



## Improve Your Storytelling Skills: A Communications Workshop

### I. Welcome and Introductions

- A. Exploring Your Material
- B. The Power of Story
- C. The Goal

Tell a true 2-3 minute story that illustrates your moral imperative, your reasons for doing the work you do

- D. Model Story

### II. A Five-Step Story Planning Process

- A. Brainstorm Material
- B. Select the Story
- C. Generate Sensory Details
- D. Unpack the Meaning
- E. First Line, Major Beats, Last Line

### III. Sharing Your Story

- A. Small Group Practice
  - 1. Feedback:
    - a) Effective Elements and Details
    - b) Questions Raised and Opportunities Missed
- B. Volunteers Whole Group Story Sharing

### IV. Whole Group Reflection

## V. Storytelling Resources:

### Storytelling Tips (adapted from [The Moth](#))

#### What to do ...

- **Be forewarned**

Moth stories are told, not read. We love how the storyteller connects with the audience when there is no PAGE between them! Please know your story “by heart” but not by rote memorization. No notes, paper or cheat sheets allowed on stage.

- **Have some stakes**

Stakes are essential in live storytelling. What do you stand to gain or lose? Why is what happens in the story important to you? If you can’t answer, then think of a different story.

- **Start in the action.**

Have a great first line that sets up the stakes and grabs attention

**No:** “So I was thinking about climbing this mountain. But then I watched a little TV and made a snack and took a nap and my mom called and vented about her psoriasis then I did a little laundry (a whites load) (I lost another sock, darn it!) and then I thought about it again and decided I’d climb the mountain the next morning.”

**Yes:** “The mountain loomed before me. I had my hunting knife, some trail mix and snow boots. I had to make it to the little cabin and start a fire before sundown or freeze to death for sure.”

- **Know your story well enough so you can have fun!**

Watching you panic to think of the next memorized line is harrowing for the audience. Make an outline, memorize your bullet points and play with the details. Enjoy yourself. Imagine you are at a dinner party, not a deposition.

#### ...and what not to do

- **Steer clear of meandering ending**

They kill a story! Your last line should be clear in your head before you start. Yes, bring the audience along with you as you contemplate what transpires in your story, but remember, you are driving the story, and must know the final destination. Keep your hands on the wheel!

- **No essays**

Your eloquent musings are beautiful and look pretty on the page but unless you can make them gripping and set up stakes, they won’t work on stage.

- **Your Story, Your Struggle**

Please don’t make somebody else’s identity a punch line, a plot line, or a prop in your story.

### Other Model Stories:

[Stories from the Stage](#)  
[Suitcase Stories](#)