of these new tools and new platforms. If you don't mind, let's move into that a little bit and I'll show you.

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LORRIE: And you'll flag us when it's like "Pitfall!"

KATE: Red flag! Danger! Danger, Will Robinson!

LORRIE: Good, perfect. Let's talk about Web 2.0. At first I thought that was just a bunch of crap, to be honest. Whatever, they're just trying to get headlines with a new catchy little phrase.

What is Web 2.0?

KATE: Right, more jargon. It's not an absolute, laid in stone definition, but it is a very powerful concept. And the concept is that this not like a new application or something that Microsoft wants you to buy. It just means that this is the next phase of the evolution of the Internet.

At the beginning it was very much this informational medium. Now it's stuff that facilitates collaboration and sharing. People are participating in providing content in so many different ways and the Web gives them a platform to bring that content to so many different people in different forms, forms that even a few years ago were not available to the average person.

For example, one way to start thinking about that is the whole idea of a podcast. Simply put, a podcast is where you offer audio like a little radio program; it's created and it's a file. You can download it, you can put it on your iPod, put it on your computer; it goes where you go. You can consume it later. It might be updated every week, so you can subscribe to it and you get a free story every week.

These are things that you could get like on the New York Times Web site and things like that. Now, with the technology, anyone who has a microphone, some generally inexpensive software and a few ideas, can create a podcast, they can put in on the iTunes store, and in theory they have the same access to a worldwide audience as Madonna or whoever.

It's funny because the pitfall to avoid, the best podcasts are short. They are like five to 15 minutes long, you know? You get these little nuggets. Some good ones are longer and some of the professional ones that are taken from other media are a little bit longer.

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But with these podcasts you can pick and choose whatever you'd like to listen to. It's almost like you can program your own radio station. "I'm going to try listening to this or I'd like to learn about this." If you haven't been to iTunes music store, you should go and look at the podcast dashboard just to see the amazing amount of options that are out there.

Again, this is a great thing that you can use in your researching if you're trying to get ideas and you're trying to get inside the head of an audience. You come up with a great product, say, for surfers. There are a lot of surfing podcasts out there. Even though you wouldn't learn to surf just by listening, they do have podcasts that tell you that; their stories, like when people talk about the best wax that they use for their board.

A lot of these are created just by regular people who have a passion for whatever the subject is. What else is really cool is the notion that you have this access and you have this possibility, and you can use this possibility to get your story out through listening to so many different people all over the world.

On the iTunes store you'll see there's a list that will have on it the top ten podcasts and it's funny because it's a mix of things that you might know like stuff from NPR or ABC. But then there's random stuff like this thing called Coffee Break Spanish. These two people in Scotland, I love this one and I can speak Spanish with a Scottish accent now.

They give you five-minute lessons every week, and they're just two people in a coffee shop in Edinburgh and they record this thing. There's somebody called Grammar Girl and there's this manners guy. They're right next to National Geographic.

So anybody has access, literally in this case, to get their voice out. I think it's been interesting from a storytelling sense about the podcast, audio is really intimate. It's like a bedtime story. It's like, "Tell me a something, tell me a story." You hear that voice, and it's not that hard to add sound affects and bumper music at the start and the end and make it sound very smooth and professional. You can retape it and mix it. It is literally like having someone's voice with you, and because you don't have to tune in at 8:00 on Tuesday when it's on; you just take it and you consume it whenever you want.

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The other thing that makes it interesting from a marketing perspective is that if someone downloads your podcast, they've opted in, they've chosen. It's that notion of that permission marketing at least for that one time, after they hear it they may not like it, but for now they care; they've put their hand up and said, "Hey, I want to know more about surf wax or pillows or more Spanish."

LORRIE: We can be a podcast as well. What we're recording right now people can put it on their iPods. That seems to be the standard although I have a Creative and an iPod, I've never used the Creative.

KATE: Have you ever used the other one?

LORRIE: No, I don't know how.

KATE: You know that technology has taken over when all the verbiage, everything around it is all just called Pod; you know, podcast, iPod.

I love those for down time. Aren't they the best? Like when you are in line at the post office or I'm often in the car for six hours at a time. I have that and I feel like it's a good investment. I've listened to stuff, I've learned things, I'm entertained; it's like I have a really good passenger even if I don't have a passenger in the car.

