

How to Start to Tell Your Story

WHERE TO START

Grab a notepad and pen and start brainstorming! Remember: this is not a test. There are no "right or wrong answers". Even the great Aristotle, had to start somewhere.

Identify your target audience: Ask yourself, "who do I want to help?"
It might be a small group or maybe it is a large group! Perhaps it is only one person. By focusing on *who you want to reach*, it will help you prioritize what needs to be told, or what is not important for this particular message.

What is your story: What is the part of your story that most weighs on your heart with significance? What is your favorite part of your story? Out of all the principles you could extract from your story - what are the top 2-3 that I want others to grasp?

Create an Outline: Now go back over your notes and highlight which ones you feel like are most significant. Organize it using the outline provided (consider it a template - but again, remember there is no right or wrong way!). Identify a rough order you want to share things in, a couple items per point.

Start talking it out loud: Use the mirror, talk to yourself in the car, or even use the camera on your phone to record yourself on video or record your voice using an app. As you verbalize things you will get the flow and realize "that doesn't fit there" or "that does not apply to the core of my message". It's very helpful.

Start saving things: Once you decide to embark on the mission to "Tell your story" then you will come across articles that will jog an idea, or you will see graphics you want to replicate for your own promotions. You may find a good quote you want to include in your presentation. Save these items to a file folder or computer folder or even via screen shots on your phone and come back to them when you go back to the drawing board.

Keep Perspective: Try to see your message from the lens of the audience. I.e. if you are speaking to 8th graders, you might not want to use big fancy words in your presentation as they may not yet understand those terms. Smile when you can. It's okay to be emotional. Audiences respect and yearn for authenticity. Make the presentation shorter than longer.

Have fun with it: This will never be a finished process. Even if you give a perfect delivery of it to 1,000 people next month you may find more details you want to tweak in 2 years. Always be open to suggestions from others.

Sample Outline

USE THIS AS A TEMPLATE!

Whether you are writing a book, preparing a presentation for a major event, or are ordering your thoughts to tell your story for a Board meeting or a Bible Study, use an outline like this to help you get prepared. This is just a template and a starting point. Make it work for you!

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Give an appealing opening line ("I always thought I would be ...")
- B. Introduce the topic you want to discuss ("This evening I am here to share my _____ with you.")

II. BODY

Ideally aim to make 2-3 points in the core of your message. What do you want your audience to walk away understanding? Here are some ideas:

- A. Point 1 - Where do you want to start your audience in your story?
Begin here. ("I was raised _____" or "My mother always taught me _____")

- B. Point 2 - What is a transition point that your story went from A to B?
Bad to good or great to even better?
("When I went to college I realized _____" or "It became obvious _____")

- C. Point 3 - What is the ultimate principle you want to convey to people?
What do you want to hit home with them? What is the point to your message? What do you want them to "really know" after hearing your story?
("Now that I am an adult I want people to know ...")

III. CONCLUSION

Use this part to summarize what you have said and tie it back to the beginning. You can leave room for Question and Answer time. Or say "thank you for listening" or let them know how to contact you if they have questions.