



Co-funded by
the European Union



U N L O C K I N G T H E P O W E R O F

STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT





Stories connect, move, and mobilize.

Stories activate more areas of the brain than facts – including language, sensory, and emotional centers.

Hearing a story releases oxytocin, the “empathy hormone” → we become more likely to trust, care, and take action.

Stories are up to 22x more memorable than facts alone (Stanford study).

Why?

Because our brains are built for narrative structure:

Beginning → Conflict → Resolution

T H E S C I E N C E B E H I N D

STORYTELLING

STORYTELLING

T H E S C I E N C E B E H I N D

Storytelling Is a Deeply Human Experience

- Storytelling is an ancient and powerful form of communication.
- When we connect through stories, we don't just understand – we feel aligned.
- Neuroscience shows that when we communicate effectively, our brain patterns literally synchronize.
- This alignment makes storytelling one of the highest forms of social connection we can create.

Great storytelling isn't just communication – it's shared experience.



Co-funded by
the European Union

STORYTELLING

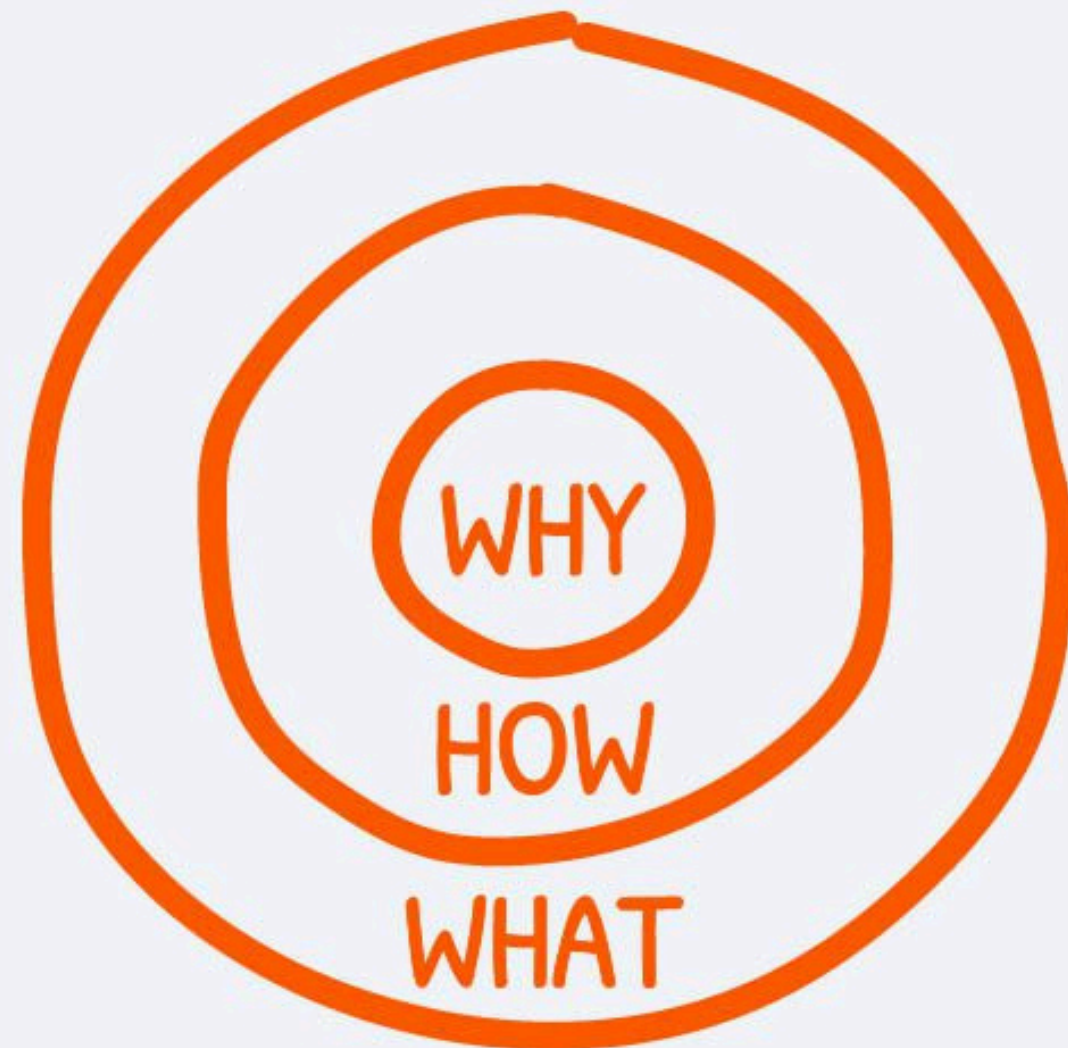
T H E S C I E N C E B E H I N D

**“People don’t buy what you do;
they buy why you do it.”**

Simon Sinek

STORYTELLING

T H E G O L D E N C I R C L E



WHY = The Purpose

What is your cause? What do you believe?

HOW = The Process

Specific actions taken to realize the WHY

WHAT = The Result

What do you do? The result of WHY. Proof.

IMPACTFUL STORYTELLING

H O W S T O R I E S S H A P E O U R M I N D S



START WITH WHY BY SIMON SINEK | ANIMATED BOOK SUMMARY

Share

Read!

Read!

