

Public Narrative in Practice

A Pedagogical Guide to Leadership
Through Storytelling

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- Marshall Ganz, Julia Lee Cunningham, Inbal Ben Ezer, and Alaina Segura, "Crafting Public Narrative to Enable Collective Action: A Pedagogy for Leadership Development," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 22, no. 2 (June 2023): 169-190, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2020.0224>.
- Marshall Ganz, "Leading change: Leadership, organization, and social movements," in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, eds. Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2010), chap. 19: 527-568.
- Marshall Ganz, *People, Power, Change: Organizing for Democratic Renewal* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

Foreword

Welcome to the world of leadership, organizing, and Public Narrative!

When I introduced Public Narrative as a leadership practice in 2006, I did not expect it would become adapted by practitioners, organizers, and educators across a wide diversity of communities, cultures, and domains.

But there were clues.

I grew up in the Jewish diaspora narrative, which was a far more salient source of identity than that of place. I only began to recognize this when, in Mississippi, I would attend a Black Baptist Church at least three times a week, and I realized I was living in another powerful narrative rooted in faith, freedom, and solidarity. When I began work with the United Farm Workers (UFW), I found myself in yet another narrative rooted in Mexican cultural traditions of solidarity, courage, and revolution; faith traditions of Catholic social teaching; and the civil rights tradition being formed all around us. By the time I left the UFW I knew that, to build a movement, you had to have not only a strategy and a structure, but also a shared story.

But it wasn't until 1997, while attending a doctoral seminar on the neurophysiology of myth, that I began to understand the link between how stories work and how our brains work. When I finished my dissertation—having identified the critical role of motivation in strategy—I dove into the study of narrative and committed to figuring out how to teach it. In 2005, while on leave after the death of my wife, Susan, and doing narrative work of my own, Adam Reich and I came up with a way to do it. All this converged in 2007 when I piloted a course on Public Narrative with Harvard Kennedy School students, practiced it with the local volunteer Sierra Club leadership, and introduced it to organizers and volunteers mobilized for training at the Camp Obamas.

It worked.

We quickly learned three things: Sharing “Stories of Self” could authentically communicate the sources of one’s values. Sharing a “Story of Us” could evoke core values we share with each other. And telling a “Story of Now” could communicate the urgency of a challenge, sources of hope we can meet the challenge, and the choices we must make to act.

We also learned that practicing Public Narrative is not about writing a “script.” Rather, it is a way to access emotional resources embedded in our values to enable courageous action. It is also not a way to “brand” ourselves for sale in the marketplace. As one student from India clarified, “it is not about applying a gloss from the outside; it is about bringing out the glow from the inside.”

In terms of pedagogy, everyone knows how to tell stories. We learn to practice Public Narrative by making our implicit knowledge explicit so we can practice it with craft, purpose, and intentionality. Public Narrative is more of a discovery than an invention.

The frameworks we use to scaffold your learning are not to be used as formulas or recipes. Reality is complex. Conceptual frameworks (like Self, Us, Now) are not reductionist descriptions of complex reality. On the one hand, they are “exercises” we can use to begin growing the emotional and cognitive muscles we need



to practice. On the other hand, they are lenses we can use to focus on key elements within the complexity that could be useful in a particular setting. Public Narrative, then, is more of what Amman community leader Samar Dudin describes as a “roadmap” than a “blueprint.” I believe this is why people can find it useful in cultures as diverse as Jordan, Japan, Mexico, and California; in domains as diverse as education, health care, leadership development, and faith; and in campaigns fighting for climate justice, racial justice, gender equality, economic equity, public security, and a sustainable world in the face of climate change—and even to elect people to public office.

Because Public Narrative is a practice, it can only be learned by practicing it—rather how one learns to ride a bicycle: getting on, falling off, reflecting, getting on again, and so forth. Our general approach is to explain the concepts, model the craft, invite you to practice, and then debrief what we have learned. Each step matters. This requires creating a “learning space” rooted in ground rules of mutual respect, listening not judging, receiving critique as data rather than judgment, etc.

Finally, change is the one constant in our reality: The world changes, the challenges change, our communities change, and we change. This is why the practice of sustained learning is vital for our development, the development of our craft, and the development of our capacity to practice it. And if we fail to articulate what we are learning by putting it into words, most of what we are learning is lost. So, we conclude each meeting, class session, workshop, campaign, or project with a debriefing of our learning: what worked (plus), what could work better (delta), and what learnings we take away with us. In this way, challenge and opportunity are bundled in an interdependent challenge—in Bob Dylan’s words, he who is “not busy being born is busy dying.”¹ Life is a better choice.

So, how does all this work?

Public Narrative practice is rooted in the three classic questions posed by the first-century Jerusalem scholar Rabbi Hillel:

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

This is not a “selfish question,” but it is a “self-regarding” question. If we presume to lead with integrity, we need to bring a clear understanding of our own values, resources, and aspirations, and we must do so with enough self-awareness to be able to “see” others.

If I am for myself alone, what am I?

To be a “who” and not a “what”—a person and not a thing—is to recognize that we live in the world in relationship with others and that our capacity to realize our objectives is inextricably wrapped up with the capacity of others to realize theirs.

If not now, when?

This question recognizes the fact that rarely can we learn to do well what we want to do without doing it. In other words, our understanding flows from action, rather than preceding it.

For me, leadership is about the interaction among self, other, and action.

The fact that these are framed as questions, not answers, is important. When do we need leadership? When everything works, when there are no surprises? Or is it when things are confusing, problematic, unexpected? Isn’t it in these moments that we need the adaptive, creative work of leadership? The world of public leadership is one of uncertainty, not certainty.

This makes leadership so challenging, so “scary.”

We may ask ourselves: Do I have the skills I need to deal with these new conditions—a “challenge to the hands”? Can I use my resources in new ways to engage with new conditions—a strategic challenge, or “challenge to the head”? And where do I find the courage, hopefulness, and resilience required to enable others to do the same—a “challenge to the heart”?

So, we define leadership as “accepting responsibility [self] for enabling others [others] to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty [action].”²

Leadership is a choice to accept responsibility for others. It is not about being a diva, a sun, a shining light— or heat—upon all who draw near. It is about entering into a relationship rather than putting on a performance. And it is about the accomplishment of a “shared” purpose: enabling people to work together to get what they want, not what I want. It is leadership as “Yes, we can!” not “Yes, I can!” Because no one can know the future, its domain is that of the uncertain, the unexpected, the disruptive. So, leadership is necessarily more about “learning” than it is about “knowing.” It is also about a practice rather than a position: something you do rather than something you are. We can all think of people who occupy positions of formal leadership but who turn out to be awful leaders. On the other hand, we meet people in neighborhoods, workplaces, and kitchen tables who practice leadership without the formal titles, resumes, or awards.

This approach to leadership is rooted in traditions of community social movements and democratic organizing. Its foundation is in individuals, each of unique and infinite worth, realizing that worth in community and acting as agents of change, source of the power to change, beneficiaries of change, and judges of the reality of change.

Organizing is a form of leadership that begins by asking: “Who are my people?” (not “what is my issue?”), “what change do they want?” (rooted in their life experience), and “how can we turn the resources we have into the power we need to get what we want?” From this perspective, the most critical resources with which to build the power are those held in abundance by the people with the problem, which is often time rather than money, commitment rather than convenience, solidarity rather than individualism, and hope rather than despair—what economist Albert Hirschman calls “moral resources” that grow with use rather than “economic resources” that deplete with use.³ There are thus three organizing outcomes: Did we achieve the goal, did we grow or strengthen our collective capacity, and have we developed new leadership?

What does this have to do with Public Narrative? Narrative is one way we have learned to access the emotional resources embedded in our values to transform disruptions to which we react fearfully as threats, into challenges to which we can respond hopefully. We can exercise agency by motivating our hearts to enable our heads to guide our hands. Public Narrative is a way to harness the power of narrative to do the work of leadership by communicating why I am called to lead—a Story of Self; why we are called to act together—a Story of Us; and why we are called to act now—a Story of Now!

Where did this approach come from?

The questions of *what I am called to do*, *what we are called to do as communities*, and *what we are called to do now* were certainly not invented at Harvard. They are at least as old as Moses’ (Nebi Musa) conversation with God at the Burning Bush. When called on to free his people, Moses asks, “why me?” And *who are you and these people? And can’t this wait? Why now?* I have yet to be introduced to a culture in which people don’t ask themselves these questions: Why me, why us, why now? They come up with different answers, to be sure, but the questions are the same.

The first time I asked myself these questions with any seriousness was in 1964 when I was a junior at Harvard College and had volunteered for the Mississippi Summer Project. The Summer Project was intended to support the work of the Black organizers fighting for the right to vote, who were being jailed, beaten, or worse, because the law did not protect them. So why not bring people who might bring the law with them: white students and Black students from elite colleges in the North? The goal was to organize the integrated Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to challenge the segregated “regular” Democratic Party at that summer’s Democratic Convention.

Some three hundred of us were gathered for training at a college in southern Ohio the night before we would leave for Mississippi. We got word that three individuals in our party—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—had disappeared. They had left the training to go back to Meridian, Mississippi, and the day before, sent to investigate the burning of a Black church where there had been civil rights meetings in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

No one had heard from them since.

Bob Moses, the soft-spoken lead organizer of the Summer Project, called us together in a college auditorium. He spoke words I'll never forget:

"Our three brothers have not been heard from."

"We don't *know* what happened, but we *think* we do know what happened...we think they're gone."

And sure enough, two months later, their bullet-riddled and beaten bodies were found buried in a dirt levee, where they had been executed by the Ku Klux Klan. They had been turned over to the Klan by the county sheriffs.

"I would like to tell you all to go home, that you're not needed, but I can't. I must ask you to go. But I can't take the whole responsibility. Each of you must decide. And if you decide you can't go, it's okay, there's no shame. But each of you must decide."

I sank into my seat in complete silence, like everyone else in the room. I began to ask myself: What I had gotten into? Was this for real? What was I doing here?

My father was a rabbi and my mother, a teacher. We had lived in Germany for three years after the Second World War, when he served as a chaplain in the American army. Much of his work was with Holocaust survivors whose lives had been shattered by that horror, people whom I met in our home on their way to find some hope. My fifth birthday party was held in a children's camp where I was to give gifts, not receive them. Their parents were gone. The Holocaust was a reality in our home. But my parents interpreted it to me as not only about anti-Semitism, but about racism. And racism kills.

The civil rights movement was challenging the institutionalized racism foundational to our country even before it became a country.

As an RK—rabbi's kid—I had to go to all the "stuff." You're also supposed to be perfect. Even as I chafed at this, I did love the Passover Seder, the telling of the story of the journey from slavery to freedom (with food): the Exodus story. There was a moment in the Seder when they would point to the children and declare, "You were slaves in Egypt." At first, I didn't get it. I hadn't been a slave, nor had I been to Egypt. But then I realized that that story is not the property of one people, one time, or one place. It is told generation after generation, and you must figure out where you are in it. Are you with the warriors on their horses and their chariots, pursuing the people? Or are you with those people trying to find their way to the land of promise?

Dr. King described the movement for civil rights as yet another chapter in the telling of that story.

I was twenty at the time. As I looked around the room, everyone seemed to be about my age: eighteen, nineteen, or twenty-one. The civil rights movement was a movement of young people. Dr. King had led the Montgomery Bus Boycott when he was twenty-five. Protestant theologian Walter Bruggeman argues that what he calls the "Prophetic Imagination" occurs at the intersection of "criticality," a sense of the world's hurt, its pain, and "hope," a sense of the world's possibilities, its promise.⁴ Young people come of age with a critical eye on the world they find, and almost of necessity, hopeful hearts. There is a deep affinity, in other words, between generational change and social change. So it was for my generation—and, I believe, for this one as well.

As we sat in silence, each in our own thoughts, Gene Wheeler, a SNCC organizer, stood up in the back of the room. She began to sing:

They say that freedom is a constant struggle,

They say that freedom is a constant struggle,

They say that freedom is a constant struggle,

Oh Lord, we've struggled so long we must be free.

She continued:

They say that freedom is a constant dying,

We've died so long; we must be free.

As she began to find her way out of the room, still singing, one by one, each person got up and followed her. The next day, we all went to Mississippi.

That was a turning point in my life.

With all due respect to Harvard, my education in race, power, and politics in America began in the South. The inequality between Black and white folks in education, housing, health, wages, and security was both evident and terrible. But bringing a few books or medical supplies wouldn't change much. I began to learn the difference between justice and charity. Charity asks, "What's wrong? How can I help?" Justice asks, "Why is it happening? How can I change it?"

The pushback comes because the reason that some people do not have enough is because other people have too much.

So, you find yourself in a power struggle. But how much of a struggle can it be when the Black community had no right to vote, was excluded from federal labor laws, and, well, I'd never had the experience of going up to someone twice my age who would stand up, offer me his chair, call me mister, and not look me in the eye because he was Black and I was white...and that went on thousands of times a day across the South. Where then could you look to get some power? This is how we learned that while few had power, many had resources. And, as the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott taught us, individual resources held by the many could be turned into enough collective power to access individual and collective resources held by the few. In other words, everyone in the community had feet. And if they used their feet to walk to work and deny the bus company their bus fare instead of using their feet to get on the bus and give the bus company their bus fare, they could turn their individual dependence on the bus company into the bus company's dependence on an organized community. That was called organizing: developing leadership, building community with that leadership, and building power from the resources of that community. I got hooked.

So, a year later, when I left the South, returning to complete my senior year at Harvard seemed to be the least useful thing to do. I even wrote them a letter: How can I come back and study history when we're busy making history? It was arrogant but also true. And when I went back home to Bakersfield, California, where we had lived since I was in the sixth grade, I met Cesar Chavez, who had just launched a grape strike—a first step in organizing a union of the largely Mexican immigrant farmworkers. I had grown up in the midst of the farmworker world but had never seen it. It took my coming home with "Mississippi eyes" for me to see another community of people of color, also without political rights, also without labor law protections, and California with its own rich history of racial oppression, going back to the native peoples, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Filipinos, and the Mexicans. It turned out Mississippi was not an exception to America. It was an example of the America we had to change. I left the farmworkers in 1981—after sixteen years in which I had learned the craft of organizing—and did another ten years of electoral, labor, and issue organizing, mostly in California.

But in 1989, I was invited to my twenty-fifth reunion at Harvard, even though I had never graduated. I was surprised they invited dropouts. And while I could understand why they would invite the dropout who started a small software company up in Seattle, that sure wasn't me. But I went. It was like running into a twenty-year-old version of myself. "How's it going?" twenty-year-old me asked. "Not so great," I replied. "Reagan's been President for eight years and I'm feeling stuck. I need to find a way to go deeper and broader." "So why don't you come back and finish that senior year you left pending?" asked twenty-year-old me. "Well. I don't know if my synapses are up to it...and tuition has changed a bit." But a remarkable three-hour conversation with an Episcopal priest who was serving as a Harvard admissions person made it possible. If he'd laughed at me, it would have been all over. But we figured it out.

In 1991, I returned to Harvard to finish my senior year. I wrote a senior thesis in history and government (having already done the fieldwork) and graduated class of 64–92. My eighty-one-year-old mother finally got to see her son become a college graduate. But I wanted to dig deeper. The following year, I did the mid-career MPA at the Kennedy School—making me the only person to go from undergrad to midcareer in one summer—and completed a PhD in sociology in 2000. While I was working on my PhD, the Kennedy School asked if I would teach a course on organizing. That experience turned out to be a real gift for me. I could integrate my life experience with the social science I was learning in a pedagogical conversation with a rising generation. I got to go to class twice a week and have a conversation with the future. How cool was that?

I've been on the faculty full time since 2000, teaching organizing and Public Narrative online and in person. I got back into the world of practice, beginning with my students involved in Howard Dean's 2003 campaign for president in New Hampshire, the Sierra Club, and the Obama Campaign in 2007–8. Since then, I've been blessed with the opportunity to work with individuals, organizations, and movements around the world, each of whom is trying to find ways to turn their values into the sources of power they need to shape a world into which they want to raise their children.

I want to thank Jorrit de Jong and everyone in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative for their support of this pedagogy project. I'm even more grateful for the opportunity to develop Public Narrative practice with over three hundred mayors in the last eight years. It is an opportunity not only to strengthen foundations of democratic governance, but also to learn from the experience of those who are required to practice leadership on the frontlines of almost every major social challenge: criminal justice, housing, health care, education, gun violence, racial conflict, climate change, and all the rest. As the first tier of elected executive leadership in our government, they are the foundation of the whole structure.

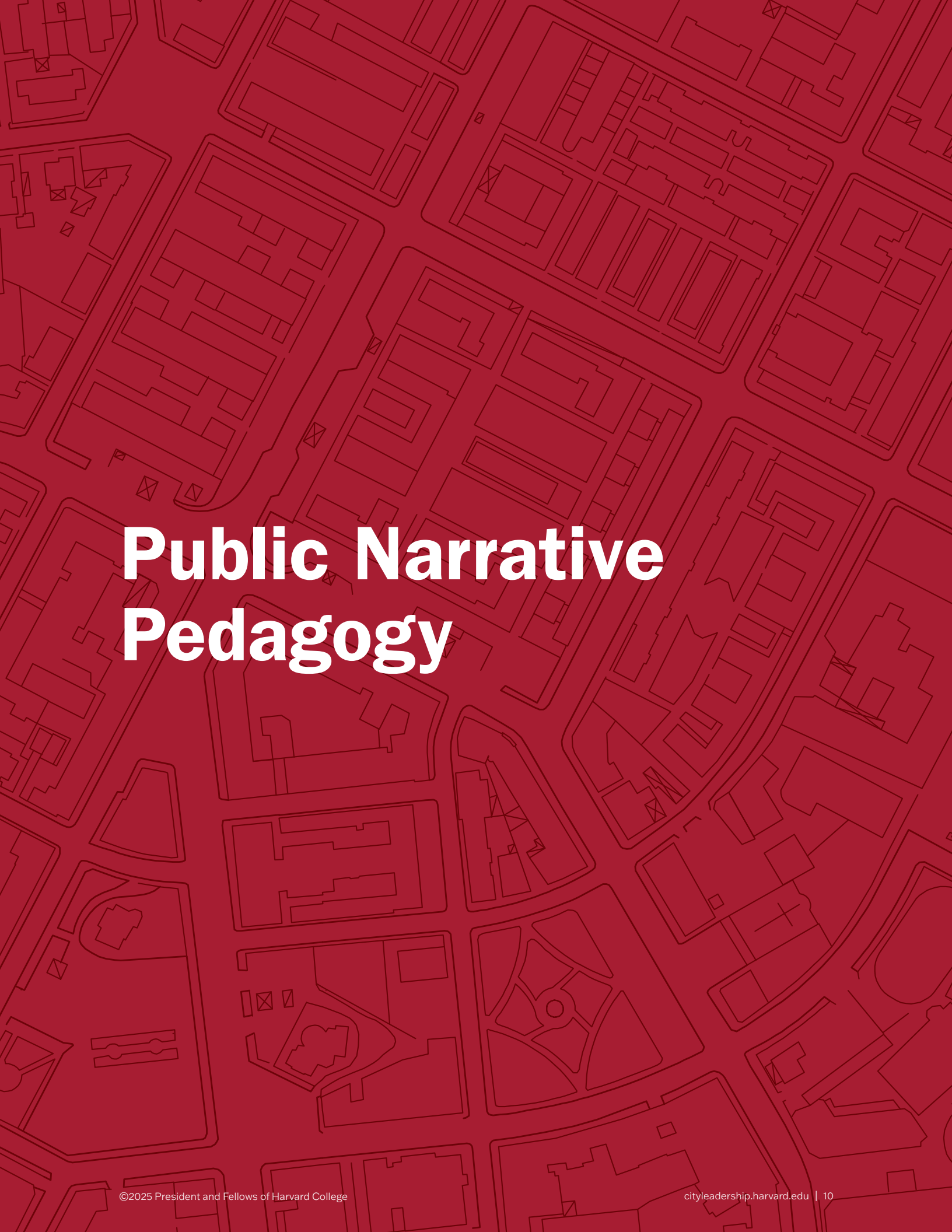
My participation in this project, craft development, and learning is only possible in collaboration with my colleague Sarah ElRaheb. Thank you is far too small a word to describe the role her leadership, commitment, and imagination plays in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, including especially the development of the committed instructors, coaches, and coordinators, who actually do most of the "heavy lifting." I am also blessed with the collaboration of Anita Krishnan, whose dedication to craft, long hours, patient persistence, and leadership has made this whole guide into a reality.

So...good luck. Keep us posted. And, in this time of great need, please let us know when you're ready to move on to the other four practices of leadership.

Marshall Ganz

Contents

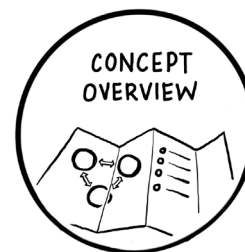
Public Narrative Pedagogy	10
Public Narrative Pedagogy: Concept Overview	11
How to Use This Guide	14
Debriefing	15
SECTION 1 Introduction to Public Narrative	17
Introduction to Public Narrative: Concept Overview and Instructor Notes	18
Introduction to Public Narrative: Instructor Outline	31
Public Narrative Is Not Therapy	33
Community Agreements and Group Accountability	34
James Croft: Video Debrief with Charts	40
SECTION 2 Story of Self	48
Story of Self: Concept Overview	49
Story of Self: Instructor Notes	52
Public Coaching: Concept Overview	55
Public Coaching Guiding Questions: Instructor Notes	59
Public Coaching: Debrief Guide	61
Amal Beydoun: Video Debrief	64
Story of Self: Large Group Debrief	66
SECTION 3 Story of Us	69
Story of Us: Concept Overview	70
Story of Us: Instructor Notes	74
Susan Christopher: Video Debrief	78
Story of Us: Large Group Debrief	81
SECTION 4 Story of Now	83
Story of Now: Concept Overview	84
Story of Now: Instructor Notes	88
Story of Now: Live Brainstorm	91
Tejas Mowtani: Video Debrief	94
Story of Now: Large Group Debrief	96
SECTION 5 Linked Narrative	99
Linked Narrative: Concept Overview	100
Linked Narrative: Instructor Notes	102
JacquINETTE Brown: Video Debrief	105
Linked Narratives: Large Group Debrief	109
Closing and Celebration	111
Closing a Workshop: Reflection, Evaluation, Celebration	112
Additional Resources	114
Troubleshooting Guide	115
Values Chart: James Croft's Five-Minute Linked Public Narrative	121
Endnotes	122



Public Narrative Pedagogy

Public Narrative Pedagogy: Concept Overview

Public Narrative can harness the power of narrative to do the work of leadership. Learners turn what they know how to do implicitly (telling stories) into a craft they can practice explicitly (Public Narrative). They learn to craft three stories: their own story (Story of Self), the story of their community (Story of Us), and the story of a currently disruptive moment (Story of Now). In this way, they can access the emotional resources embedded in their values for the courage to respond to disruptions with agency rather than react to disruptions with fear.



Aligning Pedagogy with Practice

In teaching Public Narrative, the pedagogy aligns with practice, linking experiential, reflective, and relational learning with conceptual, emotional, and behavioral learning. In other words, what is taught (practice) is aligned with how it is taught (pedagogy). Participants learn to practice storytelling as opposed to learning about storytelling. Like learning to ride a bicycle, they can only learn by doing it; learning “about” leadership does not enable a person to lead.

This approach grew out of leadership practice in highly uncertain contexts, including community organizing, social movements, and politics.⁵ Today, leadership practice in general requires engaging with uncertain conditions, limited reliance on institutionalized authority, and constrained or limited resources.⁶

Learning Public Narrative requires participants to learn how to do what they already do in a new way. This involves letting go of previous conceptions, which can be difficult. Learners can approach this challenge with what the Zen tradition calls “shoshin”: a beginner’s mind. You could start your class/workshop by introducing the pedagogy of Public Narrative with the metaphor of a person learning to ride a bike: They first have to get on the bike, then they fall off—that’s the moment of choice when they either go home or they find the courage to get back on, knowing that they will continue falling until they learn to keep their balance. This process plays out in an interactive four-step process: explain, model, practice, debrief.

Explain

First, you as instructor explain conceptually how the practice works. This guide includes visuals throughout that are particularly useful for showing the process of Public Narrative. For each element of the craft (Introduction, Self, Us, Now, Linking), you share: What is it? What is its purpose? How does it work? What are the elements? How is it crafted? Why is it important? How does it relate to the other elements of Public Narrative?

Model/Debrief

You then share an example of the practice—usually a model video, but sometimes a live model (see, for example, Public Coaching: Debrief Guide in the Story of Self section on page 61). The learning really happens through a skillful debrief with your learners on what they just saw. Interactively debrief the model, making explicit connections between what they saw/heard; lifting up the elements of the craft you explained in the initial step; and sharing your own experiences, thoughts, and questions.

Practice

Learners would then have a chance to “get on the bike” to try it on themselves. Divide participants into small groups (four to six people each), which are led and facilitated by an experienced Public Narrative coach and held constant throughout the workshop. In each breakout, the coach opens the group with a brief check-in and content recap. Learners then have five minutes of silent reflection time to draft a two-minute story (for Self, Us, Now) and a three-minute story for Linked Narrative. Each person then shares their story with the whole group, after which they receive coaching and feedback on the story from the coach and their peers so they can continue improving it.



Debrief

Finally, you facilitate a debriefing of a few model stories from selected students (nominated by their coaches) with the entire group. Instead of offering direct coaching, however, debrief the stories by engaging the whole group: What moved you? Why? Did you understand the person? What more did you want to know? Debriefs are where learning is solidified: As people are asked thought-provoking questions, they start to make sense of what they've just been through and begin drawing connections between concepts, models, and practice. Debriefs are also a space to elicit remaining questions, which are foundational to the group's learning.

Learners of Public Narrative do not leave with a final script. They leave having learned how to communicate their values, the values of those with whom they are working, and values that can enable them to find the courage to meet new challenges.

Creating a Brave Space for Relational Learning

Public Narrative is a relational practice that requires allowing others to see one's vulnerabilities. To scaffold this process, construct what Public Narrative practitioners call a "brave space"—a holding environment that is bounded, normed by community agreements, and intentionally facilitated to enable critical reflection, iterative practice, and coaching on that practice. Learning Public Narrative requires learners to take risks when confronted with discomfort, rather than avoiding them to stay safe. Bravery is what you ask of students, while safety is not something you can guarantee. Keeping in mind that this is a leadership craft, leading in the face of uncertainty won't always feel safe, and it certainly will require courage.

Within this brave space, participants learn experientially by developing a Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now, and by enabling others to do the same. As noted above, the pedagogy requires getting on the bike: trying, falling, and continuing to try because it's the only way to learn. Learning Public Narrative requires participants to recall particular moments in which they learned to care (often, moments of hurt) and in which they learned to act (often, moments of hope); learners require a brave space in which they can share with vulnerability and take the risks that come with exploring these moments of being seen, of sharing works in progress, and of risking failure. Encourage learners to take responsibility for what they communicate and its impact on others, as this is part of the leadership practice you're teaching.

Creating a brave space is different from creating a safe space. Assign learners to teams that are diverse, bounded, and stable (throughout the workshop), enabling them to cultivate a sense of group trust, mutual support, and interdependent learning. Members of the teaching team (instructors and coaches) create this environment through several steps: first, by sharing their own Stories of Self, modeling vulnerability and authenticity for learners; second, by co-constructing norms and ground rules with the group; and finally, by structuring time intentionally. Story sharing and narrative coaching are both limited in time for focus, fairness, and craft. The iterative rhythm of learning also encourages people to try and learn from failure rather than fearing failure to begin with.

Coaching

Coaching is at the heart of Public Narrative pedagogy, and asking questions skillfully is the heart of coaching. This is so because each person already has all the information they need to construct a Public Narrative embedded in their lived experience—especially in their Stories of Self and Us. The coach's role is to enable the learner to locate their most salient moments of experience—called "coaching the person"—and to facilitate the learner's effective articulation of their experience in these moments—called "coaching the story." This is accomplished not by giving advice but by learning to ask questions skillfully.

What is Skillful Questioning?

Skillful questioning is:

- Asking specifically: *When? Where? Who else was there? Where were you? What words were said? How did you feel? What did you do next?*
- Asking why: *Why did you care? Why did you choose this, not that? Why did you do what you did next? Why were you there in the first place?*
- Strategically choosing which questions to ask: Gauge where the student needs to do the most work. Differentiate between coaching the person versus coaching the story. Check to see if something was left “unsaid” that may need saying.

The first thing a coach must do is establish a relational connection within which a conversation can happen. Coaching is not an interrogation, an interview, or a checklist. When done well, coaching is more of a conversation or instructive dialogue with genuine questions and honest feedback. Holding tension is also a key aspect of coaching: It’s necessary to challenge and support learners by offering both affirmation (ask: *Why do you think that was so effective?*) and challenge (ask: *Yes, but why?*) at different times. Coaches co-construct learning with their particular person or group. They invite participants to share their reflections, contributions, experiences, and questions, and respond to them authentically in a way that enhances the learning of the whole group, enabling a deeper and richer understanding of the craft of Public Narrative.

Evaluation: Pluses, Deltas, Takeaways

Public Narrative is an interactive and non-linear process, so almost every attempt can be a valuable source of learning. To benefit from this learning, participants must be provided a space in which critical feedback can be experienced as data useful for one’s learning rather than as judgment of one’s person; explicit framing matters. Educational psychologist Carol Dweck describes this as a “growth mindset” (feedback on my learning) rather than a “fixed mindset” (feedback on me as a person).⁷ For example, those with a growth mindset interpret critical feedback as: “Oh, I’m not being judged as smart or dumb, wise or foolish, etc., but I am getting valuable data for my own learning; what am I doing well, and what can I improve?”

Key Learnings and Takeaways

When it comes to experiential learning, one of the definitive findings is that specific articulation by the learners of what they learned can be the most valuable moment in the whole process. The experience alone is not enough; its usefulness for learning depends on putting it into words, enabling the student to “own” it. Build in debriefs at the end of each section to enable learners to reflect upon their practice and synthesize their learning as they go through the process. Eliciting key takeaways and learnings publicly from a group solidifies individual and collective student learning, and it offers instructors good feedback in real time.

