

CRAFTING YOUR LEADERSHIP NARRATIVE

Public Narrative 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Originally adapted from the works of Marshall Ganz of Harvard University

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Introduction to Leadership & Organizing

LEADERSHIP:

Accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty.

ORGANIZING: Organizing is a form of leadership that enables a constituency to turn its resources into the power they need to make change. In short, it is about equipping people (constituency) with the power (resources) to make change (real outcomes).

PEOPLE: ORGANIZING A CONSTITUENCY

The first question an organizer asks is not "What is my issue?" but "Who are my people?" Who is my constituency? A constituency is a group of people who are "standing together" to assert their own goals. Organizing is not only about solving problems. It is about the people with problem mobilizing their own resources to solve it through iterative recruitment, training, and development of leaders.

POWER: WHAT IS IT, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM, HOW DOES IT WORK?

Rev. Martin Luther King described power as the "ability to achieve purpose." Power is the capacity we can create by combining our resources and using them creatively to achieve a common purpose. Power is not a thing, quality, or trait – it is the influence created by the relationship between interests and resources. You can "track down the power" by asking – and getting the answers to – four questions:

- What are the interests of your constituency?
- Who holds the resources needed to address these interests?
- What are the interests of the actors who hold these resources?
- What resources does your constituency hold which the other actors require to address their interests?

The unique role of organizing is to enable the people who need/want the change to be the authors of the change, because that gets at the root causes of the problem -- which usually involve powerlessness in one form or another -- not only the problem's symptoms.

So organizing is not only a commitment to identify more leaders, but a commitment to engage those leaders in a particular type of fight, building the power to create the change we need. Organizing power begins with the commitment by the first person who wants to make it happen. Without this commitment, there are no resources with which to begin. Commitment is

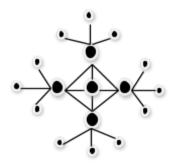
observable as action. The work of organizers begins with their acceptance of the responsibility to challenge others to do the same.

CHANGE: WHAT KIND OF CHANGE CAN ORGANIZING MAKE?

Change is specific, concrete, and significant. It requires focus on goals that will make a real and visible difference. It is not about "creating awareness," having a meaningful conversation, or giving a great speech, although those may contribute to an organizing campaign. It is about specifying a clearly visible goal, then mobilizing your resources to achieve it.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT A CONSTITUENCY:

Organizing is not only about achieving goals but also building leadership capacity throughout the constituency. Leaders develop other leaders who, in turn, develop other leaders, all the way "down." Although you may be the "dot" in the middle, your success depends on developing the leadership of others. That's where much of your power is built.



FIVE ORGANIZING PRACTICES

Organizing people to build the power to make change is based on mastery of five key leadership practices. These five practices can transform individuals, how their groups operate, and how the world looks, feels, and is.

DISORGANIZATION	ightarrow Leadership practices $ ightarrow$	ORGANIZATION
Passive →	o Shared Story $ o$	→ Motivated
Divided →	ightarrow Relational Commitment $ ightarrow$	→ United
Drift →	ightarrow Clear Structure $ ightarrow$	→ Purposeful
Reactive →	ightarrow Creative Strategy $ ightarrow$	→ Initiative
Talking →	ightarrow Effective Action $ ightarrow$	ightarrow Doing

1. Creating Shared Story:

Organizing is rooted in shared values expressed as public narrative. Public narrative is how we communicate our values through stories, bringing alive the motivation that is a necessary pre-condition for changing the world. Through public narrative, we tell the story of why we are called to leadership ("story of self"), the values of the community within which we are embedded that calls us as a collective to leadership ("story of us"), and the challenges to those

values that demand present action ("story of now"). Values-based organizing - in contrast to issue-based organizing - invites people to escape their issue silos and come together so that their diversity becomes an asset, rather than an obstacle. And because values are experienced emotionally, people can access the moral resources — the courage, hope, and solidarity - that it takes to risk learning new things and explore new ways of doing things. By learning how to tell a public narrative that bridges the self, us, and now, organizers enhance their own efficacy and create trust and solidarity within their campaign, equipping them to engage others far more effectively.

