

MODULE 1: Why We're Here

CORE CONCEPTS

 **How to Use the Complete Storytelling System**

 **What You'll Learn from this System**

 **Definitions of Key Terms**

 **How We All Think in Story**

 **MODULE SPOTLIGHT:
Stories Beat Data**

 **MODULE PRACTICE:
Instituting a Mission Moment at Meetings**





MODULE 1 : WHY WE'RE HERE

Full Transcript:

Welcome!

Thank you for purchasing my Complete Storytelling System. I appreciate that you made this investment, and I promise to make it a worthwhile one.

The information in this system will change how you do your work—how you think about and use language in an intentional, new way.

Based on thousands of my clients who are already using this approach, I'm confident that when you follow the steps, all the steps, in this program, you'll actually see a transformation in your fundraising culture.

And yes, you will raise more money!

I'm Lori Jacobwith, master storyteller and chief fundraising culture change expert for Ignited Fundraising, the company I founded in 2007. My passion is to help you raise more money from individuals. My vision is that you get to do that with ease. And that's exactly why I created this Complete Storytelling System.

I'll be your coach and guide through this whole process. And I couldn't happier to work with you!

I believe the secret, truly—the secret—of really effective fundraising is sharing examples—or rather the stories—of real people. It's your people stories that convey your impact.

But what if I told you there is MORE? It's about how you capture powerful stories consistently and maybe most critically---in an easily repeatable way.

That's exactly what this complete, proven system is designed to do. I've created it to help you find, craft and share stories and I'll teach you how to with some ease, with some fun, and with a system you can use over and over again.

I've chosen to dedicate my career to helping people like you raise more of what you need. Time, people, money. I'm a fundraising coach & trainer and messaging expert.

And the truth is, since I was a little girl, I've told stories.

Because I shared interesting, fun stories, especially with kids, I soon became the most sought-after babysitter in the Minneapolis neighborhood where I grew up. I was so popular that my neighbors would call in July to book me to babysit their kids for New Year's Eve because their kids wanted to hear my stories...and yes, I also took good care of their kids!

In my professional career I've held positions of executive director, development director and board member of various organizations around the country.

I know your pressures and the frustrations you are dealing with. I know the challenges you are facing because I have faced them myself. Through my work in the field and as a coach and trainer I've come to fully understand the power of sharing stories.

I have experienced so much success with storytelling, that I use it as the basis for my entire approach to fundraising. My unique approach has helped hundreds of organizations raise nearly 300 hundred millions dollars from individual donors.

Now, it took me years to become the master storyteller I am today. The good news is: It doesn't have to take YOU years because I'm sharing my complete, proven, one-of-a-kind system with you.

Let's quickly talk through the training materials you have in front of you so you can make maximum use of this system.

I've created a combination of video instruction, worksheets, ready-to-use templates and self-guided practice exercises to help maximize your learning.

I've designed this system so you can easily find what you're looking for or you can quickly revisit a particular module you want to study again.

Not only is this system filled with great information for you to use, I also designed it to be fun!

Here's a quick overview of what we'll be talking about and you'll learn:

How to introduce the work of your organization quickly and boldly.

The power of word choices in all of your communication but especially in your stories.

What is storytelling?

Why should you tell more stories?

What do your donors want to hear from you?

Who are your storytellers and how do you find them?

Where do you find great stories? Not just good stories, but where do you find GREAT stories?

How do you make your stories cause people to take action?

I'll even teach you: What's your money story? I know you may not know what that is, yet, but I'll help you understand and why should you share it. Often.

Once we've explored those topics and answered those questions, I'll take you through the formula of how to tell a powerful two-minute story—that's right—one of my tools is to teach you how to share an effective, engaging, story in JUST TWO MINUTES.

The extra bonus: I'll teach you how to teach others in your organization to find and tell even more great stories!

I'll be with you at the beginning of each module in a short video like this, to teach you the core concepts of each step in my system.

Don't worry about writing on the worksheets! I want you to write on them. You can print as many as you need. In the Final Module and resources section of your guidebook you will see how you can access the password-protected area of my website to print more copies.

Are you ready to get started? I know I am!

Let's start by defining a few terms so I know we're on the same page.

The first word I like to define is the word development. I say development is the process your organization goes through to raise awareness about your mission; to have the community know who you are AND why your work requires financial support.

