

WORK BOOK



STORYTELLING FOR RESIDENT LEADERS

A how-to guide for creating narratives that
make a difference in your community.

STORYTELLING FOR RESIDENT LEADERS

The *Storytelling for Resident Leaders Workbook* was developed as part of a Civic Participation Pilot supporting resident leaders in South Phoenix and aimed at increasing community engagement in the context of the light rail expansion. Vitalyst invested in storytelling training to provide skills to resident leaders in order to elevate stories of the lived experiences of the residents of South Phoenix. The intent was to bring forward stories of marginalized citizens most likely to be impacted by inequitable transportation development. This would ultimately influence the Transportation Options, Community Design and Economic Opportunity elements of a healthy community.¹

The workbook grew out of a series of storytelling training workshops conducted in the Spring of 2017 with resident leaders connected to Remain, Reclaim, Reimagine (RRR). RRR was a South Phoenix resident-centered group that intended to prevent displacement through equitable engagement practices. Members of RRR crafted, told, and analyzed stories to prepare themselves to help others in their community do the same.

The purpose of this workbook is to provide other residents and community leaders a set of tools to find and foster the stories of the communities they live in and serve. Personal stories, family stories, stories that document social history, stories of both trauma and triumph, and stories with deep local significance must be alive in the consciousness of the community. When that is the case, it is harder for others to dictate what is or should be for the community. Resident leaders have the narrative capital to counter stories that do not best serve their interests.

The foundational principle of this workbook is that healthy communities require that the stories and voices of traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised people be heard and honored. To be most effective, institutions – non-profits, government agencies and business organizations – must center the voices of the people that they serve. At the same time, resident leaders can build their own and their community’s capacity by understanding the complexities of their lived experience and how it relates to others who share consequences of the same systemic issues. Story is a powerful tool to achieve that kind of understanding.

Sustaining community cohesion has always been one of the primary functions of storytelling. Our ancestors shared history, demonstrated values, and reinforced bonds between people through storytelling, and that is still true for us today. The act of telling a story is empowering. It can allow the teller to take charge, reframe, and understand life experiences. Bringing people together to tell and hear such stories of importance and meaning strengthens their connections to each other. This results in stronger and more resilient – healthier – communities.

Throughout history, stories have been used to highlight injustice and create the case for change. We are living in a time when the capacity of a single story to reach and influence millions of people has never been stronger. We need those single impactful stories. We also need the benefits that can come when many people are telling the stories of their lives and many others are hearing and valuing those stories.

¹ <http://livewellaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/E0HC-Handout-Jan2018.pdf>

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I WANT TO USE STORYTELLING IN MY WORK

Stories can be used in a variety of settings and for numerous purposes:

- Stories can help you connect with others.
- Stories can frame issues for city officials and legislators.
- Stories can elevate the lived experience of the people you work with.
- Stories can convey an issue in a tangible way.

Perhaps the most challenging part of sharing stories is crafting them in a way that matches your intention.

This workbook is meant to help you find and prepare the stories you need to do your job and to make a difference in your community. It is filled with specific activities to support you in different phases of the storytelling process from identifying a story to tell to developing an existing story further.

Ultimately, each story is a unique window into someone's life and we hope that this toolkit serves as a mechanism to enhance the opening.



WHAT IS A STORY?

Story is the most fundamental and profound way in which humans preserve and share information. Stories are used to convey meaning, transmit history and tradition, entertain, instruct, to build empathy and community, and to motivate people to act.

A story is the narrative shape given to a sequence of events to contextualize, highlight, and amplify the meaning.

Stories are not reports, essays, lectures, anecdotes, jokes, speeches, recipes, sermons, travelogues, monologues or newscasts. These are forms of narrative with distinctive structures of their own. Stories are, however, almost always included in those other types of narrative to bring them to life, to make them real.

A real story documents change. That can be the smallest change in consciousness all the way to biggest life-changing transformation.

There are many ways to structure a story, but one way or another they almost always come down to this:

This is how it used to be.

Changes came.

Now it's this way and here is what it means.

Storytellers intentionally craft oral stories and share those stories purposely, face-to-face with others, in real time. This toolkit is designed to help you tell stories to serve your goals. The exercises will help you find, craft, and tell stories that are based in real moments and concrete images. When you tell a story in this way, you use words, gestures, and facial expressions to create pictures in the listener's mind. Ideally, the story becomes a little movie that your listener is seeing in their heads as you talk. When the listener can see and feel the events of the story, empathy and understanding result.

Almost anyone can tell a story, but to be a storyteller is to take on a specific role in society. The job of the storyteller is to find, craft, tell, leverage, and preserve the stories of his or her community. That includes the folktales, myths, and legends, the historical and family stories, stories of institutions and movements, and the tales of personal challenge and transformation.

ADAPTED FROM *THE ORAL TRADITION TODAY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF STORYTELLING*, BY LIZ WARREN.

“STORYTELLING IS DIFFERENT THAN ‘TELLING A STORY’.
STORYTELLING IS ABOUT CHANGE. GOOD OR BAD. SOMETHING
HAS TO CHANGE.”

HOW DO RESIDENT LEADERS USE STORY?

Resident Leaders use story in three interconnected contexts:

1. To hone their understanding of their own personal, family, and cultural stories as well as the societal meta-narratives that impact them.
2. To build organizational capacity.
3. To implement systems change.

1. Personal, Family, and Cultural Stories

Most of the exercises in this toolkit are designed to help resident leaders develop their skills in this context. It's essential to know the stories of who you are to yourself, your families, and your communities. This is the starting point for all other ways of using storytelling in organizing. Identifying the stories you are carrying begins the process of recognizing, reconciling, and constructing your personal and social identity. The act of shaping a memory into a story often brings unconscious beliefs and values to light. Those beliefs may or may not be useful and relevant. If they don't serve, you can reframe the story to better represent the reality of your lived experience.

You must be engaged in this process before you can help others do it. A crucial part of this is learning the extent to which personal, family, and cultural stories relate – or don't relate – to the broader societal narratives that shape social possibilities and realities. It is often the case, especially for people in marginalized communities, that the stories told about them by others are at the least inaccurate, or worse carry destructive prejudices.



Building your own set of stories provides relatable and accessible ways to self-advocate and to advocate for others. Because stories are about the experience of an individual, they can provide a face to an issue – the face of someone most impacted by the issue. A concrete, story-based example makes it much easier for others to see an issue and its reality in the lives of others. That, in turn, makes it more likely that they can shift perspective or take action.

2. Building Collective Capacity

Storytelling is an important element of recruiting and connecting to new resident leaders. Recruiting people to a cause or organization can take time. Resident leaders use stories – about themselves, their organization, the people they serve, and the issues they are grappling with – to build relationships and to establish common ground. Stories help potential participants see themselves in the cause and build their confidence in the organization. As resident leaders find, prepare and share their stories, they simultaneously develop stronger relationships within their teams.

As the members of an organization or a group build their individual and collective sets of stories, those stories can be employed in different contexts:

- A story might be used to give context to numbers and statistics that describe a community or group of people.
- If there is a health issue, stories help to explain causes, impacts and solutions.
- Stories might be written for use in newsletters, grant applications, social media and promotional applications.
- Stories might be honed and distilled for use with institutional staff, or with council members or legislators.

“I LEARNED TO CONNECT MY OWN STORY OF SELF INTO SHARED VALUES.”

3. Systems Change

The more familiar individuals and organizations become with how their individual stories relate to broader societal meta-narratives, the more able they will be to use stories to influence systems change. Systems are created and maintained by people – people who also have stories. Creating opportunities to connect people through storytelling allows people working in institutions and the community residents impacted by those institutions and their policies to meet and establish a dialogue. A story circle, for example, is an effective tool to hear several stories in a short time and to start to identify patterns.

“I LEARNED HOW TO USE MY BODY TO TELL STORIES. EVERY SHIVER AND QUIVER MATTERS IN HELPING ME AFFECT EMOTION. ALSO, ABOUT HOW TO CENTER VALUES IN MY STORYTELLING.”

Stories are vehicles for values and there is a set of human values that can transcend culture, ethnicity, class, and political party. Stories that include values like loyalty, persistence in the face of adversity, cleverness, love of family and pride of place can help people connect with others they may have seen as completely different from themselves.

In a recent article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Ella Saltmarsh writes about how and why stories and storytelling are so effective for those working to affect systems change:

Story has many different qualities that make it useful for the work of systems change. It's a direct route to our emotions, and therefore important to decision-making. It creates meaning out of patterns. It coheres communities. It engenders empathy across difference. It enables the possible to feel probable in ways our rational minds can't comprehend. When it comes to changing the values, mindsets, rules, and goals of a system, story is foundational.

Saltmarsh identifies the three qualities of stories that can be implemented to change systems: stories as light, as glue, and as web.

Story as light “helps illuminate the past, present, and future, thus lighting up the paths of change.” It:

1. Highlights the fault lines in a system and makes visceral cases for change.
2. Illuminates outliers and builds a cohering narrative around their work.
3. Shines a light on visions of the future that change the way people act in the present.

Story as glue “builds community through empathy and coherence,” by enabling “people to connect across differences and to generate narratives that hold together groups, organizations, and movements.”

Story as web allows us to “reauthor the web of narratives we live in,” specifically:

1. Change the personal narratives we have about our lives.
2. Change the cultural narratives that frame the issues we advocate for.
3. Change the mythic narratives that influence our worldview.

ssir.org/articles/entry/using_story_to_change_systems#commentload

To see several examples of how story is being used in communities, check out St. Ethelburga’s storytelling guide here: stethelburgas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/STE-Narrative-Guide-28-2-11.pdf

For a more in depth look at story-based projects, read *Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims (Teaching/Learning Social Justice)* edited by Rickie Solinger, Madeline Fox, and Kayhan Irani. The editors highlight several projects from around the world.

CREATING SAFE STORYTELLING SPACES

An important key to creating safe storytelling spaces is to explicitly set the intention and boundary that the participants are in charge of the stories they choose to tell and the feedback they receive. The safer participants feel with each other and the facilitator, the easier it is for them to develop powerful stories.

