

Park Howell

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Debbie Howard: Welcome to senior living marketing perspectives. I'm Debbie Howard co-founder and CEO of senior living smart. And today I have been so excited to talk to park Howell. He is a storytelling strategist who helps marketers and content specialists grow their business using. The story, his podcast is the business of story. So definitely listened to that. He is the author of brand Bewitchery. So go buy that book and his course is the ABT of stories. So welcome.

Park Howell: Deborah. Thank you so much for having me on the show.

Debbie Howard: Thank you. So today we're really talking about we're exploring how to sell more by saying. And really how do we incorporate storytelling in a way that's compelling for our audience and, Park, I feel like so much of lead generation and driving traffic and marketing has really switched over more to the science side of [00:01:00] marketing rather than the artful side of marketing. So people are very concerned with page loading speed and Google ranking and Google my business. And all of the very technical things, which are all important because we have to drive traffic to find our businesses. And of course our businesses are all senior housing and seniors care and people have a need and they have to be able to find us.

But when they get there, We have to have some message that's compelling that shows that we understand that we relate that we're empathetic and ultimately that we have a solution that's going to improve their lives. So that's why it was so exciting. And so excited to talk to you about storytelling.

Park Howell: Well, think about what you just said there. And I'm just looking down a fire up my phone because we're all running around with one of these, right. And we have this digital world now what fascinates me about this is. Frontal cortex. We [00:02:00] are brilliant storytelling monkeys, essentially. So we are able to create this technology that compounds at the rate of Moore's law.

We just get better and better, faster, faster, and faster. And what does that mean? That we send out more information, this cacophony of communication that goes out. That we all are competing with and trying to figure out and make sense of, but here's the interesting thing to me, Deborah. So while we've got the

frontal cortex that can do this, we are still running around with this basic primal limbic system that has not changed appreciably since our ancestors navigated and survived.

The Savannah. It's the exact same system that we're all using to navigate and survive the internet in this on-site of communication. And then all of my work, what I have found out. As the very thing that ensured the survival on the Savannah and our evolution [00:03:00] is storytelling is the exact same thing that we need to be using today to hack through the jungle of this online digital world.

To me, I don't necessarily pay a lot attention to the numbers nor do I ever begin with numbers because what's the first syllable of numbers.

Our brains aren't made to make a lot of decisions off of numbers, unless they're put into the context of a story. So to your point, when we are telling the stories of our products and our services that we have to offer, instead of leading with logic, And reason and data and numbers lead with a story because why don't we buy with our hearts emotional context of a story.

And then we justify that purchase with our logical brain. That's when the numbers come into play. Okay.

Debbie Howard: Yeah. That's really interesting to go back [00:04:00] historically, because storytelling is probably the first way of sharing history and building community.

Park Howell: Yeah, I don't know if you've had a chance, or any of your viewers have read Novell, Harari, sapiens, a book.

He does a really great job of outlining the evolution of humanity and the reason why homosapians are the most aggressive invasive species ever is because we are the only organism that we know of that thinks acts poles, people together using. We use fiction to talk about a brighter tomorrow, and then if we pay off the promises we make in the story and deliver on that brighter tomorrow, it becomes fact you build trust, and then you just continue that story with the people around you.

Debbie Howard: Yeah. And I think so much of what we do is, very similar to some degree, seniors, housing and care can seem, as you visit website and brand to [00:05:00] brand, as a commodity, okay. Everybody offers meals and

transportation. We're all doing all these wonderful things. And so how do you differentiate, because if you don't differentiate, then you're leaving consumers in a place of only evaluating price and location and you can, he can never win on a price and location, conversation.

So, let's talk a little bit about seniors housing in general, because there are some nuances about, selling what we sell. One being that it's a product that consumers don't have a lot of familiarity with how to buy, maybe they're going to make a purchase once or twice in their life.

Depending if they have one or two parents who may have a need for additional, care. So we have a, we have an audience that maybe doesn't want to always buy what we have, and certainly doesn't have a roadmap of. I've bought this multiple times in my life. So I have an understanding of products and services and how we should make an informed decision.[00:06:00]

So do you think that impacts the way you have to build your story, understanding that your audience may be in. And this place.