LORRIE: It's like a rolling library.

KATE: I've got someone talking to me the whole time and I can talk back to them if I want. It's a great thing to start listening to these if you're at all interested and just kind of see what appeals to you and give it a try. It's really not so hard.

LORRIE: Obviously, the most interesting ones are the ones that are going to have stories. That's what keeps you absorbed and you'll remember it better, right?

KATE: Absolutely, and those are the things that people go back to. They're interesting for that, for the story, for the voice, and also for the very kind of niche, this is the same with blogs, but communities that are represented. There are things that you never knew that there are people who are passionate about this thing, and they are out there and they are communicating and sharing the content and learning from each other with these technologies.

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LORRIE: Let's talk about blogs for a minute. They're getting pretty popular. They have been for awhile, but a lot of traditional Web sites are actually turning their Web sites into a blog. That's something I have considered doing myself.

KATE: The blog, in a nutshell, is kind of like an online diary. It's a medium that you go to on the Internet. You could write about whatever you want, but the most important thing that makes a blog different from a static Web page is that it allows people to write in and comment, and it's linked to other media. It's purely network.

For example, a blog about storytelling, and there are actually a lot of those. If you Google "storytelling blog" you will find a lot of people writing about this, especially recently. It's become very hot.

You'll have a person write every week about something that interests them. They'll say, "Hey, check out this on this Web site," or "Oh, my gosh, watch this video." You can put a YouTube link in there, but this is all about networking.

People write into the blog, you can look at a blog with Analytic and see where people are reading it and what's going on.

Just to illustrate, I started blogging in what's considered the early days which was 2004, and I had heard about it because Motto Magazine put me together with someone and wanted me to start a blog.

I took some time off. I went to volunteer for the presidential election in Florida because I thought, "If I don't do something, I'll never be able to live with myself." I took two weeks and I was going to work and try to make a difference.

So I set up a blog, basically, for my parents who are elderly, who wanted to keep up with what was going on and share it with their friends. Since I taught them how to use their Mac, they were comfortable with their computer, so I would start posting things up there like what happened to me today. You know, someone spit on me or just things that happened.

I started writing, "I can't believe that people are stealing our voter registration forms and how ugly it was." A lot of the things I found out I was like, "Wow! You don't have to tell me there's a big divide between red and blue because I'm really seeing it up close and personal."

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Well, I just wrote this just for friends and family, but people started finding it and would be at this little headquarters and someone would say, "Hey, there's a TV crew here from France who wants to talk to you." So I was interviewed and a bunch of things and I didn't publicize it; I didn't do anything. I just put it out there and people wrote to me and I wrote back.

They'd say, "That's not really true." And I'd say, "Yes, here's a video that I shot," and I would put that up there. Or "Here's a picture of this really horrible racist sign that I took." It kind of put people into this experience and all these people just started finding it.

I was like, "Wow, you can do this almost without really trying. What's the possibility if you were a little more deliberate about it?"

That's what's so neat about that is that it leaves people hanging a little bit. What's going to happen next? If you're blogging and you do it a lot, wow, it's great practice for being a storyteller, to think like a writer. It's like you were saying about Dan Kennedy and writing a story every week. Yeah, you should do that and you should probably put it on a blog.

LORRIE: Why not? Exactly.

KATE: Put some questions on there and put it out there and tag it and put it on some sites. See who you get.

My sister and I have been working on a project and we have a blog for that. We're in two different cities and it started just for us to collaborate. We look at the site Analytic sometimes and we'll say, "Oh, my gosh! China? Belgium? Mexico? There's not just a few towns where our families live.

Somehow people find it and they are reading it.

LORRIE: Interesting. How do they find it? They just do a search and whatever you're doing comes up?

KATE: Yeah. They can do a search. There are ways you can register your blog on different services. Where you set up the blog you can put little keywords about it.

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It's like "I'm Blogger or Technorati. You can designate it. If I knew the mysteries of Google and Spider and search engines, I could retire, probably.

But I think blogs, generally, from what I understand tend to increase your rankings and score higher, they're seen as real content. As I mentioned earlier, there is that Google search that only searches blogs. I think more and more people use that. Journalists use it for the same reason we talked about.

