

INSPIRE



"Our chief
want is someone who will
inspire us to be what we know
we could be."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO BE INSPIRED. OPEN YOUR EYES. SEE.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." Mark Twain

Lately, I'm working harder to uncover and discover the amazing inspiration present in uncommon places and everyday moments. Its easy to take for granted the beauty in the changing of the seasons or the wonder of a newborn discovering her toes that first time.

But when we can allow ourselves the chance to slow down, to really see and hear and feel our world, its almost impossible not to become inspired. There's tremendous beauty all around us, even when we're not looking.

I'm finding that when times are really tough, when I'm struggling with cynicism or approaching the borders of despair, it helps me to retreat into a good book or take a drive in the country. Sometimes I call an old friend or instant message with my nieces and nephews. An old box of photos almost always picks up my spirits and reminds me of how wonderful life really is.

I think inspiration, like passion, offers us the chance to embrace joy and hopefulness and to make the best of whatever our circumstance. Life isn't always easy; and it helps to remember that yesterday is gone, and tomorrow isn't promised.

When we can open our hearts and minds and put as much into enjoying the present as we do into building a future, then inspiration can root in us the energy and the power and the truth that we need to change ourselves and change the world.

So begin today! At lunchtime, take a walk in the park. Or go to a bookstore and browse a section you've never looked in before. Buy the first book that sparks your interest. Go home after work, forget about being tired, and bake a cake from scratch. If you have a fireplace, light a fire. If not, light some candles. Sing. Dance ...



Inspiration ...
in artistic composition,
refers to an irrational and unconscious
burst of creativity. Literally, the word
means "breathed upon."

SPEAK TO INSPIRE

Nine questions to help you prepare to motivate people to action.

Developed by the good people at the Advocacy Institute (www.advocacy.org)

- 1. What do we want?** (Goals) What is it you want your audience to do after listening to you?
- 2. Who can give it to us?** (Target Audiences) Which segment of the public is in the best position to hear and act effectively upon our message? (Note: The "general public" is not a target audience.)
- 3. What do they need to hear?** (Messages) What is the best language, use of words, that will impact them powerfully and move them to action?
- 4. Who do they need to hear it from?** (Messengers) Who is this particular target audience most likely to listen to?
- 5. How do we get them to hear it?** (Delivery) What is the best medium to reach them (e.g., print, radio, television, email)?
- 6. What have we got?** (Resources; Strengths) What resources do we already have at our disposal—good messages, graphic artists, web-savvy specialists, motivating speakers—that can help us achieve our communications objectives?
- 7. What do we need to develop?** (Challenges; Gaps) Who do we need to bring in? What skills do we need that we don't have? What organizational culture issues might hamper our efforts?
- 8. How do we begin?** (First Steps) What are some things we can do right away to get the effort moving forward? Then what will we do after that?
- 9. How will we know it's working, or not working?** (Evaluation) What mechanisms will we put into place to measure the impact of our message and our approach?

Story Plotter

Excerpted From an On Your Feet White Paper, © April, 2005 (<http://www.ojf.com>)

We hear stories all the time. We tell stories. We are stories.

But stories, unorganized, may not be enough to inspire either internal or external organizational action. They need a structure to fit into, so that people better understand what the stories are about, and how the stories can help catalyze action.

Story Plotter emerged as a structure for organizing stories and action. The left hand column captures stories of the current reality, what is happening now. The stories in the right column capture what we would call future stories: stories of new possibility, new ideas, new action, and future fears and anxiety. The top row describes stories and action worth keeping and cultivating. The bottom row captures stories and actions that might be most constructive if stopped or discouraged from coming into fruition.

NOW	FUTURE
Stories of Fact Capture the Current Reality of Aligned Behaviors CELEBRATE	Stories of Possibility and Revolution Imagine New Ideas, Actions, Changes, Both Big & Small ASK, WHAT IF ...
Stories of Contradiction Reveal Inconsistencies and Failings STOP DOING	Stories of Anxiety Reveal Fears and Worries ACKNOWLEDGE

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF



QUICK TIP SERIES

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