

Observations

from research about how to work with stories and storytelling in organizations



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Knowledge Socialization (Story) Group

<http://www.research.ibm.com/knowsoc>

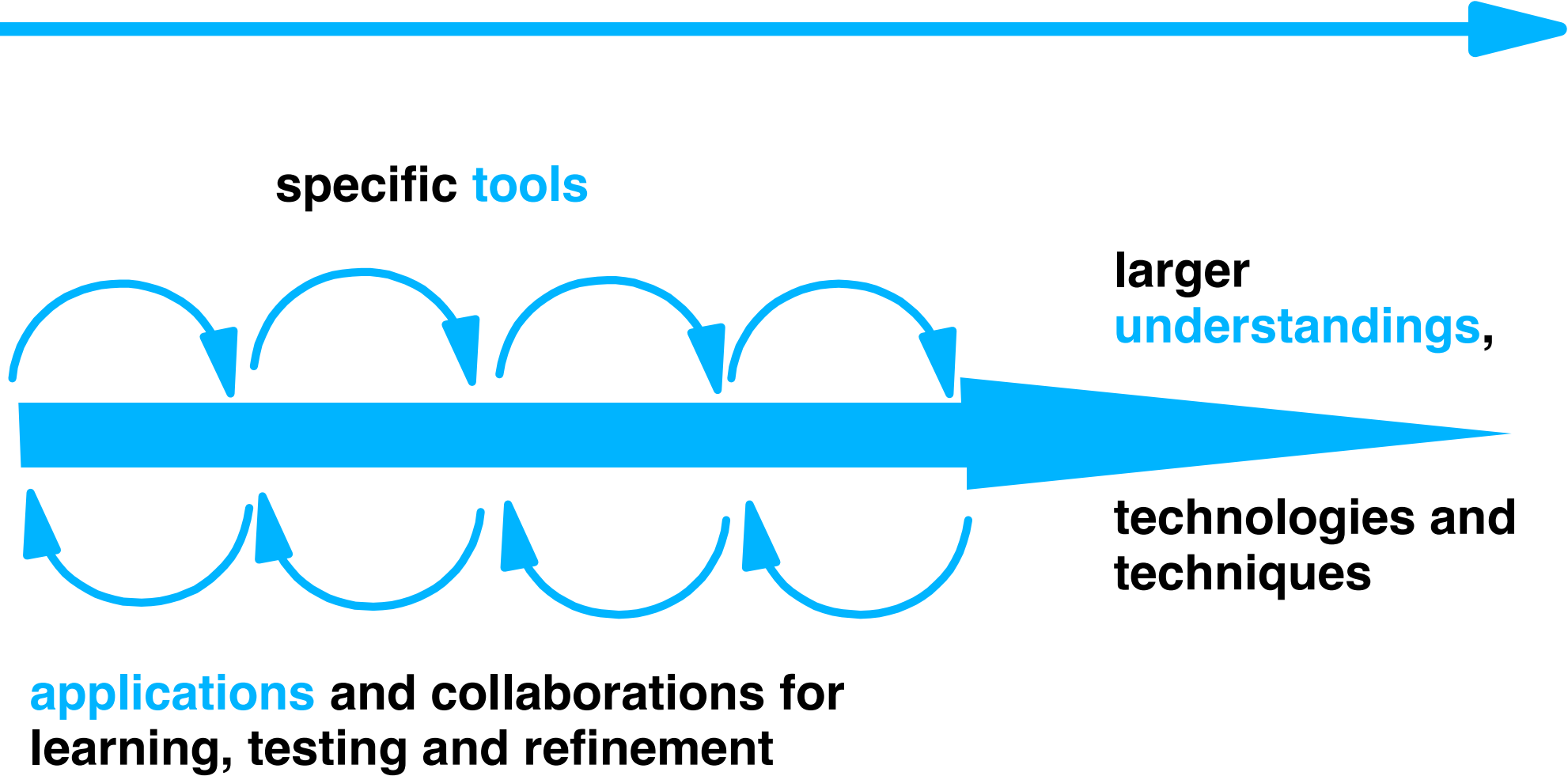
Workshop on **Storytelling and National Security Policymaking**

December 14-15, 2000


Washington, DC

These are slides from a talk I gave at a 2000 workshop on things I had learned from two years of research into stories in organizations and communities.
(Note, the web link here is dead.)


