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GIRL SCOUTS OF THE PHILIPPINES

# Training Helps

## The Power of Stories

Article by Larry Lipman

**S**torytelling is one of the most effective methods to engage, teach, and increase group participation and trust because it is my belief that: Telling a personal story is one of the very few magical moments that a facilitator cannot be judged by an audience.

That is huge. We are always judging. Always, always, always. That mental radio voice in our heads yaps and yaps constantly about the traffic, our bosses, our peers, our family, strangers, facilitators — anything that moves within eyesight.

When we kick out judgment, we are open to learn, grow, and take risks. Those are the teachable moments for which we strive. As the pace quickens in our high-speed society, it's increasingly important to turn at times, to good old-fashioned story telling — an ancient art that feeds the hungry soul. Coupled with pace is the fact that facilitators, being in front of the room as they are, tend to be viewed as authority figures by many participants, even if only subconsciously. While we tend to ascribe lofty characteristics upon authority figures, it can be valuable to your group to dissolve these potential misconceptions with mild doses of reality from time to time.

Telling a personal story to your group, that is of course relevant to the topic at hand, can be a fun, informative, and interesting way to move your group. While at the same time, introducing your humanity more fully into the room, and increasing participants' trust in you.

What are the elements of a good story? Off the top of my head, I'd say that stories that support group process would have some of the following characteristics:

- \* Stories relating personal experiences are best for engendering trust.
- \* Stories should be succinct and interesting.
- \* Stories should contain some deeper message or meaning.
- \* The storyteller should tell stories well with appropriate emotional engagement.
- \* The story should somehow relate to what you're trying to do as a group and should ideally move the group forward.
- \* The story should not be used to avoid or dance around what's up for the group.
- \* The story should not involve anyone who would take offense to it being told publicly.

Now, let me tell you a story...

Years ago, during my rookie year as an Algebra teacher, I was invited to go on my very first backpacking trip. Several students, parents, and teachers from my school arranged a 6-day trip to the High Sierras in Northern California. I couldn't wait. What a great opportunity to network, have some fun, and experience gorgeous scenery. I hardly knew anyone. And I never backpacked.

On the 3rd day, we had our biggest challenge: 6 miles of switch-backs straight up a mountain pass. By noon, we were one third the way there.

And everybody was dispersed into different groups. Somehow I was traveling alone. I loved the moment. I was free to travel my own pace. I was thoroughly enjoying the magnificent scenery. And I was carrying everything I own on my back. I remember how thrilling it was to be so self-contained.

My home was on my back. It was a magical moment in time for me to feel so alive and free. I remember clearly how blue the sky was as I neared the top. The closer I got, the more blue I saw. Finally, I reached the top. I was King of the Mountain. I held my arms up high and yelled loudly that I was King of the World. I waited for the rest of the group to join me. I enjoyed being the first one. No, I relished being the first one. Man, did I fly up that mountain. I loved that moment. I felt confident, contented, fulfilled, and happy.

No one showed up. I hadn't seen a single person since noon. It was nearly dark. My mood switched quickly to worry, fear, and loneliness. What had happened?

I fixed my dinner and I spent the night alone under the stars in my sleeping bag. All kinds of thoughts roared into my head. I tried hard to eliminate the scary thoughts. Finally, after counting my 35th shooting star, I relaxed. At that defining moment in the middle of the night, I focused on where I was. I was alive, well fed, warm, and underneath the most gorgeous sky I had ever seen. I smiled. I slept.

I woke up to the sounds of familiar people. It was my group! The leader said that I had taken the route up a different mountain, and he knew which one. It had been too late to start a rescue party. So they all left at 3AM that next morning to greet me at my camp.

Why did I share this story and how does it relate to facilitation? I tell this true story in my programs to find out what others might have picked up from listening to it. I love finding out how their lessons are different from mine. That is where I grow and learn as a facilitator.



# GROUND RULES

We believe that group decision making is more efficient and achieves better results when group members have a shared understanding of expected behaviors and attitudes. Like playground rules posted on a fence, meeting ground rules encourage that we play safe, have fun, and no one gets left out. Good group decisions result not only from the steps we take as a group, but also from the attitudes that each of us bring to the table. Further, to make things better we need to actually do things, take action - not just talk and listen.

The long list of Ground Rules below serves as a menu. For any group we facilitate, we usually settle on ten or fewer Ground Rules we think are best suited to the particular group and the particular task at hand.

For Ground Rules to be truly effective, group members need to understand each of them and agree to follow them as best as they can. Sometimes, it's best for the group to make up their own Ground Rules starting with a blank paper. Other times, it's best for the facilitator to propose a set of ground rules, explain them, and ask for additions and revisions. Either way, below is a menu to spark your appetite.

