The Elements of Persuasion
Richard Maxwell and Robert Dickman

The Big Idea
Storytelling is something that is innate in every individual. The elements of persuasion are comprised of the five elements which make up the core of storytelling. This book was made to teach you how to weave words in your story and tell them in a manner people will not forget. Most concepts are in groups of five, making it easier to grasp and recall. It is also rich in real life examples which will enable you to see how each concept is at work based from real situations that occurred in some of the industry's best businesses. Timeless in its approach, this book links primitive notions of the human psyche and its effects on contemporary times in the aspect of persuading, pitching more effectively and selling with impact.

Why You Need This Book
At the heart of every business transaction and opportunity is the need to be a master of persuasion. With the help of this book, you will be able to have a step-by-step guide in selling faster and winning more in your business. Reading this book will ensure that you are fully equipped with the makings of a fabulous storyteller that customers will learn to love and forgive for just about anything.

So What's Your Story?
It all begins with a story.

Before you can be a master storyteller, you first need to know the story that you are about to tell. Simply put, a story is a poignant piece of fact that transforms its readers and compels them to make a change.

A good story does not have to be long or verbal. All it needs is the right timing and the presence of the five major elements. In a nutshell, the five elements are passion, a hero, an antagonist, awareness, and transformation. If you are properly able to make use of these elements, you are well on your way to achieving the perfect pitch for your business.

These five elements are actually a business representation model of Empedocles' elements for the material world with which we live: Fire, Earth, Air, Water and Ether. Ether is particularly special since it is implied and added on by Plato and Aristotle. These Greek philosophers have actually made a business model for future persuaders to enjoy.

Fire in the Belly- Personal Persuasion
Your passion fashion can make or break your story. Like fire, it helps get things started. Passion is something you cannot fake. It invokes a personal touch, at the same time, acknowledging the presence of pressure and embracing it warmly. It might require a lot of risk to pull it off. But it is a risk worth taking. The more open your story is, the greater are your returns.

Stories with passion give out two advantages: they are easy to recall and they increase your likeability the instant you use them sincerely. Sometimes, even hatred at the beginning may even be good for your business. If you're able to play with the fire of passion without getting yourself burned, you emerge as the winner.

Also taking from Sun Tzu’s art of war are five elements. Moral influence is what makes the primary difference, it being the first element. But you can never exhibit passion or moral influence if you do not genuinely believe your own story. The second element would be the weather or the timing of the story.
Then there is also location or terrain where you will be presenting your story as third element. Command and Doctrine follow as the fourth and fifth elements, respectively. Together, these elements of Sun Tzu form a strategy that is bound to light fires in your business.

**Passion Questions for Moral Influence**

- Is it something you genuinely care about?
- Is it true?
- Is it hot enough for people to accept and buzz about?

**Fostering Good Timing (Weather)**

1. Think of the energy level of the people you will be talking to. (e.g. Early in the morning is better than sluggish siesta time.)
2. Keep it light, no matter what time of day.
3. Strive for their recall, not their instant decision.
4. Close with a strong punch line that will have them thinking long after you've presented your ideas.

**Beef Up Your Knowledge of Terrain by:**

1. Arriving early.
2. Checking if all your equipment and tools are running.
3. Mapping out movements you will make in key parts of your presentation.

**Getting A Sense of Command**

Have courage, a balance of overconfidence and timidity in the midst of fear. This courage will spur you on and allow you to be able to say your story with the flair and aplomb of an expert. Learn from experts and watch good public speakers. Expose yourself to the craft of excellent speaking and do your best to practice. Understand their techniques in speaking and see what you can assimilate as you form your own style.

**Mastering Doctrine**

1. Rehearse your speech.
2. Be familiar with the speech but don't memorize it.
3. Read out loud at least five times.
4. Get feedback.
5. Challenge your audience with something they can do in response to your speech.

**Miyamoto Musashi and the Memorable Line**

Ever recalled whole chunks of other people's speeches? Chances are, you wouldn't remember them all, except for that core sentence which sums up the heart of their speech. In making your own speech, have a poignant and memorable line for your listeners' mental safekeeping.

**Brushing Fires-- Motivating the Masses**

Never underestimate the power of story to change not only you but also the people around you. However, just like funny punchlines, timing is really essential to get the effect that you want to have on your listeners or clients.

**Stories can be quite contagious.**

If you are in the habit of letting empowering stories spread like wildfire in your system, you are bound to sustain motivation that will perpetually spur them to be at their best.
You can use any scale for your story
The good thing about stories is that it is easily scalable. Whether you speak from a small group or a large convention, the effect remains the same.

Stories tend to glue people to loyalty
Loyalty is one of the best benefits of a good collection of company stories. People will want to stay in a company that is naturally nurturing of its employees.

Human response is naturally wired for stories
People have a natural craving for stories. It is already a part of our psyche.

Stories are the best tools for connecting if used properly
Not every story can win an audience's approval. The proper use of elements will dictate how well your story will be received.

Everyone is A Hero- How Stories Build Trust

Heroes are not extraordinary but possibly equal to the people you are trying to reach.
Heroes are valuable in their chosen field.
Heroes have the element of surprise on their sleeve.

Heroes are essentially good
Heroes are good listeners.

Three Qualities of A Corporate Hero

1. Trustworthy
2. Good Listener and Committed
3. Complex enough for sustainability.

Active Listening Skills

Being a good listener is also part of building trust. There are different markers to look for when you are doing active listening. Simply put, it is the ability to be able to empathize with the person you are listening to.

