



# STRENGTH ON STAGES

WITH

**ROBERT HARTWELL**

**JANUARY  
12+13**

# THE WORKBOOK

**CREATED BY ROBERT HARTWELL**

- ✓ *Inc. 5000 Entrepreneur*
- ✓ *Award Winning Director + Choreographer*
- ✓ *Oprah Winfrey Network + HGTV TV Host*
- ✓ *Storytelling Coach*

**STRENGTHONSTAGES.COM**

A workbook for  
entrepreneurs, speakers,  
authors, fundraisers, or  
anyone who wants to inspire  
people to listen and act.

**Every day of your life, you're going to step onstage.**

A “stage” is anywhere you're going to be seen and heard. It's anywhere you have an opportunity to speak and inspire people to take action.

Your personal “stage” might be meeting with a client and asking them to hire you, coffee with a potential investor, a keynote presentation, giving a pep talk to your employees, speaking to your teenage child, or something else.

Whatever your stage may be, I want to help you step onto that stage feeling completely prepared—knowing what you're going to say and how you're going to say it.

I want you to feel poised, powerful, and strong. Looking and feeling your absolute best. So that you can seize that moment and absolutely nail it—and get whatever result you want.

I want you to know, “I did everything possible to prepare for this moment. I gave my all.”

I'm so grateful that you've chosen to spend time with me—and my team—in New York City for Strength On Stages. This is a masterclass where you learn speaking skills that you'll use every single day of your life.

Thank you for being here.

Let's bring out the strong, clear, and bright story that I know is inside of you.

*My absolute all,  
Robert Hartwell*

***PRE-WORK***



# *My Story Begins...*

...in a small town in North Carolina.

From a very young age, I knew (and my family *definitely* knew) that I was different from the other kids in the neighborhood.

While my classmates were signing up for Boy Scouts, I was choreographing full-on Broadway numbers in the backyard—complete with sets, costumes, everything!

When my brother begged for a new basketball, I pleaded with my mom to get me ballet lessons.

I was the little boy who devoured *The New York Times*—especially the Arts section. I clipped out photos of dancers, actors, and glamorous artists that I admired and plastered them onto my bedroom wall. Yes, I was making vision boards before vision boards were even a thing!

From age 7, I knew with absolute certainty that I wanted to be on Broadway and see my name in lights. I worked hard, put in 10,000 hours of relentless training in dance, voice, and acting, and got accepted to a top college to study musical theater.

At age 25, I made my New York City Broadway debut.





After a successful career on Broadway, including 5 Broadway shows and 2 national tours, I opened my first business: The Broadway Collective. It all started with me, a laptop, a tiny home-office, and (like almost every entrepreneur) a frightening amount of caffeine and the drive to build something out of nothing.

The company rapidly expanded and hit The Inc 5000 List as one of the fastest growing private companies in America, with more than 440% revenue growth over 3 years.

Then, life took an unexpected turn. After my Aunt Paulette (who was like a second mother to me) died from the virus, I was consumed by grief and needed to get out of the city so that I could breathe.

One serendipitous event led to another, and I found myself making an offer—full price, all cash—to buy a 200-year-old colonial mansion in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The house was an absolute mess (we're talking no electricity, no running water, floors crumbling) and in dire need of renovation. But I could see the potential beneath all the neglect and I knew, "This is my home."

The day that I closed on that house—Juneteenth 2020—I shared my story on social media.



I posted a photo of me—standing in front of my new home—on Instagram. I added a caption and told everyone the story of this home. How this house was built two centuries ago, at a time when slavery was still legal federally in the United States. How Black people worked as servants in this house, long ago, and how their names were never recorded. I shared my own story, too—how proud I felt to be a Black gay free man, a business owner, and homeowner. I vowed to fill this home with light and love, to renovate it and make it better than before, and make my ancestors proud.

That social media post—which was really just intended for my close friends and family—went completely viral. The next morning, I had 100,000 new followers, thousands of comments, and my inbox was crammed with emails from every major media outlet—wanting to set up an interview and hear the whole story.

My story about buying a home—this particular home—resonated with people in a powerful way. This was a true story of possibility, dreams achieved, and the promise that our future can be better than our past. I was astounded by how many people emailed me personally to say, “Your story gave me hope.” “This was the good news that I really needed.”

Soon, that IG post led to a meeting with Ms. Oprah Winfrey’s team and a TV show deal on her network. They wanted me to do a home renovation show—and I was overjoyed to accept the offer. This was a chance to spread a message of reinvention and hope to an even bigger audience.



**The photo that blew up the internet!**

One thing I know for sure (to quote Oprah herself) is this:

**When you tell your story, miracles happen.**

Miracles happen for you—and for others, too.

This is true not only for me. It's true for every human being. When you tell your story—whether in a social media post, newsletter, book, onstage, or a private conversation with a potential client or investor—that is a moment of power and it's going to unlock greatness.

If you want to inspire people to listen, share, purchase, enroll, donate—tell a story.

And if you want to improve your storytelling and speaking skills, you are absolutely in the right place. ◆





# About **ROBERT HARTWELL**

- ✔ Robert Hartwell is an award-winning Broadway performer, choreographer, director, producer, and entrepreneur.
- ✔ He is the host and executive producer of Taking Back the House, a television show presented by OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network, HGTV, and Scott Brothers Entertainment.
- ✔ The show follows Robert as he renovates a historic mansion in Massachusetts that he purchased. The home was originally built at a time when slavery was still legal. Robert—a Black gay man—is determined to reclaim the home, room by room, and fill it with beauty and love.
- ✔ From stage to screen, Robert creates jaw-dropping moments that leave audiences awestruck and inspired.
- ✔ You've seen Robert in Tony Award-winning Broadway shows and featured in Pharrell and Jay-Z's hit music video, "Entrepreneur."
- ✔ As a director and choreographer, his work has been seen at Lincoln Center, Music Theater Wichita, North Carolina Theater, Naples Performing Arts Center, The University of Michigan, and Fulton Theater.
- ✔ Robert was the assistant director on the national tour of the Tony Award-winning revival of Once On This Island. Another recent project, For Colored Boyz, won the top award at the Fulton Theatre's Stories of Diversity Playwriting Festival.
- ✔ Robert is the founder of The Broadway Collective, a musical theater education company for teens. The company made the Inc 5000 List for being one of the fastest growing private companies in America.
- ✔ Robert divides his time between NYC and his new home in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

***Stay connected at [Robert-Hartwell.com](http://Robert-Hartwell.com).***



# The Science of Storytelling

**You want to increase sales, get more donations, or permanently change someone's mind? Tell a story. It's #science.**

## **Tell a story...to motivate someone to change their behavior**

As reported by NPR, when healthcare patients hear a story about someone who made a positive lifestyle change—sitting less, walking more, eating better—those patients are more likely to change their habits, too.

