Let me tell you a story…

The Power of Storytelling in Agile Coaching

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Jason Anderson ▶ **Mark Cruth Jr.**

June 2, 2009 ·

MMMMARRRRRRRRRRRRK! Thanks man 😀 It was great! A few little kinks along the way, but I met my team members and they seem like knowledgeable, fun to work w/ people. They also do the type of development process that I have been really interested in trying; it's called scrum. Basically you work in a area next to your whole team while you work on getting tasks done. You meet every day in the morning and discuss what you did the day before and what you plan on doing that day. It's pretty cool, and seems the most beneficial for a newbie like myself 😀

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Personal Mission

I will do everything in my power to breakdown barriers to collaboration in order to build an environment that values agility, autonomy, and feedback.

Mark

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Mark Cruth

Detroit, Michigan

Father, Husband, Agilist, Amateur Storyteller

Founder & Coach

Teal Mavericks

Co-Active Coaching

Agile Organizational Coaching

Management 3.0 Facilitator

ICAgile Trainer

Agile Coach

Quicken Loans
Engineered to Amaze

Practitioner

8fold Pros

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Icebreaker: Details!

Details are everything to storytelling. Even the most basic activity can be made riveting with the right amount of detail applied…

Partner with someone and take turns describing a basic activity:

- Storyteller 1…describe the process of putting on your **shoes**
- Storyteller 2…describe the process of putting on your **coat**

Timing: 2 minutes per storyteller

Rules

Storytellers must use the Full Minute

Listeners must close their eyes

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So why are we here?

To add *Storytelling* to our Agile Coaching Toolbox

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Guess what…

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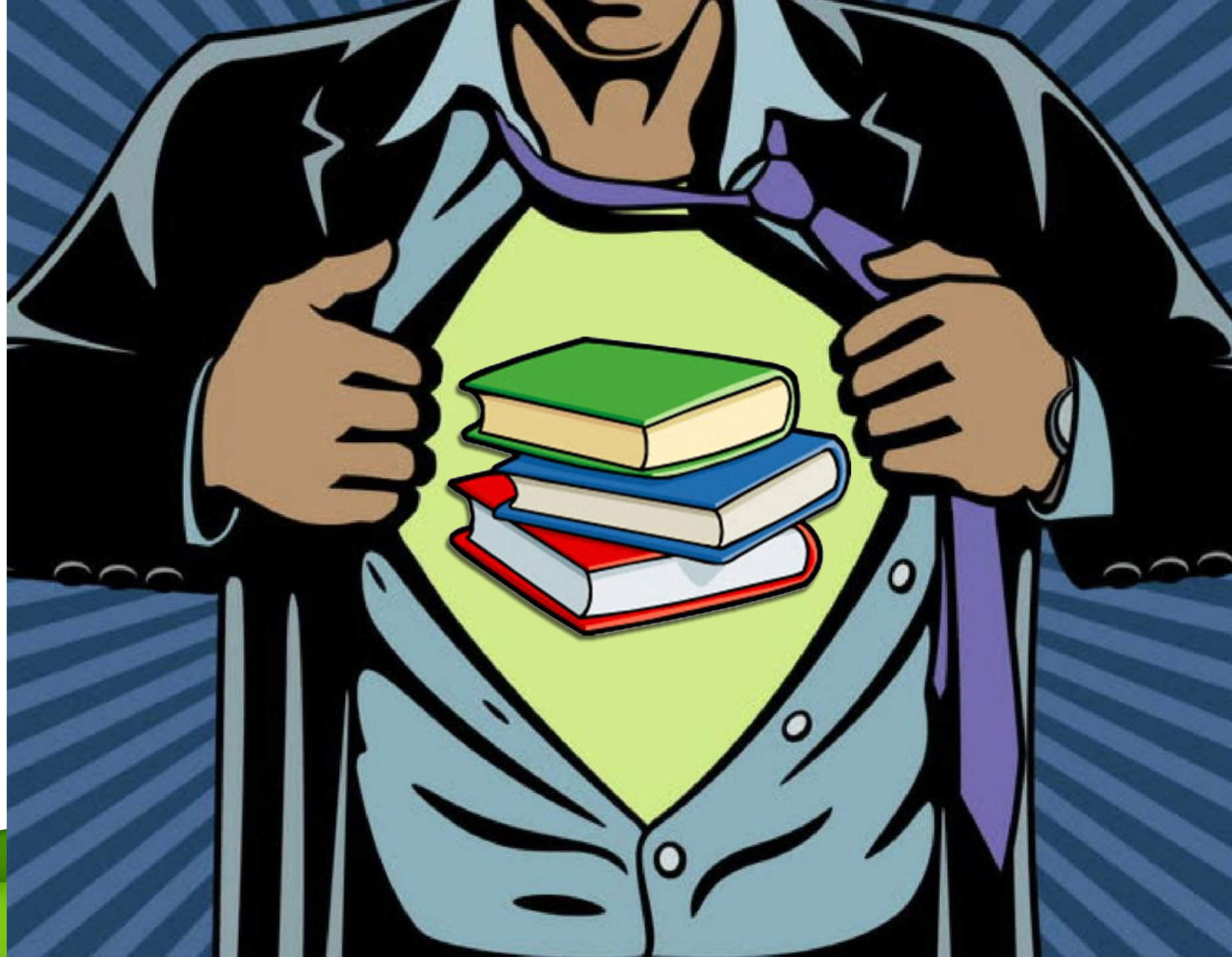
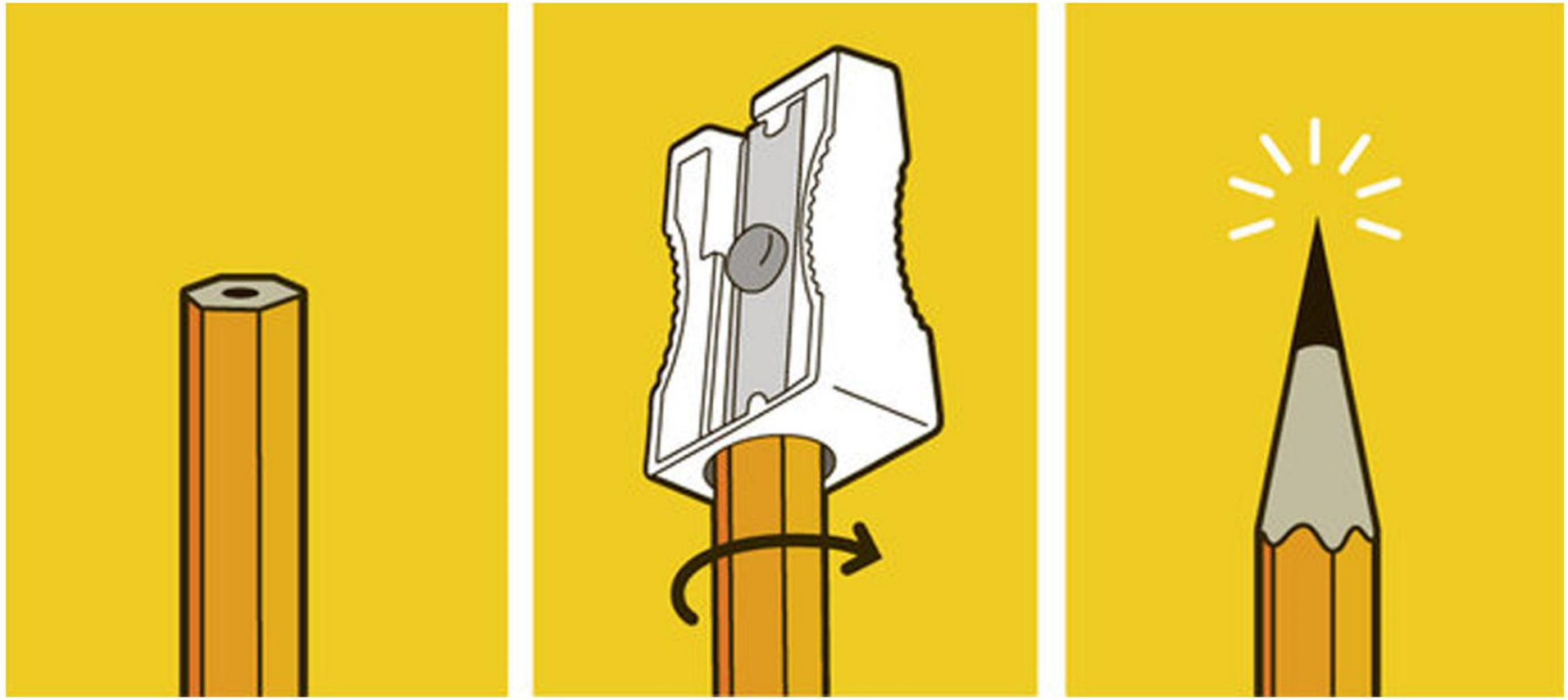
You're a Storytelling **Superhero!**



We just need to **sharpen** your skills



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How are we going to do it?

