

James Taylor

Hi, it's James Taylor, founder of [SpeakersU](https://speakersu.com). Today's episode was first aired as part of International Speakers Summit the world's largest online event for professional speakers. And if you'd like to access the full video version, as well as in depth sessions with over 150 top speakers, then I've got a very special offer for you. Just go to InternationalSpeakersSummit.com, where you'll be able to register for a free pass for the summit. Yep, that's right 150 of the world's top speakers sharing their insights, strategies and tactics on how to launch grow and build a successful speaking business. So just go to InternationalSpeakersSummit.com but not before you listen to today's episode.

Hey it's James Taylor. And I'm delighted today to have Michel Neray here for our international speakers summit. Michel is a global speaker, trainer and consultant he's helped thousands of individuals craft and perform more effective, purposeful stories to become more effective leaders, salespeople, coaches, teachers, trainers, speakers, and influences of all types. He also uses purposeful storytelling to more effectively differentiate position and brand organizations in the market. He is the founder of Mo Mondays, which is a monthly variety show that combines live music, comedy and inspirational storytelling. And you'll now find Mondays in 14 cities across North America. And then when not speaking on stages, chances are you'll find him maybe snowboarding down some slopes or canoeing down some rapids. So it's my great pleasure to welcome Michel today. So welcome.

Michel Neray

Hi, James. Happy to be here.

James Taylor

So share with us what's happening in your world just now with what's going on.

Michel Neray

Oh my god, it's beautiful. The weather is warming up and it's hot. And I'm getting calls all over the place. So that's good. And it's great. And we're starting a new venue at mo Mondays right here in my hometown. And I'm excited about that. We've got some awesome speakers and stories lined up and yeah, good, good snowball real momentum.

James Taylor

How did you get into this well to speaking with it all begin from get begin for you.

Michel Neray

Oh, gee, okay, well, that's taken me back a long, long way. So let's just say that I used to have an ad agency, my agency and me particularly, we had a lot of high tech clients. This is we're going back a long time back in the 90s. Early 90s, I'm I founded and launched a website that was the world's first first of its kind, kind of like Google, but but focused on creative professionals, people in the advertising world. And as part of that, I got asked to speak at a lot of conferences, international conferences. In fact, I became kind of like the evangelist for the company. And I would go touring, graphic design and art schools around North America. And I would talk to associations and this is just all part of because you know, people we go we're going back a long ways here. I remember being in boardrooms convincing members of the board, that the internet and the web was not a flash in the pan. This was here to say so, okay, we're going back a long time. But anyway, as part of this, I get feedback, say, you know, Michelle, your your talks, your keynotes, your presentations, they're very, they're very motivational. And, and I was insulted. What, me a motivational speaker, no, I have serious content. But I kept on getting this feedback to the point where I started looking at it and and saying, well, maybe there is something to what I do and how I do that is different than your average, you know, technology presenter or your marketing presenter. Because basically, I was teaching people how to use the internet, how to harness it for real customer service and marketing and all kinds of things rather than just do a brochure where we're going back a long time.

James Taylor

Anyway, do you remember what that first experience was? where you were, obviously, that in the early days, you were kind of speaking as a ways of evangelizing about your company and and what was happening with you know, the technology but you remember that time when you you got that first like speaking game, they were booking you and it was your It was your fee? They were they were they were giving you a fee for this? Can you remember what that that time was and what that felt like?

Michel Neray

Oh, my God, well, um, you know that that happened gradually. I don't remember. But I do remember a time when I was presenting for the company, as the company evangelist, so they weren't they were paying the company that we're trading certain we're doing services for them. And I was on stage And I realize and oh my god, and it was a mistake. It was it was my calendar popped up. I don't use PowerPoint anymore. But it was back in the days when I was using PowerPoint, my computer and my my calendar pop up said, you know, remember to take my son to karate you know that. And of course, the whole audience saw this. And it was a big laugh, but I rolled with it. And I and I had them as totally engaging. And that was the, that was the moment, I realized, you know what, I know what I'm doing. I'm good at this. They like me, they like my content. I'm entertaining them, at the same time that I'm giving them stuff that they could really take back to their homes and their studios and their offices and use it. And I just, I just felt Okay, I got this. That was a that was a good feeling.

