



positive  
rhetoric

# Telling Your Story

*An Ambassador's guide to  
writing and speaking about the gift of life*

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**Positive Rhetoric**

**Thank you for volunteering to be an Ambassador with LifeSource.** This short guide should help you see and describe the vivid images and special moments that will help make your story memorable and persuasive to everyone who hears you speak about the gift of donation and transplantation.

Follow the outline to write a draft of your speech. Remember, your audience wants to hear you--so let your personality shine through as you write and then deliver your speech. Are you lighthearted? Serious? Funny? You can allow those parts of your personality to play in to your speech, as it is appropriate. Talking about donation and transplantation can be tough, but let yourself be you--your audience will appreciate your sincerity and seeing your personality as well.

**Tip: When you answer these using this outline to write your speech, try to avoid general, unspecific language like:**

*We were just so grateful and excited when we got the call.*

Tell us with concrete, vivid, detailed language what these moments were like to experience! For example:

*"The phone rang only two times before my wife lifted the receiver. We all looked at her and watched her face, because somehow we all had a feeling who was on the other end of the line. Her face was pale at first, then her eyes got wide. She looked at me, and I could see her cheeks get pink and her hands shake a little. I knew it was the call. THE call. And now everything was about to change."*

.....**Step One: The Free Write** ..

.. **The 5/5/5 Write**

Take out your watch or a timer. Put 60 minutes on the timer. Now, sit down with your computer or notepad and spend no more than 60 minutes writing an answer to the following questions:

- What is your story about donation and/or transplantation? **Give yourself FIVE WORDS to answer this question.** It's hard, right? We all have incredible stories to tell, and it's hard to get to the very most important words to express our connection. Here is an example, from my own story:

.. • *Loving mother leaves hopeful legacy.*

That helped get to the heart of the matter!

- **Now, with FIVE SENTENCES, answer the same question.** What is your story about donation and/or transplantation?

A little easier, right? As we expand out, keep thinking about these special, essential words and ideas that you want to make sure you express. One more exercise, and then you will use this work to write your speech!

- **Finally, with FIVE PARAGRAPHS, answer the same question.** What is your story about donation and/or transplantation?

### **Step Two: Finding Your Speech**

You might have intense feelings around sometimes deeply tragic events--those are very hard things to write about. *You should be proud of yourself for getting it all out on paper.*

Using the work you just completed, take a few minutes to format your speech using the following outlines.

**For the most painful moments of your story, it's okay to decide not to answer a question or leave those details private.** We understand that some things are just too private or too personal to share. Rrgcug tgeej "qw^q"Vgtguc"kh"{ qwj cxg"c"s wgunqp"cdqw^y j cv^q"uj ctg"qt"y cpv^q"l k^ewuu"{ qwt "ur ggej lrxqt { 0'

### Speech Outline

- Tell the audience your name, that you represent LifeSource as an Ambassador, and thank them for their time, attention, and help.
- Describe in 1-3 sentences what it felt like the first moment you knew your life (or your loved one's life) would be touched by donation and/or transplantation. Where were you? Were you sitting or standing (if you can remember)? What did the room or place feel like? Did you experience any physical symptoms when you found out (did you feel numb or tingly, did you feel lightheaded, did you feel strong or solid, did you feel relief or fear)?

Recipient/Recipient Family	Donor Family	Living Donor
Describe in 3-5 sentences the timeframe for your/your loved one's wait list process. That would possibly include the onset of a condition (give the approximate date), when transplantation was raised as a possibility, the date of being listed, etc.	Describe in 1-3 sentences each 2 special or meaningful memories you cherish about your loved one. Use vivid details to describe these. What were you hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, or smelling? Pretend like you are a movie screenwriter. Put us in the setting, make us feel what you felt during those special moments.	Describe in 3-5 sentences the first time you heard the word "living donation" as a possibility for saving someone's life.
Describe in 5-6 sentences your/your loved one's transplant process. Include information about your/your loved one's donor here. Feel free to expand on your connection to your donor family, if possible. Express your feelings toward your donor and their loved ones.	Tell us in 3-5 sentences what you knew about donation prior to this time in your loved ones' life. Describe your impression or understanding of donation before your loved one became a donor.	Describe your recipient (if you were connected to them, how the process came about, etc.) in 4-8 sentences.
	Tell us in 5-10 sentences how your loved one decided to become a donor? How did your loved one communicate that decision to you? Why did you support their decision?	Describe in 1-3 sentences what it felt like the first moment you knew you were "a match." Where were you? Were you sitting or standing (if you can remember)? What did the room or place feel like? Did you experience any physical symptoms when you found out (did you feel numb or tingly, did you feel lightheaded, did you feel strong or solid, did you feel relief or fear)?

- Describe in 1-3 sentences **each** the 2 most special or meaningful moments you have experienced since your life (your loved one's life) has been touched by donation and/or transplantation. Use vivid details to describe these. What were you hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, or smelling?

Pretend like you are a movie screenwriter. Put us in the setting, make us feel what you felt during those special moments.