## AS A GROUP

These types of things are usually "held" and managed by the facilitator or group leader

### Creative environment

- Open-minded
- No bad ideas
- We support risk taking

### All views heard

- Hands to speak
- Listen with respect

### Useful record

- Take notes
- Minutes approved by the group
- Reflect the group on the spot
- Write in the moment
- Capture and document decisions

### Group owns the agenda

- Group consent to the agenda and changes
- All honor agenda timing

### Neutral facilitation

- Facilitators serve the group
- Facilitator empowered to implement the agenda
- Trust the facilitator on process
- When unclear what to do, facilitator decides

### Stay on topic

- Stay on the high ground
- Basket (parking lot) for later
- Establish and honor group decision rules
- No one decides until we all decide
- Silence equals consent
- Majority rule

### Honor all individuals

- Introduce new people
- Accommodate special needs
- Anyone can call a break at anytime
- Explain unique acronyms and terms

## ATTITUDES

These types of things are beliefs and values held by individuals

### Understanding before judgment

- Open-minded
- Ask questions
- Minimize assumptions
- Listen to understand
- Imagine the other person's view
- If unclear, ask

### Tolerance

- Assume the best in each person
- Give the benefit of the doubt
- Focus on behaviors, not on personalities

### We are here for the group cause

- Us over me
- Fully present

### We know the process is imperfect

- Don't expect too much of each other
- We probably won't achieve all things for all people

### Positive outlook

- We might achieve more than we dreamed
- Conflict and tension lead to solutions

### Humility

- I don't know what's best for the group
- No one is smarter than all of us

### Look for the best in each other

- Each person has gifts to share
- Appreciation and gratitude

### We judge behaviors, not people

- Separate behaviors from personalities
- Don't carry grudges
- Don't take things personally

### Shared responsibility

- For the meeting outcome
- For following the process

### Have fun

- Laughter is good
- Jokes are welcomed at no one's expense

## ACTIONS

These types of things are actually done by individuals

### Do what we say

- What we say and what we do are aligned
- Volunteer with authentic intent
- Follow through on pledges
- Walk the talk
- Minimize distractions
- Silence cell phones
- No side conversations

### Seek win-win solutions

- Seek not just a win for me, but for us

### Kind and considerate

- No meanness
- Respect for each other
- Better to be kind than be right
- Emotion is okay - Aggression is not okay

### Play your part

- Know your lines
- Stay in role

### Listen with respect

- Listen to understand
- No interrupting
- Listen to inner self
- Silence is valued

### Withhold judgment

- Gather info until the last minute
- No one decides until we all decide

### We speak for ourselves

- Speak for yourself
- Use "I" messages
- We speak directly
- Minimize gossip and hearsay
- Speak our truths
- Tell our feelings

### Honor group rules

- Know and follow policies
- Play our parts, know our lines

### Confidentiality

- Who we see and what's said here, stays here

### Name issues

- Write down issues to be resolved
- Confront conflict

### Stretch for application

- Imagine how to apply what we learn
- Use what you learn - practice

### Learn new things

- Explore new language
- Share stories, tips, and techniques

### If lost, ask for directions



## TRAINING AS THE BEST TEACHERS DO

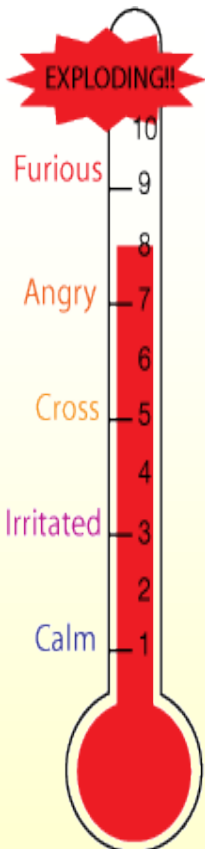
We can all recall great school teachers who made otherwise boring subjects come alive and taught lessons that shaped us still. We're all teachers in our own ways. There are people that we work and interact with daily who look to us for both technical learning and life lessons. Let's explore great teachers' approaches and see what they can teach us about our teaching roles.

- Present challenging concepts
- Are passionate about their subject(s)
- Use vivid stories to illustrate lessons
- Ask you about the subject area even outside the class room
- Are true to the principles they teach
- Teach set of rules to master & use the content
- Make complex topics understandable
- Are interactive
- Make learning fun and rewarding
- Don't simply give answers away for the asking
- Are still actively learning themselves
- Have a love for the material / topic
- Adapt to students' various learning styles

Identify three new ideas for each of the approaches above that you can adapt to become a better teacher to those around you.

