



# WEBINAR

## Storytelling for Teambuilding



With Jerome Deroy, CEO of Narativ.

### Contents

Storytelling for Team Building	<a href="#">4</a>
Team-Building Experience	<a href="#">5</a>
Disconnection on your team	<a href="#">6</a>
Humans are hardwired for storytelling	<a href="#">7</a>
Experience feeling disconnected from teams	<a href="#">8</a>
Storytelling brings empathy and emotional connection	<a href="#">9</a>
Storytelling humanizes your team members	<a href="#">10</a>
Optimal team-building starts with listening	<a href="#">11</a>
Why use storytelling for your team?	<a href="#">11</a>
Example of cross-cultural team-building	<a href="#">13</a>
Get rid of judgments and assumptions	<a href="#">15</a>
Create and focus on the story of your team	<a href="#">15</a>
Brief summary of Narativ's services	<a href="#">16</a>
Q + A	<a href="#">17</a>



Today we're here to talk about storytelling for team building. As I said earlier, this is one of a series that we're doing on storytelling in business, and we focused on team building today because about half of our clients come to us--more than half, actually--to look at team-building, team effectiveness, and collaboration.

I wanted to hear from you guys because a lot of our clients have this experience. Just as a kickoff, we can practice using the chat box. Now, again, what is your experience of storytelling for team building? It can be, "I have absolutely no experience of storytelling for team building," or just anything that comes through your mind. I'd be really interested in hearing about that. We got some of your answers in the pre-webinar questions that were also helpful. As you think about that, please fill out the chat box. That's how we'll see your answers to that. I'll give you a little bit more background about who I am, what Narativ is, and what we do in the world. So, keep those responses coming, and we'll take a look at those. As the responses come along, I'll share them with everyone else.

I want to tell you a little bit about who I am and about Narativ, because I know some of you know me, and some of you don't. Some of you might have been in the previous webinar that I was talking about. I know for a fact that some of you have taken our workshops in the past. I could do a couple of things here. I could tell you that we have 25 years of experience, so we've been doing this for a very long time. Like I said earlier, most of our clients actually come to us for team-building, training, team effectiveness, team collaboration, and team communication--all of those we consider to be part of team-building. Instead of going through this list of bullet points, which I'm sort of teasing right now, I'm going to tell you a little bit of a story about who I am and how it led me to Narativ. This is really in order to show you how you can connect storytelling to your message, and how to talk about yourself, your team, and your company.

So, as you know, my name is Jerome Deroy and I am the CEO of Narativ. Many years ago, I was not the CEO of Narativ; I was Jerome Deroy, as I've always been. I was born in the seventies, and I went to business school. After business school, I started a job in finance and I was working in the marketing department. Rather quickly, about six months into that job, I was sent to Hong Kong to replace somebody. I arrived there when I was 25 years old, and it was my first real work experience. About five years into that experience, I came back from a Monday morning meeting with our managing director and the whole team of about 10 of us in a big conference room overlooking the Hong Kong Bay and Hong Kong Harbor. We could see China in the distance. I sat at my desk, which was on a big open desk floor with lots of telephones ringing around me, and I typed into my search engine three things: business, film, and New York. About six months later, I walked into my



boss' office and I told him, "Lawrence, I quit."

He said, "Well, wow, that comes as a surprise because we were going to send you back to the headquarters of the bank in France, since you're French and you grew up there, and it's kind of a good connection. You also speak good English." He started to rattle off all my credentials, basically.

I told him, "I'm going to stop you right there. My mind is made up. I'm leaving. I'm going to go to New York."

He said, "Well, good luck with that. Are you going to work in finance?"

I said, "No, I'm not."

He asked, "Oh boy, what are you going to do then?"

I replied, "Well, I'm going to try my luck in film." He shook my hand, gave me a Montblanc pen, and I left. Then, I was in New York in a two-bedroom apartment that I was sharing with someone from Texas. I came from a three-bedroom apartment in Hong Kong Hills where I was living on my own. I was looking at my laptop screen, which was open to job in a job search. I moved my mouse from jobs to internships. That evening, I told my girlfriend at the time, "You know, I don't know if I did the right thing here. I'm really not sure about this. I'm not finding any jobs. People are telling me that my background is not relevant even though I want to work in the business of film. I feel like my credentials are good and I could really offer a lot to these filmmakers. I feel like I've got a good sense of it. I took this course at NYU..."

