
How to Find a Good Story

Some Leads

You are the hero or she-ro.

The hero's journey is one of our oldest stories, an archetypal myth which crosses time and place and culture.

It's *your* story, whether or not you feature as the main character.

What's bigger than we are? Think of a context for your story that locates your listeners in a larger experience. For example

"The tasks involved in keeping Mom clean and comfortable sometimes made me feel like Sisyphus. I got the rock to the top of the mountain, so to speak, only to have it roll back down on me as soon as I stepped out of her room."

Find something remarkable to dramatize with your story. Or simply describe something you think of as remarkable!

KISS

Keep it simple, sweetie! You only have 2 minutes.

The more complicated the situation, the greater the need for a simple story.

Listen to other caregivers' stories.

What made you laugh? Smile in recognition? Nod or shake your head in

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sympathy?

How did that *also* happen to you? Do you have someone like that in your life?

How is the person to whom you give care the same as the one in the story? Different? What's the connection?

What elements in that situation do you find in your own? What's different?

Think about your audience.

Find something your listeners will agree with and build your story around it.

Speak to what you know about your listeners. Adopt their frame of reference for a moment. Tap into experiences you may share.

Pay attention to the mundane.

Be specific. Set a mood. Paint a picture. Try colorful adjectives and unpredictable images.

Try to capture your emotional frame of mind. For example:

"I was so tired that 16 noisy grandchildren jumping on me like a trampoline couldn't have waked me up."

Create a story *worth* believing.

Nothing gets a bigger laugh than something that makes people say, "Gosh! That's so true!"

Consider what you're

Everyone has their own way of getting

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good at.

positive attention. What's your strong point?

Some people are good with **language**. We rely on words (puns, witticisms).

Others are good with jokes. We may have **comic timing**.

Still others have **expressive faces** and engaging gestures. We move in an energetic and engaging way

Learn what works best for you, and build from what you know.

Find a punchline.

What's the good line you heard? What's an image that strikes you? What was the moment when everything changed? Speak it out loud. See it. Describe it. Invent it.

Think of the punchline as a symbolic container for the meaning of your story, something you want to share.

Then try it out by using it in a 2-minute story. Does it get the laugh, the smile, the nod you want?

Don't be boring.

You have 2 minutes to talk about your life as a caregiver, and that's if your listener really, really loves you.