For me, development is not the part where you ask for money. That's fundraising. Instead, development is just that: it's developing people's understanding of who you are, so that when you send out that appeal, when you have to ask for money or advice or time, people know exactly why you're asking and they feel great about giving it.

One of the most potent ways to raise awareness is by sharing a story about your work!

The next word I want to define is: Storytelling.

Storytelling is a spoken or written account of a real or imagined event. Notice I said real or imagined events. The stories you tell may not all be based on real events. They might be about what could happen.

At its core, storytelling is part art and part science.

It's about using language, vocalization, physical movement and gestures so that we are conveying to our listeners an actual picture of what we're telling them.

As you'll discover through our work together, you may have more storytellers than you thought. And some people will be your story sources. That's their purpose. The tools I have for you will help you identify people to share stories AND to help take the fear away from telling those stories. I'll also help YOU help OTHERS to be great storytellers.

Right now, I've got a story to share with you:

As part of my nonprofit leadership career, I worked in Phoenix, Arizona, at Prevent Blindness America. We had a tiny staff of one, me! But I had a big title: president and CEO.

Our work was to deliver free vision screenings for preschool age children, which we did with a team of 12 wonder volunteers who had been trained to use a special vision screening camera.

When I started at Prevent Blindness America, we were screening only 250 children a year. We had a small footprint but we were doing important work. Some of you can relate to that small footprint, I know.

In the two and a half years I was there, we grew to a staff of 5. I trained more than 900 volunteers. Our budget grew from one grant of \$80,000 to an annual budget of \$1.2 million a year – mainly from individual donors.

But THE most important thing that happened was we increased our impact exponentially. We went from screening 250 to more than 25,000 children each year! We were able to help lots more children get the vision care they needed to save their eyesight.

A nice example of a career success right? But what does this have to do with storytelling?

When I first started that job, I found a note—a thank you note from a mom named Paula. It was stuck in a huge pile of paper that welcomed me on my first day on the job. In between financial reports, unanswered mail, utility bills, you name it, every other kind of document imaginable, was there on my desk. There I found this lovely handwritten note from Paula about her daughter, Madison. She'd enclosed a picture of her adorable little girl with pigtails.

Madison was just four years old when our screening volunteers found that she has severe vision loss in her left eye. Fortunately, her vision loss was completely correctable if it was caught before age 5 and Madison was going to turn 5 in just a short time. With the results of our vision test, Madison was able to get the critical help she needed.

She got glasses and wore an eye patch. She was proud of that eye patch! Over the course of time, her eyesight corrected to better than 20/20. Paula's note made it clear she was overwhelmed with gratitude and wanted to give other children the same opportunity Prevent Blindness had given to Madison.

For the two of them, our work had literally been life-changing because without that screening, Madison would have gone blind. In that pile of papers—the thank you note—that STORY of the impact of our work—leapt out at me.

I quickly called Paula to thank her for sharing her story. The more I learned the more I knew we had to begin sharing Madison's story right away. I did that when I spoke to donors or recruited volunteers. Paula gave her permission and also offered to share her own story whenever we needed her to.

Paula and Madison became the most powerful storytellers in our organization. A woman who was a single mom—a mom whose life had been profoundly impacted by our services became our most effective fundraiser and she never even asked a single person for money.

I credit the increase in our fundraising in just two years from \$80,000 a year to \$1.2 million to Paula and Madison's story. It was transformational. My goal is to help you find YOUR "Paulas and Madisons"!

[PAUSE] Why did I share this story? Of course to illustrate how powerful the right stories can be.

I bet when I started describing that pile of papers on my desk the first day on the job, you started to visualize a desk —maybe your own. And when I talked about a mom being so grateful for what helped her daughter, you could easily picture, a mother and her little girl. I was painting a picture for you. I was sharing an impact visually—with a real story.

Important FACT: Underline this one: All of us—every single one of us—think in story. Our brains are wired to think in story.

This is really critical for you to understand— not only do we all think in story but every decision we make is based on the stories we tell ourselves.

Lisa Cron, author, of a book called *Wired for Story*, explains the that the stories we tell ourselves are how we give meaning to our

day and to the decisions that we make. Basically, if we don't feel something, we can't make a decision.

You told yourself a story about what to wear today, what car to buy, where to live. You even decided to purchase this Complete Storytelling System based on the story you told yourself about whether or not you need help raising more money or getting your board more engaged.

Your donors may decide your work is important but what actually causes them to take action and give their time or their dollars is how they feel about your work.