My girlfriend looked at me and asked, "So, what are you going to do?"

I said, "Well, I moved from jobs to internships. People are saying that you've got to pay your dues and you've got to get some experience first."

She said, "Well, that sounds great."

I said, "Yeah, but I mean, I'm almost 30 years old and I've been at this for a long time and my savings are dwindling. What should I do? Do I just keep going?"

She said, "Well, yeah, that's the whole reason you came to New York. You've got to keep going. Just bite the bullet and keep going."

## Storytelling for Team Building

So, I did, and I met Murray Nossel, the founder of Narativ, because he was working on a documentary film and he was looking for an intern to help him with the production and distribution of his institutional films that he was starting to make for companies and organizations. I met Murray and then he told me about Narativ, and as they say, the rest is history. That was in 2005, and two years later we landed our first corporate client and started developing training programs that used the storytelling methodology that Murray had created in the mid-1990s. He created this company called Narativ in the early 2000s. When I came on board, we really looked to see how this method could be applied to corporate and organizational challenges such as team-building, which is what we're talking about now.

So, all of that experience has been sort of bottled up into a methodology that's worked for a lot of different people, in a lot of different settings, and different backgrounds. We've worked with companies as diverse as Cigna, to Prudential, to Facebook, and Twitter. We've worked with the tech world, the financial world, and the legal world, and it's really worked across the board no matter what people's backgrounds are. We've also done this in more than 25 languages, so people who don't even speak English go through this training. What it does is that it sort of captures and shares this critical knowledge that we all hold, and the problem with knowledge that it doesn't always get shared. So, how do you do that? We found that storytelling is a great way to do that. We've also improved listening skills through our methodology because you'll learn in this webinar that storytelling begins with listening. It begins with you, the individual, and then it moves on to listening, and then you can tell stories as a way of creating a common language, and that's where it hits the collective and the team effectiveness part of it. So, of course, it does increase cross-team collaboration. That's one of the things we're going to talk about today.

Like I said earlier, more than half of our clients come to us for team-building. You know, a lot of our clients come to us for straight-up messaging and ask how do I present myself? How do I present my message? But it always links back to team effectiveness somehow because without collaboration, without communicating between team members, what do you have, really? You're talking to yourself, and maybe if you're a one-man show or one-woman show and you're just starting something, maybe that's good for a while to kind of hone your message. We certainly work with people on their pitch and things like that. But very quickly after that, once you've honed that pitch, once you've honed that story, you're going to have people that are going to start to follow you. You're going to have people that are going to start to listen to you and to work with you. What are the stories that



you can tell that bring people together? More importantly, what are the stories that they are telling that are critical to your growth and to the growth of your organization? So, that's really how we look at team-building.

### **Team-Building Experience**

Now, before I actually go into this, I want to read a few of these. I don't know if people are reading them as they go along, but I just want to read a few of these answers to the question, "What's your experience of storytelling for team-building?"

A: "I've had a role in playing in role-playing situations for team-building, but never storytelling."

So, with role-playing, that's something we find a lot in team-building and it's great way of actually connecting people to one another.

A: "Some experience to help with knowing one another better in order to build icebreakers and in order to build connection and solidarity."

Absolutely. We're going to talk about connection. We're going to talk about helping one another. So, you're right on the money there.

A: "I'm a visiting nurse and would visit my patients and listen to their stories of illness."

Of course, so listening to their stories-- and we take it even one step further-- because sometimes what you have to do is to retell stories in order to persuade someone else or another organization to follow you and see how did you do this for somebody else. Right? Sometimes, all you have to do as a team leader or team manager, or a member of your team, is to listen to somebody else without any particular agenda. Just listen to their story because that's what they need in that moment. They just need you to listen. That's a great example.

A: "We learned about each other through some personal storytelling. It helps us build camaraderie."

Absolutely!

A: "A little familiar with Narrative Medicine that can be used to address provider burnout."

Great. Someone who's talking about Narrative Medicine, which is one of the fields



that we are associated with at Narativ here. Art and Narrative Medicine is a really interesting program from Columbia University. For those of you who don't know it, you should go and check it out. Essentially, it is really about building dialogue between doctors and patients. Addressing this idea of provider burnout: burnout is a huge topic, and not just in the medical field. I can assure you that we see this in a lot of different teams that we work with at a corporate level. How do you actually address that rather than leaving it unaddressed, which can lead to further disruptions and kind of ripple effects that become negative?