Park Howell: Yeah. Well, think about it. Market dynamics are always based on scarcity, right? The more scarce the product or service is the more you can charge for it. But don't, we really live in a land of abundance that we and our customers have an abundance.

Choice available to them on pretty much anything they want to buy. So scarcity no longer plays into it. The abundance problem is you become commoditized as you pointed out. And the only way to raise yourself out of that primordial muck of commoditization, where the low price leader wins is through the power of an emotional story that can get that homosapien that prospect or customer is sitting across from you.

Picturing it feeling it, stories light up the theater [00:07:00] of the mind. So now we are experiencing what it may be like. Have mom or dad come into your care, have me as a guardian, dealing with your administration while they're in care. And oh, by the way, this decision is being made under typically really tough, stressful times.

I know our father, he passed away at 91, but the last five years of his life, He battled Alzheimer's and my mother was a nurse forever and she looked after him as long as she possibly could. And then the last two years, we had to find a

home up in Seattle, Washington, a little town north of Seattle called Buffalo Washington.

And we ended up at sunset and we were lucky, or I'm sorry, sunrise. We. Fortunate in one aspect. And that was a few years before that my wife's Michelle mom, Marge, was struck by Alzheimer's as well down here in Arizona, where I [00:08:00] live and the Michelle and her sisters went and they shopped of course, all different places.

And it was a little bit like too hot, too cold, too small, too stuffy. They're mean, they didn't seem to be on top of it. This is the stuff they weren't talking about, how many floors it was. They weren't even talking necessarily about the expense of it because they all roughly cost the same.

They weren't looking at the data as much as they were the drama. Who are the people? What does it look like? And they found sunrise out in Chandler and she was very happy there and they took. Absolutely good care of her. So when my siblings up in Seattle made that decision, we had already been through the story of sunrise down here.

And I said, I can only tell you we had a good experience here. I am hoping and assuming the brand will deliver on that up in Seattle. And we were fortunate. They pretty much did through the two years of our lives, but now. [00:09:00] It was affecting us. And it's just a much deeper impact when it's your own parent going through it.

Debbie Howard: Yes, absolutely. And I think that was unusual that you did have kind of a brand experience, because I would say in general for senior living, so much, it's a fairly new industry and it's still very fragmented. There are a few kinds of national brands. Publicly traded companies, but for the most part, we're dominated by smaller operators that really don't have the scale of, of brand.

And because you're not looking for this product over and over and over again, it's not like I know that I'm going to buy. Ty then Hellman's cause that's what my mom used. And I have those brands because I grew up with them and I had familiarity and that we already had trust. And if my mom picked them, they had to be good kind of thing.

So if you don't have the advantage I guess, of brand and you're one of those smaller operators you're trying to level the playing field. I would think that the

story would [00:10:00] be even more compelling for the smaller operator, right? Cause you have to differentiate beyond the fact that we run hundreds of communities or we've been doing this for 50.

Park Howell: Yeah, absolutely is. I'm a big believer in leadership guru, Simon Sinek, and his whole idea. It all starts with the what and the how just expresses, why you do what you do. And for any of your clients out there, viewers out there, if you've got that smaller product or service you're offering, and you don't have the big money.

To go out and push a lot of advertising and marketing. The one thing that will level the playing field is to really dial in that brand story, using your why at the heart of it. Now people say, well, that's all well and good park, but how do I do it? I just start talking about our story. And I go now and Deborah, this, we have this simple little framework called the.

But, and therefore, and I came about it from the complex world of storytelling, trying to understand it, trying to [00:11:00] teach it and coach it in my brands. And we had a lot of success with it. We're talking the hero's journey and the Pixar way, and these multi-step, um, Took me at the helm to make that work. And what I was always looking for is what can I share with business people that they could use as an entree into story without being story theorists?