Source: <http://brainzooming.com/>

## How Angry are You?



In a long-term study on temper and heart-attack risk, Harvard researchers ranked the anger levels of 1, 300 people using these questions.\* They found out that those with higher levels of anger were at an increased risk of heart attack. To see where you fall, give yourself one point for each true answer to questions 1 to 15, and one point for a false answer to question 16.\*\*

1. At times I feel like swearing.
2. At times I feel like smashing things.
3. Often I can't understand why I've been so irritable and grouchy.
4. At times I feel like picking a fistfight with someone.
5. I easily become impatient with people.
6. I'm often said to be hotheaded.
7. I'm often so annoyed when someone tries to get ahead of me in a line of people that I speak to that person about it.
8. I've at times had to be rough with people who were rude or annoying.
9. I'm often sorry because I am so irritable and grouchy.
10. It makes me angry to have people hurry me.
11. I am very stubborn.
12. Sometimes I get so angry and upset I don't know what comes over me.
13. I've gotten angry and broken furniture or dishes when I was drinking.
14. I've become so angry with someone that I've felt as if I'd explode.
15. I've been so angry at times that I've hurt someone in a physical fight.
16. I almost never lose self-control.

### Ranking

- 0 - 1 Mellow; low risk of anger-induced heart attack.
- 2 - 4 Average; risk of anger-induced heart attack is 2.7 times that of a mellow person.
- 5 - 16 High anger; risk of anger-induced heart attack is 3.5 times that of a mellow person

The Anger Thermometer

Source: *Reader's Digest*

## TEAM BUILDING

### SHUFFLE ON A ROPE



A group standing on a straight line of rope attempts to re-order their positions, ensuring that all movements are made with at least one foot on the rope at all times.

#### What You Need

Long piece of rope (say 10m for 25 people)

#### What To Do

1. Lay a long rope in a straight line on the floor (or relatively even ground) and ask your group to stand directly onto it with both feet.
2. Re-arrange their current positions according to a particular sequence, for example, the month and date of their birth. However, all movements must be made with at least one foot always touching the rope. If at any time, one or more people involved in a move should discover that both of their feet are not touching the rope, they will incur a penalty. Penalties can also be incurred if any other part of the body (such as a hand or butt) should touch the ground (often because they were used to break a fall).
3. Typically, penalties vary from simply counting the number of infractions, to requiring the offender to move to the end of the rope opposite to the direction they were travelling. For example, if a person with a birth date of September should come off the rope, they must start over from the January end of the rope.

#### Variations

- Vary the sequence criteria, such as last two digits of their mobile phone number, street number, height, shoe size, length of hair, etc.
- Complete the task with several members of the group blindfolded.

Source: <http://inspireyourgroup.com>

It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.

*Napoleon Hill*

## CONGRATULATIONS!

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## ICE BREAKER

### Jump In, Jump Out

Holding hands in a circle, facing the centre, a group jumps in, out, left or right of the circle in synch with their leader's instructions.



#### What You Need

Open, flat space to form a circle

#### What To Do

1. Ask your group to form a circle, holding hands facing the centre. You then explain that you want them to ...*"SAY what I say, and DO as I say."* Next, you practice a few rounds, by calling one of four commands – Jump In, Jump Out, Jump Left or Jump Right.
2. The aim is for each person (the group) to repeat exactly what the leader says, at the same time they are copying what he/she does. Pretty simple, you'd think. Not! There is always a few people who move to their "other left" (or right) or just simply get confused, causing the circle to crinkle.
3. After 20-30 seconds, re-form the circle, and announce that you now want the group to *"SAY THE OPPOSITE of what I say, and DO as I say."* Get it? For example, if I say "Jump In," the group says "Jump Out" as they literally jump in.

#### Variations

- Re-form the circle, and announce that you want the group to *"SAY what I say, and DO THE OPPOSITE of what I say."* For example, if I say "Jump Left" the group is invited to say "Jump Left" as they jump to the right.
- Add extra commands, such as "Jump Twice" or "Jump High" or "Jump to the Left/Right".

Source: <http://inspireyourgroup.com>



# ADDING HUMOR TO TRAINING

By Elaine Biech from Training For Dummies

Thomas Edison once said that he had never worked a day in his life. It was all fun! Wouldn't it be great if you could always say that? Adding humor to your training is one way in which you can add fun to your participants' days.

## START OFF ON A FUNNY FOOT

This Way  
to the  
FUN!

Establish the atmosphere right from the start. Every session should start off on a high note to set the stage for the rest of the session. Be positive. You want to send the message that this will be fun.

Why add humor to the opening of a training session?

- Relieves nervousness participants may feel
- Establishes the environment for the rest of the session
- Gets participants' attention
- Models that although the session is serious, the trainer does not necessarily believe in being glum

## I'M LOST!

Use humor to defuse unexpected situations. Here are some examples you may want to try.



