



Global Farmer Network

“Take it to the farmer...” Dr. Norman Borlaug

GFN® Communication Master Class - Session 1b

- Discovering your personal story: Challenges you face. Choices you have made.
- Characteristics of an effective story

Words enable us to think, stories enable us to link...

STORYTELLING

Ability to retain the attention of those who listen so that they interpret it as we want it to be interpreted.

Stories are meant to be told because they are the main instrument to share who we are, what we do, what we can offer or sell, what are our passions and talents, the things that worry us and the challenges we face.

YOUR STORY

When writing (and sharing) your story keep in mind these tips:

- a. **Introspection:** self-knowledge is imperative to discover the stories you have. You must be honest and sincere with your own attributes so your audience can get to know you and you know yourself better too.

- b. **Authenticity:** your story must be based on real events so it is congruent; remembering specific, well-detailed images and strong moments of your journey will help you connect to your audience. Do not pretend because you can't fake emotions and exaggerating them is quite harmful for your message. Keep the real you as real as possible.

- c. **Empathy:** empathizing with the people around you and the people listening to your story is key for creating a connection, achieving this connection in a faster and more effective way.

Once you have your story make sure you:

- a. **Make emphasis on key points:** words matter and so do images and energy, so keep a light heart but be very emphatic on those strong moments you've chosen.

- b. **Make it personal:** you are the main character in your story, so be sure to focus the attention on you, while maintaining a humble energy.

- c. **Simplify:** keep it as short as you can, but don't leave out what you consider most important. you are creating images for your audience, so don't distract your audience with complicated images where you are not the protagonist. Your main goal is to tell them who you are and why you're there, the construction of your story should be focused on that.

AN EFFECTIVE STORY

Really knowing your story is key to use it effectively, because the person telling the story has the power to manipulate it. You have to be in control of every part of your story.

What makes an advocacy story effective?

1. **Relatability:** the audience can identify with the storyteller
2. **Transportation:** audience members are absorbed in the story
3. **Emotionality:** the storyteller uses descriptive, visual language to capture the emotion of their narrative

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH AGRICULTURE

Do you remember your first contact with agriculture?

Maybe you grew up on the family farm, or visited relatives, or became interested by your friends' work or because you had questions about the food you bought. This is something very personal that may be positive or negative, but is foundational to your personal story.

List 5 to 7 words that remind you of that first contact with farming and 3 to 4 words that you think complicate your relationship with agriculture.

Choose one word from each column and create a paragraph

This sentence (or sentences) should show your motivation as a farmer or the purpose you have in agriculture, and also a setback that you will overcome or a problem you will solve. Other words from both lists may help you write your paragraph.

MAIN MESSAGE

THE PURPOSE OF YOUR STORY

Now that you have created an image of how you relate to agriculture based on a positive and a negative aspect, you can choose what you want your personal story to be:

1. **Motivational:** must have a call to action
2. **Drive change:** must have a transformational goal
3. **Transactional:** has to offer an opportunity

Based on whether you want your story to be motivational, drive change or transactional, every story has to have a purpose, a message you want to send, what's yours?

- What do you want others to know about you as a farmer?
- How would you tell others who you are and why you're here?
- What do you want others to take away from your story?

Write down 3 possible goals you want to achieve, one of each category:

In addition to having a main message, every story should also:

1. **Inform:** teach you something
2. **Entertain:** make you have a good time
3. **Inspire:** move you

THE GOAL OF YOUR STORY

We tell stories to get closer to others, so the ultimate goal of a story is **creating a connection**, and connections happen in different levels:

1. With the brain to understand it

- a. WHAT: Purpose of the story, delivering you main message
- b. HOW: Tell the story: your personal style
- c. WHY: Use the story to create the kind of connections you want

2. With the heart to feel it

- a. How to make the message matter to those who listen to us?
- b. Knowing the audience
 - i. What do they need to hear?
 - ii. What do they want to hear?

3. With the senses to remember it

- a. Use your body:
 - i. Movements, posture, clothes
- b. Your voice:
 - i. Volume, rhythm, pauses
- c. Take advantage of the place where you are
 - i. Lighting and colors
 - ii. Surroundings

HOMEWORK

1. Write a list of 5 to 7 key turning points in your life that have led you to where you are now and who you are as a farmer.

Try and cover every important event you can think of, from your childhood, school, to that first encounter with farming or your first job. It can be anything you want, related or not to agriculture, positive or negative, that brought you to where you are today and have given your life a route.

Some examples of this turning points may be:

1. A difficult time in your life, and how you overcame it
2. A funny moment

3. A change of heart that shifted your perspective on farming, or something important to you
4. Something you've learned along the way that affected your path
5. Your biggest failure or your biggest success and why it's important to share it

2. Take the list of the 7 turning points in your life and write your personal story.

Like you did with the paragraph you wrote before, your turning points are the core of your story. The goal is to tell it in about **5 minutes** but be sure to cover the events you consider most important to you and the purpose of telling it.

Remember that every story has:

- a. Characters: you are the protagonist, but you haven't done it alone

- b. Message: what the audience should remember
- c. Conflict: is there a specific challenge you have today?
- d. Outcome: your call to action, transformational goal, or opportunity.

Write your story.