2. Creating Shared Relational Commitment

Organizing is based on relationships and creating mutual commitments to work together. It is the process of association — not simply aggregation - that makes a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Relationships are built through intentional one-on-one meetings and small group meetings, in which people share their stories, values, and interests. Through association we can learn to recast our individual interests as common interests, allowing us to envision objectives that we can use our combined resources to achieve. And because it makes us more likely to act to assert those interests, relationship building goes far beyond delivering a message, extracting a contribution, or soliciting a vote. Relationships built as a result of one-to-one and small group meetings create the foundation of local campaign teams, and they are rooted in commitments that people make to *each other*, not simply commitment to an idea, task, or issue.

3. Creating Shared Structure

A team leadership structure leads to effective local organizing that integrates action with purpose. Volunteer efforts often flounder due to a failure to develop reliable, consistent, and creative individual local leaders. Structured leadership teams encourage stability, motivation, creativity, and accountability – and use volunteer time, skills, and effort effectively. They create the structure within which energized volunteers can accomplish challenging work. Teams strive to achieve three criteria of effectiveness: (1) meeting the standards of those they serve; (2) learning how to be more effective at meeting outcomes over time; and (3) enhancing the learning and growth of individuals on the team. Team members work to put in place five conditions that will lead to effectiveness: real team, (bounded, stable and interdependent), engaging direction (clear, consequential and challenging), enabling structure (work that is interdependent), clear group ground rules, and a diverse team with the skills and talents needed to do the work.

4. Creating Shared Strategy

Although based on broad values, effective organizing requires that we identify and focus on a clear strategic objective; e.g., desegregate buses in Montgomery, Alabama. Narrowing and

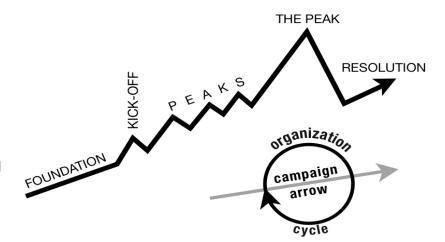
focusing on a strategic objective is a key to unleashing our creativity and turning our values into action. National campaigns often locate responsibility for national strategy at the top (or the center of the snowflake), but are able to "chunk out' strategic objectives in time (deadlines) and space (local areas) as a campaign, allowing local responsibility for figuring out how to achieve those objectives. Responsibility for strategizing local objectives empowers, motivates and invests local teams. This dual structure allows the movement as a whole to be relentlessly well oriented *and* fosters the personal motivation of volunteers to be fully engaged.

5. Creating Shared Measurable Action

Organizing outcomes must be clear, measurable, and specific. This allows us to evaluate progress, practice mutual accountability, and adapt strategy as needed, based on experience. Such specific measures include number of volunteers recruited, amount of money raised, number of people recruited to a meeting, voters contacted, pledge cards signed, laws passed, etc. Although electoral campaigns enjoy the advantage of very clear outcome measures, any effective organizing drive must come up with the equivalent. Regular reporting of progress to goals creates opportunities for feedback, learning, and adaptation. Training is provided for all skills (e.g., holding house meetings, phone banking, etc.) to carry out the program. New media may help enable reporting, feedback, coordination. Transparency exists as to how individuals, groups, and the campaign as a whole are doing on their progress towards goals.

CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are a way of mobilizing time, resources, and energy to achieve an outcome and treat time as an "arrow," rather than a "cycle." A campaign is an intense stream of activity that begins with a foundational period, builds to a kick-off, builds to periodic peaks, and culminates in a final peak, followed by a resolution.