The Knowledge Socialization (**Story**) group at IBM Research focuses on:



Some of the **work** we've been doing in the Story group:

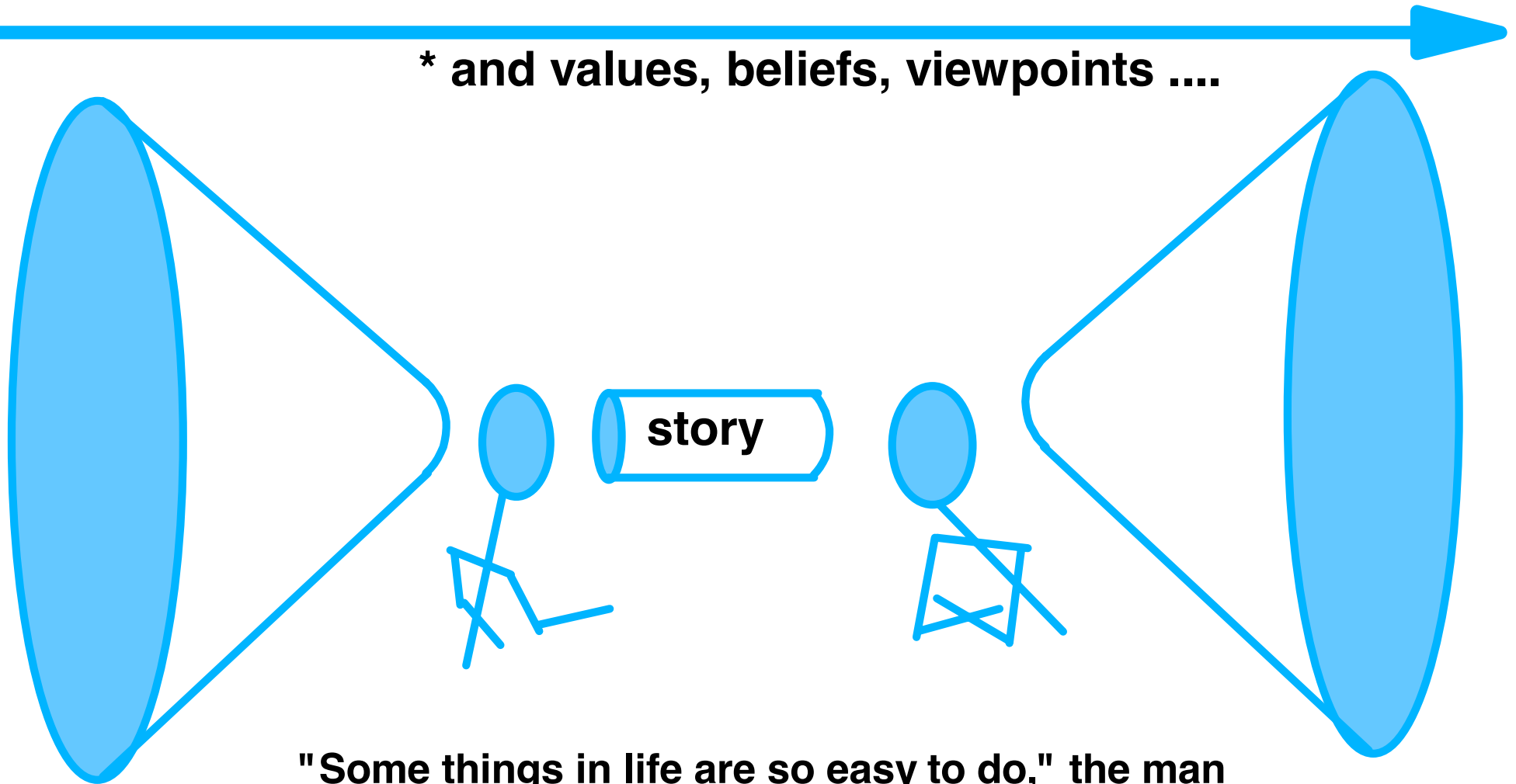
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- **tools** for "working with" stories
 - **knowledge representations** for composing, organizing, and understanding stories
 - **methodologies** for gathering, understanding, and telling stories for education, KM and design
 - **support** for storytelling in IBM

Food for thought.

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- Following are some observations (**intuitions**) about "working with" stories and storytelling in the context of people and organizations.
 - These are from **experience**; they are unproven though some are reflected in the literature.

