

To Celebrate National Mentoring Month, Techbook Online invites Black Male Mentors to Share Their Stories

January is National Mentoring Month and Techbook Online is celebrating by gathering public narratives from black male mentors and publishing them to a global audience. Leveraging our partnership with www.GoodMenProject.com, one of the world’s largest male-focused websites – averaging 2.5 million weekly readers – we aim to highlight the important dimensions of black male lives, such as: mentoring, fatherhood and community leadership.

From January 6th to January 31st, black male mentors are encouraged to submit post-ready (*proofread*) impact stories (*minimum of 700 words*) using the public narrative framework to cnorris@techbookonline.com. On February 3rd, Techbook Online Corporation will aggregate all the stories into a special edition **Techbook** entitled: **“The Black His-Story Book: A Collection of Narratives from Black Male Mentors.”** (*Note: Please send a HD headshot and byline when submitting your story.*)

The Public Narrative

Crafting a complete public narrative is a way to connect three core elements of leadership practice: story (*why we must act now, heart*), strategy (*how we can act now, head*), and action (*what we must do to act now, hands*).



To combine stories of self, us and now, find common threads in values that call you to your mission, values shared by your community/mentees, and challenges to those values that demand action now (*such as lack of funding and resources*). You may want to begin with a Story of Now, working backward through the Story of the Us, with whom you are working to the Story of Self, in which your calling is grounded.

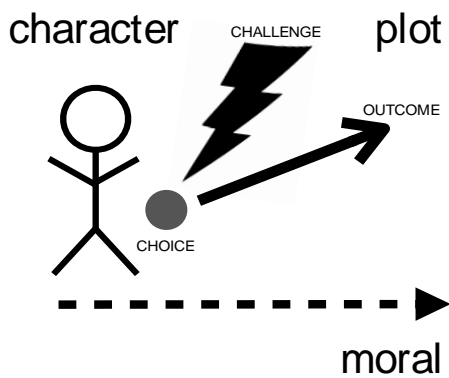
The Three Key Elements of Public Narrative Structure

Challenge – Choice – Outcome

A plot begins with an unexpected challenge that confronts a protagonist pursuing a purpose with an urgent need to pay attention, to choose how to respond, how to act, and a choice for which s/he is unprepared. The choice yields an outcome that teaches a moral.

Because we can empathetically identify with the character, we can experience the emotional content of the experience, learning the moral with our hearts, not only our heads. We not only hear “about” a person’s courage; we can be inspired by it.

The story of the character, his or her struggle to choose, the values that enabled him or her to act, engages listeners in recalling their own stories of struggles, choices, and action, the values that moved them, offering new insight into their own lives.



Narrative Structure

Each of us has a story that can move others to action. As you learn this skill, you will be learning to tell a compelling story about yourself, your constituency/organization/mentees, and the need for urgent – and hopeful – action.

A “story of now” communicates an urgent challenge you are calling on your community to join you in acting on now.

The story of now focuses on a challenge to your community demanding action now, a source of hope, and the choice of a pathway to action you call on others to join you in taking.

A “story of us” communicates shared values that anchors your community, values that may be at risk, and may also be sources of hope.

Just as with a story of self, the values of a community are often expressed through key choice points in its life: founding moments, moments of crisis, of triumph, disaster, of resilience, of humor. Stories of us are accounts of events involving specific people, moments, events, words, etc.

A “story of self” communicates the values that called you to lead in this way, in this place, at this time.

Each of us has compelling stories to tell. In some cases, our values have been shaped by choices others – parents, friends, and teachers – have made. And we have chosen how to deal with loss, even as we have found access to hope. Our choices have shaped our own life path: we dealt with challenges as children, found our way to a calling, responded to needs, demands, and gifts of others; confronted leadership challenges in places of worship, schools, communities, work.

Story of Self Grounds your Story of Now and Story of Us

If you get stuck while writing, ask yourself the follow three questions:

1. What will I be calling on others to do? Why do you care? When?
2. What values shared by your community/mentees will you call upon? When did you acquire these values? How do you teach them?
3. Why have you accepted responsibility to lead? When was the first time you did that? Why? How do you know you’ve inspired others to lead?



WORKSHEET:

LINK SELF / US / NOW & ASK FOR COMMITMENT

The “Ask”

What meaningful choice are you calling upon others to join you in taking? Think about this first to help you ground your narrative.

Story of Self

What stories can you tell about the experiences and/or values that call you to take leadership within our community? Think of particular challenges you faced, choices you made, and the outcomes in those experiences.

Story of Us

What stories highlight the shared values and experiences of the people to whom you're speaking? Think of specific collective challenges you faced as a community, the collective choices you made, and the outcomes of those experiences.

Story of Now

What stories communicate the urgent challenges that your community faces?

What stories can offer your community a sense of hope?

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