

# Storytelling for Fundraisers

# Good grief!

So now I'm supposed to  
be *Shakespeare* on top of  
everything else?!?!?

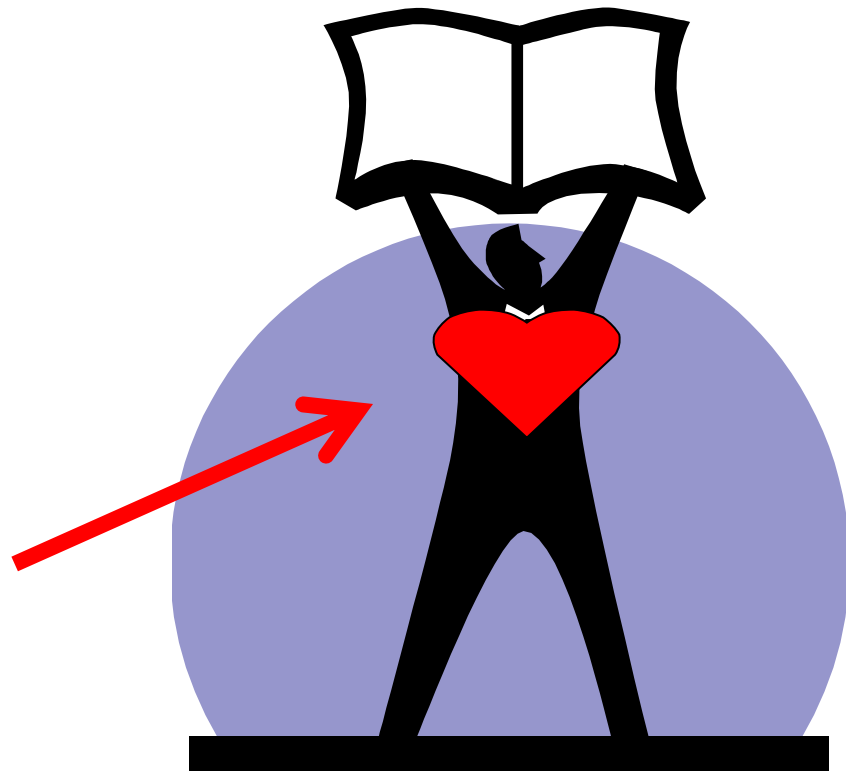
We all know the power of a good story.



# The first requirement of good storytelling is Emotional Resonance.

You know it  
when you feel it.

And you should  
feel it right here.



# Patti

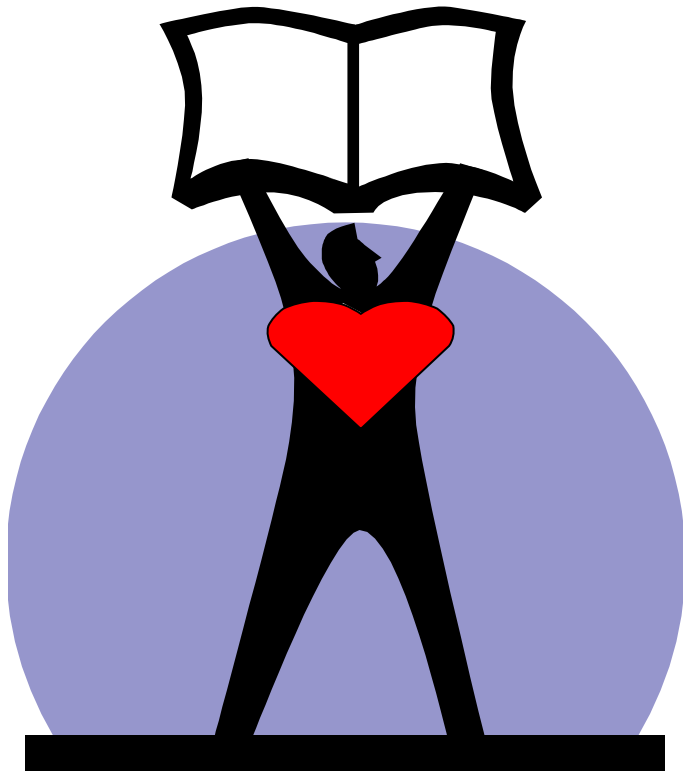


*“The doctors gave me their private numbers and said to call night or day. That doesn’t happen every place, that’s for sure.”*