There are four core components to creating a safe space:

1. Set ground rules for the group.
2. Utilize affirmation-based feedback.
3. Understand group dynamics.
4. Adjust for disruptive or offensive behavior.

1. Set Ground Rules

It's important to explicitly establish a set of ground rules and recommit to them each time your group meets to work on stories. While it is functionally the facilitator's job to ensure that people are respected, honored and safe in the process of developing and telling stories, everyone shares the responsibility. Agreeing on ground-rules keeps that responsibility in the front of people's minds and helps develop sufficient safety for people to share their experiences.

Ground rules can include:

- Participants choose what stories from their life they want to craft and tell.
- No one is pressured to tell any specific story within or outside of the training.
- Stories are not shared outside of the training without the specific permission of the teller.
- Feedback from participants is focused on affirmation, not on critique.

2. Affirmation-Based Feedback

The exercises in this toolkit often rely on people telling and receiving feedback from the other participants. The most effective type of feedback is the affirmation-based feedback cycle (outlined below).^{*} This technique is focused on affirming what listeners liked about the story and what they noticed the teller did well. It may seem counter-intuitive, but affirming a teller helps foster the confidence necessary to work to improve the story and prevents shutting down. This model centers the power with the teller. Everyone receives affirmation after telling, but after that the teller chooses whether they want to ask or receive questions, or if they want suggestions. Suggestions are not the focus of this model and should not be emphasized.

Review the telling and feedback cycle with participants every time they will be telling to each other, affirming that the teller is in charge of the feedback they get after the appreciations:

- Listen with attention and respect to each teller.
- After each teller, the facilitator will lead the group in providing feedback:
 - **Affirmations:** listeners tell the teller what they liked about the story and what they noticed the teller did well.
 - **Questions from the teller:** the facilitator will ask the teller if they have any questions for the listeners. If the teller says no, move on.
 - **Questions from the listeners:** the facilitator will ask the teller if they want questions from the listeners. If the teller says no, move on.
 - **Suggestions:** When stories and tellers are new, the focus is on affirming the teller and facilitating

^{*} This model of coaching is common amongst storytellers. It is described in more detail by Doug Lipman in *The Storytelling Coach: How to Listen, Praise, and Bring out People's Best*.

improvement through questions. These steps in the process almost always provide the information that the teller needs to improve the story. The teller will always be asked if they want a suggestion, and the facilitator will make sure that the teller's wishes are respected. Suggestions can do more harm than good if they erode the tellers' trust in themselves or in the group.

As a group becomes more familiar with each other and there is more trust, there can be more suggestions. A story can even be rewritten to fit a particular need or context with the teller's permission and involvement.

Creating safe storytelling spaces requires commitments of time, focus, and preparation. The framework provided above is built on the assumption that everyone is acting in accord with whatever goal or purpose brought people together, and with an intention to create connections and understanding.

3. Understand Group Dynamics

If the participants are similar in background and experience and are already committed to a shared initiative or cause, they can often establish a safe environment quickly.

The more diverse the backgrounds and experiences of the participants, the more time is often required for them to feel safe in sharing stories of their life experiences. It can also mean that participants will hear stories, perspectives, and attitudes that make them feel uncomfortable, angry, or unsafe. Facilitators must be prepared to act in those instances in a way that acknowledges a teller who may be unintentionally offensive, while simultaneously promoting the safety of the space for others to tell and be heard.

4. Adjust for Disruptive or Offensive Behavior

It does happen that someone who creates offense can't or won't be sensitive to the perspectives of others. It also happens, rarely, that someone intends to offend. In both of those cases, facilitators must manage the process of helping the group figure out how to interact with that person. Do the ground rules need to be adapted to deal with the problem? Can the stories of that person be tolerated in the group? Can the group tell the person what is bothering them? Can the person change what and how they tell? Can the group transform itself to hold all the stories?

Helping people learn how to accommodate the diverse set of stories in a community is the core of the work. The leaders of St. Ethelburga's Center for Reconciliation and Peace write:

"Of particular interest to community building is the way in which people in conflict can hold different stories about events and their meanings. Working with these opposing narratives is essential to conflict transformation."

stethelburgas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/STE-Narrative-Guide-28-2-11.pdf

Using story to affect community building and conflict transformation takes a commitment of time and a clarity of purpose. A shared vision of why the group came together in the first place is essential to the process.

Facilitators will want to consider how best to train and prepare themselves to be ready to both establish and operate their ground rules effectively, and to keep participants safe and productive as people do the work of using story to build and transform their communities.

ADAPTED FROM *THE ORAL TRADITION TODAY* AND COURSE CURRICULUM BY LIZ WARREN

TIME: IT'S A PROCESS

It is important to give yourself and those you are working with the time and space to discover stories and to identify the values they contain.

Most of the exercises in this toolkit can be done in an hour or two. But developing a story practice takes time, patience, and a commitment to learning a process that reaches from the individual, through the multiple communities and identities each person inhabits, and on to the political, governmental, and cultural systems everyone must negotiate.

Finding, shaping, understanding, and leveraging your own stories and the stories of others in multiple contexts can be the work of a lifetime. Marshall Ganz, the Harvard educator known for his work in teaching storytelling techniques to resident leaders, advises his students in the syllabus to his class:

This is not a course in public speaking, in messaging, image making or spin. It is a class in the craft of translating authentic values into action. It is about learning a process, not writing a script.

<http://marshallganz.usmblogs.com/files/2012/08/MLD355-Fall-2017-Syllabus-1.pdf>

The process of implementing a story-based practice begins with your personal stories and understanding the values contained in those stories in the context of your family and communities. Being able to identify the values in stories is one of the keys in helping people transcend narratives that conflict or are in opposition.

Ella Saltmarsh provides the example of a community where social services and families were in deep conflict. When the social workers and families were able to hear stories about their experiences, it became clear that there were shared values. “(T)hey wanted the same kind of outcomes. Sharing stories across the divide helped the two groups come together and co-create a new service.”

ssir.org/articles/entry/using_story_to_change_systems#commentload

Take the long view. You are developing a set of stories for yourself, for your organization, and for your community. It is important work and worth your time.

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“I AM BECOMING MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE TELLING OF MY STORIES, ESPECIALLY WHEN FINDING SIMILAR THEMES IN OTHER STORIES.”

FINDING, CRAFTING, AND TELLING STORIES

I have an idea for a story.

When you have an idea for a story, the next step is to give the idea the shape of a story and to start telling it.

Stories document change. Things are different at the end of the story than they were at the beginning, and that difference is in some way engaging and significant to the teller and the listener.

Story structures help you organize experience so that your stories are more effective. Telling the story to others helps you become more comfortable with it and remember it.

Here's how to put a story together.

To be effective, a story must tell the listener how things were before, what changed, how things are now and why it matters.

The activities below provide structures for you to play with and suggestions on how to tell your story to others.

Activities

Use these activities to shape your idea into a story and tell it to others.

A. CRAFTING BY TELLING

B. PLAYING WITH STORY STRUCTURING TOOLS

C. STORYBOARDING

A. Crafting by Telling

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop a story idea by telling it to other people.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have told their story idea to one or more people to develop a full story.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- It helps to be in a room where people can move their chairs.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (5 minutes):

- Confirm that each participant has a memory or story idea that they want to work with.

Talking Story (10-15 minutes for each partnering):

- Ask the participants to choose a partner.
- Ask them to each talk about their story idea with the other.
- Ask them to listen for the problem or challenge in the story and for the impact of the story on the teller – how they changed or what they learned.
- If the story doesn't have those elements, ask the partners to help each other talk through those elements.
- Repeat this with different partners as time allows.
- Ask for volunteers to tell the story to the whole group.
- If someone does tell to the whole group, set a boundary for listeners to keep any feedback positive – what they liked about the story and any questions they may have for understanding.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or for even one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

- 60-90 minutes, depending on number of participants and repetitions of the activity
- 30 minutes minimum for setup and for participants to share one story

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MATERIALS NEEDED

- Story structures
- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- These activities can be done individually or in a group
- With a group, plan on 60-90 minutes
- This activity would not be effective with less than 60 minutes

B. Playing with Story Structuring Tools

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To experiment with story structuring tools.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have experimented with applying story structuring tools to their story idea and told their story to another person.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are doing this activity on your own, read the descriptions of the structures and apply them to your story idea. Try telling your story to someone else to see how it feels.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Review the story structures.
- Think through how you would apply them to your own stories.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (10 minutes):

- Review the Story Structures Comparison Chart with participants and discuss.
- Confirm that each participant has a memory or story idea that they want to work with.

Talking Story (10-15 minutes):

- Ask the participants to choose a partner.
- Ask them to each talk about their story idea with the other.
- Encourage them to ask each other questions and to share what they find interesting in each other's stories.

Playing with Story Structures (15 minutes):

- Provide the participants with the story structuring tools
- Ask them to write notes on the handouts to think through their stories and develop them.
- Some people may want to continue to work with their partner on this, others may want to work alone.
- Assure them that they don't have to use all the structures. The point is to play with structuring the story until it has a shape that feels right.

Telling the Story (10 minutes):

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to tell the structured story.
- This can be informal or timed.
- If timed, give the tellers 3-4 minutes to tell the story, and provide the listeners with 2-3 minutes to ask the teller any questions they may have and to tell them what they liked about the story.
- Timing is useful for people to get a sense of how long their story is and if they need more time to tell it effectively. Questions from listeners are essential as they help the teller learn what they need to include to make the story work.
- If time allows, ask for volunteers to tell the story to the whole group.
- If someone does tell to the whole group, set a boundary for listeners to keep any feedback positive – what they liked about the story and any questions they may have for understanding.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

“AS I LISTENED TO EACH STORYTELLER, MY STORY BEGAN CHANGING IN MY MIND, AS FAR AS STRUCTURE.”

RESOURCES FOR THE CHART AND ACTIVITIES

Tell Me A Tale: A Book About Storytelling by Joseph Bruchac, Harcourt Children's Books, 1997.

The Hero with a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell, Princeton University Press, 1973.

Telling Your Own Stories by Donald Davis, August House, 2005

“How to Tell Your Story of Self,” by John Light, billmoyers.com/content/how-to-tell-your-story-of-self

The Oral Tradition Today: An Introduction to the Art of Storytelling by Liz Warren, Pearson, 2007.