WHY
HOW
WHAT

CLASSIC

Watch on YouTube

The thumbnail features a central circular graphic with the words 'WHY', 'HOW', and 'WHAT' stacked vertically in red. Above 'WHY' is an illustration of a woman celebrating and a man working on a laptop. Below 'HOW' is a pair of glasses. Below 'WHAT' is a book labeled 'CLASSIC'. To the left, a man in a suit stands next to a thought bubble with a green checkmark and the word 'Read!'. Below him is a sign that says 'I hate reading' with a small figure. To the right, another thought bubble has a red 'X' and the word 'Read!'. A red play button is overlaid on the central graphic. At the top left is a profile picture of Simon Sinek, and at the top right is a 'Share' button. At the bottom right is a 'Watch on YouTube' button.

WHY STORYTELLING

M A T T E R S F O R S O C I A L
I M P A C T

To inspire change, people must feel something.

- **Facts speak to the mind, but stories speak to the heart.**
- **People might understand your cause from statistics... but they only care when they feel connected.**

Storytelling builds empathy:

- **It bridges the gap between “us” and “them.”**
- **It makes your cause personal, relatable, and urgent.**

W H A T I S N O T

STORYTELLING

A story is not just a sequence of events

Storytelling isn't just about having a beginning, middle, and end.

A true story is a journey – not just what happens, but why it matters.

It follows a hero or heroine on a quest, facing a challenge or conflict, and moving toward transformation.

What makes it powerful is the emotional progression, not just the timeline.

A great story connects through tension, growth, and meaning.

W H A T I S N O T

STORYTELLING

A Story Is Not Just an Anecdote

We share anecdotes every day. But that's not a story.

Anecdote = A moment.

Story = A journey of transformation.

A powerful story includes:

- A conflict or challenge
- A resolution
- A deep change in the hero or heroine

It's the emotional and personal transformation – not just the event – that turns an anecdote into a story.

HOW TO START?

STORYTELLING

Why you are telling your story?

- What message do you want to share?
- What change or emotion do you hope to inspire?

Who is the target audience?

- Who do you want to reach – funders, young people, decision-makers?
- What do they care about? What language or format speaks to them?

Where can you find a story?

- Real people you've supported
- Personal experiences / Everyday moments
- Volunteer or staff testimonials

KEY ELEMENTS

OF IMPACTFUL STORIES

1. Clear

Is your story easy to follow?

- ✓ Avoid jargon
- ✓ Stick to one core message
- ✓ Keep the structure simple: beginning → conflict → resolution

KEY ELEMENTS

OF IMPACTFUL STORIES

2. Emotional

Does your story evoke feeling?

- ✓ **Does it make the audience care?**
- ✓ **Are you showing vulnerability, challenge, or hope?**
- ✓ **Can the audience empathize with the character?**

KEY ELEMENTS

O F I M P A C T F U L S T O R I E S

3. Respectful

Are you honoring the dignity of the people in your story?

- ✓ Do you have consent to share this story?
- ✓ Are you avoiding stereotypes ?
- ✓ Are you amplifying voices rather than speaking for others?

KEY ELEMENTS

O F I M P A C T F U L S T O R I E S

4. Actionable

What can the audience do after hearing the story?

- ✓ Is there a clear next step (donate, share, join, reflect)?
- ✓ Is your call-to-action tied emotionally to the story's journey?
- ✓ Does your story make people want to act?

WHAT IS A GOOD STORY?

F O R S T O R Y T E L L I N G

Simple

- Clear and easy to follow – no overload.

Personal

- Centered on real people and lived experiences.

Authentic

- Honest, raw, and emotionally true – not polished marketing.

Relevant

- Connects to your cause and resonates with your audience.

USEFUL STEPS

IN DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK

1. Define Your Purpose

→ Why are you telling this story? What do you want your audience to feel, think, or do?

2. Know Your Audience

→ Who are you speaking to? What language, tone, or format will best reach them?

3. Collect Real Stories

→ Gather testimonials, personal moments, interviews, and field experiences.

4. Structure the Narrative

→ Use a clear beginning → conflict → resolution. Focus on emotion and transformation.

USEFUL STEPS

IN DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK

5. Make It Ethical

→ Ensure consent. Tell stories with dignity and avoid exploitation.

6. Choose the Right Format

→ Video, social media, blog, podcast? Pick the platform that fits the audience and story.

7. Include a Call to Action

→ What should people do after engaging with your story? Make it clear and meaningful.

8. Test and Share

→ Share with a small group first. Gather feedback. Then refine and distribute widely.

IMPACTFUL STORYTELLING

H O W S T O R I E S S H A P E O U R M I N D S



BBC How stories shape our minds | The science of storytelling | BBC Ideas Share

HOW STORIES WORK

BBC

Watch on  YouTube

DIGITAL TOOLS

F O R S T O R Y T E L L I N G

- **Carrd** - Create a simple landing page to host a digital story or campaign
- **Padlet** - Digital pinboard to collect and share youth or community stories
- **Crello (now VistaCreate)** - Like Canva, with extra animation features
- **Canva** - Social media graphics, storyboards, posters, infographics, reports
- **Canva Video Editor** - Create reels, testimonials, and campaigns with animated text and effects
- **CapCut** - Excellent free video editing app (especially good for TikToks, reels, youth-focused content)
- **Lumen5** - Turn text or blog content into short videos automatically

RESOURCES & INSPIRATION

KEEP THE STORY GOING

[What Is Storytelling?](#), National Storytelling Network

[The Power Of Storytelling: Inspiring And Connecting With Your Audience](#), Forbes

[ADVOCACY TOOLKIT](#), Unicef

[Storytelling Tips & Tricks, How to tell a successful story](#), The Moth

[Storytelling for Social Change: a communications resource for young leaders](#), World Vision

[Storytelling for Impact Videos](#), National Geographic

[DIGITAL STORYTELLING MANUAL AND TOOL KIT](#), DYME



Co-funded by
the European Union



ANY QUESTIONS?





Co-funded by
the European Union



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