– Patti

Palo Alto Medical Foundation

# Goal for Patti's story: Emotional Resonance



- ✓ Express her pain.
- ✓ Express her fear.
- ✓ Give detail, not too much.
- ✓ Express how special the surgeon is.
- ✓ Express Patti's relief.

# Fred



- ✓ Express Fred's pain.
- ✓ Express Fred's fear.
- ✓ Give detail, not too much.
- ✓ Express how special Innvision is.
- ✓ Express Fred's relief.

- InnVision Services to the Homeless

Emotion reaches  
some donors . . .

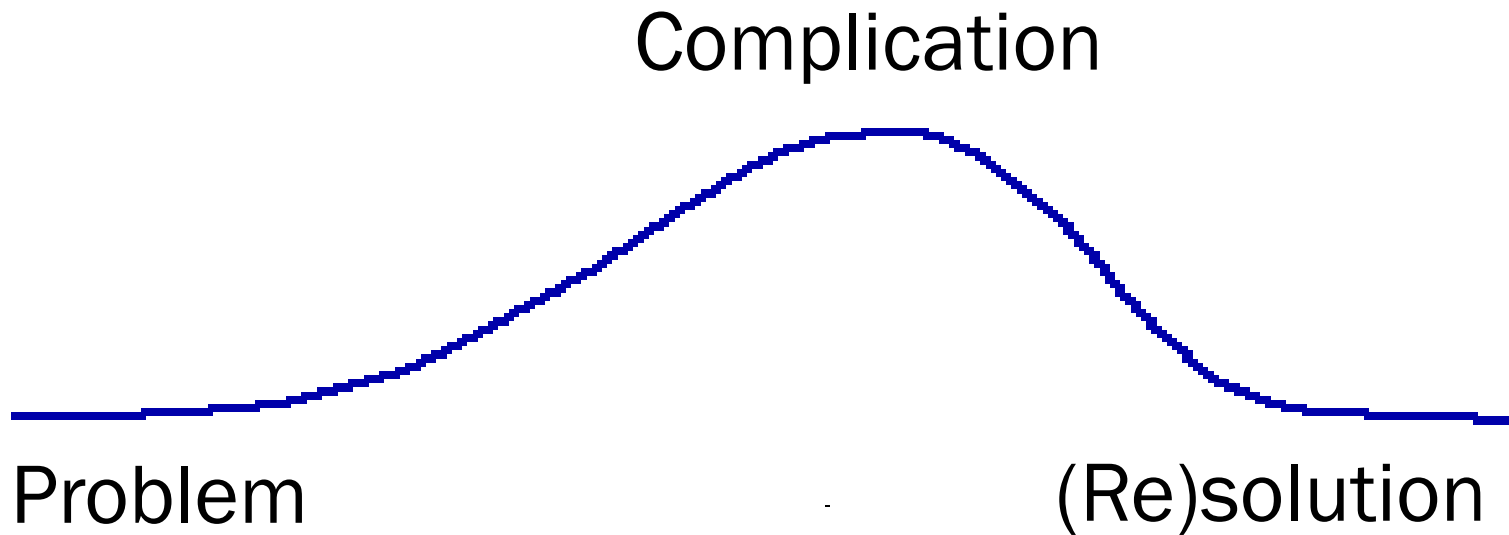


more readily  
than others.

