

**Say it like
you mean it.**

The Red Thread Core
Story Framework

People don't give simply because an organization exists.

Not to your programs.

Not to your statistics.

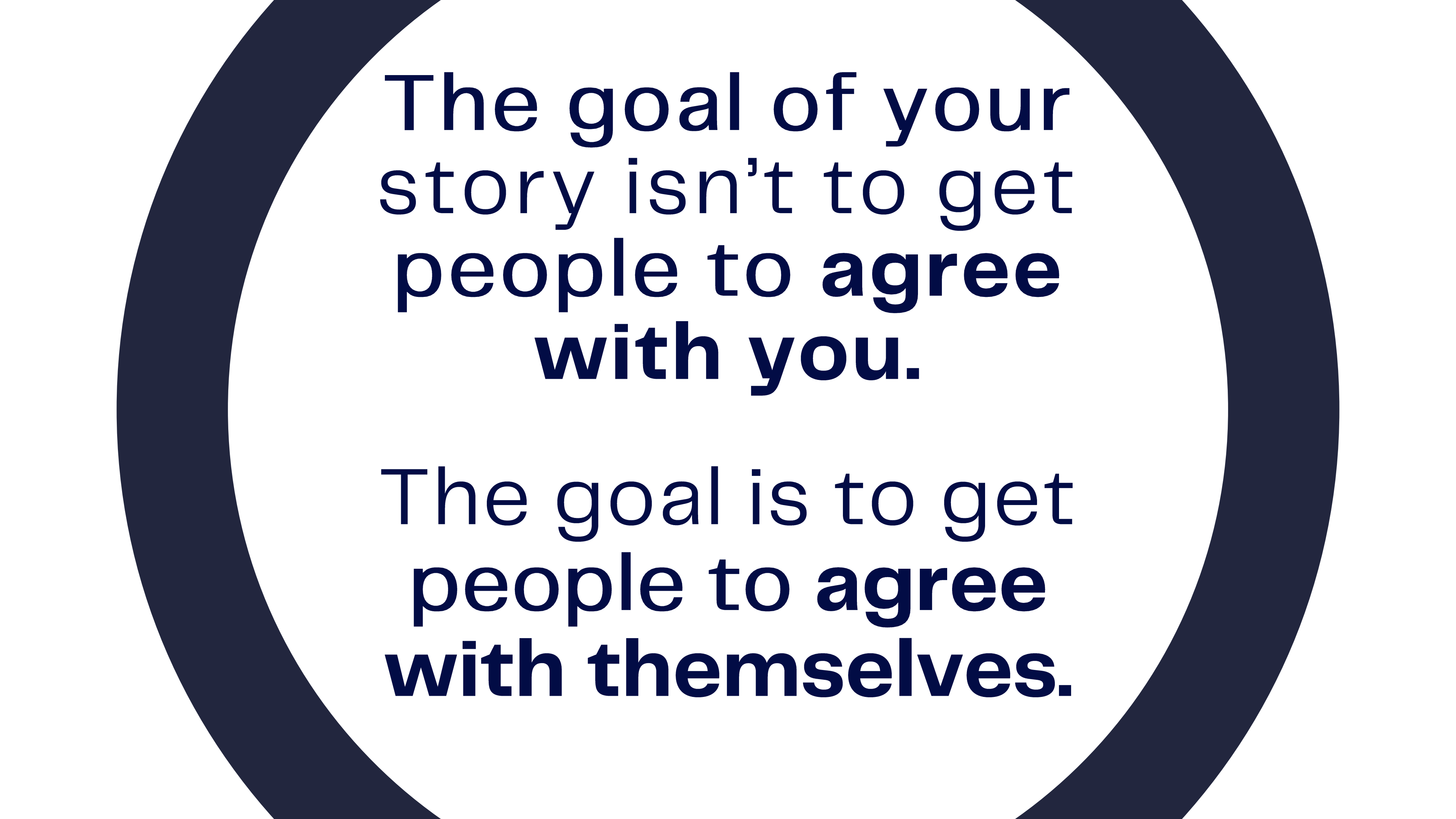
Not to your impact reports.

