

# WORKSHEET:

## DEVELOPING YOUR STORY OF SELF

---

You tell a story of self to enable others to “get you” – to enable them to experience the values that call you to serve the cause you serve AND to have accepted responsibility to lead. The key is to focus on choice points: moments when your values influenced choices you made in response to challenges you faced. When did you first need to be heard and believe that you could be? When did you have to care for someone else and found out you could? When did you have to stand up to someone bigger than you? Where did you find the courage? Or did you? What were the circumstances? What makes a story of self powerful is not “high drama” or “tragedy” but the extent to which you allow yourself to be vulnerable, to let others see something real about your sources of caring and of courage.

**Before you decide what part of your story to tell, think about these questions:**

1. What will I be calling on others to do? What is my purpose in calling on others to join me in action? Why am I called to leadership?
2. What values move me to take action and might also inspire others to similar action?
3. What stories can I tell from my own life about specific people or events that would show (rather than tell) how I learned or acted on those values?

**What are the experiences in your life that have shaped the values that call you to leadership?**

### FAMILY & CHILDHOOD

Parents/Family  
Growing Up Experiences  
Your Community  
Role Models  
School

### LIFE CHOICES

School  
Career  
Partner/Family  
Hobbies/Interests/Talents  
Finding Passion  
Overcoming Challenge

### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

First Experience with Political & Civic Issues  
A Key Moment in Your Work as an Organizer  
Role Models/Community  
Current Experience as an Organizer

Think about the challenge, choice and outcome in your story. The outcome might be what you learned, in addition to what happened. **Try drawing pictures here instead of words.** Powerful stories leave your listeners with images in their minds that shape their understanding of you and your calling.

<u><b>CHALLENGE:</b></u>	<u><b>CHOICE:</b></u>	<u><b>OUTCOME:</b></u>

**Remember**, you have seen Amal telling her story in only 2 minutes and you will get the same to tell your Story of Self, so your draft should reflect that. Most speakers use 350-400 words to tell a two-minute story.

So two tips:

- Ground your story in moment and only moments of
- Practice delivering it and time yourself!

There is no one story to be told, this is a craft that is developed by practicing

### *For Further Reflection*

We all live very rich, complex lives with many challenges, many choices, and many outcomes of both failure and success. That means we can never tell our whole life story in two minutes. The challenge is to learn to interpret our life stories as a practice, so that we can teach others based on reflection and interpretation of our own experiences, and choose stories to tell from our own lives based on what's appropriate in each unique situation.

Take time to reflect on your own public story, beginning with your story of self. You may go back as far as your parents or grandparents, or you may start with your most recent organizing and keep asking yourself why you in particular got involved when you did. Focus on challenges you had to face, the choices you made about how to deal with them, and the satisfactions – or frustrations – you experienced. Why did you make those choices? Why did you do this and not that? Keep asking yourself why.

What did you learn from reflecting on these moments of challenge, choice, and outcome? How do they feel? Do they teach you anything about yourself, about your family, about your peers, your community, your nation, the world around you – about what really matters to you? What about these stories was so intriguing? Which elements offered real perspective into your own life?

Many of us active in public service have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world, and we would have no reason to try to fix it. But we also have stories of hope, otherwise we wouldn't be trying to fix it.