Narrative 4 Overview

**Mission:** Narrative 4 harnesses the power of the story exchange to equip and embolden young adults to improve their lives, communities and the world.

**Vision:** A world where young adults lead with empathy

**Philosophy:** Fearless hope through radical empathy.

**Motto:** Share today. Change tomorrow.

Narrative 4 was officially established in **2012** by **Lisa Consiglio and Colum McCann.**

**Quick history:** N4’s leaders began testing exchanges with various communities in 2007 (under the umbrella of the Aspen Writers’ Foundation and the leadership of co-founder and current N4 CEO, Lisa Consiglio), working with students in Colorado, New Orleans, LA, Fort Duchesne, UT and post-earthquake Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as well as with Arab and Jewish populations in Israel.

In June of 2012, an unprecedented gathering of literary minds and social justice advocates convened for five days, stirring up a wave of ideas and dreams for how the world could be transformed through stories. They stepped outside of their daily lives and came together as friends, colleagues, and authors to explore the role that stories, storytellers and story-based arts programs play in our global culture. The group tackled questions such as: "What is the highest aim of storytelling, and how can we harness that energy to transform our society?" and "What capacity does literature have to articulate and sustain a vision of enlightened leadership?"

The result was an innovative organization created by the same authors and advisors who gathered to contemplate new narratives of individual, social, and political meaning: Narrative 4.

**Key Founding Artists and Activists:** Colum McCann, Reza Aslan, Terry Tempest Williams, Tobias Wolff, Ishmael Beah, Lila Azam Zanganeh, Ron Rash, Greg Khalil, Firoozeh Dumas, Darrell Bourque, Sting and many other artists and activists.

**Program Reach:** 4 continents, 12 countries, 18 US states. Estimated 25,000 participants reached since 2013. 80% of programs are in schools (middle, high and university) and 20% of special programs are with adults.

**Four Components of a Story Exchange Facilitator Training Workshop:** Module 1: Introduction to Narrative 4; Module 2: Experience the Story Exchange; Module 3: Facilitation Skills; Module 4: Implementing N4 in the Community
Impact of the story exchanges in the classroom:
1. Develop active listening skills
2. Engage in peer-to-peer learning
3. Practice communication skills
4. Enhance reading and writing skills
5. Improve self-reflection and self-awareness
6. Experience an overall increase in positive emotions
7. Promote civic responsibility
8. Create positive school climates
9. Increase awareness of diversity
10. Suspend argument, engage emotions and experience compassion

Key assumptions:
1. There is a universal interest in stories and story-based arts experiences
2. Humans respond both emotionally and intellectually more to stories than to mere statements of fact
3. We only need one story to significantly change our narrative
4. Have the means and skills, people will strive to play greater and more positive roles in their communities
5. Enthusiasm, deep optimism and empathy are contagious

Description of Empathy-Into-Action: N4 has become one of the world’s most impactful organizations in the fields of empathy and education. The “Empathy Into Action” campaigns are designed to break open intractable issues through the use of our core methodology and creative, impactful applications of the story exchange and community project models around the world.

5 Empathy-Into-Action Main Themes (several points of intersection and myriad sub-themes under each category): Environment, Faith, Identity, Immigration and Violence.

Key Research Findings: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence study indicates that N4 US high school students feel positive emotions more than the average US high school student. University of Chicago report indicates that empathy levels increase after the story exchange.
Examples of Story Exchanges in the Classroom:
General: http://www.dianemoorephotography.com/page1
Virtual exchange: https://narrative4.com/2017/03/cross-cultural-classroom-magic-mexico-chicago/
Object exchange: https://narrative4.com/2017/03/object-lesson-bringing-arab-israeli-high-school-students-together/

Examples of Story Exchanges in the Community:
Theatre performance inspired by story exchange: https://narrative4.com/2017/05/singing-another-story/
Students and police: https://narrative4.com/2017/05/students-and-police-join-forces-for-empathy/