## **Tell a story to...motivate people to donate more money**

When you hear a beautifully told story, your body releases oxytocin—the natural neurotransmitter that makes you feel trust, empathy, closeness, and connection to those around you.

In a peer-reviewed study supported by The Center for Neuroeconomics Studies, researchers found that when participants have extra oxytocin flowing throughout their system, they are 56% more likely to donate to charity (and donate larger amounts) after watching a brief ad about the cause. Stories create oxytocin—and oxytocin leads to generosity.

## **Tell a story to...increase sales**

Stories create emotion. As reported in The Harvard Business Review, when brands focus on making a strong emotional connection, customers pay more attention to store communications—posts, newsletters, and so on. And, customers shop more often. Researchers noted a 50% increase in sales.

# The Science of Storytelling

## **Tell a story to...hold people's attention, help people learn faster...and get more views, shares, and likes**

When people hear a list of facts, the information typically goes in one ear—and out the other. But when people hear the same information delivered in the form of a story, they remember what you've said.

Organizational psychologist Peg Neuhauser states that when people hear a great story, they absorb information better—and retain info for much longer—compared to simply hearing facts.

If you look at the top ten most-watched TED Talks of all time, nearly all of them contain a personal story—not just research and stats. When we hear someone telling an interesting story, it holds our attention, and we want to keep listening all the way to the end.

## **Tell a story to...change hearts and minds...and change the world**

Daryl Davis is a musician. Davis, who is Black, has spent the last 30 years befriending members of the Klu Klux Klan. He invites KKK members to join him for a meal or drink, strikes up a conversation, and tells them his story—one human being to another. In many instances, this is the first time that the KKK member has ever sat down with a Black person in their entire life.

Because of Davis, more than 200 Klansmen have given up their robes. They quit the organization forever and will never take part in it again.



# The Science of Storytelling

As reported on NPR, “Davis collects the robes and keeps them in his home as a reminder of the dent he has made in racism by simply sitting down and having dinner with people.”

What Davis did is incredibly courageous—and of course, incredibly dangerous. I am not encouraging you to go into a threatening situation and put yourself in harms’ way. However, the fact that Davis has been able to change 200 minds— this illustrates the incredible power of telling your story. When you share your human experience with another person, you can open people’s eyes, change hearts and minds, and even change deeply-held beliefs. You can change one person’s life, change an entire community, and start a ripple effect that changes the world.

## **One more example...**

The Pew Research Center conducted a study to find out, “When someone is opposed to gay marriage, but then changes their mind, what causes this change to happen?” 32% of the people polled say they changed their mind because “they know someone—a friend, family member, or other acquaintance” who is gay. They have a personal connection. They know this person—and they know this person’s story. This creates a permanent change of heart.

**Stories create miracles.**

***WEEK 1***



# ***WHERE YOU WANT TO BE***

Set your intention and decide what you want to achieve from this program.



## Where You Want to Be

# *Intention*

**Why are you here at Strength On Stages? Set your intention.**

*Example:*

- I am here because I have a story I want to tell—and I want to tell it more powerfully.
- I am here because I dream about giving a TED Talk one day. I want to get prepared for that moment.
- I am here because I want to figure out how to convince even more clients to hire me. I want professional training to develop a stronger and more persuasive speaking voice.





Where You Want to Be

# *Dream Opportunities*

**What types of opportunities do you truly want?**

*Example:*

- I want to be a guest expert on NPR.
- I want to get a book deal, record an audiobook, and do a book tour.
- I dream about being on a major television show, like Good Morning America.







Where You Want to Be

# *Audience*

**In your profession, who are you usually speaking to? Who is your audience? (Or audiences, plural, if you have several groups that you speak to.)**

*Example:*

- My primary audience is busy moms who want to make more time for self-care and fitness. This is my customer base. In addition, I speak to my workplace team and occasionally to investors.





Where You Want to Be

# *Audience Profile*

**What kind of media does your audience consume? (Magazines, books, podcasts, etc.) List specific outlets they read/watch/listen to.**

**What events/conferences do they attend?**

**What social media platforms do they use?**

*Example:*

→ My primary audience loves business-oriented and advertising-related media. They read Forbes, Fast Company, AdWeek, and Ad Age. They usually spend time on LinkedIn but sometimes on Instagram. They attend conferences like Ad World and Inbound Conference.





## Where You Want to Be

# *Message*

**Consider your primary audience—the people you speak to most frequently. What do you want to say to those people? What is the message they need to hear? (If there’s more than one, write down a couple messages, plural, that these people need to hear.)**

*Example:*

→ My primary audience really needs to hear the following messages:

Your health needs to be the highest priority – not the lowest.

Small daily habits make such a difference in how you feel.

Creating a healthier life doesn’t begin when you join a gym or buy a salad. It begins with a decision. You need to decide that you are deserving of care and attention.





Where You Want to Be

# *Message Visioning*

**What would be an ideal scenario for you to share your message?  
Think BIG.**

*Example:*

- I'm on tour with Oprah, speaking in front of sold-out stadiums in 7 major cities. Gayle King introduces me and I step onto the stage. The audience explodes with cheers and applause. I'm wearing a fabulous red suit and Prada loafers.