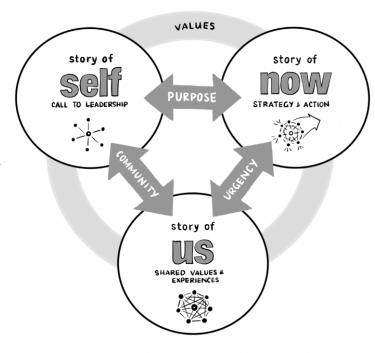
Introduction to Public Narrative

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

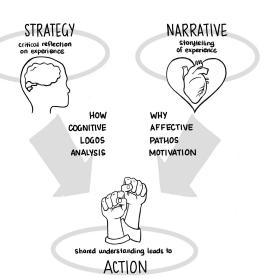
- Hillel, 1st century Jerusalem sage

Public Narrative brings together the Story of Self, why am I called to leadership, with the Story of Us, the shared values and experiences of a community, and the Story of Now, confronting us with an urgent challenge and pathway forward.

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).



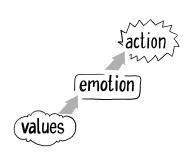
Organizing is motivated by shared values expressed through public narrative. Narrative is how we learn to make choices and construct our identity. Each of us has a story that can move others to action. By learning the craft of public narrative, we can access our shared values for the emotional resources we need to respond to challenges with courage rather than reacting to them with fear. By learning to tell stories of sources of our own values, a "Story of Self," we enable people to "get us." By telling stories of the sources of values we share, a "Story of Us," we enable people to "get" each other. By recognizing the current moment as one of urgent choice and proposing a hopeful way forward, a "Story of Now," we



motivate action. By learning how to tell a public narrative that bridges the self, us, and now, organizers enhance their own efficacy and create trust and solidarity within their campaign, equipping them to engage others far more effectively.

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.



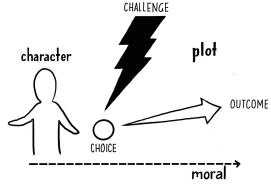
The key to motivation is understanding that values inspire action through emotion.

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.

AGENCY MOTIVATORS		AGENCY INHIBITORS
URGENCY	0 V	INERTIA
ANGER	E R	APATHY
HOPE	C 0	FEAR
SOLIDARITY	M E S	ISOLATION
Y.C. M. A.D.	J	SELF DOUBT



NARRATIVE STRUCTURE CHOICE

CHALLENGE

BASED IN

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.

Story moments enable us to see, hear, and feel what the storyteller experienced. Through vivid, sensory details, we can make our stories come alive.

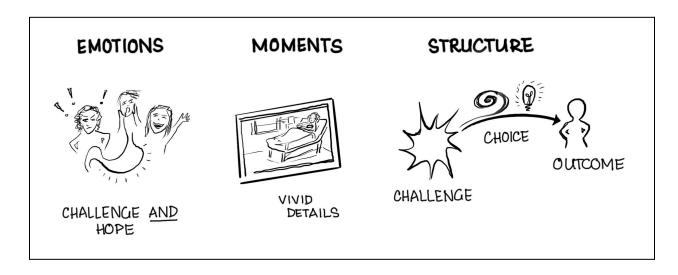
OUTCOME

Leadership:

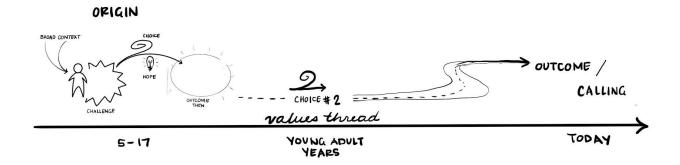
Accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in conditions of uncertainty.

– Marshall Ganz

Three Key Elements of Powerful Stories:



Story of Self Framework:



Story of Self

A Story of Self communicates why I am called to what I do (my calling) by sharing narrative moments that show where, when & how I learned my values. It is not a resume. A Story of Self usually recounts moments of hurt (why I care) and moments of hope (why I believe I can act). It's often through moments of hurt that we experience what we really care about, why the world needs fixing. And it's in moments of hope that we learn we could do something about it. Our choices show what we care about — In the moments I had to choose how to respond to a challenge, the outcomes resulted in learning a moral. Sharing these moments enables others to "get" us and establish moral authority. What is unique about each of us is that our identity is not simply a combination of categories (race, gender, class, etc.), but rather, a product of our journey, our way through life, and our personal experiences.

