
Sharing Your Story: A practical guide

Telos is committed to helping you use your voice responsibly to grow the pro/pro/pro movement. This document is intended to help you as you share your Telos story and other pro-Israeli, pro-Palestinian, pro-peace narratives from the region.

Why?

We share our story because it has the potential to change lives for the better – we know this because it has already changed ours! Our Telos stories contain elements of the ‘other’ that challenges negative stereotypes and counters single narrative mindsets.

We share our story because it is intimately tied to the narratives and experiences of our friends in Israel/Palestine. And where their voices cannot be heard, it is important that we speak into those spaces as we are able.

We share our story because it opens doors to new relationships with those not in our conventional circles. These relationships are essential to building a diverse movement that crosses faiths, sectors and political allegiances.

How?

We invite those looking to partner with their voice to consider sharing their stories in three ways:

- In conversation
- Online
- Before your political representatives

Each has its own strengths and limitations and falls somewhere on the reach-relationship spectrum. For instance, when we share our story with a friend in conversation, we are only reaching one person but in sharing relationship with them, the potential for impact is significant. In contrast, when we Tweet, Facebook and blog about our experiences, we may reach hundreds or even thousands of people, but that experience is devoid of authentic relationship and provides limited opportunity for interaction, but lots of opportunity for

our words to be misconstrued! However we share, both personal conversation and online sharing are important for spreading the pro/pro/pro message.

7 Tips to effectively sharing your story!

1. Communicate to be heard

How you are heard is more important than what you want to say. The most effective way to be heard is to **be a good listener** – ask good questions, be legitimately engaged in order to understand where your listener is: what are their biases? Are they new to the issue? How can I meet them where they are? Take the time to listen. Again, being heard can be harder online because it's a one-sided conversation, and that's not a true conversation.

2. Tell your own story

The real unassailable story is the story of your own journey and transformation. While you may want to give voice to your friends' stories, you are never going to be able to tell their story with accuracy and full impact. So tell the story of how you met people whose example changed you. Similarly, as much as you try (and you should try as much as possible), accept that you do not possess mastery of all the facts. The important thing to communicate is your experience, which is hard for people to reject.

3. Focus on the big picture: PEOPLE.

Conflict is about people so our task is to not get bogged down in theological histories or tit-fot-tat/ who-is-to-blame details but instead, focus on the people at the center of the conflict: other friends whose lives are consistently upended by war. Telling your story in a way that always comes back to that core truth of loving people is an effective way to engage someone who is even strongly opposed to you theologically or politically.

4. Be intentionally pro/pro/pro

Remember there is no future for anyone without a future for everyone, so share stories from both sides! This may be especially important if your Telos experience shattered your worldview and now you wish to fly the flag for the 'other' whom you used to oppose. Avoid implicit bias and being put in an either/or camp that represents a false and destructive binary that has fueled this conflict for too long. Be explicitly pro/pro/pro and model a different and better way of engaging that tells the legitimate narratives of both sides.

5. Give Grace

To both your self and others. We are ALL on a journey. Your audience hasn't seen and experienced what you've seen. They need the opportunity to go on that journey.

They need to wrestle, just as you did. And it's harder if they haven't yet shared your experience and had the chance to confront their biases head on in the eyes of a child who could be their own. Give them grace to go on that journey and the space to begin it in your communications.

6. **Communicate from a place of love and hope, not a place of trauma and anger**
Humanize your friends in Israel/Palestine so your audience has an opportunity to fall in love with them. They are more than victims, they are dreamers and doers, believers and lovers, people like us with hopes and aspirations. Speak from love, not from anger, otherwise your story will likely fall on deaf ears. For if your trauma speaks, it will likely be too much for your listener to bear before their hearts have been broken too. MLK's famous words were "**I have a dream**" NOT "**We're living a nightmare.**"
7. Most importantly... **Build Authentic Relationships**
Relationship is everything. People are not fodder to be converted on an issue; they are friends and neighbors who are to be loved unconditionally regardless of their theology or opinion on a complex and emotional geopolitical topic. And when they are truly loved by us, they are more likely to see the world as we see it. A good friend of Telos has said that peacemaking might just begin with the three words "Let's have lunch". Put relationships first, really care about who you're talking with, and they might just listen to you.

5 quick tips on using your political voice...

If you would like to begin communicating with your elected representatives about your pro/pro/pro beliefs, we welcome you to do so. Here's what we recommend:

1. Vote

2: Find out who your elected representatives are:

[Visit this website](#), type in your zip-code, and voila, your representative.

To find your Senators, [go here](#) and scroll down until you find your State.

3. Contact them and don't be intimidated. It's our job in a democracy to inform our leaders, and their job to listen and represent us.

4: Try to do a little bit of research on them beforehand to help you build that relationship. Especially helpful is to know where they stand on issues pertaining to the Israeli/Palestinian

conflict, peacemaking, and justice. This is useful information that will enable you to tailor your story to your audience.

5: **Build a relationship!** Do not expect to walk into an office, pick up the phone, or write a letter and for your elected representative to be changed. Do not even expect that they, not a staffer, will hear you. It is right that we engage with and concern ourselves with the activities of those elected to represent us. And when we do, we should be comfortable sharing our experiences in Israel/Palestine and our desire to see pro/pro/pro policies that build towards peace in the Holy Land.

If you are planning on contacting your elected representative, let us know! We would welcome the opportunity to assist you in framing your dialogues.