

2016 web edition

Storytelling Toolkit Part I

By Melissa Balmer. Edited by Terri Ryder



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The Tools, Tips &
Strategies to Elevate
the Voice + Impact
of Women for
More Mindful Mobility

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Please note portions of this toolkit have appeared on our website, in our email newsletters, various social media, podcasts and other interviews.

Cover image by [Lisa Beth Anderson](#) of Sofia Ramirez Johnson and Ryan Johnson. The image is from the summer 2015 #BikeInstead #WalkInstead social media campaign Pedal Love created in collaboration with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority. Learn more about Sofia, Ryan and the campaign [here](#).

Introduction

“Across time and culture, stories have been agents for transformation – in part because they change our brains”

Elizabeth Svoboda, Aeon Magazine

For the past four years, my friend Jim Brown and I have been having an ongoing, in depth, conversations about how we can grow active transit. At Pedal Love we like to call it “mindful mobility” (biking, walking, and taking public transit). Jim and I have been inspired by the extraordinary growth of other popular well-being movements, i.e Slow Food, Yoga, and Mindfulness.

As the Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, Jim recently asked me two important questions:

- How can stories connect us better as advocates and collaborators?

- How can stories connect our issues to a wider public?

My goal with this three part toolkit is to answer both questions in a way that not only gives you specific tools for the “**Why**” but also sparks your own imagination for the “**How**”.

I firmly believe if we collaborate to harness the passion in our networks to tell our stories creatively, we’ll be able to exponentially grow this movement of active living, **especially if we focus on elevating the voice and impact of women.**

Why? Women are just over 50% of the U.S. population, and according to author and marketing expert Bridget Brennen women control 70-80% of consumer purchases, but we’re still not being taken seriously as a growth market in bicycling. In running and walking yes, we have a plethora of footwear options available for our

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in bicycling not so much. Jay Townley wrote in an Oct. 2015 blog post [“We Have Come to An End of An Era of Bike Shop Retailing”](#):

“Women are fast gaining share of American bicycle riding participation, and they also are seeking, creating and carving out their versions of the bicycling lifestyle in the communities they live in. **The American bicycle business needs to move quickly to catch up and learn to play a role, or it will be left behind and may be made irrelevant by the new majority.**”

While it’s improved since I first entered this field 8 years ago, neither our seasoned female leaders, nor our bright next generation, are yet [“top of mind awareness”](#) enough for those choosing keynotes within our own active living movement. We can do better.

Nor are we yet seeing our top female talent being recruited to speak at the kind of progressive summits,

and culture shift conferences where active transit should be part of the conversation. I’m talking about [TED Global](#) of course, but also events like Tina Brown’s [“Women in the World”](#) summit, the [Wisdom 2.0 Conference](#), and [SXSW](#).

Further, very few of us are on the radar of the popular lifestyle media that is still such a strong influence on the choices women make.

Let’s change this. With this Storytelling Kit, very much a work in progress, I’d like to begin a dynamic conversation with you about the power of storytelling.



Director

[PedalLove.org/Women on Bikes California](#)

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The Why & How of Storytelling – What's Next?

Coming in Part II of our Pedal Love Storytelling Kit Early May 2016:

- Framing your story
- Approach is as important as content
- Pictures speak louder than words
- Marrying data & policy to story
- The allure of evocative language
- Pictures speak faster than words
- Make it or break it with body language
- Your voice as an engagement tool
- Short can be very sweet
- Storytelling exercises

If you've found our Storytelling Toolkit to be of value to you **we're asking your help to share it with your friends and networks in active mindful mobility.**

Please consider a donation to:

- Help cover the womanpower of distributing Part I
- Complete writing/layout of the Pedal Love Storytelling Toolkit Part II and Part III
- Expanding the Pedal Love Storytelling toolkit to include **more stories of women throughout the U.S. especially those in walking and public transit advocacy**
- The time and talent it takes to full edit, proof and layout this new extended version as an e-book for September 2016 and a print version by February 2017.
- Please find out donation levels and live links on the next page.

Acknowledgements

We are a group of people who have mostly volunteered our time and talent. Our goal is to elevate the voice and impact of women to grow mindful mobility (biking, walking and taking public transit) through storytelling.

It began with our love of bicycling and focused on Southern California. In 2014 we expanded statewide, and now, with this kit, we're expanding again to the entire U.S.

My partner, Charlie Gandy, challenged me to create something with my own artistic twist. We made our mark early with compelling “lifestyle” images by [Allan Crawford](#). Kellie Morris, Maria Sipin, Machiko Yasuda and Charis Hill have been my key collaborators, Elayne Fowler and Janet Lafleur such wonderful ideas and support. There are so many more I don't have the space to name here. [InterTrend Communications](#) created our beautiful logo. Mick Victor and Lisa Beth Anderson came in like magic to help me take things to



a whole new level. And Terri Ryder what would I do without my dear friend and brainstorming, and editing champion? Thank you all!

Above from left: Kellie Morris, Jennifer Tetric, Sarah Bennett, Maria Sipin, yours truly, and Machiko Yasuda. Image by Allan Crawford.

In Memoriam

Deb Hubsmith founded the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#), a non-profit that advances policy change and catalyzes support for healthy, active communities, starting with walking and bicycling to school. Deb was a charismatic presence and memorable storyteller who left us all too soon after a courageous battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia.

