

Want to Hear Nifty Stories?

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. Even later, the word took on a more cultured definition in reference to poems, books, and, of course, nifty stories.

Whenever I heard the word I assumed it meant something good, something attractive. However, it was only when I found myself using the word in my description of my own stories that I needed to define it. Actually, it was a listener who called my material "nifty stories," and that comment sent me to the books. 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."

What makes nifty stories nifty? 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. To me, nifty stories are a blend of entertainment and education, or what some call "edutainment." I look for stories with certain underlying values that help the listener to set their internal compass when sailing through life.

Any story with a moral at the end sends the listener a clear message. It teaches by example. On the other hand, many stories are not so obvious in the lessons they offer. The characters may act out the meaning of the story. Listeners are left to figure out the message for themselves. And there may be a different message for each listener. This kind of story is generally attractive to a wider audience. Longer stories are likely to be more subtle in the lessons that result. One can learn many lessons from epic stories. Just compare a tale from the Arabian Nights to a fable by Aesop to see the difference. Which one appeals to you? My personal penchant is for finding my own lessons when I listen to a story. Check out my World Full of Stories and Fables in Four Minutes CDs for some examples of nifty stories with more subtle lessons.

Nifty stories are stories that teach. Nifty stories appeal to a broad audience. [Nifty stories](#) travel beyond the culture from which they originate. Nifty stories are always stylish, regardless of the era that spawned them. These stories are naturally very attractive. Any stories of worth are nifty stories.

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