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Story Structures Comparison Chart

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Basic Story Structure | Beginning sets the context (place, participants, time) | Middle describes the action (what happens, what problem is addressed, what changes occur) | End provides the resolution (growth achieved, wisdom gained, problem solved) |
| How Something Came to Be | How things were before | How things changed – in a moment or over time | How things are now and why it matters |
| Structuring Tools (Donald Davis) | Normal World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a normal world of the character's experience • Trouble comes to that world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character's world turns upside down • The character gets some help or learns something new | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new normal world is established |
| | Five Ps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Place • Problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem • Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress • Point |
| Hero Structure (Joseph Bruchac) | <p>Departure: The hero or heroine leaves home.</p> <p>Difficulty: The hero or heroine faces great obstacles including evil people, threats by monsters and abandonment.</p> | <p>Difficulty: The hero or heroine faces great obstacles including evil people, threats by monsters and abandonment.</p> <p>Discovery: The hero or heroine finds a way to overcome the obstacles. Doing this, he or she gains power or is given a special gift.</p> | <p>Return: The hero or heroine goes back home, often using what he or she has gained, which may be include material or spiritual wealth and knowledge, to help the people.</p> |
| Public Narrative (Marshall Ganz) | Challenge | Choice | Outcome |

Story Structure – Worksheet

BASIC STORY STRUCTURE

Beginning (set the context – the place, participants, time)

Middle (describe the action – what happened, what problem is addressed, what changes occur)

End (provide the resolution – growth achieved, wisdom gained, problem solved)

THE FIVE Ps: LIST THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR STORY

People

Place

Problem

Progress

Point

Story Structure – Worksheet (Cont.)

THE INVERTED WORLD

Describe the Normal World

Trouble Comes

The World Turns Upside Down

Help Comes or Something is Learned

A New Normal is Established

HOW SOMETHING CAME TO BE

How was it before?

What changed? Could be over time or abruptly

How is it now?

What does it mean?

Story Structure – Worksheet (Cont.)

HERO STRUCTURE

Departure: The hero or heroine leaves home.

Difficulty: The hero or heroine faces great obstacles including evil people, threats by monsters and abandonment.

Discovery: The hero or heroine finds a way to overcome the obstacles. Doing this, he or she gains power or is given a special gift.

Return: The hero or heroine goes back home, often using what he or she has gained, which may be include material or spiritual wealth and knowledge, to help the people.



C. Storyboarding

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop a story using images.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have created a storyboard for their story and told the story to another person.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are doing this activity on your own, follow the instructions below. Find someone to share your story with from your completed storyboard.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (10 minutes):

- Confirm that each participant has a memory or story idea that they want to work with.
- Provide them with a printed storyboard or ask them to draw one on a blank piece of paper.
- Remind them that the activity is about grounding the story in image and color, not about how well they draw. Stick figures are fine. Simple symbols are fine.
- Color is important. Tellers and listeners remember it better.

Listing the Scenes (10 minutes):

- Ask the participants to make a list of the key scenes in their story.
- Encourage them to keep it as simple as possible. Each scene will be a frame in their story board.

Creating a Storyboard (30-45 minutes):

- Provide the participants with the storyboards and ask them to choose one.
- Encourage them to take their time and enjoy the process of creating and coloring the images.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Printed storyboard or blank paper
- Crayons, markers, color pencils – enough for each participant to have several different colors

TIME NEEDED

- These activities can be done individually or in a group
- With a group, plan on 60-90 minutes
- This activity would not be effective with less than 60 minutes

Telling the Story (10 minutes):

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to tell the story from their board.
- This can be informal or timed.
- If timed, give the tellers 3–4 minutes to tell the story, and provide the listeners with 2–3 minutes to ask the teller any questions they may have and to tell them what they liked about the story.
- Timing is useful for people to get a sense of how long their story is and if they need more time to tell it effectively. Questions from listeners are essential as they help the teller learn what they need to include to make the story work.
- If time allows, ask for volunteers to tell the story to the whole group.
- If someone does tell to the whole group, set a boundary for listeners to keep any feedback positive – what they liked about the story and any questions they may have for understanding.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

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Storyboard – Worksheet

| | |
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| | |

How Things Came to Be Storyboard – Worksheet

| HOW THINGS WERE | WHAT CHANGED | HOW THINGS ARE NOW AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|-----------------|--------------|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Storyboard - Worksheet

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FINDING, CRAFTING, AND TELLING STORIES

I need an idea for a story.

Do you have a specific use or context in mind? It can help to know the project, initiative, population or contexts you will use the story in. Remind yourself of your goals and the outcomes you want to achieve by using a story. Grounding yourself in your intent can provide the foundation to find and shape stories that fit your need.

Or, are you looking to build a collection of stories? It's always useful to have a set of stories that you can fall back on and adapt to whatever context you may need. Since all real stories document change, a story that on the surface may seem unrelated to a specific issue or context can still serve to highlight values or serve as an example of how a problem can be addressed. Any story can be used in multiple situations.

Here's how to get story ideas.

The first step to finding stories is to know that you have them within you.

Just being alive – being human, growing up, being in relationships, being in the world – gives us all more stories than could ever be told.

Dramatic, adventurous stories have the capacity to capture listener's attention and help them to relate to the life experiences of others. But don't discount the everyday experiences of your life that have changed you in some way. They almost always have an even greater power to connect deeply because listeners can relate. They can see themselves in your story.

Memories that can be shaped into stories are there, waiting to be tapped.

The activities below will give you several ways of sparking memories for stories.

Activities

Use these activities to begin to find, craft, and tell stories.

A. STORY PROMPTS AND STRUCTURES

B. THE STORY OF YOUR PASSION

C. LISTENING TO STORIES



MATERIALS NEEDED

- List of prompts
- Story structures
- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 60-90 minutes
- More time will be needed in advance for facilitators to prepare the prompts
- This activity would not be effective with less than 60 minutes

A. Story Prompts and Structures

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To find memories that can be shaped into stories and told to others.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have found at least one story idea, structured it, and told it another person.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Develop a list of prompts that match your purpose. The more prompts, the more likely it is that everyone will find a story.
- An effective prompt brings a memory that documents a moment of learning, discomfort, emotion, awakening, resolution, understanding or shifting perception – large or small.
- To adapt the attached list of prompts to best suit your needs, think through the kinds of experiences your participants might share, the kind of stories you are hoping to elicit, the issues you are seeking stories to illustrate.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (5 minutes):

- Let the participants know that they are going to be doing an activity designed to help them find, craft, and tell a 3-minute story.

Finding a Memory (5 minutes):

- Give participants a handout that has the list of prompts on one side and the story structuring tools on the other.
- Ask them to read the prompts and to put a check or write a word or two by any prompt that sparks a memory.
- Participants will need 5 minutes or less to do this. Don't let it go on any longer than necessary or people will overthink.

Structuring the Story (5 minutes):

- Review the story structures.
- Ask participants to choose a memory from the prompts that they know fits one (or more) of the story structures.
- Provide them with 3-5 minutes to sketch their story out on the handout. Encourage them to just jot a word or two, or a phrase that will spark an image, by each element of the structuring tool.

Telling the Story to a Partner (10 minutes per cycle):

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to sit facing that person.
- Ask the pairs to decide who will tell first and who will tell second.
- Tell them that each person will have 3 minutes to tell their story. The listener will then have 2 minutes to say what they liked about the story and what they want to know more about.
- Use a timer and ask the first teller in each pair to start.
- When the 3 minutes are up, ask the listener to say what they liked and what they want to know more about. Time that for 2 minutes.
- Give the second teller in the pair 3 minutes to tell their story, and the listener 2 minutes to respond.

This cycle can be repeated with new partners as time permits. If you do repeat it, give the participants a minute or two to think through the feedback they received and how they want to integrate it into their story. Telling to additional partners deepens the story in the teller's memory.

If time allows, ask for volunteers to tell the story to the whole group. If someone does tell to the whole group, set a boundary for listeners to keep any feedback positive – what they liked about the story and any questions they may have for understanding.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

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“I’M FEELING MORE CONFIDENT IN MY OWN STORYTELLING AND BEING SURE THAT I HAVE WORTHY STORIES TO SHARE.”

Sample Story Prompts

- You and your friends got in trouble in school or college
- You were caught in the middle between two friends
- A rough beginning to a good friendship
- You survived, or didn't survive, a rough patch with a loved one, a colleague, a partner
- A misunderstanding led to deeper understanding
- You had an experience that helped you understand the power of community capacity building
- A date or an appointment or a meeting went wrong
- You said yes to the wrong person
- The moment you knew you were on the right path – what happened, how did it change you?
- A moment of inspiration or understanding that made a difference for you
- Someone who believed in you and your path – what happened?
- A mentor who has guided you, opened doors for you
- Someone you admire and how they inspired you
- A key obstacle to you becoming who you are today and how you overcame it
- Something you worked very hard on turned out great – or didn't – and why
- A story of a health care tragedy that didn't have to happen
- You learned a new strategy that made a difference for a client or the community – what happened?
- You embarrassed your mother (or father, siblings, spouse, children)
- A client of yours inspired you – what happened?
- You were embarrassed by your mother (or father, siblings, spouse, children)
- You needed to be rescued or you rescued someone
- You witnessed a specific example of the power of healthy community design – what was it?
- You had to make a mid-course correction – what led up to it and what did you do?
- You had an experience that helped you understand the root cause of a community issue or problem – what was it?
- Your most interesting relative – what they taught you?
- You didn't get blamed when it was your fault – or you did get blamed when it wasn't!
- A story of unlikely or unexpected community collaborators – what did they do and how?
- You broke or damaged yourself in some way
- You learned a family secret
- You got in big, serious trouble
- You lost your temper, or you caused someone to lose his/her temper – what happened?
- You misjudged someone, or you were misjudged – what happened?
- An incident that brought your family closer – or pushed them apart
- You needed help and you got it
- The joke was on you



“I’M GETTING MORE COMFORTABLE TELLING MY STORIES
AND REALIZING THAT I DO HAVE GOOD STORIES TO TELL,
EVEN IF IT TAKES ME A WHILE TO REMEMBER THEM.”