James Taylor

So you'll know and now really as as the kind of the storytelling guy that's gonna purposeful storytelling. You speak about this? Obviously train, you can consult on this as well. When it comes to two speakers specifically, how can storytelling really come? How can storytelling really work not just for them necessarily being on stage or time in terms of how they think about their brand overall.

Michel Neray

So that's a key thing. So don't forget, when I started, before, I really focused on storytelling. I was known as the you know, Chief differentiation officer, my focus, even in my advertising days, my focus was how do I help my clients stand out be different differentiate themselves in the market. And what I found was that if you dig deep enough, even for larger companies, but if you dig deep enough, at the end, you always find a story, or four or five. And so over time, I started shifting my own focus from the differentiation kind of doorway to get in to the storytelling doorway to get in in the door. What What happened, what interests people, but what really, what really cemented that for me show it showed me personally how important that was, was this time, I was hired by a national real estate company in the US to present at their national conference in New Orleans. And, and I was doing my talk and and and the reason why they hired me was because my focus was differentiation. Who needs it more than real estate agents who on the surface, do and say what they do the same as everybody else. So they were looking to give their real estate agents, some help in differentiating themselves. And by the way, the same holds true for lawyers, accountants, consultants, coaches and speakers for that matter. The list goes on and on. We all a lot of us. Pretty much all of us. on the site, if we just show our business card and and the title of what we do. It's basically the same as everybody else in our field. So that's what I was being hired to do. Now, I showed them strategies on differentiation. I showed them what the large brands do. We show them some old TV commercials, we had a big laugh, I asked them what the key message was of those commercials. But my premise was, so my ulterior motive was. And this is kind of like the repeatable phrase that I use what makes you different as a person, what is what makes you different and better in your business, your career, your life? You're not other words, again, it comes back to at the heart. There's that personal story. That is the reason why in the how you do what you do that sets you apart in the market. And as part of that story, I shared a story about my mother, my mother went through the Holocaust. She spent the year in Auschwitz, I shared some of the stories that she shared with me and how that affected me as a child growing up. So basically, I grew up. You know, in Montreal, I was a little French Jewish kid. My mother was French. I was a little French Jewish kid in an English Protestant school in a French Catholic province. Basically, that's who I was. And it didn't matter what group of kids I hung out with. I was always the odd kid out even amongst my Jewish friends. It said what? Because my father is Persian. She goes like, like you You know, it didn't matter which group of kids I hung out with, like, what, where you come from. But I shared so I shared that I shared how the experience of my mother influenced me and my

father influenced me as a child and how, and how I, kind of in hindsight, I connected the dots to my expertise in differentiation.

James Taylor

So I'm guessing when giving that story was a beacon personal story to your family, a big conference, a big national conference, a lot of speakers will be very, you know, worried about doing that. Well, that's, that's too personal as to, you know, to me, you know, how does that relate? So, what do you say to those people that can say to you Well, you know, have that criticisms, it? Well, why did you share that story? Is that not too personal or something you want to keep tucked away? Rather than like telling people?

Michel Neray

Well, absolutely, and I, and I felt the same way. I it took me, it took me a year, many years, 10 years of 10 years of being a professional speaker, before I myself had the courage to share that story. And I started sharing it, because, I mean, we're, we're, we're, I started sharing that story, because I was invited to speak at a conference for immigrants. And, and on personal branding again. And, you know, about a week before the conference, I turned to my wife, I said, You know, I, I, I don't know what I'm, I don't know, if I, I don't understand really what their problems are, I don't know, I, you know, like, does the personal branding stuff, the the basic, or the stat, the corporate strategies that I have to offer? Do I understand what they really need? You know, here I am, I'm white, I speak English. I have the full weight of white privilege on my shoulders, you know, like, do and she said, Michelle, share the story of your parents coming to this country. And I did and it and oh, my God, the room change because they can see that, you know, at the core. We're all human. Yeah, but let me let me go back to the New Orleans story. Because here's where it gets interesting. I shared that story. And yeah, everybody was moved, it had exactly the impact and the effect that I wanted it to. But it wasn't until a year later that I realized to how big an impact it was. So a year later, I was invited to speak at a workshop this time, not a keynote, a workshop for speakers on differentiation and branding. And we're just about to start the workshop. And the doors burst open, like probably the last person to get into the workshop. And he runs up to me as I'm preparing all my stuff. And he said, Michel, remember me? And I said, help me. And he said, I was in the audience last year in New Orleans. And you shared the story about your mother. And I thought, Oh, yeah. And it hit me is that he didn't say, I remember the corporate strategies you presented. He didn't say, I applied what you taught us. And my business went up by 550%. He said, I remember the story you shared about your mother. Wow. Wow. Oh, you asked about differentiation and memorability. That's what people remember. Now, since then, that's all been kind of supported and proven by neuroscience, which is still a new field, you know, in the last 15 years. But oh my god, you need any more proof than that?

