

# **Center for Public Leadership**

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## **Public Narrative Workshop 2017**

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### **Participant Guide**

**Friday, November 4, 2017**

Harvard Kennedy School  
Center for Public Leadership  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Originally adapted from the works of Marshall Ganz of Harvard University  
<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/marshall-ganz>

Modified for this training by Abel R. Cano

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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We welcome your suggestions for improving this guide further for future trainings. We also welcome you to use it and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the restrictions below.

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| <b>PUBLIC NARRATIVE WORKSHOP AGENDA</b> |                 |                  |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Saturday, November 4, 2017</b>       |                 |                  |
| 9:00 AM                                 | Welcome (5 min) | Barbara<br>Reest |

|                                |  |                      |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 9:05 AM                        | Introduction to Public Narrative (70 min)                    | Prof. Ganz<br>Page 6 |
| 10:15 AM                       | Break (10 min)   |                      |
| <b>STORY OF SELF</b>           |  |                      |
| 10:25 AM                       | Introduction to Story of Self (30 min)                       | Page 13              |
| 10:55 AM                       | Teamwork (45 min)  | Page 17              |
| 11:40 AM                       | Debrief Stories of Self & Review Key Learnings (25 min)      |                      |
| 12:05 PM                       | Lunch (50 min)   |                      |
| <b>STORY OF US</b>             |  |                      |
| 12:55 PM                       | Introduction to Story of Us (25 min)                         | Page 22              |
| 1:20 PM                        | Teamwork (45 min)  | Page 26              |
| 2:05 PM                        | Debrief Stories of Us & Review Key Learnings (20 min)        |                      |
| 2:25 PM                        | Break (10 min)   |                      |
| <b>STORY OF NOW</b>            |  |                      |
| 2:35 PM                        | Introduction to Story of Now (25 min)                        | Page 31              |
| 3:00 PM                        | Teamwork (40 min)  | Page 35              |
| 3:40 PM                        | Debrief Stories of Now & Review Key Learnings (20 min)       |                      |
| 4:00 PM                        | Break (10 min)   |                      |
| <b>LINKING SELF / US / NOW</b> |  |                      |
| 4:10 PM                        | Introduction to Linking Self / Us / Now (25 min)             | Page 39              |
| 4:35 PM                        | Teamwork (45 min)  | Page 43              |
| 5:20 PM                        | Debrief Linked Stories & Review Key Learnings (25 min)       |                      |
| 5:45 PM                        | Closing: Review Workshop Key Learnings & Evaluation (15 min) |                      |
| 6:00 PM                        | End of Workshop  |                      |

## **PERSONAL GOALS**

***What are your hopes for this workshop?***

***What kinds of skills are you interested in learning?***

***What contributions do you see yourself making?***

STORY OF NOW

A “story of now” is urgent, an urgency based on threat, or, equally, on opportunity; it is meant to inspire others to drop other things and pay attention; it is rooted in the values you celebrate in

your story of self and us, but poses a challenge to those values. It contrasts a vision of the world as it will be if we fail to act, the world as it could be if we do act, and calls on us to act.

**WHAT CHANGE DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD?**

**WHAT URGENT “CHALLENGE” MIGHT YOU CALL ON US TO FACE?**

**WHAT VISION COULD WE ACHIEVE IF WE ACT?**

**WHAT “ACTION” MIGHT YOU CALL UPON US TO JOIN YOU IN TAKING?**

PLEASE RESPOND WITH NO MORE THAN 2-3 SENTENCES.

*What urgent challenge that you care deeply about do you hope to inspire others to join you in doing something about? What choice will you call on your classmates to make if they are to meet this challenge? How could they work together to achieve this outcome? How could they start now?*

Describe this “now” in two or three sentences.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Story of Now</b>   |
| <b>What change do you want to see in the world? In what “cause” might you call upon us to join you?</b> |

# **PUBLIC NARRATIVE: INTRODUCTION**

# INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC NARRATIVE

## Creating A Public Narrative

Goals for this session:

- Learn WHY Public Narrative is an essential leadership skill
- Learn HOW Public Narrative works: values, emotion & story structure
- Learn HOW TO learn to tell your public narrative.

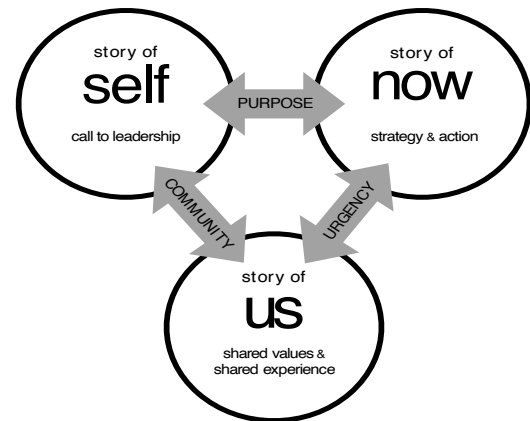
If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

When I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

- Hillel, 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem sage

Crafting a complete public narrative is a way to connect three core elements of leadership practice: story (why we must act now, heart), strategy (how we can act now, head), and action (what we must do to act now, hands). As Rabbi Hillel's powerful words suggest, to stand for yourself is a first but insufficient step. You must also construct the community with whom you stand, and move that community to act together now. To combine stories of self, us and now, find common threads in values that call you to your mission, values shared by your community, and challenges to those values that demand action now. You may want to begin with a Story of Now, working backward through the Story of the Us with whom you are working to the Story of Self in which your calling is grounded.



*Public Narrative*

## Public narrative as a practice of leadership

Leadership is about accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty. Narrative is how we learn to make choices and construct our identities – as individuals, as communities, as nations.

## Each of us has a compelling story to tell

Each of us has a story that can move others to action. As you learn this skill, you will be learning to tell a compelling story about yourself, your constituency, and the need for urgent – and hopeful – action. In addition, you will gain practice in listening, and coaching others to tell a good story.