Pluses and Deltas

Always start with what worked (pluses), and can, therefore, be repeated; only then move into what could be done differently or better (deltas), inviting and sharing concrete ideas and suggestions for improvement (not just a rant session). Starting with pluses before deltas enables you to build on a solid foundation of competence, which is key because learners need to know what to do more of, not only what not to do; the fact that they often go straight to what didn’t work first can turn the sessions into one of fault finding rather than learning.

Because you were introduced to Public Narrative in a class or in a workshop, be sure to draw explicitly on your own experience (coaching yourself). This instructional guide is designed to mirror the pedagogy of practice itself. The intention is to scaffold your own learning to teach Public Narrative in the same way (explain, model, practice, debrief).

And now, it’s your turn to get on the bike! We wish you the best as you embark on this exciting journey of teaching and learning!

How to Use This Guide

This instructional guide is designed for people who have completed a course or workshop in Public Narrative and want to learn to teach the craft to others as an instructor (and/or a coach). This guide was designed to scaffold your learning. It includes conceptual resources to clarify your understanding of the craft so that you can explain concepts clearly, and pedagogical resources for teaching practice of the craft, like sample agendas, instructor notes, and debriefing guides. You will want to adapt these resources as you develop your own teaching practice.

Read through all materials before teaching for the first time. You can only really understand each part in the context of the whole. You may notice that some parts overlap or seem redundant. This is intentional: Learning to teach Public Narrative is as non-linear and iterative as is learning Public Narrative. You will be offered the same information in multiple ways to facilitate your own comprehensive processing of your understanding.

The guide is organized into five sections: Introduction to Public Narrative, Story of Self, Story of Us, Story of Now, and Linked Narrative. Within each section you'll find three kinds of resources: (1) Concept Overviews, (2) Instructor Notes, and (3) Debriefing Guides. These are described below:

1 Concept Overviews

Foundational reading to ensure that you understand concepts at a level that enables you to explain them to others. You can also adapt content from these sections to supplement and enhance your teaching notes.

2 Instructor Notes

Model teaching plan with key learning goals, teaching points, and a sample script directed at learners. With this scaffolding, please adapt the materials to fit your particular learners and your teaching style.

3 Debriefing Guides

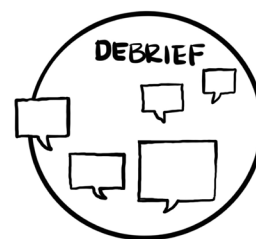
There are two kinds of debriefing guides, one for debriefing model videos during upfront teaching, and one for debriefing learners' stories shared in the large group after small group practice and coaching.

- Video Debriefing Guides each have a conceptual section (for your own learning) and a pedagogical section (tools for you to use while teaching). The conceptual section includes learning objectives, a detailed review of the story in the model video, and connections from the video to the teaching points. (Familiarize yourself with this thoroughly before you start teaching.) The pedagogical section outlines the structure and flow of the debrief. It includes suggested questions and comments for you along with possible answers from learners and ideas for how to respond to them.
- Story Debriefing Guides include a short review of how to approach your debriefing in the large group, as well as a list of suggested questions based on what you hope to teach and coach from the model stories.

Again, this is only scaffolding: a starting point. Effective debriefing requires asking good questions, listening well, and responding to what you hear in the moment.

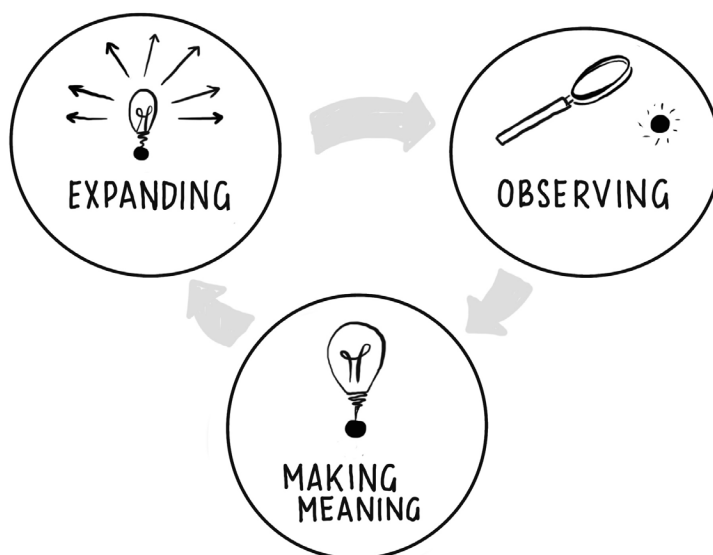
Debriefing

Debriefing is an essential pedagogical method for teaching and learning Public Narrative. A debrief is a facilitated conversation with the group that enables learners to articulate their shared learning by connecting their learning experience (videos, stories, practice, etc.) to specific elements of craft. An effective debrief is not about eliciting one “right answer” from the group (like going through a checklist). It is about engaging learners in a genuine, critical reflection on their experience through the lens of the craft, responding authentically to what they offer, and drawing connections to enable group learning. Instructors facilitate debriefs of model videos as well as model stories shared in the front of the room. Additionally, you’ll be facilitating debriefs to gather key takeaways, pluses, and deltas (constructive suggestions for the future) from the group.



When you begin your debriefing, decide on the key learnings you want the group to walk away with for that particular section. At the same time, be ready to adapt to emergent challenges and opportunities. With that in mind:

- Ask strategic guiding questions to elicit responses from the group. Strategic questions are both intentionally focused on elements of the craft and open-ended enough to invite learners’ genuine reflections on their experience. They are not “hide the ball” or “display” questions (questions for which the instructor has an answer in mind that the learners are trying to guess), but genuine questions like: *What connected with you? What more did you want to know?*
- Really listen to the answers you hear and respond to them accordingly. Build on what has been said and asked. Every debrief will be different because it grows out of the particularities of the group, their experiences, their questions, and their insights. Reiterate and uplift good points when they’re made.
- Engage the learners in focused conversation with each other, not only with you as instructor. Think of the distinction between playing soccer vs. ping-pong: In soccer, players pass the ball amongst themselves, while ping-pong is more of a one-on-one back-and-forth.
- Address off-base, incorrect, or confusing comments in the moment. You may find a way to rephrase the question, redirecting it to the group, reframing it, or making an explicit correction. Be sure to deal with off-base responses respectfully so as to not embarrass the learners who shared them, but do not let an incorrect comment pass by without addressing it—this can confuse the whole group.

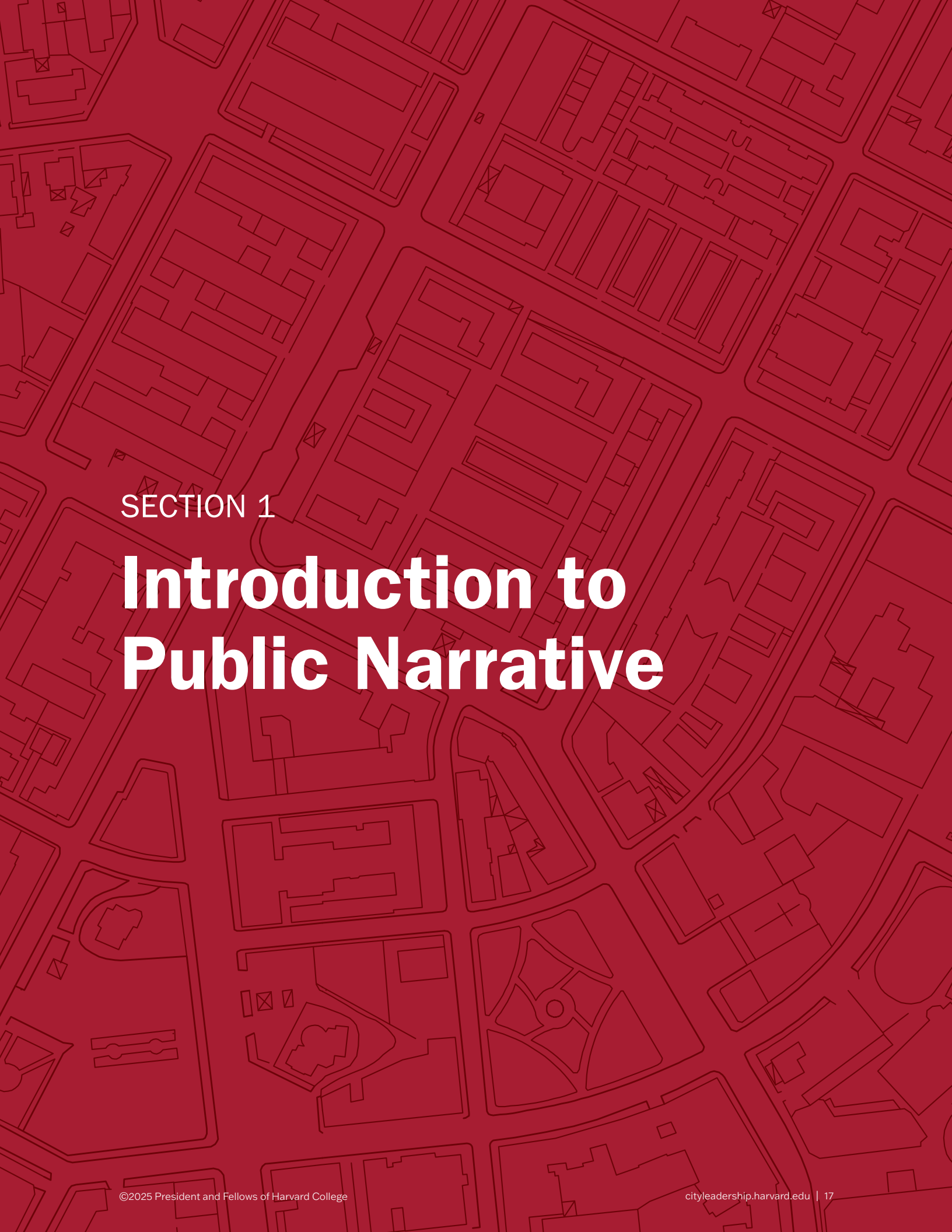


In this guide, there are specific debrief questions for each of the five sections. As you prepare for each debrief, keep your key teaching points in mind and use the questions offered in each section to guide you. The art is in balancing enough structure to enable learning of the elements of the craft, with enough flexibility to work with the responses of the group. Like the rest of Public Narrative pedagogy, facilitating debriefs is a skill that you will develop with practice. Reflect on your debriefs after each training and note down what questions were most effective, what really worked, and how you could improve for next time.

Debriefs enable learners to reflect upon what they have observed and experienced, to make meaning, and to expand upon their learnings for the future. The following three-step process is one way to think about the flow and purpose of debriefing. It is structured as three steps: (1) What? (2) So what? (3) Now what? You can weave Steps 1 and 2 together simultaneously but keep Step 3 for the end of the debrief.

Three-Step Process for Debriefing

Phase	Goal	Example Questions
WHAT?	Make observations to identify what happened. Elicit observations about what happened, asking questions that are grounded in learners' experience.	<i>What did you see/hear?</i> <i>What details stood out to you?</i> <i>What images could you picture?</i> <i>Where? When?</i> <i>How did they begin?</i>
SO WHAT?	Assign meaning to those observations (<u>why</u> they are important, <u>how</u> they connect to the craft). After eliciting observations about <i>what</i> just happened, ask about their <i>meaning</i>, drawing connections to elements of Public Narrative. Focus on why certain things worked, <i>why</i> they're important, <i>how</i> they connect to the craft, etc.	<i>What did we learn from X moment?</i> <i>Why did she include those details?</i> <i>What was the effect of the imagery?</i> <i>How did it make you feel?</i> <i>Why did they begin that way?</i> <i>What purpose did that serve?</i>
NOW WHAT?	Consider how to implement the knowledge gained. After identifying what was observed, what it means, and why it's important, the third phase is to ask the group how they will use this knowledge moving forward.	<i>How can you apply this to your Story of X?</i> <i>What might this mean for your narrative?</i> <i>What will you take away for your own coaching practice?</i>

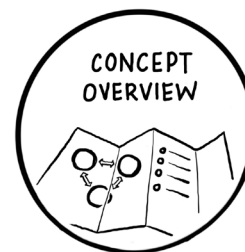


SECTION 1

Introduction to Public Narrative

Introduction to Public Narrative: Concept Overview and Instructor Notes

Note: This Introduction to Public Narrative is part of the “explain” section of the pedagogy. It is best taught interactively: Engage learners in dialogue and begin to note who asks what kind of questions to elicit key points. They can be your discussion “allies.” The questions are not meant to be rhetorical. Engage with your learners’ responses as you introduce them to the craft of Public Narrative.



Introducing Public Narrative

Welcome

Ask learners:

- Why did they decide to come?
- What are they interested in learning?
- Where are they from?

Introducing Public Narrative as a Leadership Practice

Public Narrative is a leadership practice that brings the craft of storytelling to the work of leadership. It comes out of the five practices of an approach to organizing—of bringing people together to take collective action: storytelling, relationship building, structuring, strategizing, and acting. The focus here is on the first practice: story.

Public Narrative is rooted in a leadership approach based on three questions posed by the first-century Jerusalem sage, Rabbi Hillel. When people asked him what to do with their lives, he responded not with answers, but with the following three questions:

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

This is not a “selfish” question but a “self-regarding” question. If a person presumes to lead with integrity, they need to bring a clear understanding of their own values, resources, and aspirations—enough self-awareness to actually see others.

If I am for myself alone, what am I?

To be a “who” and not a “what” is to recognize that people live in the world in relationship with others. Their capacity to realize their objectives is inextricably wrapped up with the capacity of others to realize their own.

If not now, when?

This question recognizes the fact that rarely can people learn to do well what they need to do without beginning to do it. Understanding emerges from action, rather than preceding it.

Leadership is about the interaction of the self, the other, and the action. The fact that these are framed as questions, not answers, is important. When is leadership needed? When everything is working just fine, with no problems, no surprises, no threats, no contradictions?

Or is it when things are confusing, problematic, unexpected? Is the adaptive, creative, and agentic work of leadership needed if the system is working fine?

It turns out that the real domain of leadership is that of the unexpected, the contradictory, and the novel. This is what makes it so challenging, so scary.

Head, Hands, Heart

One way to think of challenges is the framing of head, hands, heart:

- Does a person have the skills they need to deal with these new conditions? This is a challenge to the hands.
- Can they use their resources in new ways to deal with these new conditions? This is a challenge to the head, a strategic challenge.
- Where can they find the courage, hopefulness, and resilience required to deal with these new conditions and inspire others to do the same? This is a challenge to the heart.

So leadership is a head, hands, and heart proposition. But too often it is taught as being solely about the head and the hands, when the challenge is really one of the heart.

Defining Leadership

In the context of Public Narrative, the definition for leadership is: “Accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty.”⁸ Leadership requires a decision—a choice—to accept responsibility for enabling *others*. It is not about a “diva” or “hero” kind of leadership, with one person at the top, but rather a form of social interaction and relationship. It is about achieving shared purpose collectively. And its domain is the uncertain.

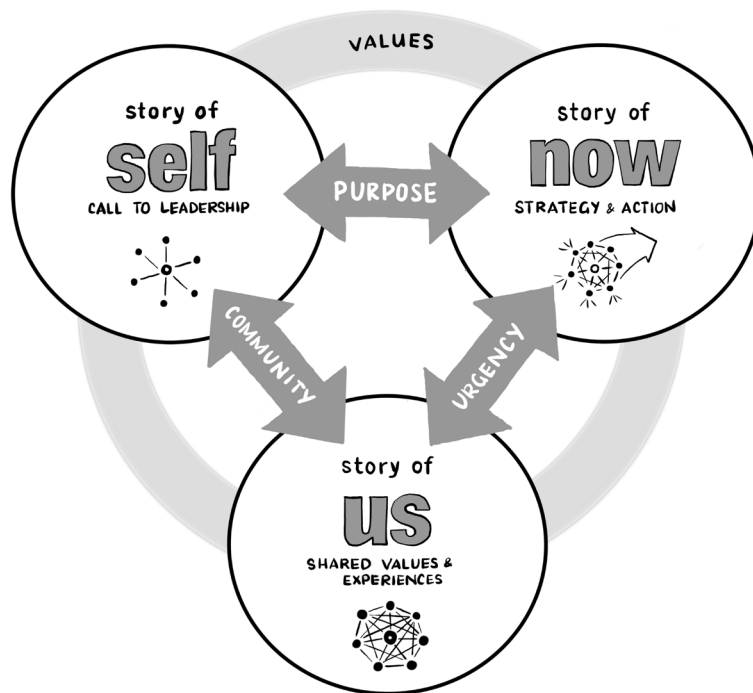
This approach to leadership is based not on a position, but on a practice: not something a person *is* or *has*, but something they *do*. There are plenty of examples of people filling positions of formal leadership who turn out to be terrible leaders. But don’t you meet people every day in workplaces, neighborhoods, and at kitchen tables who are exercising leadership in this way without the title or formal position?

Leadership also turns out to be more about learning than about knowing. No one can know the future, so no one has all the answers, but asking specific kinds of questions can lead to finding answers. This requires sustained learning.

The key question is: How can a learner use Public Narrative in a way that enables them to exercise this kind of leadership effectively? When disruption of the expected confronts them with uncertainty, what do they do? If that disruption is construed as a threat, people tend to flee, or react with fear. But when they construe the disruption as a challenge, they come closer and engage with it, responding with curiosity, hope, and agency. Agency is the emotional capacity to make mindful choices in response to disruptions: A person’s heart can equip their head to guide their hands, enabling the person to respond rather than react.

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In other words, Public Narrative is how people learn to access the emotional resources embedded in their values to turn disruptive events from threats (something they would normally retreat from) into challenges (something they can engage with). The power of narrative can be harnessed to do the work of leadership by communicating why one has been called to lead (a Story of Self), the values that they share (a Story of Us), and the challenge to those values that requires action (a Story of Now).



Sharing the Pedagogy

Consider explaining some of the pedagogical background to participants so they can better understand the concepts and why they are important.

Here is an example of how you could start:

Learning to Ride a Bike

Consider posing the following questions:

A word about our pedagogy—about how we’ll be learning today. How many of you have learned to ride a bike?
[Show of hands]

How did you learn? Did you learn by studying bicycleology? You heard a great lecture? You watched a “how to” video?

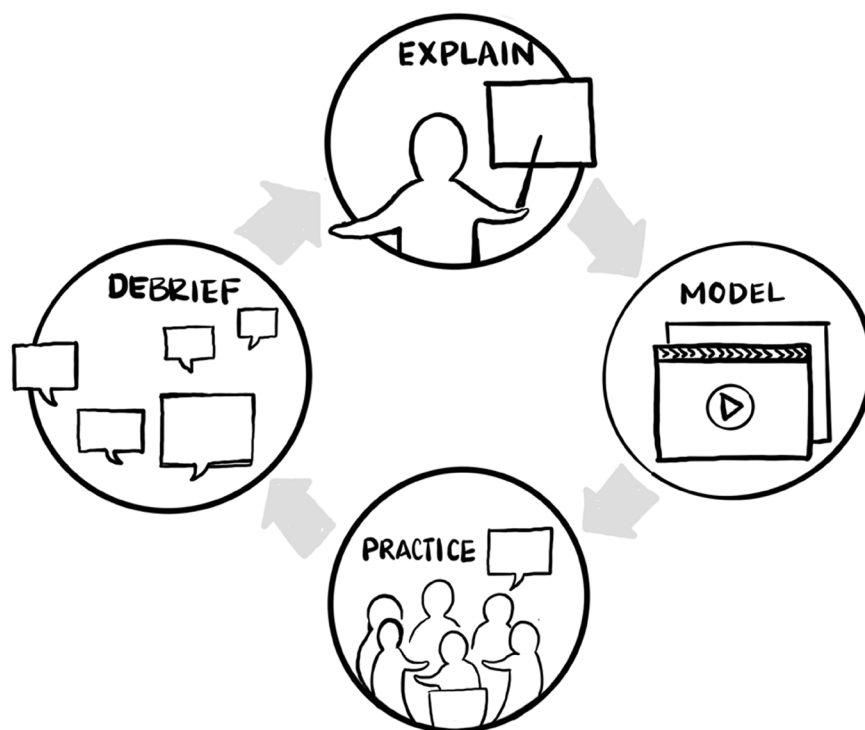
No. So what did you have to do to learn?

You had to get on. And what’s the first thing that happened? You fell. So that was the moment of truth when you either went home and went to bed, OR you found the courage to get back on that bike knowing you would continue to fall. Because you knew it was the only way you could eventually learn to keep your balance, by falling and getting back on. Learning takes courage—it takes courage to get on the “bike” and try, knowing that you’ll fall for a while. That’s really how we learn any practice, including the practice of Public Narrative.

Four Elements of Pedagogy: Explain, Model, Practice, Debrief

Proceed to explain that the pedagogy has four elements: explain, model, practice, and debrief. First explain the concepts to the group. Then the group observes a model of what it really looks like and debriefs that. Then they practice: they try it on for themselves and get feedback or coaching. Then they debrief their experience as a group. They do that over the course of a few sessions as they work on Story of Self, Story of Us, Story of Now, and linking all three together. Their learnings grow the more they get on the bike! So don't hold back.

Public Narrative pedagogy has four elements: explain, model, practice, and debrief.



Growth Mindset

Acknowledge that this kind of learning requires participants to take risks and support each other as they try, fall, and learn together, and explain that it's helpful to cultivate what Carol Dweck calls a "growth mindset" as opposed to a "fixed mindset." When someone brings a fixed mindset to learning, they view anything they do as a value judgment on themselves: "If I cannot do this well, my identity is at stake." When someone brings a growth mindset, however, rather than experiencing critical feedback as a judgment on who they are, they interpret it as data that can help them learn.

A growth mindset embraces feedback as valuable data for continuing to learn and develop, while a fixed mindset can experience feedback as judgmental criticism.

Coaching Team Introductions

Share that this kind of pedagogy benefits from scaffolding and support. The key to the scaffolding is the coaching team. Have the coaching team introduce themselves, sharing: first and last name, where they grew up, what their parents do/did, what they do. These questions help indicate to the room that everyone comes from somewhere.

Set Community Agreements

In addition to the support of an excellent coaching team, let participants know that having a clear set of agreements or ground rules can facilitate their learning together.

The kind of brave space that can enable people to take the risks of learning and go beyond their comfort zones is built on a foundation of respect.

Respect Exercise

First, ask people to think of a specific moment in which they felt disrespected. Ask: *Do you have that moment in mind? How did it feel? What words would you use to describe it (in the chat online, called out in person)?*

Repeat this exercise three more times: Ask about moments when they felt respected, when they respected another, and when they disrespected another. The words that people use to describe these experiences are quite similar, regardless of what the source of disrespect may be. Being respected and respecting others feels good. Being disrespected and disrespecting others feels bad. And it seems to boil down to just three things: being seen and knowing you're being seen, being heard and knowing that you're being heard, being valued and knowing that you're being valued. When folks are asked if they would like to adopt the respect commitment for their work together, the response is invariably positive.

Community Agreements

Move on to ask what community agreements or ground rules or norms they can adopt to enable them to work together in a respectful way. It can be helpful to suggest a few to start (e.g., being courageous, managing time, stepping up/stepping back, maintaining confidentiality, etc.). Time is especially important because so much of the workshop is timed. It can be useful to reflect on the fact that time can be an enemy or a friend. People can experience time as a scarce resource of which they can never get enough—it's a constraint. They can also experience time as a resource that allows them to construct spaces within which they can do the work, make sure everyone gets a chance, etc. The opposite of structure is not space; it's chaos. In fact, structure can be used to create space.

Accountability Measure

What happens if someone violates one of these agreements? If someone comes ten minutes late and everyone ignores it, then there is a new norm. Norms exist in the practice of them, not in words on the wall. Participants need to have a way to take responsibility for holding themselves accountable to their own norms. Not public shaming. But something relatively light, a bit uncomfortable, and perhaps even funny (e.g., a ten-second dance, singing a song, saying a nursery rhyme, telling a quick embarrassing story, performing vegetable charades, etc.).

Where this Framework Comes From

Reveal that Public Narrative grew out of organizing rooted in community, social movement, electoral and labor organizing, leadership development, building community with that leadership, and building power from the resources of that community. It involves five practices: relationship building, storytelling, strategizing, taking action, and structure.

Background on Marshall Ganz

You may want to share with participants some information about the originator of Public Narrative.

Marshall was a student at Harvard, dropped out to join the civil rights movement, and volunteered with the Mississippi Summer Project, where he found his calling.

He worked with Cesar Chavez organizing farm workers for the next sixteen years, mostly in California, where he learned the craft, followed by ten years of electoral, union, and issue organizing.

He went back to Harvard and completed his undergraduate degree, a master's at the Kennedy School, and a Ph.D. in sociology. Ganz was asked to design courses on organizing in which he was able to integrate his life experience with the social science he was learning in a pedagogical conversation with a rising generation, allowing him to develop the pedagogy.

He was a practitioner for twenty-eight years, then a scholar, then a teacher. Ganz returned to the world of practice in 2003 with Howard Dean's campaign and worked with the Sierra Club and then the Obama campaign in 2007. This, in turn, created the opportunity to share this approach to teaching and learning leadership and organizing with the Dreamers, as well as internationally, for several efforts including immigration reform, climate change, work with mayors and city leadership, and countless others.

Ganz's frameworks are constantly evolving, as they are a bridge between theory and practice, with learning going both ways. They have been translated into multiple languages and are being taught, learned, and practiced all around the world.



Why Public Narrative? (Instructor's Story of Self)

When it is time for you to share your Story of Self:

- Share who you are, what calls you to leadership, what moments and choices in your own life shaped you and your values.
- Express what brings you to Public Narrative, why it is important to you and what inspires you to teach it.
- Be sure to tell your story through story moments with vivid imagery, and real challenges, choices, and outcomes that help the group understand who you are and what you care about.
- Remember, this is an opportunity not only to build a relationship with learners, but to model the craft of a Story of Self.

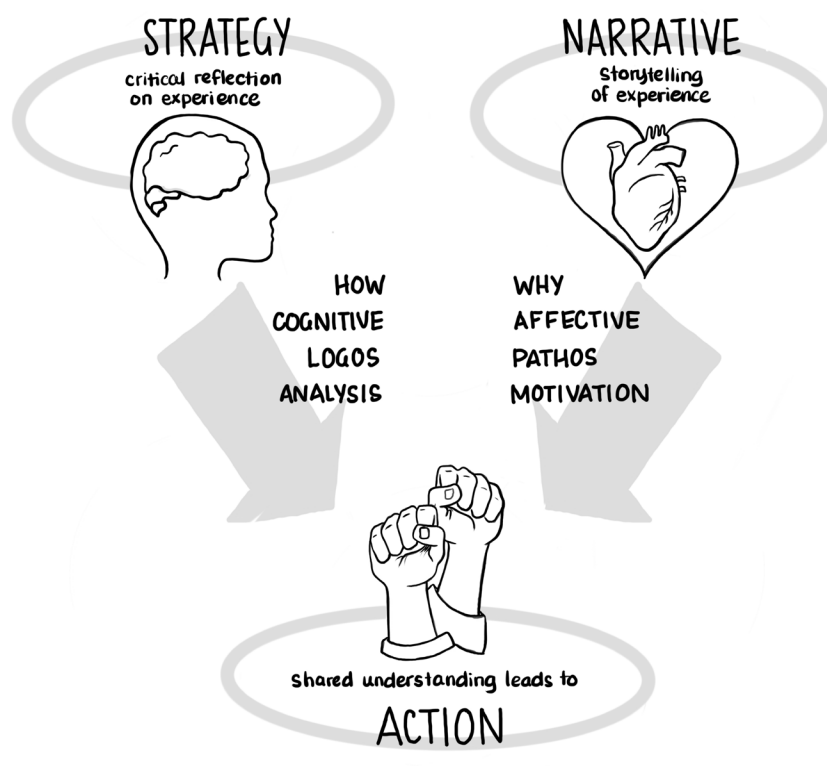
How Public Narrative Works

Two Ways of Knowing

Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner says there are two ways of mapping the world: cognitively, with the head, and emotionally, with the heart.⁹

- Cognitive mapping enables people to strategize—it answers the “how” (how do I get from here to there?). But that “how” doesn’t get them to the “why.”
- Emotional mapping (also known as affective mapping) enables people to answer the “why” behind what inspires, frightens, attracts, disgusts them, etc. It can reveal the value they place on people, experiences, and objects. That’s what helps them understand why they care, why anyone cares.

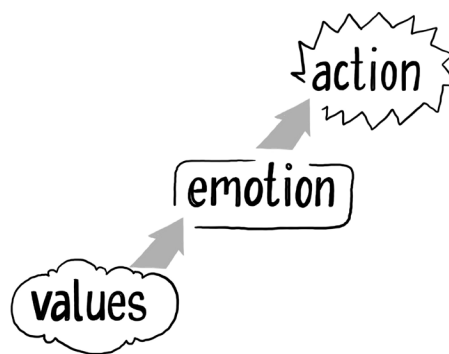
If you ask participants where they think most leaders spend their time, typically most responses are head and strategy. In order to take action, people require both modes of thinking. Public Narrative is about learning how to speak the language of emotion, how to engage with it so that the emotional can interface with the strategy, and the head, hands, and heart can work together.



Motivation: Values Enable Action Through Emotion

Values are not just words: They are feelings, emotional commitments—what people really care about. Values influence the choices folks make and are shaped by them. Knowledge without motivation does not turn into action. People can know what to do, but unless they feel motivated to do it, they won't act.

This is about speaking the language of emotion, which may sound a bit strange, but music speaks the language of emotion. Worship, theater, and poetry all speak the language of emotion. Narrative speaks the language of emotion, which enables people to respond—instead of react—to disruption.



Emotions

From a leadership perspective, the critical emotional work is to get to a place of agency. Within Public Narrative, agency is defined as the emotional capacity to make mindful choices. Public Narrative is not about manipulating others to do what you want; it's about enabling others to do what they want.

