

Discovering Empathy: A Labovian Analysis of Gus Worland's Personal Story in TEDx Talk

Ellysa Rahmani Putri Astuti*

English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study discusses how attitude can evoke empathy and emotional engagement in narrative. The personal story of Gus Worland was analyzed in his TEDx Talk using the Appraisal Theory framework, particularly the subsystem of attitude, including affect, judgment, and appreciation, to assess emotional expressions, behavioral assessments, and evaluative stances. It also uses Labov's framework of narrative analysis to show how structural elements like evaluation contribute to the resonance of empathy in the audience. Qualitative research design, therefore, has been used to analyze the transcript of the TEDx Talk by Worland through content analysis. The results show that the effect amplifies emotional resonance, judgment deepens moral engagement, and appreciation highlights the transformative value of connection. Labov's six narrative components further elaborate coherence and impact; the sections of evaluation and resolution foster a reflective and actionable response among audiences. The study contributes to the knowledge of empathy-building for public speakers and mental health advocates on ways to employ narrative strategies for impactful communication. It will be useful for other researchers to extend this framework across various advocacy contexts to gain a deeper understanding of narrative empathy in its universality.

Corresponding e-mail:

*)elisdiplo2004@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Narrative discourse has always been one of the cornerstones of oral and written communication, especially when it comes to analysis in linguistics. Of all the available robust frameworks for studying narratives, one that stands out is William Labov's model for a story, broken down into six components: abstract, orientation, complicated action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. This framework has also been applied in a variety of contexts, ranging from Arabic oral traditions to the analysis of advocacy speeches and literary works. Its flexibility and systematic approach make it a useful tool in investigating coherence and the impact of the narrative.

With the advent of digital times, such platforms as TEDx Talks have grown into the most powerful medium for telling and sharing stories and advocating things by weaving intellectual depth with emotional resonance. In the TEDx format, concise, impactful presentations on many occasions use personal narration. This TEDx Talk by Gus Worland, "Is someone you love suffering in silence? Here's what to do," gives evidence of how storytelling may raise awareness about sensitive issues like mental health and the prevention of suicide. He personalizes this talk with a call to action, making his talk an even stronger candidate for a narrative analysis.

From the moment of its proposal in 1972, the narrative framework developed by William Labov has represented one of the most fertile tools with which to deal with narrative discourse. Abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda are the elements providing the structural approach to how stories should be constructed and delivered. The Labov model, in wide application within linguistic and discourse studies, has given reason for insight into the coherence and the cultural relevance of the narratives. It finds its application in oral traditions, advocacy speeches, and written literature. For instance, Alenizi (2020) applied Labov's framework to Arabic oral narratives and showed the robustness of the model for non-Western storytelling practices and further cross-cultural studies.

Another aspect of Labov's model is that it has been flexible to digital and multimodal storytelling. More recent studies extend the model to include narratives, such as those presented through a TEDx Talk, by using media that incorporate visual and auditory elements with textual. Research about TEDx Talks confirms the high value of storytelling methodology in composing powerful narratives that reach widely varied audiences. Examples include Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TEDx Talk entitled "The Danger of a Single Story" in 2009 and Bryan Stevenson's social justice advocacy in 2012, which both use Labov's elements to emotionally and intellectually involve listeners.

In addition, the field of narrative analysis has used Labov's framework in conjunction with other linguistic theories, such as appraisal theory. For instance, the research by Solihah et al. (2018) on appraisal resources in evaluating the attitudes and intentions of speakers, aiming at narrative coherence, complements the attitudinal appraisal of Wulandari and Khristianto (2024) regarding James Charles's YouTube reviews to illustrate how affect, judgment, and appreciation contribute to emotional engagement and credibility. These works show an evolving application of narrative frameworks within diverse communicative contexts.

Despite its wide application, there has been criticism of Labov's framework for its strong structural emphasis at the occasional expense of sociocultural and performative aspects of narration. Other researchers, such as Fitriani et al. (2023) and Suhartini and Nugroho (2023), pointed out that affective and contextual elements, such as emotion and translation dynamics, should feature in the analysis of narratives. These findings point to the fact that while Labov's model is foundational, its integration with modern discourse tools and multimodal considerations is imperative in explaining the complexities of contemporary narratives.

