



Depending on who you ask, 80% of New Year's resolutions will fail before February. Whether it's a New Year's resolution, a major life change, a risk you took, something completely unexpected, or something you face every day, we've all faced failures, shortcomings, or challenges that tried to (or maybe did) stop us.

Your Story is an informal gathering for people to share their story, hear other's experiences, and make new connections. Free appetizers and a cash bar will be provided, and Monte Skelton will perform. We'll hear from Katy Adams about issues surrounding addiction in our community and the services they provide at Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare. Then, we'll hear from as many people who have brought their personal 5-7-minute stories to share. You do not have to share a story to participate, but if you would like to, please see these tips and suggestions from The Hearth Community below. If you have any questions you may contact Raygan Baker at [rbaker@bethelucc.org](mailto:rbaker@bethelucc.org).

[Storytelling Guidelines:](#)

**Title.** Our experiences are complex; stories tend to be simple. What is the title of the story you want to tell? Giving it a title will help you get to the heart of your story. Or, if you were to pitch this story to a movie producer, what's the one sentence pitch?

**Setting.** Give a few introductory details, only what is necessary: place, time, age, others involved and your relationship to them. This gives your story a context, a setting and characters.

**Character.** We need to have a feeling for the "who" of the story. A few descriptive words (short, rough hands, a chipped front tooth). Personality (quiet, never made eye contact, loved dogs). Avoid superlatives ("the most amazing!"). What was the longing or deep fear that you carried?

**Action.** In a story something happens. What's at stake? Stories have a beginning, middle and an end. There's a conflict, a climax, and a resolution.

**See it.** Like good writing "show, don't tell." In other words, visualize the scenes of your story and then describe these scenes without lots of background and explanations.

**Start and Finish.** Know your opening line, otherwise you may wander: "When I was a girl my only friends were hamsters." You also need to know your last line to keep your story from trailing off. Make sure the last line helps us know what the story means to you.

**Summary:** Remember there is no right way to tell your story. Everyone has a different style. Talk in a way that's natural to who you are. Begin it, follow it through the action, end it and tell what it all means. Remember color, beauty, feelings, and touch. Don't talk about it, tell it. Live through it again.

**Time:** To hear from as many people as possible, we need to keep stories to 7 minutes at the most. Please practice your story and time yourself. At the event, we'll give you 2 and 1 minute warnings to keep you on track.