

Personal narrative

Personal Narrative is the two stage process of starting a conversation using your own personal experiences and values (SELF) to frame the problem you want to share (PROBLEM)

Stage 1: Establish legitimacy as a trusted voice

How: Connect **your experiences and values** to the issue.

The aim of **SELF** is to use personal experiences and values to legitimise your connection to the issue. This will allow you to frame the problem you want to share, rather than using facts or statistics which can alienate and make people feel guilty. Starting a conversation with a personal experience establishes a values-based conversation from the start rather than one that is framed by facts, policy or hypothetical situations. A personal experience that connects you to the issue doesn't need to be based on someone you know who is seeking asylum as many of us don't have this experience. It can be a moment you share from a newspaper article or a movie which is no less powerful or legitimate. Sharing something that has touched or concerned you and explaining how it sits with your values, is a soft, inclusive entry point to start a conversation.

Stage 4: Progressing internalised attitude change

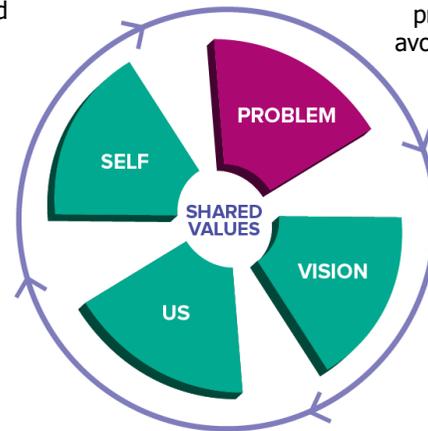
How: Invite people to take the next step (big or small) in action which further connects their **experiences and values** to the issue.

The aim of **US** is to invite people to join you in taking the next step so they can further connect their experiences and values to the issue. If we think of a time when we shifted our attitude on an issue, it is probably due to learning more from a trusted friend who shared our values and introduced us to experiences we hadn't been exposed to before. We weren't pressured to change our attitudes it just happened as a natural consequence of making our own connection with the issue. This is what US (and the framework) is all about. At this stage it is important to tailor the ask to the person. Someone who is at the beginning of learning more about the issue may go to a movie, or join you for coffee with someone you know who is seeking asylum, whereas for someone who already cares deeply the invitation will be to take more strategic action. Walking alongside people and inviting them to engage with the issue and the people most impacted is at the heart of shifting community attitudes on the rights of people seeking asylum.

Stage 2: Create space to reflect on values

How: Frame the problem on your own terms, reflect on the human impact of the problem and highlight **how this contradicts your values**.

The aim of **PROBLEM** is to frame the problem on your terms so you drive the conversation rather than being led off topic to problems where you're expected to have all the answers. By *focussing on one problem* such as family reunion or temporary protection, this provides direction and gives you a reference point to keep the conversation on track. During this stage it is important to highlight how the problem is impacting on people, how the problem contradicts those values you spoke of earlier and who is responsible for the problem. This will allow people to understand the cause of the problem and avoid people feeling responsible themselves and open up the conversation so both parties can reflect, acknowledge each other's concerns and gain a better understanding of where views align. Finding common ground allows the conversation to progress from the problem onto a vision.



Stage 3: Transition to shared values

How: Ask questions that build awareness of **shared values** and allow people to consider fair and humane alternatives.

The aim of **VISION** is to build the awareness that common ground exists due to some aspect of the problem contradicting the shared values of both parties. Once this has been established, fair and humane alternatives can be considered. Finding common ground and understanding of shared values is a turning point in the conversation. This is where attitudes begin to shift. For example, people may continue to be concerned about family members coming to Australia and 'taking jobs' but agree that people being separated indefinitely from their family is unfair. During this stage it is important to ask open ended questions to bring people into the conversation so they can further connect with the problem and consider how things could be different. For many this will be the first time they've felt compelled to consider alternatives and may take a number of conversations to reach this point.

Getting on the right track

Getting on the right track is a two stage process of moving the focus of the conversation from problem to solutions (VISION) and where shared values creates an environment where taking the next step becomes possible (US).

Using the Conversation Framework

Personal narrative

Stage 1: Establish legitimacy as a trusted voice

Steps:

- Start the conversation with an experience or moment that connects you to the issue
- Share how your values influence why you care about this

I've had to raise my children on my own. Although it was tough while they were kids we're very close as adults and I know no matter what happens, they've got my back. My son lives in Brisbane and I know I have the freedom to jump on a plane and visit him. So when I think about people here seeking asylum, especially the young guys around the same age as my son, they've fled at a time when our Government was offering permanent protection, thinking that if they made it to Australia, one day they could bring their elderly parents, or wives and kids here safely.

Stage 4: Progressing internalised attitude change

Steps:

- Invite people to take the next step in finding out more to further connect their experiences and values to the issue.

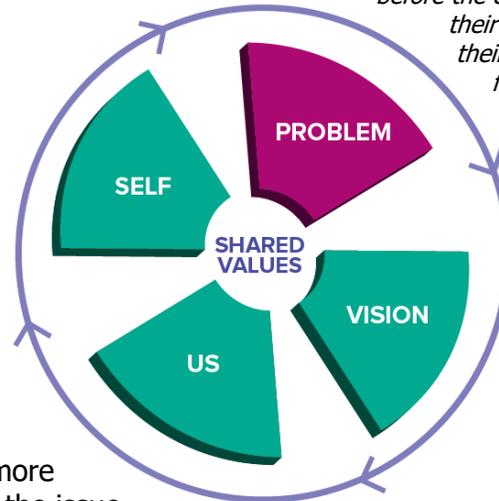
I have been thinking a lot about this lately which is important but not going to change anything for the families affected. The Refugee Action Collective is holding a forum on temporary protection in the city next week and there will be people who are going through this process speaking. Would you be interested in coming along and hearing what it's like for them? It would be great to have you there and we can grab something to eat afterwards.

Stage 2: Create space to reflect on values

Steps:

- Frame the problem you want to share
- Describe how the problem impacts on people, how this contradicts your values and who is responsible for it

That's why I think the Government changing the rules in 2014 removing permanent protection and introducing temporary visas is so deeply unfair and cruel. It means people who arrived here before the changes but are applying for their protection visas now have no way of seeing their families again, because it's not safe to go back and the Government won't let their loved ones come here. And I try to put myself in their position and just can't fathom how devastating it must be to be told that. I just think it's unfair, what do you think? It's never been like this, except for a short time during the Howard years, Governments on both sides of politics have afforded people permanent protection, so we've proved before that we can treat people fairly.



Stage 3: Transition to shared values

Steps:

- Bring people into the conversation by asking open ended questions to connect people's values to the issue and establish common ground
- Ask questions about how things can be different to allow people to consider alternatives

What do you think? I just think it's better for everybody if we have people living in our communities who have their family around them so they can get on with rebuilding their lives together. How could that help us all build a stronger community? I just put myself in the same position and if I knew my family were coming I would be able to rest, be effective at work, knowing they too would be safe. What kind of responsibility does the Government have to let families be together? I really think it's not unreasonable to be asking our politicians to prioritise family and fairness. What do you think?

Getting on the right track