In 2009, a man, a journalist

by the name Rob Walker, wanted to find out this: Is storytelling really

the most powerful tool of all? And in order to do this, he went on his computer,

and he bought 200 objects from eBay. And the average price of the objects

was about one dollar. He then called 200 authors,

and he asked them, "Hey, would you like to be part

of the 'significant object study'? Which means that I would like you

to write a story to one of the objects." And 200 authors said yes. So there he had 200 objects,

he had 200 stories, and I assume that it was

with nail-biting anticipation that he went on eBay again

with all the 200 objects. Would there be a difference?

Would there be a change? Do you think there was a change? One of the objects was this, this beautiful horse's head. There we go. The beautiful horse's head. Now, this beautiful horse's head

was bought for 99¢ and was sold, when the story

was added, for $62.95. (Laughter) That is a slight increase of 6395%. So, was this a one-off situation? Not really, because he bought the 200 objects

for a total of $129, selling them for $8000. Now, that's insane. But you know what's even more

intellectually challenging to understand? How can you and I go to the movies and pay good money

to watch movies like James Bond, [that] are absolutely unrealistic? And we sit there;

we enjoy the movie. And some of us, we really enjoy the movie. And we leave the theater,

going like, "God, what a man! I would like to be more like him. I'd like to walk like him.

I'd like to talk like him. I like Bond. (Laughter) I wonder how I could be more like Bond." And then this weird revelation

hits you like from nowhere, and you come up with a brilliant idea

to walk to a watchmaker shop. And wow! It just happens

to be an Omega watch in that shop that resembles the one

that Bond was wearing in the movie. And you pay $10,000

to put that watch on your wrist. And you leave that store

feeling more like Bond. How is that possible? PQ Media tells us

that 10.5 billion dollars is turned over in product placement

revenue every single year. How is it possible for you

to be so easily tricked by something so simple as a story? Because you are tricked. Well, it all comes down to one core thing, and that is emotional investment. The more emotionally invested you are

in anything in your life, the less critical and the less

objectively observant you become. And the greatest

emotional investment of all is falling in love. Now, falling in love

resembles a good story. Do you remember

the last time you fell in love? Yeah? Good for you.

It's a beautiful feeling, isn't it? (Laughter) Do you remember how you longed

and how you yearned and how you dreamt? Then you looked at her,

and maybe you thought, "God, I love the way you chew that apple - so crunchy. (Laughter) And the way you slurp that tea,

just over the edge, you know. Oh, it's so sexy. Love it!" And then about 13 months later,

when you biochemically fall out of love - 13 months later, on an average,

you fall out of love - suddenly you find yourself

sitting in the sofa, and you go, "Jesus Christ, where

did this thing come from? Oh my God! And where are my friends? This is a weird thing." Then suddenly you hear a sound;

you go like, "What's that?" You go over to the kitchen,

and you look, and you go like, "Oh, it's you!

You're eating an apple there. Could you just keep that down

just a little bit? You're kind of spraying the table there. Please, please don't." And you sit down comfortably again, and just a minute later, you hear somebody drinking tea

from the kitchen, going (Slurp). And suddenly, this is all annoying to you. Have you been there? Sadly enough, 13 months later, our critical thinking and our cortex

comes home from a one-year-long vacation, and we start questioning things. During those 13 months, what happened

was that your brain was flooded with neurotransmitters and hormones

hijacking your cortex, throwing your objectively

observant skills out of the window. And the thing with storytelling

is that the same thing can happen. In stories, the same hormones

and neurotransmitters can be released. Hormones like vasopressin, oxytocin,

serotonin, dopamine, endorphins. And you know what? That's what I would like to do

during my talk. I would like to induce

three hormones into your brain. I call it "the angels' cocktail,"

so it's a nice cocktail. I would like to start with radically

increasing your dopamine levels. And I need your consent on this. Is it okay? Cool. And if you don't like the idea of that,

you'll just have to cover your ears. So, dopamine. This is what it looks like. And when you have that in your blood,

these are the beautiful effects: you get more focus, more motivation,

and you remember things in a better way. So what does dopamine feel like?

It feels like this. About six years ago, I received

a phone call from a woman who represented one of the biggest

training companies in Scandinavia, and she said, "Hey, David! We've got a lot of trainers

in presentation skills and in rhetorics, and we'd like to increase

the level of all of these, and we think you are a perfect pick. Would you like to come to a meeting?" I'm like, "Wow, I'm honored. I'd love to." And I come up to Stockholm,

and I'm going to their office, and just as I am going

to pull the handle down, what I don't know then is that I'm walking into

one of the absolute worst meetings I'm ever going to have in my life. But I don't know that yet, so it's okay. I open the door, and I meet this woman. Her name is Liana. And hurriedly she says,

"David, just so you know, I'm not the one you're having

this meeting with; you're going to have it

with three gentlemen, further on here." And I'm like, "Okay,

that's a bit strange." Usually you know who

you're going to have the meeting with. Then she progresses

with a bit of chit-chatting, and then suddenly she says,

"Are you ready now?" And I'm like, "Yeah,

what should I be ready for?" She says, "Just so you know -

Can you see the room over there?" And I go like, "Yes, I can see it." "Well, in that room

you have the three gentlemen. Just so you know, they're all

majority owners of this company. They've all got an ex-military background, and none of them wants the training

that you are going to pitch." (Laughter) I'm like, "Come on! Why am I here?" And it's like, "Well,

all the trainers want this, but the management are on too high horses. They can't see that they need it. So it's pretty simple. The only thing you have to do

is go in there and kind of, you know, just prove the opposite." I'm like, "Yeah, that sounds

simple, doesn't it?" And I can remember myself,

I'm walking towards this office, my sweat is coming down

my palms, my heart is racing, and just halfway there, she calls my name. And I still, to this day, don't know if this woman