1. Stories are a compact means of transferring **complex** knowledge.*

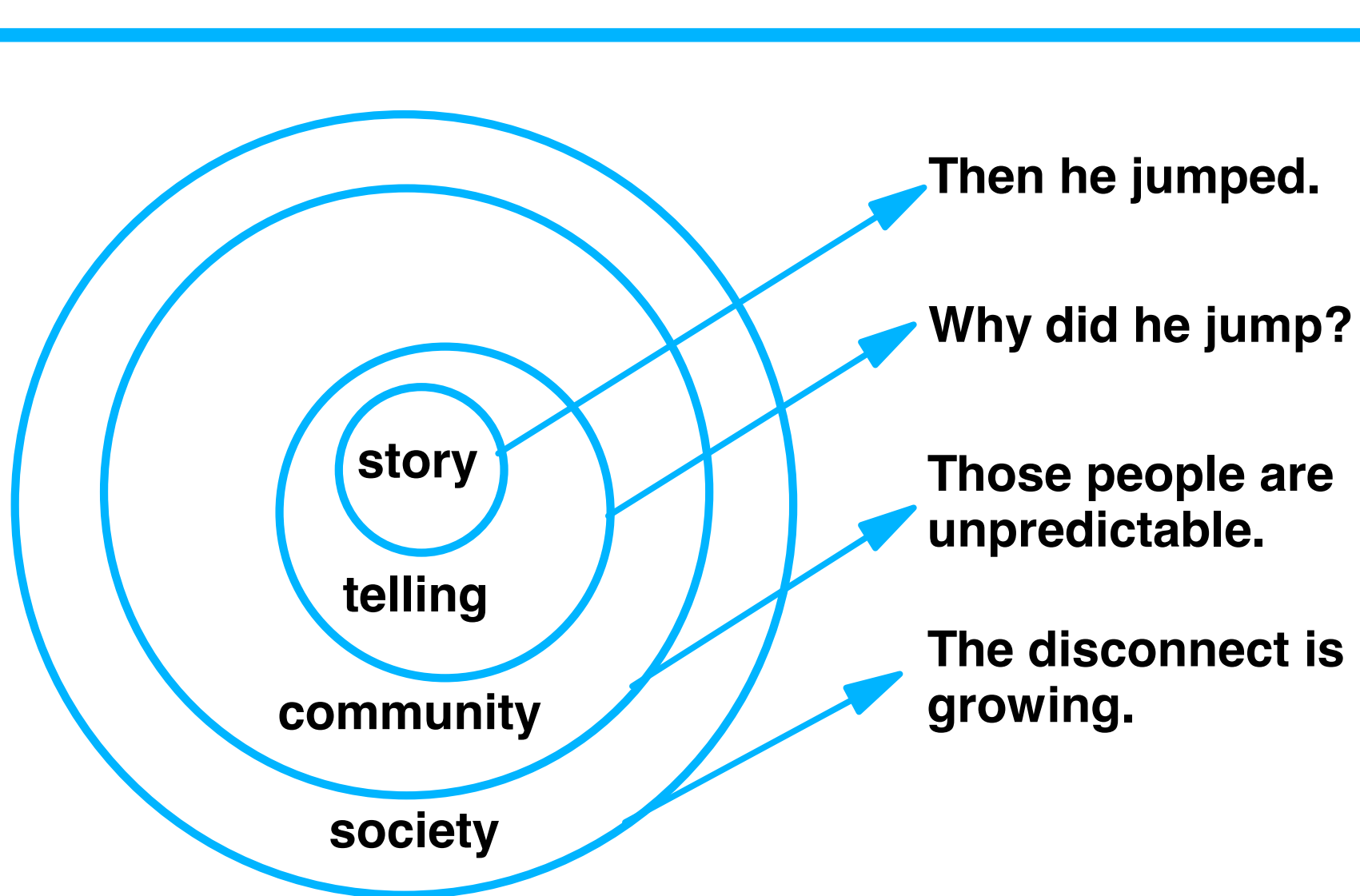
* and values, beliefs, viewpoints



