



TOOL | THE STORY SPINE

This tool uses the familiar elements of a story to provide a structured way to facilitate a deeper reflection and dialogue about an idea, issue or opportunity.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The **Story Spine**, was originally created by playwright Kenn Adams, as a tool for creating well-structured stories. However, it is also a playful and effective tool that can be used either to guide structured reflection on a completed project; or, as a creative method for envisioning possibilities for a new initiative. Either way, it offers a structured way to deepen and share their insights about an issue, challenge or opportunity.

It is well-known that our human brains are particularly “hard-wired” to remember story. Perhaps it is because most stories combine both information and emotion and therefore engage various aspects of our brain at the same time. Virtually every story or narrative includes five distinct elements. These are:

1. **The Platform** – This element “sets the stage” for the story, including a description of the characters and the setting. It “sets” the stage” so the listener can understand the context that the story is unfolding within.
2. **The Catalyst** – This element describes the impetus for a change or new action.
3. **The Consequences** – This element outlines the key actions that unfold as part of the story.
4. **The Climax** – This element is often the most exciting. It describes the moment when the conflict in the story reaches a crescendo.
5. **The Resolution** – This element captures the pivotal moment when the story’s conflict is resolved. Often this includes “the new reality” and the morale, or central lesson, that the story offers.

“Storytelling is the oldest form of education.”
- Terry Tempest Williams

The **Story Spine** draws upon the 5 elements of story by presenting a series of sentence fragments to prompt the capturing of the essential narrative elements of a story. As a group activity, participants can complete each sentence individually and then guide the sharing of individual insights in a structured way.

TOOL HOW-TO

1. Individuals complete the sentence fragments on the **Story Spine Worksheet**
2. Individuals share and explore their responses as a group
3. Together, the group uses their reflection to capture important lessons they have learned from an existing project or, identify important components of a possible new project.

Source: www.curiographic.com
Inspired by Kenn Adams' *Story Spine*

THE STORY SPINE WORKSHEET

Today we learned about...

To create cities of the future, everyday...

One day (something happened)...

Because of that...

Because of that...

Until finally...

So, the morale of this story is...