What could they use? Almost like the silver bullet to story. And I was fortunate. I met Dr. Randy Olson just over 10 years ago. Harvard PhD, evolutionary biologist. So we understand something about our organisms and how we act and why we do what we do. Randy also gave up tenure, went on to USC film school, graduated, produced three documentaries on climate change and global warming, but more importantly has written about seven books.

I think it is now teaching scientists. How to make the complex thinking and our complex projects, simple and easily [00:12:00] digestible to the rest of us, to grantors, to funders, to the government using these story frameworks. And he landed on the add button, therefore in a second book called connection. When I saw it from a brand standing point back in 2013, I was like, that's yeah.

That's what we're looking for to take a complex story in the branding world and simplify it. And Randy and I have worked together ever since, and he still teaches it in the science world. I teach it in the business world. And that's what

I'm so excited about sharing with your viewers and listeners today is using this concept of an, but therefore in all of your communications.

Debbie Howard: Wonderful. Well, let's jump right in. Let's start with the, and how do we create an agreement with the audience.

Park Howell: Right. So let me quickly unpack what the add button therefore has. It uses the three forces of story of agreement, which is like act one, setting the stage. [00:13:00] But is the contradiction, the conflict or the problem now we're squarely into act two where all the action adventure, the car chases, the explosion steak place.

And then the therefore is the solution. It's act three. Why this works so well is because our cause and effect, pattern seeking live. Brain that we talked about earlier, our fight or flight subconscious that is constantly worrying in the background to figure out what we should be doing. Next loves this for this three forces of story agreement, contradiction consequence.

What agreement is that statement of agreement is the and statement, and here's the best way to explain it is you want to start with your audience. What do they want and why is it. But is now the contradiction. Why don't they have that? Therefore, you are the resolution. [00:14:00] How are you there to help your audience get what they want?

Now what this does is it takes you out of the center of the story. And that's the real crusher here for most people. I got tell you your brand, your product and service, even you are not the center of the story. The center of the story is your audience, your customer, your prospect. They are the hero in this journey.

You have to understand what they want and why they want. And appreciate what's at stake for them and getting it, but then you have to empathize why they don't currently have it. Why is there not someone else out there delivering it for them that you can deliver in your own unique way? Therefore, That's your opportunity to talk about what you have, what and how you are there for them.

You play the more important role of mentor guide in this story structure, really, in all story telling when it comes to your product or service.

Debbie Howard: Yeah. We [00:15:00] often battle that we have clients that just want to lead with their brand, like why they're so great, why you should choose us? We're the answer to all your solution, all your problems. There's a place for

brand. It's just not always at the beginning because at the beginning, it, first of all, has to be about the audience.

Park Howell: The resolution, your brand is the resolution.

Debbie Howard: Right. Right. So in structuring that, I'm just thinking about, some of the nuances of our industry is that we have the adult child as an audience, and then we're more and more seeing the older adult being comfortable with technology and doing some level of research on their own.

And I think with baby boomers, we're going to see even more of that. Baby boomers taking the lead and not having their kids take the lead. So is there anything different that we have to think about as we're constructing our ABT framework? Do we need to have two messages, one for the adult child and one for the older adult, or is there a way to bring those messages together?

Is there enough at the core [00:16:00] need that aligns both of those audiences that we feel like we can create one statement? Yeah.

Park Howell: So here's what we've learned. And it's through the 10 years of working alongside Dr. Olson, we have taught 170 hours of an buttoned, therefore training to scientists since COVID.

So in all of that, it's all been virtual and we have trained up now a couple thousand of them using this framework and we've learned a lot in the process. And then of course, I'm transferring it over to the business world. So the first thing is, as we talked about already, your audience is the center of the story.

The second most important thing about this hand button, therefore is a singular narrative. So while you might have two or three or four different audiences, you're talking to, I want you to write an ABT for each audience. And depending on who is sitting across from you or who is reading your ad or who you are targeting in your [00:17:00] social media, your ABT is going to be specific to them.

So if it is the adult child, What's at stake for them. And it might be, I'm just going to completely wing this now so I can butcher it. I'm really want to show you more of the form than the absolute content. If I'm writing something to an adult child, you have been raised in an amazing family and you want only the best for the golden years of your mom, period.