A Story of Self must **bring alive actual moments of experience**, in the present tense, enabling others to be there. In this way the story teller becomes emotionally present, enabling the listeners to experience the emotional meaning of the moment. By articulating and sharing these moments of experience, we can claim ownership of them. We can transform what was an influence *upon* us into a resource *for* us. In Public Narrative, we tell stories to enable agency and empowerment.

Choose stories that enable listeners to learn what *moves* you, what calls you to leadership, and to the work you do. It is not any dramatic story that you can tell about your life, even if it involves drama. And it may not have been a single moment of insight, as we learn from a combination of our experiences. Try to choose moments from your life that shaped you: challenges you faced and choices you made that led you to become passionate about your calling.

Telling a story, not telling "about" a story

The following techniques are useful in crafting and telling an effective Story of Self:

- Narrate your story in first-person: "I tiptoed to the corner of the building and peeked around."
- Use the present tense: "I can see the army officers coming closer. One of them unslings a rifle."
- Avoid the use of "and" as a connecting phrase: "He looks through his gun. He walks forward."
- Include sensory information: I see.../ I hear the sound of .../ the smell of.../ i taste...
- Let the listeners know how you felt: Scared? Excited? Joyful? Desolate?

ORIGIN STORIES

An *origin Story of Self* gets to the **root** of who a person is, and where their values came from: their truly formative moments. It often involves recovering the sources of values -- parents, teachers, faith traditions, etc —from whom the person first received those values. An origin story usually takes place somewhere between the age of 4-17 years old, as it's during these formative years that we *develop* the values that we are then called to act on later in life. Origin moments tend to be the most powerful. Without an origin story, we are left wondering *why* the person became the way they are, and what led them to make the choices they did.

Story of Self: Questions to Consider

- When did you learn your resiliency and strength?
- When in your childhood did you learn that you could make change?
- When did you first choose to support others and take leadership?
- When in your childhood did you learn that the world was unjust?
- What do you do today, and why?
- What values really drive your leadership today?
- When did you learn those values early on in life?
- How does it feel to share this story with others?
- Is this as authentic a story you can tell today, or is there another?
- What other stories would you like to have in your 'story bank'?

Story of Self: First Draft

What is your calling? What do you want to create in the world?

In what early moments did you learn the values that shape your leadership today? (hint: aim for moments before age 20 if you can!)

- In what early moments did you feel that the world needed fixing? In other words, in what moments did you experience hurt or challenge?
- What did you do? Why?
- How did you learn that *you* could make a change? Who believed in you early on? How did they show it?
- When did you first start enabling others to make change, and why?
- How does all of that show up in your leadership today?

Second Draft:					
CHALLENGE:					
SOURCE OF HOPE:					
CHOICE:					
OUTCOME:					

Story of Us

What is a Story of Us?

You tell a "Story of Us" to enable the people in this community 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. The "us" that the storyteller brings alive is not based on what "category" describes them (race, gender, 'people in recovery'), but in the values 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. Stories of us are 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 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

The Shared 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 Shared 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.

The Shared 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.

Story of Us: Questions to Consider

- When did you feel the power of this group?
 When did you see this group act on a value?
 I heard you say that we care about _____. Is there a moment when you saw us act on that?
 I heard you say that we care about _____. Can you give an example of when we demonstrated that?
- How do you feel telling this story? Do you feel genuinely excited about this community? Do you feel a sense of solidarity with them? How might you increase those feelings as you share?

Story of	f Us:	First	Draft
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Write a narrative about one moment that inspires you about this group. You can use a specific moment you shared together or a more universal feeling. Either way, be very specific!

Now make it longer and more specific and detailed! Use the challenge - choice - outcome structure. Share in moments, including what you saw, heard, felt, and experienced in the group.

