

## Spiffy Nifty Stories

I grew up with the word "nifty" as a standard descriptor in my vocabulary. It was a word that meant a variety of things, all of them good and attractive. As I grew older I heard the word being used in a wider range of topics: a nifty song, a nifty concert, a nifty evening out. 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. 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 Merriam/Webster Dictionary definition states: "very good, very attractive," etymology unknown, originally used in 1865. The standard reference Compact Oxford Dictionary states: "particularly good, effective, or stylish."

So how do I define nifty stories? The stories I choose to tell are, indeed, particularly good and rather effective at making a point, a lesson, a message, a bit of perspective. 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.

Any story with a moral at the end sends the listener a clear message. It teaches by example. However, the lessons in many other stories may not be as obvious. The characters may act out the meaning of the story. Listeners are left to figure out the message for themselves. And different listeners will carry away different messages. Stories such as these are inclined to be more widely popular. Longer stories are likely to be more subtle in the lessons that result. Epic stories have many layered lessons. Just compare a tale from the Arabian Nights to a fable by Aesop to see the difference.

Which one gives you more freedom to choose your own message? 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 edify. Nifty stories appeal to a broad audience. Nifty stories carry a message that applies to all people. Nifty stories are always in vogue.

Stories such as these hold the listeners attention long enough to send their message effectively. Nifty stories are worth their weight in gold! Similar Entries [Folk stories](#) | [Stories](#) |

## About the Author

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