

Stories That Matter

How to recruit, train, equip, and deploy storytellers for your organization or cause

“Movements have narratives. They tell stories, because they are not just about rearranging economics and politics. They also rearrange meaning. And they’re not just about redistributing the goods. They’re about figuring out what is good.” - Marshall Ganz

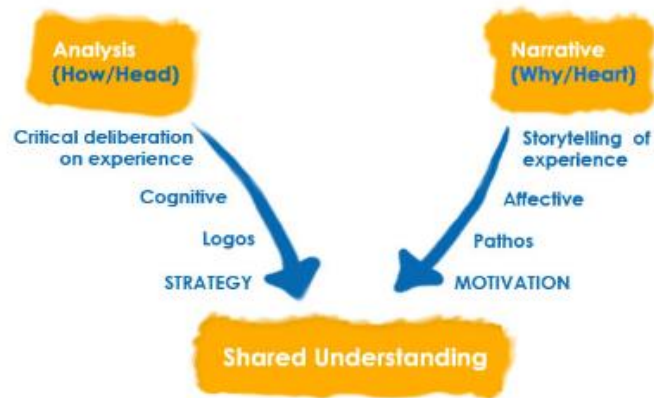
Why tell stories?

Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools organizers can use to unite a movement. Your story is the “why” of organizing — the art of translating values into action through stories. It is an ongoing discussion process through which individuals, communities and nations construct their identity, make choices and inspire action. Each of us has a compelling story to tell that can move others.

Two Ways to Engage

Leaders employ both the “head” and the “heart” in order to mobilize others to act effectively on behalf of shared values. In other words, they engage people in interpreting why they should change their world – their motivation – and how they can act to change it – their strategy.

The key to storytelling is understanding that values inspire action through emotion. We experience our values emotionally — they are what actually move us to act. Because stories allow us to express our values not as abstract principles, but as lived experience, they have the power to move others to action as well.



The three key elements of storytelling structure: Challenge — Choice — Outcome

A plot begins with an unexpected challenge that confronts a character with an urgent need to pay attention, to make a choice — a choice for which he or she is unprepared. The choice yields an outcome, and the outcome teaches a moral.

Because we can empathetically identify with the character, we can “feel” the moral. We not only hear about someone’s courage; we can also be inspired by it.

The story of the character and their effort to engage around values engages the listener in their own challenge, choice and outcome relative to the story. Each story should include all three elements. It’s not enough to say, “I was scared.” You need to say, “I was very scared, I needed to decide, and when I did, I learned it was possible.” Challenge, choice, outcome.

Incorporating challenge, choice and outcome in your own story

There are some key questions you need to answer as you consider the choices you have made and the path you have taken that brought you to this point in time as a leader. Once you identify the specific relevant choice point, dig deeper by answering the following questions.

Challenge: What was the specific challenge you faced? Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

Choice: What was the specific choice you made? Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage (or not)? Where did you get the hope (or not)? How did it feel?

Outcome: What happened as a result of your choice? What hope can it give us? How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

Source: <http://billmoyers.com/content/how-to-tell-your-story-of-self/>

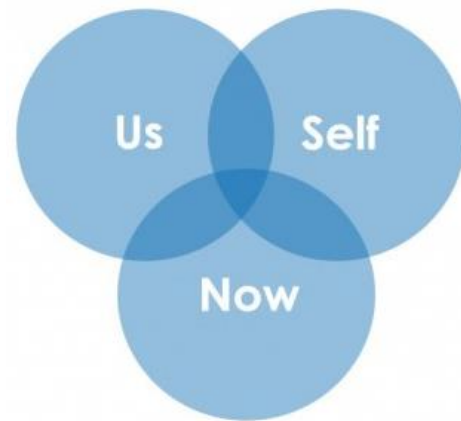
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Story of Self, Story of Us, Story of Now
By Marshall Ganz

A “story of self” tells why we have been called to serve.

The “story of self” expresses the values or experiences that call each person to take leadership on climate change. The key focus is on choice points, moments in our lives when values are formed because of a need to choose in the face of great uncertainty. When did you first care about being heard, learn that you were concerned about climate change, wanted to protect the planet, wanted to ensure clean air, clean water for yourself and others, learn to love nature or appreciate being outdoors, care for social justice or overcoming social strife linked with resource or climate issues? Why? When did you feel you had to do something about it? Why did you feel you could? What were the circumstances? What specific choice did you make?



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.

Just as with a person, the key is choice points in the life of the community and/or those moments that express the values, experiences, past challenges and resources of the community or “us” that will take action. For example, tying a current effort to win a campaign to a past campus campaign victory and describing the effort it took to win, the people who worked hard to make it happen, their capabilities, their values, etc. is a story of us.

A “story of now” communicates the urgent challenge we are called upon to face now and calls us to action.

The story of now articulates the urgent challenge in specific detail. It also includes a description of the path we can take to achieve goals relative to the mission – the unique strategy or set of ideas that will help us to overcome the challenge we face and succeed. The story of now includes an ask that summons the audience to a specific action they can do to achieve our collective mission. Finally, the story lays out in detail a vision for the potential outcome we could achieve if our strategy succeeds.