## Learning Public Narrative

We are all natural storytellers. We are “hard wired” for it. Although you may not have learned how to tell stories “explicitly” (their structure, the techniques), you have leaned “implicitly” (imitating others, responding to the way others react to you, etc.). In this workshop you will learn the tools to make the implicit explicit. We will use a four-stage pedagogy: explain, model, practice and debrief. We will explain how story works, you will observe a model of story telling, you will then practice you own story, and you will then debrief your practice with others.

You will learn this practice the way we learn any practice: the same way we learn to ride a bike. Whatever we read, watch, or are told about bike riding, sooner or later we have to get on. And the first thing that usually happens is that you fall off. Then, and this is the key moment, you either give up or find the courage to get back up on the bike, knowing you will continue to fall, until, eventually you learn to keep your balance. In this workshop you’ll have the support of your written materials, peers and coaches.

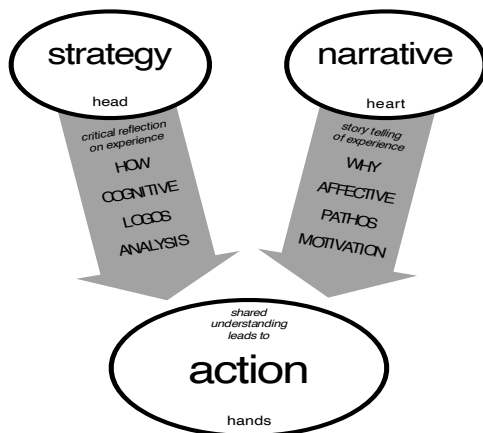
You will also learn to coach others in telling their stories. We are all “fish” so to speak in the “water” of our own stories. We have lived in them all our lives and so we often need others to ask us probing questions, challenge us to explain why, and make connections we may have forgotten about so we can tell our stories in ways others can learn from them.

We all live rich, complex lives with many challenges, choices, and outcomes of both failure and success. We can never tell our whole life story in two minutes. We are learning to tell a two-minute story as the first step in mastering the craft of public narrative. The time limit focuses on getting to the point, offering images rather than lots of words, and choosing choice points strategically.

### How Public Narrative Works

#### Why Use Public Narrative? Two Ways of Knowing (And we need both!)

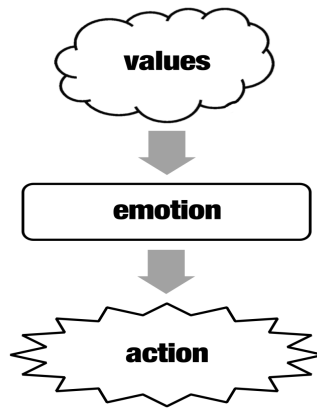
Public leadership requires the use of both the “head” and the “heart” to mobilize others to act effectively on behalf of shared values. It engages people in interpreting why they should change the world – their motivation – and how they can act to change it – their strategy. Public narrative is the “why” – the art of translating values into action through stories.



#### The key to motivation is understanding that values inspire action through emotion.

Emotions inform us of what we value in ourselves, in others, and in the world, and enable us to express the motivational content of our values to others. Stories draw on our emotions and show our values in action, helping us *feel* what matters, rather than just thinking about or telling

others what matters. Because stories allow us to express our values not as abstract principles, but as lived experience, they have the power to move others.



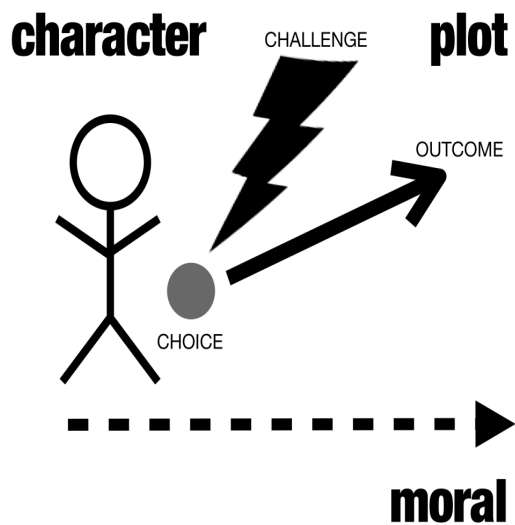
**Some emotions inhibit mindful action, but other emotions facilitate action.**

The language of emotion is the language of movement, sharing the same root word. Mindful action is inhibited by inertia and apathy, on the one hand, and fear, isolation and self-doubt on the other. It can be facilitated by urgency and anger, on one hand, and hope, solidarity, and YCMAD (you can make a difference) on the other. Stories can mobilize emotions enabling mindful action to overcome emotions that inhibit it.



**The Three Key Elements of Public Narrative Structure: Challenge – Choice – Outcome**

A plot begins with an unexpected challenge that confronts a character with an urgent need to pay attention, to make a choice, a choice for which s/he is unprepared. The choice yields an



outcome—and the outcome teaches a moral.

Because we can empathetically identify with the character, we can “feel” the moral. We not only hear “about” someone’s courage; we can also be inspired by it.

The story of the character and their effort to make choices encourages listeners to think about their own values, and challenges, and inspires them with new ways of thinking about how to make choices in their own lives.

### *Narrative Structure*

**Public narrative combines a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now.**



*Public Narrative*

**A “story of now” communicates an urgent challenge you are calling on your community to join you in acting on now.**

The story of now focuses on a challenge to your community demanding action now, a source of hope, and the choice of a pathway to action you call on others to join you in taking.

**A “story of us” communicates shared values that anchor your community, values that may be at risk, and may also be sources of hope.**

Just as with a story of self, the values of a community are often expressed through key choice points in its life: founding moments, moments of crisis, of triumph, disaster, of resilience, of humor. Stories of us are accounts of events involving specific people, moments, events, words, etc.

**A “story of self” communicates the values that called you to lead in this way, in this place, at this time.**

Each of us has compelling stories to tell. In some cases, our values have been shaped by choices others – parents, friends, teachers – have made. And we have chosen how to deal loss, even as we have found access to hope. Our choices have shaped our own life path: we dealt with challenges as children, found our way to a calling, responded to needs, demands, and gifts of others; confronted leadership challenges in places of worship, schools, communities, work.



