

# *Finding Your Story*

A Step by Step Process  
to Discover and Write  
Your Personal Transformational Story



*You*

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# *Finding Your Story*

For speakers, authors, entrepreneurs and leaders, the ability to tell a story is a wonderful skill that elevates your connections with others.

Material from your own life experience is the most meaningful way to make that connection, but how do you work with that experience?

Situations and incidents that happen every day and seem ordinary and insignificant can be the seed for a very moving and engaging personal story. This is especially true when you have come out on the other side of the experience with a much different perspective of it than you had while it was happening.

What blooms from the seed can be spoken, written or read. It can be a speech from a stage, a chapter in a book, a blog post, or a video.

And you can make it compelling by following these steps.

**The key to a moving and empowering story is the personal transformation that happens in the story.**

## **Finding Material**

Keep a daily journal.

Each day in point form or short sentences write down what happened during the day. No details or long descriptions are needed for this stage.

In fact, the quicker you note the information at this stage of the process the better.

Imagine you are writing scenes for a movie, one scene in the kitchen, one when the kids were going to bed, one when you couldn't find your keys, to offer some examples.

They may seem boring and lack any action or excitement or potential for insight. That's okay.

In particular it's good to note what frustrates or angers you.

Or conversely what pleases you or brings you pleasure.

Make note of how others played into the scene. Maybe it was the family dog, the cashier at the grocery store, or a person who interviewed you for a job.

Keep the journal over a period of time and add to it every day.

### **The Seeds of the Story**

When you're ready to create your story, go back over your journal and choose an incident or situation. As you're choosing the event, go with your gut and your memory of how you felt at the time.

Take as much time as you need to remember.

From the one scene, what was the conflict, frustration, anxiety or disaster? What was the degree of the conflict, etc? Pick a number from 1 to 10, the higher the better.

Write in longer form about that particular incident. More details are better at this stage.

Let your ideas and emotions flow without censoring or judging anything.

Keep writing even when you think you have nothing more to say.

## Identify the Desire

Identify your core desire from that scene. Every story contains a spoken or unspoken desire.

If you could have whatever result you wanted from that scene, what would it be?

It could be anything so let your imagination run wild.

The scenario/scene could be a fantasy, a drama, science fiction. The location could be anywhere you want.

It could even be magic.

Again, write until you can't write any more.

**Note: this multiple step process may take a number of days or even weeks.**

## Name the Outside Forces In Your Way

Keeping your desire in mind, what were the *external* obstacles in the way of you getting what you want?

Was there a person who was keeping you from getting what you wanted?

Look for *all* the external blocks that were in your way.

This is where a perspective of victim-hood might show up. And that's okay! It might be needed for the story. The before and after meme will be instantly recognizable by your audience.

The whole purpose of this process is to move you through *all* the stages to your transformation.

List all the persons or things you can think of in as much detail as possible while keeping it to the external blocks at this stage.

Write as much as you can.

## **Name How YOU Were In Your Own Way**

Now look within. What were the *internal* obstacles to your desire?

How were you stopping yourself from getting what you wanted?

Was it fear? Was it a lack confidence? Did you not know how to ask for what you wanted?

Could you go to jail?

Could you get fired if you acted on your desire?

Being that extreme is a way to add humour. It doesn't have to be true. It only needs the potential to be true.

Can you recognize a familiar pattern of your behaviour in this situation?

Remember, no one else is reading your story at this point so by being completely open about your own wrong steps or internal blocks, you could uncover a jewel that will ultimately be a key point in the final version.

We can't see how to change until we accept that we get in our own way and take responsibility for our own role in the situation.

By identifying your internal obstacles, you are pointing the way to your transformation.

Your transformation is what your audience wants to see or read about because they want to know it's possible for them.

Continue to write as much as you can about your day to day life even as you're going through all the steps for one story.

**This step allows for exaggeration, which can add some humour to your story, especially if there are other parts that are quite dramatic.**

## **Travel Back in Time**

Now think back to your childhood. Is there a connection in your past to the current situation?

Close your eyes for a few minutes and as you allow yourself to go back in time, let your subconscious mind show you an incident from your past. It may be coming up because it needs resolution.

Don't worry, you don't have to relive it. Let the writing act as an agent for your own healing if it's needed.

It may not be a difficult memory, but whatever it is, usually the first one you think of is the right one.

Once you have a memory, write whatever you remember in as much detail as possible, Why does the incident from your current life remind you of the memory?

Who is there? What are the surroundings?

How did you feel about what was happening back then?

Your writing might start with the simple words "I remember...".

## **Making the Connection**

In the connection between the current situation and the memory from childhood, what is the potential for transformation? Is there a lesson you can learn?

How do you use the lesson to come to a better understanding of yourself?

Think of a specific question you could ask that relates to the life lesson and add the question to your story.

## **Pulling It All Together**

Pull everything together with a statement or statements that encapsulate the lesson and the insight you've had.

Define the transformation you've experienced. How is life different?

What action will you take as a result?

Whether your audience is listening to you speak or on a video, or reading a blog post or book chapter, what three meaningful ideas, insights or steps can you offer them?

As you begin to pull your story together, think about who the story is for, and write it directly for that person.

Who is it? What are their concerns about life? What are their obstacles? How can your story help them?

## **Summing It Up**

This process can find treasures in ordinary everyday events that are poignant or funny or relate-able in your story.

The memory, transformation and healing you go through will deepen the energy connection to your audience.

This same process is a perfect way to move from life's dramas (frustration, anger, fear) to essence (peace, harmony, happiness), and can be used over and over in multiple ways and situations.

As you use the process over and over, you'll discover new ways to adapt it to suit your particular form and style of storytelling.

**As you develop your skill with this process, you will find different ways to adapt the story to more than one form, eg blog post and video, or speech and book.**

**Find your own unique way of expressing your ideas.**

The more you use this process, the more ideas and incidents you'll find to write and speak about.

In other words, you'll have a never ending supply of material from your own life.

Above all, remember to approach the whole process with a sense of fun and playfulness.

**Here in short form are the steps in the process:**

1. Write regularly about everyday ordinary events.
2. Choose a situation from your writing.
3. What was your conflict or frustration?
4. Identify your most important desire in the situation.
5. What outside forces were keeping you from your desire?
6. What internal blocks were keeping you from your desire?
7. Choose a related incident from your childhood.
8. Connect the childhood event to your current situation.
9. What were the questions, insights and transformation that happened that you can now share with others?

*You don't just have a story. You're a story in the making, and you never know what the next chapter's going to be. That's what makes it exciting.*

Dan Millman

*Writing is an extreme privilege but it's also a gift. It's a gift to yourself and it's a gift of giving a story to someone.*

Amy Tan