But you've been looking at senior care housing and have not found the caring that is unique to the way you were raised. Therefore, come on over to the howl house. Who will, we will walk through our 10 point assessment program to understand if we are the right facility for you and your loved one. When we're all [00:18:00] said and done, you will have a better picture as to what's available to you and your.

So again, just to quick, here's what you want. And here's why it's important, but now let's connect with them on their terms. But it's frustrating because you haven't found the caring residents you had hoped. And where do I turn? Therefore, come on in, let's sit down and talk and let's go through our unique assessment to see if we are right for you.

So it leaves that door open, but it says, we want to take the time to really understand. And you know what, maybe your mom, isn't someone we actually want to hear. Maybe she won't fit in with the community, we all want to know that in advance don't we, so that it's good for everybody. So it works on both sides of the coin, but we're being honest about it.

We're being authentic about it. I share an example of my own world outside of your industry. I got a call yesterday. About, doing some work for a [00:19:00] law firm and w and their annual meeting coming up in April and could I do a storytelling training program for them. And so we had just a lovely conversation and it went as they normally do in their prospecting and so forth, we didn't get the price yet.

But then I had asked my question, Deborah, and I said, And it's my butt in the story. So they, and statement of agreement is getting acquainted and here's what we're looking for. And here's what wins look like. And here's what I can do. And then there was a decided, but conflict in the conversation. I said, listen, I was in Indianapolis.

A week before Thanksgiving. And I was working for a very large law firm out there and their real estate division. And it didn't go well, they want to participate. They didn't, they, it was awkward for them. It was awkward for me. And I'm not sure anybody. Got anything out of that particular presentation. If you feel you have those same kinds of attorneys in your world, then [00:20:00] maybe me or maybe my program is not right for you.

And then they were quickly like, no, you know what? We have this great culture and they're fun and they're open to things and whatever. And so now we think it

would work really well. But thinking through that set up problem resolution, and then being just very directly. That I don't want to waste your time.

And I don't want to find myself in that awkward position again. What do you think is the best way to go? And it builds stress it's authentic. And even if that, at that point, they said, no, you're not right for us. Guess what? We saved everybody a lot of time and anguish had money in that exercise. That's the power of the ABD.

Debbie Howard: Yeah, it sounds like being authentic. It's just a pattern interrupt. It just stops people in their tracks. That wasn't. That was not what I was expecting at all.

Park Howell: Yeah, absolutely.

Debbie Howard: So if we were going to take ABT and break it down for the older adult, maybe looking on behalf of themselves, and maybe they're looking [00:21:00] more for active adult or independent living, or even if they're looking for assisted living, it would come across a little bit differently.

You understand that maybe at this point in life, it'd be great to have a more supportive environment, more services and amenities. But you don't want to give up your freedom and choice and independence therefore you really need to find a place that will allow you to keep all the things that are wonderful about your life and add in some additional, services and amenities that may be beneficial at this stage of life.

I'm just winging it to. But is that kind of the same along the same lines?

Park Howell: It is. So if we have rule number one, your audience is at the center of the story rule. Number two, you're always working with a singular narrative. You don't have two people, two different audiences, two different problems.

It's always one thing. Then I think the third thing is, as you were writing these. First right. Start with the problem. As you write down your ABT [00:22:00] and then go and layer on top of it. That statement of agreement. What I want people to get out of their minds is so many times in sales and marketing, you're taught, hit them over the head with the problem right away.

We have learned that is not what the homosapien brain likes. It actually wants to paint a brighter, more aspirational picture at the beginning and getting you nodding saying, yes, that's what I want. Or you're a close. I actually want this. Then you insert the problem. If you begin with the problem, then you start with a but statement.

You can set up an adversarial relationship with your audience because they may fold their arms at that point and say, that's not my problem at all. Yeah, what the hell. But if you start with here's, what you looking for, and this is why it's important to you, you can either clear clarify. That's exactly what they're looking for, or at least you're validating their position and then you insert the problem.

