

Using stories to illustrate values

This is a large group storytelling activity. It's high energy, very engaging and really demonstrates how effective storytelling can be in an organisation.

TEAM EXERCISE

Completion: **35-45 mins.** | Difficulty: **8/10** | Materials: **NONE**

ROUND 1:

This storytelling activity should be high energy, with full engagement. It will demonstrate how effective storytelling can be in an organisation particularly when it comes to your values.

- Make sure tables have even numbers of about 8 people.
 - Tell everyone "You are going to share a story with your table"
 - The story should be in relation to your chosen topic (for example your values).
 - Your story should be a 'good' story or example – so positively focused.
- Your story isn't long – it's just 90 seconds.
- Who was involved, what was the situation, what happened etc.
- Take it in turns and go around everyone at the table. Listen carefully to everyone else's stories.
- Continue until everyone has shared a story.

NOTE:

There is no real time for questions in this process – just listen to everyone else and acknowledge their story. This process should take about 10 – 12 minutes depending on how many people are at each table.

- When everyone has shared their story (Keep an eye on all the tables and look for when tables have finished. If they are in general conversation they've finished!)
- Ask everyone to "Now reflect on what you have heard – and choose one story that they think really stands out and is most impactful. Most importantly, make sure to remember who told it but don't tell anyone what story / who you've chosen."
- Move straight into Round 2.

ROUND 2:

- Now instruct everyone to move to different tables and get together with different people.
- If there are 1 or 2 people at the same table – don't worry.
- Once everyone is seated – ask them to share their story again.
- **Note the story they tell is their own story, not the one they thought was most impactful. This is important!**
- Follow exactly the same rules as last time – 90 second stories, everyone shares.

NOTE:

For some this feels a bit weird! But encourage them to trust the process!

When everyone has told their story, again ask them to select their favourite / most impactful story.

This time they are evaluating their previous favourite story with the new ones they have heard. Have they heard a better one?

Again – ask them to choose just one stand out story from all the ones they have heard during both rounds and keep a mental note of who told the story and not to say which story / storyteller they have chosen.

PTO for Round 3 and Debrief.

INFORMATION:

INTRODUCTION:

- The activity is based on a technique originally used by Seth Godin.

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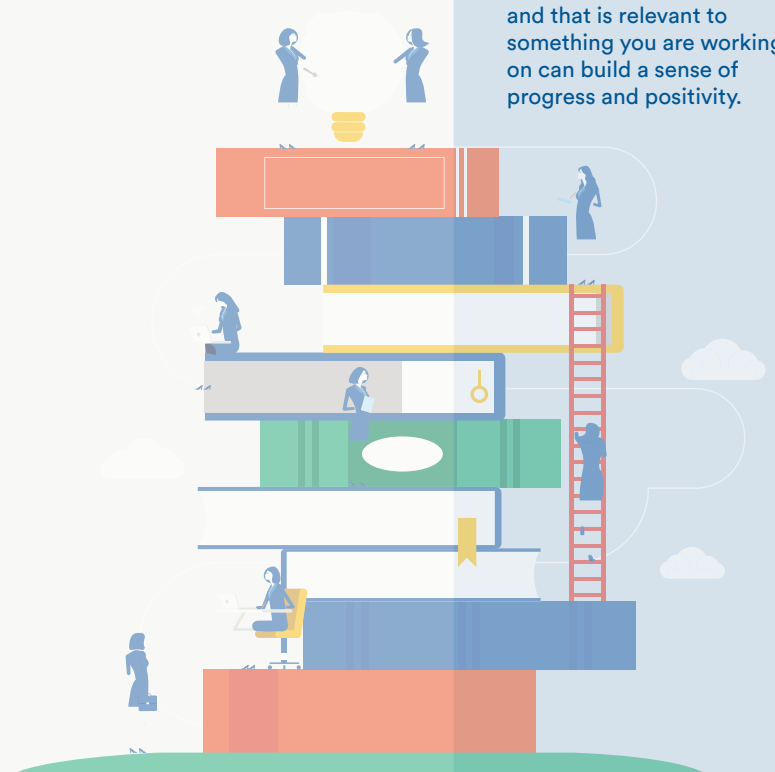
- To explore peoples' experiences and examples and sharing them quickly and effectively. The topic can vary – but be clear about the nature of the stories you want to tell.
- For example – if your session is about your values, then the stories you want to share are all about examples of people living the values. Who, what, why etc.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- A great way to get this message across is to share your own story as an example to the group. Make sure you choose a good example and stick to the time (90 seconds).

SUMMARY:

- This is a great technique to introduce into meetings. Starting every meeting with a positive story regarding something that attendees have seen and that is relevant to something you are working on can build a sense of progress and positivity.