Where You Want to Be

# *Audience Takeaway*

## **Whatever fear you just wrote down...**

Do you want these people to enroll in a program, become a client, write a check and invest, donate to a good cause, try something new, behave differently, think differently, start doing something, stop doing something, or...?

Imagine you are speaking to this audience and tell them, “Here’s what I want you to do...”

*Example:*

→ Here’s what I want you to do...Before the end of today, go do one thing (big or small) that is just for you. Treat yourself to a moment of self-care, whether it’s a short-minute walk or a quiet cup of tea. Give yourself this full, complete moment. And then, I want you to visit my website, take a look at my services, and become a client. Let’s work together to create the best and healthiest chapter of your life.





# ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

**Professional Speakers need a powerful bio to captivate decision-makers.**

These “decision makers” are meeting planners, conference bookers & organizers, human resources directors (for corporate speaking gigs), and other professionals.

Your speaker bio needs to show off your very best assets and demonstrate your value with a splash of your unique personality.

If you’re already feeling the nervous sweats come on, take a deep breath. We’ve got you.

This short workbook will walk you through everything you need to know to craft a dazzling speaker bio, get more bookings, and show off your strength... on stage.

We’ve also included fill-in-the-blank templates at the end of this workbook to make writing your speaker bio easy-breezy.



***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
ELEMENTS OF A  
SPEAKER BIO



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

THE MOST IMPORTANT  
ELEMENTS OF A SPEAKER BIO

#1

***Tell them  
“what you do.”***

**Don't leave your reader guessing. Tell them right up front who you are and what you do.**

*Three examples:*

- Susan Hyatt is a Master Certified Life Coach, Bestselling Author, and one of the world's leading experts on helping women build more wealth, smash the patriarchy, and get more of what they want.
- Rachel Rodgers is a Bestselling Author, Self-Made Millionaire, and founder of Hello Seven. Her mission is to teach women—especially women of color—how to end the cycle of overworking, under-earning, and financial stress, once and for all.
- Melissa Cassera is a Professional Screenwriter & Publicity Strategist who helps business owners create obsessed fan bases for their work—leading to more sales, sign-ups, and fan mail.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

THE MOST IMPORTANT  
ELEMENTS OF A SPEAKER BIO

#2

***Stack your most  
impressive  
credentials.***

Show decision makers “why” they should book you by layering in your most impressive accomplishments.

Not a NY Times Bestseller? No speaking experience yet? Haven't won an Oscar? (Neither have we!)

We know you've done plenty of impressive things during your time on this Earth. There is no room for inadequate feelings here! Leave those thoughts in the trash where they belong!

**Instead, let's focus on your accomplishments. This could be any of the following...**



- Number of podcast listeners, blog readers, email subscribers, social media followers, etc you have. Add these audiences together for a more impressive number. (Example: Through her website, podcast, and social media, Stacy reaches over 20,000 people per week.)
- Academic degrees and certifications.
- Non-academic education. (Example: speaking multiple languages, volunteer work, unique travel experiences, etc.)
- Number of years you've been in business.
- Impressive clients or companies you've worked with.
- Total number of clients you've served.
- Revenue markers. (Example: self-made millionaire, 7-figure business owner.)
- Awards or notable press mentions.
- Exciting endorsements or testimonials you've received. (Example: *Clients consider Shenee the "go-to expert" on women's health & hormones.*)
- Client success stories. (Example: *Angela has helped dozens of clients land major deals with publishers.*)
- Got speaking experience? This is absolutely important to include in your speaker bio! Even if you've only spoken to an audience of 15 people at a local Rotary club, it counts.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

THE MOST IMPORTANT  
ELEMENTS OF A SPEAKER BIO

#3

***Share what you do  
when you're NOT  
speaking/working.***

Conferences, corporations, and event planners love speakers with experience in their field AND a rich life outside of work. Include some things you love to do when you're not working in your bio. (Example: hiking, cooking, gardening, snuggling your pets, painting waterfalls, etc.)

This information may seem frivolous, but it's actually a very smart way to separate yourself from the competition. It also helps decision-makers to bond with you on a personal level.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

THE 5 THINGS TO  
AVOID WHEN  
CRAFTING YOUR  
SPEAKER BIO



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

### **MISTAKE #1**

***Wayyyy too  
much  
information.***

Your speaker bio should land somewhere between 75-150 words. That means, you don't want to draft a 10-episode dramatic retelling of your entire life (at least not for this format!)

Your speaker bio should feel like a "coming attractions" - leaving decision makers excited and clamoring to know more.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

### **MISTAKE #2**

# ***Confusing jargon.***

There are certain words, phrases, accreditations, awards, etc. that might make sense to you and your peers, but that make no sense at all to the person hiring you to speak on stage.

Lots of people splatter confusing jargon and credentials in their speaker bio, leaving decision makers scratching their heads.

If you're referencing something that's not easily understood by the masses, include a quick explanation to help the decision maker grasp why it's significant.

*Example:*

Instead of saying: "Stacy is the winner of the DRUM Award."

Say this: "Stacy is the winner of the DRUM Award, which is like winning an Oscar in the marketing industry."



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

### **MISTAKE #3**

# ***Head-scratching professional titles.***

Your professional title is what you most want to be known for. (Example: Career Coach, Marketing Consultant, Nutritionist, Sex Expert, etc.) You might have one title or two. Maybe even three. Any more than that will confuse the reader. *For example...*

Don't litter your speaker bio with something like: *Career Coach, Bestselling Author, Professional Speaker, Dog Mom, Authenticity Advocate, Yoga Instructor, 4x Credentialed Somatic Breathing Counselor*

A great trio of titles would be: ***Career Coach, Bestselling Author, Professional Speaker***. Simple & effective.

When sharing your professional title(s) in your speaker bio, use clear phrases that are easy to understand. We love playful language, but it's not the time to get fancy with your words when sharing professional titles.

If you're a Marketing Consultant... say that. Don't use something like "Conversion Queen" or "Cash & Coin Goddess." Again, simple & effective always works.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

### **MISTAKE #4**

# ***Zero personality.***

Lots of speakers are hesitant to include personality in their bio for fear of not looking “professional.”