So now let me jump over to your example. Let [00:23:00] me use an example of my mother. He is up in Seattle will be 97 and two months. She is amazing. And she still lives at home. The same 12 acres that we, that they raised. She and my dad raised us seven kids on she is still there. She, there was a lovely assisted living place down near her that she loved.

In fact, she and her girlfriends would go down and play. Card's there every Thursday afternoon, which was a brilliant marketing tool because they got used to the staff down there and, very active adult lifestyle, even for what, as soon to be a 97 year old, a woman who is very. She's just a sharper be.

So here would be her H B T right at the end of 2019, beginning 2020, when she was seriously considering moving down there because of the community and the comradery of being around all these lovely people.[00:24:00] I have been going to XYZ community for the past 15 years and playing cards and really could see it as my future home because the lovely people that are there, but.

COVID scares the hell out of me. Therefore, I'm going to stay right here where I live and hope for the best. Well, hope for the best she has lots of company that comes through there. It was a blessing for us as a family, because she was not around a lot of people. She still plays cards with her five primary girlfriends every Wednesday.

They get together at one of their houses. God bless them. And she's still living this great lifestyle, but it was the COVID thing. Now that was out of everybody's control. But now you've got serious contradiction in your story, and I'm sure a lot of your customers are dealing with that, but that's another very

true [00:25:00] example of the, and, but therefore, and if that's the case and you're dealing with that with your own community, then once you're in.

How are you combating COVID? How are you communicating the cleanliness and the hygiene and the whatever in your community to make sure that everyone feels good and feels safe and feels protected and your walls.

Debbie Howard: That's such a great example. Thank you for bringing up COVID because when I go on to a lot of senior living websites, I only say websites rather than social or paid, just because.

90% of all your prospects are going to visit your website at some point in their decision journey. So it's an important place to get the messaging. I noticed that there, most of the ones I look at have exactly the same message that they did pre COVID. There was zero change. In the message and it just strikes me as that's one of the reasons I thought the timing of having you on is so important because I think it's a good time to reconsider, are we being authentic if we haven't in [00:26:00] some way, acknowledge that the world has changed and that may be we're less selling, services, amenities, and socialization.

Then safety, security supply chain, creating, in an environment where we in some states have been able to create a bubble around the community where no one is in or out without, being vaccinated and being able to make that value proposition, to quell those kinds of fears, but just surprises me.

I don't know if you've seen that in other industries as well, it's still come here to live your best life, live your best life, or, this years are ahead or, but there's absolutely no mention, about COVID anywhere in, in the copy.

Park Howell: Yeah. First and foremost, I give them a little bit of a hall pass because they are in the trenches day in and day out.

Operating, a lot of them aren't web whizzes, and it's hard to write this copy and content, and they may not have the [00:27:00] budgets to go and bring people in. Plus because we're all dealing with pandemic brain, whether we've had COVID or not think about the existential threat. Of COVID over the last two plus years that doesn't seem to be going away.

So again, this limbic system that helped us navigate and survive, the Savannah is on super over power mode. Do I go, do I not go? Do I wear a mask? Do I not wear a mask? , is this a super spreader? Is that a not do I get vax? Do I not get

vac's? Can I trust this? It's burning up all of these calories and energy that takes away from our frontal cortex, our executive functioning that may stop, take a breath and make some of those decisions you're talking about there.

So it's hard right now, but you make a very good point that we need to address that. Elephant in the room. And when you do, you are going to build trust with your audience saying, look, they're talking about it. It's something that is on foremost [00:28:00] on all of our minds. And how do you particular community deal with it?

What happens when my father on Alzheimer's is now put in he's got a week to go, do I get to come in and see. How are you going to handle that? Do I get to still come and take them out to, on walks? My dad loved ice cream, so I let one of my very last visits with him as I took him very quick and we went down and we sat there and we had the greatest time eating ice cream together.

He remembered me still and he loved that ice cream. It was my last time I saw. We are you going to let me take dad to ice cream now, we all want to know this what's going on and then, oh, by the way, how protected is he in there knowing he doesn't have a lot of time left, but it's still top of mind.

