

## 51. 99-WORD PHOTO JOLT (CONTRIBUTED BY BRIAN REMER)

*How deeply do you explore your situations?*

Rod Stewart had a hit song titled, “Every Picture Tells a Story, Don’t It?” Brian Remer, author of [“Say It Quick!”](#) suggests that you can tell powerful stories in just 99 words. What story does your picture tell?

### **Synopsis**

Participants choose a photograph. They then tell a 99-word story based on the image.

### **Purpose(s)**

- *Clarity:* To convey the ‘true’ meaning of an image that could be interpreted in many ways.
- *Creativity:* To create the story behind an image.
- *Conversation:* To discuss the many stories that could lie behind any one image.

### **Training Topics**

- *Solo:* Can I tell the story behind this image?
- *One-on-One Coaching:* Can you tell the story behind this image?
- *Communication:* Can I use words to make this image stronger?
- *Creativity:* How many stories can we create from one image?
- *Any Training Topic:* Tie your stories to any training topic.

### **Participants**

- *Minimum:* 2
- *Maximum:* any number
- *Best:* 2 to 32
- *Configurations:* Solo, Pairs, Triads, or Groups

### **Time**

- *5 to 15 minutes:* Run as a pairs activity with no debrief.
- *15 to 30 minutes:* Run in pairs or triads with no a short debrief.
- *30 to 60 minutes:* Run in teams of four or more with a full debrief.

### **Supplies**

- One deck of *Photo Jolts!* cards per 12 participants.
- (Optional) “Say It Quick!” by Brian Remer, available at <http://thiagi.com>.

### **Room Set Up**

- No room set up is required for this Photo Jolt.

## **Preparation**

- No preparation is required for this Photo Jolt.

## **Virtual Facilitation Options**

- *Image Sharing without Cards:* You can run this Photo Jolt by choosing one image then sharing that image with the local and remote participants via video or image sharing. This will require display capabilities in the remote locations. All participants will then complete the Photo Jolt using the same core image.
- *Video Sharing with Cards:* You can run this Photo Jolt by providing each virtual location with a deck of images and a video link.
- *Audio Sharing with Cards:* You can run this Photo Jolt by providing each virtual location with a deck of images. The virtual participants will describe their image without sharing it via video.
- *Remote Facilitation with Cards:* If you have the minimum number of participants at the remote location, they can run this Photo Jolt locally.

## **Flow**

1. *Select a photograph.* Ask participants to silently choose a photograph that resonates with them. Allow 1 to 2 minutes.
2. *Write a story.* Ask participants to write the 99-word story – yes, exactly 99 words – that lies behind their image. Allow 10 minutes.
3. *Share their story.* Ask the participants to share their story with their partner(s).
4. *Debrief.*

## **Variations**

- *99-Word Story Collage:* Form teams of four. Ask the participants to read a 99-word story from “Say It Quick!” Then ask the participants to create a 4 image collage representative of that story.
- *Let Me Show You:* Ask the participants to read a 99-word story from “Say It Quick!” Next, choose a random image and say, “Let me show you a picture from this story.” Ask how it changes the interpretation of the story; what new insights it adds, and how one might alter either the story or artwork to better reflect the concept.
- *99-Word Black Sheep:* Read a 99-word story from “Say it Quick!” Then pick two photos that represent it and one that doesn't. Now, your partner (or another team) must guess which picture does not fit.
- *Transitions:* Read three 99-word stories and then choose two pictures to insert as a transition between each. These photographs should construct a logical sequence and a larger story. Participants can choose the ‘best’ sequence.

## **Play Sample**

Here is an example using Photograph 1 - Skyscraper. The topic for this discussion was ‘Our Team’.

- *Look*: “This is a photograph of a modern skyscraper.”
- *See*: “I believe that our team is hierarchical. Junior members don’t get to contribute as much as senior members.”
- *Feel*: “I feel like I will have to wait 5 years before I can contribute. That is frustrating to me. Sometimes I get angry when my ideas aren’t heard. I feel marginalized.”
- *Explore*: “This photo is dark, which is how I sometimes feel. The windows are tiny, which represents my contribution. The building edges are sharp, like the rejection of my ideas.”
- *Share*: “I was on a project team at college that felt this way. I didn’t say anything. As a result, we didn’t get the best ideas. We did sub-par work and got a poor grade. I don’t want that to happen again.”
- *Connect*: The partner replies, “I went through that in my previous company. I didn’t like it, so I left. In retrospect, I wish I had talked with my teammates. Maybe my photo helps. My image is of two women running. They are isolated from the people in cars, but are finding strength in each other’s support. Do you have teammates that can support you?”

What additional statements might you make?

### ***Debrief Questions***

To get the most out of this Photo Jolt, ask and discuss the following types of questions:

- *What were common themes?*
- *Did we have contradictory themes?*
- *What does this tell us?*

### ***Resources***

- n/a.