

SESSION 08 — STORYTELLING FOR FOUNDERS

Storytelling.

Tell your *story*.

How great founders make people believe before they buy.

*"The best startup isn't always the one with the best technology.
It's often the one that tells the best story."*

08

SESSION · WORKSHOP



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SLIDE 02 · LEARNING OUTCOMES

Today's Mission.

By the end of this workshop
you will be able to...

6 OUTCOMES · 1 SESSION

You'll walk out with new founder muscles.

01

Understand why storytelling matters

The science of memory, meaning, and belief.

02

Tell your startup story with confidence

No slides, no jargon — just you.

03

Make investors emotionally connect

Move from spreadsheet to belief.

04

Explain your solution without feature-dumping

Meaning over specifications.

05

Build your own Story Arc

Hook → Hero → Vision, structured.

06

Deliver a 60-second Elevator Pitch

Live, on your feet, at the end of today.

Turn to the person next to you.

Before we start... ask yourself:

Why do some startups get funding while others don't?

VOTE WITH YOUR HAND · WHICH ONE WINS

A. Better tech

Superior product, novel algorithm.

B. Better design

Beautiful UI, memorable brand.

C. Better founders

Credentials, network, hustle.

D. Better storytelling

→ We'll find out today.

People don't remember **data**.

*Imagine listening to 20 startup pitches today.
Tomorrow morning — what stays with you?*

TAKEAWAY

Facts fade.
Stories
stay.

✕ WHAT FADES

The numbers.

~~\$4.2M ARR~~ — Revenue figures

~~TAM \$28B~~ — Market size slides

~~120k MAU~~ — User counts

✓ WHAT STAYS

The stories.

"The startup that helps teachers."

"The app for farmers."

"The AI accounting platform."

Why stories work.

Our brains process facts and stories on completely different circuits.

● LEFT BRAIN

Facts

- 01 Logical
- 02 Easy to forget
- 03 Hard to connect with

● RIGHT BRAIN

Stories

- 01 Emotional
- 02 Visual
- 03 Memorable
- 04 Human

T CASE STUDY · TESLA

Tesla doesn't sell cars.
Tesla sells a future without fossil fuel.

- 1 Mission first**
Accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy.
- 2 Product second**
The Model S, 3, X, Y are chapters — not the story itself.

CORE PRINCIPLE

People don't buy information. They buy **meaning.**

Every great startup sells **two** things.

01 · THE PRODUCT

Product

What you built.

Code, features, hardware, the app itself.
The *artifact* you deliver.



02 · THE STORY

Story

Why it matters.

The meaning, the mission, the change
in the world you promise.

People invest in the second one first.

Apple never sold computers.

✕ APPLE DIDN'T SAY

*"We have faster processors, more RAM,
and a graphical user interface with 32-bit
color depth."*

A spec sheet. Correct. Forgettable.
The kind of pitch that dies with the deck.

✓ APPLE SAID

Think
Different.

Creativity

Simplicity

Changing the world

People joined the *mission*. The products followed.

INSIDE THE INVESTOR'S HEAD

What investors **really** buy.

RARELY BECAUSE OF...

× Features

× Technology

× Slides

THEY INVEST BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE...

01

The founder

02

The vision

03

The problem

04

The story

THE GOAL · THE WOW MOMENT

**Create one moment where
they say:
"Now I get it."**

Airbnb never sold rooms.

✕ AIRBNB DIDN'T SAY

"We rent apartments to strangers using a peer-to-peer booking marketplace."

Accurate. Boring.
A transactional description of a transformative product.

THE PRODUCT

Accommodation.

✓ AIRBNB SAID

Belong
Anywhere.