A: Someone says to Nancy, "There's already a connection happening."

I love this. Someone also says that they see they should chat. Nancy and Gail, I love it. This is great. You're already making connections here and there's team-building happening on this webinar. I love it. Thank you for those answers. We'll do another one of these in a little while regarding another topic.

The dictionary actually says that, "Team-building is the action or process of causing a group of people to work together effectively as a team, especially by means of activities and events designed to increase motivation and promote cooperation." Of course I'm not going to disagree with that definition. I think it's a great definition of team-building. The things that I want to focus on are motivation and cooperation because what we see it as and what we hear from our clients is that yes, activities and events that bring people together are absolutely valid and they are a wonderful way to make connections with one another and to know each other better. But how do you keep that experience going over time? These experiences can often be fleeting if they're not followed up with long-term practices to implement. That's where we come in with those practices, because we have a method of listening and storytelling that we can put in place to actually create better team effectiveness.

## **Disconnection on your team**

So, that's sort of taking it one step further from team-building and we talk about collaboration, right? And where does collaboration come from? Good collaboration comes from communication. That is not necessarily perfect. Our goal is not perfection here. Our goal is always connection. We're looking at communication as a way of connecting people and we feel like the best way to connect people is through storytelling. But what happens when there's a disconnect is that it disrupts our way of collaborating with one another, and there are two disconnects that can happen. The first one is between team members, right? Perhaps you've had this experience-- I'm not sure, I know a lot of you are in small businesses, some in much



bigger organizations-- but wherever you are the moment you have more than one person, more than two or three people, you start to see people naturally gravitating towards each other because of background, because of language perhaps, if you're in a global organization. People also gravitate towards each other because of what they do. These roles get kind of set in stone, and that's what you do and you don't do anything else, and you start to gravitate towards other people. What does that do concretely? It creates this word called "silos." It creates silos, and it also can create a sense of isolation between team members so that the marketing team doesn't really know what the accounting team is up to. Are they really useful? Are they really helpful? Have you ever had that experience where you're wondering about a colleague and thinking, well, what exactly do they do? Sometimes you might be thinking, I feel like I'm working a lot harder than them. These resentments kind of start to bubble up to the surface and you start to wonder, and many questions come up that can actually disrupt.

That's where the disconnect happens between team members: that sense of isolation. Now, that sense of isolation can also happen between leaders and their teams, right? So a leader who has perhaps has founded a team, has founded an organization, can feel a kind of a loneliness because they started it. They have the story, so to speak, and now they've grown. How do they then share their knowledge with their team in a way that levels the playing field and aligns everybody towards the same goals? That disconnect can happen in leadership as well between leaders and their team. We feel like stories are the best way to address any kind of disconnect, because stories naturally connect us.

## **Humans are hardwired for storytelling**

You can see this picture here of a brain, and there's a function of the brain that specifically responds to storytelling. We know this because of neuroscience, which shows us that story is a function of the brain. They've done tests that show what happens to the brain when you're listening to a story, and what happens to the brain when you tell a story. The same areas of the brain light up. There's that thing that, in layman's terms, makes you want to know what happens next. When you're in story mode, you just want to know what happens next. Right? So, what happened next? What happened to this person, and what happened to that person, and what's going to happen to you? How is it going to end? We know our brain knows naturally when the story is being told, and it absolutely wants to fill in the blanks. It wants to know what happens next. "We're hardwired for stories" is what we say at Narativ, and because of that basic principle that we hold to be true, you can rest assured that storytelling will work when you use it. Your audience will not be able to help themselves no matter how cynical they are: they will want to know



what happens next. Stories connect us.

## **Experience feeling disconnected from teams**

I want to ask a very quick question here. We've gone through why we feel disconnected and what types of disconnects there are or can be team collaboration. I'm really curious as to what kinds of disconnects you might have found in your own experience. We also call them "Team-Related Challenges" here on this slide, but it's really going back to that idea of a disconnect. Have you ever experienced that kind of disconnect, and what was the challenge that occurred that you feel created a disconnect?

I'm going to keep going, and I'll do the same thing where we'll talk a little bit about those challenges that you've found in your own experiences. I want to just address one thing also, Nancy and Gail: we can absolutely put you in touch with one another because we have emails that you registered with. If for some reason your email is not there, just send me an email. It's [jerome@narativ.com](mailto:jerome@narativ.com). Whomever you want to be connected with, just let me know and we'll make that happen. Great. Love to see that happening. So, think about those team-related challenges that you've had, and please share that in the chat box.