Being asked to “leave emotions out of it” places value on a kind of stoic commitment to rational objectivity. But that's a shame, because there is tremendous power in emotion. Emotions tell people what they value—in themselves, their community, the world. They don't just tell people how they should act; emotions actually move them to act.

Motivation has the Latin root “mot-”, which means “motor”: to move. It shares its root with “Emotion”—“that which moves us.”

- Emotions and choice (Martha Nussbaum Study)¹⁰
 - The moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum reported on a study of people with damaged amygdalas. The amygdala is a part of the brain that processes emotions. The study found that people with damaged amygdalas can generate many options when presented with a problem, but they are unable to choose among those options.
 - Making decisions rests on value judgments, and value judgments require emotional information. People use emotional cues to make choices, and their emotions reflect what they value, what they care about.

Agency-Inhibiting vs. Agency-Enabling Emotions

Not all emotions are created equal, though. Some emotions inhibit mindful action, while others enable it.

- Emotions that inhibit agency: inertia, apathy, fear, isolation, self-doubt. These agency-inhibiting emotions prevent people from jumping up and taking action.
- Emotions that enable agency: urgency; anger (outrage); hope; solidarity; the feeling that you, the learner, can make a difference (YCMAD): not just anyone, but you. This is also known as self-efficacy.

These agency-enabling emotions are very powerful because humans have evolved to run many things on autopilot. People are generally governed by inertia,



habit, or apathy, going along as they are, which is helpful many times in life, because it's efficient. Sometimes people can ignore new information or let it pass them by. Over time, human brains have developed a surveillance system that detects anomalies and surprises, which is communicated as the experience of anxiety.

Disruptions make people take notice: The unexpected triggers this anxiety in them, which can be a good thing, shaking them out of their habitual ways of doing and thinking. This teaches them they need to act in a different way, which is important for taking action and creating change. People respond when they feel a sense of urgency and anger.

Urgency and Anger vs. Inertia and Apathy

Urgency

People prioritize what's urgent—if they have to figure out what to do with their life but they have a project deadline tomorrow, which will they do? Figure out their life, or the project? Probably the project. Urgency moves things to the top of the list. Many things are important, but the urgent will always trump the important, so the leadership challenge they face is how to make what's important feel urgent so that people will pay attention and prioritize taking action. This has been a struggle of the climate change movement: how to connect the important with the urgent.

There are two kinds of urgency:

- **Urgency of need:** where the problem is so bad, people must act now to stop it. For example, patients being denied lifesaving healthcare because they can't afford to pay.
- **Urgency of opportunity:** where there is some kind of deadline that motivates people to act now. For example, when there are only three days left to act before the vote, or before the bill is signed.

Anger

Anger is not rage but outrage: feeling the dissonance in the contradiction between the world as it is and the world as it should be. This dissonance and sense of injustice can be an important source of courage, but not by itself.

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

The other dimension of leadership work is enabling a response to a disruption. The default reaction to disruption, if experienced as a threat, is fear (anxiety's first cousin!). Those reflexes were developed way back in reaction to threats like saber-tooth tigers. It was when people began to live in larger groups or communities that reacting with fear to every surprise became destructive. Humanity developed the cultural resources to summon hope in place of fear, solidarity in response to the isolation that goes with fear, and self-efficacy in response to the self-doubt that often goes with fear.

Hope, Solidarity, and YCMAD Counter Fear, Isolation, and Self-Doubt

Hope can counter that fear. Not a fake kind of optimism that ignores reality but hope that's based on reality. As has often been attributed to the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Maimonides, hope is the belief in the plausibility of the possible, as opposed to the necessity of the probable. To be a realist is to recognize that the world is not a domain in which the probable always happens. Goliath is more likely to win, but sometimes David does. Hope is the place that lies between fantasy and certainty, the place of imagined possibility: of "could be." It's precious in that way. Hope is about finding those sources of possibility, in one's self and others. Faith may offer a source of hope, cultural traditions may offer a source of hope, relationships with others may offer a source of hope. The belief in the possibility is important to nourish and cultivate.

Isolation often goes with fear, and that's where love comes in. Solidarity, family, and community is where people get courage; When they feel like they're not alone and they're a part of something, they can recognize their own value and find courage in that, which helps them overcome feelings of isolation.

Similarly, feelings of self-doubt can also inhibit people's agency, when someone feels like *oh, I can't do anything, I'm not qualified, not me....* That's when they need "YCMAD" or "you can make a difference." And not just somebody could make a difference, but *you* can make a difference.

The challenge is how to mobilize the feelings of urgency, anger, hope, solidarity, and YCMAD (you can make a difference) to overcome the emotions that inhibit agency, enabling people to respond (with hope) as opposed to reacting (with fear).

What Makes a Story?

Stories are one way people have learned to access the emotional resources they need to turn threats from which they flee into challenges with which they can engage, and enable others to do the same.

Plot, Character, Moral

What Does It Take to Make a Plot?

Model a boring, uneventful plot, then engage the group and ask them to help you make it a more interesting plot before debriefing the difference between the two models.

For example: "I woke up this morning, drank my coffee, came here."

Is that a good story? Would you pay to find out what happened next?

No. Help me make it a story.

Work with the group to co-construct a more interesting story, introducing one unexpected disruption, then asking them what happened next.

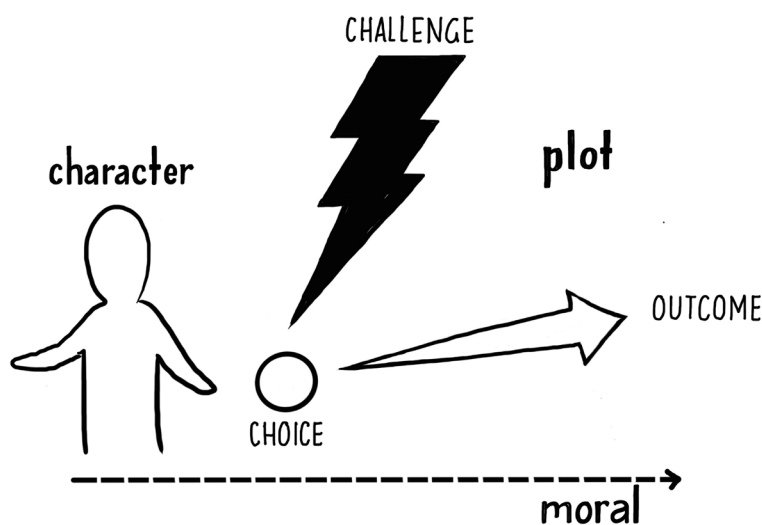
For example: "I woke up this morning, drank my coffee...

...and I found an ancient coin at the bottom of my mug....

...and I went out to my car and found the wheels were all missing...

...and I heard a loud screeching and flapping outside my window..."

Take a few minutes to elicit challenges from the group and follow the thread, asking questions like: *Then what happened? What did I do? How did I deal with that?*



Why Do People Care?

When did people start paying attention? What's at stake for them? Why do they care?

Because participants can identify empathetically with the protagonist, they can experience emotionally how the protagonist dealt with it. They experience how the protagonist faced a disruption. They can feel the fear. They can feel the hope. They can feel the values the protagonist draws upon for their courage, hope, sense of possibility. People are interested in stories not so much for the protagonist's head or hands lessons (their specific strategies or tactics in that exact situation), but rather for their heart lessons (their emotional resources and the choices they make); they ask themselves: "How did she find the courage to deal with that? Why didn't she give up? Where did he get the hope?"

To be a story and not just a description, there needs to be a challenge, a choice, and an outcome from which the protagonist learns a moral of some value to them. Stories teach people values and how to find the moral resources to act in the face of uncertainty.

Character

When people identify with a protagonist, they don't take away a propositional moral like "haste makes waste"; they take away a moral to the heart. They are able to experience the fear, danger, etc., the protagonist faces along with the emotional resources (the hope, courage, values) the protagonist draws on. All people have those experiences in their lives: They've faced challenges—moments of hurt, pain. And they've had moments of hope.

Where Did You Hear Your First Stories?

Where did you hear your first stories? From whom? From your parents, or aunts, uncles, grandparents, right? All cultures, faiths, and families teach through stories. Why? What's going on there? Why tell children stories instead of teaching them through a set of rules, or a list: "Do this! Don't do that!"?

It's experiential. Because of the process of identifying with the protagonist, storytelling embeds learning in real experience rather than just stating a rule. It doesn't even need to be a human being; it could be an animal or a tree (like in parables). But it's relational, and people can emotionally identify with the stories. They learn how to make good choices by empathically experiencing them, not simply hearing about them.

All families have stories about who got things right and wrong (e.g., "You know Uncle X... he was doing great, made all the right choices, did everything right... but then he took that wrong turn and the rest was downhill from there... But Aunt Z, on the other hand... she got it right...").

Faith traditions, culture traditions, and family practices from all over the world teach values this way. A human culture that doesn't involve storytelling has not been discovered. Stories teach people how to access the emotional resources to exercise choices in ways that are good choices for them.

Story Moments

The core unit of narrative is the "story moment." A protagonist is confronted with a disruption they have to deal with: Do they experience it as a threat to which they react in fear? Or do they experience it as a challenge to which they respond with hope? Their choice leads to an outcome: an experiential "moral"—a teaching of the heart, not only the head. A story moment describes a setting (a beautiful sunset, a happy family dinner, a star-filled sky), but it is a setting in which change occurs (a sudden storm, an intruder, a coyote). In a play, movie, or, in fact, life, each story moment (a beat) is nested within a larger story moment (a scene), within a larger story moment (an act), within a larger story moment (a play).

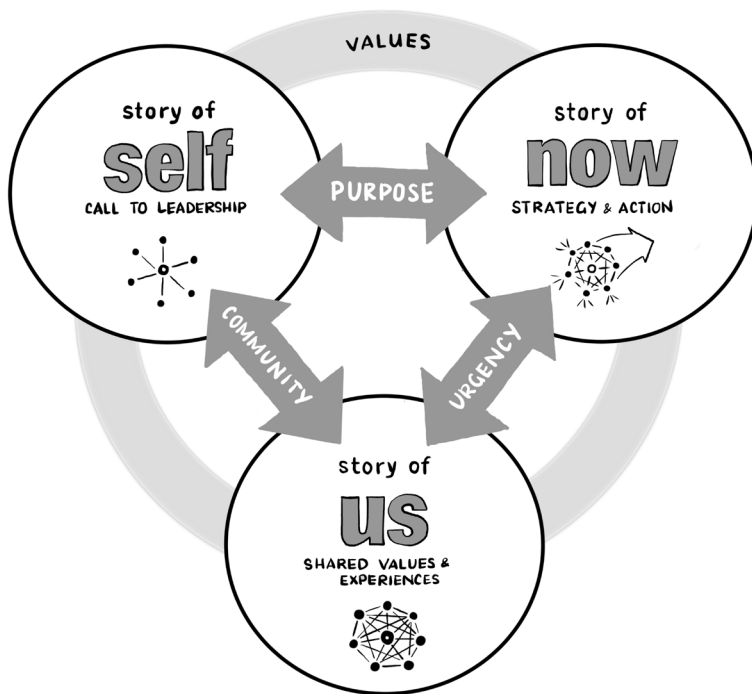
The "story moment" is a core unit of narrative and occurs when a protagonist is confronted with a disruption they have to deal with.

Public Narrative: Story of Self, Story of Us, Story of Now

Public Narrative is about harnessing the power of story to do the work of leadership by learning how to use stories to experientially communicate to others:

- Story of Self: why someone has been called to leadership, what has moved them, and what is their moral authority to call on others to act.
- Story of Us: an experience of shared values—values that are at risk—so they become a source of hope for a community.
- Story of Now: the story of an urgent challenge someone is facing, a source of hope, and a call to action.

Public Narrative is a framework, not a formula; a roadmap, not a blueprint. Participants can move between Stories of Self, Us, and Now, as demonstrated in the model video they will watch. As this is a leadership craft, a Public Narrative often ends with a Story of Now, calling people into collective action.



Public Narrative is about harnessing the power of story to do the work of leadership by learning how to use stories to experientially communicate to others a Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now.

Story of Self

A Story of Self communicates to others why a person has been called to lead so others can understand them. What challenges did they face? What choices did they make in the face of those challenges? Where did they get their hope, and why are they called to what they do today? There is a key focus on choice points: moments where a person acted with agency that allowed them to share sources of the values that moved them to action. This both establishes their moral authority as a leader and enables others to understand and connect with them in a real way. Articulating these experiences in a story shared with others can also be powerful for the speaker, beginning to change what was an influence upon them into a resource for them.

Story of Us

A Story of Us evokes the experience of values shared by those whom a person is trying to move to action. The emotional experience of these shared values facilitates a kind of shared identity in the group, which brings about shared experiences of pain or injustice (challenges), along with shared efficacy through solidarity (hope). A Story of Us enables people to identify with each other, not because they share certain traits or categories (categorical Us), but because of shared experiences where they actually put their values into practice (an experiential Us), which makes shared values accessible to them.

Story of Now

A Story of Now is the story of an urgent challenge a person is urgently called to face: It turns the present moment into a story moment. Like the Story of Self and Story of Us, the hopefulness in a Story of Now is rooted in values, which are evident through a strategic goal, a pathway to action grounded in the efficacy of the Us, and in the solidarity of an articulated shared commitment. What choice must they collectively make to act now? What are they being called to do?

Setup for Model

To the extent that leadership is about enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty,¹¹ narrative is about how to enable others to access the moral or emotional resources to act with agency or purpose under conditions of challenging uncertainty.

Let participants know they're going to watch a model of a Public Narrative and debrief it. It is a video of James Croft, who took a Public Narrative class at the Harvard Kennedy School several years ago. This five-minute Linked Public Narrative was the final narrative he developed for the course, and the video is of him sharing it at an LGBTQ rally on the Harvard University campus.

As your participants are listening, tell them to explore the following questions:

1. *How does James begin, with a Story of Self, Us, or Now?*
2. *What are the specific moments he takes us to? Why all the details?*
3. *What are the values you hear expressed in the narrative?*

[Show model video of a Linked Public Narrative] (5 mins)

[Debrief] (10 mins)

Conclusion

Everyone knows how to tell stories because people are hardwired for it. What they're doing here is taking what they know implicitly and making it explicit, so that they can bring skill, craft, and intentionality to it. That's how Public Narrative works: It's not an invention, it's a discovery. It's something that's out there and by naming it, people can exercise some agency with respect to it. And it is a craft because it's a skillset that gets better and sharper with practice. When people are speaking from the heart, authentically, and being real—well, that's hard to fake.

At the end of one of these workshops, someone once said, "Oh, so this is how we can brand ourselves, how we can market ourselves." And Jayanti Ravi, a student from India, said: "No, this isn't about how to apply a gloss from the outside, it's about how to bring out the glow from the inside." That's what this craft is about.

Introduction to Public Narrative: Instructor Outline

Note: The Introduction to Public Narrative is the “explain” part of the pedagogy. Remember that this craft is relational, so as an instructor, your teaching style should engage learners in a dialogue. Questions are a key part of this pedagogy: The questions in these lecture notes are not meant to be rhetorical. Ask your learners these questions and engage with their responses as you introduce them to the craft of Public Narrative.

Instructor Goals:

1. To enter into a relationship with participants by sharing your own Story of Self (why you are called to do this, what experiences have moved you, what values do these experiences express?).
2. To lead participants in establishing a brave learning community by setting norms, showing respect, avoiding judgment, etc.
3. To share the sources of where this approach to leadership, learning, and narrative came from.
4. To introduce the Public Narrative pedagogy: explain, model, practice, debrief.
5. To educate participants in the following concepts:
 - a. Public Narrative is a leadership practice, consisting of a Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now, culminating in a collective call to action.
 - b. The core unit of narrative is the story moment.
 - c. Stories can communicate values.
 - d. Emotion plays an important role in stories and in motivating people to action.
 - e. There are differences between agency-inhibiting vs. agency-enabling emotions.
 - f. A story is made up of character, moral, plot.
6. To debrief model video of a Public Narrative in practice.

Outline for Upfront Lecture: Introduction to Public Narrative

Use the following outline to guide you as you prepare lecture notes for Introduction to Public Narrative. The outline contains the key points to cover in your upfront lesson, along with proposed timing for each section. You can expand on this outline using other resources in this guide and adapt it for your teaching style.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Introduction to Public Narrative Total Time: 65-70 mins
15-20 mins	Introduction to Public Narrative
	Welcome • Ask learners why they decided to come • What are they interested in learning? • Where are they from? Introduce Public Narrative Framework as a Leadership Practice • Rabbi Hillel's Three Questions • Head, Hands, Heart • Defining Leadership • Sharing the Pedagogy – Explain, Model, Practice, Debrief – Growth Mindset • Coaching Team Introductions – Full name, Where from, What parents do/did, What you do • Set Community Agreements – Respect Exercise – Community Agreements and Accountability • Where this Framework Comes From – Background on Marshall Ganz
10 mins	Why Public Narrative
	• Instructor Shares Story of Self (3-5 Mins)
20 mins	How Public Narrative Works
	• Two Ways of Knowing • Motivation: Values Inspire Action Through Emotion • Emotions – Agency-Inhibiting and Agency-Enabling Emotions – Urgency and Anger vs. Inertia and Apathy – Hope, Solidarity, and YCMAD Counter Fear, Isolation, and Self-Doubt – Fight, Flight, Freeze • What Makes a Story: Plot, Character, Moral – Why Do We Care? – Where Did You Hear Your First Stories? – Story Moments • Public Narrative: Story of Self, Us, Now
15 mins	Model Video of Public Narrative and Debrief
	• Set Up Model Video • Show Model Video (5 Mins) • Debrief (10 Mins)
5 mins	Conclusion

Public Narrative Is Not Therapy

Public Narrative enables people to articulate moments that shaped their values by motivating them to reflect on their own lives and experiences for the purpose of leadership. Coaching requires asking people to allow themselves the vulnerability to identify challenges they have faced (often painful moments), choices they made, and sources of hope that enabled them to get through those challenges and that shaped their values. Bringing these moments to life requires deep exploration by asking specific, probing questions: Where were you? Who was there? What happened? How did you feel? Recalling and sharing painful memories—particularly with a group of people one doesn't know—can be difficult.

Some people may wonder what identifying such personal moments has to do with leadership, or they may compare this kind of coaching to therapy.

Public Narrative is not therapy. It is a leadership practice. Most instructors are not trained clinicians. Public Narrative is about learning to draw on the sources of a person's values and enabling others to draw on theirs. It is not about finding sources of dysfunction; it is about finding sources of function. Coaching each other in identifying these moments can be very emotional. It requires challenging one's self and others to explore why we care by digging into what can be hurtful moments. It helps to keep in mind that the goal of Public Narrative coaching is not just to explore but, rather, to help people learn to communicate and articulate their values through a narrative they will craft and share.

But it doesn't stop there. It also requires digging into hopeful moments to learn where a person gets the courage to do something about the hurt, setting the stage for or articulating the choices a person makes. Remember this is Public Narrative: The point is not to share the most deeply traumatic or painful moments in one's life (though some may come up as folks identify and recall stories that are meaningful to them) but to help others understand where someone got the courage and hope to overcome those challenges, and why they've been called to what they do today. This craft is focused on choice and agency, so it's imperative that the storyteller is sharing what they choose to share (both during coaching and when they share their narrative publicly), and they are being guided and supported to balance an exploration of their challenges with sources of hope.

Scars and Wounds

One useful framing is the concept of “scars, not wounds.” In Public Narrative, you are not asking people to share experiences that are still open wounds—those that feel raw, unprocessed, and actively painful. What you're looking for is proof of overcoming: that someone has gone through something difficult and challenging, and come out the other side, and that they have the scar to prove it. While a coach is a guide, the person telling the story should always be in the driver's seat. Learning requires people to move out of their comfort zones into a “risk” or “stretch” zone, but only they know when they've moved past a healthy zone into a danger zone that is counterproductive to learning.

Let learners know that you encourage their full participation but also understand there may be times they need to step back, and the role of the coaching team is to support them no matter what.

Community Agreements and Group Accountability

Creating a brave space is required for learning, teaching, and practicing Public Narrative. It is called a “brave” space rather than a “safe” space, because safe often implies comfort, and learning and growth often require discomfort. It’s not easy for a person to allow themselves to be vulnerable enough to share personal experiences, try something new, and risk failure in front of people they may not know. In a brave space, people are enabled to find the courage to take risks, challenge themselves and each other, and learn together. Creating a brave space requires adopting ground rules, called community agreements.

- As instructor, explain why these community agreements matter and offer a few examples, but focus on eliciting proposals from the group. It’s important that the group generates the bulk of the agreements so that they’re tailored to the community and participants feel a sense of buy-in (as opposed to an instructor dictating a list of community agreements for everybody else).
- Try to move from abstract concepts and words into observable behaviors. When someone suggests an agreement (e.g., listen to each other), ask questions that push a level deeper, like: What might that look like? *How do you know if someone is listening?* This level of specificity helps ground the community agreements in observable behaviors (e.g., they make eye contact, they react to what you’re saying, they’re not using their phone) rather than remaining abstract.

Over time, we have discovered a set of community agreements that facilitate learning by creating a brave space. The table below outlines these suggested community agreements with observable behaviors and their purpose. Every instructor will establish their own ground rules with their participants, but the following community agreements can help create the “brave” learning space needed to teach Public Narrative.

Community Agreements	Observable Behaviors	Purpose/Rationale
Confidentiality (“Vegas Rules”)	What is heard in the room stays there. Share the learning, not the stories.	We are establishing a community in which we will share personal information, try new things, and risk the vulnerability required. Knowing that what happens in the room won’t be taken out of context elsewhere helps foster this sense of community in the group.
Respect Time	Start on time, end on time, honor time limits (for large group sessions, small group breakouts, lunch, breaks, etc.).	Ask your students to make structured time their friend to be respected, not their enemy to be resisted (complained about): • Focus: Learning Public Narrative craft requires focused practice, replacing adjectives with images, showing not telling, and mastery of detail. • Fairness: Participants are entitled to equal access to practice and coaching. The limited time for learning must be distributed equitably. If the first person goes over time, the last won’t have time to say anything at all!

Community Agreements	Observable Behaviors	Purpose/Rationale
Growth Mindset	Give and receive critical feedback as data for your learning, not judgment of your abilities or you as a person. Question your assumptions. Bring an open mind—"shoshin": a beginner's mind.	We all tell stories. Learning storytelling as a craft requires making implicit knowledge explicit so you can bring intentionality to it. This may require some unlearning (letting go of old habits, shifting your existing way of doing or thinking) to create the space for new learning. Giving and receiving direct coaching and feedback is both affirming and challenging.
Be curious and ask questions.	Listen carefully. Question the instructor, each other, and yourself. The only dumb question is the one that isn't asked.	Learning a new practice involves making the unfamiliar accessible. Only you can know if it's working for you, so when a question forms in your mind, it needs to be asked. Chances are that others have the same questions.
"Oops/Ouch": Assume best intentions but own your impact.	If you hear a comment that offends you in some way, try to assume that people have good intentions. On the flip side, if you are made aware of something you said or did that hurt someone else (even if it was not your intention), own the responsibility for that impact.	Learning with each other is integral to learning Public Narrative. Our learning benefits from diverse comments from a range of people. Sometimes people may be offended by what is shared. We have different life experiences and perspectives. We use this norm to bring grace to this process.
Put away your devices.	Put your phones away (except for timing), don't be checking texts or emails. Don't use your computer (unless you need it for learning).	Learning practice requires both your full attention and respect for your colleagues. If your technological devices are distracting and not helpful for your learning needs, please put them away and be in the moment!
Listen without judgment.	As you hear different ideas, listen to what people are saying with an open mind. When you disagree, try to hear where people are coming from. Seek to understand.	It can be tempting to judge others immediately based on our values and experiences, but as we are aiming to learn together, suspend that judgment to really hear what people are saying.
Be present.	Make eye contact. Listen well. Engage honestly and openly with one another. Be there with and for one another (smile when it's funny, respect others' pain, etc.).	Respect for each other's learning—and our own—requires our full presence, head, and heart. You can offer good coaching only when you are fully present to whomever is being coached.

Community Agreements	Observable Behaviors	Purpose/Rationale
Step Up/ Step Back (or Move Up/ Move Back)	If you have been quiet, try to “step up” to contribute your thoughts. If you notice you have been speaking a lot, try to “step back” to give others a chance to speak.	Some people are more apt to speak and others less so—this norm is meant to ensure that we hear from as many voices in the room as possible. Also, that we try to be self-aware in terms of how much space we are taking, and trying to leave space for one another. *Note: Instructors and coaches should also be intentional about engaging as many voices as possible, ensuring that airtime is distributed fairly. Challenging each other is a part of the craft of Public Narrative—your role as a coach and a teammate involves giving critical feedback to help others develop their stories.
Respectfully challenge each other.	Acknowledge what others are sharing. Coach by asking very specific questions that can enable participants to grow. Share your thoughts honestly in a way that is constructive, not adversarial.	We are here to support and challenge each other, so by offering only affirmation and not constructive feedback, you are actually depriving your peers of a learning opportunity.
Have fun!	Laugh! Smile! Dance! Jump around! Hug each other! High-five! Participate with your head AND your heart!	This work is challenging and deep, so it's important to also embrace joy, fun, and levity so we can all get through it together! Plus, don't we learn better when we are having fun?
Courage!	Take risks, try new things, lean into discomfort, push yourself, be brave!	Leadership is hard work that requires courage. People feel empowered to risk vulnerability when they see others taking that risk, too, so it's beneficial for everyone's learning.

Community Accountability: “Mea Culpa Move”

Once you have agreed on your community agreements, it's important to create an accountability mechanism. It can be called “community accountability” or a fun name like a “mea culpa move” (acknowledging the responsibility for one's error). This accountability measure is a quick, public (and usually lighthearted) way of acknowledging when a community agreement has been broken, offering people a way to hold themselves, and each other, accountable. If an agreement is broken and nothing happens (i.e., it goes without acknowledgement), then the group implicitly has created a new agreement where that behavior is accepted. For example, if one of your community agreements is “Arrive on time,” and someone walks in ten minutes late, sits down, and no one says anything, then a new agreement now exists: “It's okay to arrive late.”

A community accountability measure (“mea culpa move”) should be something that can be done in the moment, acknowledging a broken agreement right when it happens; this allows people to take responsibility for it without taking much time away from the actual program or workshop. The group should decide on an accountability measure together, something everyone is able to do. It helps for the instructor to suggest a few ideas to the group, elicit suggestions from them, then ultimately have them vote on the accountability measure they'd like to adopt.

It is helpful for this “mea culpa move” to be a bit silly and lighthearted (like “sing a song for fifteen seconds,” “act out an animal while making the sound of another,” or “perform vegetable charades”) as it serves to keep accountability while also adding some levity to this work, which can sometimes be emotionally heavy.

Community accountability is not meant to be punitive (i.e., to publicly shame anyone), but rather to invite people to hold themselves and each other accountable by taking responsibility when they break an agreement the group has made. Once they have chosen the accountability measure, it’s crucial they actually ask people to do it when someone breaks an agreement. This sets the standard, and throughout the workshop or training, the participants can then call upon each other to do a “mea culpa move” if they break a community agreement. Alternatively, you can nominate one to three people to take on the role of “Community Agreement Captains,” who hold the responsibility of noticing when community agreements are broken and reminding people (and the group) to hold themselves accountable.

Below are suggestions for community accountability measures that have been collected from many groups over the years. Encourage your group to be creative and pick something that will be fun/funny, but also isn’t something that people want to do (it should be mildly embarrassing/silly because it is meant to deter participants from breaking the community agreements, after all).

Suggestions for “Mea Culpa Moves” (Accountability Measures)

- Full body dance for fifteen seconds, providing your own music
- Give a fifteen-second lecture on a topic chosen by the group
- Sing a song
- Sing a Disney song
- Tell a joke
- Act out animal charades (silently act like an animal and the group has to guess the animal correctly)
 - Variation: Act out one animal while making the sound of another animal.
 - Variation: Vegetable charades—act out a vegetable and the group must guess the vegetable correctly.
- Dance the Macarena (or some other dance)
- Rap a nursery rhyme
- Read a nursery rhyme in a dramatic way

Navigating Potential Resistance to an Accountability Measure

Most people are somewhat familiar with the practice of setting community agreements in some form. Choosing an accountability measure, however, may be less familiar to people, and you may face some pushback or resistance from the group. This resistance is usually limited to one or two strong voices, and it most often comes from a place of fear, uncertainty, or a negative group experience in the past.

If you do run into resistance while setting the accountability measure, it’s important to acknowledge and address those voices respectfully, while also holding your authority as the instructor. You want to hear what they are saying, respond respectfully, and clarify the purpose of the accountability measure, but you don’t want to get stuck in a theoretical or philosophical discussion that takes time away from the real purpose of the workshop. In the table below, there are some examples of common pushback you may encounter, along with some ideas for how to respond.

While it can be a challenging situation to navigate, remember that the purpose of the community accountability measure is intended to facilitate the learning of the group, and that one to two strong voices

are not speaking for everyone. If you notice that some people in the group seem on board while others are resisting, you can turn the question to the group, asking: *What do others think? Why is this important? or Who has a different thought on that?* This way, the folks who are resisting get to hear from their peers: They may learn something and also realize that not everyone shares their concerns.

Ultimately, how much time you spend on this discussion is your judgment call as the instructor. It's crucial that you set an accountability measure before moving on, and that you don't take too much time here and compromise the learning for the rest of the workshop. At some point, if you sense that most of the group is on board, you may need to set the community accountability measure despite a few dissenters. More often than not, throughout the course of the training, those who were resistant begin to feel a sense of solidarity with the group around the accountability measure, realizing that it's both useful and fun, and that their concerns were unfounded.