- If you lose your place or pause too long, you can say, "I just wanted to wait a moment in case any of you have lost your place." Steve Martin's favorite for this situation, "Where was I? Oh yes! I was here!" (Take a step to the side.)
- When you garble a sentence, you can say, "Later on I'll pass out a printed translation of that sentence."
- If you tell a joke and it bombs you can say, "Okay, I'll just go back to my desk (Wisconsin, home office, or wherever you call "home") now!"
- If you are using a microphone and it goes dead, you can say, "Evidently someone has heard this presentation before."
- If people are talking during your presentation, you can say, "Feel free to talk among yourselves." Or, "I see you're starting to break up into small discussion groups ahead of me."
- If someone points out you misspelled a word, you could say, "Mark Twain once said he never respected anyone who couldn't spell a word more than one way!" Another response when informed you have misspelled a word is to look around the flipchart as if you are missing something and then say, "Does anyone know where the spell check is on one of these?"
- If you give incorrect instructions, say, "Does everyone understand? Good. Now forget it. That was just a test to see if you can follow instructions. Now I will give you the actual instructions."
- If a participant answers a question incorrectly, you can say, "right answer, wrong question!" (Be careful with this one. You certainly don't want to insult a participant)
- If the lights go out, you can say, "Why do I have the feeling that when the lights come back on, I'll be alone?" or "You thought you were in the dark before this session!"

Humor can turn an awkward situation into an enjoyable experience. The participants laugh. The laughter makes them feel good and eases the tension of a difficult situation for the trainer.

## GET PARTICIPANTS IN ON THE ACT



Don't feel as if you need to be the one responsible for all the laughs. Get participants in the act so all enjoy themselves. How can you do that?

Many games and energizers exist where everyone is laughing at the end. Relay races can have that effect on participants. "All Tied Up" is an energizer in which participants stand in close proximity to one another. Everyone grasps everyone else's hand in no particular order. Next participants begin to untangle themselves.

One game that results in everyone laughing is called "Did You Shower Today?" Place one chair for each participant in a circle. Have all participants sit in the chairs. Begin giving directions for participants to change chairs. Here's a few to start with, but you can add, or change them to personalize for your group. This activity helps participants get to know each other better and leaves them laughing because at times four or five people may be trying to sit on the same chair.

- If you showered today, move 3 chairs to the left.
  - If you read a newspaper regularly, move 2 chairs to the right.
  - If you traveled abroad within the past year, move 1 chair to the right.
  - . . . add your own ideas.
- When participants say something funny, be sure that the entire group has heard it so everyone feels a part of the humor.

## AUSTERE ATTITUDES



Everyone who walks into your training session will not be interested in being humored. Some will bring attitudes that are barriers to having a good time.

- Training is serious business — just like work.
- Humor is a waste of time.
- Employees who have fun at work are not productive.
- We can't possibly accomplish our goals with all this raucous laughter.

What can you do to try to turn these attitudes around? Well, nothing new: Build trust, encourage participation, respect others' opinions, and ensure that participants take responsibility for their own learning. When using humor it should flow naturally from the content. Humor should support, not replace, the learning objectives. Always have alternatives to humorous activities available if the humor isn't right for a particular group of participant.

Source: [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com)



## HEALTH ALERT!!!

You can do yoga anytime but we recommend it before bedtime as a way to soothe away the stresses of the day. The following four introductory yoga poses are good for increasing circulation around the heart and promoting relaxation. And you can actually do them in bed, in your pyjamas, before going to sleep. Hold each pose for at least 30 seconds.

### Cobra pose

Lie face down with your feet together, your toes pointed behind you and your hands palms down just in front of your shoulders. Lift your chin and gently raise your head and chest so that your torso is supported on your forearms. Be sure to keep your shoulders down and back, not hunched up by your ears. Remember to breathe deeply throughout. People sometimes hold their breath during this move, which is not good if you have existing heart disease.



### Prayer pose

Kneel with the tops of your feet on the floor or bed and your toes pointed behind you. Sit back onto your heels, then lower your chest to your thighs. Extend your arms and rest your palms and forehead on the floor or mattress (or as close as comfortably possible).



## HOW TO CALM YOUR NERVES

### Spinal twist

Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat and your arms at your sides. Slowly lower your knees to the left while simultaneously extending your arms to the right as far as comfortably possible. Keep your shoulders in contact with the floor or bed. Repeat on the other side, holding each position for 15 seconds.



### Corpse pose

Lie on your back with your arms at your sides and your palms facing up. Place your heels slightly apart and allow your feet to fall naturally to the sides. Starting with your feet, progressively contract (or flex) and then relax all of your muscles – in other words your toes, then your ankles, calves, knees, thighs and so on to the top of your head. When you have finished, relax, breathe deeply – and sleep.



Source: [www.readersdigest.com](http://www.readersdigest.com)

*To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.*

*Buddha*

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