



Annotated Agenda

Telling Your Personal Story

TIME ALLOTTED: 75 minutes

TRAINER(S):

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Projector and Screen
- Exercise worksheet
- Butcher paper or white board and markers

GOALS FOR THE SESSION:

- Understand the key principles of building relationships and trust through story
- Know how to move people to action by telling your story
- Feel comfortable sharing your personal story with a variety of audiences

SKELETAL AGENDA:

0:00-0:07	Introduction and Agenda
0:07-0:15	Structure of an Effective Story
0:15-1:05	Personal Story Exercise
1:05-1:15	Debrief, Next Steps and Closing

ANNOTATED AGENDA:

0:00 – 0:07 Introduction & Agenda

0:00 – 0:03 Personal story intro

- **[Slide 1 is a cover slide]**
- **[Slide 2]** [Trainer should give a two-minute version of their personal story. Don't forget to share challenge - choice - outcome and practice it like any other section! It's especially important with this module that those three elements of your story are clearly identifiable.]

0:03 – 0:05 Stories Connect Us

- **[Slide 3]** You may have noticed that in the OFA world, we tend to talk about our personal stories a lot. We tend to kick off our trainings by sharing our personal stories. That's because personal stories are a powerful organizing tool that help us really connect with others and move them to take action.



- **[Animation cue]** I am willing to bet that one of the reasons you signed up for this fellowship is because you are passionate about an issue or multiple issues, and you want to make a difference.
- Your job as an organizer is to get other people to take action on those issues.
- **[Animation cue]** The best way to do that is to first build a genuine connection with each person you engage.
- And you don't build relationships by reciting your biography or handing someone your resume. You build relationships by building trust, being vulnerable, and identifying common values that unite you as human beings.
- **[Animation cue]** It is only when you have a strong genuine connection with a person that you can help them build a strong connection to the issue at hand.
- The more connected they are to the issue, and the more connected they are to you, the more likely they will be to take action – and to keep taking action time and time again.
- Personal Stories are a powerful way to do this: they are how we communicate who we are, why others should trust us, what is at stake and why there is such urgency and need to act together on the issues we care about.
- So that is what our session is all about today.

0:05 – 0:07 Goals and Agenda

- **[Slide 4]** By the end of this session, we hope to have accomplished the following three things:
 - First is that you understand the key principle of trust building as an important organizing tool
 - Second is that you know how to tell your personal story in a way that motivates others to take action. You may not feel like it's perfect, but you will have the foundation you need to go out and use this tool and practice.
 - And third is that you feel comfortable sharing your personal story.
- **[Slide 5]** To accomplish those goals, here's a rough agenda of what we have planned.
 - Once we've wrapped up the introduction and agenda, and we're all clear on why stories matter, we're going to talk about the structure of an effective story.
 - Then, we're going to look at an example of a story and analyze and unpack what is strong about it.
 - After that is when the real fun begins. That is when we'll actually give you some time, and guidance, to start to form your own personal story – a genuine articulation of why you're taking action and why others should as well.



You'll have time for reflection as well as live practice and feedback.

- And after that, we'll debrief and wrap up!
- **[Animation cue]** So now we'll dive into the structure of an effective story.

0:07 – 0:15

Structure of an Effective Story

0:07 – 0:12 Elements of every story

- **[Slide 6]** I'd like to pose a question to the group. If you think about stories – all stories, be it a story that goes back to the beginning of time as well as the movie you saw in the theater last week. What are some of the elements all stories have? [Have participants brainstorm and popcorn answers. Write answers on the board. As you reveal the five key elements, make sure to acknowledge any that are mentioned in this popcorn discussion.]
- **[Animation cue]** Exactly! The core elements of a story are:
 - Characters (Heroes and Villains) – these are characters whom we fall in love with, identify with, cheer on or boo. You don't have a compelling story unless there is a protagonist you can get behind.
 - Plot (Direction/Engaging Purpose) – our stories need to have some purpose and direction otherwise we get bored.
 - Conflict (Challenge, Climax) – good stories have a conflict where the hero faces a critical challenge or question
 - Resolution (Choice, Consequences) – The decision regarding the challenge is made and the result becomes known – and hopefully, a happy or inspiring ending
 - Theme (Moral – Lesson) – did anyone read Aesop's Fables in school? What's a fable? [Stories that teach lessons]. Right! The theme should help us learn more about ourselves and the world around us. There is a purpose to our story and a lesson to be learned.

0:12 – 0:15 Structure of an Organizing story

- **[Slide 7]** When it comes to telling your personal story as an organizer, really the structure is the same, but there was a brilliant professor named Marshall Ganz, who organized with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. He created a new framework for us to use to think about how to articulate our own personal story in a way that moves others to action. Those four components are the Challenge, Choice, Outcome, and Ask.
- We're going to look at each of those pieces a bit more closely.
- **[Animation cue]** The challenge. The challenge is really the central reason for taking action. Without challenges, there would



be no need to organize. Everyone would just be happy with the status quo. [Name the challenge from your own personal story you told at the beginning of the session.]