James Taylor

Yeah, I can think now, as you're saying this, I can think about some of my favorite speakers I've seen on stage isn't someone that often isn't, it's going to be an unusual choice for a great

speaker, I actually think he had a real power to him was a guy called Edward de Bono. And Edward de Bono would set up there, you know, he had this kind of Oxford dawn kind of profess Oriole type of vibe by him. And he was set up there with I think, was acetates. And he would draw these things and his speech was very slow and but as far away as you get from the Aurora motivational site, but as I think about that now, and that had an impact upon me as I think about that. Now, what do I remember? I remember a couple of stories that he said in there. I don't I don't really remember that. You know, the frameworks. I don't remember many of those other things. But those stories then that inhabit you know, that that were kind of the thing and I suppose this goes all the great reasons Understand this as well, this this idea that you're assigned to just prove out something that all the great religions have kind of figured out parables or stories. That's what gets, especially in an oral tradition as we'll get past time and time again. So I'm interested when you kind of gave that. And I think this is, I think this will resonate with a lot of our folks that are on the summit just now. We I think we probably all have that story, that one story, at least one story, probably a lot more. So. But that one story, where you think, should I tell it? You know, should I should I use this? Because it's kind of personal. But at the same time, there's that there's a big teachable thing in that and it relates the thing I do, what would you say? Is there anywhere? Is there any point you would say? Actually, no, you really want to tell that, that that that kind of personal story, you know, or if you just say, Well, you know, the context when you shoot ocean?

Michel Neray

So the answer is yes. But not Yes, there are times when you shouldn't Sure, and but it may not be what you're thinking of. Because I do this all the time. Now, I have a really keen sense on when someone is ready to tell their story. So have they fully processed it? Have you fully processed your story? Have you come out the other end? and derive the lesson, the insight, the purpose of it? Can you tie it back to your content? Does it make sense within the context of your of your talk, and what I find is that when you can do all of those things that you can actually use your story in a multiple of different ways to make it make sense for the audience for your topic. And for your purpose, what you were hired to do. You know, I'll give you two very quick stories now. And I'd love to tell you a little bit about the neuroscience behind those because I've been studying this now, for for five, six years. It's incredible. But I'll tell you, so I shared that story about my growing up, and what impact it had on me. And link, you know, connecting the dots as an adult to what I what I learned as a child what how my worldview got framed, to what I do today, what I do especially Well, today, you know, what, perhaps, is my my differentiation as a speaker. And I share that, how I connected those dots, I share that in rooms full of CEOs, I share that in all kinds of rooms, I share that. I've shared that in workshops with event planners, and the penny drops for them at some point, the penny drops for them about why I do my job, my role, whatever it is the way I do it. They all walk out of the room with a with a with a sense of why I do how I do what I do. I know that sounds like a mouthful, but it's why I do how I do what I do. You know why I do my CEO role the way I do it, that sets me apart from other CEOs. And it helps me be a better leader about what's important. What I'm looking for from the people who who report to me while I work with my team members doesn't matter whether it's rooms will

CEOs or event planners doesn't matter. It's It's It's how it's I get to know my strengths better in a palpable way that I could then lead my team better.

James Taylor

So that you mentioned the neuroscience part, you're in that you're in that room, you tell that story in New Orleans, that ripples on the other person that has impact upon them that ripples on to other other people as well. What's going on in that very first instant in terms of that in terms of the brain, you mentioned that can the neuroscience, you know, often speakers, we can get up on stage, we do our thing, hopefully it transforms people in the room, you make it you make an impact in that way as well. But some of its and I this is similar to hear music as well, a lot of music as I work with, they kind of don't want to know exactly how that stuff works. They just know it has an impact. Whereas other speakers, and musicians really want to know. And it's great book, how the I think it's the brain on music or how it works with David Byrne. We just said okay, this is actually what's going on the brain when music happens when you experience music. So what's going on in the brain of that audience member when you're you're telling that story? Why Why does it reverberate in that way.