In the fall of 2014 I did an [audio interview](#) with Deb when she and her doctors felt she was in remission. It was my first real conversation with her. It was also one of the most fun and meaningful conversations I've ever had. **Even though I was interviewing her, I felt immediately heard and understood for my purpose with Pedal Love.** We were full of plans to collaborate. Sadly just after this interview and image was taken, she found out she had cancer again. She passed away in August of 2015.

Her passion, vision, and, above all courage have



inspired me to think bigger and write this toolkit. I hope it will be a “permission slip from the Universe” to help you master your own stories and share them.

Above: Deb is from fall 2014 by her husband Andy Peri.

Chapter I: Setting the Stage – Why Focus on Women

“Pick yourself, and keep making art until someone can't ignore you any longer.”

Seth Godin [February 14, 2016 blog post](#).

Why Focus on Women?

While doing the research for this toolkit I came across a heartbreaking series of facts that confirmed my gut feeling of why we need to really focus on elevating the voice and impact of women and girls for this movement. Women are just over 50% of the U.S. population, and according to marketing expert Bridget Brennen [control 70-80% of consumer purchases](#), and yet:

- [72% of girls feel like society limits them.](#)
- [Women feel worse about their bodies today than they did 30 years ago.](#)
- [Only 1 in 10 news stories have women as a central](#)

[focus and there is less coverage of women's sports today than in 1989.](#)

But facts and research and polls don't change hearts and minds. Stories do. I'm starting off this toolkit with three compelling short videos of female empowerment.

The first is [“Unstoppable”](#) from the “Like a Girl” campaign created by award winning director Lauren



Setting the Stage – Why Focus on Women?

Greenfield which debuted in the summer of 2015. It has over 30 million views. Imagine if we could harness this kind of creative talent for mindful mobility? I believe we can.

The goal of the campaign is to do nothing less than transform the phrase “Like a Girl” from being derogatory, to meaning amazing things, to make the experience of puberty a time of empowerment, instead of [the time when the confidence of girls plummets](#).



The second video is the East L.A. band Las Cafeteras' music video for the song [“Mujer Soy – Yukicito Remix”](#) (I Am Woman). It features a day in the life of Maryanne Aguirre of the Boyle Heights biking club/feminist advocacy group the [Ovarian Psychos](#).

The video came out in March of 2015 in honor of women's history month. It has over 64 thousand views. This March [a documentary film](#) about the group will debut at the SXSW film festival in Austin.

I share the numbers of views for these videos, and others in this toolkit, to illustrate the scope of interest, and open our minds to the opportunities and possibilities we have to inspire and reach fresh audiences with great storytelling.

The third video I want to share with you is from the U.K.'s [“This Girl Can”](#) campaign, funded by their lottery (Now there's an idea!). In just a year ,the campaign has

Setting the Stage – Deciding Its Okay to Shine

garnered over 37 million views on social media, and actively engaged 540,000 women by boldly, and authentically embracing what women of all ages and races look like when we exercise. We jiggle and sweat. Get over it and join us.

Deciding It's Okay to Shine

We need more women in this movement to feel they've done enough homework and it's time to step forward to be seen and heard

In 2012, as Women on Bikes SoCal, I raised the money to host the very first “female only” certified bicycling instructor class with the [League of American Bicyclists](#) program as a scholarship. A class just for women, and a class that was a full scholarship for each participant, had **never been done before in the entire U.S.**

At Right: A social media promo image from “This Girl Can”

I gave out 11 scholarships to women in Long Beach, South Los Angeles, and East Los Angeles – areas that at that time had fewer than 3 female LCI's (League Cycling Instructors). Three recipients have become key creative collaborators and advisers for us at Pedal Love. One of them has found not only found a new career through the scholarship, she has become the breakout media darling of the group. I'd like you to meet Kellie Morris and share her story of deciding it's okay to shine.

A former IT executive whose traveled the world hosting



Setting the Stage – Deciding Its Okay to Shine

trainings, Kellie took to teaching bike education like a duck to water. She has a warm welcoming personality with a sense of fun that puts people at ease.

I love organizing photo shoots with talented photographers and interesting subjects. I like being a talent scout. When I decided Kellie should be the next subject for us **she outwardly said “Yes,” while she inwardly said “Oh No!”** Here’s what went on in her head:

“When the Pedal Love folks told me that they wanted to take professional pictures of me. Ugh! All I could think about was that I am 50 pounds overweight. No one would want pictures of me on a bike. Aren’t all bicyclists slim and trim? Wouldn’t people judge me? Maybe if I prayed really hard, God would make sure that photo shoot would not happen or maybe I would wake up 50 pounds lighter. My head can go to ridiculous places. When I settled down and sat with the emotions I was



able to see and acknowledge my fears of being judged. My fears of not being good enough. When I saw my fears, I could then decide what I was going to do about those fears. I do have a choice on what I will do when facing my fears.

Above and on next 2 pages: Kellie by Lisa Beth Anderson from our 2014 photo shoot, including Momentum Magazine.

