

# 6 ELEMENTS

## Your Donors Want to See in Your Donor Stories

### A TRUSTWORTHY NARRATOR

The reader's feelings about the storyteller influence their reaction to the story.

*"Earn my trust with authentic, consistent communication. Don't try to impress me. Talk to me like one normal person to another."*

### SETTING

When your reader can see, feel, smell, hear the place and time of the story, they engage more deeply.

*"Help me smell the autumn leaves on campus, hear the sound of squeaky shoes on the gymnasium floor, feel the garden soil under my fingernails. Transport me to a certain place and time, and I'm hooked!"*

### SIMPLICITY

Effective stories are simple stories

*"Please don't tell me everything about the donor's gift decision or give me a resume of their life. Capture my attention with the most relevant and interesting parts. We can get into the details later if and when I decide to make a gift."*



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### DRAMA

Something has to happen in order for it to be a story.

*"I'm not interested in a biographical list of some other donor's life accomplishments. I'm interested in something happening."*

### EMOTION

Effective stories don't tell the reader how to feel, but they always result in the reader feeling something.

*"Show me why this person gave to you. I don't care so much about what they gave or specifically how they gave. I'll work that out for myself. The why is what's going to touch my heart."*

### RELATABLE CHARACTERS

The more your reader can identify with the characters in your story, the more likely they are to be influenced.

*"If I'm a middle class retiree, don't tell me stories about the big-wig corporate CEO who got his company to write a check. Tell me stories about people like me."*