## **VIDEO REVIEW: JAMES CROFT**

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We'll be watching five minutes of James Croft's Linked Public Narrative. As you watch it, focus on the elements of SELF – US – NOW that you hear in his story.

| <b>SELF</b>   | <b>US</b>  | <b>NOW</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>What experiences shaped his values? Whose choices were they? Why are they stories?</b> | <b>Who is the "us" to whom he appeals? How does he draw on shared experiences to create an "us"?</b> | <b>What challenges to those values does he describe? What's the source of hope? In what action does he ask us to join?</b> |
|   |  |  |

- 1. Why does James Croft begin as he does?**
- 2. What specific choices does James talk about in his stories?**
- 3. What details, images, moments bring his stories alive?**
- 4. What values do these stories communicate?**

# **PUBLIC NARRATIVE: STORY OF SELF**

## STORY OF SELF

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Goals for this session:

- Learn how to tell a story of SELF in a way that communicates your values.
- Learn how to coach others by giving feedback on their story of SELF.

### **What is a Story of Self?**

You tell a story of self to enable others to “get you” – to enable them to experience the values that call you to serve the cause you serve AND to have accepted responsibility to lead. The key is to focus on choice points: moments when your values influenced choices you made in response to challenges you faced. When did you first need to be heard and believe that you could be? When did you have to care for someone else and found out you could? When did you have to stand up to someone bigger than you? Where did you find the courage? Or did you? What were the circumstances? What makes a story of self powerful is not “high drama” or “tragedy” but the extent to which you allow yourself to be vulnerable, to let others see something real about your sources of caring and of courage.

### **Incorporating Challenge, Choice, and Outcome in Your Own Story**

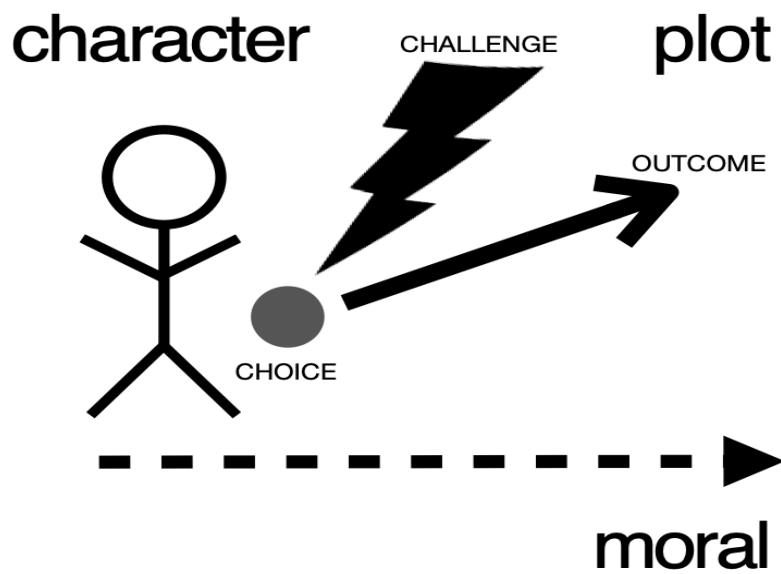
Ask yourself questions to focus on choices you made along the way that brought you to this point in time as a leader. Once you identify a specific choice point, dig deeper by trying to answer the following questions.

**Challenge:** Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

**Choice:** Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage (or not)? Where did you get the hope (or not)? Did your parents’, grandparents’ or others life stories teach you how to act in that moment? How did it feel?

**Outcome:** How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

A word about challenge. Sometimes people see the word challenge and think that they need to describe the misfortunes of their lives. A struggle may be of your own choosing – a high mountain you decided to climb, not only a valley you managed to climb out of. Any number of things may have been a challenge to you and be the source of a good story to inspire others.



### *Narrative Structure*



#### **VIDEO REVIEW:**





## TEAM BREAKOUT SESSION: STORY OF SELF PRACTICE WORK

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### GOALS

- Practice telling your Story of Self and get good, constructive feedback
- Learn to coach others' stories so they become better storytellers: **constructive critical and affirmative** feedback.

### AGENDA

**TOTAL TIME:** 40 min. of teamwork

1. Review the agenda. **Choose a timekeeper, introduce yourselves & set norms.** 5 min.
2. **Your coach will tell his/her 2-minute story of self** as a model. 2 min.
3. Take some time as individuals to **silently develop your story of self.** Use the worksheet that follows. 5 min.
4. As a team **go around the group** and tell your story one by one. Each person has **2 minutes to tell his/her story** and **3 minutes for coaching** from the group. 25 min.
1. Return to large group. 3 min

**\*\* NOTE:** You have 2 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure the timekeeper cuts you off. It encourages focus and ensures



## WORKSHEET: DEVELOPING YOUR STORY OF SELF

Before you decide what part of your story to tell, think about these questions:

1. What will I be calling on others to do? What is my purpose in calling on others to join me in action? Why am I called to leadership?
2. What values move me to take action and might also inspire others to similar action?
3. What stories can I tell from my own life about specific people or events that would show (rather than tell) how I learned or acted on those values?

What are the experiences in your life that have shaped the values that call you to leadership?

### FAMILY & CHILDHOOD

Parents/Family  
Growing Up Experiences  
Your Community  
Role Models  
School

### LIFE CHOICES

School  
Career  
Partner/Family  
Hobbies/Interests/Talents  
Finding Passion  
Overcoming Challenge

### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

First Experience with Political & Civic Issues  
A Key Moment in Your Work as an Organizer  
Role Models/Community  
Current Experience as an Organizer

Think about the challenge, choice and outcome in your story. The outcome might be what you learned, in addition to what happened. Try drawing pictures here instead of words. Powerful stories leave your listeners with images in their minds that shape their understanding of you and your calling.

| CHALLENGE:                               | CHOICE:                                  | OUTCOME:                                 |
|--|--|--|
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |

For Further Reflection

We all live very rich, complex lives with many challenges, many choices, and many outcomes of both failure and success. That means we can never tell our whole life story in two minutes. The challenge is to learn to interpret our life stories as a practice, so that we can teach others based on reflection and interpretation of our own experiences, and choose stories to tell from our own lives based on what's appropriate in each unique situation.