Setting the Stage– Deciding Its Okay to Shine

A crazy thought occurred to me: I could choose to enjoy the process. What would that look like? How would that feel? I picked the best outfits I had. You know the ones that everyone complements you on? I picked those outfits. I even pulled out the very high heels I never wear (Why did I buy those things?) I shaped my eyebrows. I dusted off the makeup and artfully applied it, using all the tricks I had learned. I



I even got a haircut so my natural was looking neat and sweet.

I packed up my two bicycles, wardrobe and makeup headed to downtown Long Beach. I may be big but I still could look my best.

As the photographer, Lisa, put me at ease, I thought about how much I enjoy riding my bikes and that I wanted that to show in the pictures. I wanted to show that no matter your size or age, bicycling is for everyone. It was time for me to shine.

When I finally saw the pictures, my first thought was, “Who is that?” I didn’t recognize myself. The pictures were beautiful! I was beautiful! I was beautiful because I radiated with the joy I feel riding a bicycle.”

Kellie was in the middle of reimagining her life, and yet

Setting the Stage – Deciding Its Okay to Shine

like many women, **when she was given the opportunity to step forward and shine she almost said “no thank you I’m not ready yet.”** But she found the courage to feel the fear and did it anyway.

It’s important to note that I was able to parlay that one photo session into many things. I used the images to pitch a story about Kellie for [Momentum Magazine](#), [American Bike](#), for the blog Kellie writes for us [“We All Ride Bikes”](#) and for numerous live presentations.

Kellie has gone on to become not only an in demand [bike education instructor](#), but a respected leader in her home council district and across Long Beach. The media loves her. A story we placed Kellie in last year with the Orange County Register is leading to that journalist featuring her on an upcoming radio podcast for one of our local National Public Radio stations..

The screenshot shows the Momentum Magazine website. At the top left is the logo for Momentum Magazine (MAG) with the tagline "(smart living by bike)". Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for Magazine, Features, Blogs, Arts & Culture, Families, Gear, BikeStyle, Videos, and Contests. The main article is titled "Bike Smart: Kellie Morris" and is dated September 18, 2012. Below the title is a photo of Kellie Morris standing with a green bicycle. The photo is credited to Lisa Beth Johnson. To the right of the main content are three promotional banners: "SUBSCRIBE & BE ENTERED TO WIN A 2014 ZIP E3 PATH PLUS" with a bicycle image, "Sign up for our newsletter! Subscribe to Momentum Mag's e-newsletter & be entered to win a Lezyne floor pump." with a floor pump image, and "CLICK HERE to win! CONTESTS BLOG new prizes weekly!" with a Momentum logo.

Kellie Morris completed her first multi-day, fund-raising bike ride in 2002 after a

Setting the Stage

My “Something’s Got to Be Done” Moment

My “aha” moment on the need to elevate the voice and impact of women for mindful mobility came during my first conference call for the [“Pro Walk, Pro Bike: Pro Place”](#) with the national advisory committee.

My hometown of Long Beach had been selected to host the conference, and because I had worked on our local [“Share Our Streets”](#) multi-media marketing campaign for Bike Long Beach, and had launched a regional advocacy organization for women (then Women on Bikes SoCal), I had been asked to be on the local host committee.

The challenge came when it was time for this group of talented, passionate, dedicated people to brainstorm on the names of women to be possible keynote speakers. The group was all men, except for yours truly, and [Kit Keller](#) Policy Director for the Association of Pedestrian



And Bicycle Professionals.

Immediately someone said [Janette Sadik-Khan](#)” then

Above: Janette Sadik-Kahn via [Momentum Magazine](#)

Setting the Stage – My “Something’s Got to Be Done” Moment

then commissioner for the New York Department of Transportation. No, someone else said, she spoke last conference. “Mia Birk?” someone else asked. No, she spoke last conference too. Mia is the former President and CEO of [Alta Planning & Design](#) and the author of the book [“Joyride.”](#)



Above: Mia Birk courtesy of J. Maus/ [BikePortland.org](#).

And then there was dead silence. It may have only been 30 seconds but for me it felt like forever. It was certainly enough time for me to think:

“Really, really? In a 25 plus year movement this group can’t name 10 women right off the bat who would be excellent, compelling keynotes? Something needs to be done about this.”

Finally others piped in with names like Leah Shahum, the Executive Director of San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, now the Director of the [Vision Zero Network](#), Martha Rowskowski V.P. of Innovation for People for Bikes, and leader of the [Green Lane Project](#), and Deb Hubsmith, to whom this toolkit it dedicated to

“Something needs to be done about this,” I thought again. “But what? And who? Obviously *not me*. . I’m a woman new to the movement, with a brand new volunteer based regional (small potatoes) organization. I

Setting the Stage – My “Something’s Got to Be Done” Moment



didn't feel ready yet to really step up to say officially, nationally, “hey we need to do something about the lack of women keynoting around at our conferences and summits” I didn't feel I'd earned my chops yet. And I deal with a chronic health challenge, which means I often only work part time, and that's meant a struggle financially. So no, obviously *not me*.

You get the irony right? I'd come up with a groundbreaking idea to host an all female bike educators class and I'd also been a key creative team member for one of the most comprehensive multi-media city bike-friendly marketing campaigns. But I didn't feel ready yet to really step up to say officially, nationally,



Above Right : Leah Shahum, Vision Zero Network. Image Lisa Beth Anderson. **Above**: Martha Rowskowski, People for Bikes. Image People for Bikes.