Learn

Do

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sto•ry

noun, plural **sto•ries**

1. an account of events that are causally connected in some way

Stephen Denning, The Leader's Guide to Storytelling

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A good storyteller can **suspend our disbelief**

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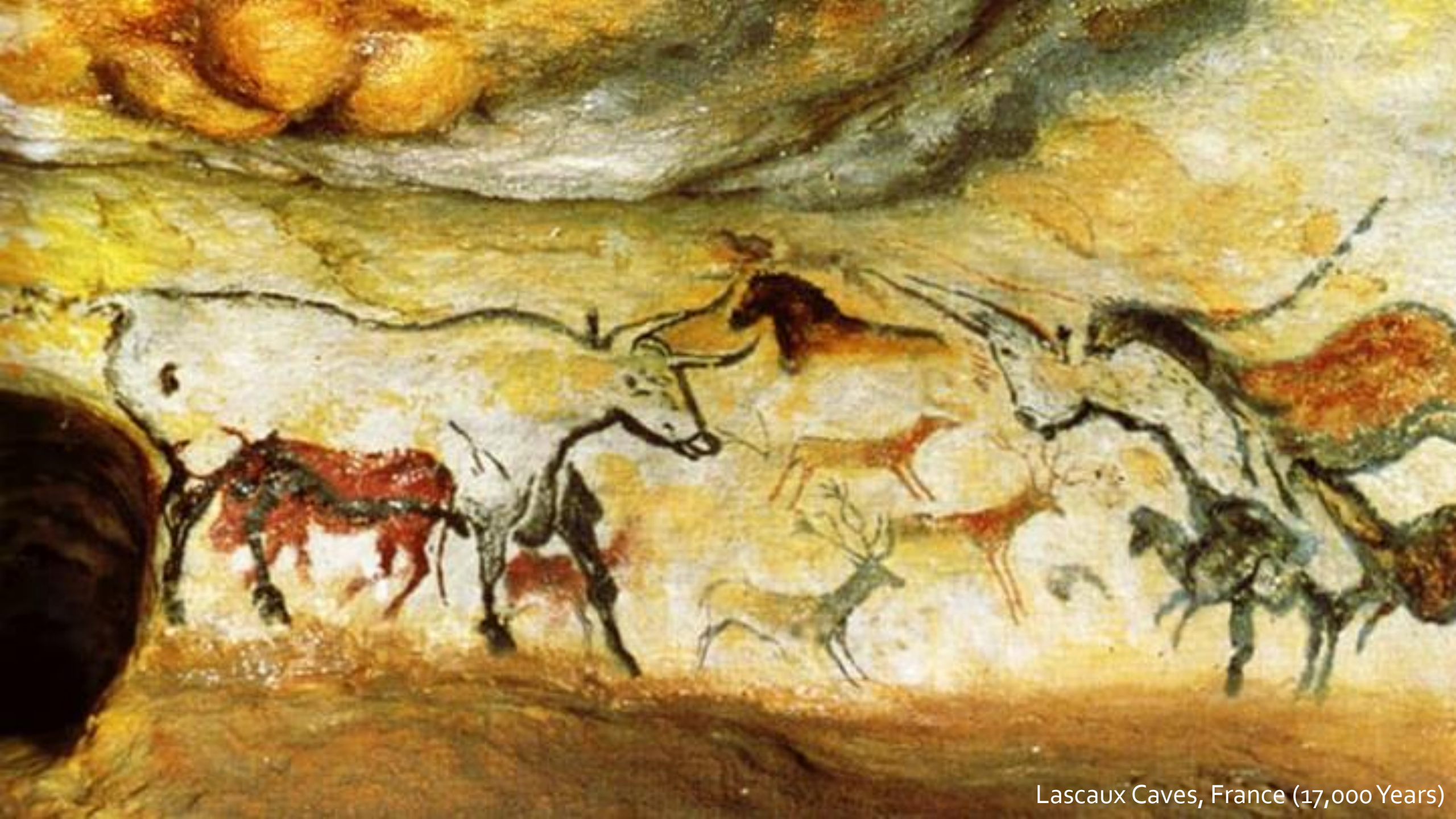

Lascaux Caves, France (17,000 Years)

Sulawesi Caves, Indonesia (35,000 Years)

Epic of Gilgamesh
4,000 Years

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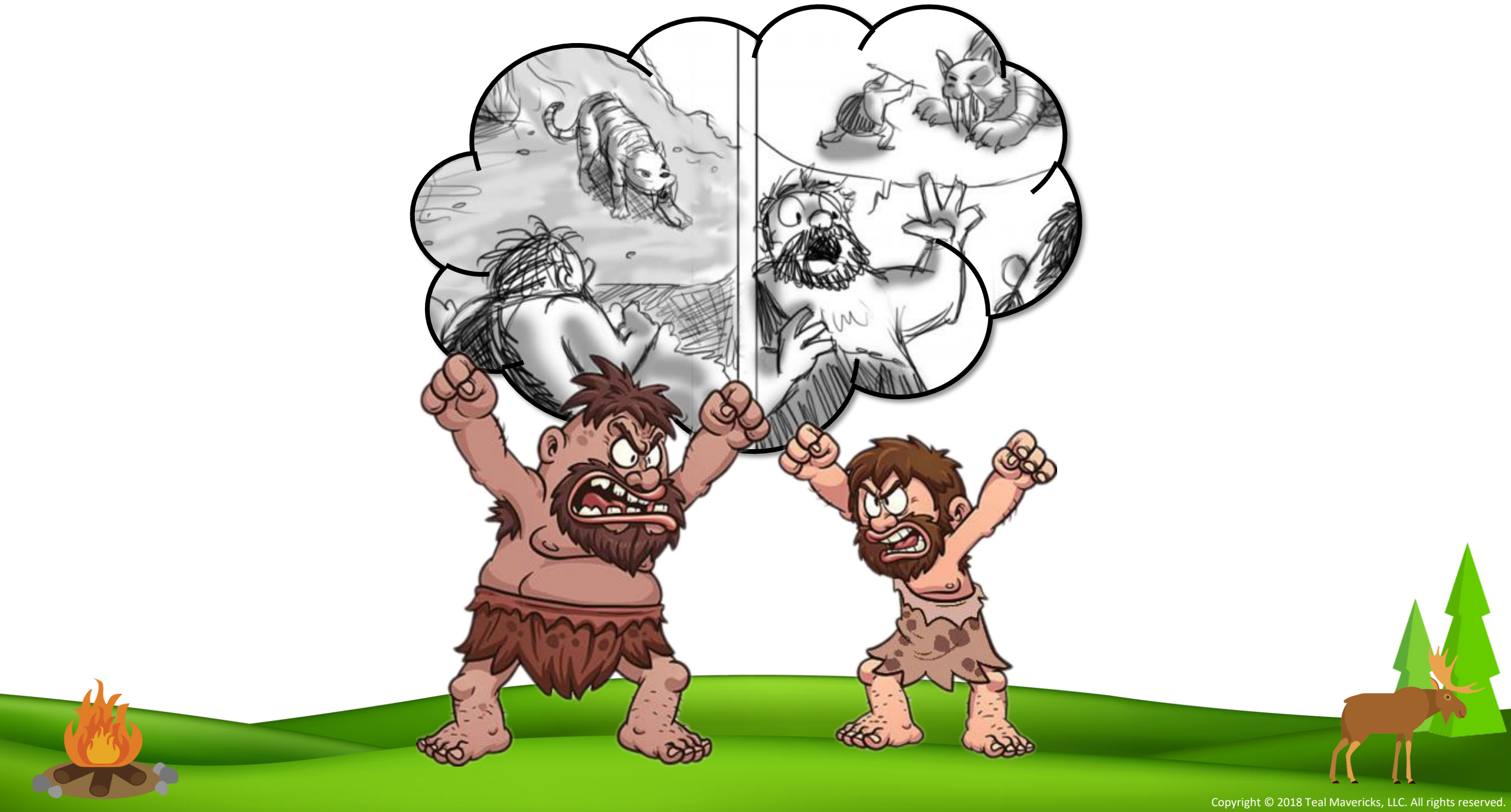