Various studies have been conducted at the intersection of Labov's narrative framework and Appraisal Theory, particularly on the attitudinal subsystem that involves affect, judgment, and appreciation. For example, Solihah et al. (2018) undertook a study on attitudinal appraisal in the students' argumentative speeches. Dominantly, appreciation outweighed the affect and judgment in the above study, meaning that students are most likely to judge a particular topic or phenomenon

rather than display an effect or evaluate an action that has taken place. This pattern has pointed out the role of appreciation in constructing evaluative and persuasive narratives.

Other inspirations of the attitudinal subsystem of appraisal theory are found in Wulandari and Khristianto's (2024) analysis of beauty product reviews in James Charles's YouTube videos. Indeed, the research showed a relatively equal distribution of affect, judgment, and appreciation; the first one referred to describing the quality of products, while affect expressed emotions regarding the feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Judgment, although less often used, referred to actions associated with the product. This multifunctional application of the attitudinal resources now shows how the Appraisal Theory further makes the digital stories more relevant and inalienable.

This role of affect has also been addressed in other research, such as Fitriani et al. (2023), while analyzing attitude appraisal in the narrative and recount texts. Affect, as found, stands as the major type of attitude, contributing most to the emotive nature and engaging storytelling. Thus, affective manipulation in the narrative should, when used appropriately, yield differences in audience perceptions and interest. Similarly, Suhartini and Nugroho (2023) conducted research on the realization of attitudinal appraisal in the translation of novels, whereby the maintenance of affective and evaluative language is considered important for maintaining the impact of narration across languages.

These studies underline the importance of appraisal theory, especially the attitudinal subsystem, in enriching narrative analysis. By integrating affect, judgment, and appreciation, narratives can evoke emotions, establish credibility, and engage audiences effectively. This research builds on these insights by analyzing how attitudinal appraisal interacts with narrative elements in Gus Worland's TEDx Talk to amplify advocacy and foster empathy in mental health discourse.

While many studies have applied Labov's narrative framework and appraisal theory to various genres, very few have combined both in the context of TEDx Talks regarding their emotional engagement and empathy in the advocacy of mental health. While there is some research regarding narratives in TED Talks that engage the audience, the integration of Labov's narrative elements with appraisal theory to explain how storytelling can foster empathy is underexplored. The study will try to fill this gap by applying both frameworks to Gus Worland's TEDx Talk in an investigation of how narrative structure and evaluative language work together to affect emotional engagement and empathy.

While work has been done regarding attitude in narrative analysis, few works have been conducted that present how these evaluative resources interact with the specific emotional power of personal advocacy narratives in the framing of mental health. Precisely, this article underpins the subtle ways in which such a contribution is made toward personal storytelling for emotional and ethical resonance in the context of mental health, precisely focusing on the attitudinal components of the Appraisal Theory, specifically the dimensions of affect, judgment, and appreciation.

The two central research questions that this study will try to answer are: (1) how the attitude element of Appraisal Theory is used in the narrative by Gus Worland, and (2) how Labov's narrative structure explains the emotional engagement of the audience with such empathy. By investigating these questions, the research aims to understand the role of evaluative language and narrative structure in shaping emotional responses and fostering empathy in audiences, with a particular focus on Gus Worland's TEDx Talk on mental health and suicide prevention.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of how narrative structures and evaluative language intersect to evoke empathy, particularly in the context of mental health advocacy.

This paper, therefore, offers a new direction in the analysis of personal narratives in advocacy speeches through the use of Appraisal Theory and Labov's narrative framework. The findings will be useful in practice to public speakers, mental health advocates, and educators interested in understanding how storytelling effectively captures audience engagement, fosters empathy, and motivates action, especially in sensitive and critical areas like mental health.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design to analyze the content of the selected narrative. More specifically, it uses the structure and meaning of William Labov's narrative framework for personal stories. Using this structure enables the approach to delve more deeply into how the story would communicate its intended message to the audience. In line with this, the research is focused on the transcript of Gus Worland's TEDx Talk, which was delivered on May 23, 2023. The talk, entitled "Is Someone You Love Suffering in Silence? Here's What to Do", was a 12-minute personal story. This narrative has been selected because it truly represents a real-life story of emotional struggles and solutions, hence very relevant for the analysis required to establish the impact of personal storytelling on audience comprehension. In doing so, the data collection involves getting the entire transcript of the TEDx Talk. After that, it involves selecting key segments of the personal narrative on the basis of their relevance to the theme. Such selections are prepared for a close content analysis in depth. Finally, data analysis is done descriptively using both Labov's six-part narrative framework and the Appraisal Theory developed by White and Martin (2005). Through Labov's framework, it breaks down the narrative structure into abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda, providing insights into how the story is organized. Meanwhile, the Appraisal Theory helps identify attitude components in the narrative, such as affect, judgment, and appreciation. Findings are then presented to show how language is used to elicit emotion and to convey meaning efficiently to an audience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Attitude Analysis