Setting the Stage – My “Something’s Got to Be Done” Moment

“let’s change this.” It was a very “Confidence Gap” moment for me, and I’m not proud of it. I’m referring to article in [The Atlantic](#) by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman in May of 2014 promoting their book [“The Confidence Code.”](#) Both spell out clearly the sad fact that even with all of the advancements women have made, no matter how proven our track record of success, many of us still feel far less qualified and less worthy than men.

Ladies we need to step up more. We need to set ourselves up to be noticed as dynamic presenters and leaders. Panels are a first step, but we need to headline more.

Fortunately we did have a local marvelously talented and dynamic woman to keynote at the Pro Walk Pro Bike conference. Vice Mayor Dr. Suja Lowenthal is an urban planner with Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus, and just completing her final term as Council Member for Long Beach’s second district where she’s led our bike



friendly conversation and other progressive green-minded policy items. Suja steps up. she takes time in her crazy busy schedule to speak regularly. Now let’s

Above: Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal by Allan Crawford..

Setting the Stage – My “Something’s Got to Be Done” Moment

take a look at why it was that both Janette Sadik-Khan and Mia Birk were/are in top of mind awareness:

- Janette was head of one of the largest transportation organizations in the country. (NYC)
- Mia was a top executive at one of the nation’s leading biking/walking friendly urban design firms.
- Janette was in the #1 television, newspaper and radio market in the country and was frequently in not only local but national press.
- Mia brought out her book “Joyride” in 2010 and had been speaking around the country about it.
- **Both are articulate, sophisticated, smart “on message” media spokespeople.**

Most of us can’t do much about the first three points,

but we can *all* learn from points four and five. And consider this: If we don’t step forward now what are we telling girls who want to be mindfully mobile about their futures?



Above: Maribel Mateo and Alitzel Velasco of [Bike It! Santa Ana](#) by Allan Crawford. You’ll learn more about them in Part III of our toolkit.

Setting the Stage

associates and her book [“Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution.”](#)

Seeing Women as a Growth Market

Earlier this year I watched a very interesting trend report webinar hosted by the [Outdoor Industries Women’s Coalition](#). In the webinar Julia Day Executive Director Business Development at [NPD Sports](#), one of the top sports market research firm, shared that for **2015 bike sales are up 3% but women’s bikes are up 9%**. She also called out “urban bikes” a growth market.

There are those who would point out, “well that 9% growth in women’s bikes is still very small in dollar value compared to the overall 3% growth. Okay, I hear you. **But imagine what the growth in women’s bikes be if the industry at large began to take the possible (not yet the actual) casual urban female rider really seriously as a growth market?**



Remember I shared with you at the beginning of this toolkit that women control 70-80% of household buying purchases? This is from marketing expert and author of :”Why She Buys” and the new [“The Female Factor”](#) Bridget Brennan.

Bridget shares on her post for Forbes.com [“10 Things Everyone Should Know About Women Consumers”](#) she notes **gender is the most powerful determinant of how we see the world and everything in it.**

Let’s think even bigger. What if the influential reach and economic purchasing power of women was harnessed

Setting the Stage – Seeing Women as a Growth Market



to create safer, more healthy, more vibrant streets for everyone?

For those of you who are still wary of how the consumer market could offer us take a listen to Audrey Choi's 2015 TED@StateStreet Boston talk "[How to make a profit while making a difference](#)."

Audrey is the CEO of Morgan Stanley's Institute for Sustainable Investing and a thought leader on how finance can be harnessed to address public policy challenges. Her goal is to make sustainable

investing the new normal. She believes by “changing the fables we can change the markets.” Her question to her audience and for all of us? **What can't we tell both the super market and the capitol markets that we care?**

Maybe Millennials Can Show Us the Way

Maybe the Millennials and Generation Z can help show us the way. On the [Nielsen Global blog](#) from Nov. 2015 it's noted that "...a recent Nielsen [global online study](#) found that they (Millennials) continue to be most willing to pay extra for sustainable offerings—almost three-out-of-four respondents in the latest findings, up from approximately half in 2014."

The blog post also notes that "...The rise in the percentage of respondents aged 15 - 20, also known as Generation Z, who are willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies who are

Setting the Stage – Millennials Are Already Showing Us the Way

committed to positive social and environmental impact was also strong—up from 55% in 2014 to 72% in 2015.”

From the very beginnings of Pedal Love (as Women on Bikes SoCal) I have actively sought connectivity, to promote the talent of, and see the guidance from young women. Two of our key creative advisers, [Maria Sipin](#) and [Machiko Yasuda](#) illustrate the talent and opportunity of the often misunderstood Millennial generation. Both received scholarships to become LCI's (League Cycling Instructors) and have become invaluable resources in opening my eyes to fresh thinking and fresh approaches to creatively connecting with new audiences.

It's been much reported both that both car ownership and car driver-ship are down in the Millennial generation. Each new generation brings its own paradigm shift. As [Fast Co.'s Co-Exist blog](#) points out vehicles to freedom and personal identity have changed for this generation, it's no longer the car, it's the internet.