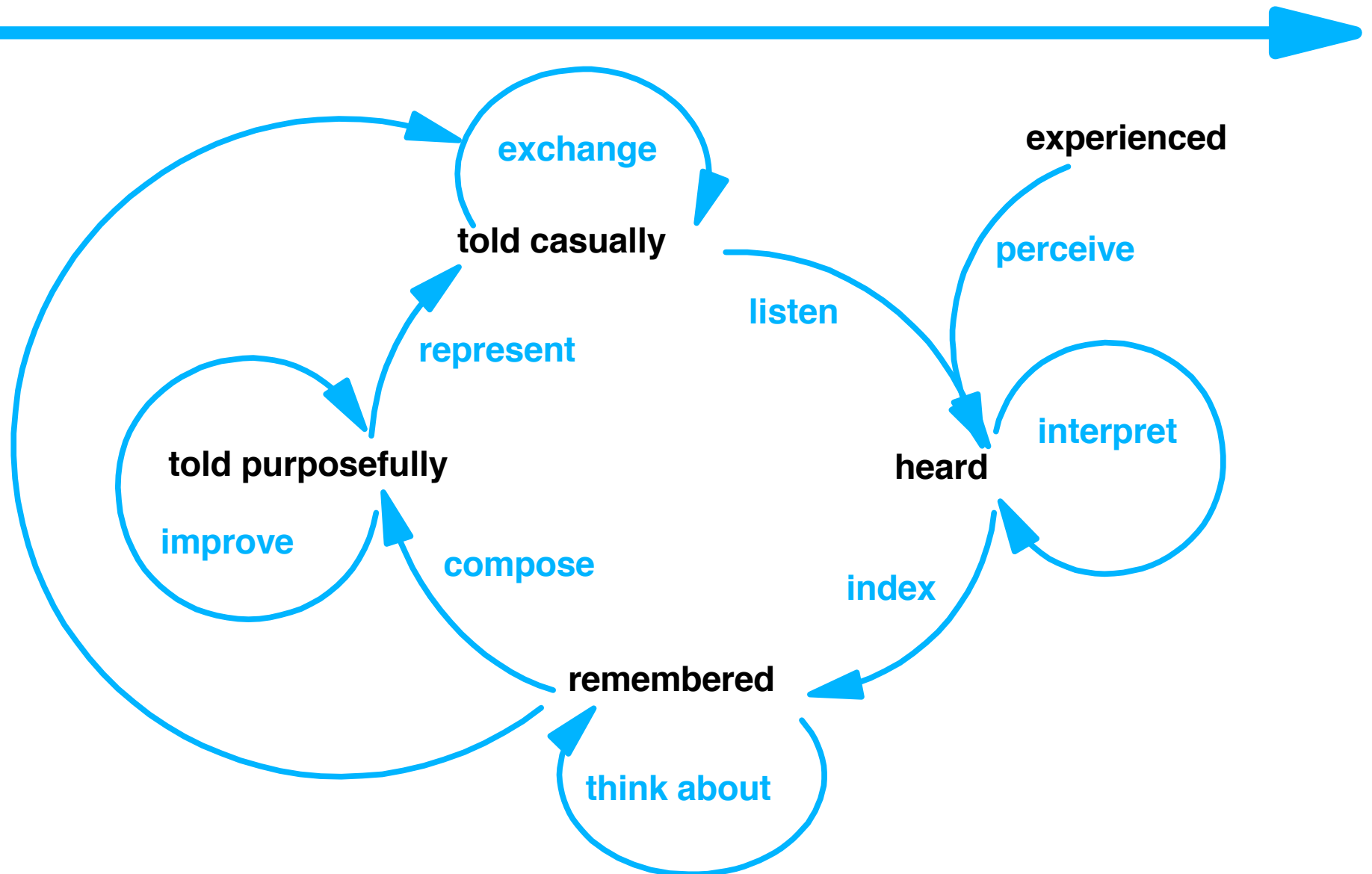
"Some things in life are so easy to do," the man thought, falling to his death.

