

# MODULE 5: The Six-Step Process for Creating Brilliant, Emotionally Connecting Stories

## CORE CONCEPTS

 **MODULE PRACTICE:**  
Story Framework

 **MODULE PRACTICE:**  
Crafting Your Two-Minute Story

 **Six Step Process**





## MODULE 5 : THE SIX-STEP PROCESS FOR CREATING BRILLIANT, EMOTIONALLY CONNECTING STORIES

### Full Transcript:

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Hi.

You've now learned how to identify sources of stories, you've found some nuggets and potentially even some great storytellers.

We've arrived at THE most powerful tool of the Complete Storytelling System—the actual process to create your brilliant, emotionally connecting stories—or what I also like to call your 'people stories'.

The worksheets in this module have literally been used thousands of times. This outline, while simple when followed exactly, will move your stories from boring or ho-hum to brilliant.

Now is the time to take your mission moment that you identified earlier and we're going to expand it so you can create your two-minute story.

It's time for me to teach you how to be a master storyteller, right?

Step #1: Identify. From all the work you've already done, identify one person. Yes, only one.

You get to decide what type of story you are crafting.

Regardless of what type of organization you are, you're looking for one person—one child, one adult, one volunteer, one board member...someone who is the "star" or the "protagonist" of this story.

This person's story doesn't have to have a happy ending. Or it can.

I know, some of you do advocacy work. Some of you do environmental work or maybe you're an animal shelter. Whatever type of work you do, your stories, at least this first story we are working on together, is about a real person.

There is someone who benefited from having that guide dog that you trained. Or the clean water you created. You're going to talk about THAT person.

The special power of storytelling is that you are able to talk about how amazing your work is through the eyes of this person. So, choose you that person very carefully.

Jot down as much as you know about the person. What you may find quickly is that you don't know enough of the details that will make this story inspiring yet. That's okay. Fill in what you know and start making a list of what questions you will ask others so you can fill in the holes later.

Step #2 Describe: You DO want to remember to include the first name, age, and some characteristics of this person's personality. Even how they look.

Did he barely look you in the eye? Did she not speak clearly because she so scared? Go into as much detail here as possible. Right now, more IS better. It will be easier to craft your story once you have gathered lots of details.

I've listed specific questions on your worksheet to help guide your information gathering process.

Remember: Right now you are still listing the story nuggets. We'll put the story together and craft it soon. But you're not quite there yet.

I'm sure this goes without saying, but you always ask permission in advance before you share someone's story.

Step #3: Exact Results. I want you to write down exactly what the results have been for your person. Exact results are things that

can be measured: Did he get a job? Did she stop drinking or using drugs? Did she get her diploma? Did that teenager get a place to live or learn a new skill?

In other words, this is what happened because of YOUR organization —the impact of your work.

#### Step #4 Transformations

Make a list of the transformations your person has experienced due to your involvement with them. What was your special brand of magic?

Transformations are different from the exact results. The exact results are things we can measure. They got a diploma, the job, whatever it is.

Transformations are not easily measured. They are usually described with emotional or feeling words, not reporting words. Feeling words like: Safe, honored, relieved.

Maybe the child from your mission moment felt safe for the very first time. Or that veteran felt as if his service finally mattered. Or that homeowner doesn't feel scared about losing their home any longer.

The EXACT RESULT is the advocacy work your agency did to change that law, but the transformation is how they feel about the work you did. The feelings that happened because of the exact results that you helped cause.

What you are looking for here is what is better/different/improved because you and your organization were there?

Take some time and make the list of transformations as long as possible.

Step 5: Find the Feeling Words. As you list the transformations, and there may be only one, or there could be a lot. Go back and circle the words that stand out to you. Words that cause YOU to feel something. If there weren't any of those kinds of words in your description...you are creating a report. That's not a story.

That's why I'm here to help you.

Our goal is to move your story from a report or news article to a real story.

Remember back to our conversation in Module 1? We talked about clear, bold language?

Word choices matter in your fact-gathering and your storytelling.

I've got a whole list of feeling words to get you started.

The important thing is: The placement of emotionally engaging words and phrases is KEY to creating a powerful story.

