

SHORT(ER) STORIES

The premise of Short(er) Stories is to refine an idea/story so only the most impacting and important information remains. I use this techniques with clients, students, writers, and artists, and you can adapt it to work under your circumstances.

On this occasion, it's a writing exercise, but I've implemented it for Video Scripts, Website Copy, to help clients hone in on ideas/stories/memories... Follow the following steps, and be sure to complete the exercise with the Tweet at the very end. Accountability is important, after all.

STEP 1: CONSIDER AN ACTUAL MEMORY OF A TIME YOU MADE A MISTAKE, BUT LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON THAT HELPED YOU GROW AS A PERSON / BRAND / BUSINESS...

STEP 2: SETUP A 5 MINUTE COUNTDOWN ON YOUR PHONE / WATCH / LAPTOP...

STEP 3: WRITE DOWN YOUR MEMORY IN THE BOX, SHARING AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE - *GET AS CLOSE TO THE 500 WORD LIMIT AS POSSIBLE (IN UNDER 5 MINUTES)*

STEP 4: RESET YOUR 5 MINUTE COUNTDOWN, AND SHARE THE SAME STORY AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME IN A BOX HALF THE SIZE (*YOUR WORD COUNT IS NOW 250 WORDS*)

STEP 5: RESET YOUR COUNTDOWN, AND SHARE THE SAME STORY ONE FINAL TIME. AGAIN, YOU HAVE A BOX HALF THE SIZE (*THE WORD COUNT IS NOW 125*).

STEP 6: FINALLY, SHARE YOUR STORY WITH IN A TWEET - IN 122 CHARACTERS OF LESS:

[{ CLICK HERE TO TWEET YOUR STORY TO ME }](#)

[Click Here to Read an Example of My Own Short\(er\) Story](#)

On this occasion, I ask you to share a single memory with me, and over a few iterations, refine and shorten it. Because you only have 5 minutes to write 500 words, you throw as much detail down as possible, and forget all about the quality of work.

You're in a quantity over quality mindset, which is the mindset we tend to take when we first create our story. After all, we've uncovered a great deal, and have lots of ideas to share.

During your second iteration, time is less of an issue, so you spend more of it focussing on the important aspects of your story. Your goal is the same: *share your story with me*. But it's not so much about quantity, rather the quality of your story.

During your third iteration, you spend most of your time thinking about what to delete. All of a sudden you have to consider how to share the same story in a mere 125 words. Each sentence plays a vital purpose, and every syllable counts.

Now you're in a quality mindset, and think only about the impact each word has.

Finally, you must share your story in a Tweet - *a near impossible task*. In the space of 20 minutes, you've gone from writing as much detail as possible (*simply to fill the page*) to deleting everything you possibly can.

This is how to approach your story.

When you first create it, it's fine to throw as many ideas down as possible, and overwhelm your page with videos and images and text and more. BUT, this isn't what your audience wants. At least, not initially.

Over time, you can drip-feed detail and introduce them to more, but for the most part, you can share everything you need to with a *Less is More* approach. By adapting this Short(er) stories exercise to everything you do, you'll transform a 5 minute video into a 2 minute one. A 20 minute talk into a 9 minute story. A journey with 25 touch points, into one with a mere 8.

It isn't easy, and it does take practice, but the better you understand your story, and the more you work on it, you'll refine... and refine... and refine some more.

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