

## 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 alluded to the uniqueness and stylishness of the subject being described. 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, 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."

What was my listener describing when he called my stories "nifty?" 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.

For example, a story with a moral is one that provides a clear message. It teaches by example. However, the lessons in many other stories may not be as obvious. The meaning is hidden in the actions of the characters. 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. 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! See here also [Inspirational stories](#) | [Folk stories](#) | [" title="Folk stories">Stories](#) |

## About the Author

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