Step 6: Practice. Now you get to fit the story into the framework I've provided for you and you get to practice telling your story. OFTEN.

#### Module Spotlight: The Storytelling Framework

Remember the story I told you in Module 4 about all of those program staff who learned how to craft and tell stories?

They took their mission moments and expanded them into compelling 2-minute stories.

It's just about time for YOU to do the same thing.

Read through all of the information you've compiled in the six-step process and shortly you'll get to weave those facts and stories into nuggets to create an impactful story.

Let me talk you through the storytelling framework...I'll do this quickly. You can follow along with the sheet.

You want to start with "Let me tell you about." Insert the person's name here, their age, a few descriptors and details about them. You want to talk a bit about what their life was like before they came to you. How did they feel about the choices they had made? What unasked-for situations caused them to be on your doorstep? Did their mom abandon them? Were they injured when they were a veteran? What health issues do they have? You get the idea.

Here's a special note though: In this area, this section of your story, you'll often revert to jargon words. Skip those. Listen for words you're saying that only you understand.

The next section is telling me HOW this person got to you. You want to share specifically. The helicopter didn't drop them off at your doorstep, right? Maybe 10 other homeless shelters turned them down and you're the first one that said, "Yes, you can stay with us." You want to talk about that.

Tell how your organization helped. This is where you talk a bit about exact results. And then you're going to move into the transformation. Blend those together; use engaging words to tell how this person's life is different because of the clean water, or the bill you passed or because they now have food to eat or a roof over their head.

When you wrap this up, you can say that this is one of the thousands of stories I could share with you about our organization. Insert just a little bit more about who you are and what you do.

It's as simple as that.

I've watched hundreds and hundreds of people use this framework powerfully to raise money and to raise awareness.

Let's go through a real example of how to use the framework worksheet.

This is the before story from one of my former clients.

"Mrs. Lee is one of our subscribers to our theater series. She's been a part of our theater family for many years. Mrs. Lee loves the performing arts and rarely misses one of our shows. She often bring guests with her and makes sure we know that she is spreading the word about our quality performances. We love Mrs. Lee as much as she loves our theater."

The staff from the theater shared this story with me and I explained to them that this was more of a "report." It wasn't a story.

We worked on the story together, using the framework you are learning. And this is the story we came up with:

"At the tender age of 9, the first show that the wide-eyed young Amanda saw was a three-hour long production of Camelot. Now at 79, Mrs. Amanda Lee loves to remind me she can still recall the thrilling moment when the orchestra music began and she was swept away to a time long ago to dream about being a queen and living in "Camelot".

It's not surprising that Mrs. Lee has become one of our most passionate and regular patrons. Even when money was tight, she was proud to bring her son and daughter, dressed in their one best outfit, to the People's Theater; and now she delights in opening the eyes of her grandchildren to the magic of live theater.

Even though Mrs. Lee may be tiny in stature and has lost some of the spring in her step, she still has a twinkle in her eye. She makes me smile just to think about her.

I think Mrs. Lee has been feeling a bit lonely since the death of her husband last year. And she's a bit frail and takes more time getting to her seat in our theater. What hasn't changed, though, is her love of our theater. She's recently told me the joy she gets from attending our performances is better than any rehab or medication. What Mrs. Lee reminds me is that we are much more than a theater company. For Amanda Lee and her family we are a place where memories are made, dreams are woven, and passion is felt. And frankly, we love Mrs. Lee as much as she loves our theater."

That 2nd version of the story is just about two minutes long. I hope you agree with me that it's more compelling, more emotionally connecting. AND you get to experience the magic of The People's Theater through Mrs. Lee's eyes.

You can almost picture her, can't you? I know I can. And the image I have of her makes me smile every time I tell this story.

START HERE

Module Practice: Story Framework

It's now time for you to sit and draft your story. I recommend crafting and sharing a story that lasts 2 minutes or less. People lose attention if you are talking at them for too long. Two minutes is about 250-300 words depending on how fast you talk. And remember, you want to practice the story often. Get it tight and compelling.

Once you've got your people story crafted we'll use it in Module 6 to combine with your money story. Good luck!