

CLD1-4-ANR



## Facilitator's Guide

# Influencing Others with the Stories You Tell

*Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me the truth and I'll believe.  
 But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever. —Indian Proverb*

### Rationale:

Effective farm and agri-business leaders know that good illustrations can make a point. Stories can be used to train, mentor and coach others. Stories of how others have dealt with change can be useful to agricultural organizations managing their own change or communicating complex facts or basic truths.

### Program Goal:

To develop effective storytelling skills for enhancing agricultural leadership development opportunities

### Program Objectives:

- To examine the value of storytelling as an effective communications tool for agricultural leaders
- To contrast storytelling themes used to relate truths or personal experiences
- To practice storytelling skills to improve potential for influencing others in agricultural leadership development situations

### Pre-Program Preparation:

- Study and make copies of *Influencing Others with the Stories You Tell* (CLD1-4).
- Prepare two to three memorable childhood/early adult stories. Practice telling them.
- Make copies of **Memorable Event** and **Impres-sionable Stories** handouts for each participant.
- If using PowerPoint, make sure all equipment works. In particular, make sure the videos embedded in the PowerPoint work. (The video clips must be located in the same subdirectory as the PowerPoint itself.)
- If using a flip chart, make sure all appropriate materials are on hand.

- Try to see how your personal memorable stories could fit within each of the seven themes in **Learning Activity 2**.
- If you are not comfortable using the political and/or religious examples in the learning activities, hide the slides in the PowerPoint and make sure your presentation flows well without them. But recognize that a lesson on storytelling is arguably incomplete without these examples.

### Introduction:

Effective storytelling is a fine and beautiful art. A well-developed and well-presented story can cut across age barriers and will capture the interest of its listeners. Good stories will be remembered long after they are told.

Many task-oriented farm leaders may think that storytelling is a silly waste of time. However, stories, analogies and metaphors are some of the best ways to communicate complex facts and basic truths. Stories are a way for our minds to see and remember what our ears hear.

### Introductory Activity:

Open the meeting with a personal story. Prepare for that story using the **Memorable Event** worksheet that you will shortly hand out to participants. Share this story enthusiastically (using hand gestures and animation, if that is your personal speaking style). Take no more than a couple minutes to do this. Explain why you think this story stays with you.

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This leadership curriculum was developed by Agriculture & Natural Resources (AG) agents along with University of Kentucky specialists. Therefore, the examples used in the facilitator's guides are geared toward an ANR/Horticulture audience, such as Master Gardener groups. Please feel free to modify and reproduce the facilitator's guide for any appropriate educational or training purposes with other audiences.

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After you share your story, hand out the **Memorable Event** worksheet. Ask participants to use it as a guide to think about a memorable childhood or early adult memory they have. They can use one of the examples listed, or they can use another event of their own choosing. Ask them to describe the event in great detail; what it was and what they did; when and where it happened; and who they were with. Finally, ask them to try to determine why the story sticks in their mind.

After about 5 minutes, ask for a couple volunteers to share their personal memories. Try to have them limit themselves to 2 to 3 minutes each. Following the two stories, ask, "Why do you enjoy these kinds of stories?" Write the answers down on a flipchart.

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### Objective 1: To examine the value of storytelling as an effective communications tool for agricultural leaders

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Stories, analogies, and metaphors are some of the best ways to develop a relationships with others. Often someone will remember a story much longer than they would retain a factual statement. A good story can be an easy way to communicate complex information. Some of the most effective leaders in the world have been good storytellers.

#### Learning Activity 1:

Use the PowerPoint (slides 1 through 15) to show some examples of how storytellers have made a difference. Speaker notes are included in the PowerPoint. If the meeting event is not suitable for electronic equipment, the PowerPoint can be adjusted to be used as a flipchart.

(The PowerPoint includes two video clips. Make sure these work on your equipment before you use it. The video clips must be stored in the same subdirectory as the PowerPoint file in order for the video clips to work. If they don't, the text slides that are hidden can be used as a replacement.)

Have each participant think of another story that made an impression on them. This doesn't have to be the participant's own story (slide 15 on the PowerPoint). Use the included worksheet. Give everyone about five minutes to work on the story, then ask for a couple volunteers to share what they came up with. The **Impressible Stories** worksheet is included for examples.