In the Appraisal theory, the Attitude system of Martin and White (2005), therefore, provides a framework through which language expresses emotions, evaluates behavior, and assesses the value of entities or events. It consists of three main subsystems: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Affect concerns the emotional responses of a person and is divided into categories of dis/inclination, such as desire or fear; un/happiness, such as joy or sadness; in/security, such as confidence or anxiety; and dis/satisfaction, such as frustration or contentment. This subsystem captures the emotional undercurrents in communication and helps to reveal how individuals relate to their experiences.

Judgment pertains to human behavior and mainly concerns moral and ethical dimensions. It is divided into social esteem, which assesses the qualities of things like reliability and capacity, and social sanction, which examines ethical or moral actions such as honesty or propriety. This subsystem enables speakers to represent individuals as morally estimable or despicable, thereby reinforcing the societally instilled norms and expectations.

Appreciation in this subsystem has to do with evaluation concerning things, events, or phenomena in terms of their quality and significance. It is divided into reaction, composition, and

valuation: how we feel about something, the balance or structure of something, and its worth or importance, respectively. Taken together, these subsystems allow a fine-grained approach to understanding how language encodes attitude and creates meaning in discourse.

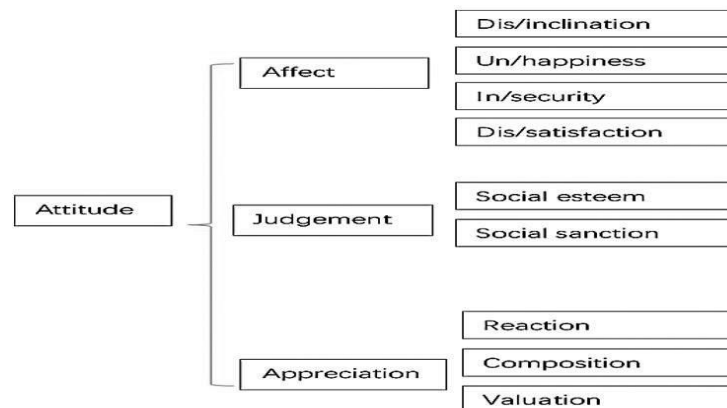


Figure 1. Attitude sub-system in Appraisal theory (based on Martin and White 2005), As Cited in Qin & Zhang (2020).

In using the expression, the Affect varies from love and appreciation through grief to worry, creating tremendous empathy with the audience. "I truly loved him" is an example where Affect is positive: One would say that the attachment or "infestation" to Angus is in keeping with the empathy of sorrow for the loss of that type of relationship. Conversely, the phrases "Why would someone like that take their own life?" and "It was hard. Emotional stuff, certain things trigger you" reflect negative Affect, encapsulating the narrator's confusion, sorrow, and emotional struggle when recounting Angus's suicide.

The expressions of vulnerability shared by these individuals are something with which an audience can more easily identify and find resonance, having dealt with grief and loss themselves. Also, the visceral description, "You can basically hear the snot running out of the nose and the tears running outta the eyes," shows raw emotional release that underlines how deep the shared human emotions are, which the story provokes. The story also serves as a call to action regarding Affect by way of a shift in personal emotions to broader concerns. For example, "It made me think, I wonder how many other people are worrying alone," describes the narrator's negative Affect of concern for others experiencing similar isolation.

This thought further deepens not only the emotional weight of the story but also invites reflection among the audience about their role in supporting others. On a more positive note, the narrator's statement, "I feel extremely blessed to be able to be in those one-on-one conversations," speaks to gratitude for meaningful interactions and reinforces the value of connection and understanding. By navigating between personal sorrow, concern for society, and thankfulness, the narrator creates an emotional arc that resonates with listeners while calling for greater awareness and empathy in approaching mental health challenges.