I'm just going to read one right now since we've got one that just came in:

A: "I felt disconnected from my team when we're not on the same page."

Right. So, I could imagine that you as an individual, you may have a certain idea of where you're going and then your team has another idea and, you know, a team is made of people. I imagine that each individual has their own kinds of backgrounds and they have their own way of addressing something. So, what happens when there's a disconnect there? That's a really good one. How do you bring them back to the same page?

A: "Long simmering resentments allowed to fester and hamper working together."

Yes. That's something that happens a lot. One of the case studies that I'm going to talk about momentarily looks at those things. It's not necessarily resentment, but it's differences between people: where they come from, what their background is, how they approach this particular problem or challenge and how they come up with the solutions.

A: "Agreements, own goals. How do you negotiate those? Lack of direction/game



plan by the team leader.”

## **Storytelling brings empathy and emotional connection**

As you answer these, this is really great because I feel like you’re sort of creating a library of things to address through storytelling, which is what we’re talking about today. It’s really important first to actually know why you want to use storytelling. What is the problem that you want to address, as opposed to just saying, hey, storytelling is a great way to communicate? That’s not enough as far as we’re concerned, and that’s not really what we’re interested in. We’re not interested in creating amazing storytellers that can tell a great tale. No, we want it to actually solve a problem, right? So, think about that problem that you’re wanting to solve and then see how storytelling can improve it.

Here’s some ways that storytelling improves communication. The first two I lumped together: empathy and emotional connection. Remember, if you go back to my own story that I told you in kind of a cursory way, I gave you a few details of my experience and how I got to Narativ. Now, there’s a lot more I could say, right? But, I want it to keep it down to a couple of minutes and I also wanted it to lead to what Narativ is today and how it sort of evolved into what it does specifically and how it relates to team-building. That’s what I had in my mind. However, what I really wanted to do was to create a connection with you guys, and perhaps something happened for you when you heard that story. When you listen to it, maybe a little bit of empathy happened. Who knows what exactly happened to you?

I’m not going to pretend to know, but in general, what does happen pretty consistently across the board, no matter where you’re from, is empathy. It’s very difficult not to empathize with someone’s circumstances, especially the big themes that I talked about in my own story, such as moving from one place to another, quitting a job, starting another one, trying to find your way into the world, and especially the turning points where you’re not sure that what you set out to do is actually going to work. That’s very compelling in a story and that’s what makes us empathize most because it’s a little bit vulnerable, and the storyteller is willing to do that. You’re willing to show some vulnerability. That’s really important in building a team, because you need to be willing to show a little bit of that vulnerability, a little bit of those moments where you weren’t quite sure how things were going to turn out, but then you found a way to get to that solution that you wanted. It’s the finding the way to that solution and those little bumpy moments that we’re actually most interested in. Why? Because they connect us to one another.



## Storytelling humanizes your team members

We've all had those moments in our lives. It makes you human, which is the next point: humanizing each person. It's so important in a team.

A: Someone said, "We're not aligned on our goals where there's some resentments."

A: "When I go into the team, I say something and I feel like people are kind of separate and they're not telling me exactly where they're coming from or perhaps they have a totally different way of looking at it."

Well, see how knowing about that person's personal story may actually change that, and how you may be able to actually direct them in such a way that they become human to you. They're not just a label, they're not just a title. That's really important because that's going to help you work through those conflicts. You're giving people a certain set of principles, and that's what we do to improve communication through storytelling.

We don't just tell people to, "Tell me a story." We actually tell them to tell us a story in a certain way, and the way that we ask them to tell us the story is by telling us what happened to them and to steer clear from opinions or interpretations of what they felt about what happened, what they thought about what happened, why they were upset about what happened, why they were unhappy at someone else about what happened. No, none of that. Just tell me what happened. If you give people the opportunity to say what happened to them and then give the next person the opportunity to say what happened to them, then you will find commonalities. You're not so much in Opinion Land anymore. I could have told you I wasn't passionate about my job. It really didn't interest me at all. I wanted to do something else. I wasn't quite sure what it was going to be. I was creative. I wanted to do something artistic. That's not a story. That's just a bunch of things that are happening in my head that no one else would be able to see. Some of you might relate to it because maybe you're in a similar circumstance. A lot of you will just say, oh, okay, that's your life. That's your opinion. That's your interpretation of things.