Both Maria and Machiko do their best to keep me up to date on social media and digital trends including tuning me in to wonderful online tools like [Canva.com](#), the fundraising platform [Patreon.com](#) (where we're looking into crowdfunding to complete this format of our

Above: Machiko enjoys bicycling around Los Angeles.

Setting the Stage – Millennials Are Already Showing Us the Way



Storytelling Toolkit and polish it to create it in ebook format on [Blurb.com](https://www.blurb.com/).

They also encourage me to keep it short, snappy, real and oh yes, super important, **make your**

communication mobile phone friendly. Can you say yes to this for your website and email newsletters? No? Time to rethink that strategy if you want to actively engage those 30 and under in your work and causes.

Maria is a health communications specialist at the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and advocates for active transportation, community partnerships, and improving the lives of those who are affected by discrimination, poverty and chronic illness as a board member of [MultiCultural Communities for Mobility](#).

When I first met Machiko she had recently finished her degree and was a journalist writing for California Apparel News. Next she decided she was more interested in the technical and sustainable side of the fashion industry and jumped into learning code. Now

Above: Maria Sipin by [Serena Grace](#).

Setting the Stage – Millennials Are Already Show Us the Way

she's a software engineer at [The Reformation](#) environmentally conscious apparel, and continues to help friends and neighbors learn how to easily and safely ride bikes. Both live mostly car free.

Our editor Terri Ryder pipes in:

“As a woman who has seen everything she was told was the safe way to a successful, well respected career, I've been very impressed by these two young women. I'm transitioning into this new digital age.

It often feels like a roller coaster as I create in the old formats that my baby boomer colleagues are comfortable with, and then turn around to absorb this new digital world. Keeping our current membership engaged, as well as recruiting new members, it becomes increasingly more critical to pay attention to the new ways of communicating. Still here but fading are the days of brochures, letters and glossy mailers..

Even email is considered, “old school”. As one who, admittedly, has lived a bit in a cave, things like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook are becoming clear as the necessary forms of communication for right now. If you experience the same discomfort with ‘not being current’ -- rely and recruit those who are. This does three things;

- It recognizes the rapid change and growth of electronic communication.
- It honors the ‘expertise’ of those who have adapted, adopted and embraced these new methods.
- **It recruits new members to our cause.** If you don't know—ASK. Ask your sons and daughters. Ask the new-hires how you can become more attractive to members of their generation. Let them show you the way. Better yet, let them lead the way!”

Chapter II: Setting the Stage - Why Focus on Storytelling?

“For a millennia, we have passed down our knowledge in story and song. If you tell me a statistic, I’ll make up a story to explain why it’s true.”

Gloria Steinem from [“My Life on the Road.”](#)

Why Focus on Storytelling?

Because we are in one of the most important conversations of our time and we need this powerful tool. Think of the popularity of The Moth Radio Hour, and This American Life. Of course one of the most successful and groundbreaking promoters of this ancient art form today are the TED and TEDx conferences.

TED stands for “Technology, Entertainment, Design” TEDx support independent organizers who want to create a TED like experience in their local community.



and they offer the tantalizing opportunity to share the talks presented at your local conference with their vast TED network.

Above is Dr. Brené Brown who’s TEDx Houston talk [“The Power of Vulnerability”](#) was so popular (It’s received over 23 million views) she was asked to speak at the TED conference and gave the talk above on [“Listening to shame.”](#)

When Brené’s first talk went viral she didn’t rejoice, she freaked out. She admits that she had set her life up to

Setting the Stage – Why Focus on Storytelling?



freaked out. She **admits that she had set her life up to play small, to be successful in her own academic realm but not on the national stage**. She actually asked her husband to think of a way to hack into the TED system to take her first talk down when it became clear how amazingly popular it was becoming. She wasn't resting in the amazing appeal and success of her talk, she was reading the mean notes of critics. She no longer does that.

Several years ago when Dr. Brown was called a “storyteller” by an event planner she bristled and the academic in her scoffed and thought, “why not just call me a magic pixie?” Since that time she has decided that maybe stories are just “data with soul.” She now embraces the title of **“Researcher + Storyteller”** on her website, in her best selling books like **“Daring Greatly”** and **“Rising Strong”** and for her coaching practice.

The nonprofit realm is also embracing storytelling as a crucial way to both improve engagement and fundraise. I'm a big fan of the of Vanessa Chase Lockshin of the Storytelling Nonprofit and her upcoming book **“A Practical Guide to Telling Stories that Raise Money and Awareness.”** Since launching her website and coaching business in 2012 **Vanessa has helped her clients raise over \$10 million in funding from donors**

Above left: Vanessa Chase Lockshin courtesy of her website The Storytelling Nonprofit.

Setting the Stage - Why Focus on Storytelling?

“Great presenters layer story and information like a cake, and understand that different types of talks require differing ingredients.”

Nancy Duarte, [Duarte Persuasive Presentation Experts](#)

As people who care about creating safer, healthier, more equitable and economically vibrant streets for the many, rather than the few, **we are called to do nothing less than change hearts and minds of the public.** We can't do that by simply stating the facts, despite the data being dead on. Being earnest and wonky won't get us where we want to go. Being great storytellers will.

- Build far greater capacity
- Exponentially increase our networks of support
- Garner far greater financial support



We have a chance now to move forward and away from single car traffic congestion with some elegant and savvy choreography. **Communities around the world are showing us a better way. You are very likely one of these people.** But remember we've had almost 100 years of being seduced by extremely savvy, emotionally engaging single car use marketing campaigns.

