



Telling your tale at Steel City Stories

- The story must be true and must be your story.
- No notes or props.
- The story should be about 10 minutes long. After 11 minutes, a bell will ring and you'll have 1 minute to wrap it up. After 12 minutes, a long hook will come to pull you off the stage.

There are many ways to tell a story, and there is no formula for how to do it right. Here are some guidelines to help you craft your tale for our stage.

Storytelling Guidelines

- **Keep it simple:** You can always elaborate by adding details and nuance to a simple story. It is much harder to simplify a complicated story. To make a long story short is to ruin it. Find the simplest version of your tale and build on that.
- **Start in the action:** Have a great first line that sets up the stakes or grabs attention.
- **Show, don't tell:** Give your listeners information on a "need to know" basis, providing just enough to understand what happens next. Instead of telling us why this thing that happened was significant, just keep answering the question: what happened? And then what happened?
- **Think bullet points instead of actual script.** You don't need to memorize your story, the delivery should be almost completely improvised and depend on your audience. React to their energy, you are mirroring and leading at the same time.
- **Take your time when you tell the story:** Beginning storytellers often worry about their audiences getting bored and sometimes try to avoid this by speeding up their telling. Take your time in telling the story, let it breathe, and your audience will appreciate it.
- **Have some stakes:** Stakes are essential in live storytelling. What do you stand to gain or lose? Why is what happens in the story important to you? If you can't answer this, then think of a different story. A story without stakes is an essay and is best experienced on the page, not the stage.
- **Know your ending line.** And after you say it, stop. Even though your story shouldn't be memorized or scripted, the ending is the most important part. Knowing exactly what your last sentence will be helps bring the story full circle and gives the audience a sense that listening to you was time well spent.

From Risk-Show.com:

How to craft your story

SET THE SCENE

Where were you in life when this began? What was your “deal”?

WHAT GOT THE BALL ROLLING

What motivated you to want to give, get or do something?

WHAT WAS AT STAKE

What hope or fear drove you? What did you stand to gain or lose? Were you surprised by complications?

HOW YOU TURNED THE CORNER

What finally changed this situation, for better or worse? Did you succeed or fail or feel a shift?

SO WHAT?

Why do you feel it’s daring to be sharing this? Why would a stranger listening to this story find it significant, affecting and worth remembering as they go about their lives?