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Modern Human ☺

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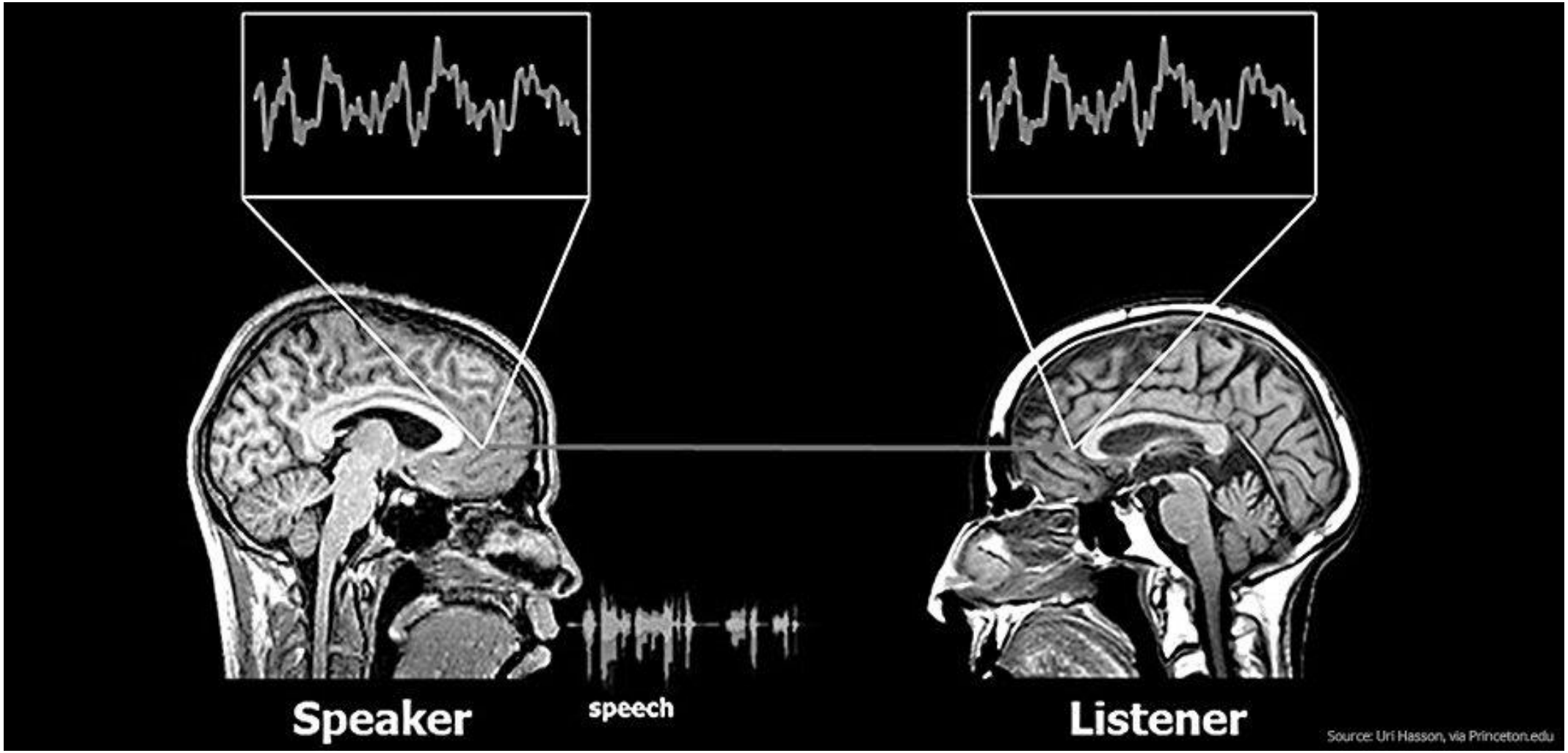

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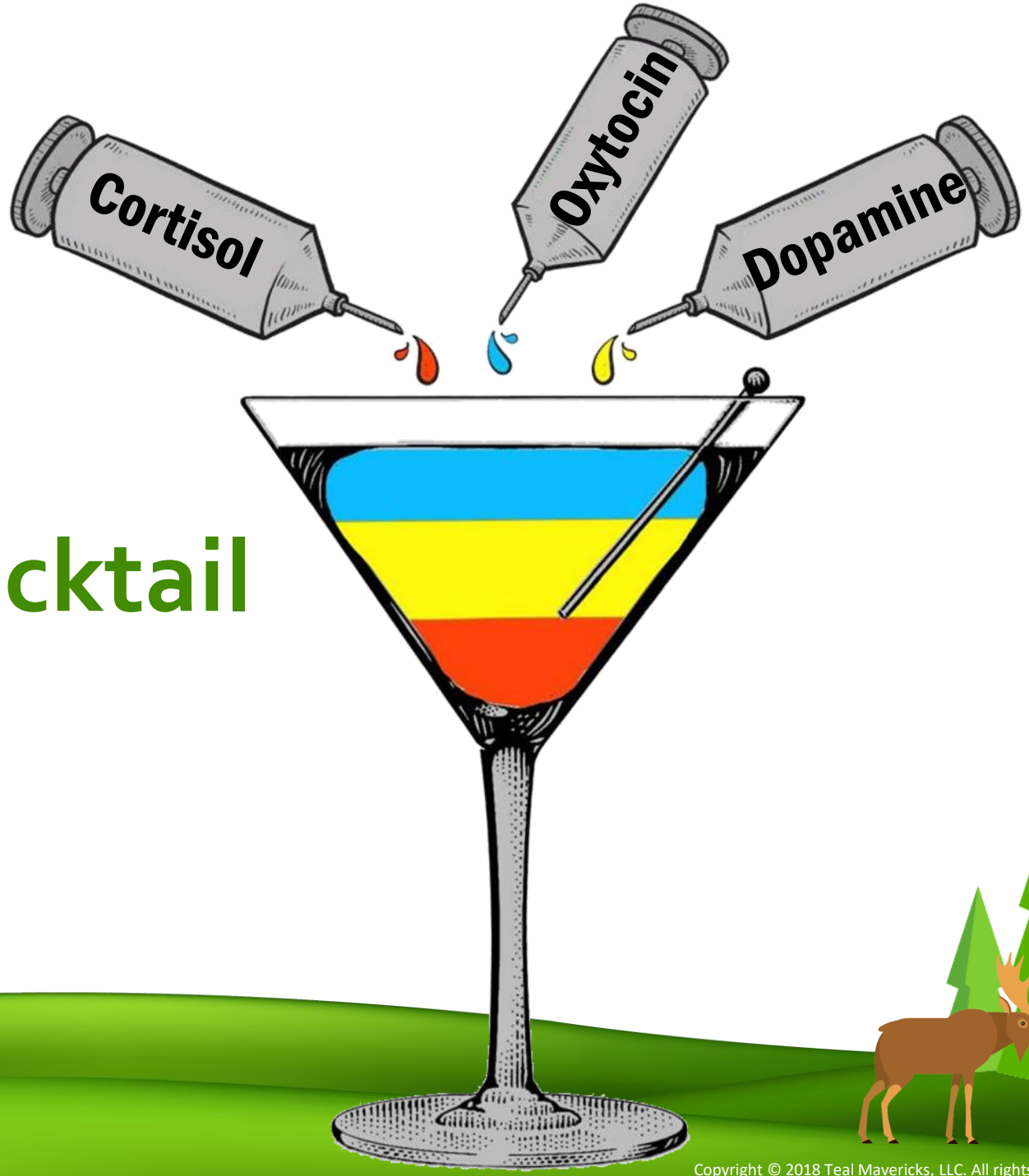
The Storytelling **Cocktail**



