



As tweeted by Emma Coates, Pixar Story Artist

Bowker comments in blue.

In business, your issue, process or product functions the same way a character does. Your audience must connect with it and care about it.

1. What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal? *What is good about your idea? Now address its weaknesses or the counter-argument and your position will be stronger.*



2. Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front. *Where are you taking your reader? Know where you want them to end up before you begin taking them there.*

3. You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best & fussing. Story is testing, not refining. *The essence of your idea needs to be strong; the details make it better but they can't fix a bad idea.*

4. You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be very different. **Know your audience.**

5. Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about til you're at the end of it. Now rewrite. **It's true, you need an overarching idea, or theme for your writing to make sense and to create the energy needed to keep a reader engaged.**

6. What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there. **Can you explain your concept in 3 or 4 sentences?**

7. Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free. **Cut details that detract from your key message(s).**

8. Once upon a time there was _____. Every day, _____. One day _____. Because of that, _____. Because of that, _____. Until finally _____. **Provide the necessary details and context.**

9. You admire a character for trying more than for their successes. **Embrace the struggle or friction that makes your business concept stronger or more valuable.**

10. When you're stuck, make a list of what **WOULDN'T** happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up. **Identify**

what you wouldn't do or a conclusion you wouldn't want your audience to draw.

11. Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time. **The 80/20 Rule: you spend 80% of your time on the last 20% of the product.**

12. Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it. **What business concepts are you attracted to ?**



13. Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone. **Start with a vague idea or concept before you get down to framing your real story.**



14. Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself. **This will make your idea stronger and more credible.**

15. Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you writer, but it's poison to the audience. **Friction and risk are essential to business success.**

16. Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it. **Find the part of you that really believes in this issue, product or idea.**

17. If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations. **Will your audience find you believable?**

18. What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against. **Make your reader want the conclusion you want them to draw.**

19. No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on – it'll come back around to be useful later. **You'll be able to think about it better in a few hours or days.**

20. Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating. **For every point you make, build a credible case and provide credible evidence.**

21. Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How d'you rearrange them into what you DO like? **Identify what you don't like about what you've written and fix it.**

22. You gotta identify with your situation/characters, can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way? **Show your reader by building your case, don't just tell.**