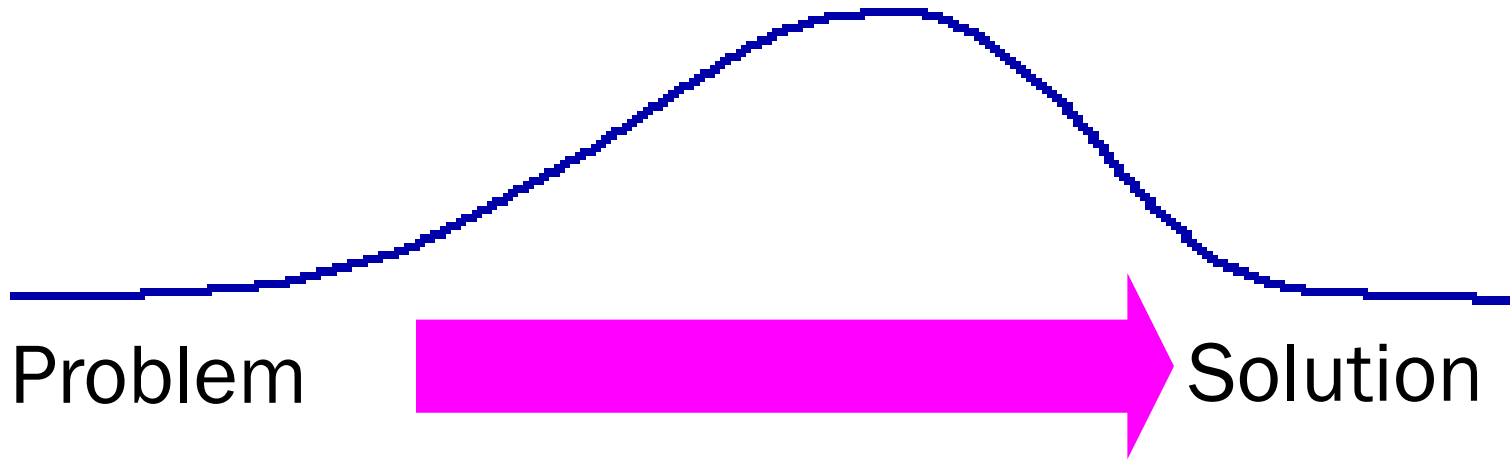
The second requirement of good storytelling is **Dramatic Structure**.



In its simplest terms,  
this is Dramatic Structure:



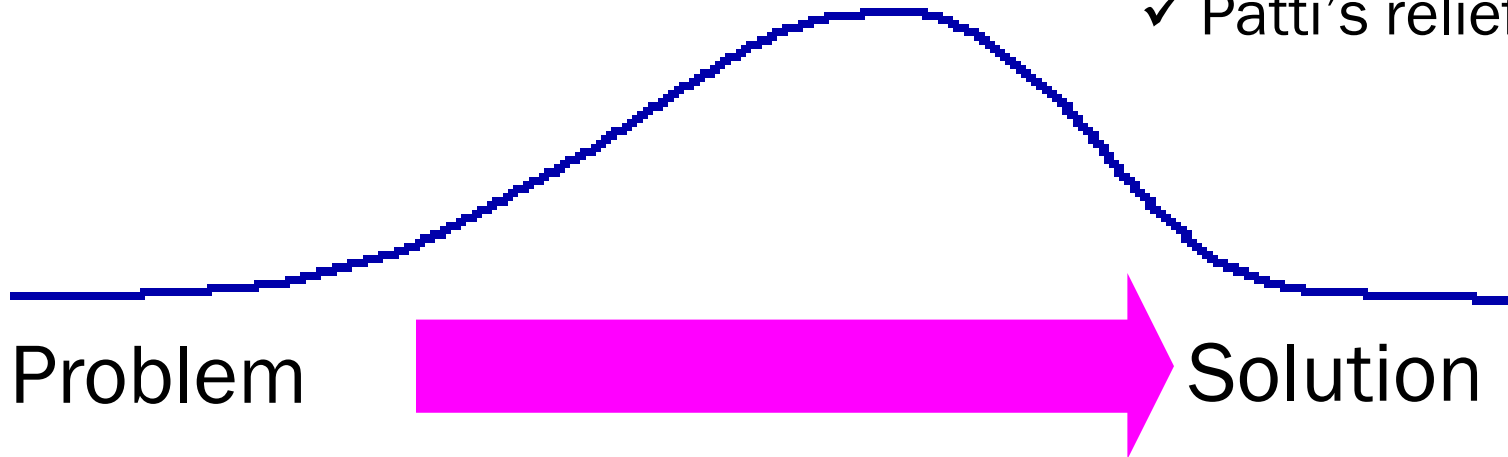
Simplify for fundraising.



