



Stories that Sell Now **The U-Shaped Story**

5 Key Story Elements:

1. Protagonist
2. Desire/Yearning
3. Obstacle
4. crisis/decision ("oh shoot!")
5. Result (take a stand/theme/elixir/new world)

In other words, Somebody wants something. There's something in the way.

It gets worse and worse. They come to an "oh shoot" moment when they have to choose. A new world results from the "something special" that helped them change.

Then/Now/How:

Many people know about the "then/now/how" structure that is typical in testimonials, for example:

THEN: what it was like before

NOW: what it's like now

HOW: how I got to where I am today

For example, "I used to be a hundred pounds overweight, now I'm not, and here's the weight loss product that got me here."

Of course this is a helpful structure. But we can do much better than this when we tap into the essential elements of story form with the U-Shaped Story.

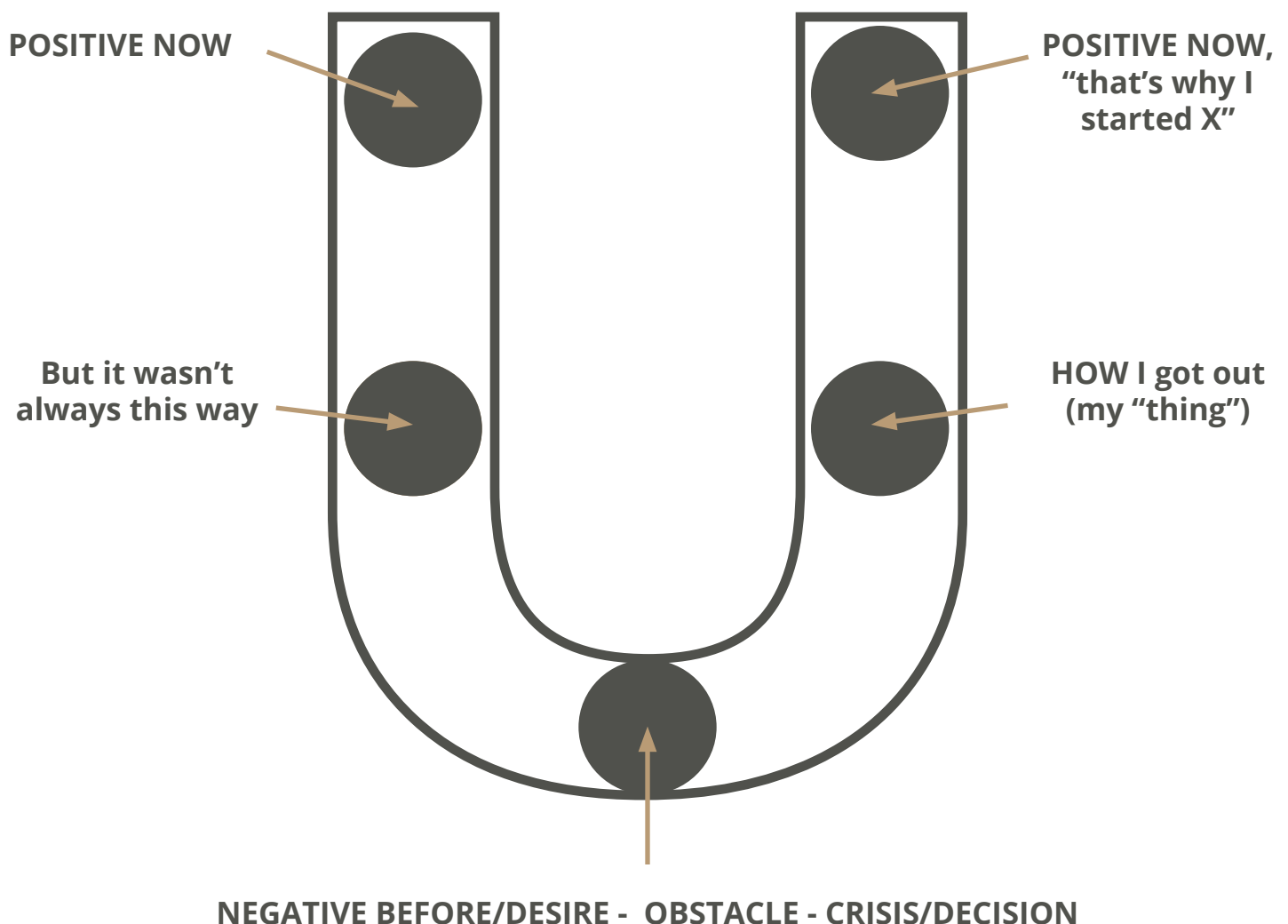
The U-Shaped Story:

The U-Shaped Story is much more powerful than then/now/how because it draws on the 5 Key Story Elements for its impact.

For the U-Shaped Story, we rearrange the key story elements in this way:

- 1 & 5. Result (what's it like now for the protagonist, who may be me!)
3. Obstacle (in the past)
2. Desire/Yearning
4. Crisis/decision
5. (return to) Result ("that's why I created X")

So Here's What the U-Shaped Story Looks Like:



Here's Our Weight Loss Example, Told as a U-Shaped Story:

Today I can get down on the floor and play with my kids. I have more energy than I've had in years, and on my last checkup, my doctor gave me a clean bill of health.

But it wasn't always this way.

A year ago, I was a hundred pounds overweight. My blood pressure was too high, my heartburn was killing me, I could barely get up the stairs, and my doctor warned me that if things didn't change, I might not see my son's tenth birthday.

I had tried x and y, but that just made it worse. That's when I found Z. Within the first few weeks, [results].

Yesterday, when my son Joey asked me to go play ball with him, I said yes. I have more energy than I've ever had, [more results], and at my last checkup, my doctor gave me a clean bill of health. That's never happened before!

That's why I created x, to help others just like me who find themselves yz [top of mind problem], so they can [what they most desire].

Of course, there are many ways to write a U-Shaped Story. This is just one example. The important thing is that we've included the 5 Key Story Elements and we've arranged them in the order listed so that our audience can hear us.

There are countless variations - we can mould this story like clay and play with the structure, and we can even change the order when we get good at it and have played more with stories!

When you know how stories work, when you understand the core elements, there's no such thing as a boring story anymore.

All your stories can be captivating when you understand how to create U-Shaped Stories for your company.