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### Objective 2: To contrast storytelling themes used to relate truths or personal experiences

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Good storytelling comes from recalling events and using your experience to communicate truths to others. Good stories can be built around common themes, which help structure and recall events for relating a specific truth. These themes can include:

- Mistakes and failures
- Unexpected opportunities
- Risks and rewards
- Choices and consequences
- Lessons learned
- Obstacles and challenges
- Someone who inspired me

#### Learning Activity 2:

Use PowerPoint slide 16 to explain each of the seven themes (or use a flip chart). Use the information in *Influencing Others with the Stories You Tell* (CLD1-4) as teaching notes. After explaining each theme, ask participants to tie something from one of their stories into the theme. Be prepared to give your own example, in case no one in the class has comments. Make sure to allow enough time for someone to build up their courage to make a comment!

The instructor's own example of how to use a story within each theme would be better, but an example for each theme from the **Impressible Stories** could be used (examples in italics).

- **Mistakes and failures.** Did anyone have an experience from a mistake or a failure in their story that resulted in gaining more self-confidence through admitting the mistake or helping to build stronger relationships? *The example of the powdered chocolate milk could be used to make a point that preparation and presentation are very important to the final outcome.*
- **Unexpected opportunities.** Did surprises or unexpected events occur that led to an "ah ha" moment resulting in more personal satisfaction? *The flood story is an example of how a family used an opportunity (some may call it another's misfortune) to change their own life.*
- **Risk and reward.** Can your story indicate taking a personal risk and receiving rewards? *The flood story could once again be used here. The family took a big risk in starting in a new business in which they had no experience. The reward was that they have been there for three quarters of a century. Another risk and reward example is the recent story of the President Obama's role in ordering the military operation that took out Osama Bin Laden. The political risks of the operation were such that failure of the operation may have severely damaged the President's credibility*

*in much the same way that President Carter was hurt by the failed hostage rescue mission in Iran in the late 1970s. The success of the operation brought the rewards of reaching a 10-year-old military goal, plus the increase in the President's stature as Commander-in-Chief.*

- **Choices and consequences.** Could your story show how a choice was a decision with positive consequences that you could share with others to influence them? *The flood example could again be used to show that the family made a choice to uproot their whole lives to move to a different community to start a new life, from a plumber to a fishing camp owner. The choice led to something of a way of life for the grandchild.*
- **Lessons learned.** Can your story share a lesson learned, with a specific truth to pass on? *The example of the death of the elderly man could be used as a story of how a community appreciated a life well-lived.*
- **Obstacles and challenges.** Can your story indicate obstacles that were overcome with a positive result? *The flood story could be expanded to talk about the obstacles and challenges in running a completely new business.*
- **Someone who inspired me.** Can your story include a certain individual who inspired a choice of some kind or enhanced your personal development? *The story of the death could be used as an example of how this elderly man could be an inspiration to the nephew-in-law as well as others in the community.*

If time permits, discuss how all seven of these themes are covered in the three **Impressionable Stories** examples. The point is that with some imagination one story could be woven into several themes.

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### Objective 3: To practice storytelling skills to improve potential for influencing others in agricultural leadership development situations

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The key to telling stories is to have something interesting to say and to say it in an interesting way. Stories can be strengthened by following some basic storytelling tips:

- Tell a personal story.
- Be honest and sincere.
- Use other's stories.

- Have a beginning, middle, and end.
- Make the story visual.
- Use body language.

### Learning Activity 3:

Use PowerPoint slide 17 to explain each of the tips (or use a flip chart). Use the information in *Influencing Others with the Stories You Tell* (CLDI-4) as teaching notes.

Ask the class to break up into groups of three people each. Within each group, have each person use one of the two stories they have written about on one of their worksheets, and ask them to tell that story to the others in their group. After each story is told, the group should critique the storyteller's style—sincerity, ease of following, uses of senses, body language, etc. Following that, each group should discuss the themes for which the story could be appropriate. (Slide 18 in the PowerPoint summarizes this how-to. Leave the slide up as people break into groups, as a reminder of what you've assigned them to do.)