Michel Neray

So to understand that we have to go back to a few theories about evolution of human beings. So there are some neuroscientists and sociologists, and anthropologists who believe many who believe now, kind of like commonly accepted now, that storytelling is, is one of the key things that allowed us to get to the top of the food chain. Because all of a sudden, we did not have to have a direct experience of being confronted with a tiger or a lion, or whatever it is, we didn't have to have a direct experience of a cause and, and result for survival in order to learn that lesson. So somehow, our physiology kind of evolved to favor those lessons. So I could learn about what to do or not to do, because ultimately we go we go, we even we go to see movies, we read books, to learn how the the main character transformed, so that we can gain from it even if it's a real, unconscious thing that we do. It's a subliminal thing we do. But we want to learn what they learned so that we can apply it to our lives. That's why we do these things. So we evolved that way. And our physiology has evolved that way to make us crave stories, we we need it literally we need it. The oxytocin, that hormone, you know, the love drug, the thing that that create that comes from empathy, and trust, and all of those good things, by the way, all of those good things that we'd like to have a, during a speech, and be during a sales presentation. Those things get fired when we hear a story, a character based story. So, oxytocin, especially and, you know, these, these are things that make us feel good, that make us naturally try the same, you know, the same things that happen when we met when we kiss or hug. Mm hmm.

James Taylor

And as a speaker, because obviously, I know your you have your background, you also have this background and your Linguistic Programming as well. So you can you come at it from that perspective. In that position of you being up on that stage telling that story. I guess some people

would want to use that were with the as they take their story arc in their speech, as they're up at a certain point. You know, in NLP, I think it's called anchoring without, you know, look to anchor that sensation, anchor that feelings, and then you repeat it. So you kind of weaving in that the NLP training that you've had within your role as a speaker? Or do you see them as quite as quite separate things?

Michel Neray

Oh, no, they're, they're everything. Oh, they go together so perfectly. Uh, let me say that, Oh, my God, this is one of the things that I teach in my workshops, we talk and if you list so, the thing to know about this, is that in every story, there are actually two storylines, at least, but two main storylines, and I call it the outside story, or the inside and the inside story. And you need to be aware of both of them. So the outside story, and every every story movie book, every story is the same. The outside story is the external circumstances of the story itself. So you know, what happens in the town who interacts with who, you know, where I buy my weapon of choice, and you know, who I plot with? And, and is it going to happen? And then my, you know, in the basement, and are the police aware of this or they fought you know, or whatever it is, okay. That's the external story, the outside story. And I didn't make that I thought I made this up. I thought, I thought, I thought oh, my God, this is brilliant. And I'm talking to some real I interviews a real script writers for for Hollywood. So yeah, we call that the inside story. Anyway, so the inside story is what happens to the character, the track the internal tense transformation of the character. And here we find all those common universal themes that we all relate to. So when I teach my groups, how to be different and universal at the same time, it's because of these two themes. These two external in or outside story and internal source. So the internal stories, what character flaw is keeping the back from What do I want to achieve? What are the skepticisms that I have? What are the fears that I have going forward, which, by the way, in a sales situation, are the same fears and skepticisms that have buyers or potential buyers, from getting over that hump? to actually buy, we need to know what those are, if we could share a story in which we ourselves experience those skepticisms fears, we have 80% of the audience saying, Oh, my God, that speaker understands that speaker is reading my mind. This is scary.

James Taylor

And I mean, you I know you've spoken. I mean, you've spoken in Israel, and you've spoken in Iran, two places you think very different, you know, different kind of worldviews as well. So how does that relate when you're when you're thinking about the internal story and the external story? Well, there's two different audience isn't the same thing. But you're just ensuring that there's universalities, in both internal and external.

