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NONPROFIT STORYTELLING

GOOD storytelling is more than a recitation of events or facts. You need to engage your readers.

1. Who is my target audience for this piece? Know who you're writing for and what will grab their attention.

2. What is my purpose in writing this story? What do you hope your readers will do because of this story?

3. What is the conflict in the story? The only reason we read a story is to follow the main character as she faces and conquers conflict. What pain is your protagonist suffering and trying to overcome?

4. What are the consequences of his/her hardships? What happens to kids who can't read? What happens to the woman who flees an abusive husband with three kids in tow? What happens to the schizophrenic who can't get mental health services?

5. Where will I begin the story? Think about the best way to begin the story—by retelling the past, projecting into the future, or focusing on the current pain and hardships?

6. How will I use my opening sentence to draw readers in? Think about how you could use a question, a joke, a declarative sentence, an exclamation, a major statistic, or even a quote to grab the reader's attention.

7. How will I use emotion to keep readers reading? Use similes/metaphors, vivid description, comparisons of before and after, character vulnerabilities, or paint a visual picture. Without emotion the story will fall flat.

8. What are some key phrases and/or words I can use to emphasize our core message? Brainstorm three different ways to weave your core message into the story. You could use taglines or key phrases.

9. How can I create a visual image and make the piece memorable in the reader's mind?

Good writers don't 'tell' readers what they want them to know. They show them through action, dialogue and visual images. (Show, don't tell)

10. How long should my story be? Your story should be long enough to generate emotion but short enough to keep the reader's attention.

11. Did I effectively carry the message throughout the piece? Focus on what you want the reader to do and the emotion that will lead them to act.

12. Did I stick the landing? Every story is a journey. If you want your readers to act, your ending should make a point they can't resist.