ROUND 3 (optional):

- If time allows, and you have a large enough group, conduct a 3rd round of stories.
- Repeat the instructions as per round two.

Finding the most impactful stories

- Now ask the entire group to congregate at the front of the room (or the back – wherever you have enough room for everyone to stand relatively close together).
- Now after hearing about 15 + stories, they should have one that stands out.
- Explain that you are now going to ask everyone to find the person that told that story and to put their hand on their shoulder or to stand next to them.
- Say 'Go' and ask everyone to move so that they can touch or stand near their storyteller.

NOTE:

This is a great part of the activity – it might look and feel very confusing, but from a birds eye view (so, if it is safe to do so, stand on a chair!) you will be able to see how the group has self selected the really powerful / stand out stories.

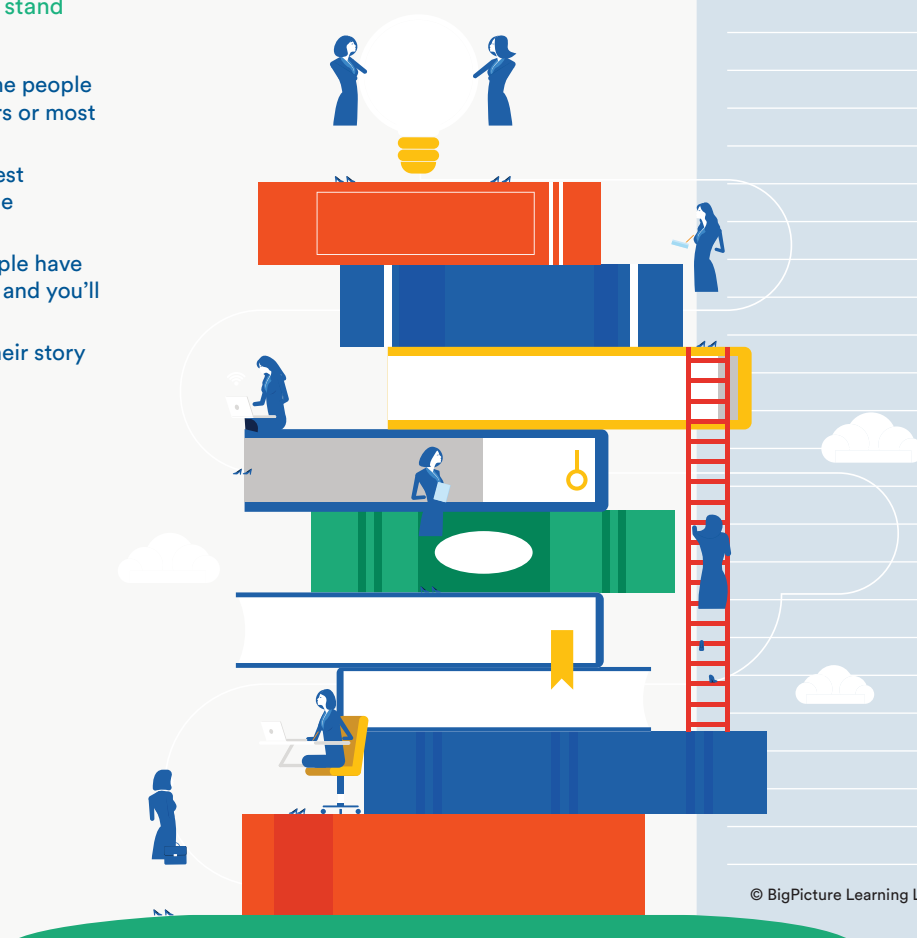
- With help from the group – look for the people with the most hands on their shoulders or most people stood near them.
- Look for the 2-3 people with the highest number of votes and ask them to come forward.
- You can ask the group how many people have not heard either of these stories yet – and you'll find that many haven't heard them.
- So ask the top story tellers to share their story one more time for the whole group.

Debrief:

- Acknowledge the top story tellers, thank them, and return everyone to their seats – their original seats!
- When they get back to their table – ask them to spend just a few minutes at the table discussing the following:
 - What did they like about the activity?
 - What did they take out of the activity?
 - What are the insights for your organisation?
- Allow tables to reflect on the activity for a few minutes and then invite some open feedback from the group.

Some key points to reflect on / reinforce:

- There's a lot of good stuff happening in the business. Are we sharing this with the wider team?
 - If not why not?
 - If we did – what impact would it have?
 - The sharing of success stories is a powerful way of communicating throughout the business – look at the energy we have created just now.
- And it's not complicated – it's easy!



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Contact The Big Picture People

Clavering House, Clavering Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE1 3NG.
 Tel: +44 (0) 191 269 6979. Email: info@thebigpicturepeople.co.uk Web: www.thebigpicturepeople.co.uk

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