



Story Creation Worksheet

Use the ideas and prompts in this worksheet as a template to help spark ideas for stories.



WHAT IS A STORY?

A story can be as simple as a conversation. Think about the last time you were with friends that you haven't seen in a while and they asked you what happened when you went on your last vacation, date, or work assignment. Did you share a story with them?

Stories fall into many categories. As examples, some are personal, some are scary, some are victorious, and some relate to your work. Regardless of what story you tell, stories all have the power to connect with people on an emotional level.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP NEW STORIES?

Stories are all around us. Some of the most powerful stories are the ones that you have experienced in the past but haven't shared publicly.

If you take a look at your Exposure Bank, you will identify a few stories that may include your skeletons.

You also uncovered 27 different stories during your interview for the Exposed and Authentic Bio Worksheet, and you only shared 9 of them. That means there are 18 left, ready to be told. (If you have not gotten your copy of *Ditch the Act*, visit DitchTheAct.com.)

You are full of stories. You just need to learn to look for them. When looking for new stories, the simple trick is to look to your past. There are plenty to choose from. Below are some questions that will get you thinking of the various stories of your life.

Questions to Spark Stories

If you can't think of any stories off the top of your head, ask yourself one of the following questions and write down the first story that comes into your head. There are a lot of questions, which will help you spark a lot of stories you might not realize you have.

- What did you see as a child that affected your life?
- What did you want to be when you grew up and why?
- What is one thing that your parents did that made you realize they truly loved you?
- Can you describe the first time you got in trouble as a child?
- What was the first embarrassing moment that you can remember?
- What was your most memorable moment in elementary school?
- What was your first day of school like?

- What is a family tradition that your family partook in that other families might think was unusual?
- What was your best memory with your pet growing up?
- Did you ever have a moment where your heart broke due to a situation your pet encountered?
- Did you have siblings, cousins, or other family members that you spent a lot of time with? Were there any heroic stories? Drag-out fights? Moments of pure joy?
- What extracurricular activities did your parents enroll you in, and what were they like?
- What was the most memorable moment you had with a teacher?
- What is the most embarrassing thing that happened to you in the classroom?
- Did you excel at any sports? Perform poorly? What was that like?
- What was the worst moment you can recollect about middle school?
- What did you and your friends begin to do as you experienced puberty?
- What was your first camping trip like?
- What was a memorable adventure with a best friend?
- What was the moment that caused you to sit in your car, blasting music as loudly as possible, while bawling your eyes out?
- What were you like in high school, and how does that compare with who you are now? If you changed, what moment defined who you've grown to become?
- What did you do the first time you ditched class?
- If you've experienced a loss of a loved one, what did you feel and how did you handle it?
- How did you get your first car? What do you remember most about your time with it?
- Have you tried any entrepreneurial adventures like setting up a lemonade stand? What was the experience like?
- Did you want to go to college? Did you go? If so, where did you go, and how did you choose your school? Was there any conflict in deciding where to go?
- Why did you pick your major in college? Did you ever feel that you should change paths or that you weren't going to make it?
- What was your best relationship like in college (or high school)?
- What was your worst relationship like in college (or high school)?
- Can you share what the process was like in landing your first job?
- As you were finding your way in life, what curveballs did you encounter that knocked you off track, and how did you deal with them?
- How did you go from graduating college to getting to where you are today?
- What was one thing that you've put all your effort into and tried with all your energy to achieve but failed at?
- How did you meet your significant other or spouse?
- How did you know that your spouse was the one for you?
- What did you learn about yourself when you went through your divorce?
- What do your children or grandchildren mean to you? What is your fondest moment of them growing up?

- What was the most unusual adventure you went on when you traveled?
- What was your worst travel experience like?
- If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?
- What inspires you to continually improve and become the best version of you?
- Can you walk us through what your biggest failure to date felt like?
- Can you walk us through what your biggest accomplishment to date felt like?
- When you are not working, what are you likely doing?
- What would people be surprised to learn about you?
- Why do you contribute your time and money to a certain cause? What impact has it made on your life?
- What was the biggest win of your career?
- Why did you have difficulty finding the exact career you wanted to do for the rest of your life?
- What was the most rewarding moment of your life?
- What was the most debilitating moment of your career?
- What was the most rewarding moment of your career?
- What was the most complex problem you had to solve at your job, and how did it make you feel when you achieved it?

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A STORY

Now that you are likely overwhelmed by the amount of stories you can call on, you need to make sure that when you create your stories, you form them in a way that connects with others.

A good story includes the following:

Core components	How it all plays out
WHO was involved?	The characters
WHERE did it take place?	The setting
WHAT happened?	The mood
WHEN did it take place?	The insights
WHY did that happen?	The motivations
HOW did you feel?	Lessons learned

WHAT KIND OF STORY SHOULD YOU START WITH?

