

# Collective Advocacy Workshop 3, Part B

## Storytelling to Create Change

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### Who?

EVERYONE has a story to tell! And with practice we can each create a powerful story to share with others about how the arts have touched and shaped our lives. Invite youth, donors, staff, parents, partners – invite everyone you'd like to see join you in advocating for support for youth arts.

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### Where?

Find a space big enough for large group work, and either large enough for people to break out into pairs to practice without being right on top of each other, or with some side rooms for these practice conversations.

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### Why?

Most of us are genuinely shy and hesitant to talk about ourselves. We need to practice sharing our stories in a concise, meaningful way, and we need to lose our hesitancy to speak up about what we care about.

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### What?

Bring copies of the Story of Self (page 4). Send these by email to people before the workshop so they can become familiar with this approach and begin to think about the story they most want to share.

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### How?

*Marshall Ganz*, a senior lecturer in public policy at Harvard University teaches “Organizing through Storytelling”. Ganz invites organizers to explore the “Story of Me, Story of Us, Story of Now” to create social movements and political change.

**STORY OF SELF** We tell our story of “self” to legitimize ourselves and to help us build relationships. We have to tell where we are coming from and what our individual core values are.

**“If I am not for myself, who will be for me?”** Who am I and why am I working with an arts group?

**STORY OF US** We want people to become a part of our organization’s story and become a part of “us”. We need to move the story from “I” to “we”.

**“If I am for myself alone, what am I?”** Who are we as a community and why do we have the responsibility to act?

**STORY OF NOW** Our needs are urgent and we need to act in a strategic way that brings us closer to resolution.

**“If not now, when?”** What do we want and what is our plan to act?

Use these Marshall Ganz-inspired worksheets to explore this idea with your youth arts advocacy coalition! Have your members practice their storytelling with each other and lead with stories when talking with decision makers.

# STORYTELLING

Good stories create a narrative about our dissatisfaction with the current situation (anger) and our vision of change for a better future (hope). Effective stories highlight the difference between what we ordinarily expect and what is reality. Stories shine light on that difference, often defined by a “aha” movement when we realize that things are not what we thought.

Our goal in storytelling is to get people to care enough that they want to act, to change the status quo. They then become a part of our story of change and will support our work with their votes, donations, time, and resources.

“People don’t want to hear analyses. They like stories better.”

*Cesar Chavez*

## How to Tell a Good Story

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### **What are the components of a story?**

- It has a beginning, middle, and end.
- A plot with a problem and, ultimately, a resolution.
- A main character (with whom we empathize) to carry the story from problem to resolution.
- The “hero” who works with the main character toward a solution.
- A “moral” to guide us.
- Specifics and details that help paint a picture.

### **Inherent in all stories is the manifestation and articulation of values.**

- Problems → Decisions → Resolution
- The decisions that are made define our values/morals and are propelled by our emotions. Thus the stories we tell should tap into others’ emotions.
- Change we want to promote
  - Inertia → Urgency
  - Fear → Hope
  - Self doubt → Self efficacy
  - Isolation → Community

### **As advocates, the goal of our stories is to encourage people to:**

- Care
- Identify with us/our organizations
- Volunteer
- Contribute

# Story of Self Worksheet

What are the experiences and values that brought you to take leadership in your arts organization?  
Some key elements and types of experiences may be:

- Family – parents, siblings, experiences growing up, your neighborhood, role models, and/or school.
- Choices – the classes you took, jobs, afterschool activities, passions, and/or overcoming challenges.
- Working with Arts Organization– your teachers/mentors, first experience doing this work, key “aha” moments.

Focus on one story, event, place, or important relationship. Think about your story in the context of challenge/ conflict, choice, and outcome. What happened? What did you learn?

The purpose of the Story of Self is to create common ground with your audience by telling a story that reflects the values that brought you to this work and where your values come from.

**CHALLENGE** – What was the specific challenge you faced?

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**CHOICE** -- What was the specific choice you made?

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**OUTCOME** – What happened as a result of your choice? What hope can it give us?

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# Story of Self

I Am \_\_\_\_\_

Before I Got Involved With \_\_\_\_\_

Or

Earlier In My Life \_\_\_\_\_

Then tell a short story. Here are prompts that might help you get started.

I struggled with...

I dreamed of...

I didn't understand...

My life was....

I yearned for...

My family...

My neighborhood...

## STORY OF US

My organization or art form is \_\_\_\_\_

Then tell a story of how this organization (WE) transform, impact, or change lives, communities, families, or the Commonwealth. Here are prompts that might get you started.

We work with...

We make...

Without us...

We have helped change...

## STORY OF NOW

We need \_\_\_\_\_

Our needs are urgent and we need to act in a strategic way.

We want you to...

We are hoping you will...

We ask you to...

You have an opportunity to help...