

# Group Teach

## A 99-Word Story Activity from *Say It Quick!*

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### Summary

People work in small groups studying a story. All groups discuss similar questions about their stories. Later, each group has a chance to share insights with the whole group adding to the collective understanding of the topic.

### Purpose

To introduce concepts related to time management in a workshop

To deepen insights about time management toward the end of a workshop

### Number of Participants

Minimum two groups of three people each. Best size is six to eight groups of up to eight people in each group.

### Supplies

- One different 99-Word Story for each small group. Print page 3 of this document onto a sheet of heavy card stock. Print page 4 on the back of that sheet and cut it into fourths. If you plan to have more than four groups, print several sheets of card stock.
- Two or three discussion questions. Post these at the front of the room or print and distribute them to each group.

### Discussion Questions

- What are some common attitudes we have about time and its use?
- Describe one or two unusual insights your story offers about time management?
- How might you apply one of these insights to your own situation?

### Faultless Facilitation

To get the most value from this 99-Word Story activity, consider how you might influence the tone of the learning environment. Think about your role and your responsibility to challenge people to stretch their understanding of the topic. Sometimes having the opportunity for a significant conversation is more important than reaching a consensus agreement about the topic.

Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Avoid either-or thinking by modeling an open interpretation of the 99-Word Stories.
- ◆ Encourage people to share their own stories that relate to those selected.
- ◆ Ask people to keep their personal stories short. Share the air time.
- ◆ Promote multiple ideas for a rich conversation.
- ◆ Give people a moment of silence to identify central concepts that summarize or connect stories in their own mind.
- ◆ Be comfortable with ambiguity. Trust that the time spent will be meaningful even if people don't bring up each and every one of your own brilliant insights.
- ◆ Leave 'em hungry. As facilitator, you don't have to tie up every loose end. Trust people to continue important conversations off line, at the water cooler, and after the workshop.

## What To Do

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Preparation	Prepare a set of 99-Word Story cards related to the teaching topic. Provide a different story for each small group and a list of common discussion questions.	--
Share instructions	Explain that each small group has a different 99-Word Story that is related to the topic of time management. "Read your story at your table and discuss the questions provided. Be prepared to share the highlights of your discussion with the rest of the group."	Listen
Work in small groups	Float between groups to answer questions and get a sense of the conversations.	Read the story aloud for your group members; Answer the discussion questions. One person should take notes.
Report out	Facilitate reports from different groups. If you have more than four groups, make sure groups that had the same stories each have a chance to share their discussion points.	One at a time, groups read their story and highlight their discussion especially identifying connections between their story and the topic.
Wrap up	Ask for summary comments that relate concepts in different stories to each other and to the topic.	Participate in the discussion sharing insights and making personal notes for future use.

### **An Empty Desk**

For two years I shared an office with Mary Ellen, a high energy multi-tasker. I always knew when she was under a deadline for a big project or grant because she would spend at least half a day clearing off her desk. Rearranging, filing, dusting, was she wasting time? Cleaning a space to work? Clearing her mind? I couldn't tell, but her projects got done on time and her grants were funded. She was very successful!

Call it procrastination if you like but preparation for the activity is as important for success as the activity itself.

### **Wasting Work Time**

Listening to the radio, I heard that Americans waste an average of two hours at work every day. That translates into \$759 billion dollars lost!

Me? I never waste time at work. I'm too busy making connections, building social capital. A walk to the water cooler puts me in touch with other people, their projects, their problems, their needs. Even the physical act of moving gets my brain working in different ways, exploring new paths. I always return to my desk with several new ideas.

Perhaps we ought to redefine "work" and how we value it!

### **Enough Time**

Kate responded sternly when her college students complained that they didn't have adequate time to complete assignments. "There are 24 hours in every day. You had the same number of those hours as everyone else," she would reply. Sounds harsh? Maybe.

It's true, some tasks cannot be done in the allotted time and some people need more time to accomplish the same things. But usually when we "don't have time" it's because we chose to do something else. We each have complete control of our time.

Do we mis-allocate our time or do we misalign our priorities?

### **Reboot**

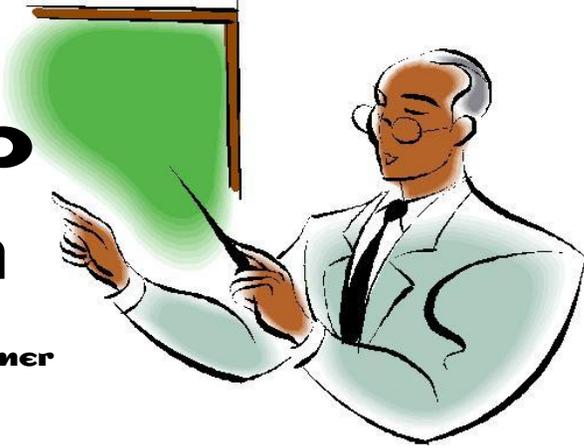
At five on Friday, Joan's computer went on the fritz. The spreadsheet she was working on froze. The e-mail browser crashed. Her hand-held device wouldn't sync. The technical support team had already gone home. There was nothing else to do so she pulled the plug and left for the weekend.

She returned on Monday anxious about re-entering a feedback loop of computer repair. But when the machine booted up, everything worked fine!

When you've tried everything else, the best solution may be to leave things alone. The trick: knowing when to act quickly and when to walk away.

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