What ends up happening is that they bleach all of the personality out of their bio. They’re left with something that sounds like a corporate bot (bleep, blop, bloop.)

Don’t be afraid to use words & phrases that feel like you. Things you would naturally say if you were sitting down and having coffee with a new connection.



## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

### **MISTAKE #5**

# ***Trying to make it “perfect”***

Speakers often ruminate over every.single.word in their bio, trying to make it “just right.” They put so much pressure on those little paragraphs, making the end result feel stiff and stilted.

Your speaker bio is just one piece of the package. A bio is an ever-evolving document that you will update as you gain more experience, credentials, and opportunities.

The most important thing when it comes to your speaker bio, right now, is that it's DONE.

**Let's get to it!**





## ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

# 3 TEMPLATES TO CRAFT YOUR SPEAKER BIO

**Here are 3 short & simple templates to craft your speaker bio.**

Choose one and give it a whirl. If you don't like it, try another.  
Feel free to make it your own!

We highly encourage you to treat this as a ROUGH DRAFT. Get the thoughts & ideas out of our head and onto the page.

This bio should be around 75-150 words. If it's a little under or over, don't stress!

# Template #1

[Name] is a [professional title(s)] for people who [describe what you help people with].

Through [her/his/their] [website/podcast/blog/social media], [she/he/they] serve an audience of [total number of people served per week]. [Name] delivers advice on [list a few things you like to talk about].

[Name] is also [stack a few other impressive credentials here].

When [name] is not [describe a business activity you normally do], [she/he/they] can be found [list a few non-work related interests].

*Here's an example of what this bio looks like. (Note: this bio is fictional, for learning purposes only.)*

Bethany Holden is a Relationship Coach for women who are tired of the apps and want to find their match without sacrificing their goals & dreams.

Through her popular podcast, Beyond Tinder, her website, and her Instagram account, Bethany reaches more than 20,000 women per week. She dishes out tough love on common relationship issues like codependency, people pleasing, intimacy, and communication struggles.

Bethany's clients often refer to her as a "relationship fairy Godmother" and a "dating guru." Her advice has been featured in Cosmopolitan and Bustle.

When Bethany is not helping clients find love, she can be found baking, hiking, and learning French.

## Template #2

Looking for a speaker who specializes in [**list your area of expertise**]?  
Look no further than [**name**], a [**list your professional titles**] who  
[**include impressive credential.**]

[**Name**] offers an exciting perspective on the [area of expertise].  
[**She/he/they**] has [**list out more impressive credentials**].

[**Name**] is passionate about [**describe what you help people with**].

When [**name**] is not [**describe a business activity you normally do**],  
[**she/he/they**] can be found [**list a few non-work related interests**].

*Here's an example of what this bio looks like, using "Bethany" again.*

Looking for a speaker who can help your audience find love and have more fulfilling relationships? Look no further than Bethany Holden, a Relationship Coach who has been featured in Cosmopolitan and Bustle.

Bethany offers an exciting perspective on the dating world. Her podcast, Beyond Tinder, website Bethanyhelpsyoudo.com, and popular Instagram reach more than 20,000 women per week. For the past 7 years, her clients have referred to her as a "relationship fairy Godmother" and a "dating guru."

Bethany is passionate about helping women who are tired of the apps and want to find their match without sacrificing their goals & dreams. She dishes out tough love on common relationship issues like codependency, people pleasing, intimacy, and communication struggles.

When Bethany is not helping clients find love, she can be found baking, hiking, and learning French.

# Template #3

Is your audience struggling with [**describe common struggles of your ideal clients**]?

[**List professional titles and your name**] would love to educate your audience on how to [**describe what you help people with**].

[**Name**] has [**list some impressive credentials**]. When [**name**] is not helping clients with [**list what you help people with**], [**she/he/they**] can be found [**list a few non-work related interests**].

[**Name**] is a game-changing, trail-blazing keynote speaker who can excite & ignite your audience on [**repeat what you help people with**].

*Here's an example of what this bio looks like, using "Bethany" once again.*

Is your audience tired of the "apps" and struggling with dating?

Relationship Coach Bethany Holden would love to educate your audience on how to find their match without sacrificing their goals & dreams.

Bethany has been featured in Cosmopolitan and Bustle. Her podcast, Beyond Tinder, website Bethanyhelpsyoudate.com, and popular Instagram reach over 20,000 women per week. For the past 7 years, her clients have referred to her as a "relationship fairy Godmother" and a "dating guru." When Bethany is not helping clients find love, she can be found baking, hiking, and learning French (the language of love!)

Bethany is a game-changing, trail-blazing keynote speaker who can excite & ignite your audience to ditch codependency & people pleasing, improve intimacy & communication, and find their happily ever after.



# ***YOUR POWERFUL BIO***

## OVER TO YOU!

**Work up a draft of your speaker bio using the information & templates.**

Once your draft is ready, a member of our team will take a look and provide valuable written feedback to make your speaker bio even more captivating.

After you receive these helpful notes back, you can make any necessary revisions to your bio and... you're one step closer to creating your speaker page!

Happy Writing!

And another thing...don't keep this cute...LET THEM KNOW YOU BEEN IN THESE STREETS BOO!

***WEEK 2***



# *WHAT YOU SHARE*

**So here's the tea...**

After looking at your powerful bio, decision-makers will shift their eyes to your speaking topics.

They want these topics to be sizzling hot, to pop off the page (and stage!), and leave audiences feeling inspired and motivated.

This workbook will show you how to brainstorm speaking topics using the power of stories, narrow down your ideas, develop exciting titles for your talks, and craft a short description that gets you booked on stage.



***YOUR SIZZLING  
SPEAKER TOPICS***

FIND YOUR  
SIZZLING  
SPEAKING  
TOPICS



# FIND YOUR SIZZLING SPEAKING TOPICS

When brainstorming topics for your talks, it can be tempting to Google “10 Keynote Topics for Speakers” or “Most Requested Speaker Topics.”

