

10 ways to use Storytelling to make your messages impactful

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FOR YOU: What is your frustration(s) with trying to get the attention of the reader or listener?

In this Session

This 2-hour skill sharing session will bring practical tips for the use of Storytelling into your projects and work. These ten tips can help to bring human-centric and social impact stories to the forefront. Storytelling encapsulates written, verbal, imagery – in fact, it employs all the senses to creatively and effectively to capture the attention of the audience you seek to reach. This session will build your own creative confidence and skills that help you create the powerful message to captivate others.

TIP #1: START AT THE END

TOP TIP #1: What do you wish to achieve?

- **Before you begin, think about the ending.**
 - What specifically do you wish to achieve in this communication?
 - How do you want people to feel/think/do after reading/listening/watching?
 - What is the purpose of what you are doing? What is the **WHY for your audience?**
 - How do you know if you are successful?
 - Let's also have a realistic view of "success".
 - This all helps to set the tone and the type of communication you wish to have.

What is the PURPOSE?

What are my three OBJECTIVES?

WHY is this important for others?

How will I know if I was SUCCESSFUL?

TIP #2: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE
STRUCTURE, THE STRUCTURE,
THE STRUCTURE

TOP TIP #2: Remember the number 3.

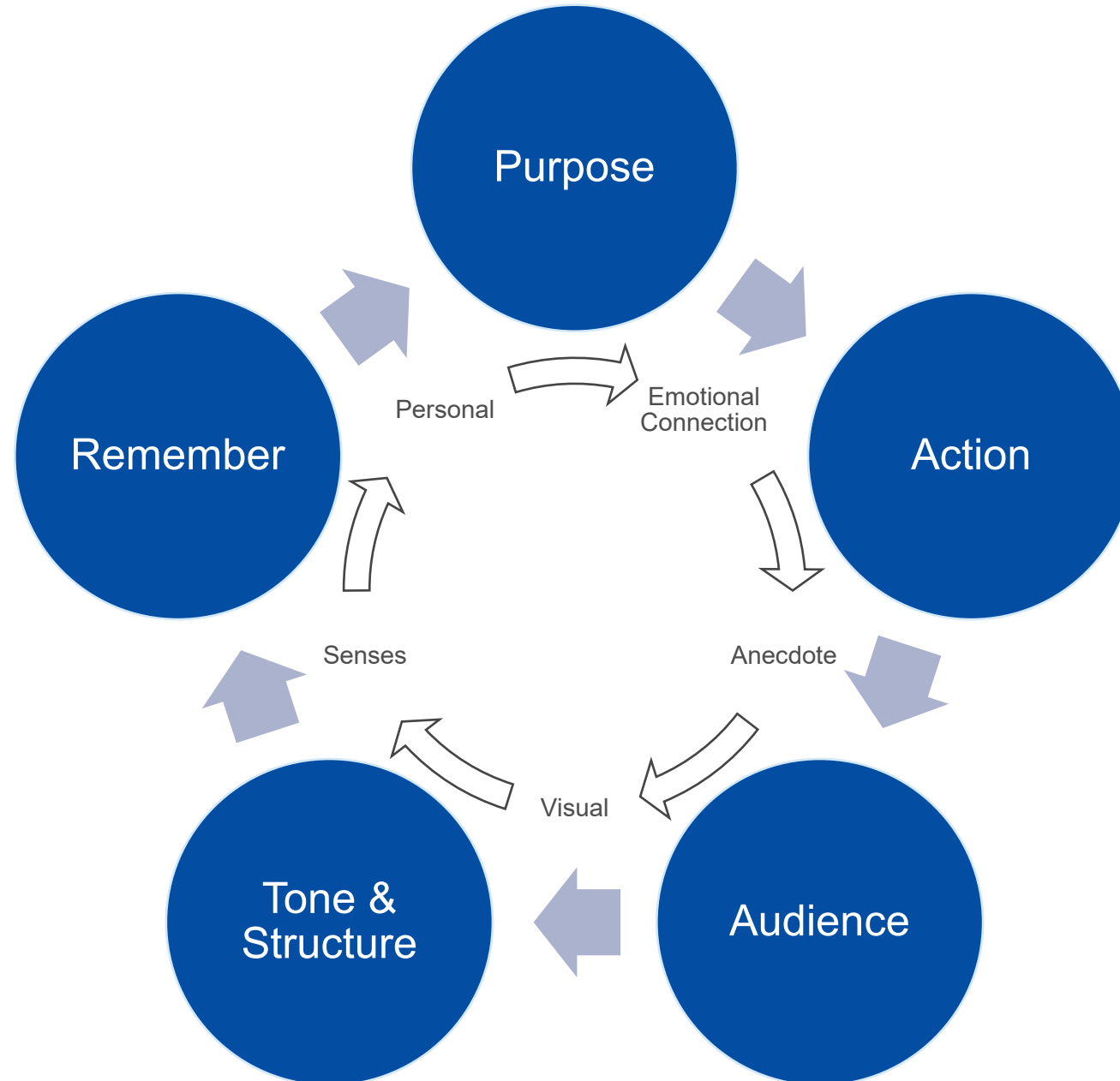
- **Start with breaking any idea into three parts.**
 - The most powerful number in communication is the number 3.
 - Every communication has a beginning, middle and end.
 - I don't believe there is a formula to follow, but there is always a structure – or else your reader gets lost.
 - This helps to break down complexity into clarity.
 - When you can – resist your 'usual' way to create (for example) a presentation.

