



## List of VALUES

Accountability	Diversity	Intuition	Safety
Achievement	Environment	Job security	Security
Adaptability	Efficiency	Joy	Self-discipline
Adventure	Equality	Justice	Self-expression
Altruism	Ethics	Kindness	Self-respect
Ambition	Excellence	Knowledge	Serenity
Authenticity	Fairness	Leadership	Service
Balance	Faith	Learning	Simplicity
Beauty	Family	Legacy	Spirituality
Being the best	Financial stability	Leisure	Sportsmanship
Belonging	Forgiveness	Love	Stewardship
Career	Freedom	Loyalty	Success
Caring	Friendship	Making a difference	Teamwork
Collaboration	Fun	Nature	Thrift
Commitment	Future generations	Openness	Time
Community	Generosity	Optimism	Tradition
Compassion	Giving back	Order	Travel
Competence	Grace	Parenting	Trust
Confidence	Gratitude	Patience	Truth
Connection	Growth	Patriotism	Understanding
Contentment	Harmony	Peace	Uniqueness
Contribution	Health	Perseverance	Usefulness
Cooperation	Home	Personal fulfillment	Vision
Courage	Honesty	Power	Vulnerability
Creativity	Hope	Pride	Wealth
Curiosity	Humility	Recognition	Well-being
Dignity	Humor	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Wisdom
	Independence	Respect	<i>Write your own:</i>
	Initiative	Responsibility	_____
	Integrity	Risk-taking	_____

# Storytelling for Advocates

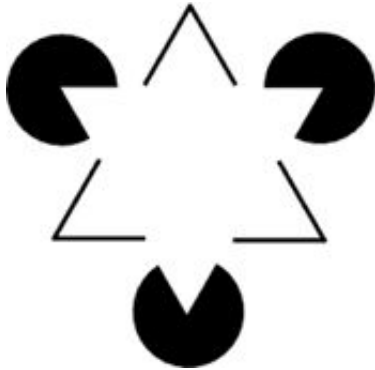
*We tell ourselves stories in order to live.*

*We interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices.*

*We live entirely...by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images.*

— Joan Didion

## What is a story?



A story is a shortcut: a path mapped to guide your audience through a complex (sometimes chaotic) landscape to help them better understand it. It works because brains love a shortcut! Stories literally help us survive.

Good storytelling, in an advocacy context, can help address a difference in perspectives by drawing on shared values and experiences. Learn from the mistakes of scientists: “filling the information gap” is not enough to win. Emotions, values, and beliefs actually drive how we **process reality**. Drawing on these are the keys to communicating effectively.

## What are the characteristics of an effective story?

It should have a plot. Stories are sequential — they should start at the beginning and move to the present. Obviously there are more complex ways to structure a story, but think of how a five year old tells you about their day: something happened, *and then* something else happened, *and then...* This framework is intuitive and, applied well, will keep your listener hooked as you move them forward through the flow of the story. You want them to be empathizing with you and following your journey along with you.

It should show, not tell. A good story should include evocative details. Don't just tell us that you went to the mountains: talk about the fog that blew in and how the cold wind felt hitting your face. Don't just say you went camping, talk about the smell of pine trees when you woke up. If you're describing a hospital, what do you remember about the other people who were there? What was the light like? Remember: People love hearing and telling stories. They dislike getting lectured. The difference is in the details, and the way that a story feels truly personal — not preachy.

It should come to a point. While not every story is one of Aesop's fables, there should ultimately be a reason you're choosing these specific instances and details to share. Ultimately, you are crafting a public narrative that is helping to advance an idea you're passionate about. Your story should help your audience build empathy, see the world through your eyes, and create a mental and emotional connection between your experiences and their own.

# Storytelling for Advocates

## Crafting a narrative

Marshall Ganz codified a set of principles for organizing-focused storytelling decades ago. (Famously, these principles were applied to the 2008 Obama campaign.) Really, the Ganz framework boils down to intuitive advocate storytelling that all of us take advantage of in ways large and small while talking to or rallying with members of the public, testifying in committee, and working to explain our positions to decision-makers — and each other.

**Story of Self:** Who am I? What brought me here, now? Connects to core, shared values by evoking experience and emotion. Key elements: a challenge you faced, a choice you made confronting that challenge, and the outcome of your choice. This is the heart of your story.

**Story of Us:** Creates a context. How does my personal story connect to who we are, collectively? The “story of us” is the part of a narrative that communicates a shared goal, a vision, the core identity of your community.

**Story of Now:** What is our urgency? “If not now, when?” Where can we go from here?

“As you will see, however, this is an iterative – and non-linear – process. Each time you tell your story, you will adapt it – to make yourself clearer, to adjust to a different audience, to locate yourself in a different context. As you develop a story of us, you may find you want to alter your story of self, especially as you begin to see the relationship between the two more clearly. Similarly, as you develop a story of now, you may find it affects what went before. And, as you go back to reconsider what went before, you may find it alters your story of now.”

— Marshall Ganz

## As you begin to think about your story, keep in mind....

- Simple and evocative is best. Avoid jargon and acronyms, and tell your story in order.
- Make it memorable!
- Details matter — they’re what help people experience events through your eyes.

Ask yourself: **What experiences have you had that drew you to advocacy?** Think about milestones in your life: when you found hobbies or issues that you became passionate about, challenges you had to overcome to reach an important goal, role models who have been important in your life...then sketch out as many details as you can about the memory that you think will most powerfully convey your personal narrative. What values can you evoke through this story, and how does it connect to the story of your community?