Allow 10 minutes per person for the story and the follow-up discussion, with the story itself taking no more than 2 minutes. Someone in each group should be responsible for keeping time. After the story and follow-up, rotate to the next person, following the same format. In theory, this would take about 30 minutes for the group.

As each person critiques the storyteller, please remember to do so gently and tactfully. Remember, your turn to be critiqued is coming up! "Critique others as you would have them critique you."

As an instructor, mill around the room listening to stories and follow-up discussions. If you see noticeable deficiencies/problems in someone's storytelling, or something that the storyteller is particularly doing right, see if the group brings it up; if not, tactfully bring it up yourself.

### Summary:

Use the PowerPoint slide (or a flipchart) to summarize the key points of using storytelling as a means of influencing others. The information included in the Summary section of the accompanying CLDI-4 publication can be used with slide 19 as teaching tips for each point.

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Developed by Kim Strohmeier, Owen County Ag and Natural Resources Agent.

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## Impressionable Stories

My wife's uncle passed away peacefully at home this week. He was the last survivor of a generation of 8 kids. The family was all called in the night before he died. While this was a sad time, with a lot of tears, I was also mindful of how this was the way a person ought to leave this life. A big, high-ceiling bedroom; a single dim lamp on the bedside; a crucifix and a large 1960's-era portrait of all the kids on the wall behind the bed; everyone speaking in whispers; his wife and his kids were all gathered around the bed, some holding his hands and some rubbing his legs, doing what they could to help ease his discomfort. In-laws and grandkids were milling around the house, in and out of the bedroom. Other family members and friends had stopped by over the course of the evening, saying goodbye and hugging the family. The parish priest had just been there, giving last rites. It was really a beautiful picture of a loving family, and a whole community that cares about them.



My wife's dad was stationed in Guadalcanal in WWII. He had some post office experience at home before the war, and the Army decided they wanted to use that experience. He considered that one of the luckiest breaks of his life; in that later, the rest of his company was one of the first groups to go in with the invasion of the Philippines, in which many didn't survive.

He was stationed there for 27 months, and he could hold you spellbound with some of the stories he told. One of the funniest was the week he was on KP, (kitchen patrol.) He said, "It was the middle of the summer, just as hot as it could be. Kitchen was open, fans just blowing hot air around, flies buzzing all over the place, just absolutely sweltering."

Just about every food they got there was powdered. One of his favorite things was chocolate milk. His first day on duty, the cook made a big batch of it. He said "the cook was a great big hairy fellow; red hair; arms covered with hair. Tattoos all over his arms. Cigarette hanging out of his mouth, ashes dropping all over the place. To mix this chocolate milk, he poured in the powdered milk into this big vat, then poured the powdered chocolate into the vat. Then he took those great big, hairy, sweaty arms; reached down into the vat and started mixing it all up. You know, I never did like chocolate milk after that!"



I live on the river, and it's a part of me. Some people clear their mind by reading or jogging; some by getting on a tractor; I do it by just sitting on a riverbank and watching the river roll by. The drawbacks of living there are that we have to deal with floods sometimes. I've had to move my grandmother and later, my uncle, out of our family homeplace (where I know live) because of flooding, and had to clean up afterwards when the flood waters receded. But a flood was the very reason my family moved there in the first place!

My granddad was a plumber in Louisville. He'd heard of this fishing camp on the river in central KY, and he and some friends starting taking a week's vacation there in the 1920's. He fell in love with place. So much so that, in spite of the fact that he knew absolutely nothing about this kind of business, he told the owners that if they ever wanted to sell the camp; talk to him!

People along the river still talk about the 1937 flood, the biggest flood in recorded history in the area. Water was up to the doorknobs in the house at the camp. After that, the owners decided they didn't want to live so close to the river! My dad remembers the wife of the owner saying that she'd always wanted running water in the house, but not that way! So my grandparents reached a deal, and my family took possession of the property in Jan 1938 and moved from Louisville to this remote camp. We've been there ever since. My grandmother's widowed father moved in with them shortly after they moved, so my kids make the 5th generation of our family that's lived there.