Michel Neray

So I'll tell you, I have a belief, and the belief is that at our core, everyone around the world, we're human. I know that sounds remarkable, right? But we're human, we have the same fears and concerns as everybody else. So those universal themes are called universal themes for a

reason. Now, there are cultural differences. There are ways we package it that we need to be sensitive to for sure. But at the core, they are we have the same fears, fears of acceptance, fears of insecurity, fears of Am I good enough, you're getting the imposter syndrome fears, you know, fears of I've seen, you know, in a sales situation before Yeah, yeah, yeah. People have told me all those things before I even people have asked me for money or whatever, or whatever currency that you want. You know, why is it different this time? Why should I do a leap of faith? Why should I believe this person? Not, you know,

James Taylor

so these are, these are very, like, when I think here of, you know, great filmmakers. And as you're mentioning some of these things, I think, you know, you know, and I, I do this on my keynotes when I'm sitting if I'm working on new keynote, and I send craft out. And I think about very much like, you know, there's that I think, as I booked the seven key plots, or the seven great plots, or something like that,

Michel Neray

and yes, that's a book that took 35 years for him to write really, I don't agree with everything that he says, but we'll get into

James Taylor

which is a great I actually, I use the the, you know, the the, the journey, the hero's journey, baby, common one and last speaker is going to use that, you know, the approaching the cave, there's all those kind of things as well. And you see a lot of filmmakers I work every time I'm watching movie, I'm always kind of in my head thinking, wonder which one of those plots and you can you can see it happening Time, time and time again. So when you're kind of going into crafting, because we're moving now away from the, the neuroscience part and the and the psychological part of it to actually the craft, the craftsmanship, or being a great speaker? How much are you going to going in there kind of plotting out like it like you're like a filmmaker, a TV maker plus story, or using other types of tools and other ways to kind of plot things out?

Michel Neray

So I'll tell you what I do and what I teach people in my workshops. I think it's very dangerous. To jump too quickly to plotting it out strategically. You really have to understand your own journey first. And a lot of speakers don't take enough time understanding that they want to you know that old adage, about it's not about you, it's about the audience. Well, that is the biggest piece of bad advice I've ever heard. I mean, we know of course, it's about the audience. But it's only about the audience, if it's about you first. And if you can understand what that universal theme is that you yourself experienced, I guarantee you, you, there's only a minimal amount of shaping that you have to do after that.

James Taylor

And if that's very similar, one of the other summit guests we have is Frederick Heron. And he talks about that law, that idea of kind of sitting before you initially going and going and starting sketching things out, sitting a lot longer when he talks about his theme and you talk about some of these kind of universal themes, sitting with it. And he said once you once you connect with that thing, that theme, it you know, it doesn't quite write itself, but it's such a much cleaner, you know, more simplified, just feels a more natural process in terms of getting kind of getting out in the page or have you look to to kind of break out for your keynotes.

Michel Neray

Yeah, and when you think about it, there aren't that many universal themes. You know, we're talking about fears and skepticisms and roadblocks and hurdles and things that hold us back in life or, you know, you talk about the hero's journey, I, I like to think of something that I learned from Kurt Vonnegut, Jr, one of my favorite authors, he talks about the man in the hole. You know, life is going great. Oh, he fell into a hole. Oh, my God. Now, how is he going to get out of it? Oh, he got out of it. Great. What's different? What did they learn about themselves, as what they need to learn about themselves to get out of the hole doesn't have to be about a man doesn't have to be about a hole. But that idea is, I think, inherent in every story, in every story, and even in all of the other six themes that you that in the in the sort of the seven, the seven types of stories, they're all that that that is a constant.

James Taylor

So one of the things that man falls in the hole, humor, yeah. So that that's an opportunity for humans. So when when I know when in your trainings and workshops, you talk a lot about the role of humor. And with Mondays, it's, it's a marriage of humor and as an as an inspirational speaker. So talking about what was your take in terms of the role of humor for speakers how, you know,

Michel Neray

humor, first, physiologically, let's just do this. And this maps back to neuroscience, and NLP and all of those other wonderful things. But just laughing, makes people feel good about themselves. And if they feel good about themselves, they'll feel good about you that builds rapport. If you're able to poke fun, preferably at yourself, not not at the art, but just that humor allows you to broach sensitive subjects. Humor allowed, but but way more than that way my humor provides that entertainment. Even right, we talk about movies and scripts, or even the darkest drama has moments of humor. Yeah, you can't take your audience down the path of a pit and just leave them there. They need literally what's called comic relief. Yeah, they and but humor goes beyond that. Humor humor signals to the audit. Remember, you asked me? Are there times that I would not share a story? Well, yeah, if you can't see the humor in your own story, I'll back

guarantee. I was about to say bettan guaranteed marriage together Well, that didn't work. But I was I can guarantee I can guarantee that you're not past your own story.