Story Structuring Devices:

THE FIVE Ps*:

- People
- Place
- Problem
- Progress
- Point

THE INVERTED WORLD*:

- Describe the Normal World
- Trouble Comes
- The World Turns Upside Down
- Help Comes or Something is Learned
- A New Normal is Established

HOW SOMETHING CAME TO BE:

- How it was before?
- What changed – could be over time or abruptly
- How is it now?
- What does it mean?

TIPS TO BRING YOUR STORY TO LIFE:

- Incorporate dialogue
- Use the senses – sight (color, size), sound, taste, touch, feel
- Concrete images to relate what happened
- Let the emotion come through the story

**Telling Your Own Stories* by Donald Davis, August House, 2005.

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MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 45-60 minutes
- This activity would not be effective with less than 45 minutes

B. Tell the Story of Your Passion

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop a story about why you do what you do, your work, your passion.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have thought through an area of importance in their lives, structured a story based on that, and told it another person.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- This activity is meant to help people develop stories about their passion and purpose – things that are important to them or define them. It can also be used to help the members of a team or project develop their own story about the project and why it is important.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (5 minutes):

- Let the participants know that they are going to be doing an activity designed to help them find, craft, and tell a 3- to 5-minute story about their passion or purpose.

Finding a Memory (10 minutes):

- Give participants a handout that has the questions on one side and the story structuring tools on the other.
- Ask them to respond to the questions.

Talking about Their Responses (10 minutes):

- Ask the participants to turn to a neighbor and talk through their responses to the questions.
- Encourage them to ask each other questions.
- Remind them to jot down any new insights they get by talking with their neighbor.

Structuring the Story (15 minutes):

- Review the chart on the reverse of the questions.
- The chart gives participants two options for structuring their story.
- Ask them to choose whichever one works better for them.
- Provide them with 10 minutes to sketch their story out on the handout. Encourage them to just jot a word or two, or phrases or short sentences that will spark an image in the space on the structuring tool.

Telling the Story to a Partner (10 minutes per cycle):

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to sit facing that person.
- Ask the pairs to decide who will tell first and who will tell second.
- Tell them how much time each person will have - 3 to 5 minutes is usually best. The listener will then have 2 minutes to say what they liked about the story and what they want to know more about.
- Use a timer and ask the first teller in each pair to start.
- When the time is up, ask the listener to say what they liked and what they want to know more about. Time that for 2 minutes.
- Give the second teller in the pair their time to tell their story, and the listener 2 minutes to respond.

This cycle can be repeated with new partners as time permits. If you do repeat it, give the participants a minute or two to think through the feedback they received and how they want to integrate it into their story. Telling to additional partners deepens the story in the teller's memory.

If there is time, ask for volunteers to tell their story to the whole group.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- Ask the participants how they plan to use the story, in what contexts.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

“THE MOST USEFUL PART TO ME PERSONALLY IS THE JOURNEY OF JUST FINDING RELEVANT AND USEFUL STORIES THAT CAN BE OPENLY REFLECTED AMONG PEERS.”

Telling the Story of Your Passion and Purpose – Worksheet

What is the focus of your passion, your work, your vocation?

Why do you care about it?

Describe the moment when, or the process through which, this issue, cause, project caught your attention?

Where were you in your life? What was happening?

Where were you?

Who were you with?

How did you feel?

What changed for you in that moment, during that time, or because of that moment/time?

What did you learn that you now want to share?

What was your life like before you got involved in this?

What outcome are you seeking from your work?

Structure the Story of Your Passion or Purpose – Worksheet

| STRUCTURE 1: FIVE Ps/NORMAL WORLD | STRUCTURE 2: HOW SOMETHING CAME TO BE |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| People, Place, Time | How Things Were |
| Problem, Opportunity, Challenge, Changes | What Changed |
| Help, Innovation, Insight | How They Are Now |
| New Normal World | What it Means to You |
| What It Means to You | |



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools
- Computer or phone to play stories

TIME NEEDED

- 30 minutes to listen to a story online and discuss it. Additional stories and discussion as time allows
- Longer if participants attend a live storytelling event
- This activity would not be effective with less than 30 minutes

C. Listening to Stories

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To listen to stories, in person or on-line, to get story ideas and experience how others craft and tell stories.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have exposure to a range of stories, story structures, and storytelling styles.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Research podcasts to find stories and storytellers that reflect or parallel your participants, your project or the issues you are working on. Have links ready for the stories you want them to hear.
- If you don't have time to do that, don't worry. Listening to any story can provide opportunity for analysis and discussion of how the story was put together.
- Research local storytellers and storytelling events that participants could attend.
- The last section of the toolkit includes a list of resources for where to listen to stories locally.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (5 minutes):

- Let participants know why they are listening to the stories.
- Ask them to listen for the structure of the story and what they notice the teller does well – or not so well.
- Ask them to notice how the teller begins and ends the story.
- Ask them to pay attention to any memories the story sparks for them.
- Encourage them to take notes if that is helpful for them.

Listen to and Discuss the Story (10 minutes per story):

- Right after listening to the story, ask the participants to jot down any memories or story ideas they got while listening.
- Then discuss the story with the participants:
 - What did they notice that the teller did well?
 - Did the teller do anything that pulled the listener out of the story?
 - How was the story structured?
 - How did the teller begin and end the story?
 - What values or big ideas did the story contain?

- Did they get ideas on how to structure or tell their own stories by listening to the story?
- Repeat with as many stories as you have time for.

If participants attend a live event, ask them to take notes on the stories they hear so that they can discuss them with the other participants.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

RESOURCES FOR LISTENING TO STORIES

Podcasts: There are many, many storytelling podcasts. Search the internet for storytelling podcasts and you will get lists of them. Check them out and listen to them to find stories that will work for your purposes. Here are some of the best know that come up on all the lists:

- **The Moth:** themoth.org
 - The Moth, the best-known story podcast, features “true stories told live.” Two decades of stories online.
 - **Storycorps:** storycorps.org
 - Audio, video, and animated stories from around the nation, often with a focus on a specific issue or population.
 - **The Storytellers Project Podcast:** itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-storytellers-project-podcast/id1272167612?mt=2&i=1000391849509
 - This national podcast grew out of the Arizona Storytellers Project.
 - **Snap Judgment:** snapjudgment.org
 - Snap Judgment, “Storytelling with a Beat,” features stories with musical accompaniment and enhancement.
-

“I APPRECIATE THE TELLING OF A STORY MORE, WHETHER IT BE A SPOKEN STORY, MOVIE, OR SONG.”

FINDING, CRAFTING, AND TELLING STORIES

I have a story and I want to make it better.

Stories get better the more you think about them, live with them, and tell them. They become as familiar as your own home or any place you spend a lot of time. You can navigate them without thinking or even in the dark.

Here's how to make your story better.

Being listened to and receiving thoughtful, affirming feedback is the best way to improve your stories. Face-to-face storytelling only exists in real-time with other people. Telling your story in your head, or to the mirror or to your dog may help you learn it, but to really know if it works, there must be listeners. Experiencing how a story is received by listeners is the foundation of both integrating the story into your body and to seeing how it could be made better. Once a story works face-to-face, it can be adapted for other contexts.

Tell your stories with supportive listeners as often as you can. Tell with two goals in mind. First, to improve the effectiveness of the story make sure the images are distinct and include dialogue and the senses. The second goal is to think about the contexts you may tell the story in. Who will be there? Why are you telling the story? Do the values in the story match the values of the context? Do you need to make it shorter or longer?

Activities

Use these activities to hone your story and to think through the contexts it will work best in.

A. IMAGES, DIALOGUE, AND THE SENSES

B. TELLING AND LISTENING

C. PURPOSES AND VALUES

A. Images, Dialogue, and the Senses

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To increase story effectiveness.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have improved their stories by refining images, and including dialogue and the senses.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are doing this activity on your own, think through the worksheet and apply it to your story. Try telling your story to someone else to see how it feels.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (5 minutes):

- Confirm that each participant has a story to work with.
- Review the Image, Dialogue, Sense worksheet with participants and discuss.

Images, Dialogue, Senses (10-15 minutes):

- Ask the participants to use the worksheet to develop their story.

Telling the Story (10-15 minutes):

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to tell their story.
- This can be informal or timed.
- If timed, give the tellers 3-4 minutes to tell the story, and provide the listeners with 2-3 minutes to talk about the images, dialogue, and senses they heard in the story.
- Timing is useful for people to get a sense of how long their story is and if they need more time to tell it effectively. Questions from listeners are essential as they help the teller learn what they need to include to make the story work.
- If time allows, ask for volunteers to tell the story to the whole group. Ask them to listen for the images, dialogue, and senses in the story.
- If someone does tell to the whole group, set a boundary for listeners to keep any feedback positive – what they liked about the story and any questions they may have for understanding.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- This activity can be done individually or in a group
- With a group, plan on 60-90 minutes
- This activity would not be effective with less than 60 minutes

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Images, Dialogue, Senses – Worksheet

Concrete images: Providing your listeners with distinct, vivid images involves seeing the images yourself, and avoiding imprecise language. For example, instead of saying, “When I was about nine or ten – I don’t remember exactly – we got a dog,” try something like this: “I was nine years old and had just started fourth grade when we got Blanco. That was a joke. He was black, and tiny, with wiry hair and no tail.”

What is the most important scene or moment in your story?

What do your listeners need to see to understand the story?

Dialogue: If people are speaking to each other in your story, provide that interaction, especially if it is an important moment in the story. Speaking both the parts helps to engage your listeners. So, instead of saying, “I told my mother that I was moving out and she fell apart,” say something like this: “So, I finally got up the courage to tell her. “Mom, I found a place. I’m leaving tomorrow.” She burst into tears and said, “I can’t believe you chose today of all days to tell me this””

Is there a point in your story when someone is speaking to someone else?

If not, can you create a moment to use dialogue?

Senses: Developing the images takes care of seeing, but can you incorporate any of the other senses into your story? Think through the smells, sounds, tastes, and feels (temperatures, textures) of your story. You don’t have to overload the story – just a suggestion of any of these helps to engage listeners.