# Simplify for fundraising.

- ✓ Patti's pain
- ✓ Patti's fear

- ✓ The surgeon's skill and artistry.
- ✓ Patti's relief.



# Dramatic Structure: It's a matter of skill and practice.

- The same structure applies no matter what the story.
- You already know this structure, because you've seen it a thousand times.

Problem: The Nazis want the Ark.



Uh-oh!

Solution: Outsmart them.

Gotcha!



Problem: Romeo's family hates  
Juliet's family.



Uh-oh!

Solution: Romeo and Juliet find a way to be together.

Better than nothing . . .



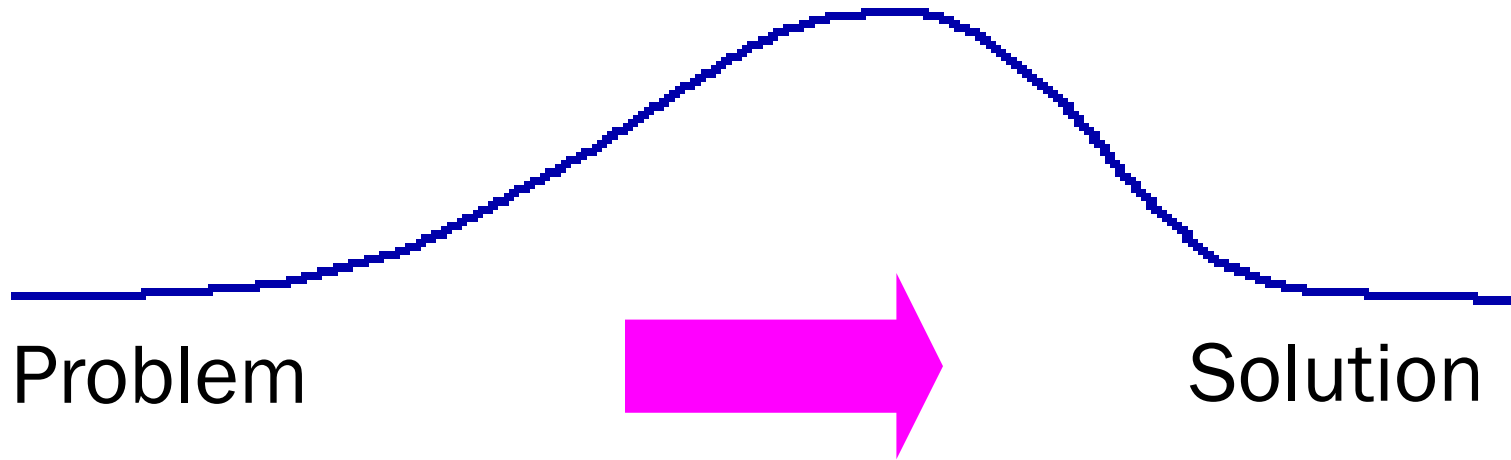
Problem: A family falls on hard times.



# Solution: Extreme Makeover, Home Edition




For fundraising, it's OK to simplify.



# Step 1: State the Problem

What is it that  
your constituents  
need or want?



Patti and Frank  
both want their  
lives back.

# Step 1: State the Problem.

George has cancer.

Martha is homeless.

Bill is hooked on drugs.

