

Story Builder: Ask the Right Questions

Getting Good Stories

When you ask the right questions, you get nuggets of rich information that almost write the story itself. Some good rules to follow:

- ✓ Your story shouldn't be longer than 2 minutes, but we'll edit your story, so get as much unfiltered detail as possible.
- ✓ Always take care that the tone of your questions is inquisitive and doesn't seem like "a grilling."

What inspired you to first...

This is the most important question you can ever ask a donor. It gives you raw information about how your organization connects with people. What inspired you to make your first donation? What inspired you to volunteer? Why did you call us for help? Why did you join our board? Why are you a sponsor? Why are you a participant?

Get the actual name, age, and visual image of the person(s) in the story.

When possible, get a photo, with a signed release to use the photo.

What is **the journey** of your story?

What is Point A to Point B?

What **sensory details** would you use in your story?

Sensory details are words that help your readers see, hear, feel, taste, and smell the object of your story.

What is the “change” or “pivot” moment in your story?

Is this a story of overcoming challenge? Relationship? Forgiveness? Hurt? Healing? Genesis story, e.g. Apple started in a garage? Adventure? Travel? Discovery? Or a significant geographical place such as Auschwitz?

What **emotions** did your story participants feel?

“People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.” -Maya Angelou. Does this story involve a disappointment? Suspense? Victory? Exhilaration? Relief? Sorrow? Humor?

What **changed**?

Can you identify specific results by asking “what is the biggest change you’ve seen since coming here?” Can you quantify results, such as “John now reads two books per month when last year he read only one book the whole year.”