B. Telling and Listening

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To improve stories by telling, listening, receiving and giving feedback.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have told their story to others, received feedback, listened to other's stories, and provided feedback.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Review the Creating Safe Storytelling Spaces section at the beginning of the Workbook.
- Set the room up in an open circle or U.
- Confirm that all the participants have a story ready to tell.

To Conduct the Activity:

Setting up the Activity (10 minutes):

- Review the telling and feedback cycle with participants, affirming that the teller is in charge of the feedback they get after the appreciations:
 - Listen with attention and respect to each teller.
 - After each teller, the facilitator will lead the group in providing feedback:
 - **Appreciations:** listeners tell the teller what they liked about the story and what they noticed the teller did well.
 - **Questions from the teller:** the facilitator will ask the teller if they have any questions for the listeners.
 - **Questions from the listeners:** the facilitator will ask the teller if they want questions from the listeners.
 - **Suggestions:** Suggestions should only be offered with the permission of the teller. Tellers usually get what they need through the questions. To ask a teller if you can offer a suggestion, be specific. For example:
 - "May I offer a suggestion about how you could end the story?"
 - "Can I offer a suggestion about how you could make this moment clearer?"
- Decide what order people will tell in.

Telling and Listening (10 to 15 minutes per story):

- Each participant tells and receives feedback.
- The facilitator manages the feedback cycle for each teller.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- The time needed will vary on the number of participants, the length of their stories, and the depth of the feedback
- Plan on at least 10-15 minutes for each teller and their feedback
- That time may increase if you include the next activity on the values in the story

“I FEEL LESS SHAKY
IN SHARING MY OWN
EXPERIENCE.”

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

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MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- This will add about 5 minutes to the feedback for each participant

C. Values and Purposes

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To identify the values and purposes of a story.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have an increased understanding of the values, big ideas, purposes and potential contexts for each story.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

To Conduct the Activity:

- Add this activity to the feedback cycle in “Telling and Listening.”
- Provide the participants with the Values and Purposes worksheet.
- At the end of the feedback, talk through the worksheet.
- Ask the teller first for the title of the story. If they don't have one, ask the others to help think one up. Titling the story often helps focus the values and purposes.
- Ask the teller and listeners to discuss what values or big ideas the story contains.
- Ask the teller and listeners to discuss what kinds of situations or purposes the story might work for.

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FINDING, CRAFTING, AND TELLING STORIES

I need suggestions for other kinds of stories.

As you develop more stories – about yourself, about others, and about events and situations – you will begin to see how any given story links to many other stories or is a part of a larger story. In this section, you'll explore more complicated structures, and the traditional stories that support all storytelling.

Here are more story types and structures.

HERO'S JOURNEY:

The hero's journey is most associated with the famous scholar and mythologist, Joseph Campbell. Campbell was inspired by the work of Van Gennep on rites of passage. He saw that the hero myths he was studying were rites of passage in story form.

The Hero's Journey has three stages: The Departure, the Initiation, and the Return, each with several steps. Hero's journey stories chart a person's transformation from one stage in life to another. They are stories of leaving one set of circumstances behind, undergoing life-changing challenges, and returning to a community with new skills and gifts to give.

The Hero's Journey was famously used by George Lucas to plot the first *Star Wars* movies and is explicitly used in scriptwriting to this day.

The hero structure is useful for thinking through and crafting the elements of a longer, more impactful story, and often contains component stories that can stand on their own.

FOLKTALES AND WISDOM TALES:

While personal and family stories are more common in modern organizing and speaking contexts, traditional folktales and wisdom tales can also be very effective.

Traditional stories contain wisdom and insights honed over generations. They are linked to deep and beautiful cultural and spiritual traditions. They contain cultural values that transcend the individual. It is often easier and more effective to make a point with a traditional story than with a personal one. These stories are work-horses that move in mysterious ways. The right folktale, parable, or wisdom story can open emotional and intellectual doors for which there are no other keys.

RESOURCES:

Joseph Bruchac, *Tell Me a Tale: A book about storytelling*, Harcourt Children's Books, 1997.

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton University Press, 1973.

Activities

Use these activities to hone your story and to think through the contexts it will work best in.

A. HERO'S JOURNEY: In an earlier exercise, you had the opportunity to play with Joseph Bruchac's four-step structure that captures the hero arc. The exercises here will help you work through Campbell's full structure.

B. FOLKTALES AND WISDOM TALES

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A. Hero's Journey

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop a story based on the Hero's Journey model.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have a working version of a Hero's Journey story from their life.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- This activity relies on the participants becoming familiar with the structure of the hero's journey and to work with prompts to find and develop a story.
- The more familiar the facilitator is with the hero's journey and the tools the better the exercises will go.
- It may be useful for participants to have time before the workshop to review the hero's journey and to work with the prompts.

To Conduct the Activity:

- Review the steps of the hero's journey in the attached "Hero's Journey Story Preparation." This will provide everyone with an overview of the structure and the flow of hero's journey stories.
- Ask participants to complete the attached "Finding and Developing a Personal Hero's Journey Story."
- Ask participants to talk through the worksheet with another person.
- Ask participants to decide how they want to structure and tell the story. They can use the Hero's Journey structure, or any of the simpler storytelling devices.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

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MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 90 minutes to 2 hours
- Or 30 minutes to orient participants to the steps in the Hero's Journey and to orient them to the tool, a week for them to prepare "Finding and Developing a Personal Hero's Journey Story," and then 60-90 minutes to share and review their stories

Hero's Journey Story Composition Preparation

This overview of the Hero's Journey asks you to think through the steps for the main character in the story. That main character may be you or someone else.

Departure

The Call to Adventure: The call to adventure is the point in a person's life when something important happens that sends the person in a new direction. It can be an opportunity, an accident, a gift, a decision, a dream, a new piece of information – any number of things – but the end result is that life changes whether the person wants it to or not.

Questions to help write this step:

- At what point in your character's life is the story going to begin? For example, does it start at a certain age, or perhaps after the loss of someone important?
- What do you see coming next for this character?
- What might make your character set out on an adventure?
- What is happening to your character when the call to adventure comes? Is it an accident, a mistake, something planned, or hoped for? Is the character looking forward to it or afraid of it?

Refusal of the Call: Sometimes when a person receives a call to adventure, he or she refuses to go. The future hero might be afraid, or feel like he or she can't leave responsibilities, or might not feel strong enough or smart enough to start an adventure.

Questions to help write this step:

- Does your character refuse the call to adventure?
- If so, why?

Supernatural Aid: Once the hero has started the adventure, a guide or magical helper appears to provide help. The helper does not have to be human.

Questions to help write this step:

- What special friends or helpers does your character have?
- Does your character receive some magical help, advice, or a special object from someone wise?

- Will the magical helper (or helpers) appear throughout the journey?

The Crossing of the First Threshold: This is the point when the person actually begins his or her adventure. The hero leaves his or her familiar neighborhood and normal life and goes into unknown and dangerous places where the rules are not known.

Questions to help write this step:

- What is the threshold and how does your character cross it?
- Why does your character decide to cross the threshold?
- Does your character have some idea about what is going to happen next?
- Is someone or something guarding the threshold?

The Belly of the Whale: At this point in the adventure, the hero is truly between worlds. The familiar world has been left behind and the world of the adventure lies ahead. For many heroes this is a very frightening moment when they feel all alone and very aware of challenges to come. He or she may truly realize what an important task they have taken on.

Questions to help write this step:

- Where is your character for this step in the journey? Someplace small and dark? Someplace lonely and very far from everything else?

Initiation

The Road of Trials: The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that a person must undergo as part of becoming a hero. The person may fail one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes in European and American stories. Your character will probably need his magical helper or object on the road of trials. Or he or she may discover hidden talents just when they are needed most.

Questions to help write this step:

- Think about what you know about your character. Remember their flaws and weakness, the areas where he or she needs growth. What kinds of tests or trials will help them grow?
- What would be truly challenging for your character?
- Does your character discover some hidden talents within his or herself?
- What kind of help can your character count on to survive these tests?

The Meeting with the Goddess: After surviving the road of trials, the hero may experience a great love. In many stories it is a romantic love. Or it may be the warm heart-filling love felt for friends and family. It may also be an experience of a divine love. Either way, the hero gains strength and a wonderful feeling of well-being from the experience. In many classical myths and stories, the great love is represented by a goddess figure.

Questions to help write this step:

- Who does your character love most in all the world?
- Who loves them most in all the world?
- How does this love help your character at this point in the story?
- Who or what can fill your character's heart with love?

The Temptation: At some point in the adventure, the hero will be tempted to quit the journey and go home.

Questions to help this step:

- Think about what you know about your character. What kinds of temptations make sense for them?
- Does your character resist the temptation? If so, how? If not, how does he or she get back on track?

Atonement with the Father: This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving in to this

place, all that follow will move out from it. In this step the person must face whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has life and death power. In others it is the biggest obstacle, the fiercest monster, or the most terrifying conflict.

Questions to help write this step:

- Who or what has the most power in your character's life?
- How does your character face this great power?
- Does your character sacrifice something in this struggle?

Apotheosis: After facing and surviving the great power in his or her life, the hero may have an experience of the oneness and beauty of the universe. For some heroes it is like being in heaven. Of course, if the hero did not survive the encounter with the great power in his or her life, he or she may actually be in heaven. It is a period of rest and reflection before the return journey is made.

Questions to help write this step:

With regard to the person you are writing about:

- Think about what you know about your character. What would heaven be for them?
- Does your character give him or herself a moment to enjoy what has been achieved?

The Ultimate Boon: The ultimate boon is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get.

Questions to help write this step:

- What was the goal of your character's adventure?
- Did the goal change on the journey, or did it stay the same?
- Are there special rewards for your character?

Return

Refusal of the Return: Sometimes, when the adventure has been a glorious or very satisfying one, the hero refuses to come back to normal life. If the hero is concerned that his or her message will not be heard, he or she may also refuse to return.

Questions to help frame this step:

- Does your character refuse to come back to everyday life?
- If so, why?

The Magic Flight: Sometimes the hero must steal the boon and then make a daring escape. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to begin it.

