

What...So What...Now What?

Steven Shepard

Steve@ShepardComm.com

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I had an intriguing conversation the other day with James Rosenberger, a friend of mine who regularly appears on *The Deliberate Storyteller* [Facebook group](#) (That's James, at left). He posts intriguing photographs and then asks people to determine the story behind the image – needless to say, a practice that's near and dear to my own heart. Anyway, we talked about storytelling and the process of building a compelling story, and James shared with me his own structural model for identifying, assembling and telling a compelling story. It has three parts: (1) What; (2) So What;



and (3) NOW what?

I like this model: It's simple, it's the point, and it's easy to remember. Furthermore it aligns nicely with the overall story paradigm that we talk about, which is itself a three part structure – an opening challenge, a wild ride, and a compelling conclusion or call to action.

In James' model, the 'what' represents the opening challenge: What is this story about? Why should I listen? What's the message here? The 'So What' is the compelling event, the linkage between the listener (or reader) and the story's relevance to her or his world. And finally, the 'Now What' is the call to action, the "So what are you gonna do about it?" part of the narrative.

I like this flow. It gets right to the point, but like any "substructure" allows the storyteller to build the story any way they see fit. It's a nice addition to the tool bag. Thanks, James!

Thanks for reading.