Take time to reflect on your own public story, beginning with your story of self. You may go back as far as your parents or grandparents, or you may start with your most recent organizing and keep asking yourself why you in particular got involved when you did. Focus on challenges you had to face, the choices you made about how to deal with them, and the satisfactions – or frustrations – you experienced. Why did you make those choices? Why did you do this and not that? Keep asking yourself why.

What did you learn from reflecting on these moments of challenge, choice, and outcome? How do they feel? Do they teach you anything about yourself, about your family, about your peers, your community, your nation, your world around you – about what really matters to you matters? What about these stories was so intriguing? Which elements offered real perspective into your own life?

Many of us active in public service have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world, and we would have no reason to try to fix it. But we also have stories of hope, otherwise we wouldn't be trying to fix it.



## COACHING TIPS: STORY OF SELF

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Remember to START with positive feedback, balancing it with constructive critical feedback. You are coaching to facilitate the other person's learning by asking them questions, rather than giving them advice, with a focus on improving story telling craft, rather than content.

**DON'T** simply offer vague "feel good" comments. ("That was a really great story!")

**DO** coach each other on the following points:

- ☑ **THE CHALLENGE:** What were the specific challenges the storyteller faced? Did the storyteller paint a vivid picture of those challenges?  
*"When you described \_\_\_\_\_, I got a clear picture of the challenge."  
"I understood the challenge to be \_\_\_\_\_. Is that what you intended?"  
"The challenge wasn't clear. How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_?"*
  
- ☑ **THE CHOICE:** Was there a clear choice that was made in response to each challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful? Angry?)  
*"To me, the choice you made was \_\_\_\_\_, and it made me feel \_\_\_\_\_."  
"It would be helpful if you focused on the moment you made a choice."*
  
- ☑ **THE OUTCOME:** What was the specific outcome that resulted from each choice? What does that outcome teach us?  
*"I understood the outcome to be \_\_\_\_\_, and it teaches me \_\_\_\_\_. But how does it relate to your work now?"*
  
- ☑ **THE VALUES:** Could you identify what this person's values are and where they came from? How? How did the story make you feel?  
*"Your story made me feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."  
"It's clear from your story that you value \_\_\_\_\_; but it could be even clearer if you told a story about where that value comes from."*
  
- ☑ **DETAILS:** Were there sections of the story that had especially good details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions of the moment)?  
*"The image of \_\_\_\_\_ really helped me identify with what you were feeling."  
"Try telling more details about \_\_\_\_\_ so we can imagine what you were experiencing."*



## WORKSHEET: COACHING YOUR TEAMMATES' STORIES OF SELF

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Record Feedback/Comments from Your Team Members Here:

Coaching Your Team's "Story of Self"

**As you hear each other's stories, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories in words or images.**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Values</b> | <b>Challenge</b> | <b>Choice</b> | <b>Outcome</b> |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
|             |               |                  |               |                |
|             |               |                  |               |                |
|             |               |                  |               |                |
|             |               |                  |               |                |
|             |               |                  |               |                |

# **PUBLIC NARRATIVE: STORY OF US**

## STORY OF US

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Goals for this session:

- \* Learn how to tell a story of us that brings alive values shared by this community.
- \* Learn how to coach others in telling an effective story of us.

### **What is a Story of Us?**

You tell a story of self to enable others to “get you” – to experience the values that call you to public life. You tell a “story of us” to enable them to “get each other”- to experience the values they share that can inspire them to act together, find courage in each other, and find hope in their solidarity. In other words, the “us” that the storyteller brings alive is based less on what “category” describes them (race, gender, language, etc.), a “categorical us”, than values the share rooted in common experience, an “experiential us.” By learning to tell a story of us you can bring those values alive as a source of solidarity, hope, and the motivation to act.

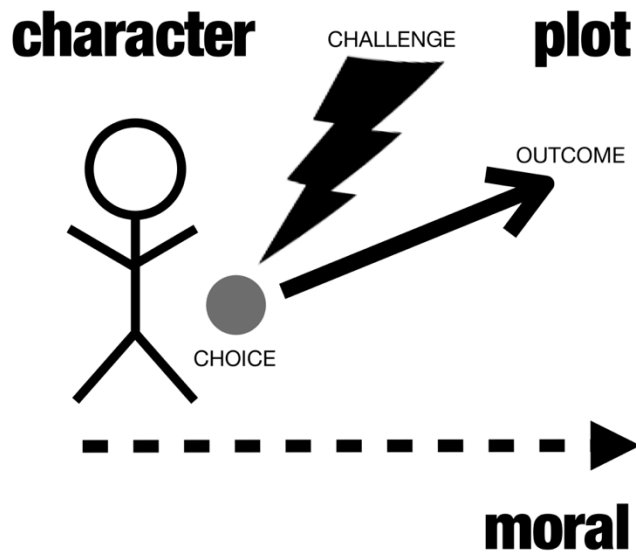
### **Crafting a Story of Us.**

One way people develop their sense of “usness” is by sharing stories that celebrate values they share. They may share stories of family, community, faith tradition, school life, profession, movements, organizational happenings, national experience, generational moments, cultural events, or even global occurrences. But, as stories, they’re about our experience of these moments, challenges we faced, obstacles we overcame, or didn’t, values we tested, or that tested us, and lessons we learned that made us who we are.

### **The Story of Us in the Room**

Although the reach of a story of us may extend far beyond “people in the room” it becomes real only in the experience of the “people in the room” – or not. The test is simple. As we heard this story did we begin to feel like an us? The experience of shared values may grow out of stories of historic moments we remember, or have heard of; they might be stories of life events like having children, stories of finding out you were accepted to this program; stories of what happened the first time you met, or last night, or this morning. And, like all stories, the more detailed, the more specific, and the more visual they are, the more effective they will be. What were the names of the people involved? What did they look like? How were they different? Sometimes stories of us emphasize obvious differences in race, religion, gender, age, for example, may actually highlight commonality of values or common purpose.