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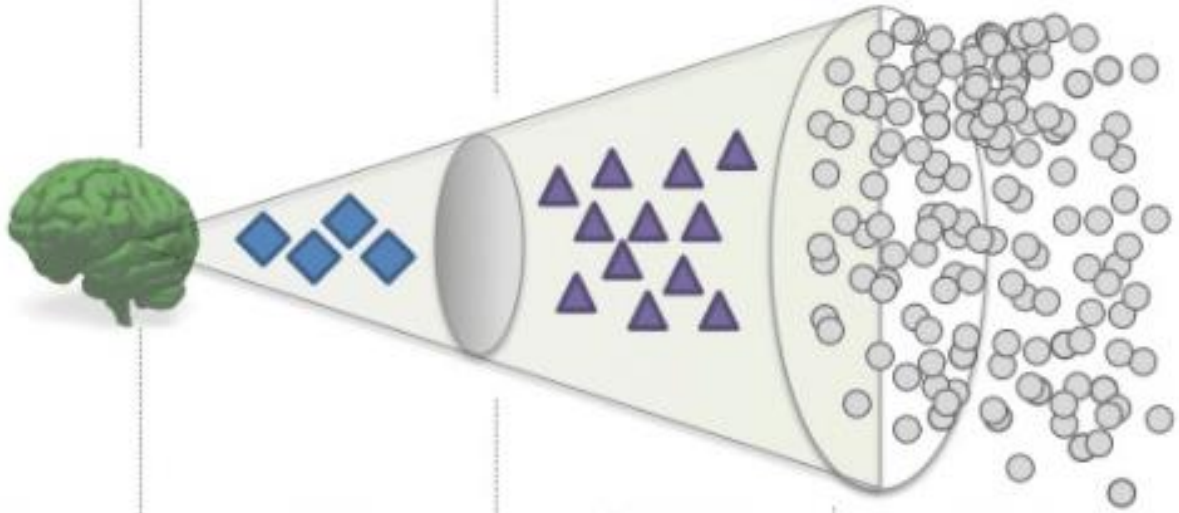
AGILE IS A
MINDSET

DESCRIBED BY
4 VALUES

DEFINED BY
12 PRINCIPLES

MANIFESTED THROUGH
UNLIMITED NUMBER OF PRACTICES

BEING
AGILE



DOING
AGILE

Mindset

Values

Principles

Practices

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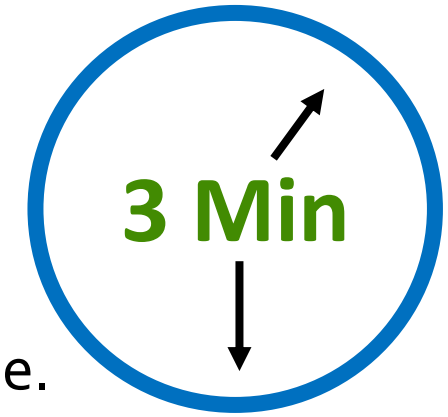
Exercise: Find Your Story



All stories have an origin, and that origin usually comes from an experience.

Part 1: Answer **TWO** of the following questions:

"I can't believe I once…" ***"During the ScanAgile conference I…"***

"…changed my perspective on Agile." ***"I was working with a team and…"***

Part 2: Find a partner and share your answers

Timing: 2 minutes to answer questions, 1 minute to share

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"It's useless to attempt to reason a man out of what he was never reasoned into."

- Jonathan Swift (Author) -

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Disney's Story Characteristics

- Create a character that is unique but loved
- Allow the audience to become part of something more
- Play with the unknown

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Story Characteristics

- Includes an underdog we root for
- Includes a villain we root against
- Includes a conflict or experience that grows character
- Creates a vision of a brighter tomorrow
- Relatable to the audience
- Focuses on a shared desire
- Audience believes it's about them
- Audience experiences the story

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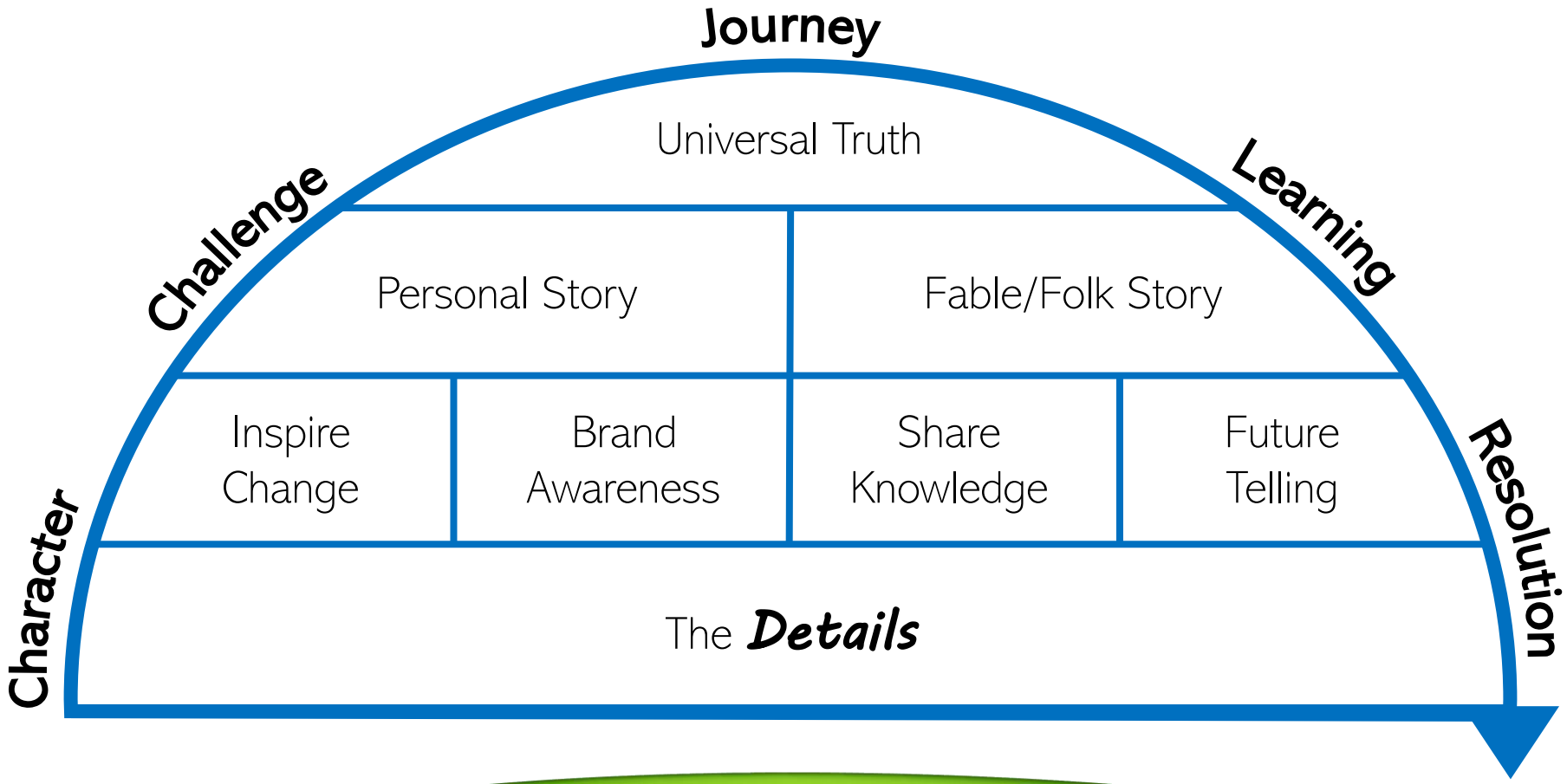
Storytelling Framework



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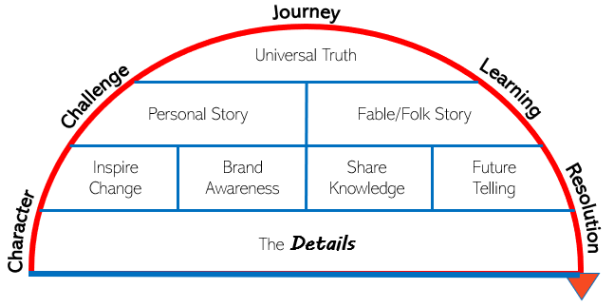
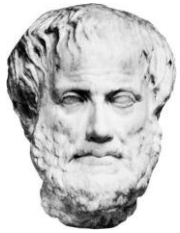
The Structure