However, when I tell you what happened, I tell you that I walked from my desk to my boss' office and I told him I quit, it's very different, right? You can see the difference. You can feel the difference. So just tell what happened. It's a very important part of our methodology. What that does then is that you start to uncover two kinds of hidden narratives: one that could be disruptive to the team, and so that helps you to actually see what's going on in the team. What is the cause of those



resentments? Somebody talked about resentment. Those hidden narratives can help you actually see how they're disruptive to the team. The positive thing that it does, too, is that you uncover the voices that were previously unheard. Thanks to that, innovation comes along, right? A really important part of storytelling is just being able to uncover things. You can see how our approach of storytelling goes way beyond presentation or way beyond just messaging and spinning a good tale. It's really about uncovering things, and it's about uncovering them for a specific purpose. The purpose here is to collaborate better, to humanize people, to trust one another in a more genuine way, and to be able to work with one another in such a way that connects and sparks innovation.

## **Optimal team-building starts with listening**

So, where do we start when we talk about team-building? Well, we start with listening. Now, listening is a really important component; it's the first component of storytelling, actually. You can't have any story without listening. We use the analogy of this cup that you have on your screen here, where the listening is like a bowl. The telling is like the liquid that gets poured into that bowl. The liquid takes the shape of the bowl that it's poured into, and the telling takes the shape of listening that got created. That's why we really need to pay attention to listening, and know that everything begins with listening. You've got to make sure that you have an optimal listening environment that's as clear as possible for people to tell stories and feel comfortable telling stories. And further, we say that there's a reciprocal relationship between listening and telling.

Do you see that loop that's going around in that image here? If there are obstacles, if there are things that are getting in the way of collaboration and the team, that loop is just not going to happen. The listening is going to shape the telling in a negative way, and the telling is going to shape the listening in a negative way as well. But, if you manage to actually clear that loop of obstacles, something new is going to come up, something innovative is going to come up, and voices that you haven't heard before are going to come up. That's all going to contribute to team effectiveness. So, I'm going to go really quickly because look at me, I've talked to a lot. I'm going to go really quickly through our case study to give you a little bit of a sense of how we work with people and how, in a concrete way, these things get played out.

## **Why use storytelling for your team?**

The first thing we do whenever we work with anyone is we ask the question, "Why story, why now?" So, why are you telling your story? You now have a list of chal-

challenges that you all came up with. I encourage you to actually look at that list of challenges. We can share this list with you guys so that you have it and you can kind of use that as inspiration and say, well, why do I want to tell a story? Why do I want to use storytelling for my team? What am I trying to address here? And is storytelling actually appropriate? I've kind of made a case for it, but there are some times maybe where storytelling is not the best way to communicate, and maybe that's not the way you want to communicate here. Then, you have to ask yourself why now? Why am I using a story, and why in this particular moment? For this client, it was to improve collaboration and better serve their business as a whole. There were a legal team, and this legal team was seen as very transactional, and so a result, they were not really reaching the hearts of the businesses that they were working with even though they were all working together. This is one big global brand that works all over the world and there are many businesses that the legal team serves. The businesses were kind of complaining about them as seeing them as, "All they do is tell us what not to do and so we don't feel like we're on the same team." So, the leader of that legal team was really interested in looking at that and addressing that barrier so that they could actually be more connected to the teams. Her belief, to her credit, was that the way to connect with anyone is through the heart. And so, how do you connect with someone through the heart? Well, storytelling, right? So that was why story, and that was why for that particular team, and why at that particular moment, because they needed to improve collaboration and that needed to be seen by the businesses as partners. They needed to prove to the businesses that they can be real partners and not just transactional—telling them what not to do.

Some of the challenges there, first of all, were that they were from all over the world. What's in red is this team of 60 people were from all these different countries. What was happening is that there were different communication styles. There were cultural gaps. Those silos that I was talking about earlier were happening there, and so they weren't really connecting with one another, even as team members. They had this sort of a double-communication challenge which was connecting with each other as team members, and then connecting with the larger teams that they actually served. They had to break through those silos. How do you do that? How do we bridge those gaps to better collaboration? Well, we brought them all together. That was the first thing. We brought them all together in a beautiful space that was not their office, so it wasn't business as usual, and that's really important. I say this because storytelling is not business as usual, and you do need to think about the space in which you tell stories and the time that you use to tell stories. Time and space are very important to our methodology. We looked at what is it exactly that we're addressing here? We're addressing perception, right? We don't want you to be seen as transactional and we want you to be

seen as a partner, not an adversary. We also wanted to move this group from being a very cerebral group, very intellectual, to a heartfelt group-- one that knew how to reach the heart as well as the mind. That's when we really put in place this idea and followed this principle that listening begins with you and that it begins with the heart. So, what did we do? We brought all these people together and we started by identifying what the obstacles were to listening in this team and how we could release them. The big three-- I'll put them up right now-- were: fear of looking bad in front of others, fear of public speaking, and preconceptions and stereotypes.

