

The Storytelling Workshop

“Self, Us, Now”

This storytelling framework was developed by Marshall Ganz. Mr. Ganz is a trainer, organizer, and senior lecturer in public policy of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Public Narrative: Self, Us, Now has been developed into a course taught by Mr. Ganz at Harvard. Marshall believes that public narrative is how we turn our beliefs and values into actions.

Public narrative and storytelling provide us with a space to express our values as lived experiences confirming with our audience that what we speak about can be done. Storytelling and public narrative have the power to move others, inspiring action through emotion. “Action is inhibited by inertia, fear, self-doubt, isolation, and apathy. Action is facilitated by urgency, hope, YCMAD (you can make a difference), solidarity, and anger.” (Ganz, Marshall; New Organizing Institute)

Storytelling and public narrative can elicit emotions that urge us to take action and help us overcome emotions that inhibit us from action.

A strong public narrative is based on a series of “choice points” that have impacted your life and moved you to the place where you are today - **challenges** you had to face, **choices** you made to deal with the challenges, and the **outcomes** you experienced, satisfactions or frustrations.

- **Challenge:** What was the challenge? Why did you feel it was a challenge? Why was it so challenging? Why was it *your* challenge?
- **Choice:** What was your choice in response to the challenge? Why did you make this choice? Where did you find the courage and hope? Describe how it felt.
- **Outcome:** What happened as a result? What did you notice about the outcome? What did you learn? What do you want us to learn? How should I feel hearing this?

(Ganz, Marshall; “Worksheet” Telling Your Public Story: Self, Us, Now; Kennedy School of Government, 2007)

The storytelling method we will work with combines a *story of self*, a *story of us*, and a *story of now*.

- The “**story of self**” tells how we’ve gotten to where we are and why we’ve been called to serve.
- A “**story of us**” communicates the values and experiences that a community, organization, campaign or movement shares and what capacity or resources that community of “us” has to accomplish its goals.
- A “**story of now**” communicates the urgent challenge we are called upon to face now and calls us to action.

The Story of “US”

The intent of our “story of us” is build a sense of community with our training participants, to recognize shared experiences and to build hope. “if I can do it, you can do it!”

Definition: A “story of us” communicate the values and experiences that a community, organization, campaign or movement shares and what capacity or resources that community of “us” has to accomplish its goals.

(<http://workshops.350.org/toolkit/story/>)

In our shared experiences what was the challenge, choice, and outcome?

What values and experiences do we share with the adults we train?

What movement do we hope our trained participants join? Why? What’s in it for them?

The Story of “NOW”

We've shared our story about how we've gotten to where we are today, a challenge we faced along the way, a choice we made in response to the challenge and outcome of our decision. We've clearly defined who WE are and who we need to join to the movement. So what does all this mean? What is this calling us to do, right NOW?

Definition: communicates the urgent challenge we are called upon to face now and calls us to action.

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This is not the story of tomorrow, this is what we're going to do today. This is a strategy, an agenda, our plan.

What is our motivating goal and what opportunities must we act on?

What outcomes do we hope to achieve?

How are we going to achieve our goal?

Describe what can be achieved when we take action.

What is your first step?