G.S. Evans, at www.storybytes.com

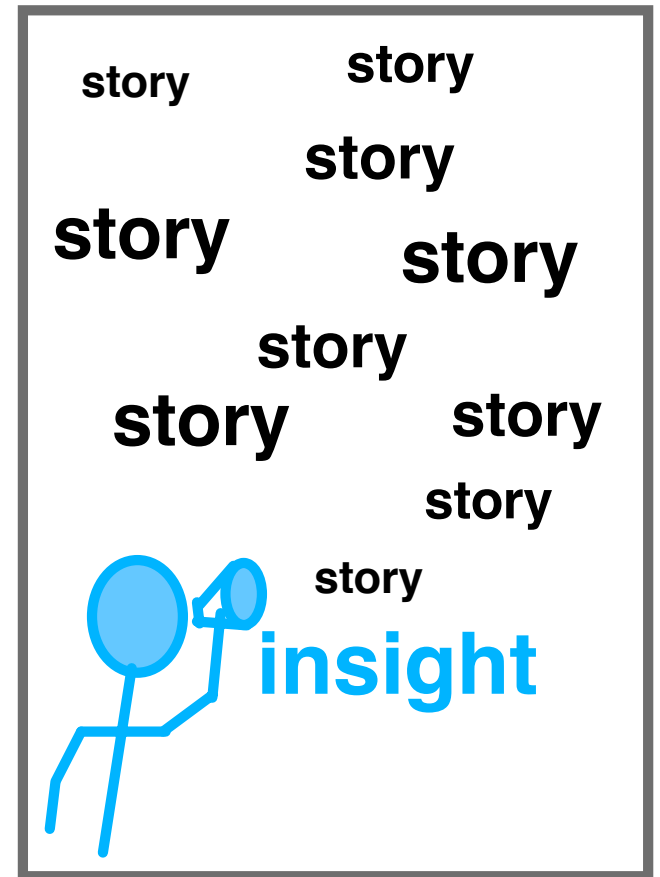
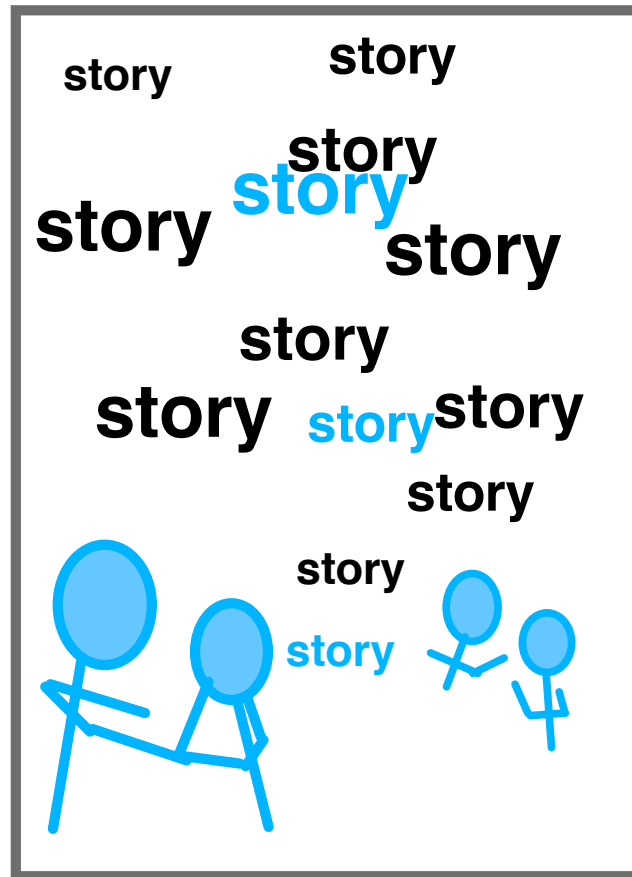
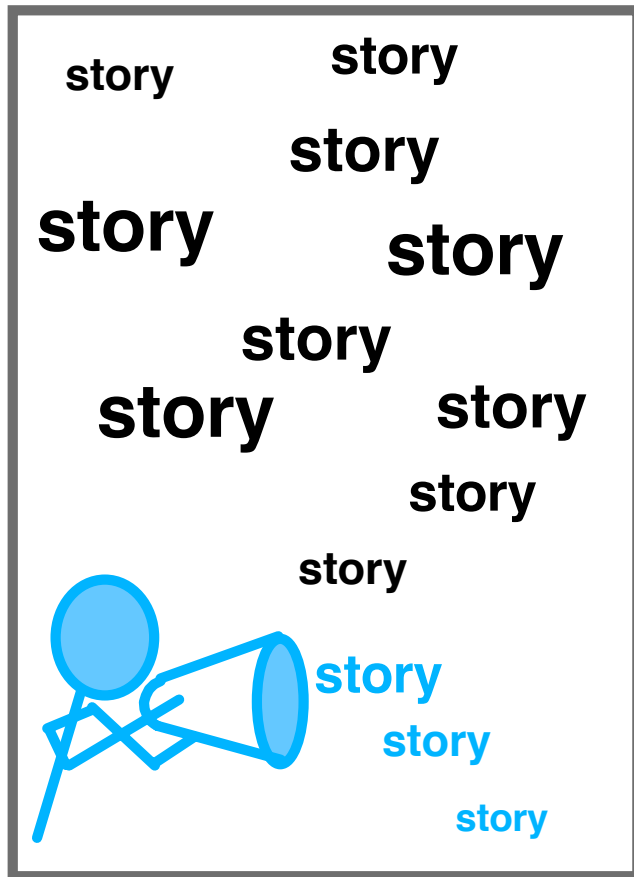
2. A story is like a **ripple** in a pond: stories have stories have stories.