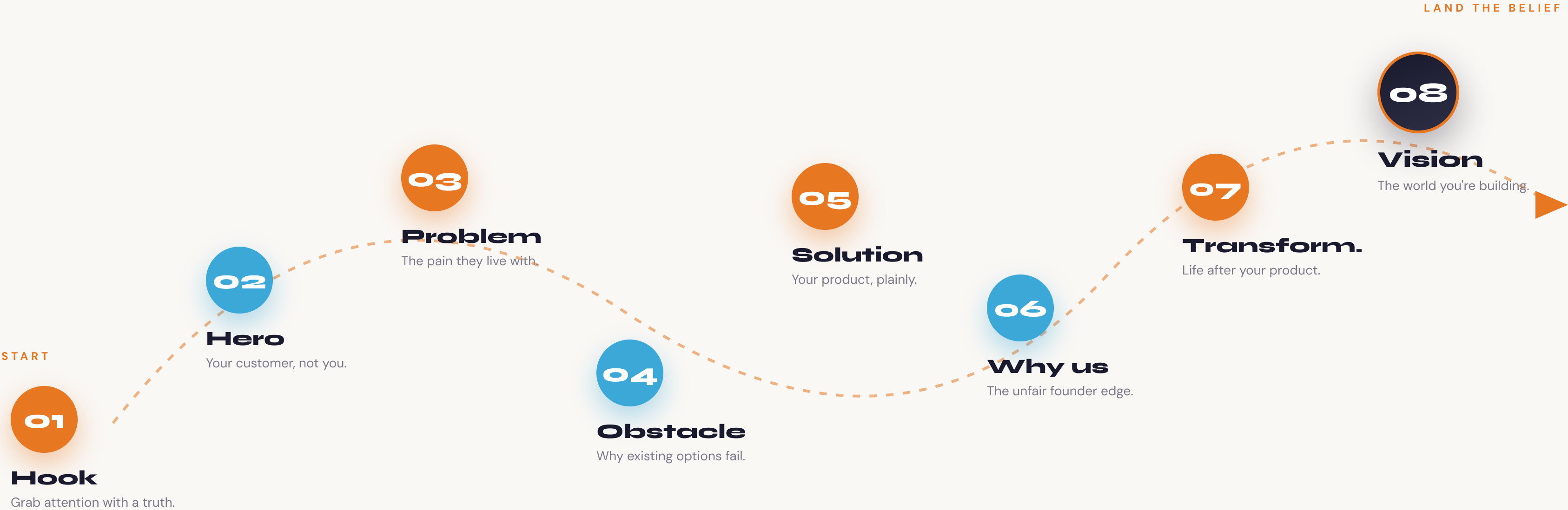
Two words. Zero features. A universal human longing — turned into a category-defining brand.

THE STORY

Belonging.

Use this as your worksheet today.

The Startup Story Arc.



Canva — the arc in action.

COUNTER-EXAMPLE

"If Canva had introduced itself by saying, 'We built a cloud-based graphic design platform using drag-and-drop technology,' would anyone remember it?"

01 HOOK

"Every day, millions of people have great ideas but struggle to create a simple presentation or poster."

02 HERO

Sarah — a university student prepping her final presentation.

03 PROBLEM

She has a great idea, but professional design software is too complicated to learn.

04 OBSTACLE

Photoshop takes hours to learn, is expensive, and is built for pros — not everyday users.

05 SOLUTION

A simple drag-and-drop platform. Beautiful designs in minutes using ready-made templates.

06 WHY US

Melanie Perkins taught design software to students — she lived this problem.

07 TRANSFORM.

Sarah makes professional slides in **minutes** — not hours fighting software.

08 VISION

"Everyone should have the power to design — regardless of experience or background."

THE SARAH TRANSFORMATION · WATCH THE ARC LAND

B BEFORE CANVA

6 hours

Fighting Photoshop tutorials at 2 a.m. Deadline tomorrow. Still no slides.

ENTERS CANVA

C THE MOMENT

Drag. Drop. Done.

Template → text swap → export. Zero jargon, zero tutorials.

RESULT

A AFTER CANVA

7 minutes

Beautiful deck. Time to sleep. Confident to present tomorrow.

THE LESSON

Every founder here can write these **8 sentences**.
That's your first real pitch.

220M+

monthly users worldwide today

\$40B

valuation — from one clear story

2013

the year the story began — 1 page, 1 idea

Zoom – the **team wins**, not the app.

STORY FRAMEWORK
Hero · Problem
Guide · Change

01 THE HERO

Teams.

The people trying to build, ship, and win — together. They're who the audience roots for.

Marketers · engineers · founders · students.

02 THE PROBLEM

Distance breaks collaboration.

Time zones. Silent Slack threads. Ideas that die in email chains.

"We used to fly across the country for a 30-minute meeting."

THE GUIDE

Zoom.

Not the star of the story — the *tool* that hands the hero what they need to win.

Role: enabler, not protagonist.

04 THE CHANGE

Work from anywhere, together.

Face-to-face across continents. Ideas shipped in hours. Small teams competing with giants.

The hero wins — because the guide showed up.

THE LESSON

Zoom isn't the hero.

The team is.

The hero of your story is not your startup. It's *the customer* whose life changes because your startup exists.

FOUNDER AUTHENTICITY

Why you?

Of all the humans on earth, why are you the one solving this?

INVESTOR FILTER

People trust
authentic
founders.

THREE WAYS FOUNDERS EARN BELIEF — EACH A REAL THING TO SAY OUT LOUD

01 WITNESSED IT

"I grew up watching my parents struggle."

Origin from empathy. You carry someone else's pain into your product.

02 LIVED IT

"I experienced this problem myself."

First-hand pain. The strongest founder-market fit — you were the customer.

03 STUDIED IT

"We spent five years researching this industry."

Earned expertise. You know things the market doesn't.

The Founder Story.

