



## Tips on How to Write or Tell Your Story

**Structure.** Good stories have a beginning, middle, and end. It also has a protagonist or main character. The beginning should grab the attention of the reader or listener. The beginning should also introduce the topic and/or main point of the story. The middle should include conflict or struggles. In the end, the conflict gets resolved and the protagonist learns a lesson, gets what they want, doesn't get they want, or all three.

**Be Genuine.** This is your life story, so let your own voice shine! There is no better person to tell your story than you—you are the expert here!

**What is Your Goal?** What do you want people to come away with after reading or hearing your story? A few examples could be: to inspire hope, to encourage, or to let people know they're not alone. Pick one main focus and let that guide your writing or storytelling.

### Some Questions to Help You Get Started Writing or Telling Your Story

- What was the earliest you remember struggling with something specific?
- What was life like for you at your lowest while you were struggling?
- What helped you move from that low point, or rock bottom, to where you are now? What did you do? Did someone help you and if so, how? How did that person(s)' help change your life?
- What did you learn or come away with after going through your struggles? What did you learn about yourself? What was the recovery process like? Was there any lesson

learned or epiphany during the recovery process? Did you discover any strengths you didn't know you had?

- What is life like for you now? Is your life better now than it used to be, and if so, how?

## A Few More Technical Writing Tips

**Paragraphs** are a great way to make your story easier to read. Paragraphs usually run between three to five sentences but it's not unheard of to make a single sentence its own paragraph, or to have a ten sentence paragraph. Rules were made to be broken.

**Brevity.** Less is more. Short sentences are usually better than long sentences (again, rules are made to be broken). Don't say in three paragraphs what you can say in one paragraph.

**Descriptive Language** when appropriate. Use metaphors ("she was the bread to my butter") and similes (it was like my depression was a fire breathing dragon"). Paint a picture with words. Brevity is good but it is always worth including some description in your story. It makes your story more interesting and relatable. Use active language. Here's an example:

Non-descriptive: The woman told me I had cancer.

Descriptive: My doctor's eyes began to tear up as she scribbled on her notepad. The words formed on the paper in slow motion: You have ovarian cancer.

And as a rule, it's always good to **Show and Not Tell**. It breaks up the story and makes it more active. Here's an example:

Telling: It was there that I yelled at Gina.

Showing: "Gina," I yelled at the top of my lungs. "You are not going to get away with this."

If you're writing about yourself, the first-person point-of-view—"I" statements—is usually best (but again, some rules are made to be broken).

**Keep it Active** and ditch the passive. Active voice is when the subject (usually this will be you in your story) is at the beginning of the sentence. Active voice makes your writing more exciting and concise.

Passive voice: Life was given to me by my mother.

Active voice: My mother gave me the gift of life.

**Keep it Upbeat.** It's okay to include the hard times and great stories have conflict. But humor is a good thing too (the old saying, "there's comedy in every tragedy").

A few more tips on storytelling courtesy of Pixar and io9 [HERE](#)