So it's a very delicate situation, obviously. And yet it's a situation that is hitting all of us over the head, upside the head with a 12 pound [00:29:00] sledge that we just got to communicate in.

Debbie Howard: Yeah, it's hard because things are still changing. So what you write today may be irrelevant tomorrow because a CDC guideline has changed or the state has come in with different regulations.

And I think it's something that we just need to somehow address and be authentic about in order to build that trust. And I think the fear is that one person's positive ABT and really expressing all of the safety measures and protocols that they've put into place, maybe a negative to somebody who's really against those protocols.

Park Howell: Yeah. They're raising hell because they don't believe, or their kids don't believe in your protocol. That's just going to be disruptive for everybody. There's the one opportunity I think that's out there and it just occurred to me as you were saying that Deborah, so there are so many. Different stories being [00:30:00] told on all sides of the COVID issue.

It's hard to get our arms around what it really means. And I think that's fair for those that don't want to take the vax. Hey man, they've got their own reasons going. They do their own research and whatever, and, come on the CDC and the federal government have not done a particularly splendid job of explaining what's really going on and why we need.

Very much in the middle of the road on this sort of thing, here's an opportunity for senior care communities to really do their research and say, we know that there's a lot of different stories coming out. Here's our belief. Here's what we back it up with. And here is how we show up every day and protecting your family and your friends, your loved one from this dreaded pandemic, while still giving them a rewarding life that we can all enjoy.

Now, to your point, there could be one home. All vaxs 24 7. You [00:31:00] can't get in here. That's our rules. And that's what we believe. And you got to respect that belief and they're going to attract that particular audience. There can be a middle of the road, one that said we really prefer you to be vaxs, but if you're not, we're going to ask you to do this assessed and go through this.

There could be the other side. We don't care about backs if we don't Yelp. And so we do this, it could be an, any nuance in there, but here's an opportunity for a community to really start separating themselves. What do they believe? How do they back it up with their own research and are they doing it authentically from their heart to make sure that they are delivering on the one thing they truly believe in.

And that is a wonderful caring. And safe community for that person to live out the rest of their life in.

Debbie Howard: Yeah, that's a great point. Thanks for spending a little time on that, because I think a lot of people are really struggling with it. And so sometimes when we struggle with it, we just don't do anything.

And instead of taking the time to be [00:32:00] thoughtful and to say, how did. Position this, and what's the right messaging for our community or our brand. another question, and this is the selfish part of podcasts because the selfish part of podcast is I get people like you and I get to ask you all kinds of questions to help inform me.

If I'm writing an ABT. So is there a difference or should we approach it differently if we're representing maybe a senior living service, that's more, crisis

driven or needs driven, like maybe assisted living or Alzheimer's care. Versus if I'm on the other side of a senior, the senior living spectrum where maybe I'm a marketing and an active adult or independent living.

Which is more choice driven. So it's almost that, move towards pleasure or move away from pain. Should that inform how I approach the project of writing ABTS?

Park Howell: It does. And let's take it just one step deeper. I always ask the question. [00:33:00] Who is your audience? So in this case, let's she always just talk about Alzheimer's for a minute.

Give me an example of an audience. We're probably not talking to the person experiencing Alzheimer's because they can't make that decision for them. So it was probably an adult child, right?

Debbie Howard: Yes. Which is the artist.

Park Howell: Yeah. Which is really hard. So let me ask you, we're just going to identify the adult child.

What do they want?

Debbie Howard: So for their loved one, they want. Safety, security, and a wonderful, still fulfilling lifestyle. They want their loved one to still be seen, be heard, be advocated for, they want them to have an amazing experience where they can still enjoy all of those things in life that have fulfilled them and been purposeful for them, but they just want them to be in an environment.

The increased level of, safety, security and socialization then.

Park Howell: Okay. So we're covering a [00:34:00] lot of things are good. Good, good. This is a great example while we start ending up with, here are a number of different narratives. Is this narrative about safety? Ultimately is this narrative about security?