SHARED CHALLENGE MOMENT:	SHARED CHOICE MOMENT:	SHARED OUTCOME:

OPTION 2: The above challenge-choice-outcome is the best way to share a Story of Us. Even if you've only had a few hours of shared experience, you can tell a Story of Us! But, if you don't have any shared experiences with the group you're speaking to, you can bridge from the Self to Universal experience. Keep the story specific, even if using 'generic' specifics. Ex: 'we've all had that moment as a kid when you're waiting for someone to pick you up and not sure if maybe they've forgotten about you, and for just a second it feels like you're all alone in the world' - super specific, also pretty likely that everyone has experienced something like that!

We may not have all experienced	
	(from your story of self)
But we've all had that moment when	
	(challenge moment - amp it up! Be specific!)
And we also all know the feeling when _	
_	(the hopeful opposite of the challenge)

Story of Now

The goal of a *Story of Now is* to create an urgent moment in which we face an urgent challenge and choose to act towards a hopeful future. In a *Story of Now*, you communicate an urgent **challenge** and **strategic pathway** to **act** on shared values by telling a story. It's where story and strategy meet. Bringing the challenge alive involves making the **story** real, with vivid details and story moments. The **hope** in the story of Now is in having a **strategy**: a credible vision of how to get from here to there. And it all ends with an ask for a real commitment to action. **Emotions**: We should *feel* the **challenge**, the agitation, tension, upset and anger. We should *feel* the **hope**, the power, the sense that we can really make a difference (**outcome**). Hope comes from understanding how and when we will act, and seeing commitment (**choice**) to act.

The Elements of a Story of Now:

The challenge: What is the urgent challenge that requires our commitment to act now? What will happen if we don't act?

- Urgency is created in two ways:
 - Urgency of **Need**, where the problem is <u>so</u> bad, you must act now (e.g., we can't put children in cages at the border for even one more day!)
 - Urgency of **Opportunity**: where there is some kind of deadline that motivates us to act now (e.g., you have 7 days to vote before polls close)
- Urgency is felt through story moments when this challenge became real in your experience. As the storyteller, you are the bridge. So share a time when this challenge touched your heart in a real way. Show it in moments!

The hopeful path: How can we use our resources to make real change on this challenge? What is the pathway to making a real difference? What could happen if we do act?

- Hope comes from the belief that we can use our resources in new ways to make a
 difference towards this challenge. This belief can come from logically knowing that if we
 do A that leads to B and then C. Or knowing that something similar worked in the past.
- The motivation in the story of Now comes from the hope the pathway is so fun, so engaging, so possible, and needs US, that we want to do it together right now! There is **urgency** in the pathway as well, if you can build excitement in.
- Consider all kinds of resources, including skills, time, network, knowledge, experience, stories, money, etc -- what exists in this community that could influence this challenge?
- Sometimes we can change the situation just by bringing our resources together in new ways. Other times, we need to bring our resources together in new ways to influence someone with decision-making power. What will make a difference in your case?

The choice: What is the specific commitment each person must make now, together?

A Story of Now concludes with: Will you join me in ______? A good ask is:

- COLLECTIVE. We do it all together, not alone or one by one.
- SPECIFIC. We know when & where to show up, and what we each will contribute.
- MEANINGFUL. We feel that it matters and it moves us. It's achievable and impactful.
- MEASURABLE & VISIBLE. We see who's with us and will know when we've succeeded.
- It is ACTUALLY AN ASK. It ends with a question: who's with me? Will you join me?

Story of Now: Questions to Consider

- Why can't we wait to act on this?
- When did you experience this challenge?
- What happens if we don't act?
- What change can we make?
- What will happen if we act? How do you know?
- What do we do first?
- Where do we show up? When?
- Why do you need us specifically and not any random person?
- How do you feel telling this story to others? Do you feel some anxiety and urgency? Do you feel excited to create something new? How might you increase those feelings as you share?

Story of Now: First Draft

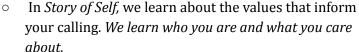
Your turn! Brainstorm your Story of Now here.