Aristotle

Beginning → Middle → End

Gustav Freytag

Exposition → Rising Action → Climax → Falling Action → Dénouement

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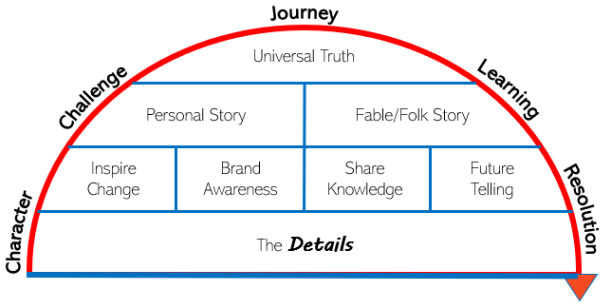
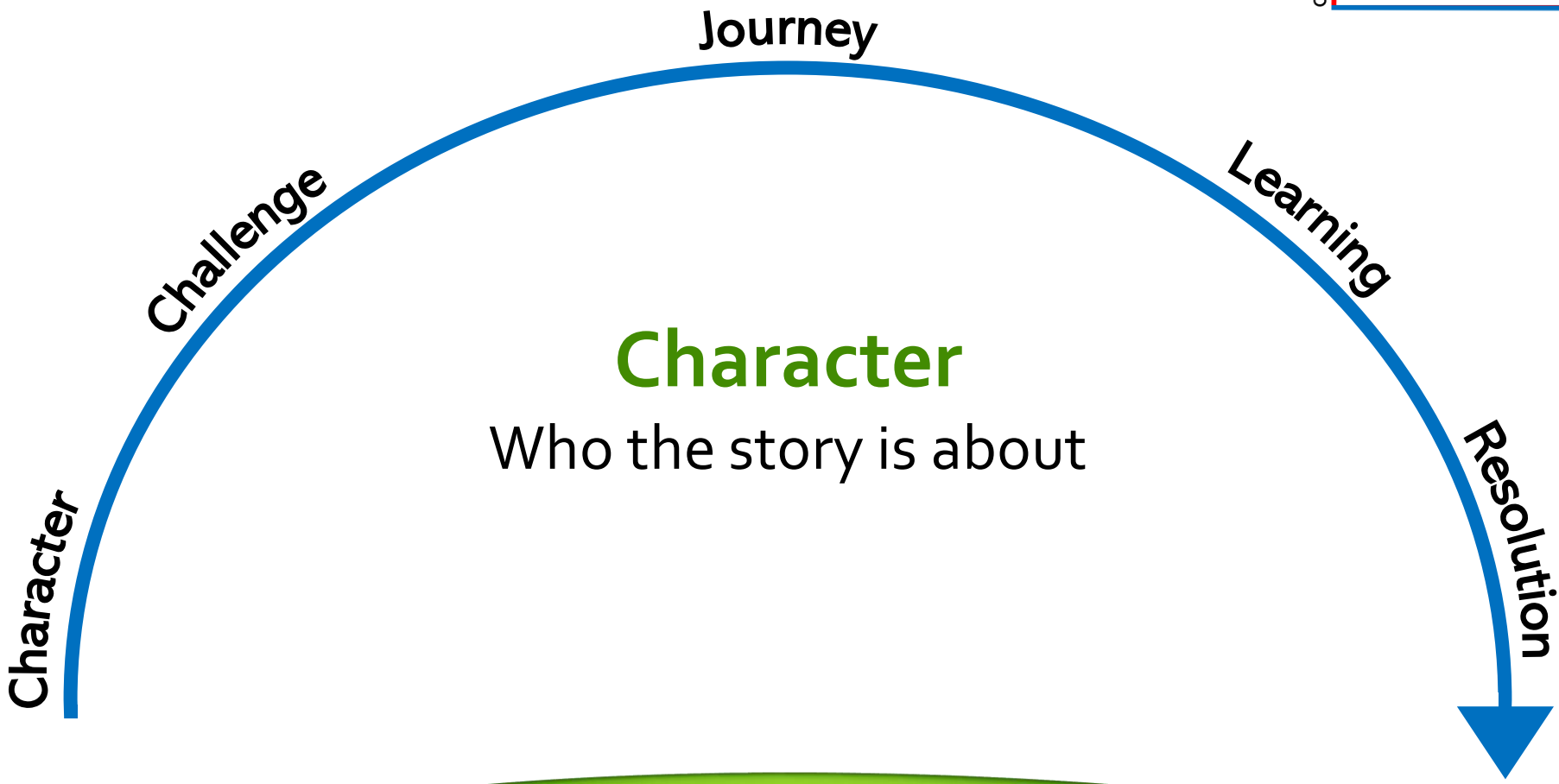
The Structure





Character

Who the story is about

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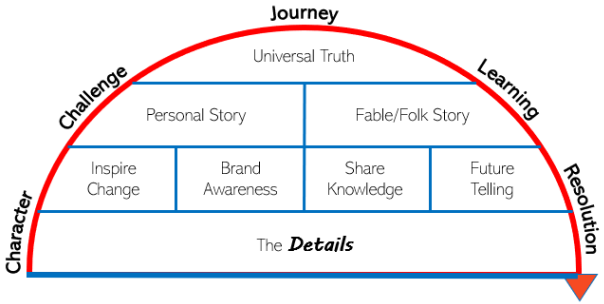