Nuance in Affect develops into flesh and blood for the humanly realistic narrator, creating less divide between particularism and universalism conceptions of Affect. The direct and unbridled emotions evinced in telling humanize a shared existence common to all listeners who feel encouraged to reflect upon both their own relationships and feelings of connectedness. It is through this emotional resonance that the story captivates and calls people into action to connect, support, and openly discuss sensitive topics such as mental health and suicide prevention.

The Affect subsystem is the one that particularly develops the emotional responses of a person, from love and sorrow to concern and gratitude, which can be shown through the narrator's utterances about Angus. This emotional range allows not only the audience to connect with the narrator's personal experiences but also fosters empathy and reflection on broader societal issues, such as mental health and suicide prevention. Personal emotions in this interplay with collective concerns foreground the emotional resonance of a narrative. By using the Attitude system, the story eventually invites listeners to reflect upon their own emotions and relations while raising awareness of social problems that concern us all.

Throughout the narrative, one notices that the narrator has continuously used positive Judgment to point out all the admirable attributes of Angus: how he was dependable and caring. This is evident from the phrases such as "He took on the mantle to look after me" or "He was my go-to guy", depicting Angus as responsible and reliable for being a caregiver and even knowledgeable for both himself and the narrator. These reviews put Angus in the position of a great mentor and support system, which makes him quite important to the narrator. Focusing on the moral character of Angus, the narrator invites the audience to admire him and feel the weight of his loss, deepening emotional engagement with the story.

At the same time, the story employs Judgment to demonstrate the disparity between Angus's successful veneer and inner turmoil. Descriptions such as "He was good looking. Beautiful wife, my cousin, three beautiful children," and "He seemed to tick all the boxes" highlight social assumptions about what constitutes perfection. Yet, these judgments are made to question superficial judgments through the revelation of anguish hidden beneath the surface. The contrast, therefore, underlines the intricacy of mental health issues, implores listeners to look beyond outward appearances, and consider what they cannot see that others might be struggling with.

Finally, Judgment extends beyond Angus to reflect on broader themes of connection and hope. The narrator's statement, "We've been on for a long time. We're like brothers," underscores the value of supportive relationships, particularly in challenging times. Additionally, "They didn't want to die. They tried to take their own life, but they didn't want to die" conveys an inherent hope in individuals experiencing suicidal ideation. This moral judgment underlines a timely intervention and emotional support, a plea for a compassionate approach to psychological distress. Together, both judgments celebrate Angus's character and simultaneously allow the audience to develop and grow deeper connections and understanding with people in their own lives.

Relating to the Appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005), the usage of Judgment in the narrative indicates evaluation of Angus's behavior and portrays his social esteem through dependability and care. Through this moral judgment, the audience will be in a position to appreciate the role of Angus in the life of the narrator as well as the general social perspective of relationships and support systems. The story further contrasts that positive Judgment with the inner demons Angus had to fight, showing just how complex mental health can be and how judgment in society is based on what one sees rather than what actually is.

In this way, the Judgment subsystem helps not only to characterize Angus's moral features but also to make the audience reflect on the value of supportive relationships and empathetic attitudes, which makes their connection to mental health and emotional support themes more profound. Through these instantiations of Judgment, the story shows how language can shape our emotional response and moral understanding, be it within the broader framework of Attitude that Martin and White describe.

The story shows positive Appreciation for the value of shared vulnerability and connection, underlining their transformative power. As he said, "What we did for the next 90 minutes was just the most beautiful radio that I've ever been involved in," which shows how deeply touching that radio session was, and how open dialogue can create human connections. Similarly, "We've given them a little opportunity to talk about the stuff that's truly important to them" highlights the radio show's role in fostering a safe space for participants to address hidden emotional struggles. These evaluations underscore the significance of vulnerability in breaking barriers and creating a sense of collective healing.

The narrator also focuses on the main theme of the story, which is the value of a relationship. Statements like "It's all about connection" and "I want everyone in the world to find someone who has gotcha for life" celebrate the importance of building strong, trusted relationships. While advocating for supportive networks, the narrator signals their role in preventing isolation and fostering mental well-being. These reflections call on the audience to nurture their relationships and invest in emotional connections with others as a source of personal and communal resilience.