Source: <http://workshops.350.org/toolkit/story/>

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Made to Stick SUCCEsS Framework

By Chip and Dan Heath

MADE to STICK SUCCEsS Model

A sticky idea is understood, it's remembered, and it changes something. Sticky ideas of all kinds—ranging from the “kidney thieves” urban legend to JFK’s “Man on the Moon” speech—have six traits in common. If you make use of these traits in your communication, you’ll make your ideas stickier. (You don’t need all 6 to have a sticky idea, but it’s fair to say the more, the better!)

| PRINCIPLE 1 | PRINCIPLE 2 | PRINCIPLE 3 | PRINCIPLE 4 | PRINCIPLE 5 | PRINCIPLE 6 | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SIMPLE | UNEXPECTED | CONCRETE | CREDIBLE | EMOTIONAL | STORIES | |
| <p>Simplicity isn't about dumbing down, it's about prioritizing. (Southwest will be THE low-fare airline.) What's the core of your message? Can you communicate it with an analogy or high-concept pitch?</p> | <p>To get attention, violate a schema. (The Nordie who ironed a shirt...) To hold attention, use curiosity gaps. (What are Saturn's rings made of?) Before your message can stick, your audience has to want it.</p> | <p>To be concrete, use sensory language. (Think Aesop's fables.) Paint a mental picture. ("A man on the moon...") Remember the Velero theory of memory—try to hook into multiple types of memory.</p> | <p>Ideas can get credibility from outside (authorities or anti-authorities) or from within, using human-scale statistics or vivid details. Let people “try before they buy.” (Where's the Beef?)</p> | <p>People care about people, not numbers. (Remember Rokia.) Don't forget the WIIFY (What's In It For You). But identity appeals can often trump self-interest. ("Don't Mess With Texas" spoke to Bubba's identity.)</p> | <p>Stories drive action through simulation (what to do) and inspiration (the motivation to do it). Think Jared. Springboard stories (See Denning's World Bank tale) help people see how an existing problem might change.</p> | |

www.MADEtoSTICK.com

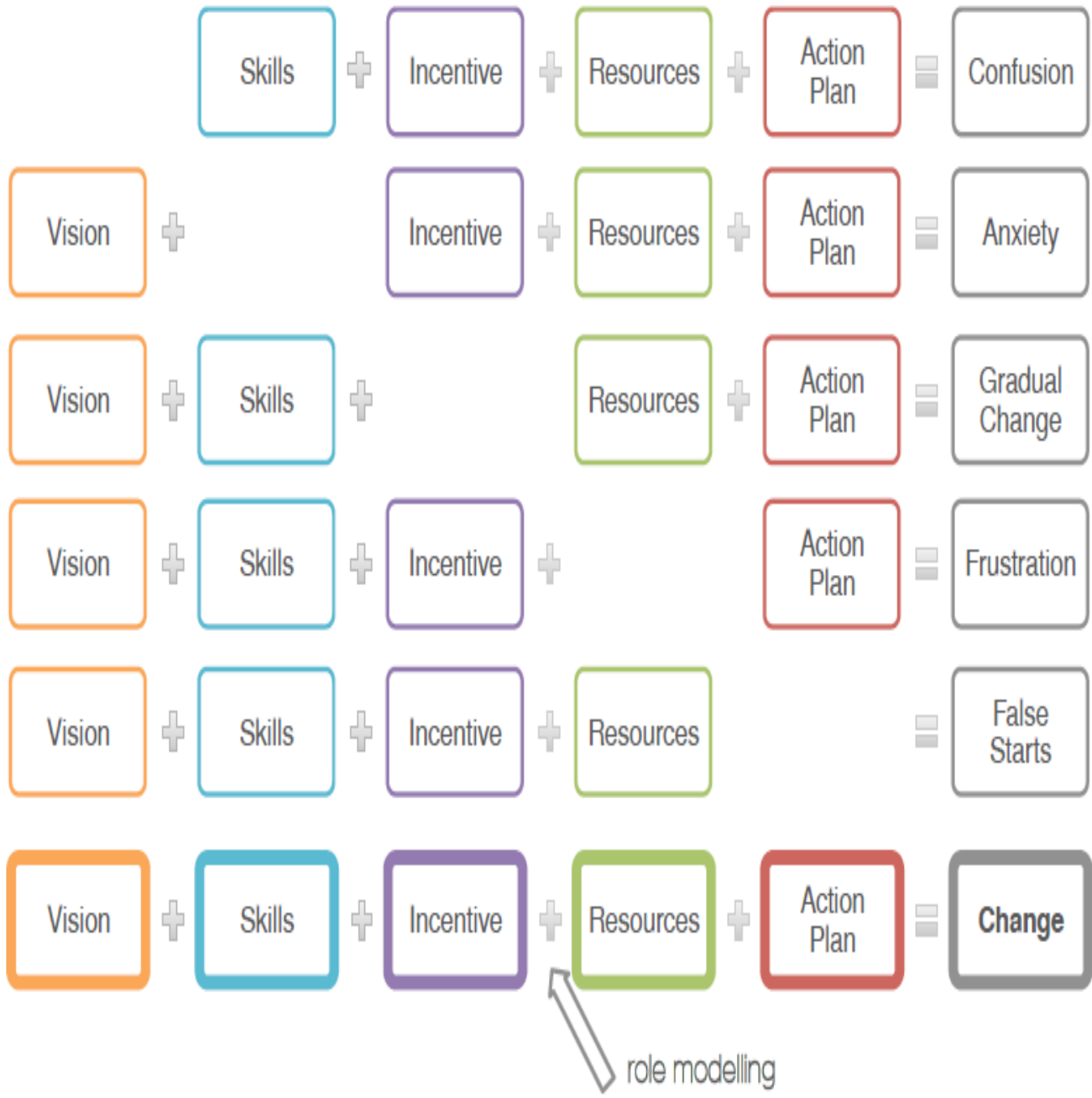
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Human Momentum Critical Elements of Transformation

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION



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Story of Self:

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Story of Us:

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Story of Now:

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