The power of the 3-point storyboard

Sketch

5 words

A map to follow – the WHAT & the HOW



How do you make an impact?

- Make it **personal**.
- **Emotional** connection.
- Use **anecdote** and reflection.
- Make it **visual**.
- Engage the audience with all the **senses**.

What creates a powerful message?

- Make sure you and your audience knows the **purpose**.
- Identify the **action**/result you wish to have.
- Write/Present for a specific **audience**.
- Write to match your **tone**, medium & your image.
- Identify what you wish someone to **remember**.

TIP #3: *At the centre of everything
is....*


TOP TIP #3: Put the 'human' at the centre.

- **We need the emotional connection in order to CARE.**
 - Back to the WHY – 'Why do I care?', thinks the reader.
 - Back to the 3-point storyboard & this exercise – try DRAWING it.
 - Our story will naturally bring more of the human-connection.
 - Look at examples around you. Why do you stop and read/listen/watch?



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unitednations  #Throwback to January 2010, when @unpeacekeeping's Jens Kristensen (right) mourned his colleagues who lost their lives in the Haiti earthquake, at a memorial service in Port-au-Prince.

Jens himself had been rescued from under the rubble of the UN Mission's headquarters in Haiti where he had

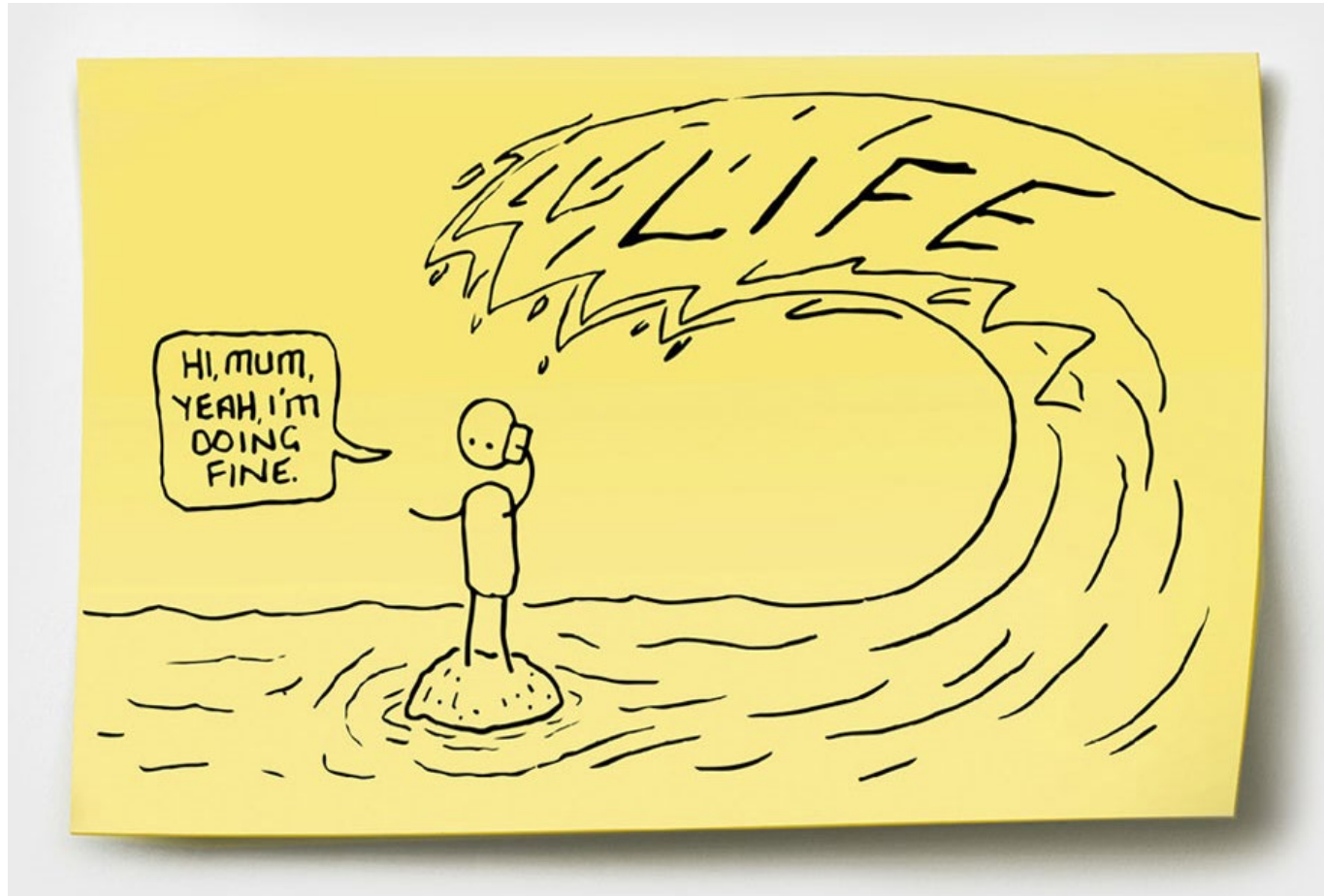


9,089 likes

13 HOURS AGO

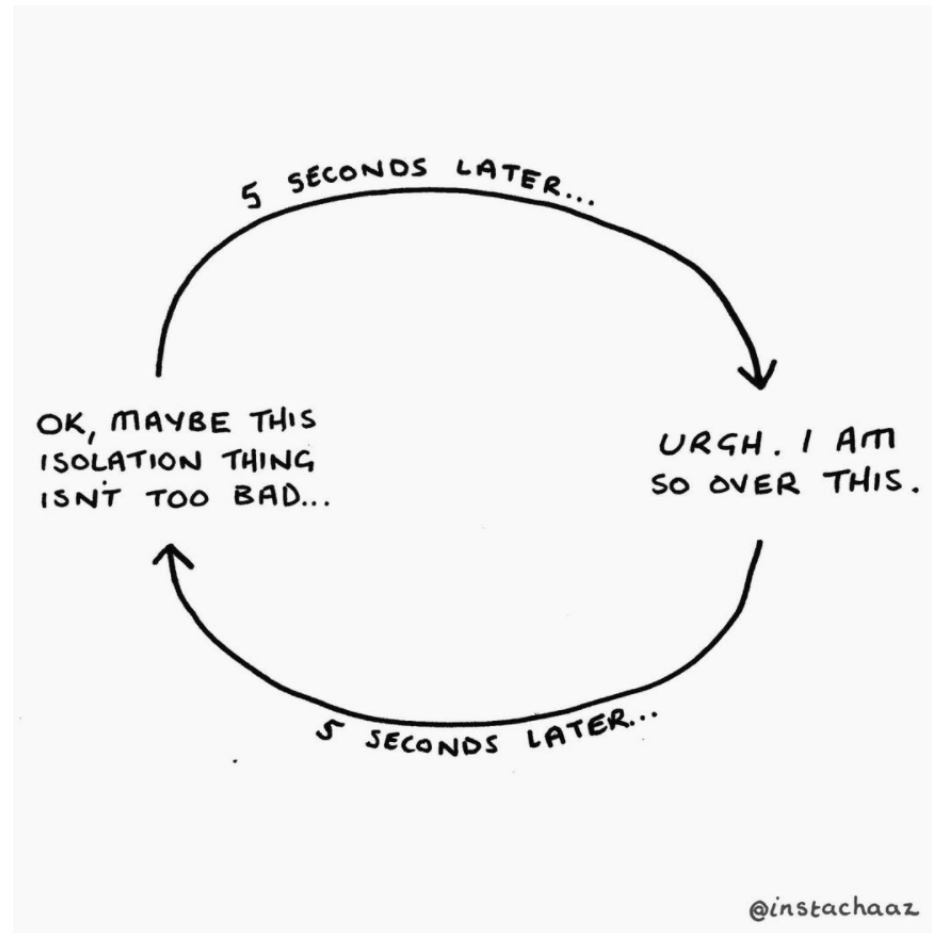
FOR YOU: Take a post-it or a small part of your paper. Draw your life at this moment.

You can convey a lot on one post-it.