Questions to help write this step:

- Is something preventing your character from returning?
- Think about your character. Is there some kind of obstacle to returning that would fit this person's journey especially well?

Rescue from Without: Just as the hero may have needed a magical guide or helper to set out on the quest, sometimes he or she must have help to come back to everyday life. Sometimes the hero has been hurt and needs help. Sometimes the person doesn't realize that it is time to return, that a return is possible, or that others need what he or she has learned.

Questions to help write this step:

- Does your character need to be rescued? If so, why?
- Can their magical guides still help them?

The Crossing of the Return Threshold: The hero crosses a threshold to return where the adventure began. The hero's task at this point is to remember what was learned during the quest, and to use it to make life better for the person and

others. This is usually extremely difficult. This is the point at which many stories end, "And they lived happily ever after." The implication is that the hero goes on to live a good and productive life, but there aren't usually too many details on just how that happens.

Questions to help write this step:

- How is your character welcomed home?
- What has your character learned on his or her journey?
- Does your character share what he or she has learned with others?

Master of the Two Worlds: At this point in the journey, the hero has learned how to be comfortable with the everyday world and the world of adventure. The hero is comfortable as a person and with the rest of the world, too. He or she is equally comfortable in both places and may be ready to be a guide for someone else.

In religion, this step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. Another way of saying it is that the person has a good inner self and can relate well to other people too. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds.

Questions to help write this step:

- Has your character learned to accept him or herself?
- Is your character ready to be a guide for someone else?

Freedom to Live: When a person has survived a great adventure, and has learned to accept them self, they often become free from the fear of death. Freedom from the fear of death is truly the freedom to live.

Questions to help write this step:

- Has your character become free to live in the world?

Finding and Developing a Personal Hero's Journey Story – Worksheet

What boon are you seeking or goal have you achieved? The “boon” is the focus of a hero story. It is the thing the hero sets out to achieve or obtain in their journey. Think about something you are working on or something you have completed. Choose a focus for your story:

- What life or career goal have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What educational goal have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What relationship goal have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What goal for your body or physical health have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What intellectual or mental goal have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What goals for your personality or emotional health have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What goal for the community have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What spiritual goal have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What social change have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- What basic needs or material goals have you achieved or are currently pursuing?
- Have you survived a major illness or other physical challenge?
- Did you complete a difficult journey, or survive a very challenging time in your life?

What is the focus of your story:

Keeping your journey in mind, think through the following questions to develop the story:

ROAD OF TRIALS

What barriers or obstacles do you perceive or anticipate?

What barriers or obstacles have you experienced?

What have you had to sacrifice on the path to your goal?

Finding and Developing a Personal Hero's Journey Story – Worksheet (Cont.)

SUPERNATURAL AID

Who or what has helped you on the path?

Has the power of your own dream assisted or supported you? (Your aid doesn't have to be external to you)

MEETING WITH THE GODDESS

Who has provided you with the love you need to fulfill your goal?

Someone living? An ancestor or loved-one who has passed on?

An animal?

THE CALL

How were you called to this goal?

How did you encounter the desire to pursue this goal?

When were you first conscious of it?

Did you refuse it?

Finding and Developing a Personal Hero's Journey Story – Worksheet (Cont.)

THE TEMPTATION

Were you ever tempted to abandon your goal or your path?

If so, how did you get back on the path?

ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER

Was there a moment when you had to take charge of a situation so that you could achieve your goal?

Was there an incident or confrontation when you had to take the power to run your own life?

Have you made it through a critical make-or-break challenge, or do you anticipate one coming?

THE RETURN

Why do you want to achieve this goal?

What will the benefit be?

What will you be able to do once it is accomplished that you were not able to before?

Will achieving the boon improve your freedom to live? If so, how?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 60 minutes to a lifetime

B. Folktales and Wisdom Tales

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To encourage participants to engage in a reflective practice around finding and telling traditional stories.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have connected with their own family's stories.
- Participants will have tools for finding and telling traditional stories ethically.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are doing this activity on your own, use the worksheets and resources to find traditional and family stories.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Review the folktale and wisdom tale resources and highlight any that may be of particular value to the participants.
- To find traditional stories that are a good fit takes time. Use this activity to direct the participants to the traditional storytelling resources available.
- Ask participants to use the attached "Finding Folktales, Folklore, Legends and other Cultural and Family Stories," and bring the results to the session.

To Conduct the Activity (30-60 minutes):

- Ask the participants to share their experience talking to someone from their family about stories. Do they have a story they learned that they can tell?
- Review the folktale resources with the participants.
- Ask the participants to talk about how they might incorporate traditional and family stories into their work.

RESOURCES

• Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts

www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html: Professor D.L. Ashliman created this enormous collection of folktales from around the world organized by folktale type. In the Cinderella section, for example, there are versions from 23 cultures. You can search for a culture or country within the collection by pressing Control-F and entering what you are looking for.

- **The Internet Sacred-Text Archive**

sacred-texts.com: This huge compilation of sacred texts from around the world contains folktales, myths, and legends organized by geographical area. The texts are all in public domain, which means that the sources are old, and the language can feel outdated. Use it to find stories that you can search for other versions of.

- Search the internet for “folktale” or “folktales” and the culture or country you are interested in. You will get thousands of hits. Look for ones that are associated with reliable people or institutions.
 - The two storytelling classrooms at the South Mountain Community College (SMCC) Storytelling Institute each contain libraries of folktales, myths, and legends organized by country and culture area. Contact Liz Warren, liz.warren@southmountaincc.edu to arrange a visit.
 - Any public library will contain books of folktales, myths, and legends from around the world.
-

“[STORYTELLING] HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS HELP IN MY PUBLIC SPEAKING ABILITIES, BECAUSE I HAVE SUCH A HARD TIME WITH SHARING ANYTHING PERSONAL OR ANYTHING I WOULD PERCEIVE AS MAKING ME LOOK VULNERABLE.”

Finding Folktales, Folklore, Legends and other Cultural and Family Stories – Worksheet

Directions: Check in with people from your family or close relations. If there is someone in your family who is known as the storyteller, be sure to talk to that person. Ask each of them about the stories they know from their family, culture, or historical experience using the questions below. If they have a lot of stories, ask for their favorite. Tip: record your discussion so you have it.

Name of Person Interviewed:

Family Relationship:

Place of Birth:

Year of Birth:

What stories are told in your family about the holidays, seasons?

What stories are told about relatives who have passed away?

What stories are told about special or sacred places?

What stories do you have about relatives who are big characters or did memorable things?

What stories do you have about special animals or family pets?

What stories do you have about how your family came to this country?

What folktales, myths, legends, or religious stories do your family tell (monsters, scary things, animal stories, hero stories, saints).

How were stories used to teach lessons in your family? What stories were used?

UTILIZING STORIES AND STORY CIRCLES

I need to utilize my stories in a range of situations.

Once you have a story, or a collection of stories, you need to be able to use them in a variety of situations. This almost always requires being able to adapt the story's length or to highlight one or more of the values contained in the story.

Here are suggestions for utilizing your story.

The more you tell and work with your stories, the more you will understand their power and capacity. The activities below are designed to help you maximize the potential of your stories.

Activities

- A. CREATING MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A STORY
- B. ADAPTING A STORY FOR A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE
- C. USING STORIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- D. ADAPTING STORIES FOR WRITTEN APPLICATIONS



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 60-90 minutes
- This activity would not be effective with less than 60 minutes

A. Creating Multiple Versions of a Story

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop 5-, 3-, and 1-minute versions of a story.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have three versions of the same story that differ in length.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Ask the participants to come with a story in mind.

To Conduct the Activity:

Five-minutes:

- Ask the participants to find a partner and to decide who will tell first
- Ask the first teller to tell and set the time for 5 minutes.
- After the 5 minutes are up ask the teller and listener to dialogue. If the story was too long, what can be left out? If the story was too short what can be added.
- Repeat for the second teller.
- Ask the partners to dialogue with each other about how they can condense the story for the 3-minute version. Remind them to think about the structure of their story to ensure that the shorter version has all the elements.
- Give the tellers a little time to think about their story before the next round.
- If there is time, have the tellers record the story on their phones to preserve it.

Three-minutes:

- Ask the first teller to tell and set the time for 3 minutes.
- After the 5 minutes are up ask the teller and listener to dialogue. If the story was too long, what can be left out? If the story was too short what can be added.
- Repeat for the second teller.
- Ask the partners to dialogue with each other about how they can condense the story for the 1-minute version.
 - Remind them to think about the structure of their story to ensure that the shorter version has all the elements.
- Give the tellers a little time to think about their story before the next round.
- If there is time, have the tellers record the story on their phones to preserve it.

One-minute:

- Ask the first teller to tell and set the time for 1 minute.
- After the minute is up ask the teller and listener to dialogue. If the story was too long, what can be left out? If the story was too short what can be added.
- Repeat for the second teller.
- The tellers will probably need to repeat this round more than once to get to 1 minute.
- Once the 1-minute version is solid, have the participants write it down. It will be useful in future activities.
- If there is time, have the tellers record the story on their phones to preserve it.

One-sentence:

- By this point the partners will be very familiar with each other's stories. Ask them to brainstorm with each other a one-sentence version of their story that still contains all the elements of a story.
- Write and/or record this version.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

“LEARNING THE MECHANICS OF STORYTELLING
IS SUPER USEFUL.”



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 60-90 minutes

B. Adapting a Story for a Specific Audience

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To adapt a story for a specific audience.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have adapted a story for a specific audience and be familiar with the tools to adapt stories for other audiences.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you are doing this activity on your own, use the worksheets to think through your story and audience.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Ask the participants to come with a story in mind, the values and big ideas in the story, and with a potential audience for the story.
- Using the story from the previous activity might be helpful.
- Familiarize yourself with the attached “Adapting a Story for a Specific Audience” worksheet.

To Conduct the Activity (60–90 minutes):

- Confirm that the participants have a story and a potential audience.
- Provide the participants with 10–15 minutes to think through how they will structure the story to reach the audience. Let them know this is really a short story-based speech and that they still want to keep it tight.
- Ask the participants to find a partner.
- Conduct timed rounds (3–5 minutes), with a feedback cycle between each telling.

