

What Makes Nifty Stories Nifty?

As a kid, I overheard my older brothers using the word "nifty" when referring to a cool car or a great suit of clothes. It was a word that meant a variety of things, all of them good and attractive. As time passed, I heard the word used in a wider range of conversations, including nifty evenings out, nifty concerts, and nifty songs. Later still, it cropped up in conversations about more "cultural" experiences: nifty books, nifty poems, and nifty stories. Whenever I heard the word I assumed it meant something good, something attractive. Still, I did not really define the word until I found myself using it to refer to the stories I tell to audiences and on recordings. Actually, I hit the books when a listener said my stories were nifty. The current Wiktionary defines the word as "good; a general term for anything that is good, useful or beneficial." The standard reference Compact Oxford Dictionary states: "particularly good, effective, or stylish."

So how do I define nifty stories? The stories I tell always have a message, a lesson, a bit of perspective, and they are, indeed, particularly good and rather effective at making their point. You could say that my idea of nifty stories is stories that enlighten as well as entertain. I look for stories with certain underlying values that help the listener to set their internal compass when sailing through life.

For example, a story with a moral is one that provides a clear message. It teaches using a concrete example. However, the lessons in many other stories may not be as obvious. The characters may act out the meaning of the story. It is up to the listener to decipher the message. And there may be a different message for each listener. Stories such as these are inclined to be more widely popular. Longer stories are likely to be more subtle in the lessons that result. One can learn many lessons from epic stories. Think of the difference between an Aesop fable and a tale from the Arabian Nights. Which one appeals to you? My personal penchant is for finding my own lessons when I listen to a story. The stories I chose for my Fables in Four Minutes and World Full of Stories CDs are good examples of nifty stories with subtle messages.

[Nifty stories](#) are stories that teach. Nifty stories are memorable. Nifty stories carry a message that applies to all people. Nifty stories are always in vogue. These stories are naturally very attractive. Any stories of worth are nifty stories. Related articles [World stories](#) .

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