

A “Story Arc” That Works

Context

I participated in this great writing workshop with [John Roedel](#) at The Omega Institute in the summer of 2023. I’ve been using third person story writing as a tool for my clients for years, and have seen the power of harnessing that methodology first hand in my [In Her Words](#) writing experience for women. So when he put these 7 simple prompts up on an easle pad the first morning of this workshop, I was no stranger to it—AND I loved how these particular prompts worked for me. So of course, I’m sharing them with you. 😊

Frame

You can use this story arc on just about anything...to unravel what’s inside your head, to shine a light on the road ahead, or to make sense of the road you’ve just travelled. But here are some of the frames I’d offer to get you started:

- What’s this next chapter in your life really about?
- What’s your origin story? (FYI..that is the prompt I used for the sample below)
- When was the last time you heard your pretty voice—your particular bird song?
- What has found its way to be grooved into your heart?
- Write about how you feel.

The 7 Prompts

Use each of these 7 prompts, in order, to start your sentence. Write the prompt and then fill in the ... with your own words. Try not to overthink it or edit it (handwriting is best for this very reason, so go old-school with pen and paper). Let your pen write the story, not your brain. When it feels right, continue onto the next prompt until all 7 have been completed. And voila! There’s your arc. Now read the story aloud from start to finish—and maybe read it to a trusted friend. It’s powerful, I promise.

- Once upon a time...
- Everyday...
- But one day...
- Because of that, ...
- Because of that, ...
- Because of that, ...
- And ever since then...

Sample

I was really blow away by the 30 different strangers sharing their stories from this exercise in that Omega workshop...so I'm sharing mine here with you today as an example to illustrate how it looks in action (in case it helps)

Once upon a time there was a woman who felt she was born wrong—an original sin, an inconvenience, a disappointment. So she played the game, figured it out, learned the rules and chased and climbed.

Everyday she felt an apology, an explanation or a justification on her lips, offering a reason, an excuse or just cause to simply want what she wanted or be enough, just as she was—to be valued, seen, worthy, respected, welcome, and loved.

But one day she got too tired. And then she got mad and sad. She had no more energy to play the games. Her head was tired of the rules and her bones ached from the exertion of the climb.

Because of that, she got curious.

Because of that, she went through the doorway marked "woman" and saw how she had been avoiding it her whole life even though it was right there.

Because of that she created a business around the door she had opened for herself—to hold herself accountable and to create an outpost that would be her new home. Her curiosity would become the center pole, holding it upright in the storms. She became familiar with this new place that was also ancient, and she shared stories to make what she was learning feel more real.

And ever since then, she has not felt alone. As it turns out, her tent was one of many in a global village. But something about the way she spoke, the way she wrote, the way she embodied what she was learning, and the way she held space for people like her, drew others to her—like a lantern being held aloft on a dark night. She became a beacon, a bearing, and an outpost in the storm. She feels deeply of service and connected to something much larger than herself.