"I want to talk to a real person who cares about this. I don't necessarily want to talk to a PR flack. Where's the real person who is living this and experiencing it, and what do they have to say? Let me try to find them."

LORRIE: They don't want the spin; they want the flesh and blood person. That makes a lot of sense.

KATE: Right, and it's a great way to learn how to interact with people virtually, to get people to write in to you. You have to be a little bit controversial, a little bit out there to get people to start talking to you and start talking to each other.

LORRIE: I think that's true. That's really one of the underlying things of Web 2.0, I believe, is this unity aspect of it. I know my kids are on either YouTube or MySpace from the moment they get done with their homework.

They're in the same room and they're interacting with who knows, people from all over. It's not even necessarily interacting, but they're putting their profile up there. They are underage so you can't get to their profiles. I'm not really that concerned about having a strange meeting.

KATE: Right, exactly. You've got to keep a little eye on that, I'd imagine. I'd say they are interacting in a way. It's a different way. I mean, I didn't get to do it when I was 12-years-old. Gosh! I never would have gone outside ever if I had that.

LORRIE: I know; exactly. I met this one kid who's 15 named Ali last summer at Alex Mandossian and Armand Morin's customer appreciation day. It was a Friday and he had taken off school to come to this free event. His mom drove him and he took off school to go to this Internet marketing event.

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He was kind of shy, kind of hanging back and eavesdropping on people; kind of listening. I could tell because he's the age of my kids and I'm like, "Hi, how are you? What's going on?"

He was like, "I'm listening to learn. I have this book on photography, this e-book, and I just came to learn," and all this kind of stuff.

Well, the next time I saw him was maybe eight months later at another event, Wonder Women of the Web, and he was driving a Maserati.

KATE: Oh, my gosh!

LORRIE: He's set up this MySpace page, and I don't know the details of how he got it going, but he's monetized it, bought his family a home in Beverly Hills, he's driving a Maserati and he's just the sweetest kid you've ever known.

KATE: Wow!

LORRIE: He leveraged MySpace somehow. I'll have to do another class on that when I find out exactly what he did later.

In high school is another place to really use storytelling to express your self. That's what is so fun about storytelling is that you can really express yourself.

KATE: You have an audience; you have a platform where people can get to you that you never had before. You couldn't have just sent random postal letters to all those people I'm sure he contacted on MySpace. That would never happen.

It's that social networking and all the stuff that's on there comes from actual people. It's not like a magazine or a newspaper or whatever. Those are all interactive. Just like the blog, it allows you to bring in all kinds of different media.

I know a lot of people on there; they're fans, they have their music, they have their videos, they have their photos. Then they have people's comments that you can see.

I'm not on it. I'm kind of averse to actually being on it myself, but I use it for research a lot.

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LORRIE: I hadn't thought of that but you're so right. Most people have a MySpace page. I was going through some of my Internet marketer friends and I would see that all their friends were other friends of mine, so I would ask all these people to be my friends. So now I'm collecting friends on MySpace.

KATE: Yeah, you've got to get all those friends.

LORRIE: It's like a contest.

KATE: You see entertainers, you see business people; especially this year with election campaigns. You see presidential candidates and this whole nature of like, "We're going to go out there because this is where people are now. People aren't watching the news and waiting for my commercial. They're on MySpace and I'm going to talk to them there and let them respond to me."

There's a story today, on one of the blogs that I write for if I can give a shout out to it. It's a Motto Magazine blog and the URL is www.WhatsYourMotto.com. It's a story that my friend the editor, Kevin, wrote today about how Hillary Clinton on her Web site, you know how these candidates have a theme song, whatever they play.

Well, she has a chance on her site where you can vote for nine different songs and what you think Hillary should make her theme song. Should it be Beautiful Day by U2, should it be I'm a Believer?

LORRIE: That's fantastic!

KATE: It's that whole Web 2.0 notion, "I'm going to go to you and I'm going to ask you what you think and you're going to be able to respond for me." Take a look at that; it's interesting. This is not just for little kids in their attic. These people are very well-funded.

Whatever you might think of her as an individual, these are not people who are just messing around. They realize how important this is.

LORRIE: And the better that you can tell a story, of course, the more interesting your content will be.

KATE: Absolutely.

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LORRIE: It all comes full circle, back around, doesn't it?