### **Example of cross-cultural team building**

I'll give you just a very quick example, and this is going to be kind of a hero of our story. There always needs to be a hero or a heroine in the story, right? In this case, after the first half day of the training where we presented our methodology and what were we going to do, we gave them a small exercise in listening and we looked at these obstacles to listening. These obstacles came up, and for someone in particular, that fear of public speaking, and looking bad, and the preconceptions and stereotypes was really blocking him. He was from Japan, and we had been told from the leader of his team that public speaking, culturally, was not something that the Japanese really did. They weren't really connecting with this sort of "American way" of speaking where we're constantly putting ourselves in front of others and we're happy to do it. Big stereotype, right? So, that's the stereotype that he's got at play. Even his leader has that stereotype about Japanese people. So, you can imagine that with that stereotype in mind, how do you actually cross that barrier? No wonder he felt stifled, right? He comes up to me and he says, "I'm absolutely terrified about what we're going to do next because I cannot speak in public. It's not what we do and I'm afraid of looking bad." I said, "Listen, we're going to do a few exercises."

Someone talked about icebreakers earlier and our training is a series of icebreakers. So much so that actually, it's kind of a warm feeling by the end of it. There's no more ice at all. It's about making people feel comfortable in their environment and able to tell a story. We did those exercises with them and by the end of that day, here's the story that Ken told, and I'm going to tell it to you now. This is why you're hearing a rustling of papers, because I want to do it justice.

Ken said with this entire group in front of him. Bear that in mind: there's 55 people in front of him. We did a series of small breakout groups first where we workshopped these different stories and we found which story to tell, and we wanted people to connect on a human level and heart level. Remember, that was the purpose of this. That was our why story, why now? So, here's the story that Ken



came up with, and at the end he volunteered to tell this story in front of everybody else to our great surprise.

He said, “I met my wife through her colleague and proposed to her on our first date. She told me I was forward and presumptuous. ‘You don’t even know my last name,’ she said. We married a year later and stayed married for a year. We argued about my smoking, her cleanliness obsession, my bachelor lifestyle, and her home-body nature. We were both heartbroken, but we didn’t see how we could stay together. We divorced. Three years later, I asked her on a date again. I proposed a second time and she said, ‘Yes.’ We are very much in love. Now, I wear two rings to signify the two marriage. They’re heavy, but I appreciate the weight.”

So, you might be asking yourself what’s this got to do with team building? How does that actually connect with everything else? Well, it connects because of that idea of empathy that we talked about. It connects because of the idea of connection. The result of telling that story to everybody else in the team, well, you should have seen it. Everybody congregated. First of all, there was a standing ovation for a story and then everybody congregated around Ken. A lot of people came up to me and actually said, ‘You know, I’m on the team in Hong Kong, he’s on the team in Japan, and we often have to do presentations together. He kind of sits in the corner and I’ve written him off. I just know that I’m going to have to do this on my own. Now I know that he’s part of my team, too, and he can actually contribute in such a way that is heartfelt. Now I know that if I need something, if I need to work with him, I know I can trust him on that.’ As for Ken, what he told us as a result of this is that he felt much more comfortable with this particular team. Now, it doesn’t mean that he became a public speaker, that he suddenly became an extrovert. It’s not about that. It’s about celebrating the fact that he is an introvert, that he has this personality, and that he was able to communicate to the rest of his team who he was through this very heartfelt story. It’s just giving you a sense that you can tell a personal story and then connect it to that business need and those business purposes. So, how do we implement these key principles here? When we look at that, and what we extrapolate from this and what this luxury brand did, is they looked at the individual and how the individual impacts the collective. It’s really important to look at your team and say, “It starts with me.” As I say, it starts with me, I’m also creating a wide listening net to support the storytelling process.

