## Bonus Lesson 10: Metaphors and Analogies

It's the Tuesday 10 o'clock meeting, again. You are about to hear several more presentations that will be stuffed with statistics, pie charts and graphs. It's a show-up and throw-up meeting time for the presenters. It's the data dump presentation that we are all so tired of watching. The audience will give their attention at the beginning and then slowly lose it as the presentation continues to drone on. Only when they sense the speaker is about to wrap it up do they tune back in. If we graph this phenomenon it looks like this:


Audience Attention Levels
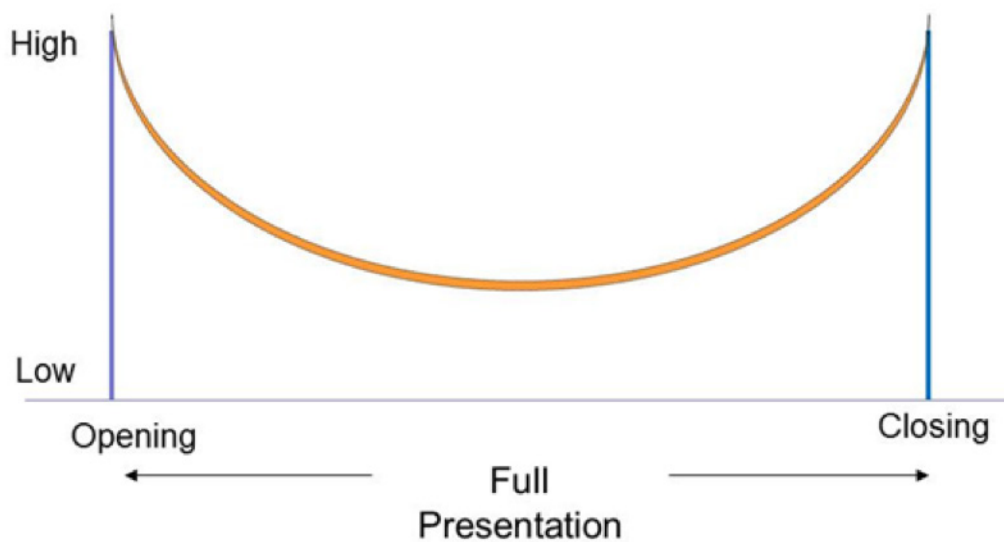
Primary / Recency Effect

This looks like a hammock strung between two trees and it's inviting me to take a nap!

Fortunately, research shows that there are ways you can regain your audience's attention and they will be more likely to remember your message. We call these methods colorful items. Metaphors and Analogies are two types of colorful items. When the speaker uses them during a presentation, it makes the information richer and more engaging. If we want the audience to increase "retention" then we must increase their "attention."

Audience Attention Levels

Von Restorff Effect
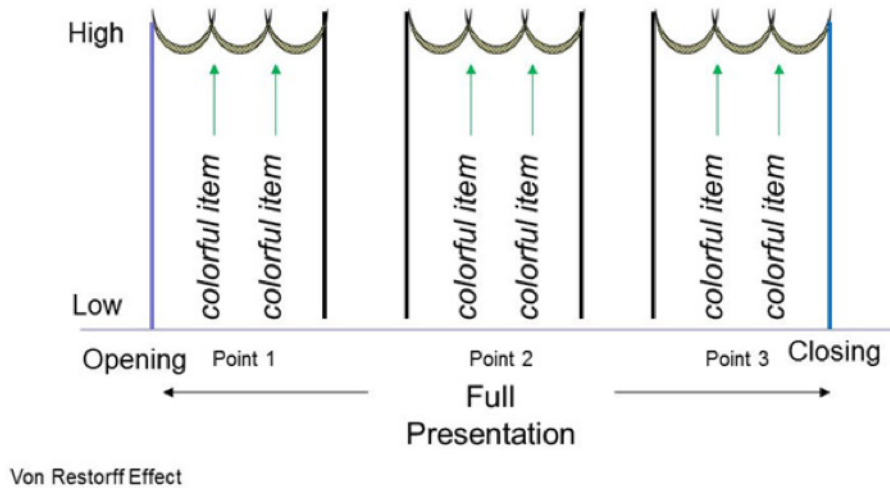
Without getting into the technical differences between metaphors, similes, and analogies, using a description or image to simplify a more complex item can help the audience understand a topic easier. The comparisons can explain or exaggerate situations. Exaggerated situations can be humorous to the audience because they paint the actual image in their mind. This also makes the presentation more memorable.

"You're trying to boil the ocean and all you've got is a lighter."

"Our new networked system allows you access to multiple databases through one portal. That's like getting your groceries, clothes, furniture, and gardening supplies all at one store: It's the Super Wal-Mart."

Before your next email lesson arrives, use a colorful item, like a metaphor, analogy or simile in a conversation you might have. Then figure out how to use it in your next presentation.