

STORYTELLING about INDIVIDUALS for COMMUNITY, by Brenda Varda

First Stage: Collecting information

1. Research: Of course, you want the facts correct...and you want the relevant, surprising, and emotional details. In this case, it will depend on sources:
 - a. Someone you know
 - b. Close family/co-workers
 - c. Articles/Web search/Newspapers
 - d. Documentation/Associations at the church
 - e. Historical records of Social/cultural conditions
2. The Element of You: in storytelling, finding or revealing the personal components that made this person important or outstanding to you is key.
 - a. Why did you choose this person?
 - b. How are they similar/different than you?
 - c. What impact do they have on you – change of behavior/choice/interactions?
3. The Setting: details of the time, place, situation and the conditions of the culture and/or personal life of the subject . Yes, a lot, but selecting a few
 - a. Who, what, why, where, when – yes, boring (don't have to get everything!)
 - b. What were their personal cultural connections? Attire, home, engagements?
 - c. What was their method of communication?
 - d. What did the church know/remember/document about this person?

FOCUS: The impact of limited details can be much more important than “everything”.

Focusing on one or two events in the person's arc can make a memorable event for listeners – instead of listing everything. (However, a 'list' at the end could be used to provide a greater context.)

SENSORY COMPONENTS: The inclusion of sensory stimulations creates a very different set of neural responses and connections. We often use visual and auditory, but touch, smell, taste can also bring listeners to a different place. Also, in the visual or auditory realm, specifics can elicit very different responses. Even the difference between 'blue' and “delightful periwinkle” or “dazzling aquamarine” -- OR between 'drums' and “hollow rumble” or “delicate swishing hits” -- you can come up with your own.

EMOTIONAL RESONANCE: Be brave in revealing the Emotions. This can include the subject's emotional impetus, your emotional reaction, or the emotional impact on their community.

*Build a stack of cards – or digital version – as you collect, reflect, react, discover. Again, you won't use everything, but quick references (categorized as you like), can make the process easier, fulfilling, and rich!

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NOT ALL STORIES ARE THE SAME –

- ❖ **Length of time** -- create a map for 'impact' points for spoken/written story, whether 7 minutes or 5-pages!
 - Allow time for the “greatest impact”
 - Make a story arc
- ❖ **Starting point --- ending point:**
 - Chronological?
 - Anchor point? Going forward and backward?
 - Reverse Timeline?
 - One event that shaped everything?
- ❖ **Three to Five Standout Moment**
 - from your collection of impacts
 - Pick the most unusual – or the most boring – things that were key
 - What propelled the difference in these actions?
- ❖ **Emotional Variety:** what hits at the core of the subject's journey?
 - Fighting Fear or Repression
 - Escaping Anger
 - Overcoming Sadness
 - Creating Happiness and Joy
 - Using humor – from the subject or you
- ❖ **Style of presentation**
 - Quiet or Bold
 - Fast or slow – or both
 - Connection to listeners (readers)
 - Be yourself – just expanded a bit
- ❖ **Audience Participation**
 - Ask a question or questions
 - Story responses after the event
 - Elicit a response
- ❖ **Story Arc – or Not? Hero's Journey,**
 - What is an ending?
 - Can non-standard styles stimulate more response – ambiguity, open-ended, unresolved?

PURPOSE of all this?

Audience Connection and Transformation - Community Building
Call to Action for Individuals/Groups
Rebuilding the Vision of History