KATE: Yes, it becomes part of your story. Think how fast a story can spread on the Internet. Think how fast someone can pick up something and link it and all of a sudden, everybody knows.

LORRIE: You know, I forgot to mention, too, and I think this is on the www.MottoMagazine.com Web site, your interview with Steve Cox and the guy from The Secret. Which guy was that, Dennis-?

KATE: Oh, yeah. There's a podcast I did, actually with David Schirmer. He's the guy on The Secret to Australian News. He talks about checks in the mail and he gets the parking space. He's a sweet guy; fascinating.

We sat down and talked about how he got to be where he is from a broke farmer living on oatmeal to this multi-millionaire with all these businesses. He's trained people in wealth creation and how to use the stock market. He has a high school education; he has none of the traditional things that people think they need to succeed. He talked about that.

He's on MySpace. All the Secret people are on MySpace which is pretty funny. But they're all there and they're all each other's friends.

On that site there's a mixture. There's the podcast section; there are some stories from the magazine, and then there's the blog. All of that, like a lot of sites, it's integrated. It's like here's some video, there's some stuff where I can write my opinion. Those are all different storytelling mediums.

LORRIE: Exactly. It's a good example of how to integrate all of those storytelling aspects.

So in general, let's just distill this down to Web 2.0. What do they have in common, all of these areas?

KATE: You mean all of the different podcasts and the blogs?

LORRIE: I mean the blogs, the MySpace; we didn't really cover Wikis, but those are also something that let people add to freely. Hopefully they're accurate. They

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need to have those checks and balances. It's just one more space where people are interacting.

What do they have in common?

KATE: They're all places where you can tell your story using different media, whether it's words, videos, your voice; it's a platform that can enable you to link and interact with people all over the place.

The other thing they have in common, and this is the 2.0 connectivity, where it comes in, the audience is part of your narrative. The people who are writing to you and reading to you and submitting and responding, are part of creating the story. They're helping you; they're giving you that feedback.

"Hey! Are people getting this? Do people care? Is this a good story?"

LORRIE: It's immediate feedback.

KATE: Yeah, it's immediate. You don't have the mean, crappy feedback. You could argue that, actually, that's not bad because someone is listening and you've hit a nerve somewhere which is a good thing and a difficult thing to do to make that connection.

Also, they are fantastic practice for learning to think like a writer, think like a storyteller, that we talk about a little more in the handout. How do you get an idea across really concisely? How do you leave the story hanging with just enough? How do you talk about your experience in a way that makes people care, that connects to their experience? How do you get people to move in their mind or in their wallet, whatever the case may be, without actually being there in front of them?

These are all different, but those are all underlying things, I think, that make them so essential to storytelling.

LORRIE: Right, I agree. Before we get to the cheat sheet and go over the top ten, do you have any parting comments about storytelling in general?

KATE: I think, in general, it's just something that when you start paying attention to it, it's so entertaining and captivating. When you can start thinking to see the

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angle and the hook in different things and to realize that everyone is interesting; everyone has something that is fascinating.

There's a great quote from the novelist Pat Conroy that says, "If I could get all of you to tell the truth (there's the truth again; don't forget the truth) there's a novel in each of you."

So whatever it is that fires you up; and maybe it's not your business or your job. If you're looking and thinking how to get into this and you think, "Well, I don't know, I just work for this company. I can't do that. I'd get in trouble. But I kind of want to try it."

Think of what your passion is. Someone talks about this catchy word for it called otaku; it's so consuming you could stay up all night doing it. I know, Lorrie, with teenagers they probably have a sport. It might be gaming, whatever it is they love to do so much, and really if you never paid them a cent to do it they would want to do it all day long.

Find whatever that thing is that fires you up. Today I was actually at Coca Cola's new museum that they opened up. The people that collect memorabilia of Coca Cola are all over the world, thousands of them, and they are into it. Oh, my gosh! There are people dressed like Coca Cola circus clowns that have their whole face fit. It's everything. They have Coca Cola underwear and they are into and there are a lot of them.

They know each other and they meet each other. They write about stuff. There's this authentic 1928 bottle.