is sadomasochistic or just downright unintelligent. Because she calls my name,

and she goes like, "David!" It's like I'm going to get the tip

or something like that, so I turn around to ask her, and she says the following - And if I don't tell you

what she says there, is that annoying? (Laughter) Well, actually, as an example,

I'm not going to do that. I just wanted to prove to you

what it feels with high dopamine levels. Would you say that

your focus was increased? Your attention was increased? You were creative;

you created situations around this, and you probably already figured out

what that room looked like, correct? And you'll remember that I

did that to you for quite a while. Now, the feeling you had there was high levels of dopamine,

which is beautiful. So how do you do that? Well, what you do is you build suspense, you launch a cliffhanger, and the most beautiful thing of all is that all storytelling is,

per definition, dopamine-creating because it's always something

that we're waiting and expecting. So just imagine, just by using

storytelling you can get those techniques. You don't have to do

a cliffhanger like I did. So that was the first hormone. I'd now like to go to oxytocin. Is that okay as well? I'll induce that? All right. The beautiful effects

of oxytocin are the following: you become more generous,

you trust me more, and you bond to me. You want to do that? All right. All right, so this was a ... Nine months had passed, and it was a planned caesarean. And the little brother, who was

5 years of age at that point of time, he was kind of really looking forward

to what's going to be - what's going to happen. He was going to become a big brother. And he had helped us

pick out the wallpaper, he'd helped choose the bed linen. He'd even saved his own pocket money

to buy a little stuffed animal, which was placed on the pillowcase. About two days before

the planned cesarean, something happened. Something wasn't right. The parents couldn't - something was off. And the day before, there was simply

no movement in the stomach, there was no heartbeat. You couldn't feel or hear anything at all. So the parents were rushed into hospital, laid down on a bed, and doctor comes in, checks the stomach, looks at me and sees what I see, and that is that the heart

is no longer beating for this child. This was me, nine years ago. It was the worst thing

I've ever experienced in my entire life. And, I don't know, can you just imagine

what you have to tell a five - how you tell that to a five-year-old? Can you just imagine that? Because he's home there, waiting

in anticipation for this coming event. But it won't happen. So a part of me and to handle that, I talk about it. And I've talked to you about it now. And now you got higher levels

of oxytocin in your blood, whether you want it or not, which means that you feel more human; you're bonding to me,

and you're feeling more relaxed. So how do you do that? In storytelling, you create empathy. So whatever character you build,

you create empathy for that character. And oxytocin is the most

beautiful hormone of all because you feel human. The third, and last, hormone is endorphin, and I would like to show you a woman which, we can say,

has overdosed on endorphins. Let's just look what that looks like. Ah, we'll go here. (Video) Priest:

To inspire and to respond ... (Muffled laughter) Are you speaking or listening? (Laughter) Woman: To speak and to listen. (Laughter) I'm sorry. Okay, um, to speak and to listen? Priest: To inspire and to respond. Woman: To inspire and to respond. Priest: And in all circumstances Woman: (Laughter) Woman: And in all circumstances Priest: Of our life together Woman: (Laughter) Woman: I'm sorry - of our life together Of our life together Priest: To be loyal to you

with my whole life and all my being Woman: To be loyal to you

with my whole life and all my being Priest: Until death parts us.

Woman: Until death parts us. Woman and Man: (Laughter) (Audience) (Laughter) Oh, the timing of that

is so lousy, isn't it? So how do you create endorphins?

Well, you make people laugh. What happens then is that they become

more creative, they become more relaxed, and again, they become more focused,

which is beautiful to have. Now, all these three hormones

that I've induced into your brain now is what I call "the angels' cocktail." But there is an opposite of that cocktail,

and I call that '"the devil's cocktail." And the devil's cocktail has high levels

of cortisol and adrenalin. And they feel like this. (Quick yell) (Laughter) Sorry to do that to you. So, high levels

of cortisol and adrenaline. The problem with that is that

if you've got really high concentrations - which I didn't give you there - but when you've got

high concentrations, look at this: [Intolerant, Irritable, Uncreative,

Critical, Memory impaired, Bad decisions] Is this something that you want

to have the people you talk to have in their blood, in their system? Now, in our stressful work lives,

in our stressful lives, many times, when you present,

communicate, deliver meetings, Which one do you think

they've drunk most of? The devil's cocktail

or the angels' cocktail? Most commonly, the devil's cocktail. And the problem then is that you've got

all this to work against. But all of that can change today. All of that can change by you starting to use something

I call functional storytelling. And functional storytelling means

that you do these three things: One, you have to understand that

you don't have to be a bearded old man in front of a fireplace with a dark voice

in order to be a great storyteller. In my experience, when I train people, everybody is a good

storyteller from birth. The only problem

is that you don't believe in it. The second thing

is write down your stories. You'll notice that you have three

to four times more stories in your life than you thought that you had. Three, index those stories. Which of your stories make people laugh,

i.e. create endorphins? Which make people

feel empathy, i.e. oxytocin? And the next time you go into a meeting, you pick the story you want

to release the hormone you wish in the person that you're talking to to get exactly the desired

effects that you want. And that's a beautiful thing. Now, you know me, some of you

know me as "Mr. Death by PowerPoint." I want to round off

with making my point very clear. And my point is this: 100 000 years ago, we started

developing our language. It's sound to say that we started

using storytelling to transfer knowledge from generation to generation. 27 000 years ago, we started transferring

knowledge from generation to generation through cave paintings. 3 500 years ago, we started transferring

knowledge from generation to generation through text. 28 years ago, PowerPoint was born. Which one do you think

our brain is mostly adapted to? Thank you very much. (Applause)