The giant panda  
is endangered.

Schools are dropping  
music and art.

Puppies and kittens  
are being abused.



# Step 2: State the Solution.

George has cancer.

Martha is homeless.

Bill is hooked on drugs.

The giant panda  
is endangered.

Schools are dropping  
music and art.

Puppies and kittens  
are being abused.

You and your  
donors can  
help!

Memorial Hospital needs a new  
linear accelerator.



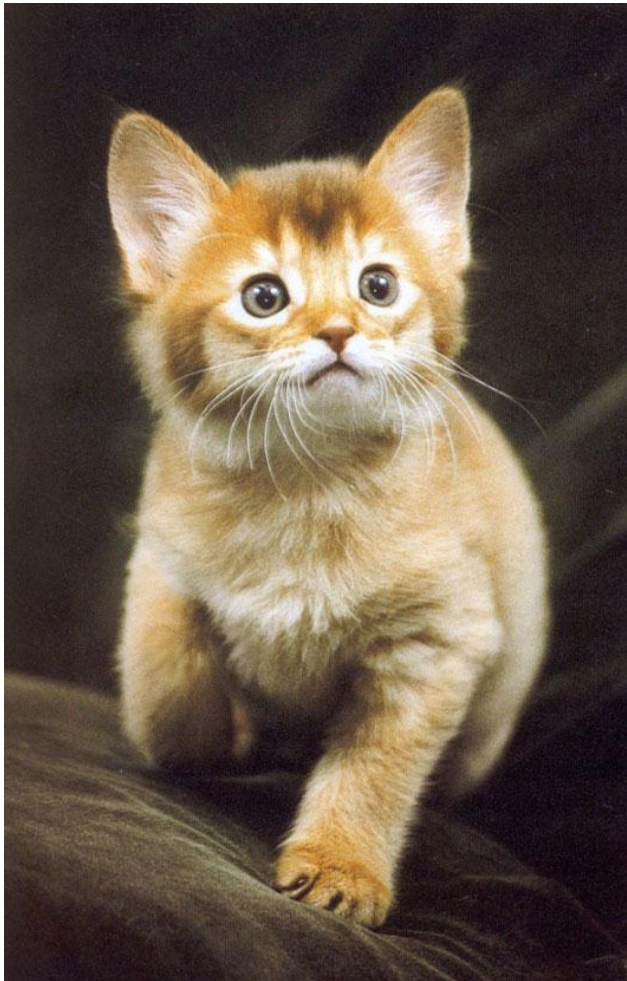
# Problem, then Solution

Judy had the kind of tumor nobody survives.  
Ten years later, here's Judy . . .

Dick learned he had prostate cancer.  
Four years later, Dick chairs the Board.

Stephanie was only 14. . .  
Now 18, Stephanie is a college freshman.

# You can do it in two steps.



## 1. State the problem with an example.

- It was two days before anyone found this homeless kitten . . .

## 2. State the solution.

- The veterinary staff at the SF/SPCA gave him a heating pad. . .

# Or take three-steps.

## 1. State the problem.

- Every parent’s worst fear is that doctors will say, “We cannot help your child.”

## 2. Give an example.

- It happened to Chuck and Sarah.

## 3. State the solution.

- Then something wonderful happened.

Problem

Solution

# Or start with several examples.

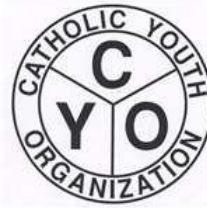
A frail grandmother . . .  
A weary mother . . .  
A gaunt young man . . .  
A technician in a hurry . . .  
A nurse pushing a wheelchair . . .

Problem

Only philanthropy can bring a second  
elevator to 2340 Clay Street.