### **Narrative Structure: Challenge, Choice, Outcome**



## *Narrative Structure*

**The Challenge:** The challenges “people in the room” have faced in the past, or face now (made real with stories, images, and details, not statistics).

**The Outcome (hope):** Stories with vivid images that remind the “people in the room” of what they’ve achieved. Their own experiences of hope, experiences that point to your future.

**The Choice:** For a story to be a story, it centers on a “choice”. What choices did “people in the room” have to make to join this “us”, to be here, in this room, in this country, in this profession, to have access to this opportunity, to have learned what we are learning? In a story of us, the moments of choice we recall are those in which we responded with the kind of action that can make them sources of hope. People had to take risks, for example, to become part of this class, workshop, campaign. Founding stories recount choices made by those who initiated the community, enabling us to experience the values that motivated them.



### **VIDEO REVIEW: SUSAN CHRISTOPHER**

We'll be watching 3 minutes of Susan Christopher's Story of Us. As you watch it, focus on the elements of the Story of Us that you hear in her story.

| CHALLENGE  | CHOICE   | OUTCOME   |
|--|--|---|
| Who is the "us" to whom she appeals? How does she articulate the group's challenge? What images does she create? | What moments of choice does she recall? What are the values? | Where does she locate the source of hope? What is the outcome of the community's choices? |
|  |  |   |

1. **Why does Susan Christopher begin as she does?**
  
2. **What are the three choices she describes through her story?**
  
3. **What details, images, moments help bring her story alive?**
  
4. **What values does her story communicate?**



## TEAM BREAKOUT SESSION: STORY OF US PRACTICE

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### GOALS

- Develop a story of “us” by using clear, specific examples of the challenges, choices, and outcomes experienced by this community: **the people in this room.**
- Learn to coach others’ stories so they become better storytellers: **constructive critical and affirmative** feedback.

### AGENDA

**TOTAL TIME:** 40 min. of teamwork

1. Review the agenda. Nominate one person to be a **timekeeper.** 3 min.
2. Take some time **as a group** to brainstorm the “Us.” Use the worksheet that follows. 5 min.
3. Take some time as individuals to **silently develop your “Story of Us.”** Use the worksheet below. 5 min.
4. As a team **go around the group** and tell your story one by one. Each person has 2 minutes to tell his/her story and 3 minutes for coaching from the group. 25 min.
5. Return to large group. 2 min.

**\*\* NOTE:** You have 2 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure the timekeeper cuts you off. It encourages focus and ensures everyone has a chance.



## WORKSHEET: DEVELOPING YOUR STORY OF US

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The purpose of the story of us is to create a sense of community among individuals who may or may not yet see themselves as a community and to give them hope that they can make a difference. It builds on shared experiences and outcomes of previous actions to establish the context in which to take future action. Your goal here is to tell a story that evokes our shared values as your audience, and shows why we in particular are called to take responsibility for action now.

Your story of us may be a story of what we've already done together (common experiences), challenges we've already faced and outcomes we've achieved. Or it may be a story of some of our shared heroes, challenges they faced and outcomes they've achieved. Hearing how we've met challenges in the past gives us hope that we can face new challenges together.

*Brainstorm all the stories you know of about your audience and your collective story and experience. Your story of us may change each time you are talking to a different group of people as you create new community with them.*

As a **group**, brainstorm through the following questions (**5 min**):

|   |
|---|
| <i>Which meaningful experiences have you shared with this community? These should be events (not characteristics) that your group feels connected around.</i> |
| <i>What specific shared values are being expressed in these moments?</i>  |
| <i>What were the challenges in these stories?</i>   |
| <i>What were the sources of hope in these stories?</i>  |

Now choose among the stories you brainstormed above to flesh some out in vivid detail. Remember, you can use this space to draw pictures instead of writing words, to help you think about where to add detail and nuance in your story (**5 min.**).



| <b>CHALLENGE</b><br><i>What was the challenge we faced? What's the root of that challenge?</i> | <b>CHOICE</b><br><i>What specific choice did we make? What action did we take?</i> | <b>OUTCOME</b><br><i>What happened as a result of our choice? What hope can it give us?</i> |
|--|--|---|
|  |  |   |

**EACH STORY TELLER SHOULD:**

- SELF – Start your story in a couple of sentences (Examples of sentences that could create the space for an US- I care about \_\_\_\_\_ because of my own lived experience, before I came here, I thought I was alone)
- US – TAKE TWO MINUTES to tell your story of US as it relates to the people you are talking with that connects to your shared values. Create the space for an ASK by evoking a shared value, experience, urgency

**COACHING TIPS:**

**STORY OF US**

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Remember to START with positive feedback, balancing it with constructive critical feedback. You are coaching to facilitate the other person's learning by asking them questions, rather than giving them advice, with a focus on improving story telling craft, rather than content.

**DON'T** simply offer vague "feel good" comments. ("That was a really great story!")

**DO** coach each other on the following points:

- ☑ **INTERWEAVING SELF AND US:** Did the story of self relate to the story of us? If so, what was the common thread?
- ☑ **THE US:** Who is the "us" in the story? Do you feel included in the "us"?  
*"Could you focus more on the experiences we as a small group shared today that reflect our values? For instance, \_\_\_\_\_."*
- ☑ **THE CHALLENGE:** What were the specific challenges the storyteller articulated? How were those challenges made vivid?  
*"I understood the challenge to be \_\_\_\_\_. Is that what you intended?"*
- ☑ **THE CHOICE:** Was there a choice made in response to those challenges? By whom?  
*"To me, the choice was \_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_ (whom)."*
- ☑ **THE OUTCOME:** What outcomes resulted from this choice? What do these outcomes teach us?  
*"I understood the outcome to be \_\_\_\_\_, and it taught us \_\_\_\_\_."*
- ☑ **THE VALUES:** Could you identify what this community's values are? How have they acted on them in the past?  
*"Your story made see that we value \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."*
- ☑ **DETAILS:** Were there sections of the story that had especially good details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions of the moment)?  
*"The image of \_\_\_\_\_ really helped us feel what you were feeling."*



## WORKSHEET: COACHING YOUR TEAMMATES' STORIES OF US

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Record Feedback/Comments from Your Team Members On Your Story Here:

Coaching Your Team's "Story of Us"

As you hear each other's stories, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories.