Find whatever that is for you and you might just want to start blogging about it. Start a podcast and put it out there and see what happens. Train yourself to be out there as a storyteller and as someone who's part of a larger community. You would be surprised at what it does for you in terms of your own marketing skills or how interacting with the world and the connections that you can make. You wouldn't be able to make them any other way.

LORRIE: That's very true. It's much more of a lasting bond when you're able to tell a story. And I love the idea of how it doesn't have to be business; just something that you're passionate about.

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Like my son plays guitar. He could write a blog or just start writing little stories around guitars.

KATE: Yeah, and you could bring it into your marketing, too, you know? Like you were saying, you talked about your dog. It's all about distinguishing what you do in a crowded marketplace.

It's like no product, of course I ended up being with Coke; the products aren't necessarily that different. Honestly, if you're a service provider, maybe some of your services aren't that different. Maybe there are a lot of people in India who could do your service, whatever. So why you? That's your story that makes people say, "Oh, no, no, no, her, because I resonate with that; I connected with that story she told about her dog, her spray can," whatever the case may be.

LORRIE: Right. Even the reason why I went into copywriting to begin with, and I won't go into the long story of it, but people love listening to it. I used to be embarrassed to say it because it was all about me, all about me, but people were just fascinated that I left my job in the corporate world as a secretary to be a writer because I wanted to stay home with my kids and over time the copywriting developed.

It was just the fact that I was motivated so much to leave the workplace. A lot of people could see themselves in that; that they wanted to be with their family.

KATE: Absolutely, and for a lot of people the entrepreneurial life is like this dream. Isn't it cool, though? "I have my own business," and people are like, "Whoa! You've got it all."

LORRIE: Let's pull out the cheat sheet and go through what's on there before we wrap up.

KATE: Sure, okay. Let's start at the top of the cheat sheet it just kind of gives you a quick overview of some of the things we talked about and maybe just touched on.

What's Web 2.0? What's a blog? What's a podcast? What's a Wiki? MySpace and YouTube. We have the URLs, the Web addresses for each of those on there so you can go check it out. I believe it's on there, but the podcasts just as I mentioned,

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just Apple's iTunes; that's the one place where you see the most podcasts in one, single interface.

LORRIE: With Apple again.

KATE: It's just true. I don't own stock in Apple; they don't give me any money; they should because I sell a lot for them. But it's just www.Apple.com/itunes. But if you just Google iTunes it will take you right to it.

Those are just the basics. If you say, "I want to explore this a little bit and see what this is all about." If you haven't been on these things, I would say don't be afraid, don't think it's just for crazy teenagers. None of these things are just for crazy teenagers. They are really important to business.

People are waking up to this whole new world and they're seeing what it does to their bottom line, so you should at least be familiar enough. Maybe you're not going to play in each of these realms 100%; just to be current and to know how to market or how to speak to people and what's going on. I think it pays to at least be conversing with what the whole thing is about.

That's the first part.

LORRIE: Then we have the Ten Ways to Pump Up Your Storytelling Muscles. This is such good information.

KATE: I'll go through that because I know it was a little glitchy and we only maybe have seven on the one that was handed out, so those of you who are looking, you can get your keyboards, or your pen if you're old school, ready to fill in the rest of them.

These are just ways to pump up your storytelling muscles. It's like I said, it's not art. It's more like a craft; it's practice.

The first one is to start really looking at people or welcoming random conversations. I did a course recently about public speaking and communicating, and our assignment the first night was to pay attention to how much you really look people in the eye; not scanning the room and pretend that I'm talking to people, but really eyeball to eyeball connecting with someone for a second or more.

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When you realize that we go through our lives, we're just driving, we've got our cell phone headset on checking out grocery store; I'm talking. We never look at anyone and we never connect with anyone which affects our lives in a lot of different ways.

When you start really looking at people and noticing things, you'll find your interactions change and you start being stimulated and getting ideas from places that you haven't before.

That's also where number two, we talked about it a bit earlier, comes in. To eavesdrop in the coffee shop and use it as subject inspiration and write about it.

Number three is how to capture all of this great stuff. You talk about this is your courses, also. Carry a notebook; those little index cards, a voice recorder, whatever works for you, to capture snippets of stories or ideas. This is especially important if you're going to get into blogging or podcasting. The key to it is simple, but it's not easy. You have to put content out there all the time or people stop looking and people stop caring.