Examples of Empathy into Action:
Regional Summit: https://narrative4.com/2017/10/first-regional-summit/
Faith and Identity: https://narrative4.com/2017/03/object-lesson-bringing-arab-israeli-high-school-students-together/

Media resources:
What is Empathy? https://narrative4.com/2016/10/what-is-empathy/
Our Story https://narrative4.com/2015/02/2300/
New York magazine “Guns in America”
PBS NewsHour: N4’s Summit https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/barrier-breaking-power-learning-someones-else-story
New York Times Magazine: A Tale of Two Schools
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/05/04/magazine/tale-of-two-schools.html?_r=0
Crossing the Divide: N4 in High Schools https://youtu.be/90m_p42QGE8
We are Narrative 4: vimeo.com/245441574
Example of One Day Exchange

9:00am-3:45pm (Lunch Included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:15am</td>
<td>Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-9:45am</td>
<td>Introduction to N4 and Reading Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45-10:15am</td>
<td>Modeling and Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15-10:30am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45am</td>
<td>Check-In (Hopes/Fears)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45-11:45am</td>
<td>Pairing and Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45-12:45pm</td>
<td>Lunch and Visual Creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45-2:15pm</td>
<td>Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:30pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00pm</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30pm</td>
<td>Evaluations/Complete Group Visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-3:45pm</td>
<td>Farewells</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of 2 day exchange

Day One: 3 hours
Gathering: 15 minutes
Intro: 15 minutes
Discussion of Readings: 20 minutes
Modeling & Q: 30 minutes
Break: 10 minutes
Pairing & Sharing: 60 minutes
Explanation and examples of visualization/gathering materials/Q&A: 30 minutes

Day Two: 3 hours
Gathering: 15 minutes
Check in: 15 minutes
Exchange: 90 minutes
Break: 10 minutes
Reflection: 30 minutes
Evaluations, Testimonial and Photos: 20 minutes
Growing Light by George Ella Lyon
I write this poem
Out of Darkness
To you
Who are also in darkness
Because our lives demand it.

This poem is a hand on your shoulder
A bone to touch to go with you
Through the hard birth of vision
In other words, love
Shapes this poem
Is the fist that holds the chisel
Muscle that drags the marble
And burns with the weight
Of believing a face
Lives in the stone
A breathing word in the body.

I tell you
Though the darkness
Has been ours
Words will give us
Give our eyes, opened in promise
A growing light.
Courage by Anne Sexton

It is in the small things we see it.
The child's first step,
as awesome as an earthquake.
The first time you rode a bike,
wallowing up the sidewalk.
The first spanking when your heart
went on a journey all alone.
When they called you crybaby
or poor or fatty or crazy
and made you into an alien,
you drank their acid
and concealed it.

Later,
if you faced the death of bombs and bullets
you did not do it with a banner,
you did it with only a hat to
cover your heart.
You did not fondle the weakness inside you
though it was there.
Your courage was a small coal
that you kept swallowing.
If your buddy saved you
and died himself in so doing,
then his courage was not courage,
it was love; love as simple as shaving soap.
Later,
if you have endured a great despair,
then you did it alone,
getting a transfusion from the fire,
picking the scabs off your heart,
then wringing it out like a sock.
Next, my kinsman, you powdered your sorrow,
you gave it a back rub
and then you covered it with a blanket
and after it had slept a while
it woke to the wings of the roses
and was transformed.

Later,
when you face old age and its natural conclusion
your courage will still be shown in the little ways,
each spring will be a sword you'll sharpen,
those you love will live in a fever of love,
and you'll bargain with the calendar
and at the last moment
when death opens the back door
you'll put on your carpet slippers
and stride out.

“Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak.”—Thomas Carlyle
“The most essential factor is persistence—the determination never to allow your energy or enthusiasm to be dampened by the discouragement that must inevitably come.”—James Whitcomb Riley

See It Through
by Edgar Guest

When you're up against a trouble,  
Meet it squarely, face to face;
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,  
Plant your feet and take a brace.
When it's vain to try to dodge it,  
Do the best that you can do;
You may fail, but you may conquer,  
See it through!

Black may be the clouds about you  
And your future may seem grim,
But don't let your nerve desert you;  
Keep yourself in fighting trim.
If the worst is bound to happen,  
Spite of all that you can do,
Running from it will not save you,  
See it through!

Even hope may seem but futile,  
When with troubles you're beset,
But remember you are facing  
Just what other men have met.
You may fail, but fall still fighting;  
Don't give up, whate'er you do;
Eyes front, head high to the finish.  
See it through!
Hamida Dakane

“Hello my Name is Hamida Dakane. I was participant of Narrative 4 early this year, and I also did the modeling for the welcoming week season. The first time I shared my story I was scared, but hopeful. On the other hand when I was telling my partner’s story, I come to learn that I have to value her story, because that was somebody’s most vulnerable piece. However, the lesson I learnt from Narrative 4 was listening, because before Narrative 4 I was one human being who only listened to respond, regardless of what people are talking about, I never bothered to listen, and Narrative 4 you cannot talk when others are talking all you have to do is to listen. The other thing is you will find friends who will be just like family to you. You will build great relationship with community member that you could never meet, let alone have been their friend. Am glad I was given the chance to participate.”

Elly Schaefer

“The first time I went to a Narrative 4 event, I was completely unprepared for the story exchange. I wasn’t sure exactly what I was going to say, but I was even less prepared for what I would feel. The process of exchanging a story with someone is deeply personal, but also deeply liberating. Hearing my story told as if it belonged to another person gave me a better perspective on what had actually happened. I came to understand myself better after this first exchange, and this experience has repeated itself at each subsequent Narrative 4 event I have attended. It also didn’t hurt that each exchange brought a new friend into my life. It was as if we were bonded. I was hooked.”

Masihulla Fnu (Massi)

“To me Narrative 4 was a unique experience from which I discovered outside of myself. I found out that I am not the only one suffered but there are others who suffered even worse than me. To be healed and thrived from all
those bad stories (I am referring to bad ones) it is in our best interest to share it with people instead of just keeping it inside ourselves."

"After the recent US election, I realized I had taken too much for granted politically and didn’t like what this divisiveness was bringing out in me…judging others, for my perception, of their ignorance and hate. Pointing fingers perpetuated the polarity and my distress, so I knew I had to switch gears and direct my energy into bridging the divide. I set out to get to know others who had different life experiences than my own and that’s when Narrative 4 seemed to surface. I loved the idea of getting to know a diverse group through personal stories and dialog around the theme of Immigration and community…a dynamic process involving an equal exchange not just us (the dominant culture) asking them (Immigrants/refugees) to bare their souls. As both a participant and Ambassador, I was struck by people’s courage to be vulnerable and the remarkable resiliency of the human spirit. My definition of hero has since expanded, as I realized heroes were everywhere, everyday. While my story was less extreme than my partner’s story of her childhood in Kenya and subsequent immigration to the US, she was still moved and informed….we both felt a deeper understanding of one another. Through this connection our hearts were primed and open to future encounters. The experience definitely cultivated empathy, which was radical because it happened quickly. I walked in a stranger on Friday night, and by Sunday I had 16 new friends/acquaintances from around the world….all living in this community. If I had to sum it up my N4 experience in 3 words they would be: Privilege, understanding and opening.”

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“I knew my partner, but exchanging our stories deepened our friendship and loyalty to one another significantly. We have continued to work together on a project that we hope will be of significant importance to his community. Being in the exchange also helped heal a wound. One of the other participants and I had had a fairly serious conflict and we had become wary, even distrustful of each other, but I know that hearing his story gave me tremendous new understanding and respect for him; I think the exchange had a similar effect for him.”