First Person Storytelling
the structure and the elements of a good story

The Bones

1. SET UP Introduces the who, what, where, and when of the story. This is the opening scene of your story. The audience needs to “see” what you see in your head. This description should be detail-rich and take about 60 seconds.

2. PROBLEM What’s up? All stories should have a challenge, problem, or some element of drama. (Ex. I wanted to get the lead in the play, but I’ve never acted, I wanted to ask Patrice out, but I am shy.)

3. RISING ACTION How did you deal with it? This may take several trials and errors. This is what you do to try to accomplish a thing and is the meat of the story.

4. CLIMAX The big moment!

5. RESOLUTION The take away. This part is rarely obvious. It’s what you think about 15 years later when you look back at that time. It may be a “happily ever after” or a lesson your learned along the way. A resolution can be big or subtle. Most importantly, though, it is TRUE and NOT FORCED.

The Elements

1. MATTER This story must have significance to you.

2. DEPTH Tell a story of an event in your life, not your whole life story.

3. HONESTY The best stories are not about heroes but people telling the utter truth.

4. DETAILS visuals, what people would see, specifics (Example: I ate my 87th double stuffed Oreo, while I was sitting in my underwear in the closet where my mother keeps towels)

5. FEELING Show your emotional point of view (Example: The moment he asked me to go out I wanted to throw up. Don’t get me wrong, I was really excited. But for me being scared and exited often come together. I almost said no just to avoid that feeling.)

6. IMPACT In some small or big way the end of your story should share how this experience shaped our life in some way and this will be part of your conclusion.

OUR MISSION
We see storytelling as one of the most democratic arts and therefore the perfect tool to celebrate a wider range of experience in the Big Bend and the Permian Basin. The station aims to foster the voices of West Texas. Our goal is to be a beacon for storytelling that amplifies West Texas voices.

TELL YOUR STORY: STORYTELLING@MARFAPUBLICRADIO.ORG