I am in charge of listening. I’m in control of that. I can shape listening, right? You need to be aware of the fact that you are responsible for listening to others and for shaping how they’re going to speak to you. If everyone’s on the same page with that-- and this is why we work with groups because everybody needs to be aligned on these principles-- it’s going to impact the collective. You need to be

responsible for your listening. Then, the storytelling process can begin. It's really important to not do what that particular leader did. I love her. She's great. She's a visionary and she was able to tell us that she needed to reach the hearts; however, she did have a predetermined way of looking at certain members of her team. She told us, "Oh, the Japanese, just write them off. They're probably not going to participate. It's not part of their culture."

## **Get rid of judgments and assumptions**

Well, actually, by doing that, you're sort of stifling those voices, right? Let the stories speak for themselves. Your only responsibility here is to look at the individuals, and start with yourself. What's getting in your way of your ability to listen to your team members? How can you encourage them to listen to one another and create an environment in which it's possible to listen to one another? A couple of hints here: time and space are very important. We really thought about that a lot with this client. Where are we going to do this? How are we going to bring people together? How much time will we have together? That creates a structure, and a kind of a safety net for everyone to know that we're all doing the same thing.

When we do an exercise and people tell stories, we limit that the time that people have to speak so that not just one person speaks or tells their story, but everyone gets a chance to do that and we're all aligned on that. And then the really important thing that you can do once you hear stories-- and the reason you don't predetermine anything-- is because you can then connect these stories to each person's role. So for Ken's role, he's part of the legal team. He's now clarified that role to everyone else. Now we know that he can also contribute to particular areas. What he did after that is he presented a topic that was particularly challenging in Japan at the moment, and how that connected to a topic for the French team. They were able to see how Ken can now contribute to this and how they're on the same page as a team because they're talking about their stories and they're actually clarifying what they do in relation to one another and how they can impact the team.

## **Create and focus on the story of your team**

As my parting message before we move on to a Q&A here, for those of you who have time to stay for that, I would love it if you guys started to think about these principles. Take some time to actually think about what you've heard here. I'm sure you've got questions and so we'll get busy answering those momentarily. But, it's really important to invest that time and to be patient with yourselves, but at the same time, don't wait to begin. So, even if you're a team of just three or four people or less, and you're building a team right now and you're thinking about that,



perhaps it's a great time to do coaching, right? Think about what your own story is. What's the story of your team? What is the story that you want your team to be aligned on?

Create that for yourself, even if you're a one-man or one-woman show at this point, and then go from there. If you're a team that already exists, bring people together and start to listen to their stories and see what the commonalities are between people. What we've seen is that clients who follow this process reported improvements in collaboration and team effectiveness, but you're also going to see a ripple effect in the overall culture because when people start to work better with one another, it starts to affect the way they speak about their organization and their team. You're going to see that affects your external messaging, too. The way the outside world perceives you is going to change and be more positive as a result of looking at how you're doing things internally and coming up with those stories that really represent who you are. You're going to see people are more motivated. They're going to talk about your company in a way that makes a lot more sense, and that's more clarified for themselves. They're going to talk about their role in a way that's much more clear. These are all the kinds of benefits that you get from doing this kind of work.

## **Brief summary of Narativ's services**

I just want to say a couple of words on how we train people. We do this in two ways. We train people in groups, and we also do one-on-one coaching, which I've alluded to, and we have five modules that address team-related communication and collaboration challenges. They go from listening modules to storytelling modules and then applications. The application plan is really important. You'll get that foundation in skills, but it's how you apply those skills that really makes a difference in the overall culture of communication of your team.

In ways of delivering this-- and you can talk to me more about this-- but we deliver on-site, we deliver online, we do this live, on-demand. There are lots of different ways to do this, especially since we started using what we call our Narrative Storytelling Practice Platform. These are the things that we look at, and how we train people. You can get in contact with us at my email, [jerome@narativ.com](mailto:jerome@narativ.com), and you can get in contact with us through @narativ on Twitter. You can also go and visit our page at Narativ on Facebook and like us on Facebook, please, for those of you who have come to Facebook to look at this webinar. Thank you so much, and click that little like button if you like us. I don't think there's a dislike button, so that's good.



## Q + A

Now, without further ado, I'm going to take a few questions for the next 10 minutes or so for those of you who can stay for this. I'll actually stop sharing my screen at this point so you can see me, and I'll start my video, and here we go. Okay. I've got the chat going on. Please use the chat button to chat with me at this point with any questions that you have. As you do that, I just want to read out some of these challenges, because they're really kind of interesting here.

