

Board Storytelling

Spread your passion for the Sonoma Valley Fund

Objective:

Not only does this give board members training and practice in an important skill, but it also:

- Gets board members talking to each other
- Wakes up their passion and energy, and engages them in the cause
- Reconnects them with the reason they are taking the time out of their busy lives to serve on the board
- Builds a sense of camaraderie and closeness among the board members
- Adds some fun to their experience as board members
- Boosts their morale and sets them up to take action.

Materials:

- Paper and pen (for notes)

Set Up:

- We want this to be casual and comfortable for board members so they can freely think about their personal connections to the Foundation.

Activity:

(15 + minutes)

We won't connect with anyone unless we can share why we care about an issue or organization. So tell people why you care. Today we are going to think about why we personally care about the Sonoma Valley Fund.

You already carry the "right" messaging with you everywhere you go – you won't forget *your* story (but you may forget a couple of statistics or a marketing message printed on a card).

Let's develop and practice your story. We know that effective stories are short and sweet (1 minute) so practicing a cogent, concise, and authentic story is an art.

1. Take a moment to think about your own connection with the Sonoma Valley Fund.
2. "I joined this board because...?"

- a. Six of you are new board members...
 - b. Why did you join the board of the Sonoma Valley Fund? What are your expectations both for your own role as a board member and for the Fund and Community Foundation?
3. What would you say if someone asked you why you care enough to serve on this board? If they ran into someone at work or socially, what would you say? What speaks to you deeply about our work?
 4. "I have learned since I joined the board of the Sonoma Valley Fund."
 5. "Why is your work with the Sonoma Valley Fund relevant?" (You may not be able to answer this question today... and that is OK)

Please write down **what would you really say if given the chance?** Remember that you want to tell your story in less than one minute! (3 - 6 minutes – or watch group for time needs)

Explain the next part of the exercise:

1. Share your story with the group
2. Each person should take about 1 minute
3. I'll keep time
4. (Hint – it is ok to take some notes about what you like about each other's stories...)

When each member has shared their story, provide feedback to one another

1. What was the most engaging parts of the stories you heard?
2. What ideas do you have for each other to make your stories more heartfelt, compelling and engaging?
3. Is the story the right length? Would you add or subtract any detail? Which story do you think was perfect?
4. Would anyone like to tell their story again considering the feedback?

Debrief with full group

- Did the stories you hear tell the story of the Sonoma Valley Fund through the eyes of your fellow board members?
- What did you learn from other board members?
- What was the experience like?
- What were they saying?
- How were they being?
- Was it easy or difficult?
- Was it fun or awful?