They give because something in your story reflects something they already believe.

They believe that no child should be left behind at Christmas.

They believe that people deserve dignity, no matter their circumstances.

They believe communities should take care of each other.



The goal of your
story isn't to get
people to **agree**
with you.

The goal is to get
people to **agree**
with themselves.

Our
challenge
isn't that
people
don't care.

Our
challenge is
that we start
our stories
from the
wrong place.

Starting the story with ourselves.

Our organization has served the community for 50 years...

We provide innovative programs for vulnerable populations by...

Our mission is to provide....

None of these statements are wrong.

But they're not how human stories begin.



People don't enter
stories **through**
institutions.

They enter
through **their**
own values and
experiences.

**When a story works,
it makes people feel like:**

1. They already knew this.
2. They already believed this.
3. They were already looking for a way to act on it.

It's not about crafting better messages.

**It's about uncovering the logic that already exists in
your audience's mind - and connecting to it.**

Belief

this matters to me

Problem

something's not right

Insight

reframe the
problem

Change


something better
is possible

Action

I can be a part
of that

**People stop feeling like they're
being asked to give.**

They feel like you've
given them a way to live
out something **they
already believe.**





The Shared Belief

The shared
belief is **never**
about your
organization.

It's about
their values.

The Belief
should feel
obvious

**Not
intellectual**

No one should have to worry about feeding their family.

Future generations deserve a healthy, sustainable planet.

Animals deserve safety, care, and the chance to thrive.



What does our
audience already
believe about **people,**
community, or fairness
that makes our work
matter?

The Problem

**People don't act
because a problem
exists.**

**They act because
the problem feels
unacceptable.**

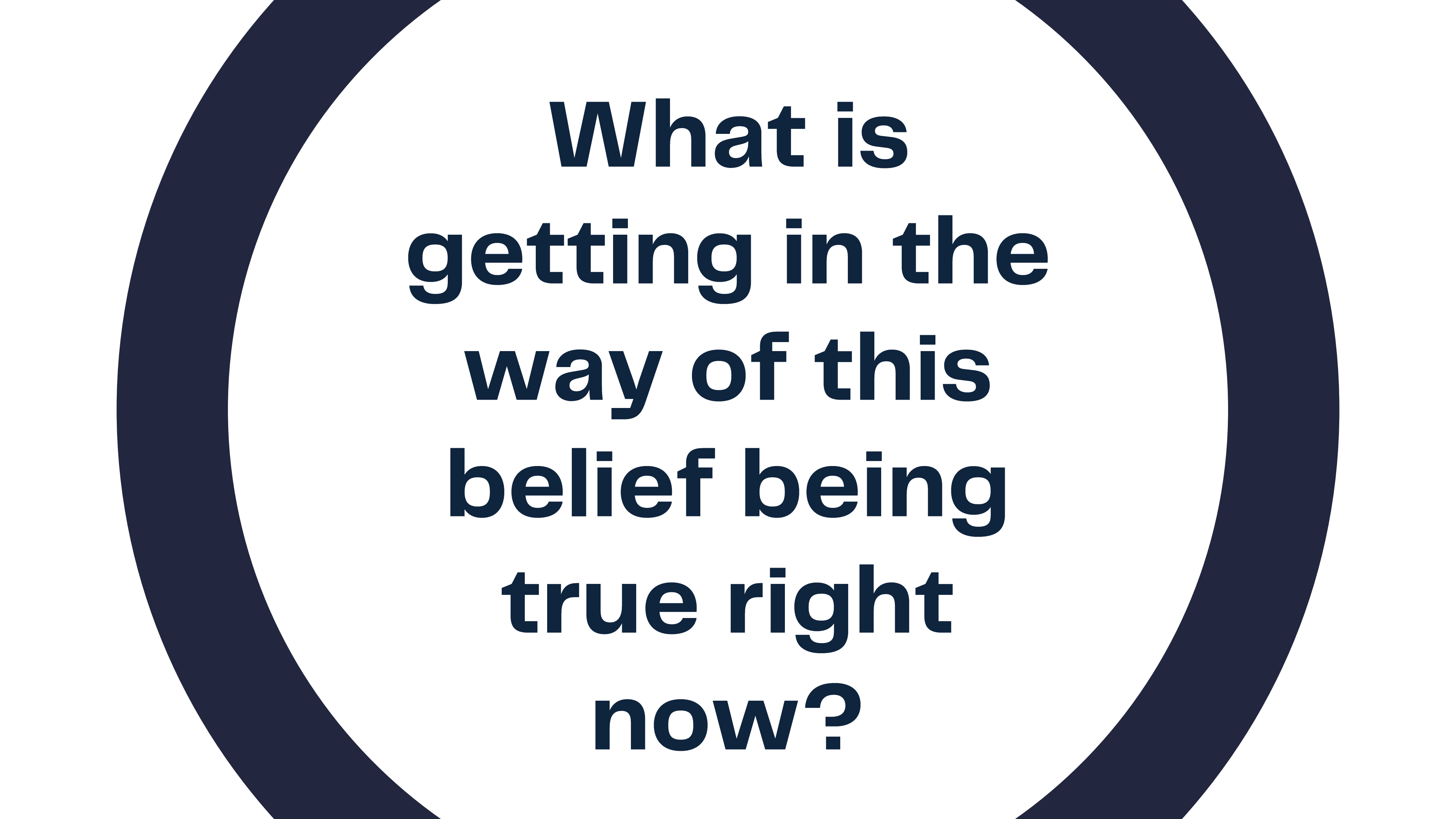
Focus on
the gap
between
belief &
reality