The story also contrasts the durability of relationships with the impermanence of material pursuits. The remark, "Work can wait. It'll always be there. They'll always replace you," downplays the impermanence of work while encouraging the audience to focus on the things in life that matter. This is corroborated by "That day changed my life," which reflects the personal transformation of the narrator following the acceptance of vulnerability and focusing on what really matters. Together, these utterances of Appreciation are a strong call to action for listeners to reassess their priorities and invest in what brings lasting emotional fulfillment.

The narrator stresses very strongly that open and frank conversation develops good contact and draws people much closer; in this situation, he considers moments to be deeply changing. Relationships become even more central in a human life when reflecting upon the durability of emotional links. The story also underlines the importance of shared vulnerability and strength within close relationships and, by doing so, draws attention to the durable value of these connections, encouraging an audience to invest in emotional fulfillment and the well-being of their interpersonal relationships. In this way, Appreciation encourages listeners to reflect on the value of their own connections and their contribution to personal and collective resilience.

B. Labovian Narrative Analysis

Labov's theory of the structure of narrative, in Figure 2, is a framework used in the analysis of the way stories are organized in everyday communication. As stated in a book entitled "Life As a Discourse: Introduction to Discourse Analysis" 2024 by Pujati, Labov, as the expert in narrative analysis, has a great model of the structure of a narrative, starting from an abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda, in analyzing some narratives. The abstract is the introduction, which summarizes the point of the story and provides attention for the audience. Orientation sets the setting; it describes the setting, the characters, and the background information. The complicating action consists of events or struggles that push the story forward to create suspense or conflict.

Evaluation is at the core of Labov's model, where the narrator indicates his attitude toward the importance of the happening in question and often points to an emotional or moral conclusion. The resolution resolves the conflict or concludes the narrative arc. Finally, the coda signals the end of the story, often relating it to the present or providing a reflective summary. The above schematized

approach, thus, helps to conceptualize how narratives function, not just as ways of telling experiences but, importantly, as ways of meaning-making in human communication.

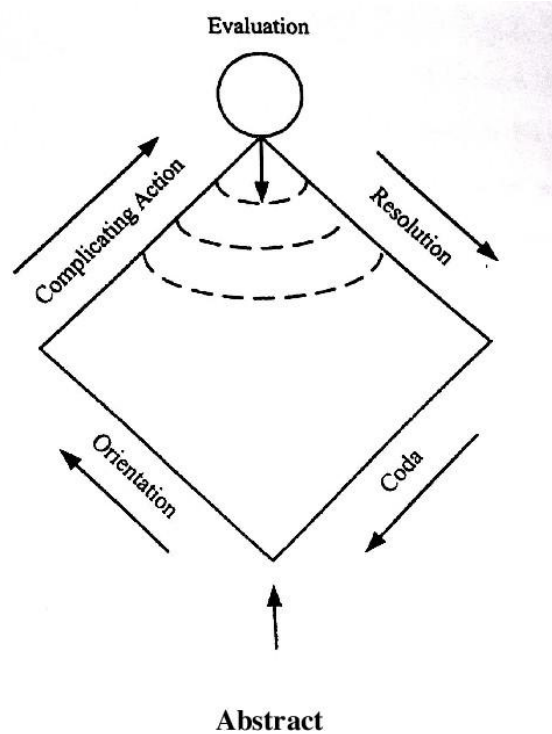


Figure 2. Labov's Progression of an Oral Narrative As Cited in Chang (2009)

Before going deeper into analyzing the story using the structure based on this theory, the transcript that the researcher already collected is also being categorized to fit the six structures properly and logically, as can be seen below:

Abstract	<i>"I want to talk about my mentor. I want to talk about the day that I got a phone call saying that he had died, and I want to talk about the moments later in the same phone call that I'd heard that he'd actually taken his own life. And I'm saying this because I want you to listen and also think about all the people that you love and adore and you cannot imagine living without in your life.."</i>
Orientation	<i>"As you're listening to me talk, my friend, my mentor, my father, figure Angus, I truly loved him. My father left the family home when I was quite young, and he took on the mantle to look after me. I'd known him from a very young age. He taught me how to swim. He was my cousin's boyfriend, then my cousin's husband, and he was just my go-to guy. When I was starting to date girls and I wasn't sure what to do, I'd ring him up and I'd ask him, Hey, what do you think? What's going on? How should I perhaps do this? When I ended up working for him years and years later in a big Maori corporate, I would always go to him for workarounds. How can I get this deal done? He always seemed to be that guy that I could turn to and he'd always give me the right answer, not only me. I remember walking around the corner at work one day and there's always someone in his office. There was always someone waiting for him. If, you rang him up. He was always on the phone. He'd ring you back. He always seemed to be that guy that had people going to him, asking for help, asking for favors, asking for support. He was good looking. Beautiful wife, my cousin, three beautiful children.."</i>
Complicating Actuon	<i>"Why would someone like that take their own life? Why would they makes no sense to me? And at the funeral and talking to people after the funeral, just the frustration. Did you know? Did you know? Did you know? Did anyone know? Did you get a clue? And</i>

of course everyone's saying, no, I didn't have a clue. In fact, he was just like you are saying, he was my go-to guy. He seemed to tick all the boxes. He seemed to just know what to say at the right time. And he seemed to be able to work his way, both personally and with work to get life done, and he was successful. I told that story on a breakfast show that I was on called The Grill Team in Sydney, Australia. I was on there for 11 years, and one morning I decided to be vulnerable. One morning I said, you know what, I'm gonna talk about my friend. Because we were six years into that 11-year stint, and I'd never really spoken much about myself. We spoke about sport, we spoke about telling jokes. We did things like ticket giveaways and concert giveaways and fun stuff. We wanted to get people driving to work or listening to us having fun. We didn't want to sort of drag 'em down with personal stuff or being vulnerable. But one morning, four 30 in the morning, sitting around the production table with the producers and my co-hosts, I said, I'm gonna be vulnerable today. I'm gonna talk about something that I haven't spoken about before and it's been eating away at me and I want to do it. And they supported me. We've been on for a long time. We're like brothers. And we said, you know what, mate? Whatever you want to do, let's go for it. So 8 0 5, just after the eight o'clock news, the Hollywood Hour in Radioland, we flicked on the mics. And I told the story that I just told you guys. It was hard. I was getting support from my co-host. I got the words out eventually a bit like I am today. Emotional stuff, certain things trigger you. But what was truly happening behind me was all the phone lines into the radio station were flashing, which means people were phoning in. Normally those lines would be for you to ring up, to be part of the show, to tell a joke, to win a concert ticket, to win a movie ticket. All of a sudden all those lines were flashing. Didn't quite realize why. The producer comes in and says, we've got all these people that want to thank you for telling your story. I thought, that's nice. I've put myself out there. It is nice to get a little bit of love like that.."

Evaluation

"So we started putting a few calls through. Not only were they telling me thank you for telling that story. More importantly, it was like we'd given them a green light. We'd given them permission to talk about the stuff that they wanted to talk about. All of a sudden, in a safe place like a radio station where they'd normally laugh their way to work, we'd given them a little opportunity to talk about the stuff that's truly important to them. The stuff that they had in their bellies, the stuff banging around in their heads that they never thought they would get a chance to talk about. So what we did for the next 90 minutes was just the most beautiful radio that I've ever been involved in. We took no traffic reports, no news reports, we played no music. We just had 90 minutes of people bumbling and fumbling and getting their way through a conversation of gravity with us in the radio studio. There was moments, thank you. It was impressive that so many people went, you know what? I'm diving in here. I'm talking about my stuff now. Because he spoke about that. All strangers listening to each other on the radio all gave each other permission to have a chat. There was moments of true silence. And silence in radio is not a good thing. However, when you have silence, when you can sort of hear the tears, you can try to just hear them gathering the guts and determination to say the next word. Or you can basically hear the snot running out of the nose and the tears running outta the eyes. That's when you know people are being fed in, and that's when you know that they're being real. So fantastic. And it made me think, I wonder how many other people are worrying alone if we just open it up on this radio show on this morning and I tell my story, then we have 90 minutes of people going, me too, me too, me too. I wonder how many people are out there feeling exactly the same way.."

Revolution

"So that day changed my life. I decided to commit myself to being more honest, to being more vulnerable. But even more importantly, let's get suicide prevention down to zero. A huge call. I know, and I said it in the Australian press and everyone gave it to me, but I don't care. I'm gonna focus on making sure that no one goes through the type of stuff that my mate went through. And how do we do that? How do we do that? That's the trick.