ASK YOURSELF — WRITE IT DOWN, DON'T JUST THINK IT

*What happened in your life
that made you build this startup?*

PRINCIPLE

**The best startup
stories are
*personal.***

PROMPTS TO UNLOCK IT — PICK THE ONE THAT HURTS MOST

01

A moment you felt this pain yourself.

02

Someone you love who suffered from
it.

03

A question that keeps you up at night.

04

The one thing you'll never accept as
"normal".

MAKE THE PAYOFF VISIBLE

Show the transformation.

The audience should clearly see the difference — not just hear about it.



THE FINAL BEAT

End with the **vision**.

The last sentence is the one they'll repeat in the elevator afterwards.

PRINCIPLE

Vision
creates
movement.

✗ DON'T FINISH WITH

"We're launching Version 2."

Product update. Small. Forgettable.
Nobody leaves the room fired up.

TRADE UP



✓ FINISH WITH

*"Our vision is to make quality healthcare
accessible to every family."*

A world worth building. Big enough to join, specific enough to believe.

TWO RULES FOR THE CLOSING SENTENCE

01 LANGUAGE RULE

Avoid "I," "you," or "we."

The vision belongs to *everyone in the room*. Speak about the world, not about your team.

02 ENDING RULE

Your story needs a happy ending.

Paint the world after you win. If the last picture is bright, they'll want to be in it.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Building your elevator pitch.

Great pitches answer six questions — in the right sequence, in under a minute.

TIME BUDGET

60 seconds

6 questions · 5 beats · 1 mission

PART 1 · THE 6 QUESTIONS

01 Who are you?

Name, role, one line of authenticity.

02 What problem exists?

The friction — concrete, not abstract.

03 Who has it?

Your hero — one specific person.

04 What did you build?

Your solution — in one sentence.

05 Why are you different?

Your unfair edge — only you can say this.

06 What's your vision?

The world if you win — the sentence they'll repeat.

PART 2 · THE 60-SECOND FORMULA

01 **HOOK**

One line that stops the scroll.

·10s

↓

02 **PROBLEM**

The pain — who feels it, what's broken.

·15s

↓

03 **SOLUTION**

What you built — plainly.

·15s

↓

04 **IMPACT**

The transformation — before/after.

·10s

↓

05 **VISION**

The world if you win.

·7s

↓

06 **CALL TO ACTION**

Ask for the meeting, the intro, the yes.

·3s

RULE Answer the 6 — in that order — and the pitch writes itself.

Tips from great storytellers.

Six rules the best founders, writers & screenwriters swear by.

CRAFT RULE #1

Great stories
are **rewritten**,
not written.

01 THE CLASSIC

Show, don't tell.

Don't say "she was frustrated" — describe her closing the laptop at 2 a.m.

02 LANGUAGE

Use simple language.

If a 12-year-old can't follow it, an investor won't either. Cut every buzzword.

03 FOCUS

One person is the hero.

Not "small businesses" — Sarah, the owner of a bakery in Nablus.

04 SEQUENCE

Emotion before explanation.

Make them *feel* the problem in the first 15 seconds — then explain how you fix it.

DISCIPLINE

05 RESTRAINT

Skip the extra stats.

One striking number beats ten pretty ones. If it doesn't sharpen the story — cut it.

Cut. Simplify.

06 THE HABIT

Rewrite it every time **you tell it.**

Your 50th telling will be 10x better than your first. Every audience is a rehearsal.

One story. Many versions.

Great founders don't change their story.
They change how they tell it.

IMAGINE THIS

You own the same startup.
Today you meet *four* different people.

Would you tell them exactly the same story? *No.*

SAME STARTUP — FOUR ROOMS — FOUR OPENINGS



THE INVESTOR

Lead with market & return.

"\$40B market. 3x growth. Here's why we'll win it."



THE CUSTOMER

Lead with their pain.

"You know that thing that wastes your Sunday?
We fixed it."



THE JOURNALIST

Lead with the headline.

"A founder from Nablus is changing how the world
learns to code."



THE FUTURE HIRE

Lead with the mission.

"Come build the future you'll be proud to have
shaped."



STAYS THE SAME

The *core story*.

Who is the hero. What breaks. What you build. Why it matters.



CHANGES WITH THE ROOM

The *details*: opening, tone,
proof.

Lead with the beat that speaks their language — investor, buyer, reporter, hire.

● NOW · YOUR TURN

60 seconds. One pitch.



THE RECIPE — 3 BEATS, SPOKEN NOT READ

15^s

Hook + Hero

Open with one true sentence. Name who you're for.

30^s

Problem → Solution

The pain. The obstacle. Then your one-line answer.

15^s

Vision + WOW

Where the world goes if you win. Land the belief.

*"Make them **believe** before they buy."*

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Now – pitch.

CLOSING **20** — 20