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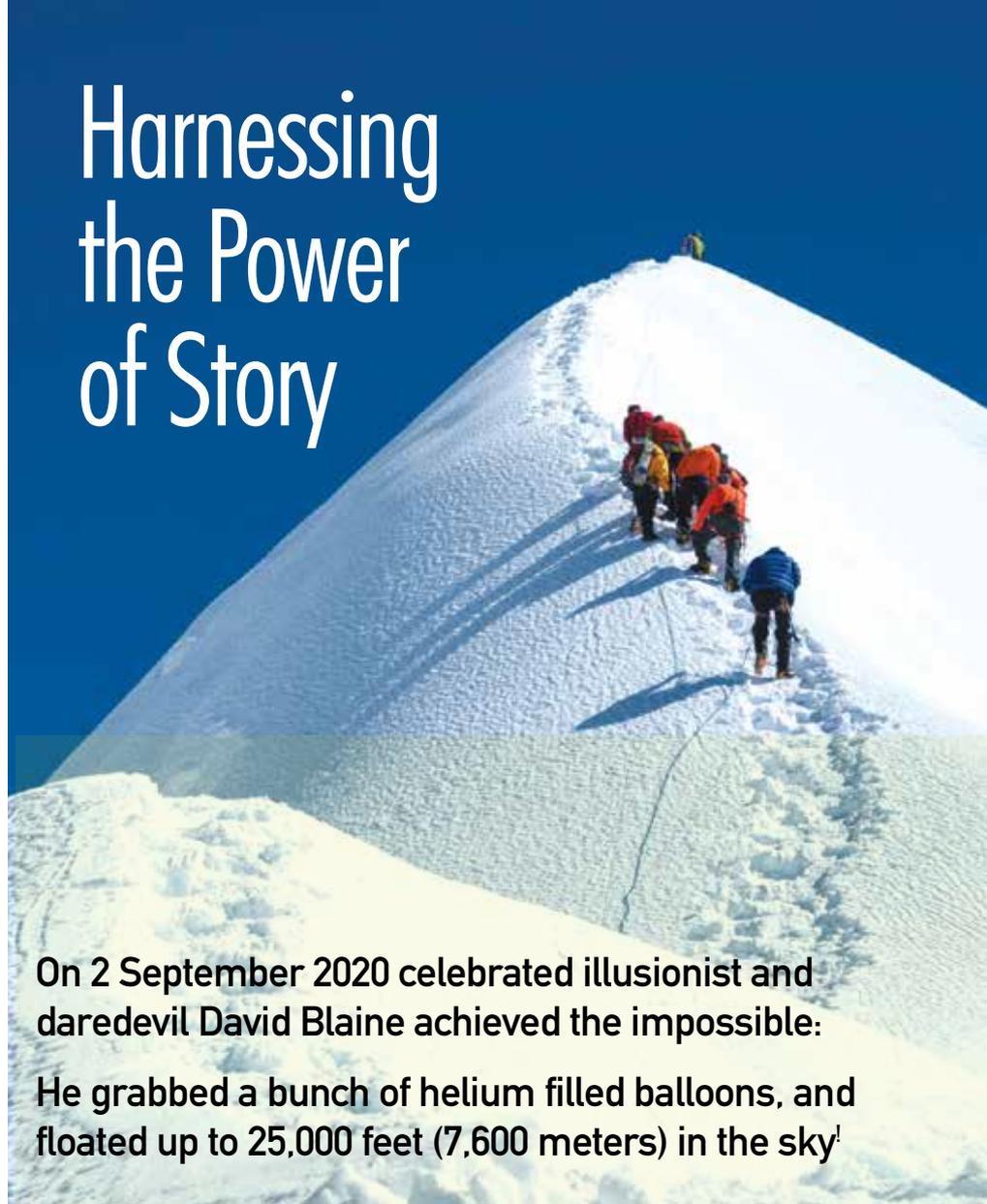
Now here's the thing:  
Despite the compelling visual integrity and cinematic nostalgia, Blaine was actually strapped onto an impressive blend of cutting edge technology and robust aviation mechanics ingeniously hidden amidst the colorful bunch of balloons that took more than a year and a team of nearly one hundred experts to design, plan and execute.

Ask anyone however and the way they will describe the stunt is by way of a very simple story without reference to any intricate details of how it was actually pulled off:-

**He grabbed a bunch of balloons and floated up in the sky!**

Human beings are natural born novelists. We tend to weave simple stories to create meaning and make sense of the world around us.

When we think about other people's day to day actions, we rarely consume ourselves trying to fully understand the big picture, the intricate details behind their intentions, idiosyncrasy or overall life philosophy. As a professional, if I meet a potential client for the first time and my behavior exudes indifference, stress and carelessness, little does she care that the night before I had a quarrel with my spouse; that my dog got sick; or that my appraisal meeting is due the next day causing me great stress. The story she will possibly weave about me is a simple one: that I don't care thus she won't want to do business with me. Good luck to me trying to rebut that overwhelmingly negative story about me! First impressions last and last impressions count, as they say. Stories can make or break us; they can propel us into the direction of our dreams or tear and bring us down; stories can get



# Harnessing the Power of Story

**On 2 September 2020 celebrated illusionist and daredevil David Blaine achieved the impossible: He grabbed a bunch of helium filled balloons, and floated up to 25,000 feet (7,600 meters) in the sky!**

people queue for hours to buy something from us or send them on a crazy run away from us.

**What simple story do you think your clients, prospects, or colleagues tell when asked to give their opinion about you? That you are dependable, experienced, knowledgeable and trustworthy? Or careless, indifferent, unprofessional, unstable or even unethical? Whether we like or choose it or not, somewhere there is always a simple story being told by someone about us. The good news?**

Instead of leaving it to fate, we can choose the story others get to tell about us.

The process goes a bit like this:

- 1. Choose the story**  
Say you would like the story to be: "Philippos is very dependable"
- 2. Work backwards from the story and calibrate your actions**

Take a step back to assess what behaviors you need to change to promote such story.

For example, dependability requires that I:

- (a) become more attentive to calls and emails
- (b) increase my turnaround time
- (c) under-promise and over-deliver (not vice versa)

**3. Be consistent**

Consistency and congruence will help promote the story you choose for yourself.

At the end of the day, it is much better for us to be intentional, deliberate and proactive and put in the effort so as to control the stories others tell about us than leave it to fate.

Are you ready to weave your very own personal success story?

<sup>1</sup> The feat, livestreamed on Youtube and titled Ascension was a brilliantly designed, painstakingly constructed and impeccably executed combination of stunt and magic. Here is the video with the key moments of the stunt: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB0zG\\_wvWfI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB0zG_wvWfI)