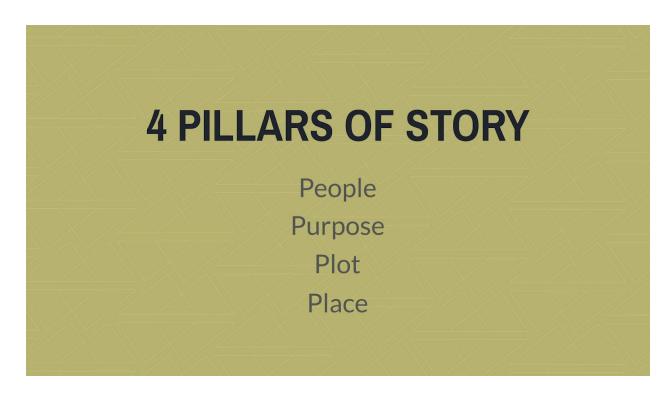**What is Story?**

Most people are misled on story. Not everything is a story. Story is a retelling of events - real or imagined - often told from a single perspective. If it's not a retelling of events, then it's not a story. Story and statistics exist on opposite ends of the same continuum. Statistics are a spectrum of experiences - of penitential stories. Story is the most powerful form of communication. Story can transport us to another world. Studies show that the more a person is transported by story, the more likely he is to take on the beliefs and actions shown in the story. Story can move us. Emotion influences human behavior and we back the these decisions with logic. Story takes us on a journey that ends in our own conclusions. The idea is ours, and we trust it more.

4 Pillars

Compelling stories are built intentionally and require a solid foundation. Every story uses all four pillars.

4 PILLARS OF STORY

People
Purpose
Plot
Place

People
This refers to the characters in the story. Power stories require dynamic characters. If story fails to resonate with audience, it's often due to week characters. The people pillar creates connection. Character-driven stories foster empathy. If we want our stories to connect with people, we need to lead with people. We can't expect our audience to want to watch more than our character wants something. What's makes a strong character?

- Desire - What a character wants beyond what they already have
  - Creates connection for the audience
  - Gives the story direction
- Uniqueness - What makes a character different
  -
- Complexity - The why or motivation behind a character's desire
  - Complexity in a character sustains connection for the audience

Purpose

Is what you take away from the story. The purpose pillar provides clarity. The purpose may be inspirational, informational, or commercial. With no defined objective in the beginning, we're left with countless revisions in the end. **Use 5 key words to easily communicate the purpose to everyone on the project.** The purpose of the film is the objective of the story. Define the story's purpose early. Why do we establish purpose?

- More intention
- Deeper meaning
- Smoother relationships with clients

Tips for Keywords
1. Embrace conflict.
2. Summarize the story in one sentence.
3. Keep keywords unique.

Prompts:
1. What is most **inspiring** about the story?
2. What makes this story **different**?
3. Who is the **audience** for this story?
4. How do you want the audience to **feel**?
5. What do you want the audience to **do**?

OVERVIEW:

1. Consider a prompt.
2. Brainstorm Keywords.
3. Group related words into clusters.
4. Consider next prompt.
5. Choose strongest Keyword for each prompt.

Together, these five prompts encompass the necessary insight, from inspiration to action, to develop the purpose.

Plot

Structure of the story from beginning to end. Audience engagement is directly related to strong story structure. The place pillar nurtures authenticity. The plot serves to create engagement. Storytell in the retelling of events. These events from the plot. Plot points are the critical moments in a character's life that have shaped his or her journey. *Specific Plot Points* refer to fixed events, or specific moments in time. *General Plot Points* are more broad. They're a collection of moments or influences, such as cultural upbringing or societal pressures. *General Plot Points* offer quick context for characters

Plot Decisions
1. Which elements should the story include?
2. How should these elements be arranged into a beginning, middle and end?

Plot Tips
1. Make note of potential Plot Points from listening and pre-interviews.
2. Favor Specific Plot Points over General Plot Points.
3. You're the storyteller. It's your responsibility to discover these meaningful moments - even when the characters might not be aware of them.
4. General Plot Points are more broad. They're a collection of moments or influences, such as cultural upbringing or societal pressures.

Plot Points are the crucial moments of a character's live that have shaped his or her journey. These plot points structure your story, creating a beginning, middle and end --- and come in two categories: specific and general

Plot has three main sections: Beginning Middle Ending

- The beginning is the setup
- The middle is the characters journey
- The ending is the resolution - it's the stories emotional crescendo

The beginning, middle and ending of your story work together to grab hold of your audience, take them on a journey and above all else, move them emotionally.