Solution

California Pacific Medical Center



Saturday evening

**FROM THE DESK OF FATHER DAVE ....**

*I cannot blame Bradley's mother. She is only 14 years older than he is. I cannot blame his father either; the man's own parents were addicts like him. Yet here is Bradley, unable to learn, because of the cocaine that numbed his brain when he was still in the womb—and unable to love, because no one has taught him how. There is no one to blame, and what good would it do? I can only reach out to this thin, frightened boy and pray that, this time, he will let me touch him.*

Dear Friend,

I wish I could say I was shocked by Bradley's story, but I have heard it over and over again.

Thirty years ago, all it took to turn around a boy's life was a hot meal, a warm bed, and a kind smile. Now it takes a lot more.

- These days *at least half* the boys who come to St. Vincent's School for Boys have neurological damage from exposure to drugs in the womb, or from severe neglect, or even from having their little heads beaten again and again.
- *Seventy percent* of our boys have been sexually molested by adult family members.
- We also see a growing number of families who have done everything they know how and still need help for their emotionally troubled sons. Nothing has worked. Nothing can keep these families together.

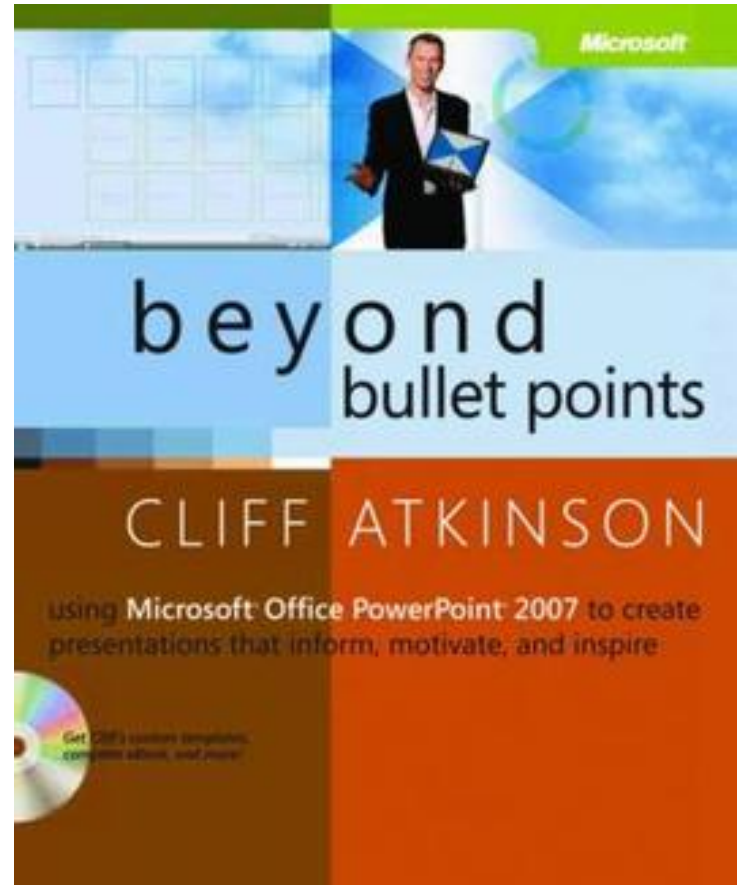
It's not easy helping any of these boys. It takes more time, patience, love, and professional skill than ever before. The work is expensive. . .and well worth the cost.

In the past you have shown great compassion for boys like Bradley by supporting the CYO and our work at St. Vincent's. Today I am writing to seek your help in changing Bradley's life. *Your gift of any amount will allow us to provide the extra measure of treatment needed by deeply troubled children.* It will mean the difference between simple custodial care and real progress.

With your help, we *can* change Bradley's life. I already see a difference.

