

Telling your Improvement Story

Narrative is highly effective at engaging the head and the heart, it both instructs and inspires - teaching us not only how we ought to act, but motivating us to act - and so engages the hands as well. Public narrative is composed of three elements: **a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now**. A story of self communicates who I am – my values, my experience, why I do what I do. A story of us communicates who we are – our shared values, our shared experience, and why we do what we do. And a story of now transforms the present into a moment of challenge, hope, and choice.

The Pixar story-telling framework provides a useful structure to help us do this well and succinctly. It follows six simple steps: **Once upon a time**..... **Every day**..... **Then one day**..... **Because of that**..... **Because of that**..... **Until finally**.....

Examples

Once upon a time, there was a widowed fish, named Marlin, who was extremely protective of his only son, Nemo. **Every day**, Marlin warned Nemo of the ocean's dangers and implored him not to swim far away. **Then one day**, in an act of defiance, Nemo ignores his father's warnings and swims into the open water. **Because of that**, he is captured by a diver and ends up in the fish tank of a dentist in Sydney. **Because of that**, Marlin sets off on a journey to recover Nemo, enlisting the help of other sea creatures along the way. **Until finally**, Marlin and Nemo find each other, reunite, and learn that love depends on trust.

Once upon a time there was a community school with high numbers of young children who often spent long hours alone after school. **Every day**, the students would go home and, with parents busy at work, they would have little guidance in their homework and other after school activities. **Then one day**, one teacher noticed that half of her students hadn't done their reading logs because their parents hadn't been home to help with the reading. **Because of that**, she decided to get a group of teachers and adult volunteers to start a free of charge after school reading and homework program. **Because of that**, the children completed their homework and reading assignments much more consistently. **Until finally**, the children who had previously been among the poorest performers in the class skyrocketed to the top and were helping other students in the class with their homework!"

Once upon a time there was a library in desperate need of repair. Although the local community loved frequenting this library and greatly benefited from the services it provided to them, the building was in shambles, preventing certain events from occurring there and causing members of the community to feel uncomfortable visiting. **Every Day**, community members inquired about the status of their library, wondering when - if ever - it would receive the repairs it so desperately needed. **Then one day**, people like you showed up and gifted their time and resources to bring new life to their library. **Because of that**, the library was a safer and more enjoyable place for members of the community to visit. **Because of that**, more programs were able to occur at the library and the number of community members benefiting from these programs steadily increased. **Until finally**, supporters like you helped completely repair the library, making it one of the safest and most popular places to visit in the entire county.

Now your turn!

Once upon a time...

Every day...

Then one day...

Because of that...

Because of that...

Until finally...