

Speaking Tips

The Hero and the Villain

According to author Dave Lieber, the best stories have a hero and villain.

The hero could be you, someone you know, the agency you are involved with, or United Way donors.

The villain doesn't have to be a person. It can be a problem that needs to be resolved or a situation that needs to be improved.

In the best stories, there is a conflict between the hero and the villain....and at first it looks like the hero is going to lose. But then something happens that changes the course of the story.

The hero reaches deep down and finds the perseverance...or the courage...or the creative idea that enables the hero to ultimately succeed. The conflict is resolved. The hero overcomes.

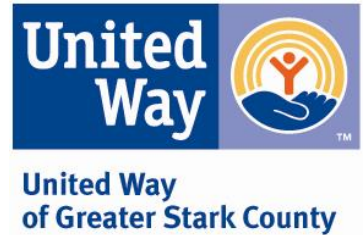
These elements are as old as story-telling itself. They are what make a story gripping and memorable. With a little thought, you can incorporate these general concepts of hero and villain, conflict and resolution, into your presentation.

You can still include facts and statistics that you want your listeners to know. Just make them part of the mixture. Tuck them inside the story you are telling. And remember to avoid technical jargon.

Speech Content

- Remember to keep your speech short—5 minutes is plenty in most cases.
- Keep in mind who you are speaking to – tailor your presentation to your audience.
- Ask yourself what is the one thing you most want your audience to remember.
- Remember to specifically ask people to contribute to the United Way campaign.
 - The main reason people don't give is that no one asks them.
 - Be sure to encourage people to contribute to the United Way Community Fund.
 - The Community Fund is the general fund from which United Way volunteers disburse money for partner agencies, as well as for United Way focus issues such as adult literacy.
- Donors do have the option of designating their contribution to a partner agency or to a specific focus area. BUT remember, as part of the Speakers Bureau you are representing United Way and ALL of its partner agencies when speaking on behalf of the campaign.

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- It's fine to talk about a particular agency with which you are most familiar, but don't pass out an agency's brochure or promote it as a designation. Similarly, don't encourage people to designate to a specific United Way area of interest that is important to you or your agency.
- If you feel you need more information about United Way, refer to the campaign brochure, the United Way Web site or contact us for additional training.

When You Give Your Talk

- Be enthusiastic! Even if you have told your story many times, it is brand new to the people in your audience.
- As you talk, establish eye contact with people around the room.
- Practice until you become familiar with your talking points—especially the opening and closing. It's okay to use notes, though.
- Don't forget to breathe.
- It's fine to pause for a moment from time to time. This gives the audience time to take in your information.
- Don't be rattled by mistakes; most of your audience won't notice.
- If people in your audience have questions about specific issues in their lives (an elderly parent who needs help, for example) encourage them to call 2-1-1, United Way's information and referral service.
- Remember it's okay to say "I don't know" if you don't know the answer to a question someone asks. Just say, "I don't know, but your Employee Campaign Manager will find out." Then the Employee Campaign Manager can call a United Way representative for help.
- Thank audience members for their time and attention, and for helping to make the community better through their contributions to the United Way campaign.