3. Stories have a natural **life cycle** one can work with at many points.

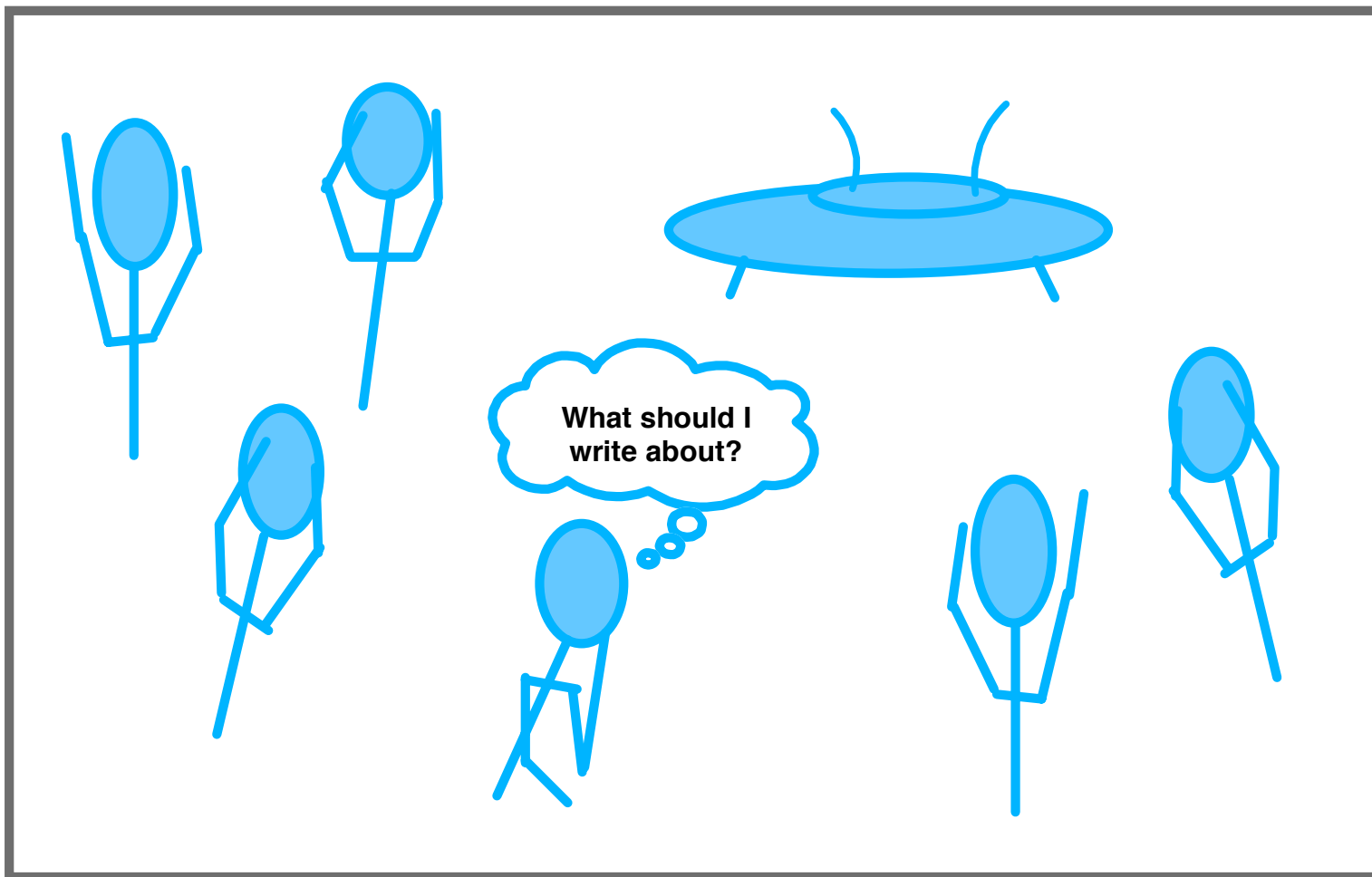


4. Our first impulse is to **tell**; but it is often better to **do** and to **listen**.



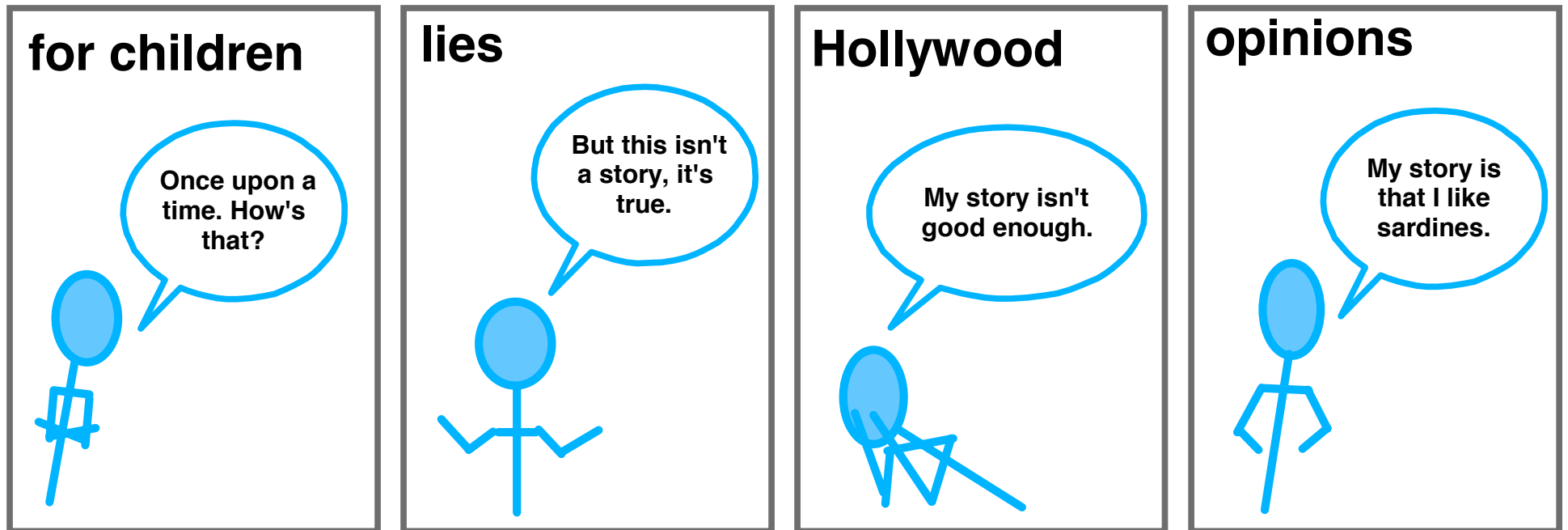
5. In storytelling, **truth*** is almost always more useful than fiction.