News flash: Fundraising is about fulfilling the aspirations of your supporters. It's not really about you, your organization.

The key is to make a choice to share powerful stories to connect your supporters with their feelings about your work.

When we give our time or money we all want to feel useful and get the warm glow of giving, right?

There's actually science behind that 'warm glow' feeling. When we we're feeling something, especially the good feelings we have when we contribute money to our favorite nonprofits, we get a literal 'brain charge'.

That brain charge is the hormone dopamine. It's that same chemical that gets released when you exercise or eat something you really love or see a movie or laugh out loud. It's when the pleasure circuits of our brains are activated.

When we do something for other people, science shows that dopamine is released. So when you share a powerful story, you are causing your supporters have to that 'brain charge'—that dopamine spark—and they feel great.

The more you cause people to experience that spark about your work, especially in between asking, the more likely they are to develop a strong emotional AND financial connection to your organization.

Which takes us back to why we're here...to learn how to create the most emotionally compelling stories possible.

Module Spotlight: Stories Beat Data

With all this talk about feelings, I know there might be some of you wondering about data. The Facts. The hard numbers of the work you do.

There is a place for your statistics and facts. I promise. And we'll talk more in depth about them in the module 'How to Combine your People Stories with Your Money Stories.'

But first I want to share a quick highlight of which is more compelling: stories or data?

A few years ago, there was some research done at Carnegie Mellon University. The research focused on the organization, Save The Children.

The research project was to find an identifiable factor that donors use when making a decision to give or not. Essentially the study asked: Is it the story or is it the data that makes the stronger case?

Here's how the study was set up. The research participants, college students, were asked to fill out a questionnaire, and they were given an envelope with five one dollar bills in it.

In each envelope, there was piece of paper with the horrible statistics that millions of children are without food in the country of Malawi. The paper in the envelope explained that by making a cash contribution, the student could help to fight poverty.

About half the participants had a 2nd piece of paper in their envelope. In addition to those statistics, these students got the story of Rokia, along with her photograph. Rokia was a seven year old little girl, with deep chocolate eyes looking much older than she really is. The story explained that Rokia was so hungry that she went to bed every night with an ache in her stomach.

In fact, her family was so desperately poor that she would likely die of starvation by the age of ten if she didn't start eating regularly soon.

The story ended by explaining that a gift from the student could change Rokia's life forever. The story even highlighted the exact dollar amount money that could really make an impact for Rokia and her family.

Now, here's the compelling part: those participants who received only the statistics about hunger in Malawi contributed on

average a little over a dollar to Save The Children.

But the participants who read the story about Rokia and saw her picture contributed an average of \$2.38—almost double.

The research was clear: story beats data.

YOU have YOUR OWN Rokia.

Her story caused those students in that research study to have what I call a ‘mission moment’.

I define a mission moment as any short inspirational example of how your organization is making an impact.

Powerful mission moments are sometimes the smallest of interactions. A look you get from someone, or the feeling you get when someone says something as they pass through your day.

As I took that job at Prevent Blindness America and picked up that thank you note from Paula. I had a mission moment. I felt proud to be a part of an organization that could cause a mom to feel so grateful. I felt inspired by Madison’s story...and the rest is history.

I’m not saying I knew how to share Paula and Madison’s story in a compelling way right off the bat.

Over time, and with practice, I was able to take a small moment from my first day on the job and expand it to a warm, engaging story.

Module 2 Practice: Instituting a Mission Moment at Every Meeting

By now you might be sensing a theme here. Practice.

The simple act of sharing “mission moments” can have lasting and far reaching effects.

I’ve watch organizations implement a “mission moment” share at the start of board and staff meetings. Suddenly the board sees, more clearly, the work matters, to real people.

Take a look at the outline in this module for how to begin the practice of sharing a mission moment. It’s simple and takes only a couple of minutes but the outcome is more powerful than you can imagine.

If staff are the only people with access to the people you serve, incorporating mission moments at your board meeting changes board members from observers to engaged participants.

The key though, is to have board members connect with staff or someone you serve directly to LEARN the nuggets of the story themselves.

In module 5 you’ll learn how to use my six step process and the story crafting template to support your board and staff so they craft their own stories to share during those mission moment updates at your meetings.

Okay! We dug in deep here...thanks for hanging with me.

Next up: Module 2 where you learn about the power of word choices!