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Values</b> | <b>Challenge</b> | <b>Choice</b> | <b>Outcome</b> |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
|             |               |                  |               |                |
|             |               |                  |               |                |
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# **PUBLIC NARRATIVE: STORY OF NOW**

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## STORY OF NOW

Goals for this session:

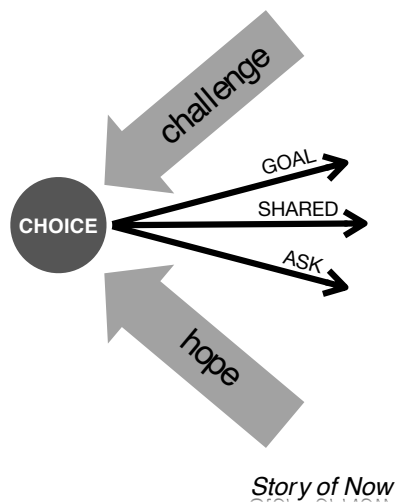
- \* Learn how to tell an effective story of now.
- \* Learn to coach others in a story of now.

### **What is a story of now?**

Now we know why you've been called to your mission. We also know who the "us" is that you will call on to join you in that mission. A story of now articulates the urgent choice faced by that "us" that requires action: a challenging vision of what will happen if they do not act, a hopeful vision of what could be if they do act, and a call to choose commitment to the action required. The "character" in a story of now is you, the people in the room with you, and the broader community whom you hope to engage in action.

In Washington DC, August 23, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King told a story of what he called the "fierce urgency of now." Although we all recall his vision of what America could be, his dream, we often forget that action was urgent because of the "nightmare" of racial oppression, the result of white America's failure to make good on its "promissory note" to African Americans. This debt, he argued, could no longer be postponed. If we did not act now, we could never realize the dream.

In a story of now, story and strategy overlap because a key element in hope *is* a strategy – a credible vision of *how to get from here to there*. The "choice" we offer must be more than "we must all choose to be better people" or "we must all choose to do any one of this list of 53 things" (which makes each of them trivial). A meaningful choice requires action we can take now, action we can take together, and an outcome we can achieve.



## **The Elements of a Story of Now**

**The challenge:** What is the urgent challenge that requires our commitment to act now?

**The hope:** What is the source of our sense of possibility that we could meet that challenge?

**The choice:** What is the pathway to action: what will happen if we don't act, what could happen if we do act, why we need to work together, the specific commitment each person must make now.

**A story of now concludes with:** Will you join me in \_\_\_\_\_?

## **Why It Matters**

The choice we're called on to make is a choice to take strategic action now. Leaders who only describe problems, but fail to identify a way to act and bring others together to address the problem, aren't very good leaders. If you are called to address a real challenge, a challenge so urgent you have motivated us to face it as well, then you also have a responsibility to invite us to join you in action that has some chance of success. A "story of now" is not simply a call to make a choice to act – it is a call to "hopeful" action.



## VIDEO REVIEW: Gandhi

We'll be watching a video of Gandhi telling a story of now. While you watch it, think about the elements of the Story of Now that make up his call to action.

| CHALLENGE   | OUTCOME   | CHOICE   |
|---|---|--|
| <i>How does he confront his audience with a real, urgent challenge? What images does he create?</i> | <i>Where does he locate the source of hope? What could be different if the community chooses to act together?</i> | <i>What does he ask the community to do? What makes it meaningful?</i> |
|   |   |  |

1. **Why does Gandhi begin as he does?**
2. **What details, images, moments do these stories bring alive?**
3. **What values does he draw upon and challenge his audience to live up?**



## TEAM BREAKOUT SESSION: STORY OF NOW PRACTICE

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### GOAL

- Develop a story of now with a clear and urgent challenge, a vision of a possible future, and the specific choice your audience must make.
- Learn to coach others' stories so they become better storytellers: constructive critical and affirmative feedback.

*NOTE: It's more than an "ask." It's a choice about whether someone's going to stay on the sidelines or dive in. It's an opportunity for them to join with you.*

### AGENDA

**TOTAL TIME:** 35 min. of teamwork

1. Review the agenda. Nominate one person to be a **timekeeper**. 2 min.
2. Take some time as individuals to **silently develop your "Story of Now."** Use the worksheet that follows. 5 min.
3. As a team **go around the group** and tell your story one by one. Each person has 2 minutes to tell his/her story and 3 minutes for coaching from the group. 25 min.
4. Return to large group. 3 min.

**\*\* NOTE:** You have 2 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure the timekeeper cuts you off. It encourages focus and ensures everyone has a chance.



## WORKSHEET: DEVELOPING YOUR STORY OF NOW



Use these questions to help you to develop your story of now:

*Why is it urgent to act now? What will happen if we fail to act? What experiences can you share that can make this challenge urgent for this community?*

*How do you know? What's the source of hope? What makes it plausible? What makes success possible?*

*What choice are you asking each person to join you in making right now? Why will it add up? How could it achieve the desired outcome?*

## **COACHING TIPS:**

### **Story of Now**

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Remember to START with positive feedback, balancing it with constructive critical feedback. You are coaching to facilitate the other person’s learning by asking them questions, rather than giving them advice, with a focus on improving story telling craft, rather than content.

