



free-range THINKING™

free-range thinking™ is a monthly journal of best practices, resources and generally useful stuff for public interest communicators who want to reach more people with more impact



BREAKING NEWS: Celebrating 20th Anniversary, Man Falls Into Deep Well of Gratitude

This month marks the twentieth anniversary of my company. When I started back in May 1998, all I had was an Apple PowerBook, a dial-up connection to the Internet, and a sneaking suspicion there were nonprofit organizations that could use help with their communications - at least enough to sustain a fledgling one-man shop like mine. I was told I had the right name for this line of work, so I called my company "a goodman," added the tagline "good ideas for good causes," and waited for the phone to ring. (Remember: this was 1998. Not *everything* took place via email back then.)

Two decades later, I'm proud to report that the company has doubled in size, I now own two laptops, and our Internet connection is much faster. And, oh yes, we've published three books, conducted over 600 communications workshops for organizations around the world, and this newsletter now reaches over 12,000 subscribers every month. Most importantly, I believe we've made a serious dent in the nonprofit sector's consciousness where storytelling is concerned (but I'll leave it to others to assess the extent of that damage).

Looking back at these accomplishments, I am struck less by the milestones themselves than by memories of all the people who helped us along the way - family, friends, colleagues, clients, students and readers of this newsletter. Today, I am the man in this issue's headline, and as I climb out of that well dripping wet, I'd like to hand out a few soggy thank-you notes. [Full story](#). *Please note: Apple Mail users may need to scroll down manually.*

About Us

free-range thinking is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Celia Hoffman. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit www.thegoodmancenter.com.

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Thank you to the home team.

When I started my company, the first decision I made was to keep it small. I wanted to do *the work*, not manage a staff. So beside myself I've never had more than one full-time employee. For seven years it was **Lori Matsumoto**, who played a critical role as we started offering online classes to go with our in-person workshops and "a goodman" grew into "The Goodman Center." Today it's the multitalented **Celia Hoffman**, who is a top-notch speaker and facilitator, designs our newsletter and presentations, and is currently helping me develop new workshops for our clients. Special thanks also go to our all-star pinch-hitters, **Terrence McNally** and **Colin Rowan**, two brilliant presenters in their own right who stood in whenever I was unavailable and regularly hit home runs.



Thank you to the co-creator of two bad books.

There's a good chance that your introduction to our company was our first book, *Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes*, or its sequel, *Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes*. Both books were critical successes (in that they were successful at being critical), and whatever popular acclaim they received is due in large part to the extraordinary work of **Chris Hershey**, who was my partner in the conception and design of both publications.

Thank you to Kristen and the Spitfires.

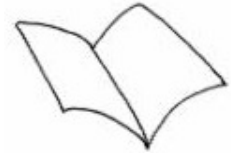
Sounds like a girl band, doesn't it? (And who can forget their chart-topping hit, "Your Message is Confusing"?) **Kristen Grimm** and I started presenting at the same nonprofit gatherings back in 2001, and she has been a great friend ever since. I have never seen anybody break down a client's communications challenges and produce the right message as quickly as Kristen, which is why I call her "the instant *messenger*." Her firm, Spitfire Strategies, conducts communications trainings that are among the best in the public interest sector (due in no small part to another good friend at Spitfire, **Dennis Poplin**), and I've been privileged to be part of their faculty from day one.

Thank you to Marc and the Encores.

Also not a band (but if they were, their signature number would undoubtedly be "Young at Heart.") I gravitate to people who have big ideas, and **Marc Freedman** is one of them. He recognized that people hitting "retirement age" still have plenty to offer, so he has championed the "encore career" as an opportunity to give back instead of kicking back, and to find (as Encore.org puts it) "purpose, passion and a paycheck in the second half of life." Whenever I talk to Marc, I always hope that some of that big-thinking will rub off on me (and I know for certain that I'll get an update on his beloved San Francisco Giants.)

Thank you to the earliest adopters.

Before I hung out my shingle, I wanted to make sure I'd have at least a few clients on board, and three took the leap of faith with me. I am eternally grateful to **Fred Krupp** at the Environmental Defense Fund, **Rob Glaser** and **Eileen Quigley** at RealNetworks, and **Norman Lear** and **Alan Horn** at the Environmental Media Association for being the first to say yes.



Thank you to the long-haulers.

Clients come and go, but some stay longer than others, and the following organizations have worked with me long enough that I feel like I became part of their families: The Annenberg Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Association of Public Health Laboratories, Bank of America, Council of Chief State School Officers, Eden Housing, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Encore.org, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, The Nature Conservancy, Regional Access Project Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, San Diego Zoo, Social Venture Partners, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the World Wildlife Fund.