Common Pushback	Possible Responses
Why do we need an accountability measure? We are all adults here and can hold ourselves accountable.	This accountability measure is about holding ourselves responsible to the group, and to the agreements we've created together. We are adults, but that doesn't mean we can't use a little reminder to keep ourselves in check sometimes. If we are able to hold ourselves accountable all the time, then we won't need to use the accountability measure. But it's good to have one, in case we falter.
I don't like the idea of "calling others out," and that's inappropriate if we don't know someone else's situation.	We've created this set of community agreements as a group, so it's less about "calling them out" and more about "calling them in"—back in to our group and the commitments we've made to ourselves and each other.
This feels like "public shaming." Why does it need to be embarrassing?	This isn't about public shaming; it's about accountability and honoring our commitments to each other. We have a set of agreements, but without accountability, there is no way of checking whether we are following them. We don't want to choose something that feels "shameful," but rather something that is fun and playful, and perhaps mildly embarrassing (it's a deterrent, after all). It's a lighthearted way that we can all acknowledge the broken agreement quickly and move on.
If we break an agreement, we can just apologize and move on.	It's less about apologizing and more about honoring our commitments to each other. An accountability measure helps us acknowledge an agreement was broken with the group in the moment, in a fun, humorous way.



James Croft: Video Debrief with Charts

[Click here to view a five-minute Linked Public Narrative.](#)

James Croft was a student in the Public Narrative class at the Harvard Kennedy School. This five-minute Linked Public Narrative was the final narrative he developed for the course, and the video is of him sharing it at an LGBTQ rally on the Harvard University campus.

Note: Since this story deals with suicide, some instructors have found it helpful to let participants know that before playing the video.

Learning Objectives

- 1 To understand who James is and why he's called to leadership through his clear Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now.
- 2 To explore how vivid images, sensory details, and emotions can create compelling story moments when it comes to challenges, choices, and outcomes.
- 3 To recognize this is a framework not a formula, where a cohesive and coherent narrative is threaded together by values (solidarity, inclusion, compassion, responsibility).

Let's dig deeper into each objective.

1. To understand who James is and why he's called to leadership through his clear Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now.

James's narrative weaves together the three elements of Public Narrative (Self, Us, and Now), and illustrates how this is a framework not a formula: His narrative is not simply Self, Us, and Now, in a row, but rather, he moves back and forth between them in an effective, compelling way. He begins with a Story of Now (6.12 seconds, Tyler Clemente jumping off the bridge, the reality of gay teens committing suicide), moves to a Story of Self that shares his own experiences (ballet dancer, gym teacher, moment in the auditorium). He then goes to a Story of Us (asking the audience to recall their experience of bullying, isolation, exclusion), then goes back to the Story of Now (finding bodies hanging from trees), touches on the Us (imagine if it were your son, daughter, friend, etc.), then briefly returns to the Self (his late coming-out and depriving students of a role model) before moving into his call to action (Story of Now), asking people to join with him to become a part of the "It Gets Better" campaign.

2. To explore how vivid images, sensory details, and emotions can create compelling story moments when it comes to challenges, choices, and outcomes.

James brings moments from his own experience to life, communicating the challenges he faced, the choices he made, and how they led him to where he is today. This constitutes his Story of Self.

Story of Self

Story Moments	Meaning and Effect (What he communicates to us)
Ballet	We can see the blue shiny hot pants, hear the old piano, feel the wood underneath his feet. We can picture him as a joyful, young person, doing what he loves.
Gym teacher	The specificity of the word used by the gym teacher makes the challenge of the moment very real.
Auditorium	We can picture the auditorium, imagine the teacher intoning his message, and connect with the isolation James felt, thinking he was all alone in that room, that there was nobody out there like him.
Vulnerability and hope	James later shares that he didn't come out as gay when he was a teacher and that for ten years, he deprived young, gay kids of a role model. He regrets his choice, but by sharing this with us, it helps us understand that it wasn't too late for him to make a change, and it's not too late for us. Sharing his vulnerability and mistakes teaches us that if he can learn and change, perhaps we can as well.

Story of Us

James is talking to a group of people he does not know, so to bring them together around shared experiences and values, he invites them to remember times they have felt isolated by calling to mind specific experiences they may have gone through.

Story Moments	Meaning and Effect (What he communicates to us)
Experience of isolation	He acknowledges the audience may not have been through this exact thing (being bullied for being gay), but he draws a parallel from that feeling to other experiences of exclusion and isolation by inviting people to remember their own experiences, and by naming specific examples like <i>too tall, too short, too smart, too dumb, from the wrong side of town</i> , etc.
Imagining you lost someone you loved	Later in the narrative, James invites the audience to reflect on how they would feel if <i>they</i> were the ones to come upon a body hanging in their yard: to imagine it were their son, daughter, your brother, your sister, your friend. He says: "it could have been one of us." This helps shift the experience from a challenge happening "out there" in the world to one that is relevant to all of us.
*Note: The challenge in James's Story of Us is not explicitly a shared experience, which would be an area for him to improve in future iterations.	

Story of Now

James brings to life the urgent challenge and a plausible pathway to action, making them real through story moments and images.

Challenge	Story Moments	Meaning and Effect (What he communicates to us)
Make the issue of teen suicide REAL and URGENT	6.12 seconds	James’s Public Narrative begins with a Story of Now. The use of 6.12 seconds as the time it takes to jump off the bridge makes the problem of suicide feel very real, urgent, and compelling. We can feel it, and feel why it is so important to take action to “catch them before they jump.” Rather than sharing statistics, James tells the story of a specific person who has faced this challenge, using imagery of the bridge and the 6.12 seconds to create a sense of urgency.
	Bodies hanging from the trees	James uses the disturbing image of a body hanging from a tree, including sensory details like “creaking on the branch” and “blowing in the wind,” which make it feel incredibly real. He calls in the emotions one would feel, the sickness in your stomach, the dread in your heart, as you realize “<i>what</i> it was...<i>who</i> it was.” He then names who some of these people actually were (e.g., <i>Billy Lucas</i>, <i>Seth Walsh</i>), so that we understand they are human beings, with names, ages, families, people who loved them. They are not data points. • <i>The image of these bodies hanging situates the current challenge within the larger American narrative of the injustice of slavery, calling to mind lynching.</i>

The Call to Action: A Hopeful Pathway to Action and a Collective Ask

Hope

After James paints the challenge at hand very clearly and creates a sense of urgency around why we need to act now, he then offers us a pathway to action by saying that people can do something to make a difference. There is hope in the feeling that people can actually take action to make some collective change in the face of this challenge. Hope in the Story of Now comes from a plausible, meaningful pathway to action.

The ask is collective, specific, meaningful, plausible, and visible. James asks his audience to join together to make videos for the “It Gets Better” campaign—to send messages of hope and solidarity to young people in the gay community who are feeling isolated and hopeless.

Ask	Details
Collective	He does not ask everyone to go off and do their own thing in their communities (e.g., “upload individual videos”). Instead, he asks the group to come together to offer whatever skills and resources they can bring to create videos, as a collective of Harvard students, and to work together as a team.
Meaningful	The videos created by this group will likely have a more substantial impact, as they will be part of a bigger, existing movement (the “It Gets Better” campaign started by Dan Savage). Folding this ask into a larger campaign is smart and strategic, as people are more likely to take action on an ask they believe is meaningful and will actually make change.
Specific	James is clear about <i>where and when to meet</i> , as well as what people will be doing there (making videos, holding a camera, etc.). He offers contacts for people to speak with if they have questions—it is all very concrete, real, and specific, so if people feel motivated to join, they know how to do it, and what it entails.
Plausible	James’s ask draws on the <i>unique resources of the group</i> he is speaking to, asking them to do something that is within their capabilities, and to use their “glittering Harvard degrees” to let people who are feeling isolated know that they stand together with them, that they’ve “got their backs.”
Visible	James lets people know whom they should reach out to if they are interested in joining, so they can connect right away and make a commitment in the moment.

3. To recognize this is a framework not a formula, where a cohesive and coherent narrative is threaded together by values (solidarity, inclusion, compassion, responsibility).

This Public Narrative is linked together by values. Throughout the Stories of Self, Us, and Now, values like solidarity, inclusion, compassion, and responsibility appear—not as descriptions but through real experiences when they were felt. James’s narrative shares: (1) moments when these values were challenged, threatened, or when their opposites were present (e.g., isolation, exclusion, scorn, cowardice), contrasted with (2) moments of hope (when these values were present, powerful, and motivating). Ultimately, he is sharing when he developed his own values, calling on the community to remember they share these values, and asking them to now act on them in the face of a challenge threatening those values.

Story	Moments of Challenge	Moments of Hope
SELF	James felt isolation and exclusion in the moments with the gym teacher and in the auditorium.	The ballet moment helps us understand James as a loving, joyful young person. The fact that he became a teacher and wanted to be a role model, and is now taking action, also shows us that he cares (<i>compassion</i>); that he chose not to be silent after ten years and is now looking out for others (<i>responsibility</i>); and that he wants people to feel heard, seen, and cared for (<i>inclusion/solidarity</i>).
US	His decision to come out later in life and deprive his students of a role model communicates his regret for not taking on that responsibility.	Together we can share our experiences to make a difference in people’s lives (<i>solidarity/compassion</i>), sharing messages of hope and “having their back” (<i>inclusion</i>). We can use the power of our “sparkling” Harvard degrees for the good of others, not just for ourselves (<i>responsibility</i>).
NOW	Asking the audience to remember times they felt excluded and alone, when they were bullied or made fun of for being different.	We, as Harvard students, can share messages of hope (<i>compassion, responsibility</i>) to join the “It Gets Better” campaign (<i>solidarity</i>) and help these young people feel like we’ve got their back (<i>inclusion/solidarity</i>).

Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of James Croft's Linked Public Narrative video. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. These questions are a foundation for your debrief: You are encouraged to expand upon them and customize the questions and comments for your own facilitation, based on your objectives, your audience, and the answers you are given in real time.

Sample Debrief Questions	Possible Answers
*Instructor Introduction: Part of this craft entails substituting images for adjectives. Let's reflect on this.	
When he begins, does he begin with a Story of Self, Story of Us, or Story of Now?	He started with the Self. Framing how people were dying.
Was that about himself? At the very beginning, what did he talk about?	<i>The young guy who took his life and why he did it. Jumping off the bridge.</i>
So what kind of story was that?	<i>Now. Because it was about a current event—it's an event that's recent, happening in the community.</i>
What made it a NOW story?	<i>How he told it. You could see it in front of your eyes, there was a sense of urgency from the 6.12 seconds.</i>
*Instructor Comment: Yes. It's being confronted with the image of urgency, of need. He could have started off saying, "I'm gonna talk about the problem of suicide among gay youth." Instead, he showed us—he wasn't telling us. He showed us. When you begin to visualize and see it, you get the emotional impact of it.	
Then, where does he go next? Self, Us, or Now? What's the next moment he goes to?	He talks about himself—his own story. Story of Self—reflecting on how he's experienced it himself.
Yeah, what's the specific moment that he describes?	When he was a young child, ballet dancing. Preparing himself and dressing up.
Could you picture it? What were the images?	The old piano. The wood beneath his feet. Blue, shiny, hot pants.
How did that make you feel?	I could feel it, joyful, like a child, getting to do something we love.

Sample Debrief Questions	Possible Answers
*Instructor Comment: It's an interesting move because he's not saying, "you understand my exact experience." Instead, he's finding a way to evoke similar experiences they may have had—the feelings they felt. That's what he's trying to get at, so he can move from his Self to a broader Us. He brings us into the experience of isolation, not just broad categories.	
Once he's got an US, because we've all had some experiences of being isolated, where does he go next? Self, Us, or Now?	The people hanging from the trees.
Right. He takes us to another NOW moment. When he takes us there, is he talking about data points?	No! They're human beings.
*Instructor Comment: Yes—they're not data. They have names, they have families... they're human beings. They're real people, they could be our brother, our sister.	
The image of people hanging from trees. Is that an unfamiliar image in American culture? What other narrative does that call up?	Lynchings.
*Instructor Comment: Yes, he's communicating the injustice of this moment without words but with images. He's locating this narrative within the greater American narrative of the injustice of slavery.	
That's the power of images. Then where does he go? How does he bring it back to the group?	Goes to the "it could be you, your brother, your son, your daughter"—he makes it more personal. That this could be your grief.
Right, that's part of the US experience. Then he goes to another place. Where does he go?	His late coming out. The fact he deprived young people of a role model. He lost those ten years. He says he could have done more, and now he's accepting his own responsibility.
Yes. Has there been much hope in this story until now?	Not much. We feel his regret about his mistake, but now he's standing up, which gives us hope. He's offering up his own mistakes. It's not too late!
Why does he do that? If he's the leader, isn't he supposed to be perfect?	It shows that he made mistakes. He's fallible and felt he deprived others of a role model. But he changed. And if he could change, maybe we can change, too. Maybe we can stand up now.
*Instructor Comment: Yes! He reveals his own vulnerability and the mistakes he's made, showing that he could change, so there's hope for us, as well. Sharing vulnerability helps people connect to you. It helps them understand how you learned your values and feel why you care. They pay attention to your scars when they know how you got them—the wounds you sustained. We can honor the fact that he's changed. It creates possibility for us as well. Courage and vulnerability are deeply related. If I am not vulnerable, I get no points for courage. That's the contrast. That's why this is powerful. It means: I can learn something from this person. That gives us some hope. This craft is really about balancing the hurt and hope. It's about authenticity.	

Sample Debrief Questions	Possible Answers
Where does he go after that? A story of Self, Us, or Now?	Story of Now. He calls us to action!
Right. What is he asking us to do?	Join the “It Gets Better” campaign?
Do you know where to go? When? What you’ll do there?	Yes. The Eliot Lyman room to help—you can do anything: hold a camera, leave messages for people who need hope.
*Instructor Comment: There’s a clear, actionable ask. He names a specific place at a specific time, it’s clear what you’ll be doing. It’s part of a bigger campaign, so we get a sense of the difference it can make—the impact it will have. He’s not offering forty-five different things to do or giving people lots of choices. Leadership has a strategic responsibility. He’s offering us a clear, strategic pathway we can take. It won’t solve the problem, but it’s a first step to getting started.	
What are the values you hear through this story?	Compassion. Responsibility. Solidarity. Inclusion.
*Instructor Comment: Yes, we hear these values throughout the narrative. We hear them in his own Story of Self, through the Story of Us, where he’s calling on the audience to think of their shared values, and in the Story of Now. This is how this works. This is one example. James was working on something else until right before filming—something he thought he should do, but at the end, he switched his narrative to focus on what he really cared about. A former student from India (Jayanti Ravi) once said this craft “is not about how to apply a gloss from the outside, it’s about how to bring out the glow from the inside.” That’s what this is all about: authentic communication about things we really care about. It’s about telling a narrative that shares who we are through what we know, what we’ve experienced.	

The background of the entire page is a detailed, light-colored line drawing of the Harvard University campus map. The map shows the complex layout of buildings, streets, and green spaces, rendered in a minimalist style with thin black outlines on a white background. The map is oriented with North at the top, and the text is centered over the middle of the map.

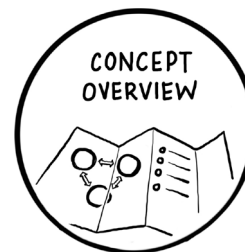
SECTION 2

Story of Self

Story of Self: Concept Overview

What Is a Story of Self?

A Story of Self communicates why a person is called to what they do (their “calling”) by sharing narrative moments that communicate where, when, and how they learned their values. It is not a resume. A Story of Self usually recounts moments of hurt (why the person cares) and moments of hope (why they can act). It’s often through moments of hurt that people learn what they really care about, why the world needs “fixing.” And it’s in moments of hope that people learn they could do something about it: moments in which they experienced being of value, being loved, being of consequence. When did these feelings come together in choices that they have made? In which moments did they have to choose how to respond to a challenge, the outcome from which they learned a moral? Sharing these moments enables others to understand someone—to experience the moments in which they formed their values and themselves. Telling a Story of Self can enable a person to earn some “moral authority”: the legitimacy on which they call on others to join them.



Sharing a Story of Self creates an experience of empathetic connection between listeners and the speaker. Listeners not only experience the speaker’s values but are also able to recall their own moments of hurt and hope, which can enable them to connect with their own moral resources. Similarly, the storyteller can experience emotional resonance with listeners who “click” or resonate with their story, which creates a kind of synchrony.¹²

Many of the formative experiences that shape people’s values occur early in their lives, within circles of family and friends, school days, and faith or cultural practices, as they’re learning to venture out into the world. This makes the stories and their meaning much more widely accessible to others because those experiences are shared human experiences, and often cut across traditional cultural, class, political, educational, racial, and religious boundaries.

Telling a Story of Self is a way for the speaker to share their values with others, not as abstract principles, but as a lived experience that communicates something about who they are. What is unique about each person is that identity is not simply a combination of categories (race, gender, class, profession, marital status, etc.), but rather, a product of a journey, of choices, of a life lived, and personal experiences. Moral philosopher Charles Taylor describes this process as the “articulation” of one’s moral sources, communicating lived experience in words and a form others can understand.¹³ In this way, an individual can claim ownership of their own experiences, transforming those that have been influences on someone into resources for someone, thus enhancing their capacity for agency and leadership.

Telling a Story of Self can be challenging: It risks exposing vulnerabilities—moments of hurt that may be painful, efforts to overcome them, and what was learned through the struggle. A Story of Self must bring alive actual moments of experience, in the present tense, enabling others to “be there.” In this way the storyteller becomes emotionally present, enabling the listeners to experience the emotional meaning of the moment.

Some people may think that personal stories don’t matter, that people won’t care, or that people should not talk about themselves so much. On the contrary, if people do public work, they have a responsibility to claim authorship of their own stories—where they came from, why they do what they do, and where they think they’re going. If they don’t, others will—and others may not tell the story well.

Public Narrative is a leadership practice of crafting narrative to enable others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty, anchored in a clear Story of Self. What makes it a story is that it is articulated as a moment (or moments) in which someone was confronted with a challenge, chose a response, and experienced an outcome, which, in turn, taught them a lesson, a moral. A Story of Self needs a story arc, which includes challenge, choice, outcome, and hope; all of the elements play an important role, so omitting any of the elements will decrease the effect of connection and agency that the story communicates.

Describing a moment in which someone faced no challenge is not only less likely to engage others' interest, it can also come across as "self-praise," which people can neither relate to nor learn from (except how great or lucky that individual thinks they are). If they claim certain values without anchoring them in lived experience, not only do they remain abstract ideas, but listeners get little sense of what they actually mean for the speaker or why they matter. If someone describes a moment in which there was no choice, they may cast themselves as an object, or victim, from whom there is little to learn. If they describe a moment without an outcome, then the story loses its moral: It's not clear why they told the listeners this story nor how it connects with what they do now or why others should join them. A well-told story moment can bring the past into the present or the distant into the proximate.

The elements of a Story of Self noted above are described in more depth below.

How to Tell a Story of Self

A Story of Self communicates why a person has been called to what they do through story moments in their life: *When did you learn to "care"? How? Through which moments? Who was there? Where did you get your hope?*

Moments of Challenge and Hope

Participants should choose stories that enable listeners to learn what moves them, what called them to leadership and to the work they do. It is not just any arbitrary dramatic story that they can tell about their life. They should choose moments from their life that shaped them: challenges they faced and choices they made that led them to become passionate about their calling. It may not have been a single moment of insight, as people learn from a combination of their experiences; the goal is to choose "a" key moment to share, not "the" moment. This alleviates some of the pressure of trying to select the "right" moment from a whole lifetime of experiences. An effective Story of Self balances moments of challenge with moments of hope, so listeners can learn not only what someone had to overcome to become who they are, but how they were able to do that and what their sources of strength and courage are.

To help illuminate those experiences from the complex story of someone's life, consider the following guiding questions:

- *When did you first realize you care about what you care about?*
- *Where did you get the hope you could do anything about it?*
- *Were you inspired by any role models who set you on your path?*
- *Why do you feel you have to act on this concern? Why can't you leave it to somebody else?*
- *When was the last moment in which you felt you were doing exactly what you were meant to be doing? What did that feel like? When was the first time you felt something like that?*

Origin Stories (Act I vs. Act II)

Like all stories, a Story of Self begins at the beginning. 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 involves remembering important memories that helped them form their values and recovering sources of value, which are often embedded in relational interactions (a person with whom you experienced value—parents, teachers, congregation, grandparents, etc.). Origin stories usually take place before the age of eighteen. It is during these early formative years that we develop the values that we are then called to act on later in life. You can think of it as Act I, the formation of values that impact our decisions in Act II, Act III, and so on. Think about superheroes or comic book characters: They always have origin stories. In order to believe in their characters and motivations (whether for good or evil), people need to know what experiences shaped them, leading them to become who they are. For example, as a young boy, Batman (or Bruce Wayne) witnessed the gruesome murder of his parents by a criminal. He then vowed to honor and avenge his parents by dedicating his life to fighting crime and preserving justice. Although he is a fictional character, understanding Batman's origin story helps others understand and connect with him as a protagonist.

Consider, for example, a person whose story begins in college when they heard a powerful speech about climate change and decided to major in environmental science. This moment of changing their major sounds more like an example of acting on a value they already had rather than telling us how they formed or learned that value. This may be a key moment of choice in their life, but it still doesn't say much about the source of their values or where their motivations came from. If someone hears a speech and it moves them to change their major, aren't you curious why? Below are examples of questions that you might ask to get to the root of a person's origin story, if they start later in life (Act II) and you are trying to take them back to Act I (origin):

- *What were you originally studying? Why?*
- *What in the speech about climate change affected you so deeply?*
- *What did it stir in you? Why?*
- *What moments did it call up?*
- *What does the environment mean to you? What did it mean to you as a kid?*
- *Who helped you realize that? When?*
- *What values are at the heart of you caring?*

Not all Stories of Self are origin stories, but origin moments tend to be the most powerful. Without an origin story, it's hard to know why the person became the way they are, and what led them to make the choices they did. In the example above, this moment may be a part of their Story of Self, but it's not clear when they learned to care in the first place.

Tell a Story, Don't Tell "About" a Story

The storyteller should be the protagonist in a Story of Self (it's not a "Story of Other"); while other people may play key roles in the story, it should be grounded in the lived experience of the storyteller, not the story of their parents, grandparents, etc. The following techniques are useful in crafting and telling an effective Story of Self. A person might not use all these techniques in one story, but they are a great way to get them thinking in a storytelling mode.

- Narrate the story in first-person: "I tiptoe to the corner of the building and peek around."
- Use the present tense: "I can see the army officers coming closer. One of them unslings a rifle from his shoulder."
- Include sensory information: "I can see/hear/smell/taste..."
- Let the listeners know how you felt: "I feel scared/excited/joyful/desolate..."
- Recall the moments as they're being described and include specific details: "It is a Saturday morning...", "I am eight years old at the time...", "I am wearing my favorite blue sparkly sweater...", "Both of my grandparents are there...", "They tell me there has been an accident..."
 - What was the challenge?
 - What choice did you make?
 - What was the outcome? What did you learn from this moment? (Values?)
- Avoid the use of "and" as a connecting phrase.

Coaching the Person vs. Coaching the Story

There are two kinds of Public Narrative coaching: coaching the person and coaching the story. Coaching the person is working with them to find the right story moment or moments. It can also involve coaching them through hesitation, emotion, and vulnerability as they grapple for their story. Once they have found a moment, coaching the story is then coaching craft in its articulation: good details, clear focus, clear challenge, choice outcome, consistency with the speaker's goals, etc. This distinction in coaching is particularly relevant for Story of Self, as people may struggle to identify or recollect key moments from their lives for many reasons, so it's often necessary to first coach the person before you can coach their story.

Story of Self: Instructor Notes

Note: Below is a basic template of Instructor Notes for teaching Story of Self. You are encouraged to expand upon these basic notes for yourself and for the audience you're teaching. Review the Story of Self: Concept Overview and use that and other resources in the guide to customize these notes, adding in your own style, questions for audience interaction, and so on.

Remember to engage your learners in a dialogue, asking them questions, inviting them to reflect, and drawing in their responses and experiences as you teach this session.

Learning Objectives: Story of Self

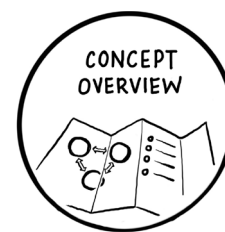
- 1 To explore how a story is constructed from specific narrative moments.
- 2 To understand that a Story of Self has a story arc that moves through moments of challenge and hurt, moments of hope, and moments of choice, connected to outcome.
- 3 To acknowledge that a person's origin story tells others where they learned their value and why they care.
- 4 To recognize that a Story of Self is constructed not found, and that selected moments can enable others to understand a person.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Self Total Time: 35-40 mins
10 mins	Framing: What Is a Story of Self?
	What Calls You to Leadership? A Story of Self enables others to <i>understand</i> you: not your resume or CV, but rather, the experiences from which you've learned to care about what you care about. What are the experiences from which you get hope? The basic question in the Story of Self is <i>why have I been called to what I've been called to?</i> We use the word "called" deliberately—it's often used to describe a religious calling, but it's also used more broadly to describe <i>your purpose</i> . Ask yourself: What purpose do you want to fulfill in life? What purposes do you want to achieve? A calling is different from a <i>job</i> —a career may align with it, or may not—so what we're really trying to get at is: What's the motivational root behind what you value, and why are you exercising leadership? We often find those roots pretty early in life.
	Moments of Challenge and Hope Who here has had an experience of hurt? (Raise your hands.) Who here has had an experience of hope? (<i>Everyone will likely raise their hands for both.</i>) If you hadn't had an experience of hurt, you wouldn't think the world needed fixing. And if you hadn't had an experience of hope, you wouldn't think you could fix it. We have our own repertoire of experiences from which we have learned these things, and they often occur early in life—it's often when we learn what we care about. Later, we make choices based on what we've learned.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Self Total Time: 35-40 mins
	Story Moments A story is made of many moments that are strung together: In a way, a moment is the unit of narrative. A story moment has three elements: challenge, choice, and outcome. It's a moment in which we were confronted with a challenge; we—or someone—responded with a choice, and there was an outcome, from which there was an implicit or explicit moral, about hurt, or hope, or both. A Story of Self brings alive actual moments of experience, in the present tense, enabling others to “be there.” It should include <i>sensory information</i>: what do you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste? But a story moment is different from <i>description</i>. A Story of Self communicates who a person is, how they got that way, what they care about, what challenges they had to overcome, and what choices they made in the face of those challenges. The more we can connect with the protagonist, the more effective the story. We want to experience how they <i>felt</i> in the moment, what they learned, and what we can learn from them. We want to learn where they got their courage and hope to make the choices they did. We want to grasp their journey of how they got to be who they got to be... how we can connect with them, and where they may be going.
	Act I/Act II—Origin Story We tend to acquire our values early in life, then we make decisions based on them throughout our lives. We sometimes think of this as First Act, Second Act, like in a play. We often talk about ourselves starting in Act II, or Act III, even when we are already acting on the values that we've formed. With the Story of Self, we're trying to go back to Act I—back to where we <i>formed</i> our values: to the origin of when we learned to care about what we're called to. Because that's much deeper and more informative, it becomes a foundation that helps us understand a person. When the decisions someone makes later in life align with certain values, we are left wondering: Where did those values come from in the first place? What is the source of those values? <i>Why do you care about X? Where did you get your hope?</i> That's the idea.
	Public Life and Telling Your Story Mastering your own story is a critical piece of work, and it's the foundation for relational leadership. If you're just a vessel for a cause, how can people relate to you? And how can they experience what that cause means to you? You're the relational bridge between your listener and why your cause matters to you, your values. A Story of Self is your own reflection on your sources of what you value, and why. It's important in public life because you don't have any option: If <i>you</i> don't author your own story, other people will author it, and they may tell it in a way that is not the way you'd like it told. It may not align with your purposes or what you're trying to accomplish. For example, let's take John Kerry, who ran for President of the United States in the early 2000s. He had a terrific story, a heroic story. But he could never tell it, and as a consequence, his opponents in the Swiftboat group claimed his story and told it in a way that turned his story of heroism into a story of cowardice. Hillary Clinton had a similar problem: She couldn't tell her own story and so the world then told her story by projecting their own take on her from their interests and purposes. So, if you're in public life, the reality is: <i>If you don't author your own story, others will.</i> Communicating your Story of Self can earn you the moral authority and credibility from which to speak and to make asks of others. Sharing a Story of Self enables others to understand who a person is and where they're coming from. It isn't packaging, but rather, it grounds your reasons for caring in your own authentic experience: <i>Why are you here, calling on others to join you?</i> The point is: Enabling people to understand you can motivate them to join you when you call on them to act.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Self Total Time: 35-40 mins
10 mins	Model and Debrief
	Model Video—Amal Beydoun (2 mins) Now we’re going to watch a two-minute example of a Story of Self and then we’ll debrief it. This is Amal Beydoun, who was in a Public Narrative workshop in Dearborn, Michigan, for Muslim-American leaders. Amal had just come out of her small group breakout, where she brainstormed for five minutes, got some coaching, and then shared this story. As you’re watching, listen for a few things: • What is the challenge she faced and how does she make it real? • How does she make the hope real, so you can feel it? • What is the choice she made in the face of that hope? • What do you think she has been called to (her vocation)? Let’s have a look. [See Amal Beydoun Debrief Guide on page 64.] Debrief (8 mins)
10 mins	Model Coaching—[See Public Coaching Guide on page 55.]
5 mins	Why Coaching Matters
	Why Coaching Matters: Fish in Our Own Water Public Narrative is a leadership practice: It is about the interaction of <i>self</i> with <i>other</i>. The point of the Story of Self is communicating with others who you are, your values, and where they come from so others can <i>understand you</i>. You need to know whether or not your story is working! Because it is about communication with another, you can’t do it in front of a mirror—it just doesn’t work that way. You need an interested interlocutor: Storytelling requires both a <i>storyteller</i> and a <i>story listener</i>. Sometimes we can be “fish in our own water,” meaning that we can’t see our lives and stories the way that others can from the outside. We may take things for granted because we are too close to them. That’s why coaching is such a key part of the Public Narrative craft. Coaches listen to your story and ask questions to help you delve deeper and identify key moments of challenge, choice, and outcome that help others understand your sources of caring. Good coaches don’t tell you what to do or say. Rather, they trust that you know the answers and see their role as helping to draw them out of you. They ask probing questions that are genuine, urging you to think about why you made certain choices, why you responded the way you did, where you learned that you could. We encourage you to step into your courage, to answer questions that may be challenging, and to embrace this brave space as you navigate potentially new or uncertain waters in your groups. That said, remember that this is a leadership craft grounded in agency, so what you share is up to you: It’s always your choice. Now you’re going to have a chance to try this on for yourselves for the first time—time to get on the “bike” in your small groups. Then we’ll come back here to hear some Stories of Self and debrief. We’ll see you back here in X minutes. Have a good practice!

