

THE STORY BRIDGE

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The Story Bridge Method of leadership development helps people move from "I" to "We." Strangers become bonded creative teams. What is difficult for one becomes possible for all.

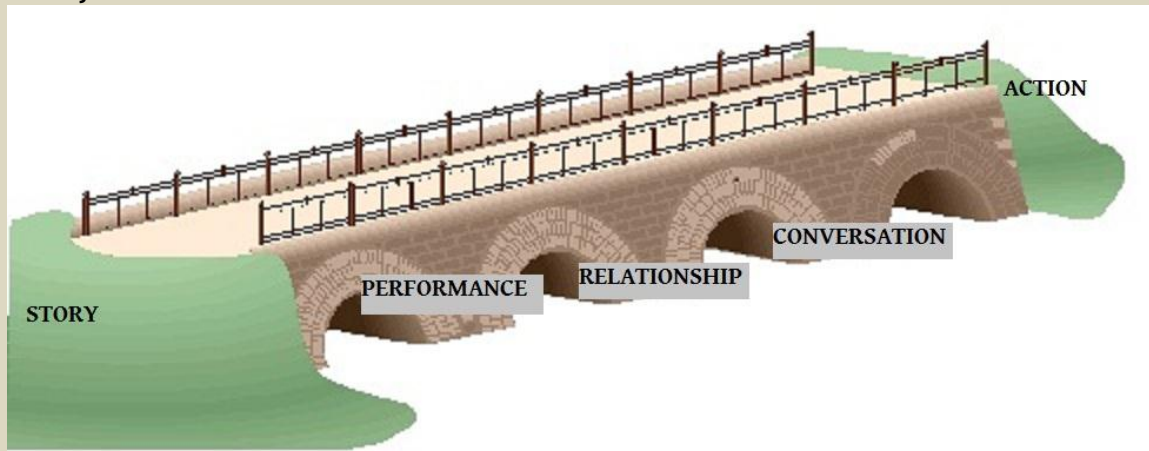
Story Bridge starts with "I." Personal stories become a bridge over which people can travel from isolation to active community. Performance, relationship, and conversation support the bridge which ends in action. Positive change--organic, sustainable, and local--is made possible through the power of "We," the care, relationship, and commitment that grows between people.

To better understand The Story Bridge, let's cross it together.

PERSONAL STORY: On the near shore, the bridge anchors in local stories of the heart. Heart stories draw people out of themselves to begin the journey. We never forget when life truly challenges us--the morning we got the diagnosis, the day my first child was born, the loss of our way of life. Turning points. We lay up stores of wisdom around such events. We are willing to share these things when we feel safe and able truly to be heard--witnessed. To witness is to bring our full selves--heart, mind, spirit, breath, and body--to the act of listening. The gravitational field of witnessing pulls events into the sacred shape of story. The feeling of witness is reverence.

PERFORMANCE: The first pier supporting the bridge is performance. But performance comes in every size. It can be as big as a full blown play of local stories with original script, music, costumes, set, choreography, and cast of one hundred facilitated by the leading practitioners in the field, or as small as me telling your story back to you in the first person. (Witnessing is performance, too; as active listeners we shape the teller's story.) Performance is role playing. It moves me out of myself, and changes my point of view. We journey in the skin of another to places we've never before known, and understandings we've never had. Performance shifts perspective, "my world" to "our world." And it creates energy.

RELATIONSHIP: The second pier forms friendships and teams. When humans tell and witness stories, we bond. This is a profound truth. When we exchange stories deeply, we feel with each other. And what we feel is love. When we embody a group of stories, the group feels it, too; we define ourselves henceforth as a team or community. The experience is family.



CRITICAL CONVERSATION: The third pier is conversation. Energized by moving inside each others' stories and into each other's hearts, we want to talk. We move easily into conversation around important questions. Critical conversation also begins with story. We lay our heart stories side by side, further deepen our relationships, and discuss what is possible in our shared future that wasn't possible before. From these conversations we harvest collective wisdom.

COMMITTED ACTION: The increasing energy of performance, relationship, and conversation moves us toward solutions. The anchorage that completes The Story Bridge is committed action. Action takes people off the bridge and out into their communities. They are driven by their passion for their group-elected task, and their deep feeling for their place and each other.

Core Principles Supporting The Story Bridge Method

- OUR STORIES MATTER
 - Our stories are our greatest wealth, and the promise of our future.
 - We share them with courageous telling and reverent listening.
 - We learn and grow through each others' stories.
 - We change when we embody the experience of someone else.
 - Our relationships, our community, emerges as we re-present each others' stories.
 - Shared stories move naturally to conversation about our shared future.
- HOSPITALITY SETS THE STAGE
 - Everyone is invited to participate.
 - Everyone belongs.
- A SAFE SPACE SUPPORTS THE METHOD
 - When we are safe and cared for we feel trust.
 - Trust enables us to take risks.
 - Risking together we become a high performance creative team.
- THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY ARE CO-PRODUCED
 - *Ubuntu*. I am because we are.
 - "I" becomes "We" most strongly when the community is inclusive.
- "THE POWER OF THE THING IS IN THE FEEL OF IT, NOT THE THINK OF IT" --Stanley Kubrick
 - People tell us that the feel is family.
 - Family, they say, means love.