The problem with this?

If you don't care about the topic... if you're only using it because it's trendy or because an article “told you so”... it will be virtually *impossible* to captivate an audience.

Can you “fake it?” Sure. But “faking it” will not lead to memorable, game-changing, stage-shattering work.

You want to choose topics that grip attention and move audiences to take action. The best way to do that is to choose topics that electrify you. Topics that make you sizzle inside and out.

When you do this, decision-makers will feel your energy pop off the page and book you to speak on their stage.

**To find the speaking topics that work best for you, start by answering at least 3 of the following questions:**







***Fill in the blank #4***

You're speaking to an audience of your ideal clients/customers. You start your speech with: "**You might not want to hear this, but**

\_\_\_\_\_."

Lined area for writing the response to the prompt.









***Fill in the blank #8***

You're speaking to an audience of your ideal clients/customers. You start your speech with: **"The worst mistake I ever made in my business/career was \_\_\_\_\_."**

Most people only share stories about their "mountaintops" or "highs" but not their "valleys" or "lows." Your valleys are what makes you most compelling & interesting. Audiences love to hear stories about your dips & slumps so they can RELATE to your journey.

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.





***YOUR SIZZLING  
SPEAKER TOPICS***

NARROWING  
DOWN TO 3  
CORE TOPIC  
IDEAS

# NARROWING DOWN TO 3 CORE TOPIC IDEAS

Once you've brainstormed using the questions above, you should have a flurry of different ideas—topics that would make great keynote talks.

We recommend listing out these ideas and narrowing them down to 3 core topics that feel most exciting for you.

If you're struggling, run each topic idea through this criteria:

***Do you have strong opinions on this topic?***

***Is this topic helpful and relevant to the people you want to serve?***

***Is there at least one lesson or key takeaway you could deliver with this topic?***

If the answer is “no” to any of these questions - ditch the topic.

LIST YOUR FINAL 3 TOPIC  
IDEAS HERE.

#**1**

---

#**2**

---

#**3**

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***YOUR SIZZLING  
SPEAKER TOPICS***

CRAFTING  
EXCITING  
TITLES FOR  
YOUR 3 TOPICS

# CRAFTING EXCITING TITLES FOR YOUR 3 TOPICS

Now that you have your 3 topic ideas, it's time to craft an exciting title that will impress decision-makers.

Titles for your talk are no different from headlines on the cover of a glossy magazine. Titles, just like headlines, should be magnetic and urge the reader to want to know more.

We recommend getting inspiration from magazine headlines to help you learn the art of crafting a talk title that grips attention.

Check out magazines or newspapers like Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Marie Claire, Travel & Leisure, People, New York Times, etc. All of these publications have online editions for easy research.

Jot down any headlines from these publications that stick out to you. Don't worry if they have nothing to do with your industry/business/speech. It's best to get inspiration from outside of your industry to stand out.

Once you have a list of headlines you like, think about how you can rework them for your talk title.

→ For example, a headline from *Cosmopolitan* reads:

## 16 Types of Aesthetics to Shake Up Your Wardrobe

*Could become:*

**3 Core Beliefs You Need to Shake  
Up Your Career**

*or*

**5 Money Archetypes You Need to  
Know to Shake Up Your Finances**

→ Another example from *New York Magazine*:

## A Reality Check About Motherhood

*Could become:*

**A Reality Check About Climbing  
the Corporate Ladder**

*or*

**A Reality Check About Cancel  
Culture**

→ Another example from the *New York Times Modern Love Column*:

## My Plea for the Sixth Love Language

*Could become:*

**A Plea for the Medical Industry  
to Understand Intersectionality**

*or*

**A Plea to Be More by Doing Less**



USING THIS FORMULA, WRITE  
AN EXCITING TITLE FOR ALL 3  
OF YOUR TOPIC IDEAS:

#**1**

---

#**2**

---

#**3**

---



***YOUR SIZZLING  
SPEAKER TOPICS***

WRITING TOPIC  
DESCRIPTIONS

# WRITING TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS

Each of your topics will need a brief, paragraph-long description to help entice decision makers to book you on stage.

Here's a simple template you can use to describe your topic. Feel free to tweak this, add a bit of personality, and make it your own!

Did you know that [insert a shocking fact/statistic/something you've learned in relation to your topic]? In this presentation, audiences will learn [list 2-3 things that the audience will take away from your talk]. This exciting talk will mobilize audiences to [insert at least one benefit that demonstrates why they should book you on their stage].

*Here's an example:*

## ***The Shocking Truth About Women and Finances***

*Did you know that 40% of women have no retirement strategy? In this presentation, audiences will learn how to overcome the knowledge and confidence gap when it comes to investing, narrow the gender pay gap, and create inclusive, women-only spaces to build their portfolio. This exciting talk will mobilize audiences to become confident investors and build sustainable wealth.*



# ***YOUR SIZZLING SPEAKER TOPICS***

## **OVER TO YOU!**

**Write a title and description for all 3 of your topics.**

Once your drafts are ready, a member of our team will take a look and provide valuable written feedback to make your titles and descriptions even more captivating.

After you receive these helpful notes back, you can make any necessary revisions to your speaker topics and... then we will jump into getting one of these stories written and ready for the camera in NYC!

Also...if you haven't heard this yet today know that I'm so damn proud of you. On the other side of your creation is ease, abundance, and victory. Somebody is going to get free from you making the choice today to unlock these topics.

There is no greater gift. Can't wait to see what you create!

***WEEK 3***



# ***WRITE YOUR SIGNATURE STORY***

The Five-Part Strength On Stages Story Framework

# #1



## *What happened?*

Tell your audience what happened.

Example: You missed your flight and got stranded at the airport – on the way to an important meeting to close a huge deal. Your boss was screaming at you through the phone and your job was on the line.

Root us into the moment without giving too much unnecessary backstory.