James Taylor

You haven't, you haven't come through the other end in order to come through

Michel Neray

the other end. And so being able to do that signals to the audience, that you're past it so it decreases the burden that they have in watching you and listening to you said oh my god, they're, this feels awful. And this, this, you know, that I, I under You know what, leave, don't leave them there. Let them let them know that it's going to be okay. And and if you lighten it up at the beginning of the story, before you take them down this deep dark hole, it tells them that the ending is going to be okay. There's something for me to learn so

James Taylor

to this so what about if you know your viewers listeners just now then maybe speaking, coming into the world of speaking something to do the first speaking gig, maybe they'll be speaking for a while. And humor just isn't isn't a part. I mean, I know for myself, I can go into speaking and speaking with my wife, one point said is that we should not don't put jokes because I'm actually not a fan of jokes. But But in that in speeches, but she said you just need to have this needs to be a lightness, more of a lightness, more of a humor. And so I kind of worked on on some on some things on that. So for someone that's listening or watching to this just now, how can they start? If they've got a pre dry talk at the moment? How can they start to add that kind of salt and pepper that spice in there with with humor?

Michel Neray

Well, it It sounds simple. It's not easy. It? I'll just say that. Unless you're a professional humor writer. We tend to think that Oh, I'm not funny. I don't know how to write jokes, or I may have I mean, I don't know how to tell jokes. And I will challenge everyone who says that. And the challenge is really simple. Have you heard something today? That made you laugh? Smile or grin? Yes, absolutely. Yeah. Okay, so good. We know you have a sense of humor. Thank you. You know, you know what you find funny? Cool. That's a start. Now, have you said something in the last 24 hours that made somebody else smile? grin or laugh? Yes, absolutely. Oh, really? Well, James, we're on a good, we're on a roll here. I mean, oh, no laughing is not allowed. You're not allowed. So this is what I'm talking about. We're not talking like, first tap into your own sense of humor. Note start to become more aware of when you laugh, because of what somebody else said. Or when you make somebody else laugh because something you said, Make a note of when like, and this takes a lot of practice, because you need to be present to your talk on stage, you need to be here a lot. You know, a lot of beginning speakers, they don't have that presence, that confidence on stage, but you get there and start to listen for the

audience reaction. And when they laugh. Oh, what did I just say there? Maybe I could try it again. And to actually say it deliberately? Or have you pulled up what I call cultivated humor mindset? Yes, it requires you to be a little bit irreverent, and maybe stick your foot in your mouth every once in a while, but it's worth the risk. You'll learn to ride that edge. Very carefully, you'll learn to ride that edge. But you have to develop a little bit more confident in going there.

James Taylor

Yeah, I think I think that was for me, that was a big, that was a big change where I got very comfortable with like, when the very first keynotes I worked on. And I was doing I remember doing this one particular keynote 10 times one particular month, or giving this keynote one time, and probably by the time by the sixth time. And it was kind of there wasn't really any kind of humor or anything. And at that point, I kind of went, actually, I now feel comfortable enough in the material. And in terms of the things I kind of want to have the core the pillars of what I want to become. Now I want to start improvising. Now, when I start doing improv, I want to start taking things from the room. I want to those conversations that you have with people before you go up on stage. You know, are they taking those things, too, obviously topical stuff that happens as well. You mentioned that something that happened to you, I think it was where you're speaking and the calendar comes up. Invariably, you know us things will happen using it. And it's having that. And I see obviously great comedians, I see it with great entertainers of any of any sort and great speakers. They had their neck competent, and they're comfortable enough with the material that they're doing, that they they have that slightness suffered that agility, and maybe it's the best is the best word I can think of for it just now as well. And also with with no

Michel Neray

danger with with memorizing you rely on exactly what you're memorized. First of all, you'll write it probably poorly, because you'll write the way you read not the way you speak. So you have to make some adjustments. And so I show people how to do that. But yeah, you're absolutely right.