And now back to the episode. So for the last six years, I've been running a foundation called Gotcha for Life. I want everyone in the world to find someone who has gotcha for life. Someone you can Talk, Odo wars and all without any fear of judgment about the truly important stuff. Why do we keep celebrating with lots of people in parties, but we don't celebrate the stuff that's a little bit harder, the stuff that's not so good, why is that the case? So that's been the focus. I dunno, If, you know the stats around suicide in Australia, seven men every day, two women, nine Australians that woke up this morning won't wake up tomorrow morning. 65,000 people in Australia tried to take their own life every single year. The number one way to die if you're a young Australian male is suicide. Now, according to the World Health Organization who they tell me that over 1900 people that wake up this morning won't wake up tomorrow morning, they would've taken their own life. On top of that 38,000, nearly 40,000 people will try to take their own life. Today, 1900 people today, 38,000 will attempt today round the world. So this is not what we are gonna accept. This is line in the sand. Time to go no, no more. But what can you do, If? you look at the world as this huge big place. It might be too big a task for you to deal with. It might be too big in your own country. It might be too big in your own city. But what if we just started looking after your own village? What if we just say, I'm just gonna look after my own people, the people that I love and adore and I cannot imagine living without. Just imagine that in the last few years I've been so lucky to Talk Odo, people that have tried to take their life, but they're still with us now. Those conversations are hard. I feel extremely blessed to be able to be in those one-on-one conversations. You know, what comes outta those three, those conversations, three things. One, they didn't want to die. They tried to take their own life, but they didn't want to die. That gave me great hope. The other thing is that they were tired and they were in pain. So, if you combine tired and pain together, you make a shit decision. We all know this If. you are not rested and you are in pain. You make bad calls. So if we know that they don't wanna die, but they've tried to take their life, that's the hope that we need to hold onto. That means if we can get to people before they get to an eight, nine out of 10 in terms of how they feel, we can actually stop them making that permanent decision based on a temporary situation. And that's what it's all about. And that's what I wanna do with you guys. Now, if I possibly can, I want you to think of someone that you love and adore and you cannot imagine living without. Have you got that person's face in your head? Do you know what that person's name is? And have you got them locked in after three? I want you to shout that person's name out. 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3. Okay. This is the bit you need to do something for me to that person that you to shouted out, I need you to send them a text message. Simple as that. Having these face-to-face conversations I understand is hard. But when we're building our mental fitness, we have to start slowly. So I want you to walk up to the mental fitness gym for me and just open up those doors, and I want you to send a text, but the words to the text are this, I love you. I miss you. See you soon. Kiss, hug, kiss, hug. What I want you to do is send that test message and let's just see what responses we get. It's all about connection. It's all about making sure that you look after the people that are most important to you. Work can wait. It'll always be there. They'll always replace you. But not these people. I would give anything to have a cup of tea, a beer, go to a footy match with my man who took his own life. I'll never be able to do that..”

Coda

“Let's make sure that we look after our village. Make sure we look after the people that are most important to you. That is absolutely key. The worst thing, the text message gets sent out. Someone goes, what the, or are you drunk? Or if a man sends it to a man, there'll be a phone call within 30 seconds, guaranteed. Or, or the worst case scenario. What's this all about? Well, you can then say to them, well, I was asked to think of someone that I love and adore and can't imagine living without. I thought a you. That's a pretty cool way to connect yourself up with the people that are most important to you. Thanks so much for listening, guys. I appreciate it.”

The abstract serves, according to Labov's theory, an introductory function: it summarizes the point of the story and orients the listener's attention. For example, the statement, "I want to talk about my mentor. I want to talk about the moments later in the same phone call when I heard that he'd taken his own life," highlights the main events-the mentor's death and suicide-while using emotionally charged language like "the people you love and adore and cannot imagine living without in your life." This kind of word choice helps make a personal and yet universal appeal, all while creating a familiar, reflective mood.

Terms like "mentor," "adore," and "cannot imagine living without" invite the audience in, as most can empathize with love and possible loss. The emotionally loaded wording ensures that even an abstract will capture attention and provide a background for further unfolding. Worland illustrates Angus as more than a mentor; in fact, he was his father figure: "He took on the mantle to look after me." It spoke volumes about Angus's main role in his life.

