

Why Stories Win, Deeper

Run your advocacy story through the four mechanisms that make a story persuade, find the weakest one, and fix it.

Run Your Story Through the Four Mechanisms

1. Transportation

Is there a moment vivid enough that a listener stops arguing and starts watching? Name it — or note that there isn't one yet.

2. Identification

Whose eyes does the listener see through? Is that person close enough to their own experience to inhabit?

3. Emotion

What specific feeling does the story produce, and where exactly does it land?

4. Coherence

What single meaning does the listener walk away holding — not three competing ones, one?

Diagnose and Fix

Weakest mechanism

Of the four above, which one is underpowered right now?

The one change

Write the single change you'd make to strengthen it — a concrete detail, a named person, a stake, a cut.

Before you deliver it

There's a moment vivid enough to enter

There's someone specific enough to be

There's a feeling that lands, and I know where

There's one meaning to carry out of the room, not several

A word on honesty

These four mechanisms work whether or not a story is true. Sharpen the instruments — but keep them pointed at the truth. Only build them on something that actually happened.