<u>Hook</u>

The Hook is the opening to your story. When developing the Hook, the goal is to find the most compelling moment possible to engage the audience with the story. Reflect on what originally attracted you to the story, without revealing the story's ending. The Hook should never take away from the Resolution. Share the story with a friend. Ask what stands out the most. Find a remarkable specific Plot Point to use for the hook. Another potential Hook can be found in Plot Points that show the Heart's Uniqueness. Without a strong Hook, the audience won't feel compelled to reach the ending.

Conflict

This is a challenge or obstacle that the character encounters. Conflict creates a question for the audience. Conflict Drives the story from beginning, to the middle, to the end.

Universal conflicts:
- **Man vs. man**
- **Mann vs. Self**
- **Man vs. Society**
- **Man vs. Nature**
- **Man vs. Spiritual**
- **Man vs. Tech**

Plot is a story's structure.

Conflict is the fuel that moves the audience from the beginning to the middle, to the ending.

Plot Points are the critical moments in a character's life that have shaped his or her journey.

1. The first plot point is simply called the conflict - The conflict creates a question for the audience.
2. The second plot point is initiation - The initiation is when the Heart accepts the challenge.
3. The third essential plot point is resolution - the outcome to the conflict - The resolution is the answer to the question.

Thes three essential plot points form the core question, the central query of the story. The story's value to the viewer lies in the heart's growth. How to develop the core question?

Step 1: look at the heart's desire
Step 2: Look at the 6 Universal Conflicts to identify which is blocking the heart's desire.
Step 3: Pinpoint specific Plot Points that represent each part of the Core Question.

Remember to favor specific plot points over general ones. Your story's humanity lies in its specificity. Yet it's about picking the strongest and most relevant ones.

Initiation

The moment your character decides to take on the conflict. For the initiation, look for an initial change in state of mind that symbolizes the start of the heart's journey.

Resolution

The Resolution is the answer to whether your character overcomes their conflict. For the resolution, look for a moment that represents the outcome of the Heart's journey.

The Core Question: Conflict, Initiation, Resolution.

A Heart with strong Desire runs into conflict. He/she decides to accept the challenge, and go on a journey to overcome it.

Journey

A collection of milestones along your character's way to overcoming their conflict. The journey serves to increase anticipation for the resolution.

Look for key milestones that occurred on the Heart's path to overcoming the conflict.
    Hurdles: Significant challenges that the character overcomes on his path to the
    Resolution.
Look for moments when the Heart tried, and failed.
Look for moments that demonstrate the Heart's Desire, Uniqueness, or Complexity.

A strong Journey heightens engagement in the story, increasing the emotional impact of the Resolution.

The Jab

The call to action or greater message you want to communicate. Strong and relevant Jabs are often found by examining the Resolution - and zooming out. The Resolution is particular to the Heart, but the Jab should have implications for the audience. What action do you want the audience to take? It can be direct or subtle. Use the 5 keywords to choose the best way to approach the Jab.

Places
How you show (don't tell) your plot visually. Places communicate plot. Through them, audiences become witnesses of the story. A story with expected visuals bores audiences.

Emphasizing different pillars results in dramatically different stories. Leading with the people pillar will help strengthen your story because people = story. Facts don't create emotional connections. Remarkable characters do. We visually communicate a character's Plot Points

through Places. The more unexpected the places, the better. Property leveraging Places we can best communicate the work we did in the People, Plot, and Purpose pillars. Place doesn't have to be so literal.

4 Layers of Place
1. Environment - Locations, settings or a collection of objects.
2. Situations - Scenarios, or actions a person it taking.
3. Objects - Specific items that you'll find within an environment.
4. Time - Seasons, certain hours of the day, periods in history, or shot durations.

All 4 layers are always in play. Examine how each layer of place may communicate a Plot Point. Examine how each layer of place may communicate a Plot Point. Strong Places are both unexpected and relevant.

Strategies
1. During the pre-interview, ask the character to describe where important moments took place.
2. Write a schedule of the character's daily routine.
3. When scouting locations, spend time with the characters in their own environment.

Remember
1. Ask where moments occured.
2. Understand Daily Routines.
3. Visit the environments to find inspiration.

Three Primary Methods:
1. Coverage - Is shooting a Plot Point as it happens (Future and Found Coverage)
2. Re-creation - Involves filming a simulated scene where something happened.
3. Representation - Uses symbols or similar scenarios to demonstrate the Plot Point.
   a. Similar Scene
   b. Object
   c. Illustration