# #2

## The Five Beat Framework



# *How did you react?*

This is where you'll set the tone for your audience by sharing the emotional impact of this story. Were you shocked, outraged, motivated, inspired, soothed, comforted, encouraged, hopeful, or something else?

As you recount what happened, emphasize the emotions you felt. The disappointment, stress, shame, urgency, hope, victory, joy, or whatever you felt. Allow your audience to feel whatever you were feeling.



# #3

## The Five Beat Framework



# *What did you do?*

What main action did YOU take in this situation?

Example: After listening to your toxic boss screech into your ear for twenty minutes, you tell him, “I quit.” You hang up, and your gaze cuts to a nearby airport trash can. You toss your work phone in the bin and wash your hands of that job, that abuse, and that toxicity for good.

# #4



## *What did you learn?*

Tell your audience what you learned from this experience. The message that you want to impart.

Example: At the airport, listening to my boss scream at me through the phone, I learned a priceless lesson about taking back my power. As stressful as it was, that moment was my miracle.

# #5



## *What do you want the audience to do?*

To conclude your story, give your audience a call to action. More than anything else, what do you want your audience to do?

Example: Urge each person in your audience to stop bowing to toxic bosses and build their own business.

**Want an example?**

**Check out this incredible story that Dr. Lauren Powell produced with Strength on Stages.**

You'll notice Lauren hits every part - and keeps her story under 3 minutes!

**Part #1 - What happened?**

Lauren shares how, in a medical emergency, two male paramedics arrived on the scene - no equipment in sight - and asked her, "are you sure you can afford this?"

**Part #2 - How did you react?**

Lauren shares powerfully, "I couldn't breathe."

**Part #3 - What did you do?**

Lauren let that moment empower her to have real conversations about inequities and racism in the U.S. healthcare system.

**Part #4 - What did you learn?**

Lauren learned that an "ivy league degree," or a "beautifully decorated home," or "manicured nails" will not protect you from inequities in healthcare.

**Part #5 - What do you want the audience to do?**

Recognize that racism is more than a public health issue. It's an emergency.

## **Want another example?**

Watch this powerful story from Strength on Stages client, Dr. Shenelle DuBose.

### **Part #1 - What happened?**

When Shenelle was at the height of her career, someone asked her son, "is your mom dead?"

### **Part #2 - How did you react?**

Shenelle was shocked, horrified...and mobilized to do something.

### **Part #3 - What did you do?**

Shenelle resigned from her job and re-evaluated her life to come alive again.

### **Part #4 - What did you learn?**

Shenelle had to figure out how to let go. As an educator, and had some unlearning to do.

### **Part #5 - What do you want the audience to do?**

Shenelle wants the audience to answer the question, "what do you need to resign from?"

# ***YOUR TURN***

**Exercise:** Map out your signature story

Using the 3 speaker topics from Week 2, map out each topic using our five-part framework.

As you work through this, it's likely that one topic will emerge as "easier" or "more exciting" to write about.

That's your signature story!

If you don't get an immediate intuitive hit, don't worry. We are here to help.















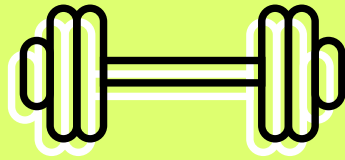






***WEEK 4***





# ***STRONG IN 5***

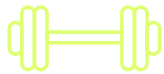
Do this 5 minute warm up right before any big opportunity –before you hop on the phone with a potential client, meet with an investor, or get onstage. Get your body and vocal muscles warmed up. Get your mindset dialed in.

***Put on 5 minutes of music that you love.  
This is approximately 1 to 2 songs.***



### **Minute 1: Move**

Move your body in any way that feels good. Stand up and gently swing your arms side to side. Reach up and reach down. Hop or jog in place. Roll your neck side to side. Get oxygen flowing throughout your body and brain.



### **Minute 2: Breathe**

Keep moving and focus on your breathing. Relax all the muscles in your face and throat. Take several deep, full breaths. Rather than puffing up your chest when you inhale, try to imagine filling your belly with air.



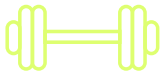
### **Minute 3: Hum**

Hum along to the song that's playing. Feel the buzzing filling your nose, mouth, and throat. Or, sing along. This helps to warm up your voice so that you sound warm, relaxed, and have a pleasing tone that people enjoy listening to.



### **Minute 4: Walk**

Take a walk around the room. Pace around. As you do so, think about your audience—whether it is one person, ten people, or millions. Who are you speaking to? What do you want to say? More than anything else, what is the main message that you want to deliver to these people?



## **Minute 5: Trust**

Take a moment of stillness and silence. Trust that you are ready for this moment.

You put in the work to prepare—you got professional training, you prepared your story ahead of time, you rehearsed, you practiced, you warmed up, you set an intention—you are ready.

You can walk into the room knowing, “I am prepared. I am not winging it. I feel proud of the preparation I’ve done.”

Trust that someone in the audience will be changed by what you say. Even if it’s just one person, touching one human life is a big deal.

# ***NEXT, LET'S TALK ABOUT REHEARSAL.***

Rehearsal is nothing more than practicing your signature story, out loud. Getting comfortable with it. Allowing yourself to play with the words, the tone, and the inflections.

The biggest question we get here at Strength on Stages is:  
**do we have to memorize every single word?**

Our answer: NO

If you memorize every word of your talk, it will come off as robotic to an audience. You miss the opportunity to allow yourself to be natural & authentic on stage.

What we suggest is memorizing your “sandwich buns.”

Before you start thinking we have completely lost the plot, “sandwich buns” is just the intro and outro of each “part” of your story.

In our framework, there are five parts.

All you need to memorize is your top line and bottom line for each section.

Top bun and bottom bun.

Once you’ve got your “buns” in order – the meat, everything in the middle, will unfold naturally.

Finally, let’s discuss “blocking.”

