Empower : Your Stories

Sharing your story is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Your story is vital to growing the movement as it helps people feel connected and impacted by what you've been through. Writing your own narrative is about you taking power out of other's hands. You are not a helpless victim. You are an empowered activist changing the future!

In this worksheet you'll write a longer version of your story to use during interviews, letters and videos; a medium version for social media posts; and a 280-character tweet.

1. In 2–3 sentences, summarize who you are and what motivates you.

Read this over. Does it capture your attention and speak to the activist that you already are and will become? If not, adjust the writing to reflect who you are. Don't be afraid to send it to 2–3 people to get their reactions.

This Playbook was created by the team of revolutionaries at I AM ALS

2. Now it’s time to write the story of you! This story should let people know who you are, how this disease has impacted you, and what change you are making. Like any good story, you need a beginning (life before your diagnosis), middle (diagnosis and reaction) and end (what are you doing now; what is your call to action). If you have trouble writing this out, don’t worry. The "Empower: Who are you?" worksheet provides useful prompts. While editing your story, keep the sentences you wrote in step #1 in mind to tighten the narrative and ensure your story emphasizes the wonderful person you are.

3. Amazing. Congratulations. Your story is written. But you won’t always get the chance to tell your whole story. Sometimes you’ll just get to tell a little bit. In the box below, write down three aspects of your story that will help people care about you and the disease. This worksheet cannot tell you what to highlight because every story is different. But here are some questions to ask yourself when picking your core three points.
   - What makes your story relatable and interesting?
   - Are you close with anyone in particular?
   - Do you have an interesting profession or hobby?
   - What was your response to being diagnosed?
   - What is your activism impacting?
   - What have been your successes?

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4. Craft the social post that will make people run to grab tissues and jump head first into your efforts. Use the text from step 2 to write two paragraphs consisting of 3–4 sentences each that tell your story -- but focus on the core of your story that you highlighted in step 3

Once this is done, read the story outloud to make sure it flows well. Sounds pretty good, right?

5. Tweet! Tweet! Twitter is an amazing tool to reach people and grow your movement. The problem is you can only use 280 characters per tweet. Each letter and space counts as a character.

   Practice writing three tweets with 1–2 of your core points in them. The point of these tweets is to spread awareness and build the movement. Be hopeful and positive without downplaying the reality of the disease.

   Start each tweet with “My name is ::fill in first name::.” As you go on, experiment with other intros.

Copy and paste these tweets into the “What’s Happening?” box on Twitter’s website. The box will tell you if you are over or under the character count.

6. Ask one or two people within your network to read through the long, medium and short versions of your story. Ask them what they think the main takeaways from each version is. If their interpretation does not match what you've intended, edit the text to make it clearer.
   Ask them or someone else to help if you are unsure about how to make your story more clear and direct. We aren't going to make a movement in isolation. Rely upon your fellow activists! They want to help.

Congratulations! You now have a long, medium and short version of your story. And so does your entire team. Use these to amplify the voices of patients and others within the disease community. But don't just use this to raise awareness and gain more advocates. Use it as a guide for your organization. This is what matters most: The people behind the movement.