Public Coaching: Concept Overview



Introduction to Public Coaching

After explaining what a Story of Self is and watching and debriefing a model video, you, the instructor, then model a live example of coaching Story of Self with a participant (approximately ten minutes), referred to as “public coaching.” Learning new skills requires venturing beyond the limits of one’s perceived competence—a step that is both exciting and frightening. It requires challenge and support: challenge to move beyond one’s comfort zone, and support to create the motivation to do so. The coach’s role is to create the tension that can stimulate growth. This often requires making the other sufficiently uncomfortable enough—and courageous enough—to risk new learning.

Why Public Coaching Matters

Modeling public coaching enables the whole group, including the coachee, to experience together how effective coaching can create enough tension to enable new learning—connecting hurt and hope—so as to find the courage to tell one’s Story of Self. Participants benefit from experiencing a live model of coaching for the following reasons:

1. Sharing one’s experience of the power of story makes it real. Seeing a member of their group be coached to share pivotal moments from their life with vulnerability and courage helps bring the power of Public Narrative to life. It moves people from conceptual understanding to emotional understanding of real people, real experience, and real story moments.
 - Participants begin to emotionally connect with the experience as they watch a fellow participant get coached, and as they see the coachee begin to share honest moments from their life with details, imagery, and emotions. It makes the emotional power of storytelling very real.
 - As the group experiences the public coaching together (as coach, coachee, and audience), it creates a sense of solidarity and community in the room. This helps establish the brave space necessary for learning.
 - Ideally, the coach’s questions will guide the coachee to share parts of their story that require courage and vulnerability (although this may not always be the case). Experiencing the value of this vulnerability together teaches the group the power and need for vulnerability in crafting and sharing their own authentic Stories of Self. Learners often recall the public coaching model as one of the most important moments of a workshop, where they really saw, felt, and experienced the power of a Story of Self for the first time.
 - Audiences get to watch a coach model the balance of challenge and support, asking challenging questions, creating and holding tension, while also being emotionally present, genuinely curious, and listening deeply. They also learn how to use coaching questions effectively in real time and see how a coach must often push past the “comfort zone” to draw out real story moments from a coachee. This is especially helpful as the instructor in the front of the room also inoculates an environment that empowers small group coaches to do the same.
2. Modeling the craft and building community
 - Public Coaching highlights the importance of relationship (between coach and coachee) and the value of relational learning in this craft.
 - Participants begin to develop the emotional strength to ask challenging questions of themselves and of one another, which is essential for coaching and learning, but also for leadership.
 - Participants gain an understanding of the process they are about to begin in their small groups.

- Seeing a peer be coached in real time makes both storytelling and coaching feel more accessible to the group.
- Being a part of someone’s journey as they “get on the bike” with this framework—and come out okay on the other side—encourages everyone to take the risk and try it themselves.
- This shared experience begins to create a sense of “Us-ness” in the group. If public coaching goes well, it becomes a meaningful experience for the group that many people will call upon in their first version of a Story of Us (i.e., a moment of shared challenge, choice, outcome, and hope).

Goals of Public Coaching

- To engage with the participant, asking them several questions to help explore early moments in their life that shaped them and led them to care about what they’re doing today
- To coach them to specific story moments rather than generalizations (i.e., specific points in time, not “we always used to...”)
- To help them identify significant choice points in their life
- To help the participant identify when and where they faced challenges and when and where they found their hope
- To model emotional presence and good listening
- To model good coaching questions for both the coachee and the larger group
- To demonstrate that everyone has a story and we are all capable of “trying on” this craft

The question for participants is really: *Why do you care and why do you believe you can do something about it?*—that crucial balance of hurt and hope. The tension often grows as you get to story moments of challenge and hurt—especially origin moments—and then recedes upon getting to hope moments.

After the coaching concludes, debrief the coaching with the group to help them learn from what they just experienced [see Public Coaching—Debrief Guide on page 61]. With the group, identify what questions were asked and why, and what stories and emotions came out of the coaching session. Inviting the coachee to reflect on their experience can also help to highlight the relational nature of coaching. This debrief enables the group to experience what coaching looks and feels like, how it works, and why it’s essential to the craft of Public Narrative. It also prepares them to embark on their own journey as both coach and storyteller in their small group practice, where they’ll work with a trained coach and begin to practice coaching each other.

Setting up Public Coaching

Framing and Sensitivity

By responding to the instructor’s invitation to engage in a coaching conversation, the coachee takes a risk, diving into a moment of uncertainty in front of others, whom they may or may not know. The norms and community agreements agreed upon by the group are intended to help foster a supportive space that encourages this sort of risk-taking.

It’s important to frame this interaction in a way that the participants and especially the coachee feel supported. As a coach, you can never be sure where the conversation will go, so follow your curiosity, balance tension with patience and space, and encourage the coachee to share honestly about their life. Generally, people tend to share what they are ready, or willing, to share. They may feel uncomfortable sharing in the moment because it’s the first time they’ve spoken about it, or because they are in front of a group, or they don’t want to feel judged. The group may also feel uncomfortable watching someone in the hot seat be asked such deep questions about their life experiences. These feelings of mild discomfort are normal and expected when someone is being coached in front of a group. As a coach, recognize when to probe the coachee further to take them to a deeper level, and when you may be going too far.

Recall the wounds and scars metaphor from earlier. The goal is not to share experiences that are still open wounds that feel raw, unprocessed, and actively painful, but rather to identify moments of one's own agency: Scars are proof that they've gone through something challenging, come out the other side, and survived. If a coachee is very resistant, seems genuinely uncomfortable, or refuses to answer a question, respect their choice and redirect your line of questioning. They may be unready or unwilling to share that particular life experience. While the coach is a guide, the storyteller should always be in the driver's seat.

Public Narrative is not therapy; it's not about digging up and sharing someone's deepest traumas or secrets. It is a leadership practice of sharing stories in public to help others understand where a person got the courage to overcome their challenges, and to communicate why they've been called to what they do today. [See Public Narrative Is Not Therapy on page 33.]

Choosing a Coachee

Suggested Activity for Coachee Selection

One way to facilitate this process is to ask everyone to write down one to two sentences about what calls them to leadership (e.g., *Why are you called to what you do?*) on a piece of paper. If the workshop is virtual, they can also share in the chat. You can then invite a few people to share their callings and reasons in the large group, and based on their responses, select the person you think might be a good candidate to coach publicly. This model allows you to have some choice in who you are questioning based on data, which may lead to a more effective coaching session. Calling on someone who has already volunteered to speak can also be helpful instead of choosing someone who may feel very uncomfortable speaking up or being coached publicly.

Tips on Choosing a Coachee

For this model of public coaching to be beneficial for participants' learning, it's important to choose a participant who is open and will share honestly and vulnerably in front of the group. The example of public coaching often helps set the tone for more open and vulnerable sharing in small groups. While it's not an exact science, here are some tips to keep in mind when choosing a participant for this section:

- Pay attention to the participants from the beginning of the workshop. Ask the coaching team to be on the lookout for people they think might be a good choice as well.
- Take notice of their body language and interactions:
 - Do they look open and ready to try this on? Or are they distracted, looking uninterested?
 - Are they asking questions? Contributing answers?
 - Do they seem curious?
 - Are they willing to share about themselves? Their uncertainties? Emotions?
 - How are they engaging with each other? With the instructor?
 - Do they seem comfortable expressing emotion?

Best Practices for Public Coaching

As you get ready to embark on your own practice, here are some helpful best practices and key questions to help guide you as a coach.

Ask Questions

Coaching is about asking questions, not giving advice or making assumptions. Ask probing questions that you're genuinely curious about (e.g., *Why did you do that? Who modeled that for you? What did that feel like?*). Listen deeply and pay attention to what the coachee is saying (or sometimes not saying) as you ask your next questions. Remember: This should feel conversational, like a dialogue rather than an interview or interrogation.

Be Emotionally Present

Engage with the coachee from a place of curiosity rather than trying to stick to a specific script. Make eye contact, smile, nod, acknowledge tough moments. Share your natural emotional responses so they feel they are being seen and heard, and that you value what they are saying.

Stay on Track

Don't be afraid to respectfully (and lovingly) interrupt the coachee if you feel they are going on a tangent and you want to redirect them. Bring the conversation back to the coachee if they're deflecting. Follow your curiosity while keeping your strategy in mind. This creates a structured container within which both the coachee and fellow participants know that they will be supported within a helpful boundary.

Guidepost (name what you're looking for)

As you ask questions, be explicit about what you hear and what you are looking for, in terms of the elements of the craft (challenge, choice, outcome, hope, story moments, origin story). This is called "guideposting" because it helps coachees understand where you are going, why you are asking particular questions, and which elements of the craft are present and absent in their story.

For example: If you hear a challenge and want to know more about the participant's hope and choice, you might say: *The moment you shared with your mother was powerful, and it's clear it was a very challenging time. I'm curious about how you got through it? Where did you get the strength to stand up to her like you did?*

Public Coaching Guiding Questions: Instructor Notes

You are trying to help the coachee pull their story out rather than trying to push them in a specific direction. There are multiple ways to coach a participant effectively, and no experience will be the same. Before attempting public coaching for the first time, please familiarize yourself with the guiding questions below, and practice on a few willing friends to get a sense of how the coaching conversation unfolds in real time.

The following questions are meant to serve as guidance, not as a prescriptive script. Choose the questions that feel relevant, based on what you hear in each story and the direction you want to take the debrief. (Note: The questions next to the orange boxes apply across most contexts, so you can use them to start and end your debriefs. The questions next to the gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, offer different options based on what you want to highlight and/or coach as you debrief each story.)

Total Time: Approx. 10 mins

Section	Public Coaching Questions
Opening Questions	• Why are you called here? What called you to do what you're doing? • Why are/were you doing that work? • Why do you care about that? • Where did that caring come from? Lots of people are in that same environment and ignore it, so why do you care?
*Towards Early Life and Origin Stories	• Let's go back a little earlier. Where did you grow up? • What do your parents do? • Do you have siblings? Where are you in the order? • What kind of school did you go to? Public? Private? • What was school like for you? • Did you do sports? Involved in other things? Like what? Why? • Did you grow up with a faith background? • Did you grow up in the same place? Did you ever move across the country/world? • How did you feel being in a new place? • What's your first memory of X? • Why was that important to you? • Why did that mean so much to you?
*Coaching from GENERAL CHALLENGE to a SPECIFIC MOMENT	• How old were you when this happened? • Do you remember that moment? – What happened? – Where were you? – Who was there?
*Coaching to HOPE	• That sounds hard! How did you get through that? – Was anyone there to help you? – What's their name? – Can you remember a particular time they helped you? What happened? • It took a lot of courage to do that, didn't it? Do you remember a particular moment when X...? • What was it about that that made you want to change things? • What made you believe that you could?

Section	Public Coaching Questions
*Coaching around CHOICE POINTS leading to OUTCOME (Calling)	• What were you doing at the time? – How did that feel? – What was going through your mind? – What else was happening around then? • When did you realize you could change X? • When did you start thinking about X? • Do you remember when you decided to X? – Where were you? – What happened? – Was that easy? Hard? • When is the first time you did X? – What was that like? • So you began doing X... – Then what happened? What changed? When? – And after that? What happened? – Were you doing anything else? • When did that click for you? – It sounds like maybe that's what you want to do for others? – And how does that connect to what you do today?
*Coaching about something they learned secondhand or were not physically present for (e.g., family history, moments from when they were a baby)	• How was that interpreted to you? By whom? • How did you hear about this? • How did X person (your mother, father, grandmother) deal with that? – What did you learn from that? • When did it become real to you? When did you experience it directly?
*Coaching about a person in their life as a source of HOPE or STRENGTH	• Where did your hope come from? • Sounds like X is very important to you. Do you remember a particular moment they were there for you? • When did you experience that directly? That kind of strength from them? • How did they communicate that to you?
Closing Public Coaching	• As you conclude the public coaching, offer one more question for the coachee to think about: (e.g., “If we had more time, I would ask you to share more about X...” or “Keep thinking about that, as you work on your story...”) • Thank the storyteller for all they shared, invite a round of applause for them, and acknowledge their courage and vulnerability.

Public Coaching: Debrief Guide

Instructor Goals

1. To describe the purpose and structure of coaching seen in the model
2. To identify the kinds of questions asked and why they were useful
3. To acknowledge the emotion, courage, and vulnerability in both sharing and hearing stories
4. To understand that the nature of coaching is relational and conversational
5. To illustrate the connection between coaching and narrative

Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of public coaching. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. The answers provided are sample answers from past workshops and classes. These questions are not meant to be followed as a script. You should customize and adapt your questions to match your facilitation style and context, and to respond to the answers you are given by your audience. Before you move into the debrief, be sure to thank the storyteller for sharing with such courage and vulnerability, and invite a round of applause for them from the group.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Responses
To the Group	
What was I just doing other than making the rest of you grateful you weren't him/her/them?	• Coaching. When you saw things in their face, you took them further. • Getting them to dig down deeply.
What kinds of questions was I asking?	• Open-ended. • Guiding questions. • A lot of probing, "why" questions. • Allowing them to focus on the events that resonated with them, what was important.
What were my techniques?	• A lot more detail—what happened in moments you'd identified as key turning points. • Trying to pull things along—the way things weave together in our Stories of Self, different stages of their life. • They go to your motivations. • They help us understand <i>why</i> someone made the choices they made—what motivated them.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Responses
To the Coachee	
How did that feel? Did it feel like an interrogation? Did it feel like I was genuinely interested? Why?	• I felt good to bring those moments back, I felt them in my heart. • I felt like you wanted to know more—and I didn't want to go there but then I trusted you. • You seemed to have a plan, so I went with it. • Yes! You responded to what I said. • Your questions were about what I was sharing. • You seemed to care and hear what I was saying and want to know more.
*Instructor Comment: It's a two-way deal. It's hard to fake interest. Every story is an opportunity for learning. The interest is real and the person knows that. It's a conversation, not an interview. A conversation with a point and a focus.	
To the Group	
How did you all feel watching that? Were you judging them?	• No! We were right there with them. • Felt connected. • Totally supportive.
Thank the coachee and acknowledge their courage in sharing: I really appreciate you going there and sharing that with us. That's not an easy thing to do. Can we have a round of applause for X? Thank you!	

Concluding the Debrief

Below are key points that should have been touched upon in the debrief already, but you can speak to them more here as you wrap up the debrief.

- Explain that you have been coaching. The kinds of questions you asked get to choices and motivations: Why this and not that? Why you and not others?
- There are events that happen that people forget about, or think are trivial and don't matter. So it takes someone else asking them questions—not like a scripted interview, but rather someone genuinely engaging with them in a back-and-forth, like a conversation. A lot of work in Story of Self is reflecting back on those moments—the origins of things people normalize. For example, if someone says: “I was always meant to be a doctor.” Were they? Did they come out of the womb wearing a little stethoscope? People put aside those moments that really are significant, so this is a work of recovering those experiences so that they can communicate them and enable others to understand them.
- A benefit that often comes with coaching is that coaches can understand themselves better. But this is inherently an interactive process: People will be learning both to coach and to tell stories, as you have been doing.

There's a Yiddish riddle: “Who discovered water?” The answer is: “I don't know, but it wasn't a fish.” It's *meant* to be funny. The point is that we are all fish in the water of our own stories. And unless we're interacting with someone who will ask those questions and probe to go beyond what is taken for granted, then it's very hard to see what we're in the midst of. This is not work a person can do alone in front of a mirror. They need an interlocutor—someone to speak with, to help them understand how things are landing with others. Remember: This is a relational practice!



“victims can only raise victims”



CHOICE
based in HOPE



CHALLENGE

OUTCOME



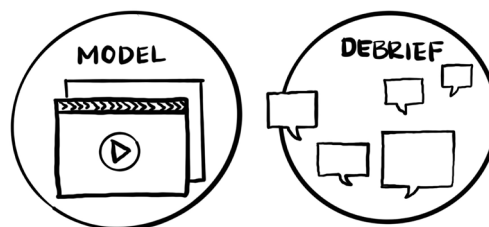
STORY of SELF

Amal Beydoun

Amal Beydoun: Video Debrief

[Click here to view a two-minute Story of Self.](#)

This is a two-minute Story of Self from a one-day Public Narrative workshop in Dearborn, Michigan, for Muslim-American leaders. Amal Beydoun had just come out of her small group breakout, where she brainstormed for five minutes, received some coaching, and then shared this story.



Learning Objectives

- 1 To examine story moments and how to bring them to life with vivid details and emotions as the Story of Self arc moves through moments of challenge and hurt, moments of hope, and moments of choice, connected to outcome.
- 2 To communicate context briefly and effectively in a narrative.
- 3 To explore the connection between story and calling.

Let's explore each objective in more detail.

1. To examine story moments and how to bring them to life.

- Challenge
 - Lies in a hospital bed (in contrast to friends).
 - Describes how she feels (like a loser).
 - Helps make the challenge feel more real.
 - Includes specific imagery that we can picture.
 - Illustrates the real emotions of the moment.
 - Contrasts what other kids are doing (studying, etc.) vs. what she is doing.
- Hope
 - Connects with her baby.
 - Highlights the moment where challenge meets hope!
 - Explores how she gets hope from her baby, who sees value in her that she can't see in herself, and that enables her to realize her own value.
 - Chooses not to be a victim anymore because victims only raise victims and she doesn't want that for her daughter.
 - Illustrates the real emotions of the moment.

2. To communicate context briefly and effectively in a narrative.

- Employs one to two sentences to set the context about her father and being an orphan as a result of war, but then dives deeply into the story moment (doesn't get carried away telling us about her background, but shows us).

3. To explore the connection between story and calling.

- Illustrates that although Amal does not get to her outcome, she is in fact a social worker who works with young women and girls.
- Demonstrates why she feels called to what she does.

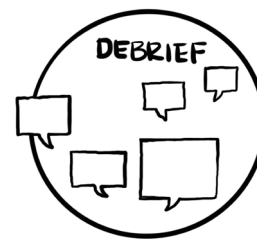
Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of the Amal Beydoun video. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. These questions are meant to be a foundation for your debrief, and you are encouraged to expand and customize the questions and comments for your own teaching and audience.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
How does she make the challenge real?	Talking about her father, being an orphan, contrast between her friends studying, sports, etc., and her in the hospital, made me think about where I'm at versus where she's at.
Where is she?	Hospital bed.
And you could imagine it, right? Picture it? How did she bring that moment to life?	Yes! Imagery, specifics. Talked about how she felt like a loser. You could imagine the bed and her longing to be outside.
*Instructor Comment: She does a wonderful job of setting the context in one to two sentences. She tells us about her father, but it gets real in a different way when she goes to the hospital.	
She draws attention to the contrast, doesn't she? What are other people doing?	Taking tests, doing finals, while she's alone, having a baby.
So, where does she get her hope?	She sees it in her child later—when the child sees her as a powerful person.
And what choice does that lead her to make?	She reflects on not calling herself an orphan any longer, choosing not to be a victim, that “only victims raise victims” and she doesn't want that for her child or herself.
*Instructor Comment: In many ways, our children embody our hope for the future—they are the future. Sometimes others see value in us that we don't see in ourselves. And that's kind of what happens here. Her child looks at her and Amal thinks, “Whoa! Wait a second.” It's a very powerful moment!	
One piece that's missing in her story is the outcome—she doesn't really get to it. But what do you think she does now, if you had to guess? What do you think her calling is?	• Something to do with women? • Not sure? • Helping teenage mothers?
*Instructor Comment and Closing: She's a social worker who works with young Muslim women and girls. Does her story help you understand why she would do that? Her outcome, and what she does today, is a clear extension of her own experience—an experience of redemption. She felt like a victim, then found the hope to make the choice to not be a victim anymore. It's an experience she had herself, and now she works with others, trying to help them. The point is that we have these moments. They aren't necessarily one moment of epiphany, but we have moments that are powerful and where we recognize both the challenges we face and our sources of hope.	

Story of Self: Large Group Debrief

In their small groups, learners practice telling stories and getting and receiving coaching. After this practice, it's important to return to the large group to hear two to four strong stories and debrief them together. Hearing and debriefing stories is an integral part of Public Narrative because it gives people the opportunity to practice applying their cognitive understanding of the framework to real stories and their own experience; it also helps them learn from the experience of their peers. Hearing a range of diverse stories together also creates a shared experience for the group, enabling them to feel not only the power of narrative, but also the collective power of experiencing them together.



The critical first strategic choice you make is about which stories to debrief with the entire group. Use specific criteria on which you and the coaches agree. A refresher with all the coaches before the workshop can be very helpful. Each coach should nominate the strongest story from their group—one that will be good for the learning of the group (see Public Narrative Coaching Guide on page 55 for tips on ranking stories). You select stories from those nominations. Along with the strength of the story, be sure to consider how representative of the entire group the storytellers are, at the least in terms of gender, race, and nationality.

Be specific, strategic, and direct with your questions to continue modeling what strong coaching looks like. Help learners understand the elements of craft, and what Public Narrative is and is not. Your job is to facilitate the learning of the entire group, and not get lost in coaching a particular story. This requires strategic choices:

- How will coaching this storyteller help the group's learning?
- Which elements of the craft can you best teach with each story?
- How can you elicit responses from the group to lift up the points you hope to make?
- How can you best engage your group in the moment—in a discussion, or with more targeted, directive questions?

You can structure the general flow of your debrief around the three-step debriefing model of observation, meaning, expanding. Ask:

1. Observations (What?): *What happened? What did you see/notice?*
2. Meaning (So what?): *Why is that important? How does it connect to the craft?*
3. Expanding (Now what?): *What are you taking away as you continue working on your own stories? How will you apply this in the future?*

Structure your debrief around the three-step model of observation, meaning, expanding. Ask: What? So what? Now what?

Keep in mind that your intention is to lift up elements of the framework in action in the stories you hear and do some coaching where key elements may be missing. The questions you ask will vary depending on the content and craft of the stories shared (namely, what's present and what's absent), so be sure to listen closely, take some notes, and make strategic choices as instructor, noting both the strengths of the story and areas where you can do some coaching.

Below are some guiding questions to use when debriefing Stories of Self. Choose the questions that feel relevant, based on what you hear in each story and the direction you want to take the debrief. (Note: The questions next to the orange boxes apply across most contexts, so you can use them to start and end your debriefs. The questions next to the gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, offer different options for questions based on what you want to highlight and/or coach as you debrief each story.) Remember to thank each storyteller after they share their story!

Section	Debrief questions
Opening Questions <i>(Don't spend too much time on these!)</i>	• Which words, phrases, or images moved you in that story? Why? How did it feel? • What worked in this story? • Do you understand who this person is? • Do you get what they are about? [key question] • Do you know why they care? • When did you get that? • What more did you want to know?
*Calling (and Outcome)	To the group: • Do we know what they do today? [outcome] • What is their calling? Do you know what they are called to do? • When did you hear that? To the speaker: • Where did your sense of injustice come from? Why do you care? • Where does your hope come from? • Why did you choose to fight instead of being overwhelmed by it? • When did you learn you could do something about it? • How did you get through it? Was there anyone who was a model? What inspired you? • We get how you learned this. Why do you want to enable others to learn?
*Challenge	• When did you hear a challenge in that story? – Could you feel the challenge? When? – How did they bring the challenge alive?
*Choice	• What choice did they make? What happened? What was the outcome? • Why did they make that choice? How do you know?
*Values	To the group: • What value/s did you hear in this story? When? In which moments? To the speaker: • Is that what you were trying to communicate? • [If not]: What values were you trying to share?
*Hope	• Was there hope in their story? • Where did we hear the hope? • [If not]: We heard a clear challenge in your story—how did you get through that? Where did you get the courage? Was anyone there who helped you? How?

Section	Debrief questions
*Origin	• Did we hear an origin story here? When? What happened? • Do you understand when they learned to care? – When did that become clear? If there was no origin, and you want to coach the storyteller briefly: • You talked about X... but when did you really become interested in that? • Where had you seen that before? • Why did it mean so much to you? • When's the earliest time you realized you cared about that? What happened? • Who helped you realize that?
*Story Moments	Teaching from a strong story moment—to the group: [Elicit and lift up the details that really worked.] • We heard a clear story moment here, right? • What do you remember? • What happened? Could you picture it? • How did they make it real? • We were right here with them! How did that moment make you feel? Coaching to a story moment—to the storyteller: [Help the storyteller get specific, and ask questions that flesh out the details.] • You mentioned X happened a lot: Do you remember one particular example? What happened? • You mentioned that X happened, but can you take us to a moment? • How old were you? • When was it? Do you remember where you were? • What did the room look like? Where were you standing? • Who else was there? What did they do? Do you remember what they said? • What happened?
Optional Closing Questions after Each Storyteller	To the group: • What were you left wondering about? • What more did you want to know? • What further questions did you have for the speaker? • Where were there gaps in the story? • Were there dots that you wanted connected? Thank the storyteller for sharing their story, noting the courage and bravery it took to share.
Wrap-Up Questions	After all storytellers have shared, take a step away from the specific stories to debrief Story of Self more broadly. • What are you taking away about what makes a good Story of Self? • What did you learn from a craft perspective? • What are you taking away about the elements of a Story of Self?

The background of the entire page is a detailed, white line-art map of the Harvard University campus, overlaid on a solid dark red background. The map shows the complex layout of buildings, streets, and green spaces across the campus.

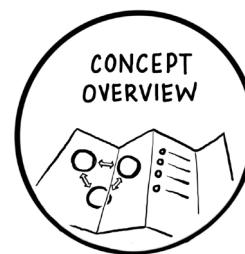
SECTION 3

Story of Us

Story of Us: Concept Overview

Why Tell a Story of Us?

Public Narrative is about enabling others to join a person by choosing collective action. We know that a Story of Self is about them, and a Story of Now is a call to action, but there is no collective action without a collective. And there is no leadership without those whom one is leading. That's where the Story of Us comes in.



People actually tell more Stories of Us than any other kind of story: at family dinners, athletic events, over drinks, during breaks in a meeting. They often begin with: “Remember the time that....?” Or “Did you see when.....?” They recall moments of significance that people experienced together. They may be funny, sad, regretful, or inspiring, but they are a way folks can celebrate values they share, reminding them of their “Us-ness.”

The goal of a Story of Self is to enable others to understand the speaker—to feel connected to them. The goal of a Story of Us is to enable them to understand each other: to experience the solidarity of becoming an Us. It articulates a specific narrative moment shared by their Us—a specific challenge they faced, choice that they made, and outcome they experienced.

It may have occurred the same day or a year ago, or it may be a moment they shared as a nation, as a member of a faith community, etc. It must include the people in the room, but it need not be limited to them. For example, many people recall the moment on 9/11 when they heard about the Twin Towers, or the day JFK was assassinated, or watching the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Others may recall the birth of their first child, when they got their first job, when they signed up for your program, when they got accepted, and so on. These moments may hold meaning for the group because they can be an experience of shared values: an element of a shared identity.

A collection of people who share experiences is not automatically an Us. Shared experiences are essential in forming an Us, but interpreting the meaning of those events through story is actually a critical leadership practice. For a group to become an Us, a storyteller must interpret the shared experiences of the group in a way that highlights values and meaning, enabling people to feel connected to the values they share, and as a result, to each other. The articulation of shared narrative moments helps construct collective identities, which helps people feel a sense of solidarity, like they're in it together. Solidarity empowers and motivates people to join together to take collective action, and is crucial for the practice of leadership more generally.

Remember: Public Narrative is about leadership, so it's not about choosing any Story of Us moment; rather, it's about telling the story of a real shared experience when the group confronted disruption, and how they dealt with that (whether they reacted with fear or responded with agency). What ultimately happened? And what does that say about what the group values? The goal of a Story of Us is to create a sense of hopefulness and agency within the group, reminding them that they, as a collective, have already acted on their shared values in the past, and they're capable of doing it again.

The key elements of a Story of Us mentioned above are described in more depth below.

A Story of Us Is Still a Story

While the purpose of a Story of Us is to enable a group to feel connected to each other, it is still a story! It's not about describing or explaining shared values and choices; like a Story of Self, it unfolds in a story arc, with a shared challenge the group faced, a shared choice they made, and the outcome of that choice, which reflects the values of the group, and locates the hope within the group itself. Think of a Story of Us as a story of overcoming: "We, as a group, have faced X [challenge], but in the face of that challenge, we overcame because we did Y [choice], which means we are the kind of people who (care about) Z... [outcome/hope]."

Listeners should be able to picture themselves in the story: to see what the speaker sees, hear what the speaker hears, and feel emotionally connected to the story. Speakers must tell stories, not tell about stories.

Listeners should be able to picture themselves in the story: to see what the speaker sees, hear what the speaker hears, and feel emotionally connected to the story. Speakers must tell stories, not tell about stories. Consider the difference in the following examples:

- Telling about a moment: "We've sat here, told our stories, supported each other, listened to each other's stories, and been there for each other."
- Showing a moment: "When my coach turned to me and said 'You're next,' my throat went dry. I heard my heart beating loudly in my chest and I thought, 'I can't do this.' I can't share this personal moment with a group of strangers. But as I looked around at each of your faces—your encouraging eyes, your warm smiles—how you were leaning into the table, waiting to hear what I had to say, I felt a sense of warmth. I took a breath, and the words came out. As I spoke, my voice still trembling, I saw you nodding, and tearing up—I knew I was safe. I could feel you all really hearing my story, and I knew that this group could really hold each other."

Both examples lift up the same values in the group, but the second is grounded in a clear moment, describing what was felt, seen, and experienced, rather than mentioning what happened. The key for the speaker is to remember the moment themselves as they tell the story. They should be specific, use rich descriptions with sensory information, identify the moments of shared choice and challenge, share the emotions they felt, share the emotions that they saw other people feeling, and say what it tells them about the group (the outcome)—and why the group gives them hope!