* at least an *element* of truth



6. People have **varied conceptions** of what a story is and isn't.

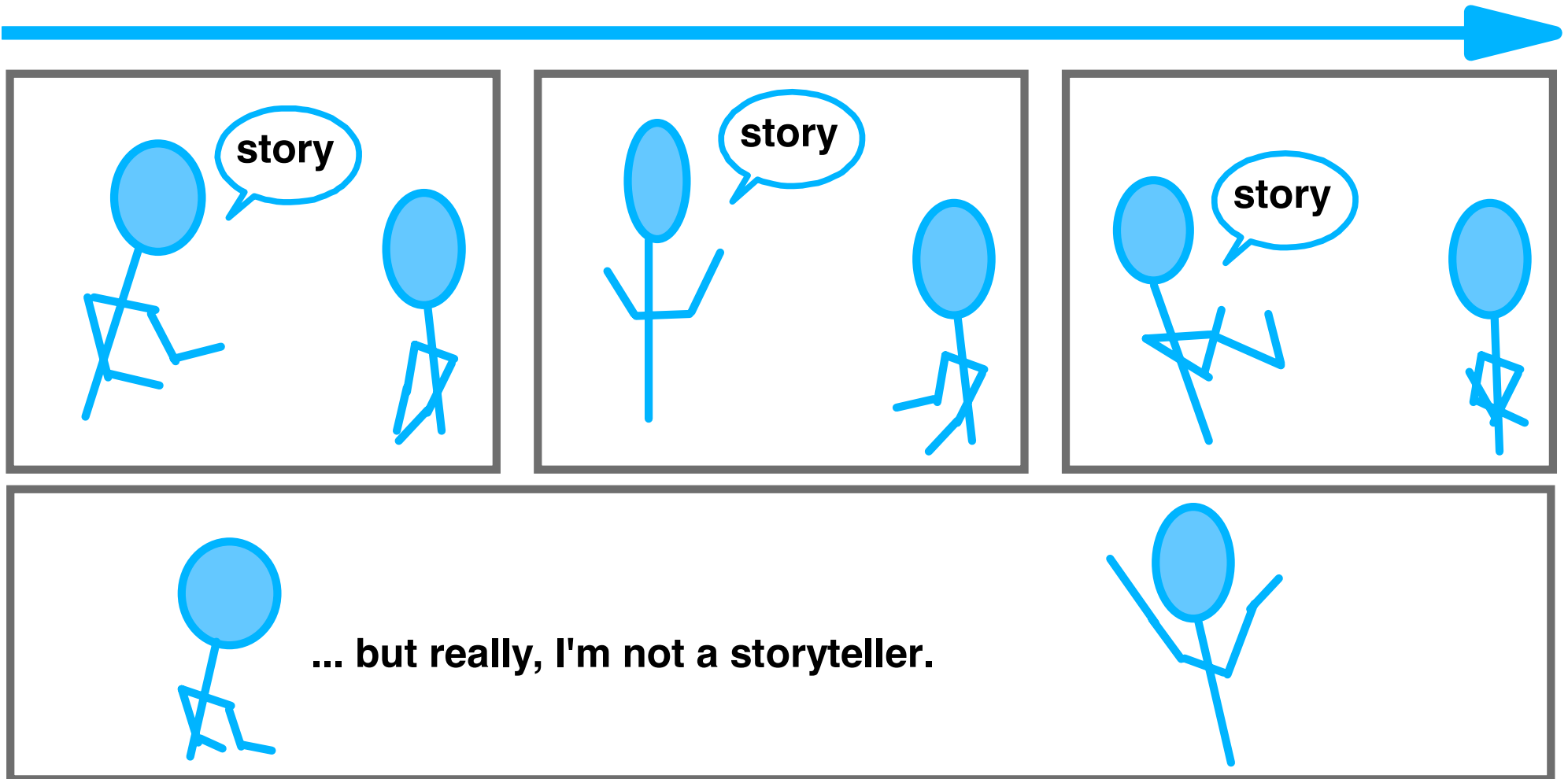
People often think of stories as..



or...



