

Sandor P. Schuman

storyteller, speaker, educator, author, editor, storytelling and writing coach

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Artist CV

My Father was a storyteller. It was his everyday way of communicating important values and ideas. I followed his example, but didn't realize it until several years ago. After leading a three-day training program at the Pentagon, I read the attendees' evaluation forms. In response to the question, *What did you like best about the program?* several people responded, "Sandy's stories." I didn't understand what they were talking about, so I asked my co-trainer. He replied, "Remember you told that story about the meeting in the Adirondacks, and one about the volunteer board of directors, and another about ..." I realized then that I had told a lot of stories. That's how I found out I was a storyteller. Since then I've told stories more consciously and formally. I continue to tell stories in my organizational consulting work, but also in public performances where I tell personal adventures, historical sagas, tall tales, and stories in the Jewish storytelling tradition. Take a look at what I have to offer and invite me to tell you a story – or help you tell yours.

Most of my professional life has been directed towards helping groups and organizations work more collaboratively and effectively. As an educator I have taught graduate and executive education courses on these topics; as a group facilitator I lead groups in problem solving and strategic decision making processes. As an author I wrote many articles and book chapters (some of which are listed below). I edited a professional journal for more than ten years and edited a series of three professional handbooks for Jossey-Bass/Wiley. If you want to know more about that work, take a look at my blog, [Communication, Collaboration, Consensus](http://Communication.Collaboration.Consensus), company website, Executive Decision Services, and Handbooks website.

Education

Ph.D. 1995, University at Albany, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy
M.P.A. 1979, University at Albany, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy
B.S. 1973, Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Books (since 2005)

Fiction

[*Adirondack Mendel's Aufruf: Welcome to Chelm's Pond*](#). Albany, NY: This Too Shall Pass Press, 2012.

Non-fiction

[*The Handbook for Working with Difficult Groups*](#). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2010, editor.
[*Creating a Culture of Collaboration*](#). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2006, editor.
[*The IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation*](#). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2005, editor.
[*Listening to the City*](#). College Station, TX: VBW Publishing, 2005, editor.

Stories and Articles (past 5 years)

Three Wishes. In, *A Family Treasury of Mitzvah Stories*, G. Milgram and E. Frankel, eds., forthcoming.
Blog: Another Side to the Story (tothestory.blogspot.com)
Blog: [Communication, Collaboration, Consensus](http://Communication.Collaboration.Consensus) (sschuman.blogspot.com)
Facilitation Trivia! *Global Flipchart*, Feb. – Dec., 2011 (multi-issue column).
[*Graduates, a Diploma is a License to Learn*](#). Albany, NY: *Times Union – Perspectives*, Sun., Jun. 26, 2011, p. 1.
[*Schuman's Rules of Problem Solving*](#). *IAF Europe Newsletter*, Feb., 2011, pp. 22-24.
It's Hard to Tell a Hug. In, *A Mother's Day Anthology*, Toronto, ON: XoXo Publishing, 2010.
[*Letters to Ims*](#). Albany, NY: *Times Union – Perspectives*, Sun., Sep. 6, 2009, p. 1.

Professional Arts Affiliations

International Association of Facilitators	Jewish Storytelling Coalition
International Jew's Harp Society	League for the Advancement of New England Storytelling
Jew's Harp Guild	National Storytelling Network
Jewish Book Council Author Network	Story Circle at Proctors: The Resident Storytelling Company

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Performances (past two years)

04-01-14	Arthur's Market	Schenectady, NY
03-23-14	Word Plays: Second Chances	Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, NY
03-01-14	Storytelling at the Temple	Temple Sinai, Saratoga Springs, NY
02-16-14	Word Plays: Love: Lost and Found	Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, NY
02-09-14	Children at the Well	Christ our Light Church, Albany, NY
01-26-14	Story Sundays: Three Spirits in Winter	Glen Sander's Mansion, Scotia, NY
01-08-14	Caffè Lena	Saratoga Springs, NY
01-05-14	Word Plays: Betrayal and Beyond	Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, NY
12-08-13	Boston Limmud	Mishkan Tefila, Chestnut Hill, MA
12-04-13	Massry Residence	Albany, NY
11-14-13	Interfaith Story Circle	Niskayuna, NY
11-10-13	Tellabration (Story Circle at Proctor's annual event)	Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, NY
11-07-13	NYC Facilitators Group	Peace Institute, NYC, NY
08-04-13	Not Just for Kids Storytelling Festival	Schoharie Crossing, Fort Hunter, NY
07-30-13	Eastline Books	Clifton Park, NY
07-16-13	Story by Story (television program)	Colonie, NY
06-02-13	Jewish Book Council Network Conference	New York, NY
05-05-13	Jewish View (television program)	Delmar, NY
04-06-13	Sharing the Fire: The Northeast Storytelling Conference	South Portland, ME
03-10-13	Passover Family Workshops	Temple Israel, Albany, NY
02-13-13	Lunch & Learn	Temple Israel, Albany, NY
01-27-13	Muskrat Manor	Castleton, NY
01-20-13	Winter Lights (Interfaith Story Circle annual event)	Albany, NY
01-14-13	Caffè Lena	Saratoga Springs, NY
01-13-13	Men's Club Breakfast	Temple Israel, Albany, NY
12-02-12	Jewish Storytelling Festival	Ohav Shalom, Albany, NY
04-21-12	Riverway Storytelling Festival	Albany, NY
02-20-12	Front Parlor	Albany, NY
01-11-12	Occupy Caffè Lena	Saratoga Springs, NY