Thank you to my personal board of directors.

Whenever I've had to make important business decisions, there's a small group of people whom I could reliably turn to for honest feedback and wise counsel. A deep bow, major props, and heartfelt thanks to **Kristen Grimm**, **John Gomperts**, **Rob Moore**, **David Morse**, **Ann Christiano**, **Eric Brown**, and **Stefanie Weiss** for always taking the call and, when a candid opinion was required, making the call.

Thank you to the "Free Agents."

When you start a business as a solo entrepreneur, it can be a lonely journey. Not only do you miss the camaraderie of a team, there's nobody internally to hold you accountable, share your successes, or point out truly stupid ideas. So sometime during my second year, I suggested to three fellow solo entrepreneurs that we meet for lunch on a monthly basis to provide these services to each other. We tagged ourselves the "Free Agents," and **Steve Bornstein**, **Steve Stockman**, **Terrence McNally** and I have now been meeting regularly for nearly two decades. I am deeply indebted to all of them for their advice, counsel and friendship that happily continue to this day.

Thank you to our partners.

Since day one, Island Technologies has managed all of our online activities, and I'm grateful to **Patrick Coffin** for maintaining his personal touch even while his company has grown substantially over the past twenty years. Alongside Patrick, the only other person to be with us since the beginning is **Grady McNutt**, accountant extraordinaire, who regularly reminds this particular storyteller to pay attention to the numbers. Thank you to Lipman Hearne, our partner in launching The Goodman Center, and especially CEO emeritus **Rob Moore** for his friendship, counsel, and misguided belief in the Chicago Bears. And finally, thanks to **Corky Retson** who designed our newsletter for many years and left us all far too soon.



Thank you to the sibs.

If you want the unvarnished truth, there's nobody more qualified to deliver it than someone who's known you since birth, and I'm privileged to have three such someones in my life. Thanks and much love to **Barbara Raho**, **Jane Pollak**, and **Meredith Bernstein**, my three older sisters, for always being there to share the highs and lows and for all the shorthand (in English *and* Yiddish) that only we understand.

Thank you to John, my BFAM.

When you can have a lively dinner conversation that caroms from Wes Anderson movies (liked the early ones, not so much the current stuff), to the chances of Tiger Woods winning another major (probably not, but don't bet against it), to the real reasons why this country doesn't seem to care about the health, safety or education of its children (and if anybody has the answer to that one, please email me ASAP), you know you have a true friend across the table. I met **John Gomperts** in 2004 when he hired me to work with his team at Experience Corps, we became fast friends and have remained so ever since. As a guy with three older sisters, I consider John to be my Brother From Another Mother.

Thank you to my kids.

When I started my company, my son, **Daniel Goodman**, was about to turn 9 and my daughter, **Olivia Goodman**, was less than a month away from entering this world. Today, Dan is a world-famous DJ, edits four highly ranked podcasts, and is simultaneously launching a new career as an e-sports shoutcaster (look it up). Olivia has just completed her sophomore year at Berkeley and is well on her way to becoming the first doctor in the Goodman family (a career which my parents had me pegged for at birth but gave up on when I passed out during a blood test.) I couldn't be more proud of both my children, nor more thankful for all their love, support and for occasionally admitting that even though I'm a dad, some of my jokes are actually funny.


And most of all...

Where do you begin to thank the person who has made the journey with you through 36 years, three states, four houses, and the thousands of roses and thorns that come with raising two amazing kids? I don't have the faintest idea, so I'll say it as simply as I can: I love you madly, **Carolyn Ramsay**, I look forward to many more memorable adventures together, and I cannot thank you enough for helping a good man become a better man along the way.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't also thank *you*, dear reader, for subscribing to this newsletter. Some of you have been with us since we started mailing out hard copies in 1999, and some have joined only recently, but I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has corresponded with me over the years, whether you were offering thanks for practical advice, suggesting topics for future issues, and even when you were providing constructive criticism. This newsletter - our company, in fact - is better thanks to your participation, and I hope we will continue to serve you well as we enter decade number three!



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Upcoming online classes at The Goodman Center

TELL BETTER STORIES Storytelling: Tapping the Power of Narrative	WEBINAR BETTER The Webinar on Webinars	DESIGN BETTER CAMPAIGNS Strategic Communications: Cutting Through the Clutter
June 4, 11, 18 & 25 9am - 10am PT	June 22 11am - 12pm PT	July 17 & 18 11am - 12pm PT

Click on the class title to read more!



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