

MothUP Extended guidelines:

How to get started:

If you want to start a MothUP group, you need to be able and willing to:

- Provide a private venue (your living room) and host a monthly, and consistently occurring, MothUP event.
- Gather a group of storytellers and send out invitations to the event every month. You can't send out a press release, but you're welcome to create a MothUP facebook page for your group.
- Make sure that the stories are recorded, and otherwise documented.
- Enter into a contract with The Moth
- Upload your group's content our MothUP Vimeo page

How to get a group together:

Tap into your own network. Email your friends, post on your Facebook page and tell your neighbors. Chat to people on the bus. Send everyone links to The Moth Podcast and ask them to tune into The Moth Radio Hour for inspiration.

Remember, you can't send press releases, but if you need more people, or if you want to host a big group, The Moth can help. We will mention your group on the MothUP page, and give you a shout-out on our Facebook or Twitter page.

Group name:

You should always use the "MothUP" name to describe your group and your events (not The Moth, but MothUP). Please call your MothUP group MothUP [city name] [group specific name], for instance "MothUP New York Park Slope" or "MothUP Phoenix Tale Tellers."

Venue:

Think of your MothUP events as a workshop; everyone who attends should have the intention of telling a story. The venue should be a private place, such as your living room, a space at your local library or the backroom in a bar.

Video:

As a MothUP group you must videotape the stories performed at your MothUP events. Not only that, we want the highest quality possible. Many handheld video cameras can record in HD quality, which is our preferred format. To ensure acceptable quality, make sure you have a tripod for your camera, so that the frame is steady. If possible, consider lighting "the stage" as well. Or put the storyteller somewhere well lit, even if the stage is just a spot next to your sofa. Please note, video from camera phones will not work.

To upload video to The Moth's Vimeo group, you should register to become a user of vimeo.com (please use your full name). When we receive your request to become a MothUP organizer, we will invite you to the MothUP group on Vimeo. (www.vimeo.com/groups/mothup). Once you have accepted the invitation to the group, you can upload video of one story after each of your MothUP events.

Other documentation:

If possible, we urge you to record the audio in broadcast quality. We want your group to be part of our community, which means we want to be able to share your stories on our podcast and on our radio show.

How to pick a theme:

Pick one of the themes that we have listed on www.themoth.org/events, or you can come up with one of your own.

Choose something broad enough to inspire many different kinds of stories. Think about stories you hear at dinner parties or around the water cooler at work. House Hunting would be too narrow, but HOME would allow for all kinds of stories...homecomings, home cooking, home runs. Stay broad for a greater spectrum of stories.

How to tell a story:

A good way to learn to recognize a good story is to listen to a lot of stories. Subscribe to The Moth Podcast (www.themoth.org/podcast) or, if possible, join us at a live Moth StorySLAM (www.themoth.org/events).

A few story tips:

The Moth is NOT a venue for readings; it is a venue for tellings. No notes, papers, or cheat sheets are allowed on stage.

***Start in the action!**

Have a great first line that sets up the stakes or grabs attention.

Not: "So I was thinking about climbing this mountain. But then I watched a little TV and made a snack and took a nap and my mom called and vented about her psoriasis then I did a little laundry (a whites load) (I lost another sock, darn it!) and then I thought about it again and decided I'd climb the mountain the next morning."

Yes: "The mountain loomed before me. I had my hunting knife, some trail mix and snow boots. I had to make it to the little cabin and start a fire before sundown or freeze to death for sure."

Steer clear of meandering endings. They kill a story! Your last line should be clear in your head before you start.

Know your story well enough so you can have fun! Watching you panic to think of the next memorized line is harrowing for the audience. Make an outline, memorize your bullet points and play with the details. Enjoy yourself. Imagine you are a dinner party not a deposition.

No standup routines please.

The Moth LOVES funny people but requires that all funny people tell funny STORIES.

No rants:

Take up this anger issue with your therapist, or skip therapy and shape your anger into a story with some sort of resolution. (Stories = therapy!)

No essays:

Your eloquent musings are beautiful and look pretty on the page but unless you can make them gripping and set up stakes, they won't work on stage.

Get people telling stories:

Remember to advertise the theme well in advance so storytellers have time to prepare their stories.

If you still don't have enough names in the hat, encourage people to tell impromptu stories. Some folks will find it easier to tell their stories without all the formality. They will usually find that time is a challenge. So toot the horn/piano/whistle at the five-minute mark for everyone, It really helps folks to learn how long five minutes *feels!* Some will think it went so fast, and others will think it was an eternity.

Releases:

As a MothUP organizer you need to have every storyteller sign a release before they tell their story. We will send you a release template that you can use; you only have to fill in the date, the theme and your (The Organizer's) name. Without a release, you can't upload video of the storyteller to The Moth's Vimeo group.

How to grow your MothUP group:

The goal is to get everyone telling stories and to bring more stories to more people.

The Moth Podcast and The Moth Radio Hour are two ways to share a story with a much, much greater audience. If an exceptional story was told at your MothUP event, let us know, and we'll put it in the running for the podcast or the radio show.

If there's an overwhelming interest for your MothUP group, your group can graduate into an official Moth StorySLAM, produced and documented by The Moth. Let us know.