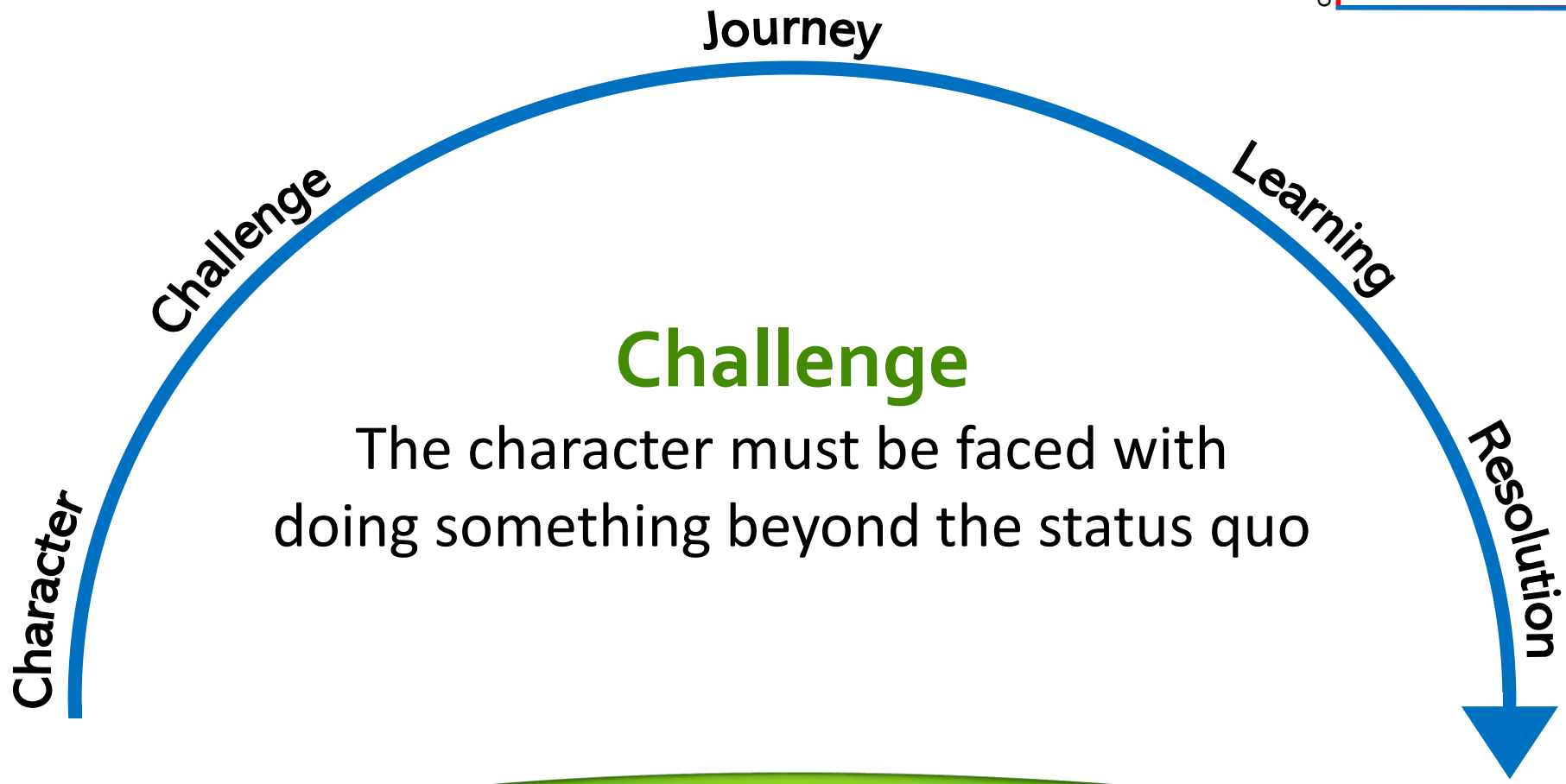

Challenge

The character must be faced with doing something beyond the status quo

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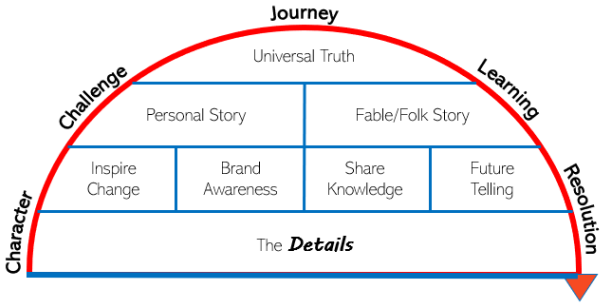

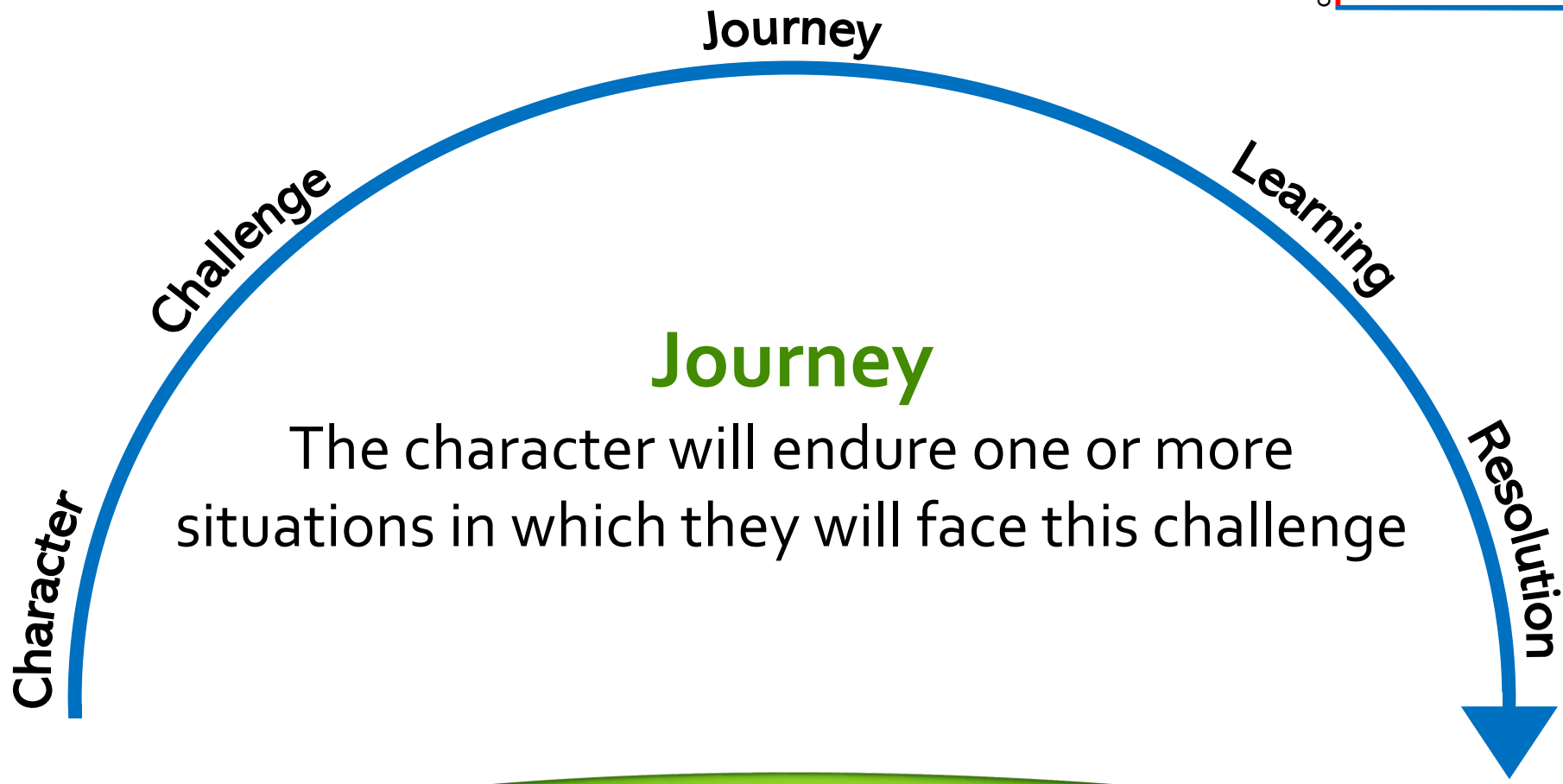

Journey

The character will endure one or more situations in which they will face this challenge

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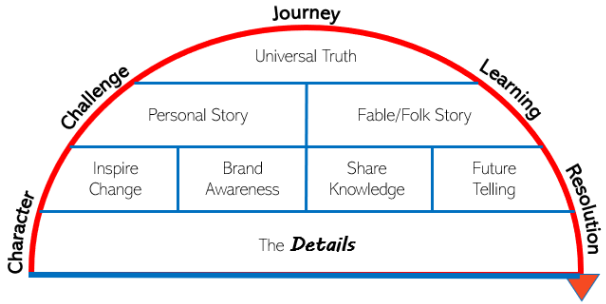