A: Heather says, "We've got three departments and each department seems so separate, and it seems like admin never does top down the right way. Everyone always hears info like the telephone game."

Right, the telephone game. You hear something, then you pass it onto somebody else, then it kind of gets muddled and nobody knows what's actually going on. That's how silos get created. You end up talking only to the people that you feel understand you, and as a result, you're not really making that effort to understand others. Again, what I want to say to that challenge is that remember that it begins with you. So, whatever the challenge is, if it's admin, it begins with you. Take that sense of responsibility and perhaps have a chat with that admin person. Ask them what their story is. Again, it's about finding the time and space to do that and finding alignment that this is how we're going to talk to one another.

Q: "First impressions are critical. How do you transform a team whose members did not have the best first impressions, like team rehab?"

That's great. First of all, what I would like to know is what actually happened in terms of how those first impressions were created, because remember that we start with listening. There are five categories of obstacles to listening that we look at. The first one is external, and what happens in the external environment. So, I'm looking at this space right now. I'm in a space that we've kind of rented out of a common workspace. It's a little bit hot in here, so I'm feeling that obstacle. When you're talking about first impressions, it could be something that's a little more internal, right? This is the second obstacle that we look at. What is going on internally? What's the thought process? What are those preconceptions and stereotypes, or those assumptions that might be a play based on what someone looks like or what maybe someone said to someone else? For me, it's about getting people into one room and actually being able to ask them what are the current obstacles that are in your listening that affect your ability to listen to someone else? As opposed to saying, "Well, what's your problem? Tell me the story of your problem." It's more about taking it from the vantage point of listening. We're all here to listen to one

another and we're just trying to create an environment in which we can listen to one another. If you create a structure in which you actually give time to people to speak, tell them you've got two minutes to tell me what are the obstacles to your listening right now. Then, move on to the next person, move on to the next person, and don't interrupt each other. Have a timekeeper in the room, and then you'll see what is actually going on with people.

Once you see and hear what's actually going on with people, then you might be surprised by the reality. Those first impressions that happened, well, maybe they were just first impressions and maybe things have evolved. Maybe you'll get a sense of where they originated, but it's about giving people a voice and making sure that everybody gets heard. A lot of times, that's where the resentments come from: people don't feel heard. They feel like no one's listening to them. They feel like they haven't been listened to. Whether it's a personal thing or a professional thing, it doesn't really matter. We're not here to create a therapy session. What we're here to do is actually create better listening among us so that we can work better with one another. Really look at that, really start with listening, and really ask people what is getting in the way of your listening-- and start with yourself. There's no better way to start than with yourself so that you can model it for others. What is in your listening of others, and what's getting in the way of your listening?

Q: "Do you include the CEO at first when you know most issues stem from them?"  
Very good point here, and what I want to say about that is if you do notice that something is stemming from one particular individual, it's probably best to start with the individual and give them a sense of this methodology. What is getting in the way of that CEO's ability to listen to everyone else, and what is getting in the way of their ability to tell what their story is of a particular event that happened?

I think it's about giving principles and guidelines to someone and making them feel like they're included as opposed to excluded. You're the problem here, so I'm actually going to work with this group over here first and we're not going to include you in there? No. Start with them. Start with them if that's what you've identified, and then bring the group together. We've actually done this in an environment where we worked with an entire leadership team of 10 people, a fairly big organization here in the U.S. We first worked with their leadership team and we had some sessions which we call ethnographic sessions so that we could find out the background and the culture that's going on there. We had some individual sessions with the CEO, with the COO, the CFO, the CMO, and all these C-suite level executives before we actually determined how we could bring them all together.



I think it's important to have those kind of individual sessions first and then go to the collective. Any other questions here? I think we should probably wrap up soon, so I'm going to leave it at that. There is a recording that's going to be sent to you. You'll also get a PDF document, because you registered, which outlines how we train people, how our methodology works, and how it can work for you. We're very interested in learning how you will benefit from working with us. Please let us know what your challenges are. I've seen a few now but please contact me directly on Facebook, on Twitter, etc. Gail, I will get back to you about your question. You can all see that question. We are running out of time and I don't want to keep people for too much longer. Thank you so much everyone for participating today and we hope to hear from you soon. Alright, bye.