This story template will work for any type of story you create. However, since we want you to ditch the act and reveal your true self, you will start with sharing Level 1 exposures, then work your way up to Level 4. As time progresses, you will begin to include both personal and business stories.

Step 1. Set the scene and tease out the details.

Start your story at the beginning. What was the first moment like? Did the memory start with a phone call, or did you bump into someone on the subway? Start there. Then work to re-create the environment, giving background details, like the year, day of the week, time of day, what you first noticed about the person, etc. Stories are made in the details. Laying out the who, what, when, where, why, and how creates context to the story.

Give yourself permission to think. Your memory will do the heavy lifting for you. As long as a question sparks your internal thoughts, the memory will reappear. Try to recollect what you saw, tasted, heard, felt, smelled, and thought. Start to describe the story. Use the question prompts and follow this next template to make sure that you tease out the nitty-gritty details that make your stories come to life!

WHERE I WAS: Questions to ask yourself to set the scene	Who were the key people involved? What did the people look like? What were they wearing? What was their mood like? What interactions were happening? What were people saying to you? Were you nervous, excited, anxious, or confused?
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Step 2. Uncover the issues.

A good story should expose some sort of conflict or obstacle. You don't have to hit people over the head with it; let the story unfold on its own.

WHAT I SAW: Questions to ask yourself as you begin to share how the conflict starts to emerge	When did things start to go wrong? Who was involved? Did everyone know there was a conflict? Who said what to whom? When things were happening, what were you thinking? What was the sequential set of events that put this conflict into action?
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Step 3. Lead up to the action.

Build your story to a point where a climactic action takes place. This could be a conversation or a turning point; it could be funny, exciting, or intense. This will set your story up for the action.

<p>WHAT HAPPENED: Questions to ask yourself about when things start getting juicy</p>	<p>What is the particular moment that made you realize conflict started?</p> <p>Who was taking action?</p> <p>What conversation sparked this?</p> <p>Was it something that someone said?</p> <p>What did that one person do?</p> <p>What happened after that?</p> <p>How did things actually play out?</p> <p>How bad did things get?</p> <p>Who was involved, and who stayed out of it?</p> <p>What was the sequential set of events?</p> <p>What was the reason it all happened?</p> <p>Was it intentional?</p>
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Step 4. Work through the problems.

Your story is shared from your perspective. You may recall the conflict happening quickly, but it is imperative for you to draw out the details. Share how you felt in the moment, and give your reader a play-by-play of what happened.

<p>WHAT I (AND OTHERS) DID: Questions to ask yourself to uncover how everyone is impacted by what is happening</p>	<p>How does the conflict pan out?</p> <p>How are the problems solved?</p> <p>How do the people in the story tie up loose ends and bring the conflict to a resolution?</p> <p>Who was involved, and how were you tied into the conflict?</p> <p>Were you watching, or were you in the middle of it?</p> <p>What time was it? Were there time constraints?</p> <p>Did you have to leave?</p> <p>Did others leave?</p> <p>Was the night almost over?</p> <p>Was there an urgency to settle the conflict?</p> <p>What was the result right after the conflict?</p> <p>Did people get angry? Did anyone cry?</p> <p>Did anyone get hurt? Did anyone fall in love?</p> <p>Was the problem not resolved? Why?</p>
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Step 5. Close it out.

The end of a story does not need to have a happy ending. It just needs to end. Sometimes, the ending comes with a lesson and an opportunity for growth. Other times, there is no lesson, or the event takes your life on a downward spiral. What matters is that you share the outcome of the conflict. Use dialogue between people and explain how different parties seemed to react in different ways.

<p>HOW IT ENDED: Questions to ask yourself to tease out the learning lessons for you and others and to show how the story has shaped you as a person, in real ways</p>	<p>Was there a big insight? What lessons were learned, if any? Did it give you a new perspective? Did you form a new relationship? Did you lose a relationship? Do you approach similar situations in a new way? What were you feeling? Sad, mad, love, joy, etc. (Refer to the Exposed and Authentic Bio Worksheet for more emotions.)</p>
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Take these prompts and pretend you are sharing your story with a friend. But instead of talking to a friend, write your story down, record it on an audio device, make a video, scribble it on a piece of paper, or use a whiteboard to map it out. Share your story as a form of content, like a blog or a video.

Step 6. Name your story.

Now that you have completed your story, what does your story talk about? Take the central idea of your story and name your content accordingly. Headlines for stories should tell the readers what they will get out of the story. Does the story answer a specific question? Or does it provide insight into what to do in a particular situation? Or does it express how you felt after an incident or event? If you need help in figuring out how to title your story, use a tool that tracks how many times articles have been shared, like BuzzSumo, to see what the most popular stories are, and use those as a baseline for how to structure your headlines.

Remember: Details make a story. Your internal conversation and thoughts make your story unique and build a connection with others.