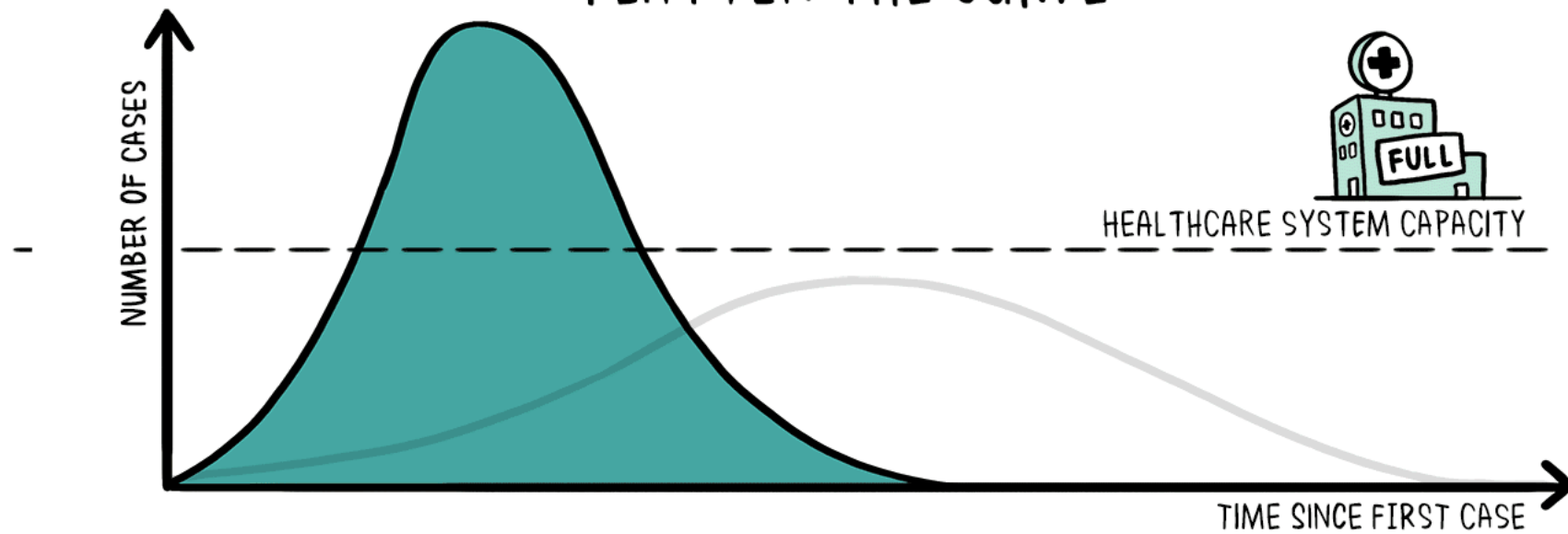
Reference: Chaz Hutton

Or in a simple visual.



Reference: Chaz Hutton

FLATTEN THE CURVE



@SIOUXSIEW @XTOTL @THESPINOFFTV

'ADAPTED FROM @DREWAHARRIS, THOMAS SPLETTSTÖBER (@SPLETTE) AND THE CDC'
CC-BY-SA

HUMANS OF NEW YORK

Stories—Countries—Series



NEW YORK CITY

“I went over there to provide those people with basic human freedoms.”



NEW YORK CITY

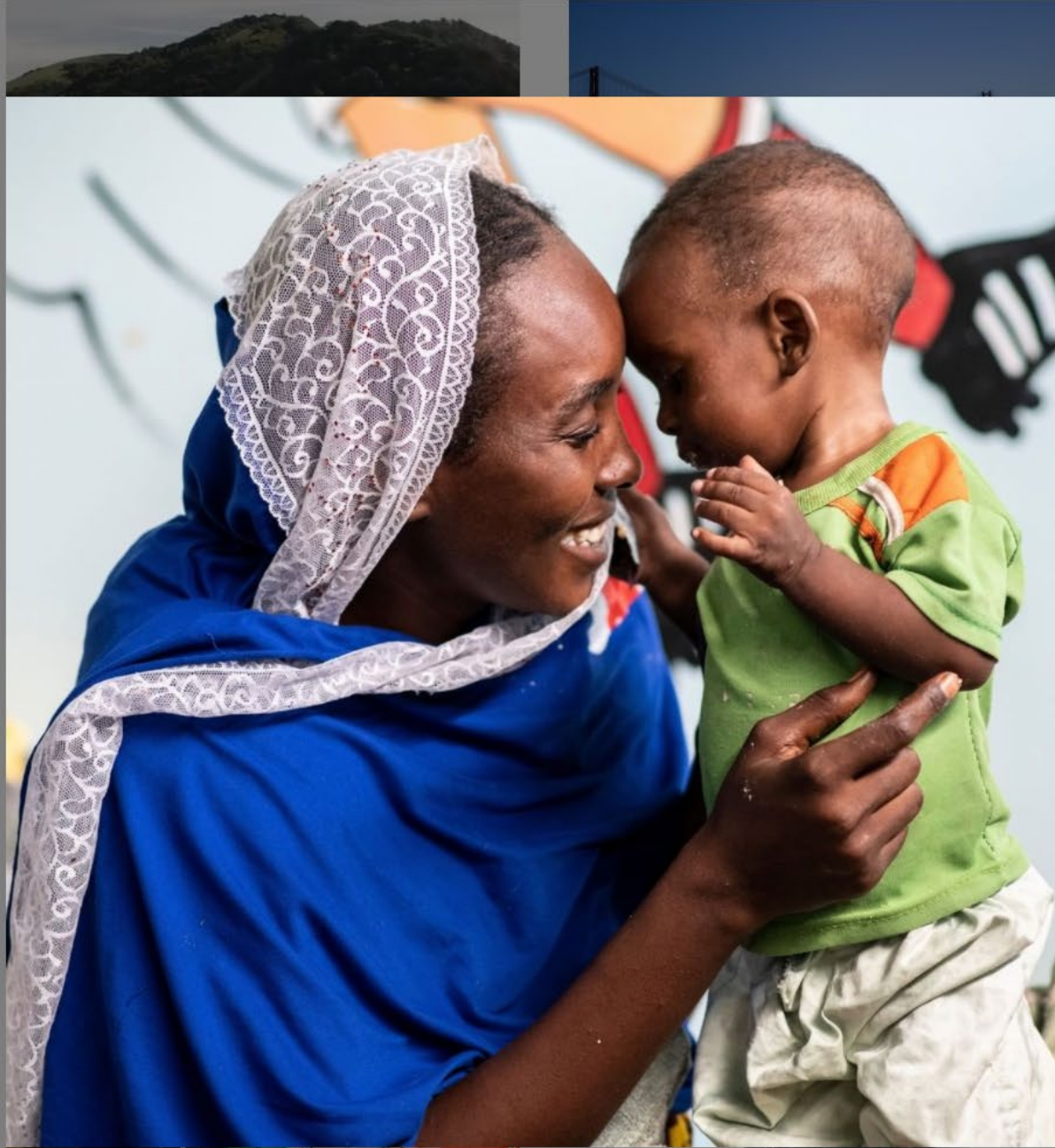
“In many ways it was the greatest thing I’ve ever done.”

[READ STORY](#)

Reference: Humans of New York

The Open Door (a.k.a Mind)

- **YES, and – how do we open the door (or keep it open)?**
 - Surprising, engaging, compelling
 - Relatable situation, anecdote
 - “Drama” – if we don’t do this...
 - Opportunity – We have the chance to...
 - Outcome
 - Answer... why do I/they care
 - The method of communication (e.g., summary)



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A smile hides many stories. Humanitarian needs are on the rise worldwide, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is why we are strengthening our global aid. A new European Humanitarian Response Capacity, international humanitarian law even more firmly put at the heart of EU external action, and more efforts to promote long-term solutions for humanitarian emergencies are some of the measures proposed.

The European Union and EU countries are the largest donor of humanitarian aid in the world. The EU funds about 36% of global humanitarian assistance.



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2 DAYS AGO



Add a comment...

Post

FOR YOU: What are the sources that you look to for inspiration?

TIP #4: Empathize with your audience.

TOP TIP #4: Design for your audience.

- **Take the time to understand for whom you are writing.**
 - Gain a better understanding for your audience. First, identify – who is your audience?
 - Rather than think of them demographically – think of them based on need, belief, connection to your information.
 - Back to purpose – what is the WHY – and what is your AIM?

WHAT DOES SHE
THINK AND FEEL?

What really matters to her?
What occupies her thinking?
What worries and aspirations does she have?



WHAT DOES SHE
HEAR?

What are friends, family and other influencers saying to her that impacts her thinking?

WHAT DOES SHE
SEE?

What things her environment influence her?
What competitors is she seeing?
What is she seeing friends do?

WHAT DOES SHE
SAY AND DO?

What is her attitude towards others?
What does she do in public?
How has her behaviour changed?

PAIN

What fears, frustrations or obstacles is she facing?

GAIN

What is she hoping to get? What does success look like?

TIP #5: Now, take them on a journey.

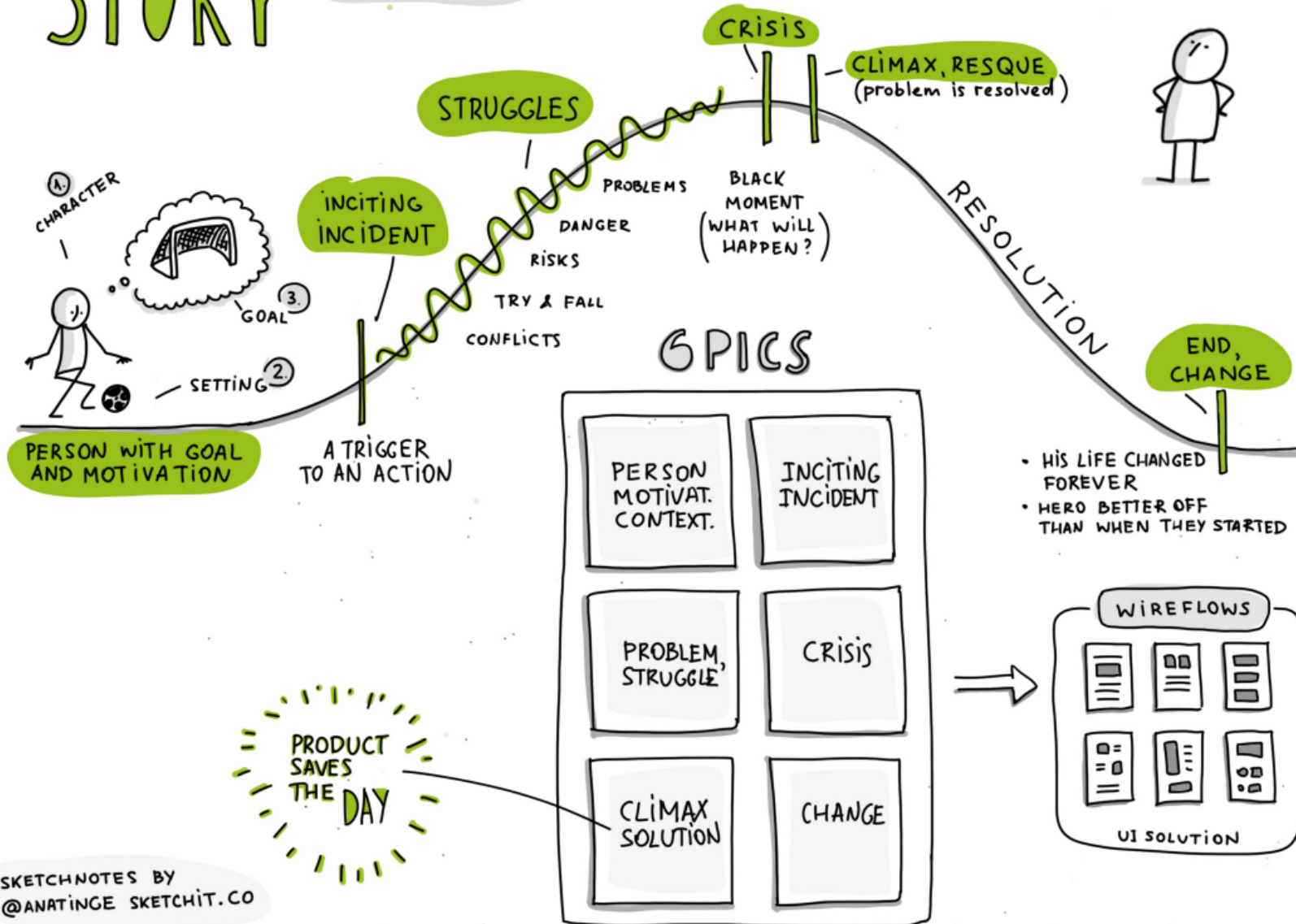
TOP TIP #5: Design the shape of your story.

- **What will be the journey for your reader?**

- Back to STRUCTURE – there may not be a ‘formula’, but there is a SHAPE to your story.
- Back to DRAWING – consider the elements that bring the main character from the beginning to middle to end.

STORY

BY @CWODTKE



SKETCHNOTES BY @ANATINGE SKETCHIT.CO

FOR YOU: What is the shape of your own story? What 6 images could convey this?

TIP #6: Spring, Spring, Spring
forward.

TOP TIP #6: Create a springboard story.

- **Consider the ‘movement’ from past to present to future.**
 - What is the main theme that you are looking to get across?
 - What are the possibilities – the future potential – the ‘feel good’ aspect that you are leading to, however ‘sad’ that the story may be.
 - We all need to look forward to something. To perhaps see how we can help or be apart of it or to better understand.

past

present



possibilities

potential

project to the... future

The 5 Ps in Springboard Stories

Reference: *Dan does animation*

TIP #7: It's all in the technique.

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TOP TIP #7: Try (all) storytelling techniques.

- **Create your own checklist of techniques.**

- Whether you are creating an informal or formal communication, storytelling technique can be used in simply ANYTHING.
- Not all techniques are relevant. Not all techniques are needed.
- The (lovely) challenge is to figure out what is needed for what you are creating – and how to apply it.

Storytelling techniques include:

- Personal, relatable story
- Emotional words
- Unusual phrases
- Questions
- Engaging words
- Practical example
- ‘Bookend’ approach
- Short sentences
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Relatable anecdote
- Everyday language
- Transition words
- Dialogue
- Contrast
- Alliteration
- Urgency/Drama
- Humour/Irony
- Theme/Red Thread
- Surprising
- Enthusiasm

Clarity checklist:

- Is the purpose clear? Does the reader care/understand (more) after reading?
- What is the main idea? What do you want someone to think, do, say after reading?
- How are statistics used? Are the numbers clear, visual, impactful?
- Is each part of the text needed? How does it advance the story?
- Is the text too complex? Who is meant to understand this?
- Can the description be more visual? Can it evoke other senses?

TIP #8: Engage all your senses.



TOP TIP #8: Storytelling is in the senses.

- **Isolate and consider all 6 senses.**

- Close your EYES. Have someone read you your story (or read it to them). What do you HEAR? What do you SEE when they tell it?
- What do you SMELL?
- Is there an element of TOUCH? Could there be?
- TASTE?
- How do you FEEL? What do you PERCIEVE?
- The use of SENSES helps us to REMEMBER.

Try a FIRESIDE Chat.



“Sit” with a colleague.

Perhaps over a cup of coffee.

Tell the story of your communication to each other.

Try different perspectives.

Imagine as if you were around the fire – and others were listening to you.

TIP #9: The best ideas come from...



TOP TIP #9: Collaboration is key.

- **The end result is always better if you involve others.**
 - When can you do this? What part of the process?
 - How can you do this?
 - Try a 'coffee meeting'.
 - Create an initial ideation (even virtually!).

COFFEE MEETING



- Invite a colleague to share a cup with you. Keep it short. Share your work. Invite them to share their thoughts.
 - What questions is this communication answering?
 - Is the importance (perhaps urgency) clear?
 - How does it link to the purpose of the EU?
 - What do you see/feel after reading this?
 - Any jargon to change? Any usual phrases to re-word?
 - Any opportunity to say something differently?

TIP #10: Be YOU.

TOP TIP #10: Find your own unique way.

- **There is no other way of saying this. BE YOU.**
 - Try new things.
 - Practice new things.
 - Go beyond your comfort zone.
 - At the heart of every communication is a person.
 - We are a collection of voices, ideas, passions, beliefs, possibilities, potential.

Quick reflections

- **If someone has asked you to use more ‘storytelling’ – it could mean:**
 - They don’t understand your content but may have difficulty articulating this.
 - They are having difficulty taking your document (report, etc.) and finding the key information to share.
 - They may be losing interest or focus as they are reading.
 - They may not understand the purpose or intent of what you are trying to get across.
 - And, or – your writing/topic has the potential for more (people, reach, impact, etc)

FOR YOU: What can you try today
(or tomorrow)?