Ultimately, is this narrative about fulfillment? So you can have those sprinkled throughout, but I want us to focus on one narrative for this ABT. So we know we're talking to the adult child of an Alzheimer's, someone who's struck with Alzheimer's. So in this case, what are you going to put the top of the list?

Safety, security, or. I think I do safety. And when you say safety, is it safety from themselves not wandering off and not hurting themselves and that sort of thing versus safety from COVID or,

Debbie Howard: yeah, I would say just that they're safe in terms of, they're not going to, wander, they're not going to mix up their medication.

They're not going to leave the stove on all fall down the basement stairs, all the things that, you know, when your judgment is impaired, that, tragic things can have. [00:35:00]

Park Howell: Yeah. So I would put that right up top, I'm sorry to hear that your mother has Alzheimer's, and you want the best place for her to live safety is right at the top of that.

We can deliver this safe environment. Then she will live this more fulfilling life for the rest of her life. So we're able to get fulfillment in there, but now it's all framed under safety, but maybe you've looked around and. Safety is not the highest priority for some of the other places you've seen.

Now. I'm not about throwing other people under the bus at all. This is just what's coming out of my mind. As soon as it left my lips. I thought I probably wouldn't go there, but you're not able to provide the safety for her at home. Like she used to have. Because of her wandering because of her mixing up of medications because of this, therefore at our home, we place [00:36:00] safety for your loved one number one, and in doing so we do that.

Now it may sound redundant to you. Gosh, park, you started with safety, that first line, and then, but you don't have safety and therefore we're going to give you safety. Yes. Our limbic system loves that step. Don't make me work for it. It's so interesting. Our brain makes up 2% of our body mass. Yet it consumes 20% of our energy, 20% of our calories.

And the majority of that is in our limbic system, wondering is this fight or flight situation? What do I got to do next? And it's being consumed by the pandemic as a good example of it. So when we use this set up problem resolution, and we have this repetition, you want say, But you don't currently have safety.

Therefore we're going to provide the ultimate safety. It goes, oh, parks talking about safety. Awesome. Now let's take that same ABT and say, you're talking to,

Dan is adult child in there and [00:37:00] he really likes his place. And so he invites his sister, Melody. I want you to come and meet.

Debra over here. I really was impressed with the safety of what they do about safety and then melody might go well, that's all well, and good. I'm just assuming safety is table stakes. I want them to know what kind of community, what kind of activities do they have going? So now. Fulfillment becomes the story.

So now we rewrite it. Hi Melanie. I'm so sorry to hear, what's going on in your family. And I understand that your mom has, Lee's a very active life and fulfillment is like right at the top of it, but you feel like now she's locked in her home. And she's not having the friends over as she used to.

And it's just not the way a fulfilling life. You want your mom to live out. That's why we're so glad that you're here today, because I want to show you the 20 different programs. We have all geared around, fulfilling the life of that senior. [00:38:00] Um, whether they like to play cards or approaches or Marshawn or love plays, and theater, or the piano player that comes in and plays ragtime every Wednesday, blah, blah, blah.

Uh, I'm happy to share with you, so now you got two different siblings in. They are, have two different interests in your particular product lines are unsafety. You have an ABT around that. One's on fulfillment. You have now moved that fulfillment up into the frame. Number one in your storytelling, but you still have a singular narrative that you're talking about.

That's the power of the ABT.

Debbie Howard: Yeah. And it comes across so differently than the way that. Sales interactions happen, which is, let me tell you about our safety system. Let me talk about our wander guard and let me show you our medication management program. And then let me, it becomes very featured.

Features driven about how we're going to keep you safe, which resonates very differently than the way that you just articulated it.

Park Howell: [00:39:00] Flip that. Your wander guard, what a great name. Okay. Great brand name. If I was to use the wonder guard and I would recommend it say I'm in an ABT and the safety.

You've got a loved one who loves living at home, but you're concerned about their safety because you have found them wandering off. I know that feeling because we had that with our dad. Therefore we give them the freedom to explore without ever finding themselves, wandering off with our program called wonder guard.

