

## Telling Your Story

Storytelling usually happens on a whim, with friends or family, and is informal and casual. We often tell stories spontaneously, and I bet we all have that one family member who goes on and on and on with a long, winding story that even they get lost in.

When it comes to advocacy, we have to tell very short stories in a very structured way. Lawmakers and their staff have limited amounts of time to spend with constituents. Our stories must include one or two memorable details and have a clear sense of purpose.

Members of Congress and other public officials hear thousands of stories every week. That's why it's important to make sure yours is the most memorable by making it *efficient* and *effective*.

## An Efficient Story

Efficient stories are organized: you make one or two key points quickly and use a short, memorable example to reinforce your point. Your story must:

- Have a clear purpose
- Be short, organized, and respects the time of the listener
- Suggest a solution to the problem

## An Effective Story

Telling an effective story means you're sharing things that are not easily forgotten. An effective story is very easy to understand, and uses examples that make an emotional connection with the listener. Your story must:

- Offer one or two understandable key points
- Use a personal example that makes the listener want to pay attention and experience an emotional connection

Your story matters because your experience is valuable.

## Practice, practice, practice!

Find someone who also is advocating and practice telling your stories to each other and critique them. Ask each other:

1. Did I indicate that I was sharing my own experience?
2. Did I give too much or not enough background information?
3. Was my story focused? Do you remember what my key points were?
4. Did I use interesting experiences to drive home those points?
5. Did I remember to end my story with our policy asks? Did I offer a solution?
6. Was I convincing?
7. Two weeks from now, what will you remember about my story?

Source: Carol Blymire - <http://carolblymire.com/>