Preparing for an interview or a networking event? If so, are you ready to answer these two questions – *Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Why are you interested in our organization?*

If you're not sure how to answer those questions, don’t worry, you’re not alone – most students are prepared to talk about things like leadership style and teamwork, but are less prepared to talk about who they are, what they care about, and how they became interested in a particular industry.

Drawing on the narrative and story-telling expertise of advisors from Yale’s Office of Career Strategy, this short video outlines how you can prepare your 1 ½ - 2 minute “interviewing story” that will make an authentic connection with employers at networking events and interviews.

So what is an interviewing story? It’s comprised of several parts. They are all outlined on this handy worksheet. The first part is a simple opening – what are you studying at Yale and what industry are you interested in? Next comes the motivational story, or the WHY of why you are interested in a particular internship, job, fellowship, or career path. We’ll focus our time here.

To tell this story, you’ll want to reflect on the influential experiences in your life that have shaped your values and led you to this particular kind of work. So, what are the elements of a story? That’s right, a story includes a protagonist (that’s you!) who faces a challenge or something unexpected, and makes a choice that results in an outcome. The choice-point here is key – it conveys your values to others.

Now, we all know how to tell a story, but when we find ourselves in a formal interview setting, we tend to only talk about our skills and stay away from our motivations. Stories are too personal, right? Plus, the listener doesn’t really care, do they? This is false. Stories are the way we connect with others and understand them. And it’s the way employers assess a candidate’s fit for their organization.

Think about a relevant story that conveys why you got interested in this area of work. And remember, a story needs to have a challenge, a choice, and an outcome in order to be a story! Next comes your related academic background – what courses did you take or research did you do that would be relevant to this job? Be sure to look at the position description to get this information.

Moving on, what sorts of supporting internship or extracurricular experiences do you have that might relate to this position? For example, you might talk about that data science project you did on bullying in schools or the grant writing internship you had at a local non-profit.

And now onto the conclusion – how does all of this experience make you a good fit for this particular job? Don’t just repeat back the organization’s mission; try to make a connection between your background, what you care about, and what this organization does.

Now it’s time for you to try to write your interviewing story! Visit the Office of Career Strategy website, download the worksheet, and get started. Then make a 1:1 appointment with a career advisor to practice. And one last thing to remember: the whole interviewing story should only take about 1 ½ - 2 minutes. Happy story telling!