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
 - If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?
-

Adapting Your Story for a Specific Audience – Worksheet

Audience and Purpose: Who are you speaking to and why? Audience is everything. The story you choose and how you structure what you plan to say all hinge on the audience, their values, and your purpose for being there.

- Choose a typical audience for one of your presentations, or an audience you will be speaking to soon. Include age, gender and ethnicity. How many are likely to be there? What is the setting? Why have you been invited to speak? Did you choose to speak? Were you assigned to speak?

- Are you speaking with an individual or small group in a meeting context? Same questions as above.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Learn as much as you can about the people you will be speaking to as soon as you can.

Focusing on why and to whom you are speaking will help you plan what you say and how you say it.

Find their website and learn about them. Do they have a position on the issue you will be speaking about? What values do they share with you and your organization?

Think of the talk in three parts:

Beginning: Depends on the above, but always includes a greeting, acknowledgement of host/sponsor, and your happiness to be addressing them. Name the problem and frame the scope. This is where your strategically selected data goes. Don't overwhelm with data – just highlight a point or two that your story illustrates.

Middle: The story that will carry your purpose. Choose or create a story that contains the values, ideas, issues, and emotions that will allow you to make your point, describe your project, and leverage your request. Use whatever story structure you like but be sure to make the problem individual. Help the listeners see it up-close. Then state how your organization is providing the change, the “progress.” Use specific verbs – intervened, connected, implemented – and say what the outcome was for the individual.

End: Wrap up with why you told them this story, how you hope it connected to them, your hopes for them and the future, your gratitude for being there – whatever fits the audience and the purpose. If you are speaking to raise awareness, then say so. If you are making a specific ask, put a price on it – in time or money.

SKETCH OUT YOUR STORY/TALK ON THE REVERSE.

Adapting Your Story for a Specific Audience – Worksheet (cont.)

Connecting with your audience: Greet, acknowledge, orient – keeping in mind the audience and your purpose for being there. How will you relate to this group? Why are you speaking to them or why were you invited? **Important: Name the problem and frame the scope. Use date strategically.** (Approximately 1/4 to 1/3 of your total speaking time)

The Story that will carry your purpose for being there, illustrate your initiative, touch their hearts, pique their interest and leverage your request: **Important – tell about an individual and help us see the problem up-close. Tell us how your organization was able to help. State an outcome.** (1/3 to 1/2 of your speaking time)

Shaping the ending to create relevance, connectivity, and to advocate: Bring it back around to the beginning. Who are you talking to and what is your goal? **Important: Is there an “ask,” an action you are urging them to take, an attitude you are asking them to adopt or change? If you are speaking to raise awareness, then say so. If you are making a specific ask, put a price on it and link it to a specific outcome.** (1/4 to 1/3 of your speaking time)

C. Using Stories on Social Media

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To use stories for social media.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have thought through strategies for utilizing their stories in a range of social media applications.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- Ask the participants to come with stories they have worked with before. The story they have multiple versions of will be especially useful.
- Think through the social media applications your organization utilizes.

To Conduct the Activity (60 minutes):

- Engage the participants in a discussion of what social media platforms they use and their stories.
 - What stories would they use on Twitter?
 - What stories and images would they use on Instagram?
 - What stories would they use on Facebook? Would they use longer versions as on *Humans of New York* or *Storycorps*?
 - Would it be useful to create a podcast for the stories?
 - What stories do they need to adapt to work for their social media applications?
 - Would it be useful to design a social media strategy based on the stories you intend to share?

To Close the Activity:

- Ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- 60 minutes
-



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Notetaking tools

TIME NEEDED

- Variable

D. Adapting Stories for Written Applications

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To develop written versions of stories.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have written versions of an orally developed story.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS

This activity can be done in groups, but ultimately an individual is going to have to write the story. Use the previous activities to develop versions of stories for your written applications.

To Conduct the Activity (variable time):

- Use one of the stories you have already developed.
 - If you need a new story, take the time to develop a story orally before writing it. That will result in a story that sounds natural and has a spoken cadence rather than a written one.
 - Once the story has achieved a consistent shape and feel, work up 1-, 3-, and 5-minute versions of it.
 - Record each version and transcribe them.
 - Do this for all your stories.
 - Use them in grant proposals, newsletters, social media posts, annual reports, etc.
-

UTILIZING STORIES AND STORY CIRCLES

I need to set up and conduct a story circle.

Story circles are used to engage people in sharing their experiences with others in response to specific prompts and to build empathy and understanding. Participants may or may not have a story in mind when they come to the story circle. The point is not to craft and tell a prepared story, but rather to elicit experiences and stories to build knowledge and understanding. Participants will be influenced not only by the prompts, but also by the others in the circle and what they choose to share.

Here are suggestions for setting up and conducting a story circle.

Setting up the story circle is as important as conducting it. The two activities below will guide you through both setting up the circle and conducting it productively.

Activities

A.SETTING UP A STORY CIRCLE

B.CONDUCTING A STORY CIRCLE



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Story Circle Guidelines

TIME NEEDED

- From 2 hours to 2 weeks

A. Setting Up a Story Circle

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To maximize the effectiveness of a story circle.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Facilitators will have clarified their purpose for conducting the story circle, identified the desired participants, and created a set of prompts.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

- Know your purpose for conducting a story circle. What are you hoping to achieve? Create connections and enhance empathy and understanding among the participants? Highlight an issue from multiple perspectives? Generate more stories on an issue?
- Identify your desired participants. Are there specific people you need to invite? Representatives from groups or constituencies?
- Review the Story Circle Guidelines. Adapt them for your intended participants and purposes.
- Design a prompt or two that will serve to introduce people to each other.
 - For example, people could start with their name and what brought them to the circle.
- Design a set of prompts to elicit stories from the participants that incorporate both your intent and the issue you are concerned with.
 - For example, at a recent story circle that brought together residents and institutional partners, the following prompts were used:
 - What gets you out of bed in the morning? Why do you do what you do? Why do you care about it?
 - What makes you want to stay in bed? What gets in the way of you doing what you do? How does your institution make it hard for you to do what you do?
 - A time you hacked your own system to help someone, or to make things work more smoothly.

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Story Circles Guidelines

A Story Circle provides an opportunity for people to share their stories. Authentic stories bond a group through natural appreciation and understanding into a community.

1. The facilitator selects a story prompt related to the objective of the lesson or a theme that is appropriate.
2. Chairs may be arranged in a horse-shoe with the facilitator at the open end, or in a circle.
3. The facilitator is responsible for creating a safe, trusting space by introducing and co-creating ground rules:
 - a. One person speaks at a time.
 - b. Listening is key.
 - c. Interruptions, comments, or questions are not permitted as they take attention away from the teller and distract the flow of the story.
 - d. Confidentiality is needed for honest disclosure. Even after the circle is broken, permission of the teller is needed to ask questions about a story or to share other participants' stories.
4. Holding a special object can help to clarify who is speaking and can help to calm the teller.
5. The facilitator will start by modeling a story on the topic.
6. The facilitator will ask for a volunteer. That person will be given the object to hold while telling the story. When finished, the person will pass the object to the person on either side. This person may choose to tell a story or pass the object to the next person.
7. The object will be passed around the circle two times, giving everyone an opportunity to "tell" or "pass" the first time, and still "tell" the second time.

SAMPLE PROMPTS FOR INTRODUCTIONS:

- What brought you here today?
- What is your connection to the South Phoenix, to Center for Neighborhood Leadership, or to Reclaim, Remain, Reimagine?

SAMPLE PROMPTS FOR RRR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS:

- What gets you out of bed in the morning? Why do you do what you do? Why do you care about it?
- What makes you want to stay in bed? What gets in the way of you doing what you do? How does your institution make it hard for you to do what you do?
- A time you hacked your own system to help someone, or to make things work more smoothly.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Story Circle Guidelines

TIME NEEDED

- Depending on the number of participants and prompts, an hour is the minimum. 90 minutes to 2 hours is common

B. Conducting a Story Circle

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

- To conduct an effective story circle.

BY THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

- Participants will have heard and made responses to the prompts.
- Ideally, participants will have heard stories that shift their perspective.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Before the Activity:

- See the previous activity to set up the story-circle.
- Be mindful of helping the participants observe the guidelines.

To Conduct the Activity (60–90 minutes):

- Review the Story Circle Guidelines with the participants.
- The facilitator models the response to the first prompt or question.
- Ask who would like to begin and hand them the object that designates the speaker.
- When a circuit has been made, introduce the next prompt.
- Go around as many times as possible or as time and attention allows.

To Close the Activity:

- If time permits, ask the participants how they felt about the experience and what they gained. You can do this by going around the room and asking each person for their biggest take-away or one word that captures their experience.
- If you need documentation, provide an evaluation. A simple evaluation asks: What did you find most useful in this activity? What do you want to know more about? Any suggestions or feedback?

ADAPTED FROM COURSE CURRICULUM BY LIZ WARREN

STORYTELLING RESOURCES FOR RESIDENT LEADERS

I need more resources for my storytelling work.

For most of the twentieth century, storytelling was often referred to as a dying art.

No more. In the twenty-first century, storytelling has captured the imaginations of millions of people who long for the opportunity to be in community with others to hear stories face-to-face, in real time. Storytelling is the perfect balm for too much screen time.

Storytelling is also now accepted as an essential part of a community change strategy.

Read on for local resources and national initiatives.

Here are online and print resources.

A. ARIZONA RESOURCES

B. STORYTELLING FOR ORGANIZING



A. Arizona Resources

STORYTELLING TRAINING

South Mountain Community College is the only community college in the nation to offer an academic certificate in oral, traditional storytelling. The institute offers credit and non-credit instruction in storytelling, produces an annual calendar of events, and partners with local institutions to produce events and conduct training. www.southmountaincc.edu/storytelling

LIVE EVENTS

Phoenix has one of the most vibrant storytelling scenes in the nation. Here are some local events where you can hear stories that have been coached and curated, as well as less formal events and slams. All these events are always looking for storytellers, too. Find them on Facebook or online to pitch to them.