Professional References

Name	Bonnie Mion	John Rohrbaugh
Title	Psychotherapist/ life coach	Professor
Organization	Self employed	University at Albany
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Teaching Resume

A dear friend, a retired educator with several decades of experience, told me he had volunteered to teach a Hebrew class. I asked him, "what is your educational approach?" He replied with one word. "Love."

While my teaching approach includes establishing clear learning objectives, developing a step-by-step plan, providing an overview to students and guiding them through each phase, using a mixture of presentations, individual tasks, small-group exercises, and large group discussions, thoughtfully preparing materials and handouts, and remaining flexible to meet learners' emerging needs and interests, I have based all of those techniques on my friend's foundation. I love the artistry I teach, I love to teach it, I love to see the participants learn and discover their own talents, and I love the relationships we build.

Because of my love of teaching and learning, I am very patient. I understand that the material may be difficult for participants to understand and absorb even though it is clear and ingrained for me. Unpacking my understanding and figuring out how to present it in a way that connects with a particular learner is a challenge that I find highly rewarding. I have taught undergraduate, graduate, and executive education classes for decades in my capacity at the University at Albany, SUNY. Having retired from that job, I now apply my artistic and teaching skills to more informal settings.

I have thoroughly incorporated my professional group facilitation skills into my approach to teaching. My workshops and classes are highly interactive, engaging individuals in small-group and large-group activities that bring forward their own knowledge and experience. I intersperse brief presentations between individual and group exercises, simulations, case studies, projects, and discussions.

Educational Appointments

Information Science PhD Program/ Informatics Department, 2000-2010, University at Albany.

Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, 1985-2008.

Public Management Institute, NYS Department of Social Services, 1985-1995.

Extension Education Planning Director and Coordinator for Program Development and Evaluation, NYS Energy Office, 1978-1983.

Program Development Specialist and Regional Extension Specialist, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, 1973-1977.

Teaching Experience

Graduate Courses

Group Facilitation
Improving Group Effectiveness
Bargaining and Negotiation
Government Decision Making
Information Management
Data, Decisions, and Models
Homeland Security Applications
Executive Skill Development

Executive Education Courses

Group Facilitation Skills
Working with Difficult Groups
Effective Communication
Conflict Management Systems in the Workplace
Conflict Management and Team Work
Judgment Analysis: Resolving Conflicts among Experts
Systems Thinking
Analytical, Monitoring, and Decision-Making Tools for Managers
Information, Technology, and Government

Conference Workshops and Presentations (since 2005)

How to Tell a Story. Jewish Storytelling Festival, Dec. 2, 2012, Ohav Shalom, Albany, NY.

Thinking Together. National Security Agency, Aug. 6, 2012, Fort Meade, MD, keynote.

Stories at Work: How to Create, Tell, and Use Stories with Groups and Organizations.

- Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, May 9-12, 2012, Halifax, NS, Canada, full-day workshop.
- Consulting Alliance, Sep. 14, 2012, Albany, NY, workshop.
- Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, Jun. 14-17, 2006, Baltimore, MD, full-day workshop.
- National Storytelling Network, Jul. 14-17, 2005, Oklahoma City, OK, concurrent session.

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Managing Information to Support Decision-Making. Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, May 9-12, 2012, Halifax, NS, Canada, full-day workshop.

A Facilitator Should Not Be Neutral. Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, May 9-12, 2012, Halifax, NS, Canada, plenary.

Creating a Culture of Collaboration; Working with Difficult Groups. Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, May 9-12, 2012, Halifax, NS, Canada, concurrent sessions.

Adventures in Editing. Community At Work, Sep.28, 2006, San Francisco, CA.

Coffee and Conversation (with Leading Authors in Our Field). Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, Jun. 14-17, 2006, Baltimore, MD, plenary session.

Group Facilitation for Multiparty Collaboration. NYS Energy Research and Development Authority, Mar. 24, 2006, Albany, NY.

Critical Incidents: What Would You Do, and Why?

- Center for Collaborative Organizations, University of North Texas, Sep. 25-27, 2006, Denton, TX.
- Int'l Ass'n of Facilitators, Jun. 9-11, 2005, Tampa, FL.
- Community At Work, Nov. 2, 2005, San Francisco, CA.