- List the three things you wish you could **tell every person in the world** about donation and transplantation.
- If you have more time, feel free to list the three things people ask you the most about your experience with donation or transplant. After that, list your best answers to those questions.
- Ask if the audience if they are registered organ and tissue donors and, if not, encourage them to sign up online [http://www.organdonor.gov](#).
- Or ask them to say “yes” at the Drivers Negpug Office when they obtain or renew their driver’s license.
- **If there is a Question and Answer time...**
  - If staff member is with you, simply direct donation process questions to them.
  - If you’ve been through the LifeSource Ambassador training, you’ll be able to handle many of these, especially if you prepare a bit by reviewing your [Tguqwtg'I wk'g](#) beforehand.
  - Use the *Questions Form* if there are questions you are uncomfortable with or unable to answer.

### **Step Three: Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Now, it’s time to read what you have written out loud. Read it to yourself, or a loved one, or even a pet. Just start practicing your speech! You can make tweaks and changes. You might need to make your sentences a bit shorter so that they are easier to say. You might need to shorten or lengthen some sections.

Most opportunities will give you 5-7 minutes to tell your story, so your first speech should be that length.

**Ambassadors tell me that the hardest speeches to write are between 5-7 minutes, because longer speeches allow you lots of time for details, and shorter speeches force you to get to the most important points without any digressions.** A 5-7 minute speech is hard to write, yet:

- 1) is the most frequently requested speaking opportunity time and
- 2) very persuasive.

**If you are given a time limit for a speech, it is imperative that you do not run long.**

*If your speech runs “long”, you need to cut it down.* As hard as that is to do, if you run over time, you are potentially interrupting a larger program, and putting your audience in an uncomfortable position (and your host as well!). **Please make it a priority to speak to your allotted time.** It makes you look good, it makes your audience feel good, and it keeps people asking Ambassadors back to the same events! **Good speakers are always at or under time. Period.**

*Remember, you can use your 5/5/5 exercise to help you get to the \*most important words\* for a short speech.*

**Some basic tips for delivering your speech:**

- Remember, speak at a slower speed than you would in normal conversation. Slow and steady is easiest for your audience to understand.
- "Tgo go dgt to breathe!

- Even if you are nervous, “fake it ‘til you make it”! Pretending to be confident while giving your speech will eventually make you \*feel\* confident while giving your speech.
- Try not to only read from the page. Making eye contact, even sporadically, will help your audience connect with you.
- Before telling your story to any audience, we recommend filling out the **Ambassador Opportunity Worksheet**. This form helps you tailor your speech very specifically to our special community (hospitals, schools, or churches, for example). The **Ambassador Opportunity Worksheet** is the next form in the manual.

Thank you for taking this time to write a speech about your experience. It takes bravery, passion, and dedication to be an Ambassador for organ and tissue donation. **Please remember: telling your story can and will save lives.** We are all grateful for your time, effort, and care.

<b>Ambassador Opportunity Worksheet</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	
<b>Opportunity</b>	
<b>TIME LIMIT</b>	
<b>Speaking to?</b>	
	<i>professions? (best guess, if needed)</i>
	<i>approximate age range?</i>
<b>When in *their* day am I speaking?</b>	<i>(ex. lunch, during staff meeting?)</i> "
<b>Speaking with a LifeSource staff member?</b>	" <i>kl'f gu.'y j qA'Y j cv'ku'vj gkt 't qrgA</i> "
<b>What is the intention of this presentation?</b>	<i>(ex. to register more donors, to thank hospital staff, to educate students, etc.)</i>
<b>When during the presentation will I speak?</b>	<i>(ex: first, at the end, etc.)</i>
<b>Do I need visual aids?</b>	<i>Are visual aids necessary? Truly helpful?</i>
<b>What equipment will be available for me to use, if I do have visual aids or a powerpoint?</b>	<i>Am I prepared to trouble shoot any equipment or technology I use?</i>
<b>What do I want to persuade this particular audience to do?</b>	<i>What is the CALL TO ACTION that is APPROPRIATE for this audience? Register to be a donor? Please continue to support donation in your hospital, etc.? Speak with your family about your donation decision?</i>

# Speech Tips

*from our best Ambassadors*

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**Speak more slowly than you think you should.**

*If you speak too fast people won't clearly hear your words and will find it difficult to remember your message.*

**Embrace the emotions that come, even while speaking.**

*Tears are a human reaction to talking about hard things—it makes you more relatable to your audience. No need to apologize for tears!*

**Try to make eye contact with all the corners and sections of the room.**

*Connecting with everyone in the room will help your audience better hear your message.*

**Make your speech fit your audience.**

*Use your Ambassador Opportunity Worksheet every time to tailor your speech for each audience. Different audiences need to hear different messages.*

**Sincerely acknowledge your gratitude for those people who helped you/your loved one.**

*Be creative in offering gratitude. Try using phrases like “I am grateful for...” or “I feel so much gratitude to....” in addition to saying “thank you.”*