**DON’T** simply offer vague “feel good” comments. (“That was a really great story!”)

**DO** coach each other on the following points:

- ☑ **THE CHALLENGE:** What is the specific challenge we face now? Did the storyteller paint a vivid and urgent picture of it? What details might make it even more vivid and urgent?  
*“The challenge wasn’t urgent enough. Why not mention \_\_\_\_\_?”*
  
- ☑ **THE OUTCOME:** What is the specific outcome if we act together? Is there a clear and hopeful vision of how the future can be different if we act now?  
*“The outcome could be even more hopeful if you described \_\_\_\_\_.”*
  
- ☑ **THE CHOICE:** Is there a clear choice that we are being asked to make in response to the challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful?)  
*“What exactly are you asking us to do? When should we do it? Where?”*
  
- ☑ **VALUES:** What values do you share with the storyteller? Does the story of now appeal to those values?  
*“Instead of telling us to care, it would be more effective if you showed us the choice to be made by illustrating the way in which you value\_\_”*
  
- ☑ **DETAILS:** Were there sections of the story that had especially vivid details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions)?  
*“The image of \_\_\_\_\_ really helped me feel what you were feeling.”*  
*“Try telling more details about \_\_\_\_\_ so we can relate to this shared experience.”*



## WORKSHEET:

# COACHING YOUR TEAMMATES' STORIES OF NOW

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*Record Feedback/Comments from Your Team Members On Your Story Here:*

*Coaching Your Team's "Story of Now"*

*As you hear each other's stories, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories.*

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Values</b> | <b>Challenge</b> | <b>Vision</b> | <b>Choice</b> |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
|             |               |                  |               |               |
|             |               |                  |               |               |
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# **PUBLIC NARRATIVE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: LINKING SELF, US & NOW

Goals for this session:

- Learn to link stories of self, us, and now in a coherent public narrative.
- Learn to coach others in linking their self, us, and now in a public narrative.

### Creating A Public Narrative

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
When I am only for myself, what am I?  
If not now, when?

- Hillel, 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem sage

Crafting a complete public narrative is a way to connect three core elements of leadership practice: story (why we must act now, heart), strategy (how we can act now, head), and action (what we must do to act now, hands). As Rabbi Hillel's powerful words suggest, to stand for yourself is a first but insufficient step. You must also construct the community with whom you stand, and move that community to act together now. To combine stories of self, us and now, find common threads in values that call you to your mission, values shared by your community, and challenges to those values that demand action now. You may want to begin with a Story of Now, working backward through the Story of the Us with whom you are working to the Story of Self in which your calling is grounded.



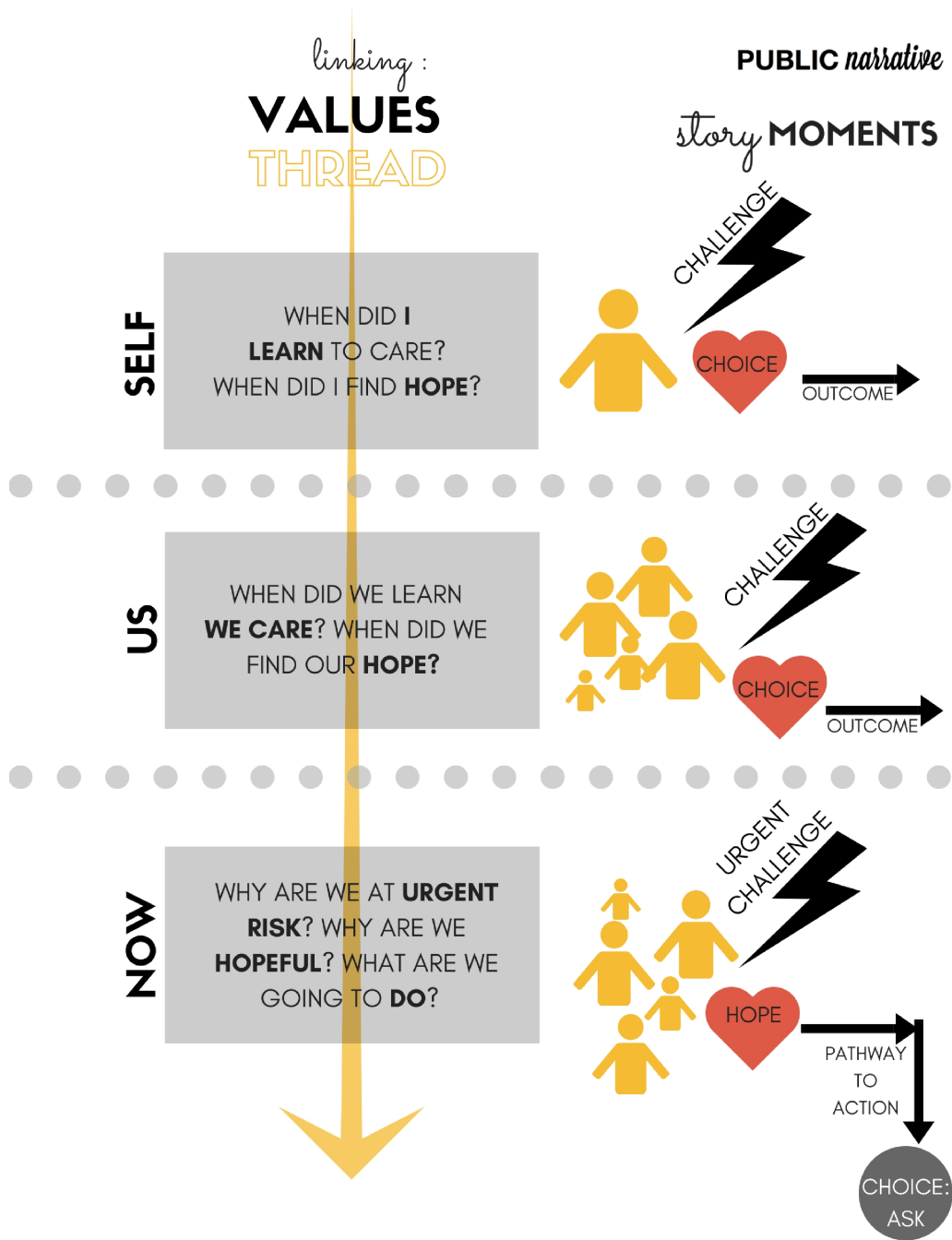
*Public Narrative*

### Creating A Public Narrative: Linking Self, Us, and Now

Now it's time to put all three stories together in your public narrative: self, us, now. What are the values that link your self, us, and now? What theme links your self, us, and now? Are there particular images that link your self, us and now? You may begin your public narrative with a story of now, to call attention to your cause, move to a story of self, to explain why this cause is your cause, move to a story of us, to remind them why this cause is their cause, and back to a story of now to call on them to join you in action. You may also begin, as Obama did, with a story of self. And you could even begin with a story of us. There is no formula, but an effective public narrative will link all three elements.

