



WHY TELL STORIES?

- Stories win hearts
- **Personal stories have been shown to be more convincing than facts and stats.**

If facts and stats changed laws, all we would need to do is show up at a state Legislature with a one-pager on how marijuana prohibition is ineffective, costly, and causes more harm than marijuana itself. We need stories though. And every successful medical marijuana bill has come with real, emotional testimony from real people. Numbers are easy to ignore, the face of a cancer patient or a grieving mother is not.

WHEN/WHERE TO TELL STORIES:

- When lobbying (Legislators or school administrators)
- In letters to the editor or blog posts
- When tabling

AN EFFECTIVE STORY MUST BE:

- Visionary - "Five years from now, we will look back and see that..."
- Authentic - To make a story sticky, you have to make yourself vulnerable.
- Legitimate - What makes you uniquely qualified to tell this story?
- Unexpected - The unexpected part of the story is usually most memorable.
- Emotional - If you don't give people a reason to remember, they won't.

TO HELP YOU GET STARTED, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PROMPTS:

- Why do you fight the drug war?
- "My SSDP story is..."
- The war on drugs is a war on ____
- Do you know a sick person who uses marijuana as medicine?
- Do you know someone who has died or nearly died from alcohol poisoning or a drug overdose?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Have you been denied financial aid due to a drug conviction?



EXAMPLE STORIES

Premise: Marijuana improves the quality of life of sick people

Supporting argument: My grandmother, who suffers from chronic and debilitating arthritis, finds great relief in using marijuana.

Supporting argument: She has been prescribed nearly every FDA-approved pain medication, but she says they make her sleepy, ill, and unable to care for herself. Marijuana allows her to live the pain-free and productive life she wants.

Conclusion: West Virginians should have safe access to marijuana

Premise: 911 Good Samaritan Policies save lives

Supporting argument: My friend Rick drank too much and got alcohol poisoning one night at a party. The hosts were afraid of getting in trouble so they hesitated when calling 911. The paramedics arrived 5 minutes too late and Rick died.

Supporting argument: Every day I think about what if we had called 911 just 5 minutes earlier. What if nobody hesitated because no one was afraid of getting in trouble. Rick would still be alive today.

Conclusion: No one should have to lose a friend or a son or daughter because people were afraid to call for help. The University of Miami needs a 911 Good Samaritan Policy now.