James Taylor

So one of the things I noticed when the very first we go on and on your website, when the very first things I noticed right at the top on the wire you see us I think it's US visa and European citizenship, right? Yes, I thought very, very clear. And that was interesting. I haven't seen too many speakers can do that. And really kind of point out like that. So told me what was the thinking behind that? Well,

Michel Neray

I like to travel. So I want to make it real clear to event planners and you know people in a position to book me for conferences, that it's not going to be a risk to bring the over. I want to lessen the risk for them. I'm available. That's where my mindset is. And, and, and and it's, yeah, you can book me with confidence, you're not going to be caught up with paperwork. So I think

it's very, very important. Like it's, it's any kind of sale, you always want to lessen the risk for the purchaser to make it easy to buy.

James Taylor

Yeah, I always I always think of in my head, I'm thinking of that event planner. And I'm thinking the job is writing on putting a great event together because they have a boss who you know, and they have their customers. And they want that those people coming up saying, you know, James Taylor was a great choice. You know, Michelle Marais was a great choice that, you know, that's, that's, that's them and they can have that the idea of de risking is a very good thing in their book. So but you by having that, it just I mean, it's quite a small thing, but I think it's actually quite quite a powerful thing as well.

Michel Neray

Yeah, and it also shows that this is my I'm, I'm a world speaker. Yeah. You know, I don't speak in my local community, once a month. And that's it, you know, that's, this is my perspective. So yeah, and my

James Taylor

platform. So what can, as we kind of start to kind of round up here, let's talk about some things that that speakers can be doing now to, to really help them with that, that kind of storytelling that you were talking about there, and also really to be speaking more, more globally. And this event is all about speaking internationally speaking globally, taking your message out to all the far flung corners of the of the globe as well, what are some things that people can take away just now.

Michel Neray

So first of all, I would suggest, I mean, if you're not convinced, to incorporate more storytelling into your presentations, regardless of whether you're a trainer, facilitator, or keynote speaker, so a lot, a lot of times people think that oh, I need to pack my presentation, especially if they come from the training world, I need to pack my presentation with tons and tons of value in content. And I would challenge that, because they're not going to remember when they leave. So if you're not convinced yet, in the power of storytelling, not just any storytelling, but what I call purposeful storytelling, then you can skip this session. Hopefully, you understand that you want to get better at it. But people have a hard time. So stories, it's, it's become a big word. So I say scrap the word story, replace it with the word example. When you have a point, can you give me an example? Can you give me an example of how you came up with that? Can you give me an example of when you saw whatever that point is in action, in your own life, or maybe somebody else who's cool, it's just an example. I use that for testimonials. I use that for case studies. In the end, the structure of a proper case study is the same as a Hollywood movie.

James Taylor

And on that point on that, you know, this idea of exactly like de can, it's just like, okay, no big story thinking exactly. No examples, it just kind of, like kind of relax into a little bit more. I know that many speakers we've had on here. They're kind of professional story collectors, their antenna is always up for like, oh, like, Oh, that's I'm gonna write that one that, Oh, I'm gonna, you know, Evernote, I'm going to click that one. Oh, that's, you know, that they can have that their mind is always very alert potential stories that they could potentially integrate into keynotes or use one of the things.

Michel Neray

Yeah, and and so once you start getting into the habit of thinking example, rather than big story, you'll start, it doesn't have to be a big, huge, heavy story all the time. Yeah, it could be a quick exam, it could be a three second example, that really shares us that shares a bit of a story. It's fine. So exactly right. And once you started tuning your mind to example, you'll start to own that's an example of that. That's an example of that, and you'll become a story collector. Absolutely. So that's number one. Number two, is don't be afraid to, to show your vulnerability and authenticity. And I know those are big words that you hear them all the time. I'll just show you a quick story about this. One of the best speakers I've ever heard, and he's a friend of mine. And he came to me on Mondays. He speaks to rooms full of CEOs, like always about the seriousness of sales process, spoke at mo Mondays, and I challenged him I said, Adrian, share a story you've never shared before. And he he said, okay, and to his credit, he dug deep. And he shared a story about how we left home, when and left high school in his teens. First night sleeping under a stairwell, he said, You know, I was always afraid of sharing that story because it's it and then he fell in with the wrong crowd and had trouble making ends meet. But don't worry, there's a good ending, went back to school aced his class and making millions in sales and later, but after he shared that story at mo Monday's he started incorporating it into his professional engagements. And he said, Michelle, if there's one time during my entire keynote, where you can hear a pin drop. It's where I share that story. And I realized now that's the story that gives me the credibility for doing what I'm doing now. so incredibly powerful. So number two, you asked for number two. Yeah, don't be afraid to show your mistakes show where you learned your lesson. And the third thing I just want to live leave people with is not only the fourth thing would be put your, your sights on international and worldview. But the third thing is, is really elevate your your talk from a verbal performance to a whole body performance, forget, technique, forget, you know, gesture comment or gesture point, just forget all of that stuff. But just get into, forget that the audience is there. So forget anybody ever said, it's not about you, it's about the audience. Get into your own headspace. Learn who you are, learn, get in touch with your own state. And you will naturally elevate your performance to what I call a whole body performance. I'll leave it there.

