Hello all

What a delight it was to meet and work with you all in Oxford, you worked so hard and participated so fully - thank you so much for that.

Before going on to the notes, some of you expressed interest in storytelling. My email is at the bottom of this message. You can use it any time if you have questions.

As promised here are some key messages from the day:

**crafting stories for yourself**

- Use story to reveal both who you are as well as what you do, by including both plot (what happened), and your reactions to what happened.
- When asking yourself 'would a story work well here and if so at which bit?' focus on the aspect you want people to be able to imagine as real, and where you want to create empathy or insight - this is where the story belongs.
- If you know what your presentation or talk is focusing on, create some prompt questions for yourself which will help you remember a story. Sometimes this is best done in conversation with someone else - like you did on the course.
- Pick a memory that is distant enough for you to tell safely without getting drawn into the emotion of it - so that you and your audience are emotionally safe.

- In most instances we need a context, memory and reflection for a story to work well, but you can play with the order and the length of each part.

Context: what the listener needs to know to understand the importance of this story, or at least where it begins
Memory: the plot of the story - what happened? This is where your sensory description comes in. Reflection: this is the landing point, and should offer the point of telling the story which is different with different audiences. So it might be either:
What this story means to you here today
What the gift of the story is for the audience
What your ask is
What your offer is

• The reflection can take some time to get to - they can change over time - and there can be more than one reflection on the same story, that is all okay.
• With autobiographical storytelling it is very helpful to have someone else to work with and give you feedback, help you separate what is essential from what is not, ask you questions and be encouraging, it is hard to have distance from our own stories and having a good companion is a real help.
• Try to work away from paper and instead verbalise your experiments because this is a much easier place to play, amend and be creative.
• Remember how you’re breathing can influence the room.
• We create motion and rest within our stories by attending to the thresholds (when a place, time, emotion or 'chapter' of the story changes). Use pauses, eye contact, and changes in tone volume and pace of your voice to emphasise the threshold gather and carry your audience over it with you.
• Voice exercises can be used to get into your body.
• Remember that the same story can have more than one reflection depending on the point you wish to draw out.
• Your reflection may change over time as your perspective on the story also changes - there is never a finished autobiographical story!

And here is a little optional additional homework if you wish to consolidate the learning from our day together:
Spotting the use of story in some of the most popular TED talks:

Jill Bolte Taylor: My stroke of insight (20 mins)
http://www.ted.com/playlists/171/the_most_popular_talks_of_all

*Which parts of this story are most engaging? why?*

*How does she use gesture? how does it change our experience of what she is saying?*

*Can you identify context/story/reflection?*

Brene Brown: The power of vulnerability (20 mins)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o

*How does Brene bring story and data/facts together?*

*How much of her comes across and what is the impact on you of that coming across?*

*How much information is she able to get across in 20 mins?*

I think it is also useful to look at use of snippets of story within short presentations and here is a good example:

Brene Brown doing a 4 minute presentation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6xb4H5ueKs

This one has the most cheesy intro which lasts for 1.04 mins. So start observing from when Brene starts talking after the 1.04 min intro.

*Can you spot a context/memory/reflection structured story within this piece (can you spot more than one?)*

*How does use of story enable connection with audience?*

Bobette Buster: Can you tell your story?
http://www.thedolectures.com/bobette-buster-can-you-tell-your-story#.VOy3i7CsWON

This is a talk about storytelling and suggests another way of identifying what to tell. It is useful to watch it from two perspectives:

1. *How does the presentation work as a presentation - when does she use story and when does she use other approaches (commentary, facts, data). What about her use of gesture and breathing?*

2. *What do you think about her actual message?*
- what we want to do as listeners?
- what is the importance of imagination and its power to change?
- capturing the moment a character steps over a threshold, can you think of anything in your life which would answer this question? This might be your next story.

Many thanks again and hope to see you for some more story adventures soon

Best wishes

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