The Power of Personal Stories

Those willing to speak about their own or their organization's personal experiences have always moved public policy; along with creating a better understanding of the issue(s) at hand. Personal stories can be used:

- **To move people**
- **To engage people**
- **To support facts and figures**
- **To educate**
- **To explain**
- **To create empathy**
- **To humanize**
- **To counter misperceptions and assumptions**
- **To activate**
- **To mobilize**
- **To inspire others**
- **To put a face on it**
- **To take ownership**

As a cause, you are what you say and do. The best way to say it is through the use of powerful personal stories. The people whose lives are most impacted by an issue most often make the most effective advocates. Respectively, the most successful advocacy organizations are those whose goals, agendas, and strategies are shaped by the people whose lives are most impacted by an issue.

Treat every personal story as a learning opportunity. Then find the best learning environment to fit the story. Proper timing is key in effective communication.

We are impressionable and vulnerable in the face of a story. If our key stakeholders only hear one side of the story, they and thus we, face the risk of forming significant misunderstandings. They can form false impressions and may in some cases fully develop their opinions before you have the chance to tell your story.

Stories matter. Many stories matter more.

This document is the copyrighted material of ©2026 Roger Rickard, Voices in Advocacy®, VoicesInAdvocacy.com. Voices In Advocacy retains all copyright, ownership, and intellectual property rights for this material.