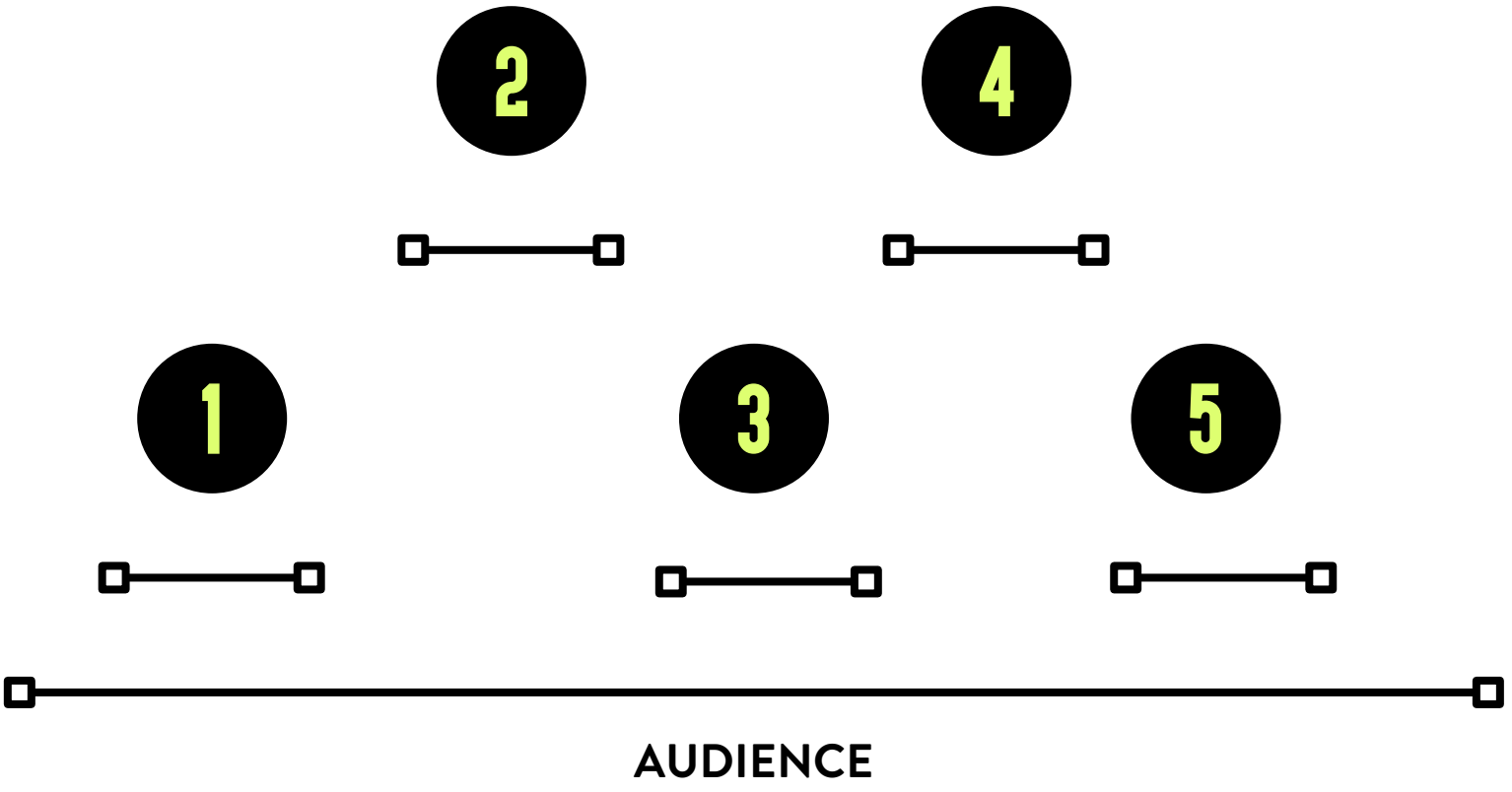
Blocking is the precise staging of actors to facilitate a performance.

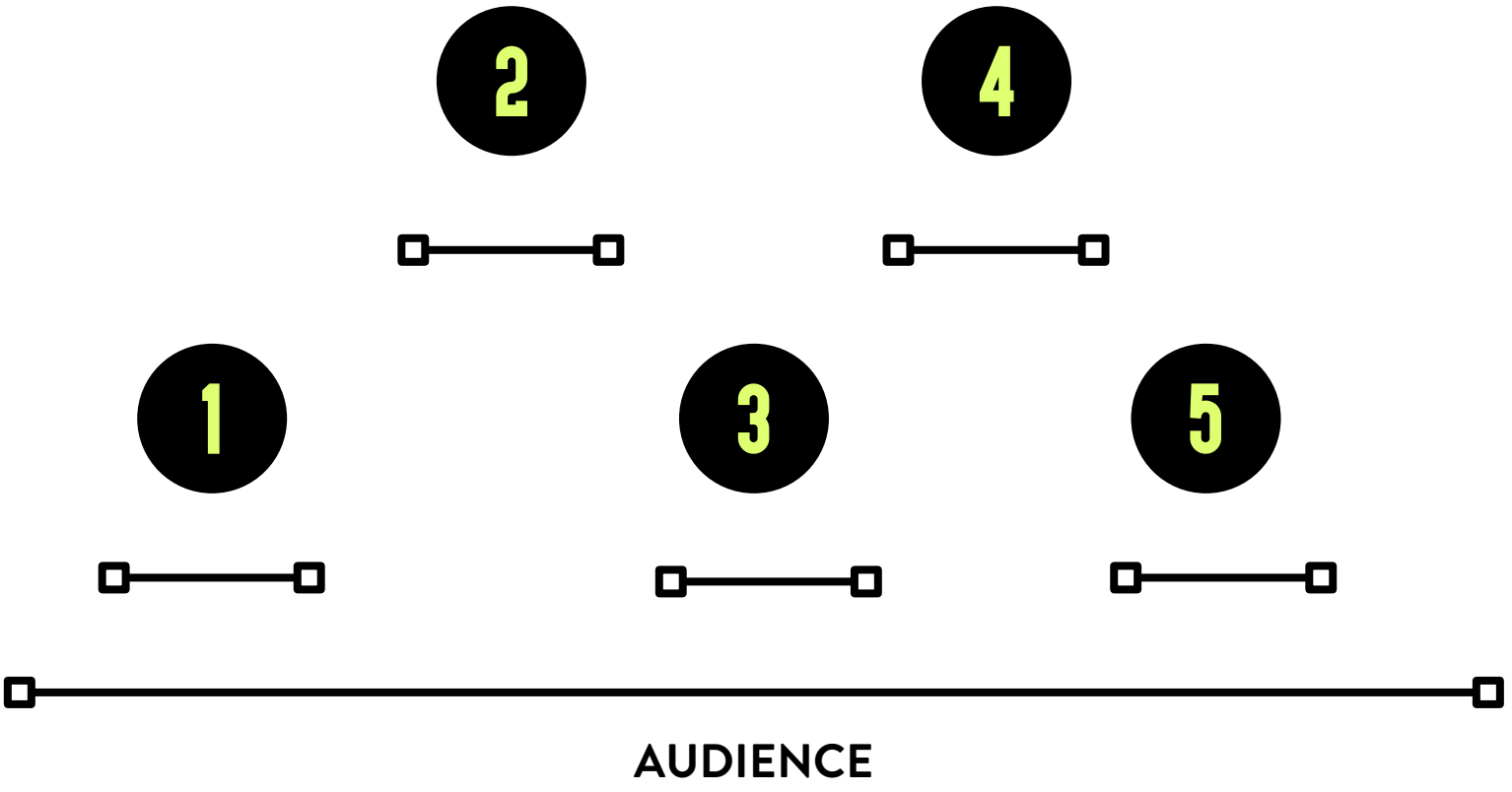
More importantly, blocking has a powerful effect on an audience, communicating story details with movement.