Markers for Active Listening

Body Language- Check the speaker's overall body language and sense the needs.
Hand- Hand gestures are done for emphasis. Make a mental note of this.
Voice-The voice will give away the speaker's emotion. Check for changes in volume or intensity.
Expressions- Facial expressions are important. Most non-verbal cues can be found from there.
Eye- The eyes will give away other non-verbal cues you may have otherwise missed.

Finding Common Ground

The proximity of your hero in the story spells the difference whether your brand will be remembered or not. People will admire and emulate those who have something in common with them, giving them some form of capacity to take part in the story and try it out for themselves.

Seasoned with Emotions

The best way to ensure that your story lives on and produce lasting impact is by means of having your people bond strongly via a common cause or experience. When people have emotional correspondence, they will respond more positively.
**Mirror Neurons**
A lot of studies have been made regarding the mirror neurons. These are parts of the brain that help us mirror the actions and feelings of others. It also helps us understand people more.

The activity of mirror neurons contributes to the formation of brands. Brands give your business increased loyalty and power.

**Transparency is Required**
Being open takes a lot of risks. But the moment other people see you and your team in action, they will be encouraged to join you.

**Do teambuilding activities.**
Physical presence matters a lot. It is not just beneficial to the members of your team, but will also influence and inspire others.

**Summarize your company's story in one sentence or phrase.**
Solidity of your company's story will bring people security and establish you in the field of your choice.

**Building Your Brand**

1. Foster equality
2. Pass on success stories from within your team.
3. Keep the moral boost and enthusiasm.

**Sticky Stories: Memory, Emotions and Markets**
The common belief of people is that emotions and business do not blend well together. The truth of the matter is that your business story will cease to be remembered unless it is an emotional one. More specifically, the intensity and shock must be there.

**Locking Your Story in Your Audience’s Memory**

**Context:** Associating your story with what your audience is accustomed to. This will ensure that they will feel secure on familiar terrain as you introduce new concepts as they are anchored in something that they have already accepted.

**Visual Reinforcement:** Having an image people won't forget. Visuals can sometimes speak volumes as compared to using mere text effects. If you are able to incorporate multi-sensory elements in your story, it will be easier to remember.

**Verbal Cueing:** Using words and gestures to show your point are still the best way to go if other forms of persuading medium elude you. Watch your body language as you pitch in your story.

**Powerful Emotions:** Making it emotionally charged is a surefire way that it will be hardwired in the brains of your audience.

**Persuade with your Narrative:** Sticking to your story and maintaining your focus all throughout your pitch will ensure that you will not deviate from the purpose of your story.

**First You Invent the Disease**
Every good story has a villain for people to understand the story more. Choosing the right villain and maintaining control over it is one ingredient in the recipe for your story's success.
Villains to Avoid

Straw Villains - Overinflated antagonists that spiral out of your control.
Demonized Villains - These are the villains who go beyond the scope with which you put it.

5 Things to Remember When Inventing the Disease

1. Overcoming the antagonist gives the story emotion and edge.
2. Make sure you can overcome your antagonist.
3. Keep it dynamic to sustain interest.
4. Make overcoming the villain a team thing.
5. Remain grounded in reality.

Activity: Tapping Your Story's Emotional Potential

Rehearse through shouting and with enthusiasm.
Then, turn it into a joke.
Say it in a sentimental, romantic manner
Use dead serious military style.
Whisper it.

Under the Radar
At any rate, word of mouth remains to be the best marketing strategy. From this, three distinct and related terms spring up. These three terms are actually co-existing, often used interchangeably to describe marketing processes but they are distinct in their focus and styles.

Viral Marketing- involves the social networks and heightens audience awareness
Guerrilla Marketing- negative and persistent marketing techniques common in political strategies.
Buzz Marketing- creating a puzzle for people to talk about

To be even more specific, the fine art of asymmetric storytelling makes these techniques work. It consists of triggering people's desire to complete and discover patterns. People love completing puzzles. So if in your story you are able to piece them into manageable chunks as you market your business, you will be able to generate right response from the people who will see it.

Your target market must also be watched, however. You need to make sure that they are able to deduce the right kind of story from the facts that you give them. The control must still remain in your hands. Calculating all the possible avenues with which your story will be interpreted is a good way to usher in your target market to full appreciation of your marketing strategy.

The Guerrilla Marketing Checklist

1. Is there a specific buzz event?
2. Is there enough information to construct the story you want people to form?
3. Is there some taboo, controversy or competition to link to?
4. Do you have a selected story element to trigger the buzz?
5. Is the audience defined, compact and self-identified?
The Storytelling Space
Transformation is the goal within the context of your commercial storytelling efforts.

The 4 Elements Occurring in Space

- **Fire** - Visual motivation to lock in a good impression.
- **Earth** - Ground with which one can explore or walk around
- **Water** - the flow of people
- **Awareness** - Conversations that ensue from within.

Stimulating a sense of wonder and discovery transforms the people in the space. It is one of the things that make stories powerful enough to make a change. When you tell a story, you do not just stuff people with facts. You render them some space to figure out the flow on their own and it will lead them to have a greater appreciation of what you have to offer as a storyteller.

Everything in a Nutshell

1. Telling stories can be both emotional and professional at the same time.
2. The 5 elements are passion, hero, antagonist, awareness and transformation (PHAAT)
3. Use the PHAAT model to generate effectiveness and profit.
4. Stories must nurture well the fragility and volatility of the emotions it can contain.
5. Stories are everywhere.