Connecting People to Each Other

With a Story of Self, the speaker's goal is to connect with each individual so that they understand the speaker and their values, which helps others understand why the speaker cares about the issue on which they're calling them to action.

A Story of Us connects the individuals in the audience with each other. A critical element of creating an Us is identifying specific, meaningful moments the group has shared that reveal their values: a challenge the group faced, a choice they made, the outcome, and what that says about the group and who they are. These may be big moments, but often they are small moments that can be unpacked to tell a powerful story of a group. It's not enough to simply describe any shared experience; a Story of Us focuses on moments in which the group made choices together in the face of challenge or disruption, even if implicit (what they did) rather than explicit (formal decision-making). A person's values are evident and experienced in moments of choice and in the actions that they take: That's how they construct who they really are as a group.

Remember the goal of a Story of Us is to cultivate the hope and efficacy within the group so they feel motivated to join together in collective action. Humor can be very useful in crafting a Story of Us; humor often draws people in, helping them remember the experiences being communicated, how they felt, and what they meant to the group.

Experiential Us vs. Categorical Us

There is a crucial distinction in a Story of Us between a categorical Us and an experiential Us. An experiential Us is defined by the experience of values shared, which is often rooted in common experience (e.g., not “We all have brown hair,” but “We all know how it feels to be left out—remember what happened to X the other day? How did we respond? Did we sit by and do nothing? No... remember how good we felt.”). That says something about who they are as a group.

It can be hard to understand the difference because people sometimes think of the various “Us-es” they belong to in categorical terms. For example: “I’m a pianist, I’m a student, I’m an organizer.” These groupings are categories, and while they do describe people, they don’t call upon specific experiences, and therefore lack both the emotional connection and any indication of what they value. How much more gripping is it to describe, as a pianist, the first time they sat on a stage, their legs shaking beneath the piano, the silent crowd, and the rush they felt as their fingers first touched the keys. Or as a student, the late nights spent before an exam, a giant mug of coffee in their hand, eyes glued to the computer screen, fighting sleep as they review pages and pages of notes. Or for an organizer to describe the first time they hesitantly lifted their hand to knock on a stranger’s door, the relief they felt when they were invited inside, and the moment of truth a few months later, as they stood in an overpacked room, watching the numbers come in for the candidate they’ve been supporting, feeling proud of the work they’d done as a community.

By the Story of Us section of a training, the participants have already shared several moments with each other. For example: “Remember the time we sat quietly in our chairs watching “so-and-so” be asked question after question by the instructor, feeling so grateful it wasn’t us in the hot seat?” or “I remember when I began telling my story in our small group. I could barely breathe, I was so nervous. Then I looked up and saw four warm, smiling faces staring across me at the table, waiting to hear what I had to say, and I felt a sense of relief, and suddenly the words came tumbling out.”

These are experiences that people have shared that might start to bind them together into an Us. When others hear about experiences instead of categories, it helps them connect to the moments themselves, often enabling them to relive the emotions and feel connected to the values the emotions bring out in them. Just giving a list of categories that people belong to may engage their intellect, but it won’t do much for their imaginations or emotions, which are both essential in really creating an Us. That said, it may be a helpful starting point for a group to think of the categorical “Us-es” they identify with (as they may be more familiar with these) to establish a sense of collective identity. From there they can begin to explore real experiences they’ve shared (perhaps as part of those categorical groups), enabling them to move from a categorical Us to a more experiential Us.

The Us in the Room

Everyone is part of many “Us-es” in life. When learning the craft of Public Narrative (i.e., in a workshop or class setting), people tell stories about the Us in the room: the unique people, experiences, and values that are present in the moment. The experiences they draw on, however, need not be limited to the current experiences of the time they have literally been in each other’s presence.

As noted earlier, a speaker can also draw on shared moments from larger narratives (of organizations, cultures, religions, countries, world crises, etc.) that they believe people in the room may have also experienced, albeit in different places. For example, in 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic was a shared experience for people all around the world. While they may be experiencing it differently, everyone alive in 2020 is part of the global Us facing the challenge of the coronavirus and its damage, in some capacity.

One way to think of these different levels of “Us-es” is to imagine a Wi-Fi signal, with “Us-es” starting at the local level and moving outward:



- Actual moments shared: Moments experienced together in the same space, whether in person or virtual (e.g., moments in a workshop, moments from a small group, moments in a class, at a party, in a meeting, at the same rally, etc.)
- Moments shared individually but as part of a larger community or group (e.g., experiences from a program cohort, an organization, a theater group, a religious practice, fans of a specific sports team, etc.)
- Moments that connect more broadly, like moments in history (e.g., September 11, 2001; the COVID-19 pandemic; the fall of the Berlin Wall; the threat of climate change; a particular election night), or broader human experiences (mothers giving birth; grieving the unexpected death of a sibling, a parent, or a child; sending a child to college, etc.)

People sometimes want to craft a Story of Us for a different group they work with, but there are three reasons it's important to focus on the people in the room:

1. They can see whether or not the story actually works. When the speaker tells a Story of Us for the Us in the room, you can ask the listeners whether they felt connected to each other. It's not hypothetical or abstract, it's real. By gauging the response in the room, the speaker will know what worked in their story and where they need to keep working on it.
2. Learning to identify and articulate moments they've shared actually creates a sense of “Us-ness” and can bring the group closer together in a matter of moments. Even if the group has only been together for a short period of time and feel like they don't know each other well, that's okay! There are still specific moments of experience they have shared (even within the context of the workshop: you can remind them of the public coaching they experienced earlier, or when they drafted their Stories of Self, the moment they shared and heard stories of their peers for the first time, etc.). Reminding them of moments they felt challenges (e.g., doubt, fear, uncertainty, resistance) and the collective choices they made (to share, listen, show up and be there for each other) can uplift the values of this group.
3. Telling a Story of Us for any Us, even if this is not the group you want to connect with, is a really valuable way to learn the craft. As a leader, there are times when a person is faced with the challenge of telling a Story of Us to a group they may not know well (as we saw in the example of James Croft), so this is a valuable skill to practice: the leadership challenge of making a group feel like an Us.

When crafting a Story of Us, it's important to focus on the people in the room.

Story of Us: Instructor Notes

Note: Below is a basic template of Instructor Notes for teaching Story of Us. You are encouraged to expand upon these basic notes for yourself and for the audience you're teaching. Review the Story of Us: Concept Overview and use other resources in the guide to customize these notes, adding in your own style, questions for audience interaction, etc.

Remember to engage your learners in a dialogue as you teach this session, asking them questions, inviting them to reflect and contribute, and drawing their responses and experiences into your lecture.

Learning Objectives: Story of Us

- 1 To evoke shared values in the group and create an Us by exploring Us moments.
- 2 To understand that a Story of Us has a story arc that moves through moments of shared challenge, hurt, hope, choice, and outcome.
- 3 To underscore that a Story of Us is experiential not categorical.
- 4 To reveal that a Story of Us is constructed with the Us in the room.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Us Total Time: 25-30 mins
10 mins	Framing: What Is a Story of Us? What is an Us? • You tell a Story of Self to enable others to understand the values that call <i>you</i> to public life. We tell a Story of Us to enable people to “understand <i>each other</i>”—and provide evidence that a group shares values. • Telling a Story of Us can help a group find courage and solidarity to act on their values, create a sense of community among individuals, and offer hope that they can make a difference. When do people tell Stories of Us? • They tell them all the time! Remember the cautionary tale of Uncle Charlie or Aunt Harriet? These stories provide examples of what to do and not to do and remind us of our values. Stories of Us are common in team huddles on the sports field or on the eve of battle. Telling these stories develops a sense of “Us-ness” within families, communities, or faith traditions. Narrated as moments, Stories of Us describe challenges we faced, obstacles we overcame, values that were tested, and lessons we learned that made us who we are as a group. • 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 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?

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Us Total Time: 25-30 mins
	A Story of Us is Still a Story • The Story of Us is still a story. It needs a story arc with a challenge, choice, and outcome—only in a Story of Us, the protagonist is the group! You are talking about a shared challenge, a choice made in the face of that challenge, and what that ultimately says about us as a group: Why does that make you hopeful? • You can think of a Story of Us as a story of overcoming, where the group is the protagonist: We, as a group, have faced X (challenge), but in the face of that challenge, we overcame because we did Y (choice), which means we are the kind of people who (care about) Z... (outcome/hope). [See Story of Us Moments on page 70.] Experiential Us vs. Categorical Us • An important distinction within Story of Us is the difference between an experiential Us and a categorical Us. Stories of Us describe shared experiences rather than “categories” like race, gender, language, etc. So rather than saying, “We are all students,” a Story of Us is rooted in the specific <i>experiences</i> of what it means to be a student. • When we hear about <i>experiences</i> instead of <i>categories</i>, it helps us connect to the moments themselves, often enabling us to relive the emotions and feel connected to the values they bring out in us. Just giving a list of categories that people belong to may engage their intellect, but it won’t do much for their imaginations or emotions, which are both essential in really creating an Us. Grounding stories in shared experience rather than categories creates greater opportunity for inclusion and solidarity. [See Categorical Us vs. Experiential Us on page 72.] Crafting a Story of Us in the Room • We all belong to many different “Us-es.” 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.” So, we craft Stories of Us based on the shared experiences of the people we are addressing. A key indicator of a good Story of Us is: Did we begin to feel like an Us? Did we feel connected to each other? When?
10 mins	Model Video and Debrief
	Model Video—Susan Christopher (3 mins) • Now we’re going to watch a two-minute example of a Story of Us and then we’ll debrief it. As a Story of Us it has a story arc based on choices. As you watch, pay attention to: • Which choices form the backbone of the story? • Why does she choose particular moments to bring alive? • Why does she end it as she does? Debrief (7 mins) [See Susan Christopher Debrief Guide on page 78.]

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Us Total Time: 25-30 mins
5 mins	Group Brainstorm and Conclusion
	Engage the group in a short brainstorm Let's take a moment to brainstorm the Story of Us for this group. Remember, we're talking about THIS Us (the Us in this room). <i>(*Note: This is true even if they've just met one another in this training!)</i> Our Story of Us will be about what makes this group special or powerful, and when we've acted on our values already. *Instructor Note: First, elicit a few meaningful moments from the group. Get specific: When was it, who was there, what happened? Then, choose one where you feel the group has the most energy, and use that moment to unpack the rest of the elements of a Story of Us. This way, the group experiences how to tell a story that's grounded in experience rather than in abstract values. • When have you felt inspired by this group? <i>(Push for a specific moment, asking questions like: When? Where? What happened? Who was there? Do others remember that moment?)</i> • Challenge: Was there a challenge there? What was hard about that? What was the challenge? • Choice: So what did we do? What choice did we make at that moment? Why? • Outcome: What happened? What does that say about this group and what we value? • Hope: Why does that matter? Why does that make you hopeful about this group? <i>(Note: You might want to offer some examples relevant to your particular group: e.g., Do you all remember applying for this program? Do you remember the moment you got in? What did it take for you to be here today? Did you have to give anything up? Did you hear any stories that moved you? Experience anything in your small group?)</i> • Now you're going to have a chance to try this on for yourselves for the first time—time to get on the “bike” again in your small groups. Have a good practice and we'll see you back here in X minutes to hear some Stories of Us.



"Obama is the beginning of that hope again"

different generations mentoring each other



stay

commit!

HOPE!

STORY of US

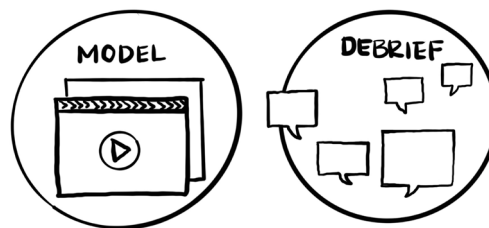
Susan Christopher



Susan Christopher: Video Debrief

[Click here to view a two-minute Story of Us.](#)

This is a two-minute Story of Us from a one-day Public Narrative workshop during a 2007 Camp Obama in Burbank, California. Susan Christopher had five minutes to brainstorm, practiced in her small group, and then shared this story.



Learning Objectives

- 1 To demonstrate the clear difference between individual challenges and choices, and shared challenges and choices.
- 2 To lift up values by sharing concrete experiences through story moments.
- 3 To locate hope in the room—in the Us.

Let's dig deeper into each of these learning objectives.

1. To demonstrate the clear difference between individual challenges and choices, and shared challenges and choices.

Susan describes her own challenges and choices in getting to where she is in the moment, which were also likely shared by many in the group before the workshop. She uses these to bridge from the Self to the Us, highlighting shared challenges and choices the group has already made. The arc she takes the group through in the story is one they can probably all relate to.

- Challenge: She's hesitant to join the Obama campaign. She's been disappointed before, has fear of picking another losing cause, she's busy (as a mom, has a job, going on vacation).
- Choice 1: Should I go? → She decides to go, see what happens, and says she can leave if she doesn't feel it.
- Choice 2: Should I stay? → She chooses to stay when she starts to feel hopeful again after hearing people share stories about joining in these causes before and feeling connected to them and remembering what they stand for.
- Choice 3: Should I commit? → She chooses to commit when she realizes that what they have created in the room is so powerful already. She realizes what they have built by coming together across differences—working, learning, and mentoring each other to work for a cause they are all called to.

2. To lift up values by sharing concrete experiences through story moments.

- Marshall talks about marching in Mississippi and working with Cesar Chavez, and her heart begins to beat faster. (Values: civil rights, justice.)
- Men in her small group wept; they were there the night RFK was shot and saw how hope was lost. They share how for them Barack Obama is the return of that hope, and Susan begins to feel her hesitation melt away. (Values: vulnerability, believing again, return of hope.)
- In her small group, a Catholic, a Muslim, a Protestant, and a Jewish man shared their personal stories, and she said she felt (in her language) “the pleasure of God” and how what brought them all together was so powerful. (Values: diversity as strength, mutual respect, solidarity, vulnerability.)

3. To locate hope in the room—in the Us.

- Rather than locating the hope in a victory for Obama, or in something external, Susan locates the source of hope in the room by saying, “this campaign has made us win already,” highlighting how what they have created is big, powerful, beautiful, and hopeful already, and it gives her the hope and faith to commit and work together.

Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

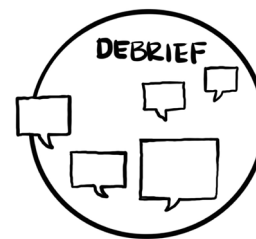
Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of the Susan Christopher Story of Us video. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. These questions are meant to be a foundation for your debrief, and you are encouraged to expand and customize the questions and comments for your own teaching and audience.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
What was the feeling in the room at the end of the story?	A sense of belief in the group. A feeling of hopefulness. Feeling powerful. Feeling together.
Let's go back to the beginning. Susan makes a few choices. What was the first choice Susan made?	Choosing to show up even though she was busy.
What was her next choice?	Choosing to stay. Choosing to participate, to share, to learn together.
What was the last choice she made?	Choosing to commit to the campaign.
*Instructor Comment: Do you think others in the room shared her challenges: the doubts of choosing to come? Choosing to stay? Didn't they make similar choices, to come, to stay? She's recalling her own experiences while creating a sense of shared challenges that were likely experienced by many others in that room, and lifting up the fact that they all chose to come and to stay, even if it wasn't easy. Do you think they came for similar reasons? Similar values? Like what?	
When did her hesitation first start to melt away? What was happening?	When Marshall started talking about Mississippi. Her heart beat faster. When men wept in her group, men who saw Bobby Kennedy shot, and said Obama was the return of that hope that was lost.
*Instructor Comment: Do you think others in the room remembered that moment? She's recounting a specific moment they all experienced together. Not mentioning it, but reminding them of what she saw, felt, heard. Very specific.	
What about her small group? What happened there?	Diversity! People shared stories across faith differences.
What specifically happened though? Does she just say "we had diversity"? Who was there? What images come to mind?	A Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, and Jewish man came together and shared their personal stories.
*Instructor Comment: She doesn't just name the value of "diversity" or "acceptance"—she connects it to a specific moment where she experienced that value in her own small group. Where the group demonstrated that they shared the value of listening to each other, finding value in difference. Others were all in their own small groups—do you think they experienced similar things that made them feel more connected to their own groups as well as the larger Us in the room?	

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
Do you remember how she describes what she felt?	She said, <i>"In my language, I felt the pleasure of God."</i>
Why do you think she did that? Saying "in my language"?	Because she didn't want to exclude anyone—she was acting on the value she's describing, of inclusivity, acceptance, respect of difference.
She then talks about a "generational healing for our nation." So what about the different generations? What are they doing?	They're learning together, mentoring each other.
*Instructor Comment: Right. Again, she's talking about actual experiences that happened with those people in that room! Not naming what the group cares about, but showing the group moments where they actually acted on their values. It's very specific—she's taking them to shared experiences, highlighting challenges that other groups may have handled differently and lifting up specifically how the people in this group responded—the choices they made.	
Why does she end it the way she does? Saying, "I don't care if Obama wins..." Where is the hope located? Out there, in Obama?	No! It's in the people in the room! In that group. She says they've won already by coming together.
*Instructor Comment and Closing: Yes, exactly. She's not locating the hope outside in some external thing, but right there, in the room—in that group of people. That room gave her a five-minute standing ovation after that speech, which gives us a sense of how they felt about it. Many times, on the eve of battle, or before a big sports match, you can hear leaders telling their people a Story of Us. The thing they usually have in common is they don't spend much time talking about the enemy or the other side or the competitor—the focus is on the people you have with you, on your team, your group, your spirit. On what you've overcome, on how you'll work together... they locate the sense of hope in the Us, rather than out there, in victory. Remember, the point of a Story of Us is to create that sense of Us-ness in the group, to help them feel hopeful about each other and solidarity around their shared values.	

Story of Us: Large Group Debrief

After learners have a chance to practice telling stories and getting coached in their small groups, everyone should return to the large group to hear a few stories and debrief them together. As noted, hearing and debriefing stories is an integral part of the Public Narrative craft because it gives people the opportunity to apply their cognitive understanding of the framework to real stories they hear, and to learn from their own experience as well as from their peers. Hearing a diverse range of stories together also becomes a shared experience for the group, enabling them to feel not only the power of narrative, but also the collective power of experiencing it together, ultimately creating a Story of Us moment. Ideally, it's recommended that you hear three to five stories, which should be nominated by the coaches from their small groups. Hearing multiple stories allows learners to see patterns across the stories, speaking styles, and content to identify what works and what is missing. When coaches nominate stories, they should identify the strengths, as the goal in this large group debrief is to hear a range of stories that showcase different strengths.



As the instructor, your job in the debrief is to facilitate learning for the entire group rather than get lost in the coaching of a particular story. Your questions should be specific, strategic, and instructive to help learners understand the elements of the craft, and what Public Narrative is and is not. You can do some coaching as a part of debriefing stories, if it feels like it will be helpful for the group to see. This involves making strategic choices: How much coaching of this story will help the group's learning? Which elements of the craft can you best teach with each story? How can you elicit responses from the group to lift up the points you hope to make? How can you best engage your group in the moment—in a discussion, or with more targeted, directive questions?

For a Story of Us debrief, you can either (1) hear one story, debrief it, hear another story, debrief it, and so on; or (2) you can hear all of the stories in a row, then debrief them altogether, highlighting the patterns and elements of the craft in action. Remember to structure the flow of your debrief around the three-step debriefing model of observation, meaning, expanding. Ask: (1) Observations: What happened? What did you see/notice? (2) Meaning: Why is that important? How does it connect to the craft? (3) Expanding: What are you taking away as you continue working on your own stories? How will you apply this in the future?

Below are some guiding questions to use when debriefing Stories of Us. Choose the questions that feel relevant, based on what you hear in each story and the direction you want to take the debrief. (Note: The questions next to the orange boxes apply across most contexts, so you can use them to start and end your debriefs. The ones next to the gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, offer different options for questions based on what you want to highlight and/or coach as you debrief each story.) Remember to thank each storyteller after they share their story!

Story of Us Debrief—Guiding Questions

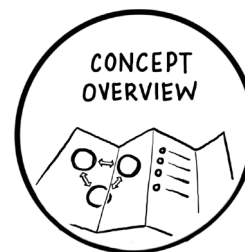
Section	Debrief Questions
Opening Questions	• When did you feel a sense of “Us-ness”? Specifically in what moments? • When did you feel connected to the speaker? • When did you feel connected to each other? Can you see the difference?
*Moments	• Which moments did you feel connected with? Could you see what was happening? Could you remember it? How did that make you feel? • Which moments made you feel hopeful about this group? Why?
*Challenge	• When did we hear a challenge? Did you connect with it? • What challenges did the group overcome?
*Choice and Values	• What were the choices this group made? • What does that say about the people in this room? • What values did you hear in this story? When?
Briefly Coaching to Better Stories	<i>If you hear Stories of Us that could become better models for the learning of the group (and the storyteller), you can do some quick coaching in the debrief.</i> Here are some common challenging and guiding questions: • Naming a value, not a moment: If you hear an <i>adjective</i> <u>about</u> a moment, coach the storyteller to create a story moment from the adjectives—e.g., “We heard you say that the group was “<i>empathetic</i>.” When did you actually see that? Who was empathizing? How do you know, and how did you see others experiencing that?” • Mentioning a moment without taking us there: If they mention a moment but don’t actually craft it, you can say: “You said that Rosi told her story with a lot of bravery—what did that look like? How did you know she was being brave? How did people respond? Who was there? Take me to what you were seeing at your table.” You can also acknowledge that they shared “a mention, not a moment,” then coach them to get more specific into the story moment.
Wrap-Up Questions	<i>*After all storytellers have shared, take a step away from the specific stories to debrief Story of Us more broadly.</i> • What did you see working through all these stories? • What are you taking away about the elements of a Story of Us? • What did you learn from a craft perspective? • What are the values/moments of hope we heard in these stories? • (*Note: This highlights the diversity of “Us-es” that can be constructed through narrative, even for the same group of people.)

The background of the entire page is a detailed, light-colored line drawing of the Harvard University campus map. The map shows the complex layout of buildings, streets, and green spaces, rendered in a minimalist style with thin black outlines on a white background. The text is overlaid on this map.

SECTION 4

Story of Now

Story of Now: Concept Overview



Why Tell a Story of Now?

The origin of Story of Now is Hillel's third question "If not now, when?" as well as Dr. Martin Luther King's speech at the 1963 March on Washington. Although many call this the "I Have a Dream" speech, its real name was "The Fierce Urgency of Now"—made urgent by all that went on in the summer of 1963 and the reluctance of the Kennedy Administration to act. Since people can't know the future or the ultimate results of their actions, action always requires risk, which is also why it requires courage.

The Story of Now is where story (why it matters), strategy (how people can act), and action (what do they do?) converge. The purpose is to motivate others to use their agency in choosing to act, in response to an urgent challenge to their values. The Story of Now links the power of the heart (values) with the power of the head (strategy) and the effectiveness of the hands (action). A Story of Now is addressed to a group's specific Us not only so they respond emotionally, but also so their resources can turn into the power needed to achieve the goals of the campaign. Campaigns often start with a Public Narrative workshop as a way of grounding the how (strategy) in the why (story).

A Story of Now transforms the present moment into a narrative moment. In this way it's different from the Story of Self and Story of Us, both of which bring past moments into the present and distant moments into the proximate one; it is about making the challenge real, the sources of hope real, and the choice to be made clear and real. It can be the kind of moment a person can look back on from the future—a moment in which they faced an urgent challenge, chose to act, and did—or did not—achieve their goals, and what they learned about themselves and the world as a result.

A Story of Now is about communicating the urgency and/or anger of an imminent assault on shared values so as to break through the habitual inertia and apathy of the status quo. Anger is the outrage people feel when they are confronted by sharp differences in the world as it is and the world as it should be. When linked with hope, solidarity, and self-efficacy, this tension can be a source of courage, enabling a mindful response (rather than a fearful reaction) to the challenge. But it can also provoke a need for retribution when linked with fear.

Once again, a Story of Now links why one must act (narrative) to how they can act (strategy) by offering a plausible action pathway linking the accessible (what they can do) to the significant (why it matters). A Story of Now concludes with an ask or a call to action, which specifies what the action is, when and where it is, and what will be done, and calls for visible commitment in the moment. The elements of a Story of Now are described in more detail below.

How Do You Tell a Story of Now?

Telling a Story of Now requires identifying a story moment that makes the urgency or the anger real. Like all story moments, this isn't done with slogans, labels, abstraction, or adjectives, but by engaging the visual, specific, concrete, and human. In the example of James Croft's Public Narrative, he shows the image of a young man jumping off the bridge in a precise, clear, and visual way. Later on in his narrative, he confronts listeners with the image of a loved one hanging from a tree in their backyard, an image reminiscent of lynching.

The Nightmare and Dream: Communicating the Challenge, Inspiring the Hope

The Story of Now is still a story. In a Story of Self and Story of Us, one aims to bring moments from the past alive in the present. The Story of Now is different in this regard: it is not a story of the past, but a story someone is constructing in the present, creating possible futures. Calling upon their Us to act with them is essential to make change.

The structure of a Story of Now is similar to the Story of Self and Story of Us: It communicates challenge, choice, and outcome through story moments with vivid details and imagery. Don't tell about the challenge by naming or describing it or using statistics—show it! Tell a story that engages your Us, enabling them to feel the challenge, feel the hope, feel that they can make a difference together, and can imagine how to do it.

- Challenge: What is the urgent challenge you nominate now? Who is really being affected by it? What does it look like? Feel like? What details and images will help listeners picture and imagine this challenge in a real way? Why is it so urgent?
- Outcome: What hopeful outcome could happen if the group acts together? What is the specific change they will make?
- Ask: What is the choice you're asking people to make? What are you asking them to join you in doing?

The challenge in the Story of Now can be found not only in the disruptive urgency or anger to which a group is responding, but also in the nightmare of the intolerable future that can happen if they don't act. On the other hand, what if they do act? What are plausible outcomes they can imagine (their dream)? By contrasting the nightmare and dream scenarios, a speaker can create tension between the two possible “endings” to the story, which can motivate people to take action toward the ending they'd like to see—and that they'll become a part of creating.

Two Kinds of Urgency

A key element of the Story of Now is communicating the urgency of the challenge one is confronting people with: It may be important, but to motivate people to act on it now, it must also feel urgent. There are two kinds of urgency—urgency of need and urgency of opportunity:

- Urgency of need is when a challenge is so dire and destructive that it requires a group to take action now (e.g., people being held in unsanitary conditions, abused, etc.).
- Urgency of opportunity comes from having a limited time to take action together (e.g., the election is just forty days from now, the class only has two weeks left together, the deadline for registering to vote is this Friday, etc.).

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The experience of either form of urgency usually only becomes real when it acquires a human face.

Hope: A Plausible, Strategic Pathway to Action

Although critical sources of hope are in the life experience of the Self and of the Us, in a Story of Now, creative strategy can contribute by framing a plausible pathway to action to realize the dream and banish the nightmare. It is a credible vision of how to get from here to there: how a person's Us can turn the resources they have into the power they need to achieve what they want. The strategic challenge, then, is to link the accessible (what their constituency actually can do) to the significant (the motivating goal they hope to achieve).

This vision of a plausible pathway can unfold one chapter at a time. The first step might be getting a critical mass of people to show up at a first meeting. Winning a small victory can enable people to experience their efficacy in making change, even if small to begin with. A small victory can become a source of hope if it is experienced as taking a step toward a significant goal. The Montgomery Bus Boycott that sparked the twentieth-century civil rights movement proposed walking to work instead of getting on the bus as a plausible first step, desegregating the buses and beginning to build the power to eventually banish the evil of institutionalized racism in America. We're still not there, but the success

A Story of Now is a credible vision of how to get from here to there: how a person's Us can turn the resources they have into the power they need to achieve what they want.

of this very specific way in which people acted together to successfully create their own source of power not only inspired others to do the same, but also developed the leadership that could take the next steps (including the young minister who chaired the boycott committee, Dr. Martin Luther King).

The choice offered must also be specific; it cannot be too vague (e.g., “We must all be better people”) or too diluted (e.g., “You can choose to do any one of these twelve things”), both of which wind up trivializing the actions. It’s not plausible that many people will actually do them, and even if they do, there is no mechanism for accountability—i.e., there’s no way to recognize whether their actions are making a difference or not. So those kinds of asks become more of a gesture or a suggestion rather than an actual call to strategic action. The choice in a Story of Now must be clear and meaningful (e.g., “We must all choose now: Do we commit to boycotting the buses until they desegregate, or not?”).

A Good Ask: Specific, Collective, Meaningful, Measurable, Plausible, Visible

Part of the creative responsibility of leadership is imagining how a person’s Us—the people in the room with them—might actually use their resources to act together to change a situation that seems intractable or distant. Think about the resources that exist within their Us. Ask the group to name the resources to which they have access—not just money, but time, skills, networks, organizations, etc. Perhaps they are from different parts of the world, speak multiple languages, have different skills, work in different fields, have diverse talents, have diverse networks, experiences? Or maybe they’re from the very community the speaker is working in, they have shared experiences, solid roots there, extended networks, a deep understanding of implicit norms of the culture? It’s important to get creative and think of a way a person’s call to action can actually draw on the resources in the room. Finally, a strong ask is specific, collective, measurable, significant, plausible, and visible, and it concludes with a commitment, really asking folks: “Will you join me in X?” Each of these characteristics are described with more depth in the chart below:

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Ask	Details
Specific	An ask should be specific enough to answer the questions what, where, when, how. What specifically is the speaker asking people to do, where do they need to be, when (date/time), and what will they do there?
Collective	An ask is collective because leadership is about bringing people together to achieve a shared purpose, and the power to achieve that purpose often requires acting together, not everyone on their own. As a leader, the speaker will ask them: “Will you join me in?” rather than telling them “YOU go do...” This is different from an “aggregate” ask, such as “everyone go and do a nice thing for a neighbor,” which scatters folks instead of enabling them to act together.
Measurable	An ask is measurable so that the people involved can actually see what difference they are making towards the end goal—towards the change they hope to achieve. As a result, they can also learn what is working, what isn’t, and how things could work better. This is why asking people to “Go think about something” is not effective: How will one know if they did it? If they did, what difference did it make? How many people need to think about it for change to actually happen? How will they know? Instead of asking them to think, what can the speaker ask them to do?