**What pressures,
trends or
realities are
making things
harder?**

**Many seniors go days
without any meaningful
connection.**

**Without early support, small
developmental gaps can
become lifelong barriers.**

**Economic pressures are
forcing loving families into
heartbreaking decisions.**



**What is
getting in the
way of this
belief being
true right
now?**

The Insight

What do people need to understand in order to believe change is possible?





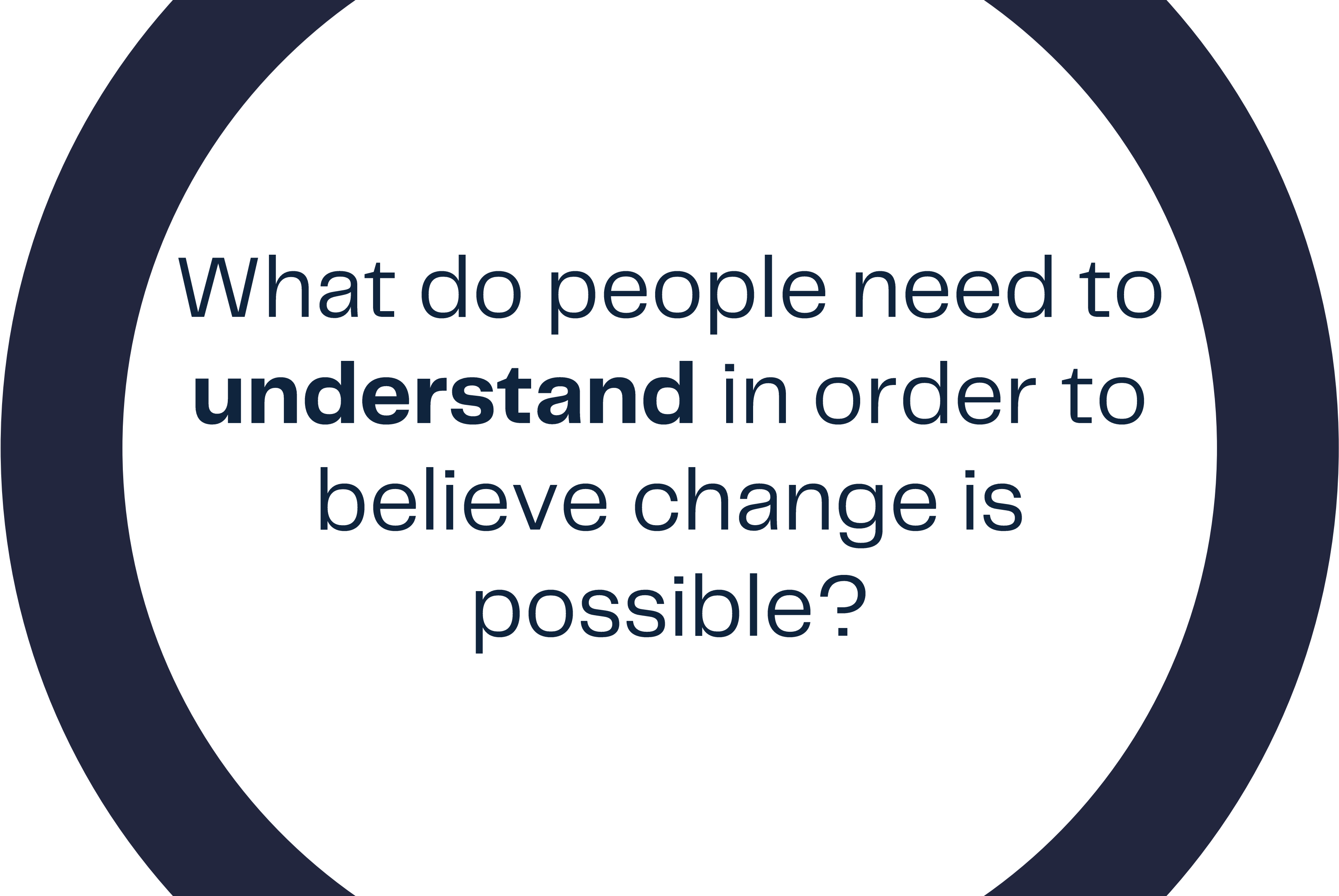
The Insight is not just **emotion**.