Above: Nancy Duarte via her website.

Setting the Stage – The Danger of a Single Story

Avoiding the Danger of A Single Story

If I have learned anything truly valuable in my eight + years of mindful mobility advocacy it's **“don't assume who might be interested in participating.”** I do my best to create as broad and as inviting a welcome mat as I can conceive of, and I'm constantly learning to expand it.

In 2009 award winning novelist Chimamanda Adichie gave a powerful TED talk on [“The Danger of a Single Story.”](#) As a young woman growing up in a university town in Nairobi she only had access to books written by English authors. And so she too wrote about children eating apples and playing in snow when she first began to write – *though she'd personally experienced neither.* Her talk has received almost 10 million views.

If you are feeling at all frustrated or challenged by connecting emotionally with your current support



base and reaching new audiences I highly recommend you take a hard look at the depth and breadth of the stories you're sharing. Are you leaving out many of those you most want to reach?

Above: Chimamanda Adichie courtesy of TED.com.:

Chapter III: Setting the Stage - Why Focus on “Mindful” Mobility

Why Focus on “Mindful” Mobility?

The term “mindful” just like the term “storytelling” has entered a new level of popularity but it can mean many things to many people. What do I specifically mean by it? **Being present and aware of our behavior in the here and now.** Being aware of how we treat others on the street when we’re moving from point “a” to point “b” getting to work, running errands, and out having adventures.

I like using the term “mindful” mobility better than “active living” or “active transportation” because I’ve come to feel that “active” is too athletic in tone to be inviting to the broadest possible audiences. I mean no disrespect to the athletic crowd reading this, but as a person who deals with chronic health challenges, I’ve become extremely sensitive to how easily people, especially women, can feel intimidated, not including and uninvited.



We are a society that knows it’s not active enough, but guilt and data aren’t getting us off the couch in the numbers needed to turn our health around as a nation.

In choosing the word “mindful” I’ve been inspired, of course, by the Buddhist concept of [mindfulness](#), and by the [secular mindfulness movement](#), but I’ve also been inspired by a lesser known Buddhist term of “maitri,” often translated as “loving kindness” or “unconditional friendliness” not only towards others, but oneself as

Setting the Stage – Why Focus on “Mindful” Mobility

well. Here is best selling author Pema Chödrön’s video [talk on “maitri”](#) to best explain if you’re curious.

I’m not a practicing Buddhist, however, I did begin my own independent mindfulness + maitri practice about 15 years ago. Why? My life felt like it was crumbling around me on the heels of getting divorced, losing my business (because my ex-husband and I had worked together), and then my health, almost all in one fell swoop. It was a devastating challenging and lonely time and would continue for several years.

One day I was at my favorite bookstore and came across Pema Chödrön’s book called [“When Things Fall Apart.”](#) Her honest, funny, pithy storytelling introduced me to the concept of maitri, and the idea of having unconditional friendliness or loving kindness as an approach to myself and others. I decided to take the term on as a guide for my life. It’s been an amazingly rewarding pair of life changing ideas.

When I decided to take Women on Bikes SoCal statewide I wanted a different non-wonky name for the website. In the middle of the night the term “Pedal Love” came to me and I scrambled to groggily write it down in my journal. A year later I realized that it wasn’t just the name of my website, my mission is to *peddle* love too.

Imagine if we as a nation decided to have truly friendly public streets? We can do it. We *can* choose to peddle love.

Chapter IV: Setting the Stage – Why Focus on the Media

Why Focus on the Media?

A popular topic in the media today is of course, the fragmentation of the media since the explosion of the Internet. However, **the combination of print and digital media is still one of our biggest platforms to get the word out about the important work we do.**

But first they have to know we're doing it.

Newsweek and other media excitedly shared last year when the First Lady Michelle Obama played the role of guest editor for [More Magazine's July/August 2015](#) issue. It was a great issue, with a very insightful and in depth piece on health. It even invited readers to consider changing up your car driving commute for biking, walking and taking public transit. The rub? **No female expert from biking, walking and public transit advocacy was quoted.** No expert was quoted at all. Most of the other sections had experts quoted but



Setting the Stage – Why Focus on the Media?

not ours. As I shared in the introduction, we are not yet on the radar for lifestyle magazines like *More*, nor are we for most of the national media outlets in the U.S. beyond May as National Bike Month.

Let's collaborate to change this. The opportunity is ripe and plentiful. The media still gives us the broadest and most robust platforms from which to share our stories.. At right I've shared a list of some of the most popular women's magazines and their confirmed monthly print subscriber base. If we added in their online audience, the numbers would be significantly higher.

Each one of these magazines has regular health and well being sections that are perfect for stories on how women are transforming their lives through biking, walking and taking public transit. Each also profiles female change agents, making our world a better place to live.

Popular Women's Print Magazines

Better Homes & Gardens 7.6+ million

Good Housekeeping 4.3+ million

Family Circle 4+ million

Woman's Day 3.2+ million

Cosmopolitan 3+ million

Glamour 2.3+ million

O Magazine 2.3+ million

Redbook 2.2+ million

Parents 2.1+ million

Setting the Stage – Why Focus on the Media?