**St. Vincent's School for Boys**

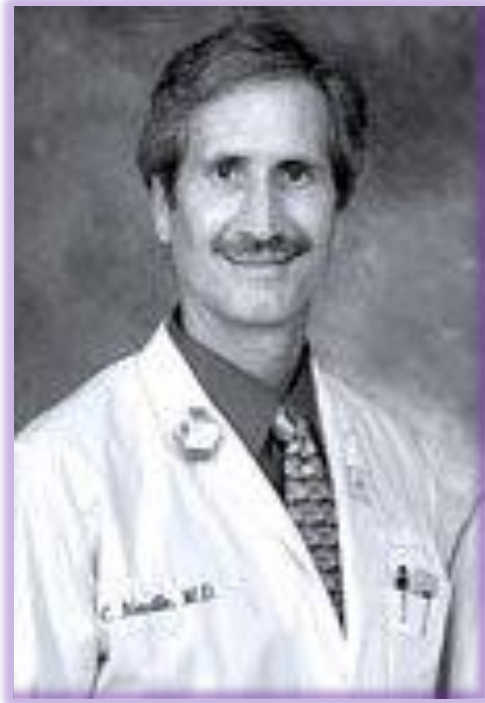
# Check out Cliff Atkinson's Books



# Where do you get your ideas?

- Professionals
- Constituents
- Imagination
- Your own life

# Stories from the pros



*“Sometimes I have to pinch myself. I think, ‘Wow—is this really happening?’ I can’t believe we can be this accurate and with so few side effects.”*

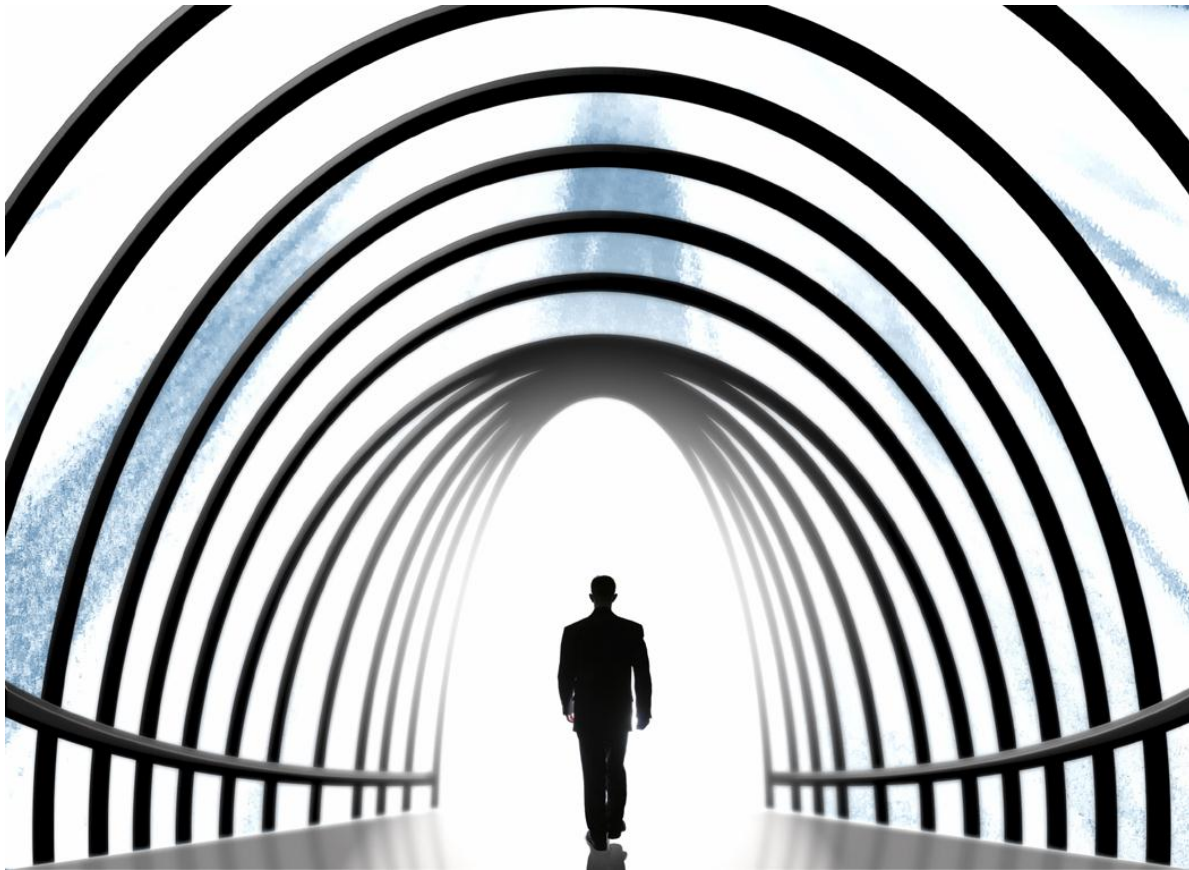
- Chris Neville, M.D.  
Radiation Oncologist  
Memorial Medical Center