- **[Animation cue]** Next is the choice. What is the choice you made in that moment of adversity? For most organizers, your choice was action. Your choice was change. Your choice was to stand up and do something – even if it’s something small. In my story, I chose to [refer to your own story from the beginning of the session.]
- **[Animation cue]** Then, we have an outcome. What were the results of your decision? The outcome is such an important part of the story, because it shows how taking action can lead to something good. If you’re telling this story in an effort to move them to take action, they need to know that taking action can have positive results. [Name the outcome from your own personal story you told at the beginning of the session.]
- **[Animation cue]** And finally, we get to the Ask. This is when you give your audience a chance to join you and become part of the story. You’ve built some trust and credibility by being authentic and vulnerable, you’ve made the issue personal, and you’ve opened a window for them to get involved and make a positive change the way you have – now is the time to invite them to climb through it. You should ask for a specific commitment.
- **[Slide 8]** So with that, we’re going to try it on for size!

0:15 – 1:05

Personal Story Exercise

0:15 – 0:20 Exercise Set Up

- **[Slide 9]** We are going to spend most of our remaining time together working on our stories.
- First, you’re going to do some reflection. Then, you’re going to take a stab at writing out your personal story using the Challenge, Choice, Outcome, Ask structure. After that, you’ll take some time in small groups to share your stories with one another, identify your common values, and give each other feedback on your stories. And finally, we’ll come back together as a full group and hear from a few folks.
- I’ll let you know when it’s time to move from one step to the next.

0:20 – 0:30 Reflection

- We’re going to start with some personal reflection. Think about your roots – the experiences that have shaped who you are.
- You chose differently than a lot of your friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Simply by virtue of becoming an organizer, you took another path. You decided to become involved. Why? Look



deeply. What motivated you? Why did you become an activist in the first place? When did you decide to get involved in organizing? What had prevented you from taking action before?

- Take some time to jot down some notes on the key experiences that helped shape who you are today.
 - When did you decide to become involved?
 - What was the challenge you faced? Why were you not satisfied with the status quo?
 - What core values are reflected by your experience(s)?
- You have ten minutes to work on this on your own.
- [Allow ten minutes for personal reflection. Walk around and check in with people to ensure they understand the exercise, but make sure to maintain a quiet environment for reflection.]

0:30 – 0:40 Write Your Own Story

- The next thing we're going to do is take another ten minutes to work on writing out our personal stories individually.
- You're going to use these four columns on your worksheet to write out the bullet pointed version, starting by naming the challenge you faced that led you to take action.
- Then, you'll write some notes about the choice you made in that situation, as well as the outcome.
- Finally, imagine you're talking with a prospective volunteer and you've just told your story. What ask will you make of that person, and how will you tie it to the story you've just told?
- As you're writing your notes, try to think of little details you can share to really paint a picture of what was happening. This is what makes stories memorable. What did that moment feel like, look like, sound like?
- [Allow ten minutes for writing. Walk around and check in with people to ensure they understand the exercise, but make sure to maintain a quiet environment for reflection.]

0:40 – 0:55 Small Group Sharing

- Okay, now that you've had a few minutes to think about your story, please find one or two people and take some time to share your stories in a group of 2-3. Think about these questions while you are talking with each other:
 - What themes do you find you have in common?
 - What is your collective story of hope that connects you together and moves you to act?
 - [Give people a heads up every 5 minutes and ask folks to move to the next person's story. Give a 2 minute warning before ending]

0:55 – 1:05 2-3 Participants Share with Large Group



- Now we are going to share our stories with the entire group. Please be no longer than 2 minutes. I'll be timing each of you and will have to cut you off so we can hear from more people.
- [NOTE: There will likely not be time to hear from everybody in this time frame, but try to call on a number of participants from around the room.]
- Thanks for sharing that with us!
- What was his/her challenge? What was his/her choice? What was his/her outcome? What was his/her ask?
- Did any of you feel moved to act and join him/her because of this story?
- What do you know about his/her values, and what she/he values because of this story?
- [Give any feedback on how to clarify or make more effective the challenge, choice, outcome and ask.]
- **[Slide 10]** With that, we're going to go ahead and debrief and wrap up.

1:05 – 1:15

Debrief, Next Steps and Closing

1:05-1:12 Debrief and Key Takeaways

- **[Slide 11]** I have a couple questions I'd love to hear your thoughts on. We're going to take one minute to reflect on these questions, and then discuss each one as a group.
- [After a minute of reflection, ask for participants to share their thoughts on the questions, and paraphrase and repeat back their responses.]
- **[Slide 12]** Overall, there are three key things I hope you took away from this session.
 - First is that personal story is a powerful organizing tool because it helps you move others to action on an issue they care about. They will be more committed if they feel connected to you and that they can trust you.
 - Secondly, remember the structure of an effective story: Challenge, Choice, Outcome, Ask.
 - And thirdly, your personal story will develop over time. It will actually never be "final," but you will become more confident with practice

1:12-1:15 Q & A

- **[Slide 13]** Now we'll answer as many questions as time allows.
- [Take questions for as long as possible, and encourage people to write down any remaining questions if time runs out, so that they can bring them up later.]