James Taylor

And it's great. I mean, I think that's what we see some of the great stage act as opposed to film actors do as well, they then have it that that place that they're on. And I think one of the I, I saw it recently with, its with an actor, do something and he made that huge RAM is a big theater, he made it feel like it was just you and him in, you know, relaying this story, this this, this example. And he was doing it with this, not just with the speaking but as you said, with his physicality and and bigger movements, smaller movements in terms of placing and things as well, it was a real crafts, you know, there was a craft in that as well. But as you say, when you get started, just you know, try it and try things don't get overly kind of caught up in the, in the mind too much.

Michel Neray

Don't get caught up in technique. Yeah, just be aware of who you are, you know, some of the most powerful, for example. And then and then, you know, we can go on all day about this. But for example, we're taught to, you know, lock guys with it with the audience, and, you know, really engage the audience that way. But you know, what the most powerful moments is when I'm not looking at the audience, and I'm looking over here and the audience is engaged in what I'm doing right now. That's the most powerful, so we use them judiciously. Of course, that's where the craft come in, but first know what it feels like.

James Taylor

So just to finish up in my head, what's in your as you're heading out to your next speaking, speaking gig, what is in your speaker bag, what you carry with you is always with you, you make sure it's in that bag, so you can try it and test it things.

Michel Neray

Well, are you talking about physically or metaphorically,

James Taylor

physically,

Michel Neray

so well, physically as as little as possible? I don't use PowerPoint or Keynote, anything, any of the less technology, the better. I don't want to rely on any of those things I want, I want the audience to be focused on me not the screen that's at the back. Technology, no matter I don't even use, you know, at mo Mondays, we don't typically use even a wireless microphone because the battery batteries could go dead. You know, use a wired microphone, learn how to use it. It takes practice. But I so when you ask me what's in my kitbag as little as possible, I want to know who I'm speaking to. So this is where metaphorically what's in my kit bag. I really want to know who I'm speaking to. What are the key concerns that they have, especially the key

concerns that they've never shared with anyone? The key concerns that don't show up in the pre questionnaire. That's what I want to know.

James Taylor

Well, Michelle has been an absolute pleasure. speaking today. Thank you so much for sharing your experience and knowledge about speaking. And also just tell you know, that those those stories, there's purposeful storytelling, great theme to be covering today. And what's the best place for people to learn more about you to connect with you to find out where you're speaking? Maybe come see you speak soon as well.

Michel Neray

So first of all, thank you James, for asking, and thank you for this session. your your your you know what you're doing that you're awesome. Thank you. So what if people want to get in touch with me? There are two ways basically my website, and I've got two so my speaker website and for training, workshops, keynotes, of course, it's my last name.com and eray.com narrowway.com. That's the easiest place and there's a Contact Us form list the keynotes and all kinds of stuff there. And if people are interested in more Mondays because kind of like the the personal expression of what I do. corporately, is now Mondays and people might be interested in attending them on Mondays or seeing seeing if there's one in their neck of the woods or even hosting one of them. Their own. That's also easy. There went the website mo.mondays.com mo.mondays.com mo.mondays.com. That's, that's it. That's the best place.

James Taylor

Wonderful. Take care and I look forward to seeing you speak on the stage and hopefully next time I'm in your neck of the woods I'll be I'll be coming into one of those more Mondays as well.

Michel Neray

Careful, I'll get you on stage. Thank you James.

James Taylor

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