# Stories from your constituents



Lions Eye Foundation

# Stories from your imagination



Fred

# Stories from your own life



One more thing . . .



Remember:  
Embellish with purpose and care.

“Your first  
responsibility  
is not to be dull.”

- Bono



# Remember:

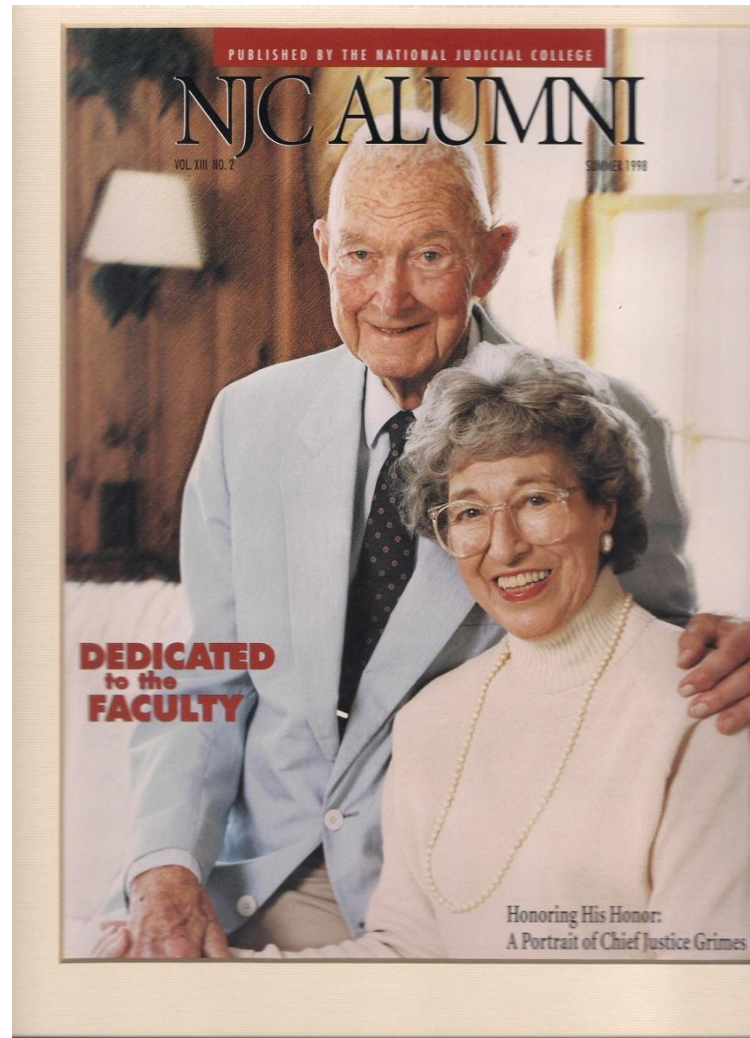
Work toward mastering the two requirements of any good story.

- Emotional Resonance
- Dramatic Structure



What every good story needs.

# One last story . . .



UC Davis Center for Healthy Aging

To see this slide show again:

Go to:

[www.gailterrygrimes.com](http://www.gailterrygrimes.com).

Click on Storytelling.