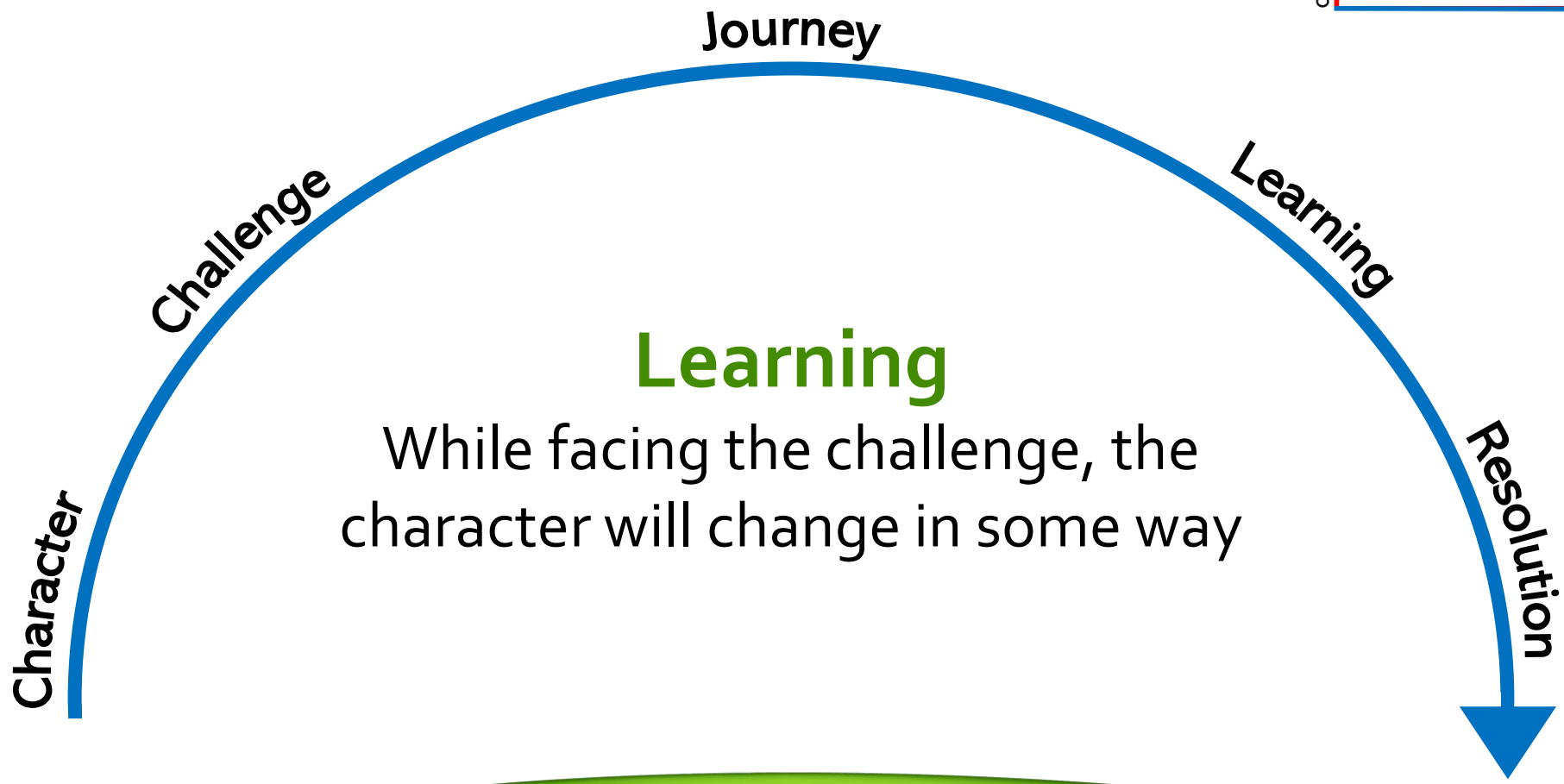

Learning

While facing the challenge, the character will change in some way

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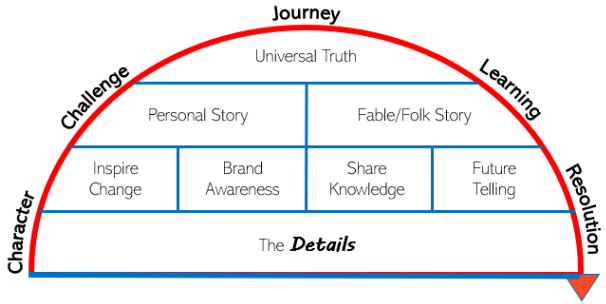
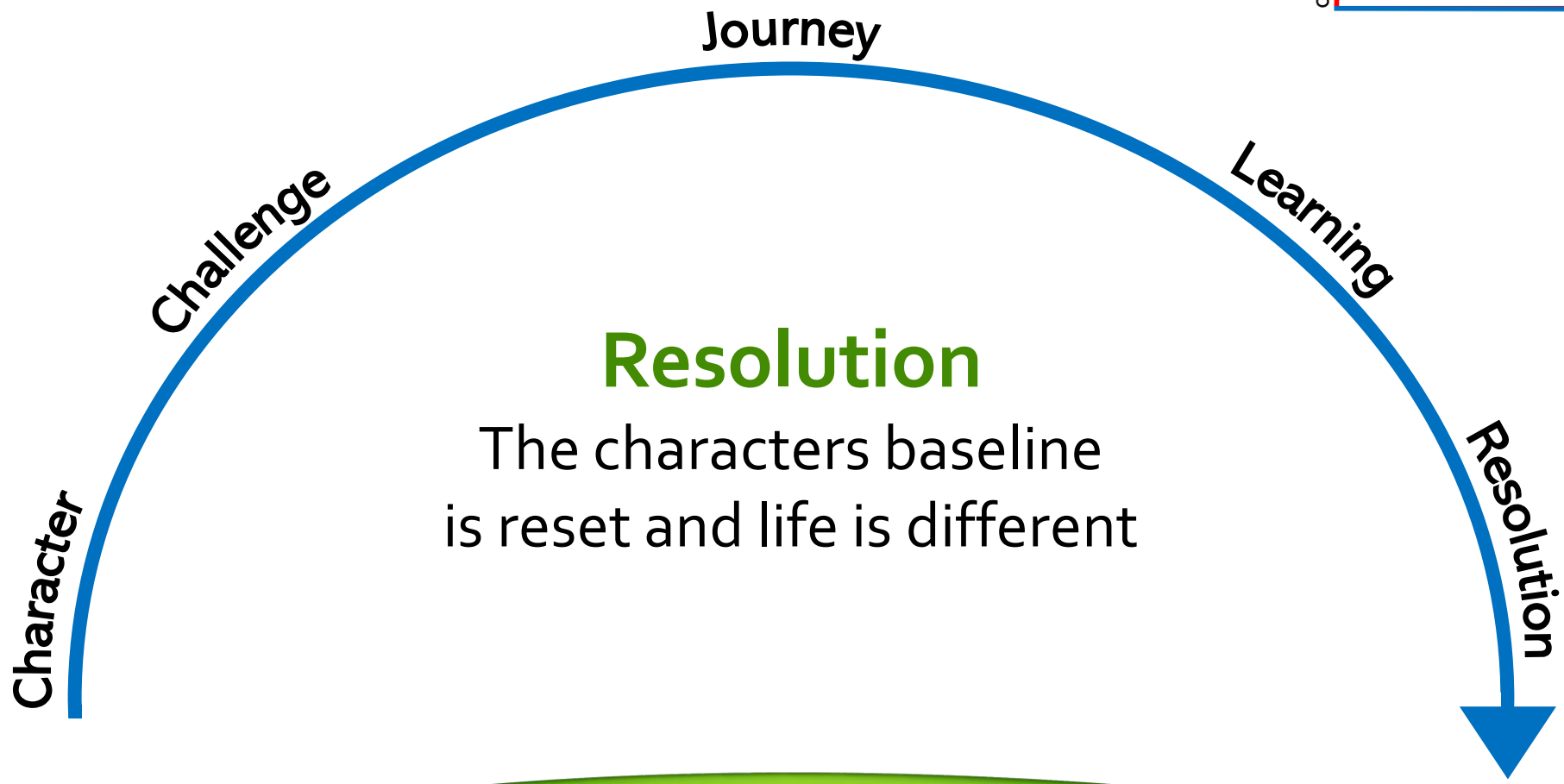
The Structure





Resolution

The characters baseline
is reset and life is different

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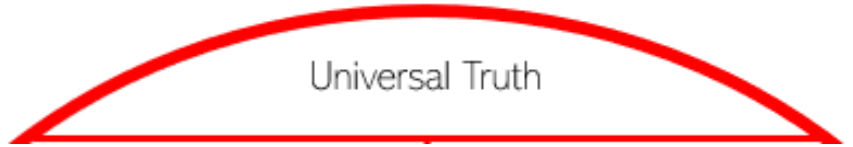
The Universal Truth



The underlying message being conveyed

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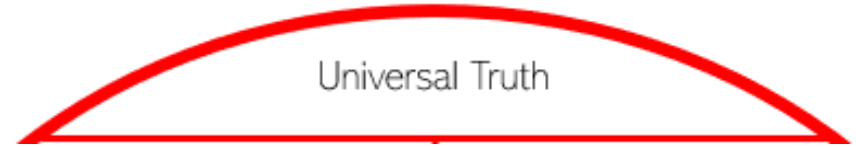
The Universal Truth



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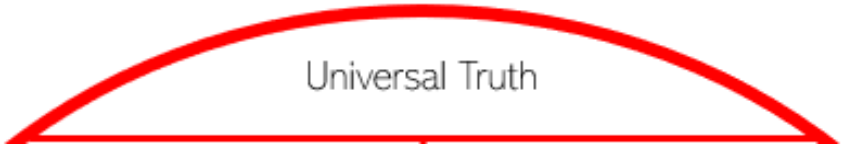
The Universal Truth



Identifying Your Universal Truth

- What do you want your audience to know…feel…do?