In part III of this storytelling kit I'll delve in depth into creating a successful media strategy, including how key collaborations with creatives and others in mindful mobility can exponentially increase the impact of your media outreach as we've been able to do both at Pedal Love and the California Bicycle Coalition.

At left is our second [Momentum Magazine](#) cover featuring single Mom and socially conscious marketing guru [Shelby Sanchez](#) by Lisa Beth Anderson. It took two photo sessions to get the right cover shot. A successful ongoing media strategy takes creative thinking for the right story angles, patience and persistence. If you're not yet pitching stories to Momentum about women in your community or organization revolutionizing their lives by bike we invite you to start now!

But first lets become better story tellers.

Chapter IV: The Why & How of Storytelling – Why Storytelling Matters

“For the leader, storytelling is action oriented – a force for turning dreams into goals and then into results”

Peter Guber, [The Four Truths of the Storyteller](#), Harvard Business Review

Why Storytelling Matters

Numerous reports in the past decade have proven what great storytellers have known since ancient times – the human brain is wired for story. It’s how we best make sense of the world around us. Let’s look at why.

In a 2012 article in the *New York Times* Sunday Review section Annie Murphy Paul wrote in an insightful article entitled [Your Brain on Fiction](#):

“Brain scans are revealing what happens in our heads

when we read a detailed description, an evocative metaphor, or an emotional exchange between characters. Stories, this research is showing, stimulate the brain and even change how we act in life.”

When we tell stories effectively we:

- Provoke Thought
- Touch Hearts
- Change Minds
- Invite Dialogue
- Create Meaning
- Illustrate Data
- Make Connections
- Change Behavior
- Build Commitment
- Establish Alliances

The Why & How of Storytelling – Why Storytelling Matters

Data alone can equal overwhelm for those watching our presentations, reading articles, and listening to interviews. **Stories instead, engage hearts and minds and allow watchers, readers and listeners to relax into the moment.**

So why do stories work so much better than *just the facts mam*? In 2014 Adam Weinroth of OneSpot.com created a compelling infographic [“The Science of Storytelling.”](#) He used the information and sources shared in *The New York Times* “Your Brain on Fiction” article I quoted on the previous page, as well a piece on Buffer.com called [“The Science of Storytelling: What Listening to Stories Does to Our Brains.”](#)

In the infographic Weinroth draws attention to four key things that a story does that data and facts alone don’t. The first two are explained in the box at right.

Each of these four actions in the brain prove that in

How Stories Affect the Brain

Neural Coupling

When listening to/reading/watching a story the part of the brain activates that allows the listener/reader/watcher to turn the story into their own ideas and experience.

Why we’re hooked on entertainment..

Mirroring

When listening to/watching a story listeners not only have similar brain activity to each other, but to the storyteller as well.

Storytelling breeds compassion.

The Why & How of Storytelling – Why Storytelling Matters

order to change behavior we need to engage the emotions of our audiences.

The next time you prepare some type of communication I invite you to try putting your audience first. Rather than fearing you won't be seen as credible if you don't fill them with data and facts try engaging them in an emotionally engaging story that illustrates your rhetoric.

Becoming a Masterful Storyteller

“People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel”

Dr. Maya Angelou 1928-2014.

The first step in becoming a masterful storyteller is paying attention to those who already captivate us with their stories – which is why I've shared so many

How Storytelling Affects the Brain

Dopamine

When the brain encounters an emotionally charged event (i.e. a story) it releases dopamine which makes it easier and more accurate to remember.

Emotion drives giving.

Cortex Activity

Watching, listening, reading an emotionally engaging story activates more parts of the brain than when the brain is processing facts.

An activated brain is an engaged mind.

The Why & How of Storytelling – Becoming a Masterful Storyteller



examples in this storytelling kit of those who we've found to be such great storytellers.

Dr. Maya Angelou was one of those. [Watch how](#) Angelou uses three minutes artfully to tell not just one story, but three emotionally engaging micro stories. She begins with the evocative statement **“I am a human being, nothing human can be alien to me.”**

Imagine how powerful would it be for you to be able to tell your story, or different angles of your organization's

story, in a short sweet three minutes? Or sometimes even in 30 seconds? Which is about how long you have to capture a journalist's attention on the phone when trying to get them to write a story.

Finding the Heart of Your Stories

Here's two important questions I want you to consider to spark some storytelling ideas:

- How do you personally make people feel about the work you do?
- How does your organization make people feel about the work you do?

Above: Dr. Maya Angelou was featured as part of Cole Haan's 2013 marketing campaign "Born in 1928" The campaign celebrated notable Americans born the same year as the shoe company.

The Why & How of Storytelling – Finding the Heart of Your Story

“When I think about compelling presentations, I think about taking an audience on a journey. A successful talk is a little miracle—people see the world differently afterward.”

Chris Anderson, [Curator for TED](#)

During the 2016 Virtual Nonprofit Storytelling Conference Jennifer Miller of True Sense Marketing invited us all to become “story sleuths” to find interesting angles or hooks to begin the stories of the work we do to heighten drama and thus interest.