- **Arizona Storytellers Project:** go to tickets.azcentral.com/ for upcoming events. Go to Facebook to learn more about the project: www.facebook.com/pg/USATODAYStorytellersProject/about/?ref=page_internal
 - “We believe oral storytelling and journalism serve and reflect a community, while developing empathy in that community. These nights blend the authenticity and discipline of storytelling with the truthfulness, community-building and empowerment that’s at the heart of great journalism.”
 - **The Whole Story:** www.facebook.com/pg/TheWholeStoryShow/about/?ref=page_internal
 - “The Whole Story is a live storytelling show created by Rachel Eseoghene Egboro to expand black narratives through personal stories. Each quarter, five people take the stage in the Whiteman Hall of the Phoenix Art Museum.”
 - **The Storyline:** Storyline hosts both curated events and story slams. www.facebook.com/pg/TheStoryliners/about/?ref=page_internal
 - “Each show is curated and directed by The Storyline’s creators, Dan Hull and Rachel Egboro.
- Storytellers attend two workshops before the show and receive additional coaching if needed/wanted.”
- **South Mountain Community College Storytelling Institute:** <http://www.southmountaincc.edu/storytelling>
 - Annual calendar of events with both traditional stories and personal and family stories.
 - **Bar Flies:** <http://microapp.phoenixnewtimes.com/barflies>
 - “Bar Flies is a monthly live reading series presented by Phoenix *New Times* at Valley Bar, located at 130 N Central Avenue in downtown Phoenix. Each month, we’ll bring you a different theme and a different lineup of readers with true stories, accompanied by a curated soundtrack. Doors open at 6pm and readings begin at 7pm.”
 - **Untidy Secrets Storytelling:** www.facebook.com/untidysecrets
 - “Untidy Secrets is a monthly storytelling event in Tempe, Arizona that aims to encourage writing and literature through alternative means.”
 - **Chatterbox:** www.facebook.com/chatterboxaz
 - “Chatterbox Storytelling Open Mic is a live storytelling event where everyone is welcome to share their story. Come to share your honest, real, personal stories. No experience necessary. New storytellers or experienced storytellers – we all have a story! Chatterbox is hosted and produced by Jessie Balli in partnership with The Fair-Trade Cafe.”
 - **The Moth:** themoth.org
 - The Moth is often credited with beginning the personal stories movement. Starting in the late 1990s in New York City, The Moth now hosts events all over the country. In partnership with KJZZ, The Moth started hosting a monthly story slam at the Crescent Ballroom in April of 2018. Anyone can put their name in the hat to be chosen to tell a story at this slam.
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B. Storytelling for Organizing

PUBLIC NARRATIVE

Harvard professor Marshall Ganz was Barack Obama's community organizing teacher. He worked with Cesar Chavez for years and has formulated a narrative approach to organizing that many people across the nation have been trained in.

The public narrative model teaches people to construct a narrative that includes the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now to engage listeners' emotions and motivate "others to join you in action on behalf of a shared purpose." Each story in the narrative is built on a challenge, a choice, and an outcome. Barack Obama's 2004 Democratic Convention speech was built on this model. You can hear it here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWynt87PaJ0

Articles, videos, tutorials and worksheets on this model are widely available on the internet. Visit "What Is Public Narrative: Self, Us & Now" for worksheets and instruction designed by Ganz and his team: dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/30760283/Public-Narrative-Worksheet-Fall-2013-.pdf?sequence=1

THE CENTER FOR STORY BASED STRATEGY

The Center for Story Based Strategy has developed a brilliant framework and a concise set of tools to help organizers analyze the opposition's stories and to write their own. www.storybasedstrategy.org/tools-and-trainings

PARTICIPATIVE NARRATIVE INQUIRY (PNI)

PNI's founder, Cynthia Kurtz, describes the process this way: "Participatory narrative inquiry is an approach in which groups of people participate in gathering and working with raw stories of personal experience to make sense of complex patterns for better decision making. PNI focuses on the profound consideration of values, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives through the recounting and interpretation of lived experience."

PNI is an in-depth, story-based process to uncover what a community cares about and the stories they tell. Her book, *Working with Stories in Your Community or Organization: Participative Narrative Inquiry*, provides in-depth examples of stories and processes. Her website, <http://cfkurtz.com>, provides an overview of the model, along with tools and a PNI based strategy game.

ST. ETHELBURGA'S CENTER FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

St. Ethelburga's has produced "What's your story? The St. Ethelburga's guide to narrative and story-based approaches to community building." This excellent guide provides a series of "fourteen different approaches to working with narrative or story, organized into three sections: A. Community Building, B. Conflict and Healing, and C. Arts-Based Approaches." stethelburgas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/STE-Narrative-Guide-28-2-11.pdf

CONTRIBUTORS

Storytelling for Resident Leaders Workbook

Developed by Liz Warren in collaboration with Stephanie Luz Cordel

“STANDING UP AND
TELLING A STORY...
IT’S NERVE-WRACKING
AND DIFFICULT BUT IT’S
GOOD TO PRACTICE.”

Contributors

The following resident leaders contributed significantly to the development of this toolkit. We want to highlight that their lived experience helps inform their work and supports the continuation of storytelling in the community.

MAYA BLANCO

Maya Blanco is a grassroots community organizer who is passionate about inviting communities of color to discussion and implementations of community engagement in sectors of art, social justice, education, and other civic engagements. Born and raised in South Phoenix, she has devoted her work to advocate and fight displacement in South Phoenix and other areas affected by gentrification.

ISABEL GARCIA

Isabel Garcia was born, raised, and educated in South Phoenix, Arizona with her parents and four siblings. Her parents are from Jalisco, México, and they immigrated to the United States in 1983 for a more secure life for themselves and children. A first-generation college graduate, Isabel received a Master’s in Social Work from Arizona State University in 2015. In 2017, Isabel became the Program Director at Unlimited Potential, a family education center dedicated to helping families who suffer indignity reclaim their hope and self-worth. Since 2014, Isabel has also been involved in the development of Spaces of Opportunity, where she is helping to promote community health and health equity through educational and community-building activities. Isabel is excited to be working in and with her beloved South Phoenix community, as she firmly believes that grassroots, community work is an opportunity for South Phoenix residents to regain control and decision-making over their health, land, and local resources.

JULIO CESAR REYNA

Julio is son to Alejandro and Angelica Reyna and brother to Alexander and Sergio. He’s been a South Phoenix resident for over 30 years. For years he told and listened to stories without a real purpose until he began community organizing in 2016. In this context, he participated in workshops with the Storytelling Institute at South Mountain Community College. He now uses the skills he learned there to provide a platform for community members that wish to have their story heard. The current platform is KDIF 102.9 LPFM a non-profit community radio station in South Phoenix of which he is also the manager.

FRANCO HERNANDEZ

Franco Hernandez comes from a multigenerational family from South Phoenix. He is the grandson of Filipino and Mexican migrant farmers, son of a Vietnam Veteran, and raised by a single mother. Franco's background in community work started with him fighting for workers' rights at the hotel he worked in, much like his grandparents did in the fields. Franco is now working with a team to build KDIF, a local community radio station in South Phoenix. Like his father who was drafted, he feels a strong responsibility to fight for his community and what was important to him. With the love, respect, understanding, dignity, and hard work his mother instilled in him, he works to promote the art and culture already taking place in South Phoenix and allowing a space for real organic conversation around culture and community, residents have found a space to focus, heal, and mobilize around subjects that matter to their individual concerns.

MICHAEL INGRAM

Michael is originally from the Michigan and after completing his B.S. in Biochemistry spent time teaching English in China. There he began to understand the concept of a global citizen and what being an active member of a community means. After returning from China he spent several years in Ohio. While in Ohio he developed an interest in environmental issues around the country. This led him to travel to Arizona State University to pursue a graduate degree. While in Arizona he was introduced to organizing through the death of Michael Brown Jr. Worried about the safety of his family he decided to get involved. He split his time between pursuing his Master's degree and learning the hard skills of organizing. He is passionate about representation in the halls of decision-making and he thinks it's imperative that we take an active role in engaging in the communities in which we live.

Acknowledgements

There are also several people that participated in the storytelling workshops or served as thought partners in the development: Joseph Larios, Hector Valdez, Lola N'Sangou, Ricky Araiza, Rey Ramirez, Shawn Pearson, Alex Reyna, and Luke Black.

We want to also give special thanks to Dr. Raquel Gutierrez, formerly at Vitalyst Health Foundation, for the sponsorship of this report and catalyzing the community work that brought this to light.

About the Author

LIZ WARREN

Liz Warren, a fourth-generation Arizonan, is the director and one of the founders of the South Mountain Community College Storytelling Institute in Phoenix, Arizona. The Institute received the Maricopa Community Colleges 2016 Diversity Award, and the 2014 *New Times* Best of Phoenix award for "Best Place to Learn to Tell Tales." Her textbook, *The Oral Tradition Today: An Introduction to the Art of Storytelling* is used at colleges around the nation. Her recorded version of *The Story of the Grail* received a Parents' Choice Recommended Award and a Storytelling World Award. She serves as storytelling coach for Gannett's nationwide Storytellers Project. In July 2014, she received the Oracle Award for Service and Leadership from the National Storytelling Network. In September 2014, she was named to the *New Times* list of 100 Creatives in Phoenix. She spends most summers in Ireland teaching for Mesa Community College's Study Abroad Ireland program. The Arizona Humanities Council recently awarded her the Dan Schilling Award as the 2018 Humanities Public Scholar.

Collaborator

STEPHANIE LUZ CORDEL

Stephanie works as a collaborative consultant focused on enhancing social impact through equitable change strategies. She supports the development and implementation of participatory policies and practices that promote equity and inclusion in order to center those most impacted by social issues. Stephanie holds a Bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Social Work with a concentration in Policy, Administration and Community Practice from Arizona State University. She has been trained in Results-based Leadership, Developmental Evaluation and the Social Empathy framework.

WORK BOOK

OTHER WORKBOOK TOPICS

COMMUNITY GARDENS

A guide to understanding, starting and sustaining a community garden

CREATING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

A how-to resource guide for cultivating resiliency in local communities

URBAN FARMING

An introduction to urban farming, from types and benefits to strategies and regulations

ARIZONA TREAT & REFER CORE EDUCATION MODEL

Resources for High Quality Design and Delivery