It's hard. Sometimes you think, "I've got nothing to write about; I've got nothing to say." Stockpile those little things. That snippet might just be that overheard conversation about, "Oh, my gosh! I can't believe now that people in Starbucks use Starbucks as a place to fire people, have job interviews, you know; all the conversations I've heard in Starbucks.

You might just scribble that down and someday when you think you have nothing to say, you can go back there and pick that up and it's like the Dan Kennedy fifties stories or whatever, and use it.

That also trains you to be paying attention.

So number four, if you want something a little more passive, I love to listen to audio storytellers. One of my favorites is called [This American Life](#). It's on NPR; it's a guy named Ira Glass. I believe he now also has it as a television show.

They are usually about an hour long. They are amazing storytellers! They can take a subject where you think, "Oh, my gosh! I would never care about that at all," and they'll do four different mini stories of different perspectives on that subject

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and you are absolutely riveted. This is the one where I'm riding and all of a sudden it's like, "Oh, my gosh! Wow! There are 60 miles gone!"

LORRIE: That's great.

KATE: You can get that on iTunes also. Listen to audio storytellers and just kind of pick up their rhythm, how they do stuff; the stuff that this gives you.

There's also an NPR series called Driveway Moments. You're listening to a really good story on the radio and you've pulled into your house and you're home, and you can't get out because you've got to hear how it ends.

LORRIE: I love that.

KATE: They collect those every week. These are the driveway moments that make you just stop and think, "Oh, my gosh! What is going to happen at the end of that?" And you can get them all as podcasts. You don't have to listen or have the radio on. You can just download them all and take them where you are.

LORRIE: I actually like E! Hollywood Story as well.

KATE: Oh, yeah! That one's fun.

LORRIE: They leave you hanging right before every commercial and it's really great about pacing, like, "Coming up next you'll find out what happened to make so-and-so have a drug overdose." So they really know how to tease you into the next segment.

KATE: They're good; even old stuff. Their stories arc are pretty much always exactly the same. You know, person has big dreams, works hard and achieves big dreams; terrifying descent into drugs, alcohol, and abuse and "I'm nobody;" then they come back at the end. It's the exact same story and you're riveted. "Oh, my gosh! The Eight is Enough kid! What's next?"

LORRIE: Exactly.

KATE: It's the same thing. You can make this thing that doesn't seem so interesting and relevant, really fascinating.

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LORRIE: Totally; depending on how you couch it, how you tell it. So go on; sorry to interrupt.

KATE: No, not at all. Let's see, number five was just sit down and write something for ten minutes. How long is ten minutes? It's nothing. That's like standing in line. No editing, get an idea and just write it; free write it and kind of get yourself moving in that and see what comes out. It might not be perfect, but it's hard for some people to get that inner editor out of the way.

"What's the right word for that? This sucks; no one cares about this. I'm really bad at this." You've got to turn that voice off really hard, you can't let it intrude. That's that kind of power writing.

LORRIE: Remember, Robert used to say if you're writing and you get writer's block just start typing "blah, blah, blah, blah," and just don't stop.

KATE: Oh, yeah. Just look around and find something, and that's where number six comes in. This is a little fun tip. Make a story out of a found object like a grocery list. I found someone's grocery list on the street one day. I picked it up and I was like, "What is their life like? Who buys this?" Anything could be the foundation of a story, and there are people who collect random, found objects and make whole exhibitions about them.

There are people who buy people's old slides from garage sales and make exhibits about them; they totally make up everything that happens. It's just the spark, you know?

Another spark is number seven; it's to go through old files on your computer. God knows what we have on our computer, especially if you've had one for a few years.

If you have a really good search function like Spotlight, you can just type in a word or concept that you're thinking about, kind of like Google, and just see what comes up.

One time I thought about dance lessons and how dance lessons changed my life. Maybe I should type in that and just see what comes up. So that's a good one.

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Number eight is a storytelling/life tip. Accept more invitations. If people ask you to go somewhere whether it's a blind date or a Tupperware party or bowling night, really go. It's all material. You're going to get out there, something's going to happen to you; you're going to see people, experience things. Sometimes we have to break ourselves out of our rut, especially when you think about who you spend time with.

