

"Narrative" Is Not a Synonym for Long

Finding the story

Put down the phone - open your eyes and ears to the things/people around you. Stories present themselves. Engage.

Be a storyteller – don't just look to convey information.

Cast a broad net - dig deep to reflect the diversity and depth of the community.

Make choices as you go.

Consider point of view.

Think outside the box – can you take a new approach?

Report more deeply once you've decided who/what to focus on.

Report for telling detail - those are the building blocks of any good story.

Empathy is a useful tool to cultivate - as well as your gut instinct and getting over the fear of trying something different.

Finding the characters

Zero in - fewer characters, stronger story.

Pick the best one - look for the person with the best story, but also the person most open to telling the story.

Explain yourself - tell them what you're looking for.

Get in their heads - find an emotional or mental core to the story.

Finding the theme

Listen, listen, listen - give yourself a moment to breathe and be open to what is happening, to the story being different than expected and adjusting to that.

Guide, Guide, Guide - there needs to be a balance between being open to what you are being told, finding the core, then guiding the process so you get the elements to build the story.

Focus, focus, focus

One word - sum up what your story represents, the universal point - in just one word. It will help you decide what to leave out and what to keep. And it'll help you work fast.

Every story needs a payoff.

One final thought – inspiration is everywhere.

Listen – to movies, to music, to jokes – and see how often you'll find narratives.