What I've done is switched the what and the how, when most people think the, what is the program now? The what is the. With safety, the how is through our winter guard program. So we've, we switched that feature and we put it downstream to the benefit is they get the freedom of feeling like themselves walking around with ever, without ever wandering off with our [00:40:00] wonderful.

Guard program. It underscores another point with the ABT and in all of your brand's storytelling, as your stories, while they're not about you again, we've put that in your audiences. Number one, your stories are also not about what you make, but what you make happen in people's lives. So this wander guard is a program you've made to make sure people don't that's all well and good, but they don't care about that.

First and foremost, what they care about is the safety while still feeling like you have the freedom to being yourself and wandering, walking around without wandering off through what we make our wonder guard program, but it's always selling and talking about what you make happen in people's lives, not what you make.

Debbie Howard: Oh, I like that. What you make happen.

Park Howell: It's not about what you make, it's what you make happen. Remember that.

Debbie Howard: That is good. And so it sounds like with the therefore statement, you're incorporating both the what and the how within the [00:41:00] context of that last step.

Park Howell: And you will even do it in the problem statement, but that what is always about the personal impact, it's about the emotion it's about what's in it for your audience is always the, what it makes you again, think of your audience, the house.

Is your program, but they're not going to buy the house. They're going to buy the what, and then you're going to prove how you do that with your.

Debbie Howard: Okay. So let's talk about getting started. I've never heard of ABT. I think this is awesome. I heard this podcast now. I want to get started creating my ABT framework.

How do you recommend that people get started? It seems like it would take a lot of. Repetition and practice to really get good at this, to have this kind of naturally flow. So what's the best way for folks to get started.

Park Howell: All right. So first you can get started right now, have a piece of paper and pen out or type on your computer or go to your digital device [00:42:00] because the order in which you're going to write your first ABT, I want you to articulate, clarify your singular audience, who is.

Number two is what do they want? And then write in all caps. And why is it important to them that your statement of agreement three steps? Who's your audience? What do they want and why it's important to them right. In first person, if you can, as if they're sitting across from you, step number four bucks, but why don't you have.

But why what's the problem, therefore, how are you uniquely equipped to help them get it? Singular narrative, singular problem. That's where to start. Who, what are they know? What do they want and why is it important, but why don't they have it? Therefore, how are you there? If you want to do a quick little online course from me, 18 minutes long, three little short videos that show you how to do this.

Go to business of [00:43:00] story dot think ethic. I don't know if you've heard of that program. Think I F I c.com. Think if it is a wonderful online training program. Or you got a business story.com and click through there. It's all a \$35 and you can go in, you can write an ABT and send it to me. And I'll give you a quick little coaching online for that.

Or we've got the book that you mentioned, the narrative, Jim for business. It's a very short 75 page guide. You can get it on Amazon and it's all of \$6 for 6 99 for the Kindle. 8 99 for the print version. It's our ideas. We're not going to get rich on this. It's we want to get, it is in as many hands as we possibly can to help you become a more compelling communicator.

That's where I'd have them start, but you know what? You don't even have to go to those other courses yet. You can do this right now with that first exercise they gave you.

Debbie Howard: That's wonderful. Well, I hope a lot of folks will go and take advantage of that. So if you're a book person, then you want to [00:44:00] write in something and have that, that tactile experience grabbed the book.

And if you want to get the course, you can get it right off the website. So I so appreciate your time today. This has been such an interesting conversation, and I know you have a passion to really. Help people that are, are purpose driven in what they do in life. And I would say that our audience being seniors housing, and they're just caring, wonderful people that are all trying to make a difference every day.

And your insights are helpful to us and in creating our own story. So thank you park. I appreciate that you shared your senior living marketing perspectives with us and in the show notes, we will have all of those links to all the resources that we talked about today, and I hope folks will reach out to park if he can, help them, really develop their brand story.

So park, thanks so much for all of your insights today.

Park Howell: Deborah, thank you so much for being here. And thank you for having me here.[00:45:00]