The Insight is **strategic**.

**Many pet surrenders could
be prevented with
temporary support for
owners.**

**Christmas support works
best when families can
access help easily and
without barriers.**

**People engage with history
when they see themselves
reflected in it.**



What do people need to
understand in order to
believe change is
possible?

The Change

This where
hope enters
the story.

A large, dark blue circular graphic on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

**Why
You?**

Your audience
should stop
hoping your
work matters
and **start**
believing it
does.

When young people have access to supportive spaces and trusted adults, they begin to **feel less alone and more hopeful** about their future.

One teen shared: "This was the first place where I didn't feel like something was wrong with me."

Last year, the organization provided over **5,000 counselling sessions and peer support interactions** - helping youth reconnect with hope, confidence, and connection.


What does the **world look like**
when the problem is
addressed?

&

Why is your organization
uniquely positioned to help
solve this problem?

ACTION

People don't act when they feel unsure.
They act when something feels both **clear**
and **doable.**





Clarity creates **momentum.**

Confused people **pause.**

Overwhelmed people **delay.**

Clear people **move.**

Help animals in need.

**A \$20 donation helps vaccinate
one rescued puppy before
adoption.**


Volunteer to deliver toys.

**Volunteer to deliver a
Christmas miracle to up to 10
families in just two hours.**

What is **one action**
you want your
audience to take –
and how can you
make that action
feel more **clear,**
meaningful, and
possible?

A large, solid dark blue circle is centered on a white background. Inside the circle, the text "One Story. Many Ways." is written in white. "One Story." is in a regular weight sans-serif font, and "Many Ways." is in a bold weight sans-serif font.

One Story.
Many Ways.



Non-profits are
not struggling
because people
don't care.

Good
storytelling
creates **clarity.**

Red Thread Resources:

Tamsen Webster – Find Your Red Thread: Make Your Big Ideas Irresistible –

<https://tamsenwebster.com/>

Dr. Jen Shang & Dr. Adrian Sargeant – The Institute for Sustainable Philanthropy

<https://www.philanthropy-institute.org.uk/>

The Osborne Group – Asking Strategic Questions

<https://www.theosbornegroup.com/tools-resources>