Tips and Tricks

- Hide your message in your story
- Don't tell people the moral of the story
- Don't get caught up in making sure we see your point
- Make sure the story works with your Universal Truth

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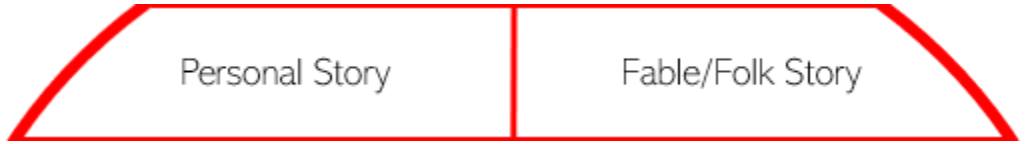
The Story



Personal Stories

Stories we've experienced either directly or indirectly

Fables / Folk Tales

Stories that have been passed down, or metaphors/analogies

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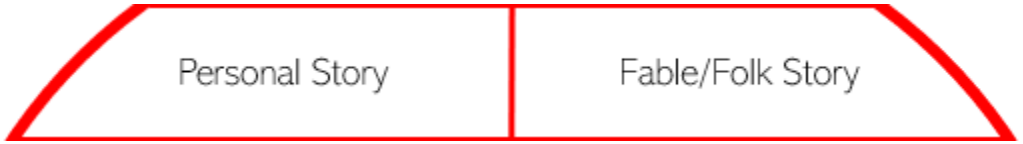
The Story



Identifying Your Story

- Think about a time when….<fill in the blank ☺>

Tips and Tricks

- Simple stories beat complicated one every time
- Never make up a story and call it real…people can tell!
- Make sure your story has enough **Structure**
- Don’t make the story about the audience
- Ask for help recalling old stories

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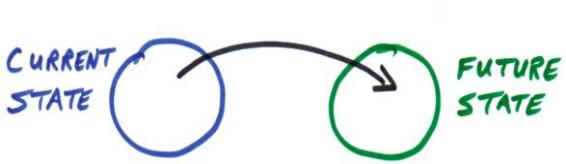
The Approach

Inspire Change

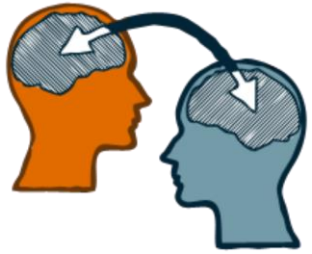


Relatable
Authentic
Positive
Change

Brand Awareness

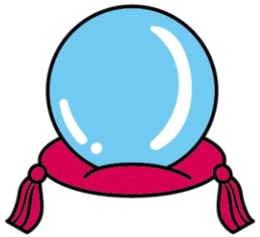
Introduction
Credibility
Authentic
Awareness

Share Knowledge



Facts
Complexity
Positive
Negative

Future Telling



Vision
Progression
Causation
Trust

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The Approach

Identifying Your Approach

- Look back at your Universal Truth…what are you trying to communicate?

Your Approach Determines Your Ending

- **Inspire Action:** End with a call to action for your audience
- **Brand Awareness:** End where you started with a remind of the brand
- **Share Knowledge:** End with a question on the topic to let your audience reflect
- **Future Telling:** End describing the how you will take the first step

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The Details

The *Details*

Identifying Your Details

- Close your eyes and picture the scene…what do you see?

Tips and Tricks

- Add / Remove details to help focus the story on the message
- Use your senses and describe an environment the audience can relate to
- Add a surprise…something unexpected to the keep the audience engaged
- Use Emotionally infused words!

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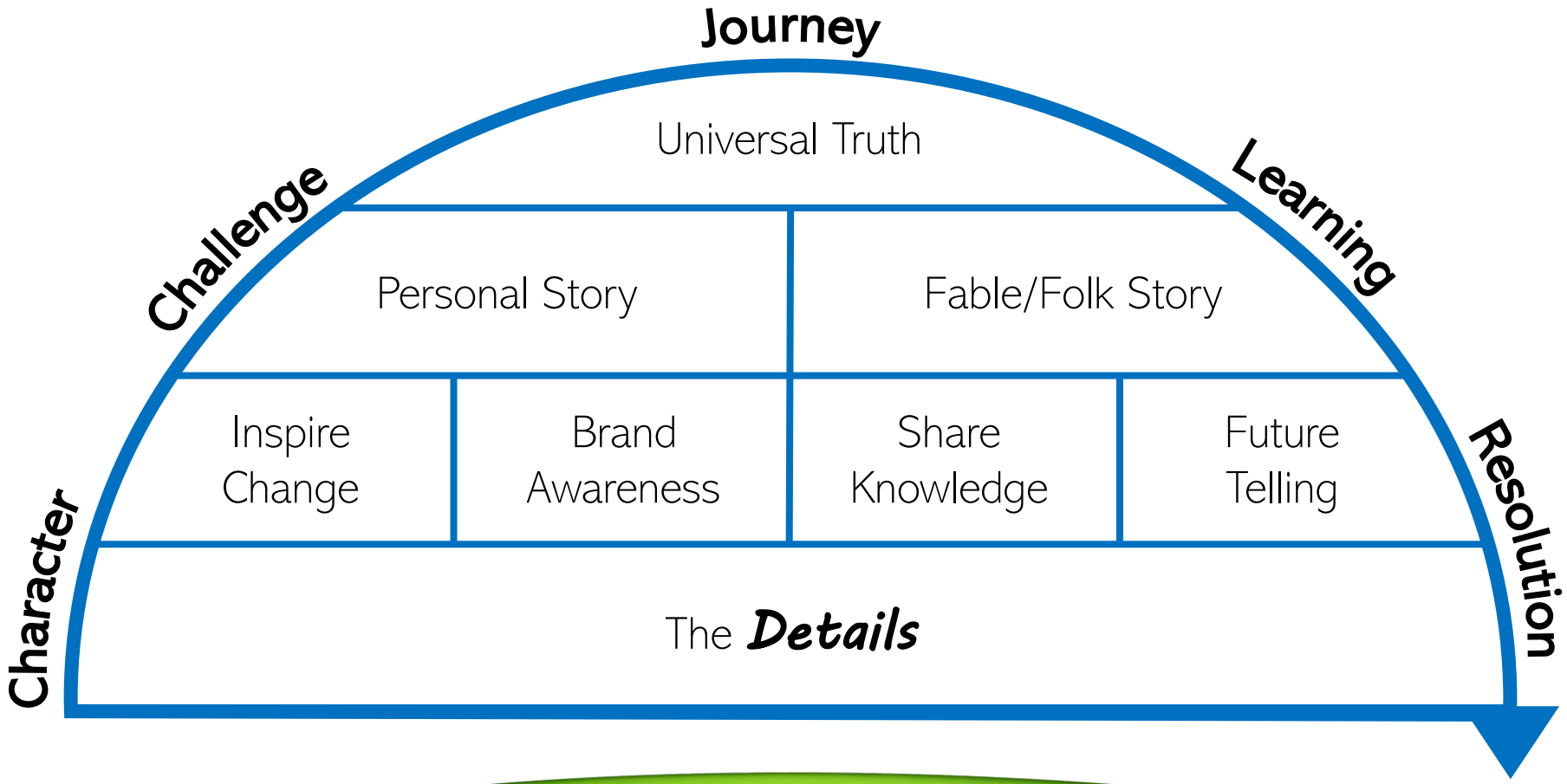
Storytelling Framework



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Exercise: Build Your Story

Time to apply everything we've learned and build a story!

Part 1: Use the Storytelling Framework to build an outline for one of the stories you identified in the earlier exercise.

Part 2: Pair up and share your story outlines!

- **Storyteller:** Pitch your story to your Listener
- **Listener:** Grow your storyteller with detailed feedback

Timing: 4 minutes for outline, 1 minutes per storyteller

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The Good Storyteller

"The person who can keep us on the edge of our seat while talking about a turkey sandwich is a truly gifted storyteller."

- Margot Leitman (Storyteller) -

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Storyteller Tips

- Make the audience your biggest fan
- Use body language and your voice…it's a performance!
- Passion and emotion are your friend
- Don't memorize your story
- Don't make yourself out to be a superhero
- Don't draw too much attention away from the story
- Slow down!

s reserved.

Storyteller Tips Cont.

- Speak to both audiences…remember that little voice
- People need to trust you, so tell a personal story
- Don’t make the audience your enemy
- Use the power of “so” to start of a story
- Practice, practice, practice
- Sometimes stories don’t stick, and that’s OK
- Use stories for good, not evil
- Be vulnerable

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Be Vulnerable

Finish Your Story

Share the Framework

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The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.

- Brandon Sanderson -

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Thank You!

markcruth@tealmavericks.com @TealMavericks

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