Most of us spend time with people who are pretty much exactly like us, which is comforting and fine, but it's not exactly stimulating. Like the whole thing about going to the mall, riding the bus, going to Wal-Mart. See what else is out there and especially if it's something that is really way outside where you would ever go.

I love to do things like this and that kind of ties into number nine because a great way to do this in a very natural context, is to travel; when you just hit the road. When you travel you get so many great stories and so many different stimuli just from the act of being in the airport with all these people and being in a new place where you don't have your familiar comfort things around you. You have to move outside and pay attention and move in a world in a way that's more like an observer than someone who's comfortable.

That's a goldmine. I write a series of articles, actually, about travel for Motto Magazine that's not where to travel. It's about how to travel; how to travel creatively; how to travel with a social conscience; how to talk with somebody on an airplane. It's all about how to use that travel which for a lot of people is a big deal.

I know, Lorrie, you don't have a lot of love for getting on an airplane and going everywhere. It's a total ordeal. This can make it something that's really rich that you can use in your life and in your marketing and in your stories.

The last one, number ten, is to dig out that box of pictures. Remember pictures? You used to go to the store and print them out and you'd have them in an envelope. Remember how exciting it was, though? I kind of miss that.

LORRIE: "This is a bad shot; my eyes are closed."

KATE: You'd look forward to it. You'd have that little piece of paper and, "Oh, my gosh! I have to wait two days to pick up these pictures. Maybe there's me

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standing next to him,” or whatever. And you’d open it up at the store and, “Oh, there it is! Oh, that’s horrible!”

I know you have all those pictures somewhere and I bet a lot of you have scrap-booked them or scanned them, so get those shoeboxes out, shake them up, pick a picture without looking and then write the story behind it.

You’re probably in it or connected to it. You should remember something and it might be a good goldmine of stuff from your past, from our common experiences. We’ve all grown up; we’ve all gone to school.

What were you saying?

LORRIE: That’s a fantastic idea, especially sort of for training wheels even just to get started. It’s like, “You know this story; just write it now.” You don’t even need to pull it out of thin air. You know it by looking at the picture.

KATE: Yeah, “Oh, there’s that dog we used to have,” or, “Oh, I remember that tricycle.” And a lot of those things that happened are essential things that everybody can relate to. Everybody had experiences like that or a memory that could be stirred by that. It’s just fun. Again, it’s about you so it’s interesting.

LORRIE: Exactly. Well, excellent. Kate, we’re actually at the end of our time here, so I just wanted to thank you so much for sharing this information.

KATE: Thank you for having me.

LORRIE: It was my pleasure. You can find out more about Kate at www.KateYandoh.com. This is Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero of Red Hot Copy at www.RedHotCopy.com, and we do hope that you’ll keep in touch and let us know, go to our blogs, and let us know how your storytelling is going.

KATE: Absolutely.

LORRIE: Thanks so much.

KATE: Thank you.

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Kate Yandoh Harris of Kate Yandoh Business Storytelling is a storyteller who creates high-quality content. For over a decade, Kate has provided content and creative direction for clients including The Home Depot, AFLAC, Sea Island Resort, Harrah's Entertainment, The Coaca-Cola Company and the United States Green Building Council. Kate has contributed over 200 articles to national, regional, and local publications and websites. She regularly contributes to event speeches and presentations including ones for Jane Fonda and Mike Ditka. Whether it is a website, a presentation, an article, a book or a giant flashing sign, she makes sure your story is heard by the right audience in a way that is relevant, engaging, and shareable. Discover more about Kate at www.KateYandoh.com.

Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero of Red Hot Copy is a pioneer in the world of copywriting when it comes to making a connection with prospects who hate hype. Her background in the entertainment industry and as a journalist prepared her for the level of wordsmithing and psychology necessary to build her decade-plus long career. Her list of clients reads like a Hall of Fame list of marketers and corporations such as Office Depot, NAWBO, Ladies Who Launch, Ali Brown International, Braveheart Women, Glazer Kennedy, and more. Author, speaker, and creator of *"The She Factor Copywriting Bootcamp,"* *"The Conscious Copywriting Formula,"* and *"30 Day Storytelling Challenge"* (free on Facebook), Lorrie knows what it takes to build rapport for long-lasting relationships. And more importantly, she knows how to SELL with copy! Follow Lorrie at www.RedHotCopy.com