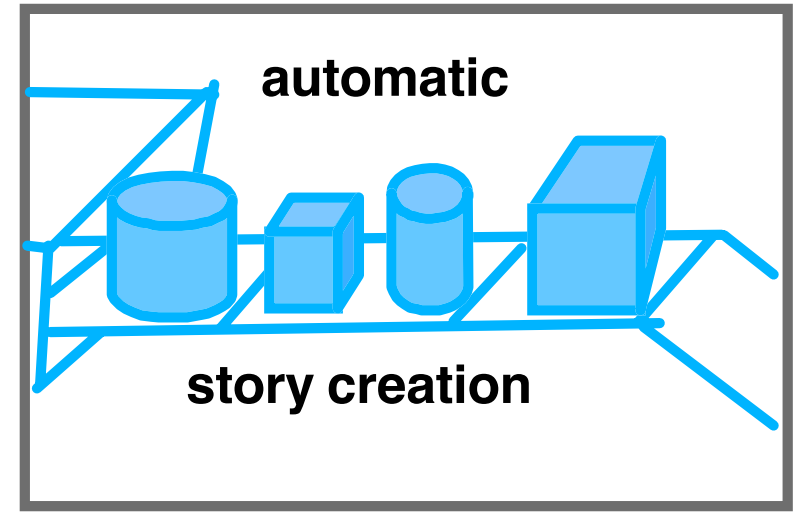
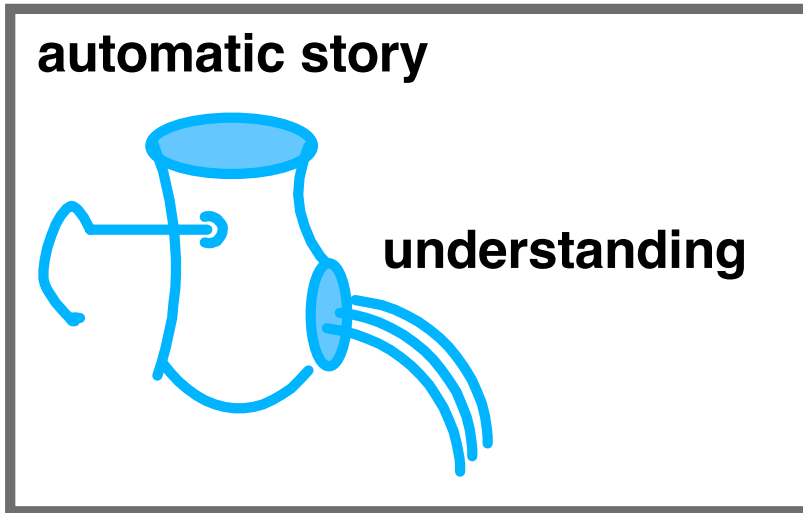
7. Storytelling is **innate** but not necessarily at the surface.



8. There are **grails** and **graffitis** in working with stories.

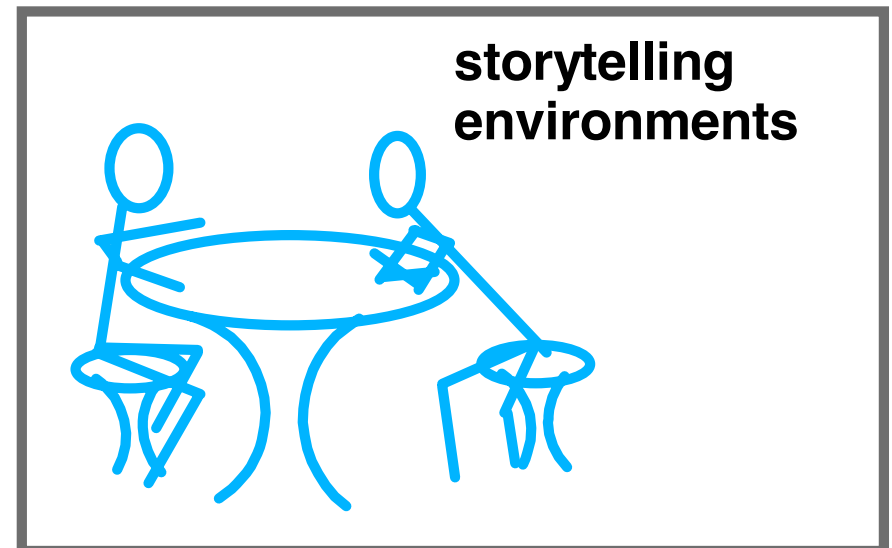
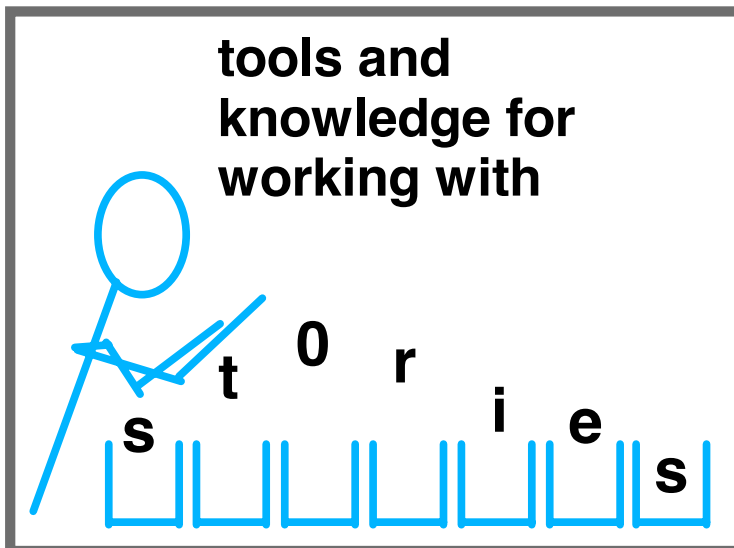
grails

(far-off solutions)




graffitis

(here and now solutions)



Finally, these are some things we are working on for the future.

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- **story composition** tools, templates and principles
 - **a pattern language** of story
 - **analogical** problem solving
 - **storytelling in communities of practice**
 - **story navigation** methods