Let me tell you a story...

The Power of Storytelling in Agile Coaching
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Co-Active Coaching
Agile Organizational Coaching
Management 3.0 Facilitator
ICAgile Trainer

Agile Coach
Practitioner

Father, Husband, Agilist, Amateur Storyteller
Icebreaker: Details!

Details are everything to storytelling. Even the most basic activity can be made riveting with the right amount of detail applied...

Partner with someone and take turns describing a basic activity:
• Storyteller 1...describe the process of putting on your shoes
• Storyteller 2...describe the process of putting on your coat

Timing: 2 minutes per storyteller

Rules
- Storytellers must use the Full 2 Minutes
- Listeners must close their eyes
So why are we here?

To add *Storytelling* to our Agile Coaching Toolbox
Guess what...
You’re a Storytelling Superhero!
We just need to **sharpen** your skills
How are we going to do it?

Learn

Do
story

noun, plural stories

1. an account of events that are causally connected in some way

Stephen Denning, The Leader’s Guide to Storytelling
A good storyteller can suspend our disbelief
Lascaux Caves, France (17,000 Years)
Epic of Gilgamesh

4,000 Years
Modern Human 😊
The Storytelling Cocktail
Agile Coach = Storyteller
Exercise: Find Your Story

All stories have an origin, and that origin usually comes from an experience.

Part 1: Answer TWO of the following questions:

“I can’t believe I once…”  “During the Agile & Beyond conference I…”
“…changed my perspective on Agile.”  “I was working with a team and…”

Part 2: Find a partner and share your answers

Timing: 2 minutes to answer questions, 1 minute to share
“It’s useless to attempt to reason a man out of what he was never reasoned into.”

- Jonathan Swift (Author) -
Disney’s Story Characteristics

- Create a character that is unique but loved
- Allow the audience to become part of something more
- Play with the unknown
Story Characteristics

- Includes an underdog we root for
- Includes a villain we root against
- Includes a conflict or experience that grows character
- Creates a vision of a brighter tomorrow
- Relatable to the audience
- Focuses on a shared desire
- Audience sees themselves in the characters
Storytelling Framework

Universal Truth

- Personal Story
- Fable/Folk Story

Inspire Change
Brand Awareness
Share Knowledge
Future Telling

The Details
The Structure

Aristotle
Beginning → Middle → End

Gustav Freytag
Exposition → Rising Action → Climax → Falling Action → Dénouement
The Structure

Character
Who the story is about
The character must be faced with doing something beyond the status quo
The character will endure one or more situations in which they will face this challenge.
The Structure

Learning

While facing the challenge, the character will change in some way
The Structure

Resolution

The characters baseline is reset and life is different
The Universal Truth

The underlying message being conveyed
The Universal Truth
The Universal Truth

Identifying Your Universal Truth

• What do you want your audience to know...feel...do?

Tips and Tricks

• Hide your message in your story
• Don’t tell people the moral of the story
• Don’t get caught up in making sure we see your point
The Story

Personal Stories
Stories we’ve experienced either directly or indirectly

Fables / Folk Tales
Stories that have been passed down, or metaphors/analogies
The Story

Identifying Your Story

• Think about a time when....<fill in the blank 😊>

Tips and Tricks

• Simple stories beat complicated one every time
• Never make up a story and call it real...people can tell!
• Make sure your story has enough Structure
• Make sure the story works with your Universal Truth
• Don’t make the story about the audience
The Approach

**Inspire Change**
- Relatable
- Authentic
- Positive
- Change

**Brand Awareness**
- Introduction
- Credibility
- Authentic
- Awareness

**Share Knowledge**
- Facts
- Complexity
- Positive
- Negative

**Future Telling**
- Vision
- Progression
- Causation
- Trust
The Approach

Identifying Your Approach
• Look back at your Universal Truth...what are you trying to communicate?

Your Approach Determines Your Ending
• **Inspire Change:** End with a call to action for your audience
• **Brand Awareness:** End where you started with a reminder of the brand
• **Share Knowledge:** End with a question on the topic to let your audience reflect
• **Future Telling:** End describing the how you will take the first step
The Details

Identifying Your Details
• Close your eyes and picture the scene...what do you see?

Tips and Tricks
• Add / Remove details to help focus the story on the message
• Use your senses and describe an environment the audience can relate to
• Add a surprise...something unexpected to keep the audience engaged
• Use Emotionally infused words!
Storytelling Framework

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Inspire Change

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Share Knowledge

Future Telling

The Details

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Exercise: Build Your Story

Time to apply everything we’ve learned and build a story!

**Part 1:** Use the Storytelling Framework to build an outline for one of the stories you identified in the earlier exercise.

**Part 2:** Pair up and share your story outlines!
- **Storyteller:** Pitch your story to your Listener
- **Listener:** Grow your storyteller with detailed feedback

**Timing:** 4 minutes for outline, 1 minute per storyteller
The Good Storyteller

“The person who can keep us on the edge of our seat while talking about a turkey sandwich is a truly gifted storyteller.”

- Margot Leitman (Storyteller) -
Storyteller Tips

• Make the audience your biggest fan
• Don’t make the audience your enemy
• Use body language and your voice…it’s a performance!
• Passion and emotion are your friend
• Don’t memorize your story
• Don’t make yourself out to be a superhero
• Don’t draw too much attention away from the story
• Slow down!
Storyteller Tips Cont.

• Speak to both audiences...remember that little voice
• People need to trust you, so tell a personal story
• Use the power of “so” to start of a story
• Practice, practice, practice
• Sometimes stories don’t stick, and that’s OK
• Use stories for good, not evil
• Be vulnerable
GOT ETHICS?
Be Vulnerable
Finish Your Story
Share the Framework
The purpose of a [story] is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.

- Brandon Sanderson -
Thank You!

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Good Storytelling Reads!
Articles on Storytelling

- https://ed.ted.com/on/5qau2M5z
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2015/10/08/steve-jobs-the-worlds-greatest-business-storyteller/#42a8adbe13f0
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgebradt/2012/03/14/how-leaders-can-inspire-action-through-compelling-storytelling/#471b89b04683
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHeqQAKHh3M#action=share
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/giovannirodriguez/2017/07/21/this-is-your-brain-on-storytelling-the-chemistry-of-modern-communication/#30184271c865
- https://www.onespot.com/blog/infographic-the-science-of-storytelling/