



Story Spine (Virtual Variation)

Category: Team Building

Format: Virtual

Length of Activity: 15-20 minutes

Ideal Group Size: Any

Themes: Storytelling, Communication, Creativity, Collaboration, Active Listening, Empathy

Tools Used: Screen Share, Music

Description: Story Spine (Virtual Variation) is a simple storytelling framework that makes it easy for anyone to tell a well-rounded story with a dramatic arc. It's a great exercise for illustrating a turning point, having participants share more about their personal history, or creating the vision for a compelling future.

How to Play:

MAIN ROOM:

- Share that we will be writing stories using a classic storytelling framework developed by Disney & Pixar. It is a way to summarize a complete story with seven distinct sentence stems.
- On a slide you have prepared, or just talking through the prompts, review the Story Spine Framework:

- Once upon a time... (set the scene)
 - And everyday... (set the context)
 - Until one day... (something happens, a turn of events)
 - And because of that... (something builds)
 - And because of that... (and continues to build)
 - Until finally... (the climax)
 - And ever since then... (the moral of the story)
- Share an example of a quick story using the framework as you go through each of the seven sentence stems.
 - Explain that we will now move into breakout rooms and will be creating improvisational stories in your groups using this framework. Using the sentence stems, you will go around one by one and each person will add the next sentence to the story (as if you are standing around in a circle). After you complete a story, the next person will start a new story, until time runs out.
 - There's no limit to what kind of stories you can make up, except your imagination.
 - The guidelines here are "If you're having fun, you're doing it right" and to be in a generative space of "Yes and..."
 - Place the Story Spine framework into the chat so everyone can reference it when they're in the breakout rooms.

BREAKOUT ROOMS:

- Divide participants into groups of 4 for 5 minutes with a 30 second buffer.

MAIN ROOM:

- Ask participants to share how many stories they were able to get through in that time by holding up their fingers.
- Explain that we will now use the Story Spine framework to write our own personal true story about a challenge in your life that you have overcome (this prompt can be adjusted based on the needs or themes of your group). The stories should be written in the 3rd person and be about something you are willing to share with the group. Encourage each prompt to be completed in one sentence, so people don't write paragraphs!
- Play some music and give participants 5 minutes to write their stories individually.

- Explain that we'll get back into the same groups and each person will have the opportunity to share their story with their group.

BREAKOUT ROOMS:

- Divide participants into the same groups of 4 for 6 minutes with a 30 second buffer.

MAIN ROOM:

- You can ask a few people to share the stories they told in front of the whole group.