

Say It Like You Mean It.

THE ART & SCIENCE OF STORYTELLING, LEADERSHIP
AND FUNDRAISING RESULTS

ANGEL BENEDICT, CFRE | JENNIFER COLLINS | JANINE FOOTE

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This is your workbook - use this space to test, question and build something real.

Clarity → Confidence → Giving

Where Do Things Break Down?

If we disappeared tomorrow, what would be lost?

Who would notice first — and why?

What has changed... that our story hasn't?

Mission \neq Meaning

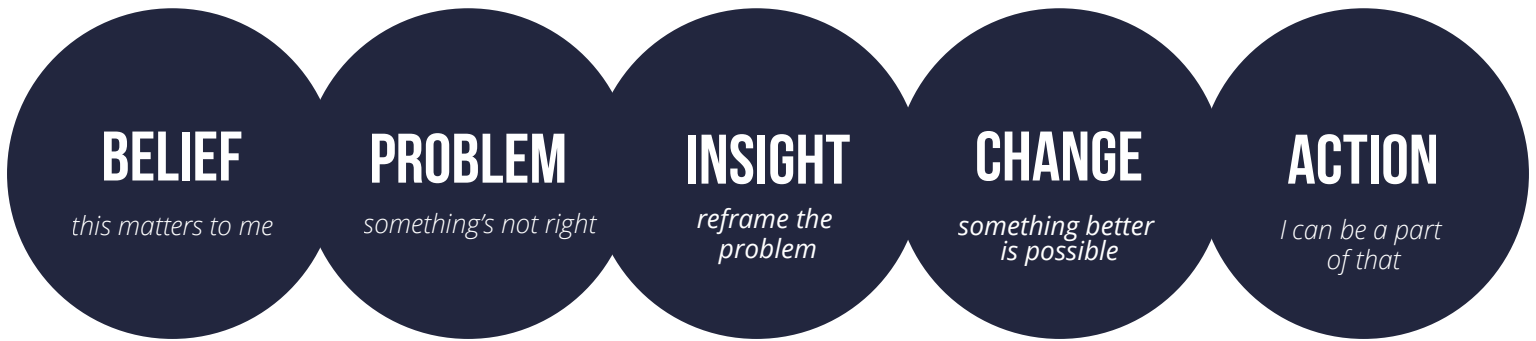
What questions do donors keep asking?

Where do conversations stall?

What feels hardest to explain?

Building the Core Story Framework

The goal of your story is not to get people to agree with you - it's to get them to agree with themselves.



The Shared Belief

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

Examples:

- People deserve dignity, even when life gets hard.
- Strong communities take care of each other.
- Hard times shouldn't define a person's future.

The Problem

The belief tells us what *should* be true - the problem shows us *why it isn't*. What is getting in the way of that belief being true right now?

Examples:

- Parents are choosing between rent and Christmas gifts.
- Our community is losing opportunities to connect with local history and culture in meaningful, accessible ways.
- Many young people are struggling silently because support feels inaccessible, overwhelming, or stigmatized.

(Tip - If your problem could apply to almost any nonprofit... it's too vague.)

The Insight

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

Examples:

- We used to think overcrowding was purely an adoption problem. But now we realize many pet surrenders could be prevented with temporary support for owners.
- Christmas support works best when families can access help easily and without shame.
- People engage with history when they see themselves reflected in it.

The Change

Paint a picture of a better, believable future. What does the world look like when the problem is addressed?

Examples:

- When families can access food support without stigma or barriers, stability begins to return to everyday life. Parents can focus on work, school, and caregiving instead of constantly calculating which meals to skip.
- When museums become spaces for participation instead of observation, communities feel more connected to both the past and each other.
- When youth have access to supportive spaces and trusted adults, they begin to believe they do not have to navigate difficult moments alone. Confidence grows. Isolation decreases. Young people start imagining futures for themselves again.

(Tip! This is a great place to share why your organization is the right choice - incorporate a real life example, transformation moment or a meaningful statistic)

Action

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

Examples:

- A \$20 donation helps vaccinate one rescued puppy before adoption.
- Your \$50 annual membership helps local students experience hands-on history programs all year long.
- One delivery route takes about 90 minutes and helps bring Christmas to up to 10 families.
- One volunteer shift can help remove hundreds of pounds of waste from local riverbanks.

(Tip! The goal isn't to make people care more. The goal is to remove friction to make it easier for caring people to act.)

Where Do You Need This Most?

Circle one: Direct Response | Leadership & Major Gifts | Sponsorship | Planned Giving | Communications with Leadership

One Story. One Donor.

Audience:

The Shared Belief:

The Problem:

The Insight:

The Change

Action:

Because of today, I will: