How to Frame Your Narrative

Harnessing your powerful story
to make meaningful change

Sarah Green
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Who am I?

Why do I think communications is so darned important?

Our world runs on stories

- We are in the middle of a huge global, national, state, and local conversation about where we get our information
- Decision-makers use constituent stories to make laws and regulations
- Stories help us make sense of data
- But…

Stories aren't told in a vacuum

- "If everyone was getting their information from my favorite news source, they'd understand what's really going on."

- "If other people would do x, then we could accomplish y."

- "Why won't anyone listen to me?"

We might need to try different frames.

Listening

- Athletes, musicians practice skills
- Listening is a critical component of storytelling – it informs WHAT and HOW we convey our information
- Let's practice this skill!

Listening Activity

What happens when we tell stories?

- They are a way to build trust

- They can help our credibility

- They can place you and your work in context of a larger issue or community

Know your audience

- With whom are you communicating?
  - Friends, neighbors, church members
  - City councils, county commissions
  - State Legislators
  - Other governmental agencies
  - Customers
  - Strangers

Know your audience

- What do you know about the people with whom you are communicating?
  - Where do they work?
  - How old are they?
  - Where do they live?
  - What might you have in common?

Know your audience

- What might others say about you?
- What might others say about your industry or your organization?
- Use the Golden Rule
- Measure your success: if you don't have another yardstick, try the Grocery Store Test

Building your story

What's next?

- Ask for feedback from someone whose **honest** opinion you trust

- Practice, practice, practice!

Thank you!

Sarah Green

sarah.hill.green@gmail.com