

## HANDOUT

# Choosing What Story to Tell

By Media What

### READ THE TRANSCRIPT

I also went through extreme poverty, you know? 177 grams of minced meat... Today your mum and I need half a kilogram! I had 177 grams to make enough meatballs for four people. Once, my nephew came and I told him "Jake, here, have some". He got, two, three meatballs, and then he asked me, "Do you have more? Where are the other meatballs?"

"These are all the meatballs there are," I told him.

"But aunt, this is all you have for all four of you?"

"This is all we have, Jake," I told him. I wasn't going to borrow money. That's all we had. That's all we ate.

I explained to him, "If I have clothes, I don't have shoes. If I have shoes, I don't have a bag." By the time I bought something, another thing would need replacing [*laughs*]. It's true! But I always looked good. I looked after my things. And I chose a color for my bag that went with everything – with brown, with black, with yellow – everything! I knew how to dress.

But my husband was always after me about the money. Then when he stayed at home he would call me "Honey, come watch TV!"

"I have work."

One day he told me, "I need to say I'm sorry."

I ask him, "Why do you want to tell me you are sorry?"

"Because I thought that you never did any housework, and you were always out with your friends."

And I joked, "Of course, we had all these servants at home, I wasn't going to stay home and do work! You had two-three women to help me clean. One for the washing, one for the housework, one for the ironing. So what was I, crazy? Of course I went out!" (*laughs*)

That's how life was. He was very difficult, my husband. And such a big spender! He spent so much money on other people, and in the end I paid for it. Everyone managed to have a house, and we... we didn't even manage to fix up this house properly. And I lost a house. The house next door was mine. And I lost it.

Times were hard. Even the school was 35 pounds a year.

**Interviewer: Why did you send your daughters there?**

We saved money. I wanted them to go. So we saved money.

**Interviewer: Did you also go to the same school?**

Yes, for two years.

**Interviewer: Why did you leave?**

I was 18. I finished school, alone.

**Interviewer: Did you get a diploma?**

No, I didn't. Because I failed two – three lessons and I never went back. Back then you couldn't take another exam. Now, you can do what you want. I don't even care. I went to the a private school, I learned French, but for what? All I did was house work. I didn't need a diploma to do house work. They wouldn't let me get a job. I wanted to. My brothers wouldn't let me. It was shameful for me to work.

So anyway, that day, with the meat balls, my nephew Jake said to me "But these are enough meatballs to feed me!"

But there were worse stories. Some husbands, beat their wives. I was lucky.

## Activity 1

- a) Underline / highlight the parts of the story that you like the best.
- b) Why did you choose those specific parts?

## Activity 2

- a) What type of story do you think this is? (Please circle)

**Character:** What inspires us, makes us afraid, what we love, or dream about

**Memorial:** Remembering people who died

**Adventure:** Travel stories

**Success:** When you reach a goal e.g. graduating high school

**Profession / Job:** Stories about professional careers

**Recovery:** Recovery from illness, or serious event in life

**Love:** Love, friend or family relationships

**Discovery:** Discovering something new about ourselves

**Identity:** Specific moments that make you understand who you are

b) Why did you choose this kind of personal story?

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