

Tell Your Story!

Tips On Becoming an Effective Presenter

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I: PRESENTATION: TELL YOUR STORY

1. **Images:** See and describe the images in your mind's eye
2. **Audience Participatory:** In imagination everyone creates their own imagery.
3. **Two-Way Communication:** Storytelling / imagery flows between storyteller and audience and back again. Pay attention to your audience members – they will communicate with you in non-verbal ways.

As you tell the story see the images. Don't worry about the words. See the story in your mind and describe it. A story is a journey.

SENSORY IMAGES + INDIVIDUALIZED MEANING + CONTEXT + EMOTIONS =
STORYTELLING

II.: Developing Your Story:

1. **What's your story's point? You decide.**
2. **The Most Important Thing:** Whatever you decide is the focus of the story, be sure your audience understands it as the *most important thing*. That will get your point across.
3. **Set the scene** with a situation that is dramatic. *There is a high stakes problem with a solution.*
4. **Audience Empathy:** Make the audience care about the person/subject. Describe details (images) to paint a picture in their imagination. Images that *paint the picture* for the listeners and beyond visuals in one's mind. They include *emotions, sight, smells, etc.*
5. **Make your audience care about the INDIVIDUAL(S) in the story**
6. **Set the scene with a situation that is dramatic.** There is a high stakes problem with the solution. Depict scenes that show "before" and "after" the change, best described through actions.
7. **Call to Action:** Make the 'ask'. What do you want your audience to do as a result of your story?
8. **Vulnerability:** Builds trust and empathy with your audience.

III. “RIO” is...

An easy-to-remember formula for telling a story: an outline, a list, pictures or one index card with bullet points that reminds you of the order of the images that comprise your story.

Write your RIO here:

IV. Storytelling Exercise

To a partner, tell a story that is a couple of minutes long. Close your eyes and describe the images that you seen in your mind as you recall the story or experience. It doesn't matter what the story is about: something that happened to you or someone else who you don't even know but have heard a story about the. Or it may be a family story passed down from one generation to the next; an emotional connection. Or perhaps it's a story that illustrates how the work of your organization positively affects individual lives. Three rules: it has a progression – a beginning, middle and end; **and** it has an emotional impact on you **and** (if it's about your organization, it has a call to action.

IV. Storytelling Exercise: Following the story the listener offers appreciation of ...

1. The story and the storyteller (including how the story was told)
2. The effect on you, the listener.
3. After hearing the story the listener asks the teller, ***“What do you most love about the story?”*** Or answer any of these questions:

- *What do you most value about the story?*
- *What would you like your listeners to get from the story?*
- *What is this story about for you?*
- *What effect would you like this story to have?*

Appreciation is an excellent form of constructive critique as it focuses on ***what works*** – positive reinforcement.

V. What is your story?

So you don't yet have a story that illustrates how your non-profit is unique? Use a family story. MAKE it a story about the work your organization does and why it is vital. Discover a story LIKE the one Evan's about to tell (not this one, it's been 'branded by another non profit).

The Ogre Story

End with how your organization helps to solve problems or serve a need. Make the ask!

VI.: Delivery

1. Voice:

- Tone of voice is more important than the words themselves
- Marking Text
- Changes in vocal pitch, speed, volume help keep listeners engaged
- Don't be afraid of a very brief, well-placed pause. Silence can speak volumes and gives a moment for the audience to absorb the full impact.

3 Vulnerability = Trust

- Learn to "read" your audience
- Be aware of the cultural diversity of your audience
- Pay attention to the audience reactions – they will let you know how you're doing

VII. Stories to tell

Regional Commission on Homelessness
United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta
380 Edgewood Avenue, S.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30320

LIVE UNITED. 

Success Story: Michael Montgomery



Michael Montgomery, a disabled veteran, was born in Columbus, GA, and moved with his family to Atlanta when he was four years old. As a young adult, he served in the military for three years, and later attended Temple University.

When Michael returned to Atlanta, he started his own pest exterminator business. His business became very successful, but unfortunately his success led him down the wrong path. Michael started to use cocaine— the more he succumbed, the more his addiction grew. Michael says drug addiction runs in his family, and that two of his siblings used drugs regularly, suggesting a long and painful family history of addiction.

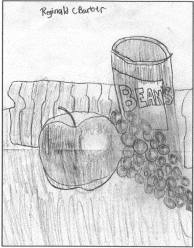
Eventually, his habit caught up to him and he lost his home. Michael lived in the streets until he lost his business as well, and was forced to live on the streets. Michael says he was homeless for all of the years from 1995 until 2000. According to Michael, he struggled to deal with the many challenges that came along with this way of life such as sleeping outdoors and the guilt associated with disappointing parents and other loved ones. His pride wouldn't allow him to beg for money and food, so he resorted to stealing and robbing for survival.

Michael says he finally decided to turn his life around on his 47th birthday. Feeling lonely, starved and desperate, he decided to start rebuilding a relationship with his family. Michael also sought help from the Veterans Affairs Hospital, and later moved into Hope House, a United Way grantee that provides transitional housing for men battling drug addiction. There he experienced his addiction and addressed his mental health problems. He also received help with his job skills training and education about his future.

This story was written by Fana Akay who works for United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. Fana volunteered in the Celebrating Success program.

For more information about the Regional Commission on Homelessness, contact Prodp Bowles at 404.527.7237 or at pbowles@unitedwayatlanta.org

Visit us online at unitedwayatlanta.org
To meet us in person, call 404.527.7237



THE GREAT DEPRESSION

I felt like there was no meaning to the next day.
I felt like my shreds of hope had fallen.
Knowing this, it was like the sun lost its brightness
I thought faith had stopped calling.

When the day actually came, it wasn't so bad
But later on in the day my dad died.
It was like the stars had gone out
The pain it brought was a sharp as a knife

The next day, I lost my doubt
God had decided to give F.D.R. an idea.
It felt great, like a stranger gave release
I was so happy; it was like the sun smiled down
on the U.S.A.

The time of the Great Depression gave also
A release.
Maybe now we could get back to fun.

— Jess Olney, *Big Kids*

The end of the war was like a cry of JOY!
— Brandon Asberry, *Big Kids*

The end of the war is like the sun
was coming out on a rainy day.
— Jack Olney, *Big Kids*

Joy, Joy, Joy

Joy feels like love and happiness

Joy is when your Son comes
back from the war

Joy is when you are smelling flowers
In the spring or summer.

Joy is pictures on a nice day

Joy is happiness all day

Joy is love all around the world

Joy is everyone laughing in a different way.

The war is over, yes!
After all the dark days in war
Your loved ones came through
Having this feeling is like looking
Beautiful
What should I do to celebrate?

— Savannah Wright, *Big Kids*

The end of the war tasted like
Homemade sweet potato pie.

— Reginald C. Barber, *Big Kids*

The war is finally over
Father will come back home
I'm so glad it's over
I am full of joy
Joy tastes like
a french fry
It smells like
fried chicken
It feels like
the fur on my cat
I love the taste of joy

VIII. Activity

- TIP:** After telling a story many times, if it starts to feel "canned". Try seeing your images from a different visual angle; also empathize a different person/character in your story Experience it **"now"**.
- Resources & Ideas:**
Free monthly email newsletter: "eTips from the Storytelling Coach."
www.storydynamics.com
- Free downloadable report:** "Seven Opportunities You're Missing If You're Not Using the Power of Storytelling in Your Business" go to www.businessstorytelling.com and subscribe.
- Great examples of powerful stories:
http://www.myhero.com/myhero/hero.asp?hero=Holocaust_Celebrity AP

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