URGENT CHALLENGE	HOPEFUL PATH	ASK
What urgent challenge do you want to confront together? In what moment did you feel that challenge	What is the pathway towards a better reality? Why do you think it will work to really make	How can this group make a difference on that path? What is a first step?
was urgent? What happens if we don't act?	change? How is this group uniquely positioned to help?	When? Where? What will they do? How will you know it's effective?

Linked Public Narratives

We have learned about crafting the stories of Self, Us, and Now individually, but Public Narrative is only a *leadership practice* when a speaker draws <u>all three pieces</u> together into a coherent, cohesive values-based narrative.

What links the three together? The key to linking the Story of Self, Us, and Now is identifying and communicating a common value or set of values across the three stories.





story of

- Moments of early challenge \rightarrow hopeful choices \rightarrow outcomes then and today
- Remember origin stories!
- In *Story of Us*, we are reminded that we share these values. *We feel a sense of connection and solidarity with each other as a community.*
 - \circ Moments of shared challenge \rightarrow shared choices \rightarrow hope in this Us
- *Story of Now* is an invitation to act on our values in the face of an urgent challenge.
 - \circ Moment of urgent challenge \rightarrow hopeful path \rightarrow clear ask
- **Values** are essential to each element and can connect stories together to make a coherent narrative. Now, as you begin to think about putting the pieces together in your own narrative, ask yourself, what values link your stories of self, us, and now? What themes come up in each of these stories?

Self, Us, and Now Told through Story Moments

- The three elements (*self, us, now*) should be told through **story moments** with all the elements of the craft present: challenge, choice, outcome, and hope. *Tell the stories, don't tell about the stories. Use vivid, sensory details to bring your listeners into the story.*
- Public Narrative is a *framework* not a *formula*. That means that the order of the stories (self, us, now) can be varied, just as long as they flow together in a clear, coherent way. Also, Public Narrative is always a "Work in Progress." The goal is to not leave with a final "script" that you will use over and over again but to begin learning a **process** you can use to craft a narrative when, where, and how you need to in order to strengthen your own capacity and that of others for purposeful leadership and action.

VALUES

story of

Linked Narrative: First Draft

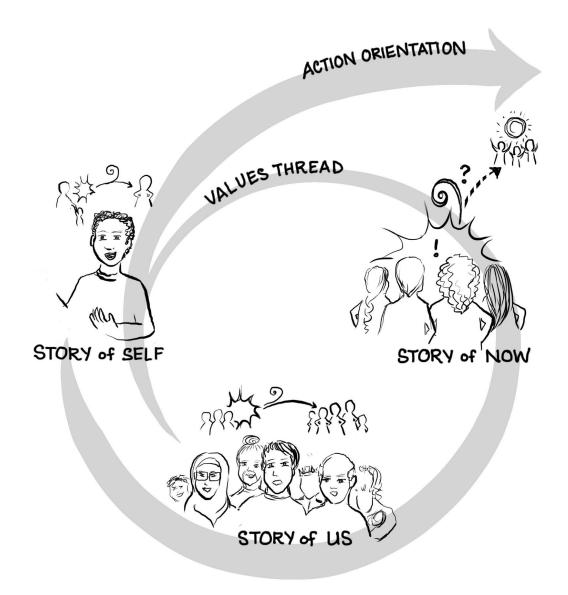
Note: Your linked narrative does not need to be in this order, and it does not need to use the same stories as the ones you shared earlier today.

	HURT	HOPE
のш ц г		
ω C		
N O W		
A s k		

Linked Narratives: Questions for listeners

Listeners, follow your genuine feelings.

- Self: Do you get this person -- why they care, and why they think they can change the world?
- Us: Do you feel solidarity with this 'us'? Do you get why this group is special and how you have already made a difference?
- Now: Do you truly get why this challenge is urgent? Do you understand how you might make a difference?
- Ask: Do you know what the first step is? Do you know when and where to show up, what
 you will contribute, how it will really make a difference towards the problem, and why you
 specifically are needed?



Thank you!