

Booktalk Your Way to the Friendliest Library in Town

Presented by Becky Spratford

For: SCLS

Part 2 of 3

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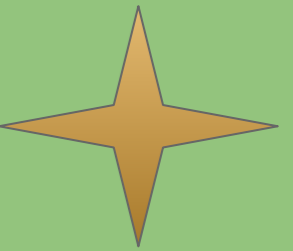




This is how we feel about books!

Power of Sharing Books

- ★ Rethink “booktalking”
 - **Sharing** the joy of a good read
 - **Cultivating** conversations NOT tallying transactions
- ★ “Books are our brand. Reading is our Business”*
 - Relationships begin here
 - So do increased circ stats
- ★ You are a trusted expert. Own it!



Warm Up!

- ★ Get in the right frame of mind for sharing!
- ★ Take the pulse of collection & larger community conversation about books
 - Check return carts/Displays
 - [Bestseller lists](#), [Daily book news](#) [media]
- ★ Conversation starters not specific items
 - Recent favs- you, staff, patrons [see above]
 - Popular books/topics
 - **Walk the stacks with no purpose**
 - When is the last time you did that?

Beginners Tips

★ Start small

- What are you reading/hearing about?
- Staff favs- yours and coworkers
- [Book Riot](#)
- [Library Reads](#)
- [Goodreads](#)

★ [Use the words of others](#)

★ Don't be afraid to fail; you can't

★ Practice w/ trusted patrons, staff, pets

★ Practice w/ the same book



Ready, Set, Booktalk!

- ★ Prepare a title
 - Is the book there?
- ★ Look for opportunities
- ★ Have an opening line/soundbite
- ★ No plot-- appeal!
- ★ Keep the book on center stage
- ★ It's a dialog— back and forth
- ★ Listen and ask ?s
- ★ Develop your own style over time

But I Don't Want to Talk

- ★ Get nervous “performing?”
 - [Record](#)
- ★ Prefer to write your booktalks?
 - Annotated lists/Goodreads reviews
- ★ Not confident on paper or with words?
 - Create displays/Instagram posts
- ★ Different ways of “talking”
 - Honors staff strength and patron preference

Intermediate Tips

- ★ Push yourself to get better/more comfy
- ★ Describe the book to its best reader
- ★ Add in books you have only read about
- ★ Increase spontaneity, decrease item dependence
 - Use Props!
 - Conversation starter questions
- ★ Interactivity is key



Rethink the “Book Talk”

- ★ Who can book talk?
 - Anyone...even maintenance staff
- ★ What can you book talk?
 - Anything... consider non-book leisure items
- ★ Where can you book talk?
 - Everywhere...in building, online, at programs
- ★ When can you book talk?
 - Anytime...not only when have an audience
 - [Post-it note reviews](#)



Practice, Practice, Practice

- ★ Create more opportunities to booktalk
 - Staff-staff, move to other depts, online
 - Enlist the help of regular patrons
 - Advertises expertise and willingness
- ★ Set goals and create friendly competition
 - [Becky's step-by-step guide](#)
- ★ Prioritize **sharing** your collection
- ★ You are finally living the dream: being paid to talk about books



Intermission: Excuse Busters

- You can use anyone's words to book talk.
- Resources are your friend.
- Reviews can be a book talk
- Your coworkers' Goodreads shelf
- The back cover copy
- What another patron told you
- ANYTHING you read about a book to a patron is a book talk!!!
- JUST TALK ABOUT BOOKS!
- It's about the conversation, not the checkout.

The Backlist Is Your BFF

- ★ New books **do not** need your help
- ★ Books in media or news **do not** need your help
- ★ Booktalks are meant to highlight books that **do** need your help
- ★ Backlist is our best asset and biggest investment
 - Time to play it up and cash in
- ★ Best backlist bets: look back 2-8 yrs

Audit What You Share

- ★ What books you choose to share matters
- ★ Institute a marginalized voices requirement!
 - [Use ALA Code of Ethics to for support](#)
- ★ When suggesting- focus on appeal NOT diversity
 - [Diversity is not a “superpower”](#)
 - It also is not a genre
- ★ Don't give hateful books a boost

Next Steps?

- ★ Use slides to make a plan for **yourself** and one with your **team**
 - Just get sharing
- ★ Remember: bridge physical-virtual divide
- ★ Always be interactive
 - Conversations go two ways
- ★ Commit to taking regular spins through the stacks to encounter patrons
 - Even if your job is behind the scenes

Final Thoughts

- ★ Everytime you finish a book, write down **why** you liked it-- appeal terms
 - Make notes accessible-- to you, to other staff
- ★ Use resources to share books
- ★ Start conversations around books, book news, etc...
 - **The conversation is the end goal**
 - Set the ex & your patrons will follow
- ★ Results: increased circulation and patron engagement/satisfaction

Next Steps

★ Practice

- Booktalk titles from your Reader Profile
- Find times and places to have conversations about books
- [Here](#) is a sheet to help you start having conversations on a larger scale

Questions?

RA for All

Matching Readers With Books
Through Your Local Public Library

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