Consider that your:

- Elevator pitches
- Live presentations
- Letters and written reports
- Email newsletters

- Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat etc.

are all opportunities for storytelling of different angles, lengths and focus. So how do you find the heart of your stories? **The personal is universal.**

Here are some questions to ask yourself and your team members to get the ideas flowing:

- Why are you doing what you’re doing? What gets you up in the morning? What is *that* story?
- **What does your work make possible? How does it make someone’s life better? Who has your work helped personally?**
- Why are the members of your staff and your board doing what they’re doing? How can these personal stories illustrate the broader picture of what your organization is doing?

The Why & How of Storytelling – Finding the Heart of Your Story

As part of building a strong and dynamic storytelling culture for yourself and your organization begin collecting these emotionally engaging stories in writing.

In part II of our storytelling kit will discover how to make these stories their most engaging and compelling. But first let's recognize that **masterful storytellers come from all races, backgrounds and ages.**

One of my favorite storytellers is the young spoken word poet [Sarah Kay](#) (note the bike on the front of her website!) who was vaulted onto the world stage in her early twenties by her presentation at TED [“If I should have a daughter.”](#)

Watch Sarah's artistry in action. See how she uses words to paint emotional landscapes? Do you need to take your live presentations to this level of performance? No. Imagine though, if you did! But **even taking just a few pointers from Sarah's skill will**



elevate your own abilities. I'm ending Part I of our Storytelling Toolkit with another of my favorite TED talks. This is by the alt-rock social media superstar [Amanda Palmer](#) called [“The Art of Asking”](#) (also the

Above right: Sarah Kay during her TED talk “If I should have a daughter.” Image by TED.com.

The Why & How of Storytelling – Short Can Be Very Sweet



name of her book which I highly recommend as well). Amanda believes in fan supported artists and **raised 1.2 million on a Kickstarter campaign from a \$100 thousand dollar ask.**

Amanda now raises money directly from fans for her various artistic endeavors on her [Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com/amanpalmer) site, where she has over 7 thousands fans, and averages \$36 thousand per project.

Imagine knowing that you could readily raise the funds you need through crowdsourcing because your storytelling about your work and your cause were so compelling people just *have* to support you?

This concludes Part I of our kit. Stay tuned for Part II coming out in early April 2016 and Part III coming out in early May 2016. Thank you for reading!

Ready to share your own and your organization's stories in more emotionally engaging ways? We can't wait to hear about it #PedalLove #MindfulMobility:

- **Email me:** Melissa@PedalLove.org
- [Facebook/WomenonBikesCalifornia/](https://www.facebook.com/WomenonBikesCalifornia/)
- [Twitter/PedalLove](https://twitter.com/PedalLove)
- [Instagram/PedalLove](https://www.instagram.com/PedalLove)

Above: Amanda Palmer gives her “The Art of Asking” talk at TED. Image courtesy of TED.com.

The Why & How of Storytelling – What's Next?

Coming in Part II of our Pedal Love Storytelling Kit Early May 2016:

- Framing your story
- Approach is as important as content
- Pictures speak louder than words
- Marrying data & policy to story
- The allure of evocative language
- Pictures speak faster than words
- Make it or break it with body language
- Your voice as an engagement tool
- Short can be very sweet
- Storytelling exercises

If you've found our Storytelling Toolkit to be of value to you **we're asking your help to share it with your friends and networks in active mindful mobility.**

Please consider a donation to:

- Help cover the womanpower of distributing Part I
- Complete writing/layout of the Pedal Love Storytelling Toolkit Part II and Part III
- Expanding the Pedal Love Storytelling toolkit to include **more stories of women throughout the U.S. especially those in walking and public transit advocacy**
- The time and talent it takes to full edit, proof and layout this new extended version as an e-book for September 2016 and a print version by February 2017.
- Please find out donation levels and live links on the next page.

Please Help Us Share & Grow This Toolkit!

Suggested Donation Levels

Individuals

[\\$3 Donation](#)

[\\$5 Donation](#)

[\\$10 Donation](#)

Organizations

[\\$15 Donation](#)

[\\$30.00 Donation](#)

Corporate Sponsorship

[\\$50 Sponsorship](#)

[\\$75 Sponsorship](#)

[\\$100 Sponsorship](#)

[\\$500 Sponsorship](#)

Each donation level link offers you to opportunity to donate at your own level as well.

The [California Bicycle Coalition](#) is our fiscal receiver so your donation is tax deductible.

Note: Donations and sponsorships \$15 and above have attractive “thank you” benefits. Please go to pedallove.org/support-pedal-love/ for all details.

Bios

Melissa Balmer is a writer, speaking and change agent. She is the Media Director for the [California Bicycle Coalition](#) and Founder/Director of [PedalLove.org](#). Her mission is to share the power of artistry and personally engaging storytelling to inspire and engage new audiences for more mindful mobility. Melissa has placed Pedal Love and the California Bicycle Coalition in media such as the *Associated Press*, *Bicycling Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Momentum Magazine*, the *Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and more. Image by Lisa Beth Anderson.



Terri Ryder has over 25 years experience in teaching, school administration, social services. She has a Master's in Social Work from Boston University focusing in community organizing, management and planning, as well as a Master's in Education from Harvard University, specializing in risk and prevention for children and youth. She has worked as a teacher, counselor and administrator serving children from preschool through high school and their families. Read her [Transit Love](#) blog here. Image by Shereef Moustafa.



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