Ask	Details
Significant	If an ask is not significant, people won't see how taking this action could actually result in a meaningful outcome. If, for example, people are asked to “<i>Post a hashtag</i>” on social media when the end goal is to change policy, it's unclear how the act of posting a hashtag will impact policy or anything else. It's also important to distinguish between asks that focus solely on input or output. An ask that focuses on input is more about the commitment entailed (e.g., one hour/week, \$20 donation/month, etc.), in contrast to one focused on output, or impact (e.g., number of animals saved, number of families given shelter, number of homes built, etc.). Balancing output and input is crucial in crafting an ask that's motivating, doable, and impactful. People want to feel like they are doing something, like they are a part of something they care about. They should be given that chance!
Plausible	The ask must offer a plausible pathway to action, one that asks people to do something realistic—something they are capable of; it should draw on their talents, skills, and resources, and actually lead to a significant outcome. When people feel like their efforts will realistically make a difference in addressing the urgent challenge they're facing, it creates a sense of hopefulness and increases motivation to act.
Visible	Finally, an ask ends with a question mark as to whether or not people will make a real and visible commitment to act. An ask should include a visible sign of commitment. How will the speaker know who is joining them? Ask them to raise their hands, shake their heads, and sign up in the moment. Count the people in the room. Asking for a visible commitment is important for accountability, but also for motivation. When people in a group see others committing, they begin to feel solidarity and belief that if they act collectively, they can actually make a difference—this is a powerful source of hope and efficacy.

A good ask is not about asking people to do a favor for the storyteller, or manipulating people to do what they want; it's about communicating what's important to them and offering others who share those values a choice and an opportunity to take meaningful action together in the face of an urgent challenge.

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 a person is called to address a real challenge, a challenge so urgent they have motivated others to face it as well, then they also have a responsibility to invite others to join them 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: the story of a credible strategy. It starts with who and where the group is, and how they can, step-by-step, get to where they want to go. The hopefulness in a Story of Now is rooted in core values just as in the Story of Self and the Story of Us. It's translated into a strategic goal, a plausible pathway to action, and the solidarity of joining together for a clear, shared commitment.

Story of Now: Instructor Notes

Note: Below is a basic template of Instructor Notes for teaching Story of Now. You are encouraged to expand upon these basic notes for yourself and for the audience you’re teaching. Review the Story of Now: Concept Notes and use those and other resources in the guide to customize these notes, adding in your own style, questions for audience interaction, etc.

Remember to engage your learners in a dialogue as you teach this session, asking them questions, inviting them to reflect and contribute, and drawing their responses and experiences into your lecture.

Learning Objectives: Story of Now

- 1 To explore story moments through challenge, hurt, hope, choice, and outcome.
- 2 To understand that a Story of Us has a story arc starting with an urgent challenge (using vivid images: painting the nightmare/dream), a collective choice (the ask), and an outcome (the action/hope—or the dream).
- 3 To create a compelling experiential urgency of either need or opportunity, as well as a source of hope, often located within the life experience of the Us.
- 4 To offer a strategic pathway to action, one that is specific, meaningful, collective, and plausible.
- 5 To be grounded in values, in what the Self and Us authentically care about, so the learner feels enabled to respond to the challenge.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Now Total Time: 30 mins
10 mins	Origin of Story of Now What Is a Story of Now? • The Story of Now addresses Hillel’s third question: If not now, when? The goal of a Story of Now is to transform the present moment into a narrative moment: a moment you can look back on from the future, one in which you faced an urgent challenge, chose to act, and did—or did not—achieve your goals. The Fierce Urgency of Now • On August 23, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King gave a famous speech in Washington, D.C. Does anyone remember the name of that speech? While King’s speech is often referred to as “I have a dream,” the actual title is the “Fierce Urgency of Now.” We often recall his vision of what America could be—his dream—but 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. Where Strategy and Story Meet • With 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 because bringing the challenge alive involves making the story real, and a key element in creating hope is having a strategy: a credible vision of how to get from here to there.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Now Total Time: 30 mins
	• A Story of Now is still a story – Don't tell us <i>about</i> the challenge by describing it—show us who is impacted! We should <i>feel</i> the challenge, <i>feel</i> the hope, feel that we can make a difference together (outcome), and understand how to do it. As we will see, the Story of Now extends an invitation to respond by asking for a commitment (choice) to act. The Challenge: Why Is This Urgent Now, for these People in this Place? • When you tell a Story of Now, you need to make the challenge feel real through story moments, answering for your audience: – Challenge: What is the urgent challenge that we must face now? Who is really being affected by it? What does it look like? Feel like? What details and images will help us picture and imagine this challenge in a real way? Why is it so urgent? – Outcome: What hopeful outcome could happen if we act together? What is the <u>specific</u> change we will make? – Choice: What is your ask of people? What are you asking them to join you in doing? What's one concrete step we could take that would be meaningful in making the change we hope to achieve? • Communicating urgency is a key element of the Story of Now. Storytellers can create urgency in two ways: – Urgency of need—A problem is so important that you must do something now (e.g., <i>children being denied lifesaving healthcare because their parents can't afford it</i>) – Urgency of opportunity—You only have a short window to act and must do something now (e.g., <i>the election is just forty days from now</i>) • For example, James Croft describes a vivid image of a young man jumping off the bridge and calls on listeners to imagine people they care about hanging from trees in their backyards. Story moments can build urgency and draw emotional connections to the challenge. The Hope: How Can You Respond to this Challenge? What Difference Can You Make? • Consider how urgent challenge moments connect with the values you share with the group: – What values are threatened by this challenge? – How can you write a new story with a more hopeful ending? – What will it actually take to get from here to there? • The Story of Now helps people understand how they can positively impact the challenge and describes how acting together can create a more hopeful future. • Once again, the balance of challenge and hope is critical in motivating others to take collective action. If a Story of Now is all challenge with no hope, then listeners will likely feel despair, like nothing can be done, leading to inaction. Similarly, if the challenge doesn't feel real or urgent, then they won't understand why they need to act now, why it's important—again, leading to inaction.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Story of Now Total Time: 30 mins
	The Choice: Strategic Pathway to Action • The “choice” on 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 fifty-three things” (which makes each of them trivial). A meaningful choice requires action people can take now, action they can take together, and an outcome they can achieve. This specific ask invites people to respond to the challenge and requests commitment from the group. • Think about the range of experiences, expertise, and resources in the room. What plausible ways could this group turn their resources into the power they need to actually do something to confront this challenge? What feasible activity could they do together that draws on their resources? Story of Now is an invitation to “join me in” an activity the group could do together (collective action) instead of an activity that “you go do” independently. • Elements of a good ask: – Specific, collective, measurable, significant, plausible, and concludes with a visible commitment. Connection to Leadership • 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.
15 mins	Model Video and Debrief
	Show Model Video: Tejas Mowtani (2 mins) [See Debrief Guide: Tejas Mowtani on page 90] • Now we’re going to watch a two-minute example of a Story of Now and then we’ll debrief it. Look at how he deals with the question of urgency. Look at how he finds a source of hope. Look at how he comes up with an ask that could actually make a difference, that has real potential impact. Debrief (10 mins)
5 mins	Live Brainstorm and Conclusion
	• Instructor’s Note: After debriefing a model video for Story of Now, it’s often helpful to do a live brainstorm with the group to prime them before they go into practice groups. [See Story of Now: Live Brainstorm on page 91.] A Story of Now is the story of a credible strategy. It starts with who and where the group is, and how they can, step by step, get to where they want to go. The hopefulness in a Story of Now is rooted in core values just as in the Story of Self and the Story of Us. It’s translated into a strategic goal, a plausible pathway to action, and the <i>solidarity</i> of joining together for a clear, shared commitment. Now you’ll have a chance to try it on for yourselves and get some coaching. We’ll see you back here in X minutes to hear some Stories of Now in the large group. Have a good practice!

Story of Now: Live Brainstorm

It's a good idea to do a live brainstorming session for learners before they go into small groups to develop their own Stories of Now. This live brainstorm is helpful for a few reasons. It serves to:

- Prime the group to get their ideas flowing
- Model how to make a general challenge more specific
- Model coaching and highlight the elements of a Story of Now
- Acknowledge and explore the resources of the group
- Ground the Now in the room to inspire real, actionable asks that people can call upon in their own stories

To facilitate a live brainstorm, first ask participants to name some current challenges they are thinking about where they would like to move people to collective action. Invite several responses. Based on group interest and relevance as well as the depth of the challenge, gauge where the energy is and then select one person to engage with in a public coaching exercise. You can direct your questions at this person to help them get more focused on their Now, but it's often also helpful to elicit suggestions from the group.

The goals of this brainstorming session are to identify a challenge, coach a person to help them bring the challenge to life (through specifics and story moments), collaboratively brainstorm plausible pathways to action, and explore the resources in the room, how they could be used, and what a possible ask might be. Below are some guiding questions to help you facilitate this process.

Guiding Questions for a Story of Now Brainstorm

Section	Brainstorm Questions
THE CHALLENGE and URGENCY	• What's something you'd like to call people together to take action in changing? • What's the problem? • When did you start caring about this challenge? – What happened? – What made it real for you? (*Note: The three previous questions are intended to steer people away from instrumentally telling a "sob story" of someone they have no connection to.) • What will happen if we do nothing? • Why must we act now? What makes this urgent? • By when do we need to do something? Are there any deadlines or important dates coming up? • Is there an urgency of need? Of opportunity? • Who's really being affected by this problem? – How do you know? – What does it look like? – How many people are being affected? – Where? In what communities? – How can you make this feel real to people who don't know what's going on? – What's a story you can tell about this challenge?

Section	Brainstorm Questions
PATHWAY TO ACTION and HOPE	• What would change look like? • What's the first step you could take to make that happen? – What's one specific action that would help? – How many people would you need? – How many X... are needed to make a difference? – Where would you start? Where is the greatest need? • Why do you believe this would work? • Have you seen this work before? When? What happened? • What is the outcome to which you've committed?
RESOURCES IN THE ROOM	• What would you need to really make this happen? • What resources would that take? • What are the resources in this room? • Languages? • Backgrounds? • Fields of expertise? • Networks? • Skills? • Ideas? • Time? • Other?
THE ASK	• What specifically are you asking these people to do? • When is this taking place? • Where should they go? • How will you measure the action? • How does it connect to the problem you've described? • Do you know who's joining you?

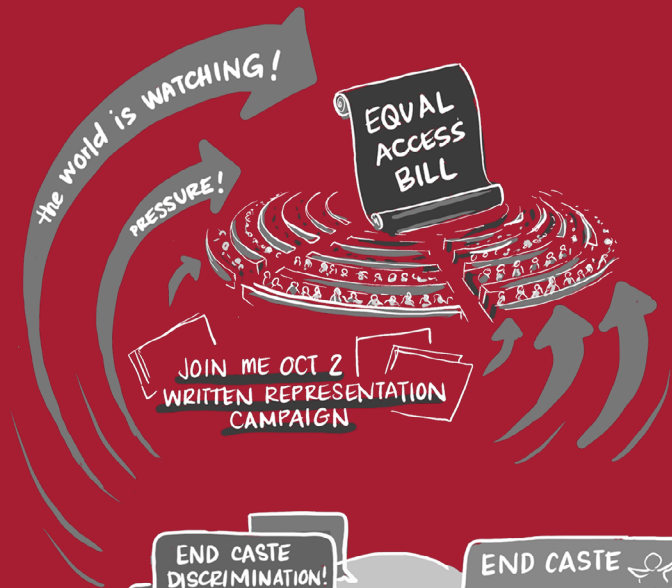
Below is a sample flow of questions asked during a live Story of Now brainstorm in a workshop. The proposed challenge to take action on was anti-racism.

- *What feels urgent about anti-racism?*
- *Why is it important to do anything about this?*
- *Whom does it affect?*
- *Pretend I literally couldn't care less about racism. How can you tell me a story of someone—a person, a community—whom this affects, that would help me care?*
- *Why do I need to act now on this, and not tomorrow, or next week, or next year?*
- *Who can bring me to a moment that makes it more specific?*
- *Given this challenge: What is one concrete step that we could take? What's an ask we could make?*
- *(If someone offers a list of possible actions): By listing many things, we actually do none of them! So, let's pick one, then it's something we KNOW we can all do together. Of all the things you listed, what's one that you'd want us to take collective action on?*

You are trying to take a big challenge, and bring it down to one specific moment, one specific action, that asks this group to act on what they value, what they're called to.



HOWEVER -
we can bring a full
stop to this
discrimination!



please?

"my birth was
my mistake."



RAISE YOUR
HAND IF YOU
ARE WITH ME IN
OPENING
THESE
DOORS!

STORY of NOW

Tejas Mowtani



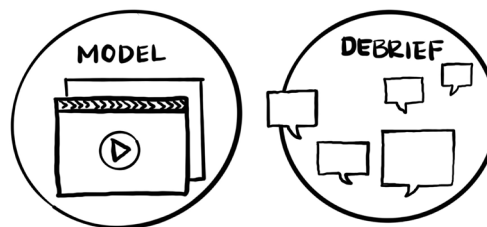
Tejas Mowtani: Video Debrief

[Click here to view a two-minute Story of Now.](#)

This video is about a young boy named Ram Charan who faced discrimination that had fatal consequences. He belonged to the Dalit caste in India, known as the “untouchables.”

India’s caste system was formally abolished in 1950; however, the system remains and deeply affects the lived experience of many. Dalits are born into a life of exclusion, human rights violations, and oppression.

Tejas tells a story that inspires urgency in his Us, students and teaching fellows participating in the Public Narrative: Leadership, Storytelling and Action course. Keep in mind, these students and teaching fellows are from all around the world. See how he finds a source of hope. Finally, look at how he comes up with an ask that is meaningful, collective, measurable, and specific.



Learning Objectives

- 1 To understand how to create urgency.
- 2 To understand that hope comes from a pathway to action.
- 3 To put out a collective call to action with a clear, collective, and specific ask.
- 4 To get the visible commitment required to make change happen.

Let’s explore each objective further.

1. To understand how to create urgency.
 - Tells us the story of Ram Charan, a nine-year old boy who is refused medical care because of the caste he was born into.
 - Inspires anger and outrage in the listeners when Ram is at the doors of the hospital but is turned away, and is later refused dignity even in death.
 - Forces listeners to experience the injustice emotionally, not just intellectually, by telling Ram’s story instead of sharing statistics. The experience of outrage and urgency motivates people to take action.
2. To offer a source of hope.
 - Communicates that organizing around the equal access law that is on the table in India can build pressure and change the reality of the million-plus Dalits who are facing discrimination. The hope comes from the pathway to collective action.
3. To put out a collective call to action with a clear and specific ask.
 - Asks those in India to join him at a specific time and place for a brainstorming session, and those across the world to engage in an international pressure campaign also at a specific time on Twitter.
 - Provides concrete pathways folks can commit to depending on where they are based and the resources of those in the room—students based in India, and students across the world.
 - Makes a collective call to action in that the only way to make a difference is if a critical mass of people come together both to brainstorm a strategy and to apply international pressure on decision-makers in India.
 - Builds pressure to come together to brainstorm ways forward, using their specific resources to build power, making it a meaningful call to action.

4. To get the commitment required to make change happen.
 - Provides a strategic pathway forward, but still has to “close the deal.” If Tejas simply leaves options on the table, what indication is there that people would do what he asks them to?
 - Asks those who are committed to “opening the door” for over a million Dalits to raise their hands, thereby making their commitment visible. The visible commitment is crucial because it is not only a sense of accountability; seeing others raise their hands also creates solidarity and power within the group, which is essential for the motivation to take collective action.

Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

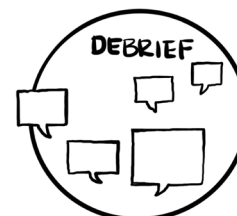
Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of Tejas’ Story of Now video. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. These questions are meant to be a foundation for your debrief, and you are encouraged to expand and customize the questions and comments for your own teaching and audience.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
How does he make the challenge urgent?	He tells us Ram’s story, and illustrates the pain of his father.
How did he bring the challenge to life, and make it real?	He shares the details of being at the door, and being turned away. He shares the details of Ram’s father carrying him in a bedsheet, and being turned away at the crematorium as well. He shares that it’s not just Ram facing this reality, but an entire group of people who face these indignities and horrors daily.
*Instructor Comment: That’s right. Tejas doesn’t lead with the statistics or talk generally about the discrimination that Dalits face: He tells us the story of one boy, and the outrageous actions that led to his death. The fact that there are over a million Rams at the doorsteps being denied care further illustrates the urgency that Ram’s story inspires in us.	
Where is the hope in this story?	He helps us to see that there is a way to possibly change the realities of many other Rams, specifically in accessing healthcare and dignity in death. A law is on the table for consideration, and the hope that this law could be passed inspires us to act.
*Instructor Comment: Yes, exactly. Hope in the Story of Now often comes from a pathway to action. A clear pathway to action enables us to visualize a way forward in the face of an urgent challenge. We can see the values in this story, values such as equitable access to healthcare and burial sites, and this pathway enables us to find a way to bring those values to life.	
What are you being asked to do? How does he draw upon the resources in the room with his ask?	There are two asks here for the different folks on the call: The first ask is for fellow Indians to come together for a meeting to begin to brainstorm a strategy for a written representation campaign to the Health Ministry. The second ask is for the rest of the students to come together online, at a specific time and date on Twitter, to post photos of solidarity.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
Is it clear how this ask will impact the challenge?	The first ask is a first step in gathering folks who can meet physically in India to brainstorm a written representation campaign to demonstrate the collective outrage and demand for change. The second ask is to demonstrate international solidarity, which will put pressure on the decision-makers to make a choice that values the dignity and humanity of Dalits.
How does he make the ask visible?	He asks folks to raise their hands to demonstrate their commitment to one of the asks.
*Instructor Comment: Right, asking for a visible commitment in the moment is important—it shows the leader who is committing, for accountability, but more importantly, it shows the group the collective power they have among themselves. As people see each other raising their hands, they can begin to feel a sense of hope and power in one another: They're in it together and begin to feel that they can actually make a difference. Now, it's your turn to write a Story of Now. How will you make the challenge real and urgent, by telling us the story of who is affected by the injustice you want to organize around? How will you make hope palpable through a strategic pathway to action? And how will you craft a specific, measurable, impactful, collective, and visible ask that's rooted in the resources of your Us?	

Story of Now: Large Group Debrief

After learners have practiced telling stories and receiving coaching in their small groups, they return to the large group to share a few stories and debrief them together. It is an opportunity both to consolidate the learning of the group and for the presenters to “get on the bike” a second time. Hearing and debriefing stories is an integral part of the Public Narrative craft because it gives people the opportunity to apply their cognitive understanding of the framework to real stories they hear and to learn from their own experience and from their peers. Make time to hear two to four storytellers who have been nominated by their small group coaches. By debriefing multiple stories learners can both see patterns across the stories, and identify what works and what is missing.



Your job in the debrief is to facilitate learning for the *entire* group, not to get lost in the coaching of a particular story. Ask questions that are specific, strategic, and instructive and can help learners understand the elements of the craft, and what Public Narrative is and is not. You can do some coaching as a part of debriefing stories, if it feels like it will be helpful for the group to see. This involves making strategic choices: How much coaching of this story will help the group's learning? Which elements of the craft can you best teach with each story? How can you elicit responses from the group to lift up the points you hope to make? How can you best engage your group in the moment—in a discussion, or with more targeted, directive questions?

For a Story of Now debrief, it's best to debrief after each story, then hear the next story, debrief it, and so on. Unlike with the Story of Us (where it can be helpful to debrief all the stories together), Stories of Now tend to be quite different from each other, so it's a good idea to allow each story its own time for debrief. The Stories of Now shared may also need some coaching around the ask, around urgency, or around other elements of the craft that can be helpful for the group to see and learn from together. Inform the group ahead of time to notice when they feel a sense of urgency, and in the debrief, ask them whether they actually feel compelled to act for each of the asks; remind them that honest answers are most helpful for their peers to develop their stories.

Remember to structure the flow of your debrief around the three-step debriefing model of observation, meaning, expanding, by asking: (1) Observations: *What happened? What did you see/notice?* (2) Meaning: *Why is that important? How does it connect to the craft?* (3) Expanding: *What are you taking away as you continue working on your own stories? How will you apply this in the future?*

Below are some guiding questions for debriefing Stories of Now. Choose the questions that feel relevant, based on what you hear in each story and the direction you want to take the debrief. (Note: The questions next to the orange boxes apply across most contexts, so you can use them to start and end your debriefs. The questions next to the gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, offer different options for questions based on what you want to highlight and/or coach as you debrief each story.) Remember to thank each storyteller after they share their story!

Section	Details
Opening Questions	• What, precisely, is the speaker asking you to do? • Do you know where and when you have to do it? • Was it clear what the challenge was? – Could you picture it? – Did it feel real? When? Why? – What images/moments resonated with you? – Do you know who's being affected? • Was this a story or were they telling us facts and statistics? When did it feel like a story? What moments made it feel real?
*Urgent Challenge	• Did you feel a sense of urgency? – When? In what moments? – Do you know why you need to act NOW? – Was it an urgency of need? Of opportunity? – [If not]: What would make this feel more urgent? Coaching the Storyteller: • This is an important problem, but why do people need to act now? • What happens if they don't act? Who is being affected? What does that look like? Can you paint the picture for the group? • Are there any significant deadlines or events coming up that could add some urgency?
*Hopeful Pathway to Action	• What about a sense of hope? – Was there a clear pathway to action? What was it? – What made it feel hopeful? What moments? What could you really imagine? How did it make you feel? – Is the proposed action actually going to lead to change? – How do you know? • Do you feel compelled to act? Why? – What will happen if you act? (Did you get a sense of the dream scenario?) – What if you don't act? (Did you get a sense of the nightmare?)

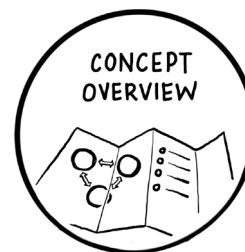
Section	Details
*The Ask (Call to Action)	• What exactly are they asking you to do? • Does the ask actually address the challenge? How? – How did they make that clear? • Does the ask draw on the resources in this room? – On the talents, characteristics, resources specific to this group? – Was it collective? – Was it specific? – Do you know what to do, when, and where to go? Next steps? – Measurable? – Meaningful? – Plausible? • Would you do it? Would you really do it? [Coaching a Weak Ask] To the Group: • What would make it more compelling? • What do you want to know more about? • What were you left wondering about? To the Storyteller: • How many people do you need? What would make a concrete difference? • Where is this happening? When? What day? What time? • What will they do? • How can people come together to do this instead of asking them to act individually? • How can you know who will join you? Ask them! Can you make it visible? • If people want to join, what's their next step? Do they know what to do?
Wrap-Up Questions	<i>*After all storytellers have shared, take a step away from the specific stories to debrief Story of Now more broadly.</i> • What are you taking away about the elements of a Story of Now? • What makes an effective Story of Now? • What did you learn from a craft perspective? • What really helped to create a sense of urgency? • What helps make the challenge real? The hope real? • What makes a good ask?

The background of the entire page is a detailed, light-colored line drawing of the Harvard University campus map. It shows various building footprints, streets, and green spaces, all rendered in a minimalist, schematic style. The map is oriented with North at the top.

SECTION 5

Linked Narrative

Linked Narrative: Concept Overview



Why Tell a Linked Narrative of Self, Us, and Now?

A Linked Narrative brings the Self, Us, and Now together with each part playing a critical role. We have learned to craft each of the components individually, but Public Narrative is only a leadership practice when a speaker draws all three pieces together into a coherent, cohesive, and compelling values-based narrative. In the simplest terms, a Linked Narrative communicates why a person cares (Story of Self), why others care (Story of Us), and how what they care about is now being threatened (Story of Now). The goal is to create an experience of their values (Story of Self), the values of the people they hope will join them in collective action (Story of Us), and the values that are being threatened by the urgent challenge(s) they're facing that require hopeful action (Story of Now).

Remember, a critical element of Public Narrative, and of leadership more generally, is agency: the emotional capacity to make mindful choices. When people feel a sense of agency, they can experience disruptive anxiety as a challenge (something with which they can engage) as opposed to a threat (something from which they must flee). A person's emotional capacity for agency then depends on the extent to which they can mobilize hope, solidarity, and self-worth to counter fear, isolation, and self-doubt. In this way, Public Narrative enables people to access and communicate the emotional content of their values.

How to Tell a Linked Narrative

A Linked Public Narrative combines the Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now in a coherent and cohesive narrative. For the narrative to be coherent, all the pieces must fit together in a way that makes sense to the listener; it cannot be three unrelated stories. Public Narrative is a framework not a formula, so the order of the stories (Self, Us, Now) can be varied and played with, as long as they make sense and flow together in a clear, cohesive way. In a Linked Narrative, the three elements (Self, Us, Now) are told through story moments with all the elements of the craft present: challenge, choice, outcome, and hope. People are telling the stories, not telling about the stories.

An effective Linked Narrative should answer the following questions for the audience (the Us the speaker is trying to call to action):

- Story of Self: Do people understand what this person is all about? Do listeners know what the speaker values and cares about and why? When did the speaker learn to care?
- Story of Us: Do people in this room share that same value? How do listeners know that? Did the story make them feel more connected to each other? What moments did they share about the group that show they care?
- Story of Now: Do listeners know what challenge the speaker is asking them to take action on? Is it clear what the speaker wants them to do and what impact it will have? Do listeners feel compelled to act because something they hold dear is threatened? Do they know what happens if they don't act (the nightmare)? What could the future look like if listeners do act (the dream)? Is there a sense of urgency? Must people act now? Is there a clear ask?

Interdependence of Self, Us, and Now

As noted above, in a Linked Public Narrative, the elements of Self, Us, and Now are as interdependent as the legs of a three-legged stool. Each story part must be strong for the linked story to “stand.” Imagine that a participant has a strong Self and Now, but a weak Story of Us: Their listeners may understand what they care about and what they hope to do about it, but if they don’t feel connected to the story and to each other, why would they want to join that person? Consider, then, what happens when a person has a strong Us and Now with a weak Self: The group may feel connected to each other and compelled to take collective action, but what reason do they have to trust and join that person? As a leader, they’ve failed to offer a sense of who they are and why they care, or to establish any kind of moral authority. Finally, if a person has a strong Self and Us but a weak Now, then they’ve succeeded in bringing a group together—one that feels connected and hopeful about itself! But then what? If they’re not drawing people together for a shared purpose—to take action and face a challenge of some kind—then it may be a fun time, but it’s not leadership. For a Linked Public Narrative to work, the elements of Self, Us, and Now must be interdependent, with a story that inspires people to join together with a speaker in taking collective, values-based action. Only then is it an effective practice of leadership.

For a Linked Public Narrative to work, the elements of Self, Us, and Now must be interdependent, with a story that inspires people to join together with a speaker in taking collective, values-based action. Only then is it an effective practice of leadership.

A Linked Narrative Is Tied Together by Values

In a Linked Narrative, the Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now are held together by values that connect all three parts. It communicates the speaker’s values through the Story of Self and lifts up the values that connect members of the Us with each other and that are challenged by the Story of Now. This is called “values coherence”: The same values are experienced in all three stories.

When people first try to link their narrative together, it’s not uncommon for one or more of the stories to deteriorate, to be given very little time, or to drop out completely. This can be for a number of reasons (e.g., time, lack of understanding of the craft, wanting to share less vulnerability, etc.). While they may have succeeded in dealing with the discomfort of sharing deep moments with their small group in their Story of Self, people sometimes gloss past that when it comes time to share a Linked Narrative. But the Story of Self is foundational to a Linked Narrative: It’s where the values running through the story are rooted. If a narrative has a strong Self, it can potentially ground a weaker Us and Now; however, a weak Self affects the strength of a narrative, and can make it ineffective. It’s in the Story of Self that a leader establishes their moral authority, helping people understand who they are and why they care. While every Story of Self may not be an origin story, origin stories are often the most powerful in enabling people to connect with the speaker; when listeners know how, where, and when the speaker learned to care about their values, that foundation connects the rest of the narrative, too. It is also sometimes easier for people to articulate their sources of hurt than their sources of hope, yet it’s from the story of hope that they have so much to teach others.

Public Narrative is not about asking people to do someone a favor, or manipulating people to do what someone else wants; it’s about communicating what’s important to the speaker, calling on people who share those values, and offering them a choice and an opportunity to act on those values to take hopeful and meaningful action in the face of an urgent challenge. As the organizer Jesse Wildeman, a practitioner of this craft, once said: “Don’t let your hesitation [to ask] stand in the way of someone else’s revolution!”

Linked Narrative: Instructor Notes

Note: Below is a basic template of Instructor Notes for teaching Linked Narrative. You are encouraged to expand upon these basic notes for yourself and for the audience you're teaching. Review the Linked Narrative Concept Overview and use those and other resources in the guide to customize these notes, adding in your own style, questions for audience interaction, etc.

Remember to engage your learners in a dialogue as you teach this session, asking them questions, inviting them to reflect and contribute, and drawing their responses and experiences into your lecture.

Learning Objectives: Linked Narrative

- 1 To recognize the interdependence of the Stories of Self, Us, and Now in the practice of Public Narrative.
- 2 To communicate challenge, choice, outcome, and hope through story moments in the Self, Us, and Now.
- 3 To thread values through Self, Us, and Now, creating coherence and cohesion.