**Your Public Narrative is Always a “Work in Progress”**

The goal of your work in this class not to leave with a final “script” of your public narrative that you will use over and over again. The goal is to enable you to begin learning a process you can use to adapt your narrative over and over and over again, when, where, and how you need to in order to strengthen your own capacity – and that of others - for purposeful leadership and action.



**VIDEO REVIEW:**  
**MAUNG NYEU**

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We'll be watching a five-minute Public Narrative by Maung Nyeu. While you watch it, think about the elements of SELF – US – NOW that you hear in his story.

| <b>SELF</b>   | <b>US</b>  | <b>NOW</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <i>What experiences shaped his values? Whose choices were they? Why are they stories?</i> | <i>Who is the “us” to whom he appeals? What moments of choice does he recall? What are the values?</i> | <i>What challenges to those values does he describe? What’s the source of the urgency? What’s the source of hope? In what action does he ask us to join?</i> |
|   |  |  |

1. **Why does Maung begin as he does?**
2. **What details, images, moments bring his stories alive?**
3. **What values run through all the stories in his narrative?**



**TEAM BREAKOUT SESSION:  
LINKING SELF, US & NOW PRACTICE**

## GOAL

- Practice telling a public narrative in which self, us, and now are strategically and motivationally linked.
- Practice telling a public narrative to ask for a specific commitment from others to join in collective action.

## AGENDA

**TOTAL TIME:** 40 min. of teamwork

1. Review the agenda. Nominate one person to be a **timekeeper**. 3 min.
2. Take some time as individuals to silently develop your **“Public Narrative.”** 5 min.  
Link your story of now with a story of self and story of us. Use the following worksheet.
3. As a team, **go around your group** to practice your full public narrative. 25 min.  
Each person has 3 minutes to tell his/her public narrative and 2 minutes for feedback.
4. As a team, **go around your group** to do a **round of appreciations**. Each 5 min.  
person has up to 1 minute to appreciate the teammate sitting to their left for a contribution they have made or a moment you have shared.
5. Return to large group. 2 min.

**\*\* NOTE:** You have 3 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure the timekeeper cuts you off. It encourages focus and ensures everyone has a chance.



**WORKSHEET:**  
LINK SELF / US / NOW



**Linking Chart:** As you begin developing your linked public narrative, remember that your values are what link the different pieces of your story together so make sure you communicate clear and consistent values throughout. Also be sure to include self, us and now as well as challenge, choice, and outcome. Once you've crafted your linked narrative, you should be able to mark an "X" in each box below.

|             | <b>Challenge</b> | <b>Choice</b> | <b>Outcome</b> |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Self</b> |                  |               |                |
| <b>Us</b>   |                  |               |                |
| <b>Now</b>  |                  |               |                |

**Clear & consistent values?**

**Are values present throughout?**





**WORKSHEET:**  
**LINK SELF / US / NOW**

**Story of Now**

*What stories communicate the urgent challenges that your community faces?*

*What stories can offer your community a sense of hope?*

**Story of Self**

*What stories can you tell about the experiences and/or values that call you to leadership in education? Think of particular challenges you faced, choices you made, and the outcomes in those experiences.*

**Story of Us**

*What stories highlight the shared values and experiences of the people to whom you're speaking? Think of specific collective challenges you faced as a community, the collective choices you made, and the outcomes of those experiences.*

**What specific "ask" are you making to others to join you in meaningful action?**

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## COACHING TIPS: PUBLIC NARRATIVE

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**DON'T** simply offer vague “feel good” comments. (“That was a really great story!”)

**DO** coach each other on the following points:

- ☑ **THE CHALLENGE:** What is the specific challenge we face now? Did the storyteller paint a vivid and urgent picture of it? What details might make it even more vivid and urgent?  
*“The challenge wasn’t urgent enough. Why not mention \_\_\_\_\_?”*
- ☑ **THE OUTCOME:** What is the specific outcome if we act together? Is there a clear and hopeful vision of how the future can be different if we act now?  
*“The outcome could be even more hopeful if you described \_\_\_\_\_.”*
- ☑ **THE CHOICE:** Is there a clear choice that we are being asked to make in response to the challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful?)  
*“What exactly are you asking us to do? When should we do it? Where?”*
- ☑ **VALUES:** What values do you share with the storyteller? Does the story of now appeal to those values?  
*“Instead of telling us to care, it would be more effective if you showed us the choice to be made by illustrating the way in which you value.”*
- ☑ **DETAILS:** Were there sections of the story that had especially vivid details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions)?  
*“The image of \_\_\_\_\_ really helped me feel what you were feeling.”*  
*“Try telling more details about \_\_\_\_\_ so we can relate to this shared experience.”*
- ☑ **INTERWEAVING SELF, US AND NOW:** Did the story of self and the story of us relate to the story of now? If so, what was the common thread? If not, what thread could the storyteller use to rethink the connections between self, us and now?

## WORKSHEET: COACHING YOUR TEAMMATES’ PUBLIC NARRATIVE



Record Feedback/Comments from Your Team Members Here:

Coaching Your Team's Public Narrative

**As you hear each other's public narratives, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's public narratives.**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Self</b> | <b>Us</b> | <b>Now</b> | <b>Commitment</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|
|             |             |           |            |                   |
|             |             |           |            |                   |
|             |             |           |            |                   |
|             |             |           |            |                   |
|             |             |           |            |                   |

