

# QHN TIPS ON HOW TO TELL A GOOD STORY

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**Note:** Each storytelling form (written, audio, video) has its own technical processes. But these are some generic tips that we hope you find useful.

## **PRE-PRODUCTION**

### **Keep Yourself on Track**

Answer this question, write it down as a story statement (like a purpose statement) and keep it in front of you at all times while you are putting your story together.

**I am writing/ assembling this story to \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Gather Personal Stories**

- Watch for great subjects that can help you tell the story you want to tell.
- When you find your great subjects, be transparent about what you are doing. Don't be afraid to read them your "story statement."
- Share your personal story(ies) with your subjects first to build rapport and give your subjects permission to go to that private space of telling their story.
- While your subject is sharing their story – listen well.
- Ask great questions. Probe. If you don't know how to probe, just ask "why?" or "how did that make you feel?"
- Train yourself to hear the passionate moments – "quotable moments" in the story. You'll know them when you hear them.

### **Gather Data**

- Seek out data that can speak to your story.

### **Gather Experts/ Research**

- Seek out experts/ research that can speak to your story. Follow the same suggestions for gathering personal stories to get the best information from the experts.

## **PRODUCTION**

### **Personal Stories**

- Lead your story with your "best" subject. Best is defined as your most quotable story; your most passionate and engaging story or set of statements.

### **Data**

- Insert data somewhere near the top. Data validates the importance of your story. Data also demonstrates awareness of other research and knowledge. Data moves the story from the subjective to the objective. Data convinces the pragmatists.

### **Experts/ Research**

- Once the personal story is underway and you have engaged the reader, you have demonstrated the data, use experts in your story.
- Experts/ Research act like data and move the story from the subjective, emotional (personal story) to the objective (intellectual). Place relevant expert/ research information directly following a relevant quote from your subject telling the story. This helps to validate the subjectivity (perceived bias) of the person telling the story (your subject).

## **STORY ENDING**

Don't worry about the ending. Telling stories is not like telling jokes; they don't require a punch line.