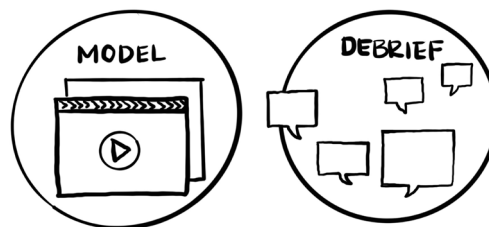
Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Linked Narrative Total Time: 30 mins
10 mins	Linking it All Together: Creating a Public Narrative Interdependence of Self, Us, and Now • You have learned about crafting the Stories of Self, Us, and Now individually, but Public Narrative is only a leadership practice when a speaker draws all three pieces together into a coherent, cohesive, values-based narrative. • Building a Linked Narrative focuses on addressing Rabbi Hillel's three questions: – If I am not for myself, who will be for me? – When I am only for myself, what am I? – If not now, when? • As Rabbi Hillel suggests, 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 create a full Public Narrative, you will combine Stories of Self, Us, and Now to invite people to act on shared values. Each of these elements are important, and they work together to communicate your message and motivate people to action. – Without a Story of Self, people will connect to each other and have a pathway to action, but they will have no clear connection to the speaker. – What will a Public Narrative lack without a Story of Us? (connection to each other) – And what's missing if a Public Narrative doesn't include a Story of Now? (an urgent call to action) 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. You should still be telling the stories, not telling about the stories. • Public Narrative is a framework not a formula, so the order of the stories (Self, Us, Now) can be varied, just as long as they flow together in a clear, coherent way. – As we saw with the James Croft example, you can combine the Stories of Self, Us, and Now in any order. You may begin your Public Narrative with a Story of Now to call attention to your cause, and then share a Story of Self and a Story of Us. Or perhaps you start with a Story of Self, bring in the Us, then end with a Story of Now—it's up to you.

Proposed Time	Outline of Lecture Notes: Linked Narrative Total Time: 30 mins
	Values Coherence • 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. • In Story of Self, you learn about the values that inform your calling. <i>We learn who you are and what you care about.</i> • In Story of Us, the group is reminded that they share these values. <i>We feel a sense of connection and solidarity with each other as a community.</i> • Story of Now is an invitation to act on shared values in the face of an urgent challenge. • Values are essential to each element and can connect stories together to make a coherent narrative. If you think back to the example of James Croft, <i>what values connected his stories? (compassion, solidarity, responsibility, inclusion).</i> • 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? Public Narrative Evolution • Public Narrative is always a “work in progress.” The goal is not to leave with a final “script” of your Public Narrative that you will use over and over again, but rather to enable you to begin learning a process you can use to adapt your narrative when, where, and how you need to in order to strengthen your own capacity—and that of others—for purposeful leadership and action.
15 mins	Model Video and Debrief
	Show Model Video: Jacquinette Brown (5 mins) Now we’re going to watch a five-minute example of a Linked Narrative by Jacquinette Brown and then we’ll debrief it. As you’re listening, pay attention to when you hear a Self, when you hear an Us, and when you hear a Now. What values do you hear running through all three stories? Debrief (10 mins) [See Debriefing Guide: Jacquinette Brown on page 105.]
5 mins	Conclusion
	• Public Narrative is not about asking people to do you a favor, or manipulating people to do what <i>you</i> want; it’s about communicating what’s important to you, calling on people who share those values, and offering them a <i>choice</i> and an <i>opportunity</i> to act on those values to take hopeful and meaningful action in the face of an urgent challenge. • Now you’re going to have a chance to try this on for yourselves for the first time—time to get on the “bike” again in your small groups. Have a good practice, then we’ll come back, hear some stories, and debrief the whole workshop.

JacquINETTE Brown: Video Debrief

[Click here to view a five-minute Linked Narrative.](#)

JacquINETTE Brown earned her Ed.L.D. (Doctor of Education Leadership) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She participated in a full-day Public Narrative workshop as part of her Ed.L.D. coursework, and this was the five-minute Linked Narrative she shared at the end of the workshop.



Learning Objectives

- 1 To recognize the interdependence of the Stories of Self, Us, and Now in the practice of Public Narrative.
- 2 To communicate challenge, choice, outcome, and hope through story moments in the Self, Us, and Now.
- 3 To thread values through Self, Us, and Now, creating coherence and cohesion.

Let's take a closer look at each of these objectives.

1. To recognize the interdependence of the Stories of Self, Us, and Now in the practice of Public Narrative.

- JacquINETTE has a clear Self, Us, and Now in her Linked Narrative, woven together around the value of passion. Her Story of Self is about her own journey through education, highlighting how “becoming a teacher” was considered a sign of oppression for a woman, but she ultimately realized it was what she was most passionate about, and chose to pursue her true calling, despite potential roadblocks. Her Story of Us recounts moments shared with her cohort-mates and their stories about how they're passionate about changing the world, how committed they are, and their willingness to sacrifice to achieve their goals. JacquINETTE's Story of Now is about the need for children to see representation of themselves in role models so that they can dream big and discover what they're passionate about, and their aspirations are not limited by their current situation. JacquINETTE calls on her fellow cohort of educators to join her by reaching out to the youth in their communities and serving as role models. The three stories relate to each other and build on one another to form a coherent, cohesive narrative.

2. To communicate challenge, choice, outcome, and hope through story moments in the Self, Us, and Now.

Story of Self:

- Challenge
 - Sees her mother toiling in rural Mississippi, picking cotton. Her parents don't want her to go into business, preferring nursing or education. Feels like a sign of the oppression of the time.
 - Witnesses high school counselor shaking her head, “Jackie, Jackie, Jackie...” Asks her to promise she won't be a teacher, that she has so much potential!
- Choice and Hope
 - Volunteers with kids at high school and watching them learn ignites a passion in her.
 - Walks up and declares her major as “Elementary Education!” (and the humorous moment of the woman responding “Ookay.”).
- Outcome
 - Celebrates that the same passion carries her through her work and brings her here today.

Us:

- Shared Challenge and Choice
 - Shares how her cohort-mates have seen challenges and been driven by passion to start different projects (choice) (e.g., passion led Darnisa to see a need in her neighborhood and start a tutoring business, that led Allison to start a school, that led Kathryn to take a failing school and turn it around, that led John to leave corporate America to work with students, and César...to do everything with passion).
- Hope and Outcome
 - Highlights that César does everything with passion: He shook her hand with passion, he ate his cereal with passion this morning.
 - Understands that passion will not let the group forget.

Now:

- Urgent Challenge
 - Introduces a group of doctors to her class and a student named Tyrone says: “She can’t be a doctor, she’s a Black woman.” The challenge is made real with this moment in the classroom, and Tyrone not knowing a Black woman being a doctor was even a possibility because he hadn’t seen it.
 - Creates urgency by reminding us that there are hundreds of thousands of “Tyrones” out there who don’t yet know about the possibilities, and how limiting that is for them in discovering and following their passion.
- Hope
 - Realizes that we can still reach out and make a difference to all the different young people in our lives.

Ask (choice) is to “Call Tyrone”: to think about the students, the young people in the audience’s lives, and to have an explicit conversation with them to let them know the possibilities.

- *Instructor’s Note: The outcome of this ask could be developed further to be clearer and more explicit. It’s not a collective ask right now and it’s not entirely clear what will happen if people take action: What will be the outcome? What would that look like? In debriefing the narrative, be sure to coach the ask with the group, eliciting suggestions for how it could be more specific and more collective (suggestions are included in the Debrief Guide below).

3. To thread values through Self, Us, and Now, creating coherence and cohesion.

The main values that run through Jacquinette’s narrative and link her Self, Us, and Now are: passion, education, possibility, responsibility, justice, giving back.

Sample Debrief Questions and Answers

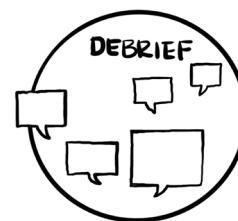
Below are some sample debrief questions and answers to help guide you through your debrief of the Jacquinette Brown Linked Narrative video. The gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, include useful comments and information you can share in the debrief to supplement the questions. These questions are meant to be a foundation for your debrief, and you are encouraged to expand and customize the questions and comments for your own teaching and audience.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
Did you hear a Story of Self? What stood out about her Story of Self?	The moment when she was about to apply—the story is anchored in that decision. When she talked about her mom seeing nursing and education as a sign of oppression. Her counselor advising her on what she should do. The difference between making the choice she feels is right, and the one that others think is right. The moment she decides to declare her major and the lady at the counter says, “Oookay.”
*Instructor Comment: Yes, she takes us to these clear moments of challenge, choice, and the outcome of those choices.	
What about the Story of Us? How did she construct that Us?	She pulled out the specific passion for several people in the room, naming their names, their passions, their projects. She added a bit of humor about César, so it engaged the group. About him doing “everything” with passion—we could imagine that (shaking hands with passion, eating cereal with passion). It made us feel like we were part of that group, too.
*Instructor Comment: You could see that really resonated with the group! Laughter is a sure way to know you’re telling a Story of Us. When people are laughing, they’re engaging, you’re connecting with them.	
What are some of the values that came alive here, between the Stories of Self and Us?	Responsibility to give back. Collective action on what we care about. The constant awareness of what we can do and doing it. Passion, education.
*Instructor Comment: Yes! Passion, commitment, education. She really communicates education and passion as values. You can feel that they’re real values for her, and in the room. You see them both in her Self and in her Us. And she’s not mentioning them as abstract concepts, but bringing them alive through actual story moments.	
What about in the Story of Now?	The value of education. The value of possibility—and the need for showing kids the possibilities that exist for them that they may not know about.

Sample Debrief Question	Possible Answers
Did the challenge feel real? How did she do that?	Yes, she took us to the classroom with Tyrone and the doctors, where he said “She can’t be a doctor—she’s a Black woman!” because he hadn’t seen that before and didn’t know it was possible. And there are so many other kids out there who need to see that.
*Instructor Comment: Yes. She takes us to a specific moment that makes the challenge real, and couples it with enough hope that people can actually do something about it. We see the values of education, passion, and possibility running through all three Stories of Self, Us, and Now.	
What’s she actually asking people to do? What’s her call to action?	Call Tyrone! Her ask was very simple and personal. It wasn’t a huge lift for people to accomplish, but it could have a significant impact on the young folks in their lives, letting them know about the possibilities. By linking her ask with the Erykah Badu song “Call Tyrone,” she put a new spin on it, and whenever people hear that, they’ll think about the “Tyrones” in the classroom.
Was her ask more of a “Join me in X?” or “You go do X”?	You go do. She asked people to call the “Tyrones” in their life.
*Instructor Comment: Right. It wasn’t a collective ask. As it stands, there was no real way of knowing who had done it, or what impact it had	
How could she have made her ask even stronger?	People could make a list of whom they would call and a deadline to call by, and share back by the end of the week. They could decide how many young people they would like to reach in the year and make calling them a regular practice. They could come together to make the calls (like a phone bank) all at once and track how many people they reached. They could pool the stories of these calls and the young folks together and share the stories in a larger community. They could build a program at Harvard that focuses on this kind of mentoring and modeling work.
*Wrap Up and Conclusion: Yes, those are some good ideas for how to make Jacquinette’s ask more specific and help people join together in taking collective action. Her Public Narrative is really great, especially the Stories of Self and Us. In the Story of Now, the challenge is really clear, and the ask is a great beginning, but the outcome is missing. What can we really do together? What would it look like if we act together? This is a great example to look at because she takes us to clear story moments in the Self, Us, and Now, and it’s woven together by the values of education, passion, and possibility throughout. No Public Narrative is perfect—it doesn’t exist. You’ll have a chance to work on your own Linked Narrative shortly.	

Linked Narratives: Large Group Debrief

After learners have a chance to practice telling their Linked Narratives and getting coached in their small groups, everyone returns to the large group to hear a few stories and debrief them. Make the time to hear two to four narratives nominated by the small group coaches. Hearing multiple stories enables learners to see patterns across the stories, the style of speaker, content, etc., and to identify what works and what is missing. Your job is to facilitate learning for the entire group, not to get lost in the coaching of a particular story. This is especially important to keep in mind when debriefing Linked Narratives because the debrief should focus on the linking of the narrative (the coherence of the Self, Us, and Now) rather than diving too deeply into any one of the stories themselves.



Ask specific, strategic, and instructive questions to enable learners to experience what makes a good Linked Narrative. You can do some coaching while debriefing, if it feels like it will be helpful for the group's learning. For a Linked Narrative debrief, it's recommended that you hear one story, debrief it, then hear the next story, debrief it, and so on. Instruct learners to pay attention to: (1) when they hear a Self, an Us, and a Now; (2) what values run through all stories; and (3) whether or not the narrative moves them—and why. These guiding questions facilitate debriefing Linked Narratives. Diversify what you focus on in the debrief so that people can see the range of elements needed in a Linked Narrative. For example, rather than coaching four Stories of Self in a row, or four asks in a row, try to coach one Story of Self, one ask, one on hope, one Story of Us, etc. This way, learners will see that all the elements are important and necessary for a narrative to work.

Remember to structure the flow of your debrief around the three-step debriefing model of observation, meaning, expanding. Ask: (1) Observations: *What happened? What did you see/notice?* (2) Meaning: *Why is that important? How does it connect to the craft?* (3) Expanding: *What are you taking away as you continue working on your own stories? How will you apply this in the future?*

Below are some guiding questions to use when debriefing Linked Narratives. Choose the questions that feel relevant, based on what you hear in each story and the direction you want to take the debrief. (Note: The questions in orange boxes apply across most contexts, so you can use them to start and end your debriefs. The questions in the gray boxes, which are also marked with an asterisk, offer different options for questions based on what you want to highlight and/or coach as you debrief each story.) Remember to thank each storyteller after they share their story!

Section	Details
Opening Questions	• Do you understand why they care? • Do you feel a responsibility to act? • Do you know what to do? • What connected with you in this story? What particular moments, images? • What values did you hear running through the narrative? – Was it coherent? – When did you hear them in the Self? The Us? The Now?
*Story of Self	• What was the challenge in the Story of Self? Could you picture it? – What choice did they make? What did they learn from that? – Where did they get their hope? – Do we get a sense of why they care? – Did we hear an origin story?

Section	Details
*Story of Us	• Did you hear a Story of Us? – What moments resonated with you? – When did you feel connected to others in this group? – What was the shared challenge in this narrative? – What did the group do? What choice did they make? – Did you feel hopeful about the people in the room?
*Story of Now	• When did you hear a Story of Now? – When did you experience moments of urgent challenge? – Was there a sense of hope? – Was there a clear ask? – Do you feel moved to act?
Closing Questions	• Do you understand the speaker? Do you understand why they care? • Do you understand each other? • Did you experience the urgent challenge through moments? Did you feel hope? • Was the pathway to action clear? Would you join them?
Final Wrap-Up Questions	<i>*After all storytellers have shared, take a step away from the specific stories to debrief Linked Narratives more broadly.</i> • What are you taking away about Linked Narratives? • What happens when one of the pieces (Self, Us, Now) is missing? • What did you learn from a craft perspective? • What makes story moments effective? Why are they so important? • What makes an effective Linked Narrative? What really worked across the examples you saw?

The background of the entire page is a detailed, light-colored line drawing of the Harvard University campus map. The map shows the intricate layout of various buildings, courtyards, and streets, including recognizable structures like the Harvard-Yenching Institute and the Harvard Law School. The map is rendered in a light beige or cream color, providing a subtle yet informative backdrop for the text.

Closing and Celebration

Closing a Workshop: Reflection, Evaluation, Celebration

Critical reflection and evaluation are crucial parts of the Public Narrative craft. Debriefs are built in throughout the learning process to highlight key teaching points and the elements of the craft, to reflect on models and practice, to engage in group learning, and to synthesize learnings as you go along. Celebration is also a key facet of Public Narrative and community organizing more generally. It's important to honor ourselves, each other, and the work that's been done frequently and openly. It helps to build in small celebrations throughout the workshop (e.g., building a collaborative playlist with the group and sharing it during breaks; publicly honoring bravery with public support, like "Let's give our storyteller a round of applause and keep clapping until they get onto the stage!"). As you prepare to conclude a Public Narrative workshop or training, it's essential to include time for final reflections and a closing (takeaways, evaluation, and celebration), which are described in more depth below.

Key Learnings and Takeaways

Public Narrative trainings cover a lot of ground, so as you enter into this final exercise, recap the day to remind learners of what they've experienced and learned (e.g., *"We began with an introduction to Public Narrative, we saw some live coaching ('X getting coached'), then we moved into Story of Self. We watched a model video, you went to practice on your own, we came back, heard three stories, shared some takeaways... etc.)*).

Research in experiential learning shows that the articulation of what has been learned deepens the learners' understanding, facilitates access to this learning in the future, and enhances confidence.¹⁴ This is why the articulation of key learnings is so important. These learnings can be anything they are taking away from the whole workshop—from the individual sessions or from overarching patterns more broadly. Your role as an instructor is not simply to elicit key learnings for the sake of it, but rather to engage with learners by lifting up key insights, pushing them one level deeper, and inviting them to engage with one another's comments and takeaways. The goal here is to solidify learnings for the whole group, so it's important to affirm insightful takeaways, and to clarify or reinterpret comments that may be misunderstandings about the craft. You should invite learners to engage with each other's points, asking questions like: *Does anyone want to build on that?* or *Who else is taking that away?* The debrief of key learnings and takeaways should feel more like a rich discussion or conversation. It's a good idea to capture the takeaways publicly (scribing them for everyone to see) so that the group can see what has been said, avoid repetition, and continue to reflect and build on points that resonate with them.

Evaluation: Pluses and Deltas

Public Narrative is a framework that has been developed and honed over many years through iterative reflection and feedback on the practice; there is always more room for improvement and growth. After capturing the key takeaways and learnings from a group, there should be time set aside for evaluation. Public Narrative is a practice, so it's important that practitioners continue building on what's working and try to improve the things that could be better. We structure evaluation by asking learners for Pluses (*What did we do really well today? What facilitated your learning?*) and Deltas (*What could we change/improve to do better next time? We invite concrete suggestions.*). This is not meant to be a time to simply voice complaints, but rather, to provide constructive ideas and feedback for what could be improved. If people suggest a delta of something they did not like, ask them to share what they would like to see in future iterations of this work. As with the key learnings, the results for the evaluation should also be captured and scribed publicly so that everyone can see the process is being taken seriously, and that the group continues to learn from each other until the end of the workshop.

Closing a Workshop: Celebration and Appreciation

After the final debrief with takeaways and evaluation, a workshop should always close with some kind of celebration. Celebration is an essential part of the practice of Public Narrative. This is a relational craft about people, connection, and action, so it's important to honor one another, the community they've built, and the work they've done together. The practice of Public Narrative can also be challenging and emotionally heavy, so celebrating together also enables people to conclude a workshop on a hopeful note. Small group work should always close with appreciations for one another, and ideas for celebration at the end of a workshop include: sharing a short poem or song, a closing circle where learners share appreciations for each other, inviting participants to share wisdom or quotes that inspire them, a post-workshop outing, etc. It's less important what the celebration is, just so long as it happens and is appropriate for the group. After celebrating with participants at a workshop or training, the teaching team should also celebrate their work together in whatever manner they see fit.

The background of the page is a detailed, light-colored line drawing of the Harvard University campus map, overlaid on a solid dark red background. The map shows various buildings, courtyards, and streets in a stylized, schematic manner.

Additional Resources

Troubleshooting Guide

The pedagogy of Public Narrative relies on the role of discomfort in facilitating learning. Almost by definition, learning something new requires going beyond that with which one is comfortable. This is even more difficult given the role that vulnerability plays in learning this craft. You may encounter some challenges. This Troubleshooting Guide outlines some of the common challenges instructors have faced in the past, along with suggestions for ways to move through them. Generally, it's important to acknowledge the participants' comments and not be defensive or dismissive of them. As an instructor, you are trying to teach the craft and keep the workshop on track, but it's important to engage with people respectfully and on a human level, as this craft is all about authenticity and connection.

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Introduction to Public Narrative Story of Self (Public Coaching)	In the Public Coaching section, you get pushback and/or sensitivity about digging up trauma in an inappropriate setting (e.g., <i>unfair power dynamics, resistance to community agreements</i>).	• In framing the session and responding to pushback, refer to the Wounds and Scars section. • Remember that respect is a basic pillar of this work. Use language and tone that is inviting and respectful of experiences. Remind the coachee and the group that the focus in Public Narrative is on agency: They have a choice to share, though we encourage them to push themselves out of their comfort zone to enable learning. • They are sharing stories of “overcoming” that involve challenges, but this is not therapy. It’s about understanding the choices they made, the values they showed in those choices, and where they got the hope and courage to overcome challenges for the purpose of leadership. [See Public Narrative Is Not Therapy on page 33.] • Try to understand where the resistance is coming from: Is it fear or discomfort? Is someone speaking up for someone else? • If you are worried about a coachee after a session, make sure to check in with them 1:1 during a break. If you think they need professional help or resources, direct them to seek those out.

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Introduction to Public Narrative Story of Self	There is severe resistance or pushback to trying on the craft.	• Acknowledge that people in the room already know how to tell stories, and this is one way of telling stories; it's not the only way. • Acknowledge that feeling some reluctance is normal, but learning rarely takes place in our comfort zone. Invite them to challenge themselves to lean into the discomfort. • Encourage them to think of this as a tool for their leadership toolkit that they'll learn to use if they try it with an open mind and practice. • Ask people to think of this craft as a jacket they are "trying on." This encourages them to dive in for the day while allowing them the freedom to take it off when they leave the workshop.
Any Section	Someone refuses to participate in a small group.	• Reiterate that this is about relational learning, and by not participating, they are depriving not only themselves of the opportunity but also their groupmates. • Check in with them 1:1 during a break or after the session to try to find out what is really going on and coach them—it's likely they are resisting due to fear of being vulnerable, feeling uncomfortable, etc. • If they really will not participate, you can ask them to leave. These workshops require participation, so if they do not want to engage and learn, then they can choose to leave.

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Any Section Story of Self	There is pushback around gender, specifically around how vulnerability is perceived from women vs. men.	• It can be helpful to acknowledge the importance of context, that gender does play important roles, and that Public Narrative may not be right for every situation. • Remind participants that “vulnerability” does not mean <i>breaking down and crying</i>, but rather it’s about sharing parts of ourselves that are authentic and courageous components of our experience. It takes courage to share the experiences in a person’s life that required them to muster up the courage to overcome. Invite them to step up to that challenge in this context. • Try not to get defensive or dismissive of the person making this argument. They are pointing to a real structural issue that plays out in most dynamics. Acknowledge that this is real: People understandably may have built up walls for good reason. The question then: Do they still serve them? Do their walls enable others to connect with them and join them as a leader? • Depending on the group, it may be helpful to invite others to respond, if they have different opinions. • Engaging in conversations like this sometimes takes up a lot of time and derails practice and learning for the group. You may want to acknowledge the issue, reminding them they are learning a leadership practice and it’ll be up to them to determine when and where they can best apply it in their own fields.

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Introduction to Public Narrative Story of Self	People claim that Public Narrative is an “American thing” and that it doesn’t work in other cultures.	• Storytelling is not an American thing, it’s a human thing. • Ask: “<i>Who were the first storytellers in your life?</i>” That will reveal that this is a cross-cultural phenomenon. • Public Narrative has been taught, learned, and practiced in many countries all around the world. This can be a common misconception, that Americans are the only ones who “talk about themselves” or “value vulnerability” or “share emotions.” Similar arguments were made at workshops in countries like Jordan, the UK, and Japan, but they lasted only a few minutes. Once people started telling their stories, the dynamics changed and people could feel the value of it. • People who practice and teach this craft come from all over the world and have found it to be effective in cross-cultural contexts. • In places where sharing about the self or emotions is not seen as a common practice, perhaps it is even more important to do so and invite people to build more meaningful connections with each other. • In challenging groups, you can say something like: “<i>You don’t need to use this methodology, but right now you have the chance to learn it and see what happens, and then you can challenge it to see whether you think it’s effective or not.</i>” (This helps people feel like their skepticism was heard, and by the end, many times the initial pushback is forgotten.)

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Any Section	There is resistance from people who have been marginalized, who do not want to tell a story that “fills a stereotype” in order to validate themselves to others (e.g., “My trauma and life experience aren’t here to convince you of anything, or for your benefit).	• There is no easy answer to this challenge, but it’s important to acknowledge what they’re saying—something along the lines of: <i>“You are absolutely right. You have full ownership of how you tell your own story and it should feel authentic to you. This practice is about authentically communicating why you are called to do what you do. From our experience, telling stories of real, meaningful moments in your life enables others to grasp why you care and often adds nuance and grounding to how others see you. But of course, there is no easy answer to this and no single story can ever fully communicate someone’s life experience. In the end, it is your choice how to tell your story.”</i> • Share your own experience if it feels relevant. Nothing is more authentic than that. (For example, one of our instructors sometimes shares her experience like this: <i>“For me as a woman of color who overcame trauma, I learnt that focusing on the choice point is deeply illuminating—it creates agency in the self, and helped shift my self-definition from victim to survivor. What happened to me did happen to me; but what did I choose in the face of that—in that moment and later in life? You are here. How did you make that happen? And how can you use your story to affect change for your own US?”</i>) • Encourage folks to focus on their moments of agency, choice, and hope in addition to their moments of challenge. Remind them that these are stories of “overcoming”—the point is not to get bogged down in all the horrible things they’ve endured, but to share how they got through them so others can learn from them, relate to them, and connect with them as a leader.

Section of Workshop	Potential Challenge	Suggested Ways Forward
Any Section	You may get questions about the “right” to tell a story that involves other people, when it’s not “your story to tell.”	• Remind participants that they are telling stories from <i>their own experience</i>—from their point of view. Other people may be involved in them, but they are meant to share their perspectives, stories, and experiences, which they have a right to do. • It’s always their choice what they choose to share and they have to make those decisions as they see fit. But they do have a right to tell their own story, even with other people involved in it.
Any Section	Pushback on Model Videos: There is pushback when debriefing a model video about specific issues with the person (i.e., they did not acknowledge their privilege, they were advocating without being asked, the situation or the person is controversial in some way, etc.).	• Emphasize that model videos are meant to be a model for learning, not a model for a person, as a role model. • Share that this story is a good model for the particular element of the craft (Story of Self, Us, Now, or Linking) and they can learn from that from a craft perspective, even if they disagree with the content or the person speaking.
Story of Us	In the Story of Us, people push back about speaking “for other people” or making assumptions about others in the group.	• Think of this as an opportunity to help a person understand how they see the group. They can tell a story about what they’ve experienced from <i>their perspective</i>: Who are others through their eyes? What shaped that understanding of the group? It’s not about speaking for others or making assumptions about what others were feeling, but rather, sharing a story of the speaker’s interpretation of events that communicates <i>their</i> experience of the group, using concrete details and observations, combined with their emotional experience.
Introduction to Public Narrative	James Croft Video: Disclaimer about difficult content (suicide)	• In some contexts, instructors have found it helpful to make a disclaimer before showing the James Croft model video (which deals with suicide), noting that it might have tough moments, especially for people who have experienced suicide close to them. • Whether or not you choose to share this disclaimer really depends on your context. In contexts where “trigger warnings” are expected, <i>not</i> sharing one may cause people to shut down and stop learning; in other contexts, it may not be expected or necessary. Use your judgment based on what will be most helpful for the particular group you’re teaching.

Values Chart: James Croft's Five-Minute Linked Public Narrative

	Self		Us		Now	
Value	Absent/ Threatened	Present/Felt	Absent/ Threatened	Present/Felt	Absent/ Threatened	Present/Felt
Solidarity	He felt isolated and alone in the auditorium.		We know what it's like to feel alone, like there's nobody on your side.	[It could've been your brother, sister, son, daughter... It could've been one of us.]	Kids are being bullied and they feel isolated.	Together, we can record messages of hope for those who need it—those who feel hopeless.
Inclusion [Respect]	The gym moment made him feel excluded because of being gay.	[Implicit respect] He feels self-respect when he comes out.	We've all felt made fun of: being too tall, too short, too dumb, too smart.		People feel like they're alone and wrong because they're gay.	We can let them know they're not alone, that we have their back.
Compassion	Both the gym and auditorium moments: He felt scorn from teachers and other students.	Ballet dancer—sense of joy, love, caring / wanted to be a role model for others [self-respect]		Asking people to imagine if the people who hung themselves were your son, your daughter, your friend—"one of us"	Young people who feel ashamed and bullied may commit suicide.	Messages of hope can help them.
Responsibility for others	He came out late and missed being a role model for ten years.	Now he's changed and is taking action.			We could take our "glittering Harvard degrees" and not accept the responsibility to make change.	We can use our fancy degrees for good, to really make a difference in people's lives. "We have to catch these kids before they jump."

Endnotes

- ¹ Bob Dylan, “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding),” Warner Bros., Inc., 1965; renewed by Special Rider Music, 1993, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/its-alright-ma-im-only-bleeding/>.
- ² Marshall Ganz, “Leading change: Leadership, organization, and social movements,” in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, eds. Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2010), chap. 19: 527-568.
- ³ Albert O. Hirschman, “Against Parsimony: Three Easy Ways of Complicating Some Categories of Economic Discourse,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 74, No.2, Papers and Proceedings of the Ninety-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May 1984): 89-96, accessed August 5, 2025, https://regulationbodyofknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Hirschman_Against_Parsimony_Three.pdf
- ⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 2001).
- ⁵ Marshall Ganz, Julia Lee Cunningham, Inbal Ben Ezer, and Alaina Segura, “Crafting Public Narrative to Enable Collective Action: A Pedagogy for Leadership Development,” *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (2023), accessed August 5, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2020.0224>.
- ⁶ J.R. Hackman and R. Wageman, “Asking the right questions about leadership: Discussion and conclusions,” *American Psychologist* 62, no. 1 (2007): 43–47, accessed November 3, 2025, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.62.1.43>.
- ⁷ Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Ballantine Books: 2007).
- ⁸ Ganz, “Leading change,” 527-568
- ⁹ Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
- ¹⁰ Martha Nussbaum, “Emotions and Judgments of Value,” Chapter 1 in *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 19-33.
- ¹¹ Ganz, “Leading change,” 527-568.
- ¹² K. G. Niederhoffer and J.W. Pennebaker, “Sharing one’s story: On the benefits of writing or talking about emotional experience,” in *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, eds. C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 573-585.
- ¹³ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- ¹⁴ Chris Argyris, “Teaching Smart People How to Learn,” *Harvard Business Review* 69, no. 3 (1991); Makoto Matsuo and Masaki Nagata, “A Revised Model of Experiential Learning with a Debriefing Checklist,” *International Journal of Training and Development* 24, no. 2 (2020): 144-153.

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