Conflict, Negotiation, and Collaboration. City/County Management Assn, Oct. 28, 2005, Albany, NY.

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Sample Project Outline: How to Tell Your Story

Overview

Participants will tell and listen to stories – their own personal stories, ones I provide, and ones they select. They will work on various exercises in pairs, small groups, and the full group. In large-group discussion they will learn about the components and structure of stories, story-teller-listener dynamics, and how to become a more effective storyteller by attending to various content components and telling skills. Participants will be coached in using the Process for Critical Response¹ to help each other improve their storytelling. The course will culminate in a invited/ public storytelling performance.

Objectives

Building on the assumption that participants already have their own stories (personal, historical, folk, and/or literary stories, etc.) that they tell or could tell, the objectives of this course are to help them (1) become more aware of those stories and identify them explicitly, (2) understand different types of stories, (3) understand why and how they should use them, (4) understand the essential components of stories, (5) learn how to tell them, orally, and (6) how to improve their storytelling technique.

What art-making skills will be taught

Interactive oral storytelling skills regarding both content skills (e.g., purpose, intent, characters, structure, events, tension, resolution, imagery, what to include or omit) and telling/ performance skills (e.g., how to use voice, facial expression, gesture, posture, body movement, audience involvement).

Materials

A binder (about 15 pages) will contain several handouts with example stories and information about types of stories, storytelling effectiveness, story components, story elicitation cues, and resources for further information. Additional handouts and resources will be distributed at the various sessions.

How you will promote social engagement

Participants will listen to my stories in the large group and react to them individually, and in pairs, 3-4 person small groups, and full group discussions.

Participants will tell their own stories and listen to others in pairs, small groups, and the full group.

The work in pairs and small groups, which will make up a substantial portion of each class, will be arranged so that, over the course of a few weeks, everyone will have the opportunity to work with everyone else in the class.

In addition to developing storytelling skills, participants they will develop their skills in listening and providing feedback to others.

Overall the time will be spent as follows:

15%	Delivery	(lecture, presentation, instruction)
20%	Clarification	(full group discussion; questions and answers)
55%	Activity/Action	(participants telling to each other, small group work)
10%	Individual Work	(reading, preparing to tell, reflection, writing)

A brief description of a culminating/sharing event

We will host a public performance in which the participants will each tell a five-ten minute story to invited guests. Participants will each play a role in producing the show. Some participants may opt out of telling and perform other functions important to the performance (e.g., stage manager, audio engineer/ recorder, publicist, ticket distribution/ sales, program design, photographer, refreshments, etc.).

¹ Adapted from *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*, by Liz Lerman and John Borstel.

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Week by week/ sequential learning outline

No.	Title	Objectives: Content skills	Objectives: Telling skills
1.	What is your story and why you should tell it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand what storytelling is and how it is different from other art forms• To practice thinking in story form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To “break the ice” by telling familiar stories to each other.• To respond to prepared questions by telling a story
2.	Story dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand the dynamics between the story, teller, and listener(s); listening, learning, and telling• To understand the structure of a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice storytelling• To observe and build awareness of listener reactions
3.	Same story, different voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand how versions of the same story can be told from different perspectives and emphasize different things (e.g., characters, places, plot elements, language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To build appreciation for how a story may be told differently by different tellers and to different audiences• To practice storytelling
4.	People, places, things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice content skills, emphasizing people, places, and things• To identify additional stories that could be told.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice telling skills, emphasizing imagery• To learn various ways to learn and practice stories
5.	Conflict and voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice content skills, emphasizing problem/ conflict/ tension and resolution/ release	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice telling skills, emphasizing voice (volume, articulation, diction, pitch, tempo)
6.	Arc and gesture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice content skills, emphasizing the structure/ arc of the story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To practice telling skills, emphasizing facial expression, gesture, posture, and body movement
7.	Teller and audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand what it means to make a story “your own”• To identify the “most important thing” in your story• To build awareness of the need to choose stories or modify them for a particular audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To build awareness of your needs as a teller• To practice telling skills, emphasizing audience involvement• To explore various ways to use a microphone
8.	Dress rehearsal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To make final preparations for the storytelling performance• To decide on the order of the stories in the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To tell the stories as though performing to the audience
9.	Storytelling performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To demonstrate participants’ storytelling skills to an audience• To acknowledge and celebrate participants’ accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To experience performing in front of a live audience• To relish the applause
10.	Storytelling performance debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To celebrate the performance and everyone’s contributions to it• To debrief the performance as a whole• To explore opportunities for the participants to continue their storytelling work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide an opportunity for performers to reflect upon their work

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No.	Title	Objectives: Content skills	Objectives: Telling skills
	Example activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the Process for Critical Response to debrief the performance as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•