

HELP!

People Are Wired to Help—But
They Only Give When a Story
Makes Them Feel
Something

Learn how to tell the kind of story
that inspires people to help.

HELP!

People Are Wired to Help— But They Only Give When a Story Makes Them *Feel Something*

People don't help because you told them to.

They help because **something you said made them feel something.**

That feeling—that pause, that ache, that moment when the donor's breath catches—
That's the turning point.

Not the ask.

Not the stats.

The moment they feel.

Why We're Wired to Help

This isn't manipulation—it's biology.

When people help, they:

- Feel less powerless
- Feel more connected
- Feel aligned with who they want to be

Helping feels good. But *only* when it's **specific, personal, and emotional.**

That's why your story matters more than your program.

That's why the moment matters more than the message.

The donor isn't looking for a reason to give.

They're looking for a moment that *makes them want to.*

The Job of Your Story

Your story is there for **one** reason:

To create a moment.

A moment where the donor *feels something real*.
A moment that interrupts the scroll.
A moment where their inner voice says:
“I have to help.”

That’s it.

Not “this organization is great.”
Not “this program is effective.”
Just **“I feel something—and now I want to help.”**

The Story Setup That Sparks a Moment

There’s no magic formula, but most “help-triggering” stories have 3 essential beats:

1. A specific person in need

Someone real. Someone we can picture. Someone we want to root for.

“Suzy, age 9, was sleeping in the backseat of a car with her little brother the night the storm hit.”

2. A glimpse into the struggle

This is where emotion happens. A sensory detail. A human reaction. Something we recognize.

“She pressed her hands over her ears when the thunder shook the windows. She didn’t want her brother to know she was scared too.”

3. A clear, urgent chance to help

Now the donor steps into the story. Not to watch, but to change it.

“Your gift tonight can get Suzy out of that car and into a warm, safe bed.”

Don’t Overload—Just Let Them Feel

The more you explain, the less they feel.
The more you persuade, the more they pull back.

Don't pile on facts or backstory. Just create a vivid, emotional moment—one that makes the donor forget everything else for a second.

Copy/Paste Story Moments That Spark Helping

First Sentences That Pull Them In:

- “This is one of those stories that stays with you.”
- “She didn't cry when her mom left. But when the lights went out, she couldn't stop.”
- “You're about to meet someone who needs your help—but doesn't know you exist yet.”

Emotional Beats That Create the Feeling:

- “He asked if someone would come back tomorrow. No one had said they would.”
- “Her shoes were on the wrong feet. She hadn't noticed.”
- “He saved half the sandwich. ‘For later,’ he said.”

Ask Beats That Invite the Donor In:

- “Will you be the one who helps her sleep safely tonight?”
- “You can be the one who changes how this story ends.”
- “She's still waiting. But it doesn't have to stay this way.”

GUT CHECK: Did You Create a Moment?

Before you send your appeal, ask:

- Is there a person in the story the donor can *feel* for?
- Is there a moment that makes you pause?
- Is the help still needed—not already resolved?
- Does the donor clearly see how *they* make the difference?
- Will this story make someone *feel* enough to act?

If the answer is yes—

Then your story has done its job.

If a donor gives, it's because you created something that mattered.

Not a perfect pitch. Not a polished brand voice. A **moment**.

One that felt personal.
One that felt real.
One that made them want to help.

That's what story is for...to deliver meaningful moments to donors.

Want Help Crafting Meaningful Moments for Donors?

This is the kind of work we do at the **Nonprofit Storytelling Conference**.

We don't teach storytelling as a theory.

We teach it as a *tool for creating real emotional moments*—The kind of moments that make donors feel something so powerful they have to act.

If that's the kind of fundraising you want to do,
You'll feel right at home.

[Get your ticket → nonprofitstorytellingconference.com](https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com)

Get help raising more money. Come to the Nonprofit Storytelling
Conference. For more information, go to:

<https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com>