Using the five-part story framework, you’ll choreograph your blocking using our helpful sketch inside this week’s worksheet.

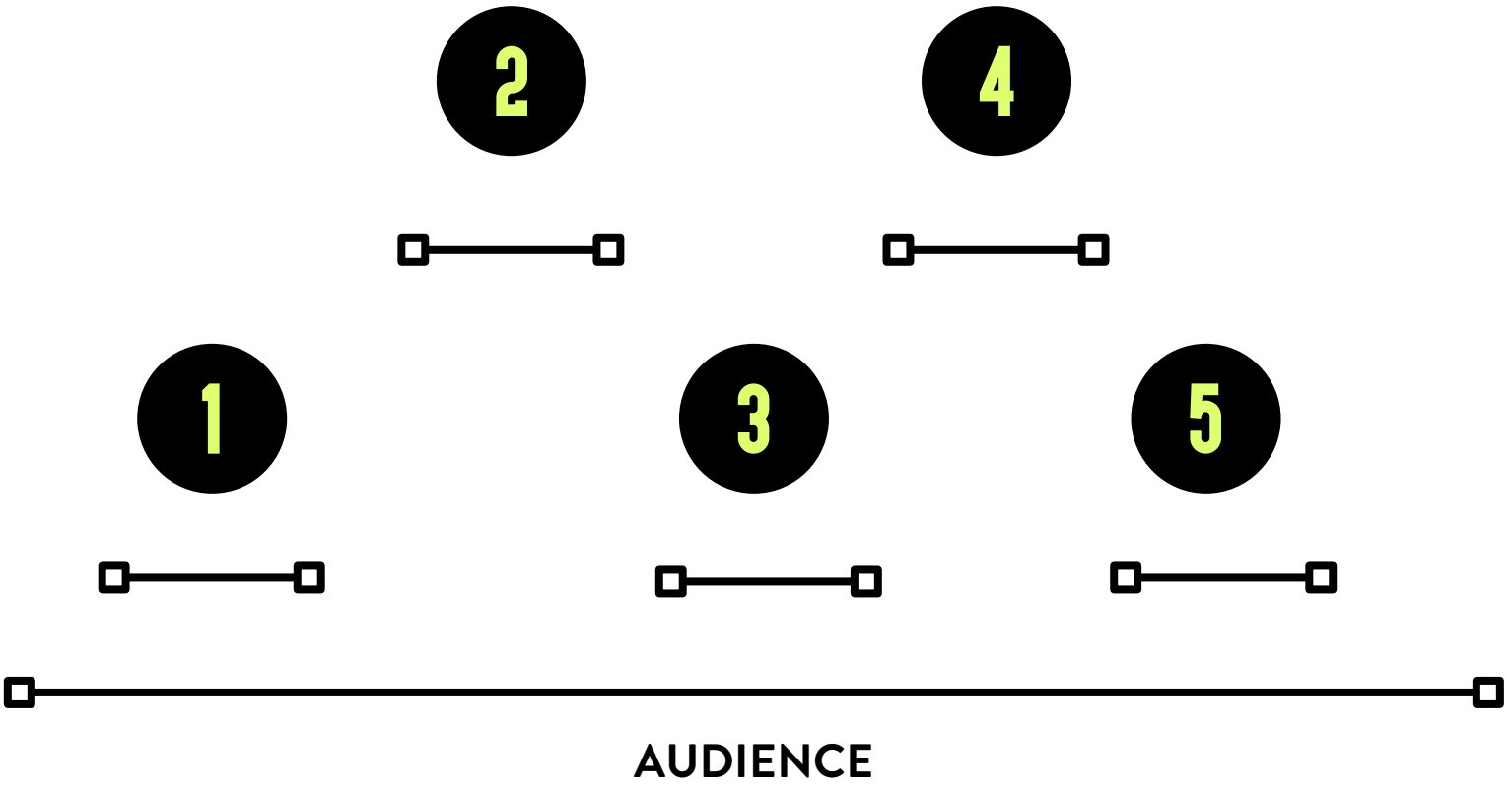


AUDIENCE











# WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU.

You've created excellent momentum.

Now let's get to New York City and make a massive shift  
in this world with your story.

You deserve it.

You are ready.

It will not harm you.

Let's walk into your next best season.

Huge love. Truly. Over and over.

xx

Robert