Specific details include "he taught me how to swim," "he was my go-to guy," and "he always seemed to be the person I could turn to," which denote all the ways Angus was reliable and important. Also, the description of Angus as "good looking" with a "beautiful wife" and "three beautiful children" adds personal and relational context to provide a fuller picture of this man and his character. Such affectionate and descriptive language ensures that the audience grasps the depth of the bond between the speaker and Angus, creating an emotional foundation for the story that follows. This section introduces the complicating action, which furthers the story by adding tension or conflict.

The speaker struggles with the central question: "Why would someone like that take their own life?" The rhetorical question reflects confusion and frustration, underscoring the shock of such an unexpected tragedy. The repeated inquiries, "Did you know? Did you get a clue?" convey a sense of communal disbelief, emphasizing the magnitude of Angus's actions. The vulnerability of sharing such a personal story on a light-hearted morning show was an extreme juxtaposition in tone to the program, and this shows the gravity of the content.

Phrases like "I decided to be vulnerable" and "it's been eating away at me" show the emotional turmoil behind this decision. Furthermore, the image of "all the phone lines flashing" was a metaphor for overwhelming listeners' responses that have supported the personal importance of the speaker's openness and its emotional resonance. Finally, the evaluation comes when, using Labov's structure, he reflects on how important it has been to him and tries to shed light on what this all meant to him.

In this section, the speaker describes the effect of sharing the story on the audience, giving them "green light" or "permission" to talk about deeply personal and highly unspoken matters. He uses phrases like "the stuff banging around in their heads" or "they never thought they would get a chance to talk about" to describe his audience's emotional release and validation. It is in the imagery of silence-you can sort of hear the tears, hear them gathering the guts and determination-that makes this such a vulnerable, honest moment.

This reflection emphasizes how open communication provides a means to find collective courage through shared experiences. As he considers these responses, the speaker wonders how many other people are "suffering in solitude," underscoring the emotional and social significance of breaking the silence around mental health. Worland reflects on how the tragic loss of his mentor led him to dedicate his life to suicide prevention and fostering emotional vulnerability.

His speech is replete with phrasings that provide meaning on his commitment to creating change: "let's get the suicides down to zero"; "this is not what we are gonna accept." To these sayings, there's

additional underpinning: He has established Gotcha for Life and brings forth further emphasis on building mental fitness with improved personal relationships. The speaker's plain, straightforward words-now asking listeners to "send a text message" with words like "I love you" and "I miss you"-call them to immediate action.

This choice of words emphasizes the need to address emotional pain and prevent isolation, linking personal loss to a greater social call for awareness and support. The resolution brings closure to the story, while also offering hope and purpose to the audience. He finally implores the audience to look after their "village"-that is, the people who give them emotional support and meaning in their lives.

This is reinforced with the phrase, "Make sure we look after the people that are most important to you." Even the example of sending a text message-"I love you and I adore you"-becomes a tangible, actionable takeaway for the audience. Light-hearted, even-what with examples like "What the, or are you drunk?" and the suggestion to text a male friend to bond-emphasized vulnerability and possibly awkward acts that make this message even more valid. But these closing remarks, "Thanks so much for listening, guys. I appreciate it," leave a personal touch, binding the audience to take home with them not just the message of the story, but a sense of connection and purpose.

C. Attitude and Narrative Structure in Building Empathy

The emotional language and moral judgment by Gus are significant in the development of how the audience will experience the story. Using Affect (emotions) and Judgment (moral assessments), Gus lets the audience connect with his feelings of loss and confusion. This approach is supported by the argument presented by Burgess et al. (2022), who note that empathy can be developed through narrative thinking.

When Gus shares his personal feelings of grief, the story is not a simple event but a complex emotional tale because it allows the audience to understand his emotional journey with empathy. In this sense, Gus's use of Attitude serves to provide an emotionally profound account and gives deeper insights into the nature of other people's fights for good mental health that could have been experienced.

Furthermore, Gus's reflections on Judgment offer moral insights into the complexity of human experiences. He presents his mentor, Angus, as a character who outwardly seems perfect but is fighting a battle inside, further challenging the audience's perception of mental health. This again echoes the idea presented by Spinoza (1677, as cited in Burgess et al, 2022) that through empathy, individuals can be driven to undertake prosocial actions, such as comforting those in distress. Gus's critical yet compassionate portrayal of Angus allows the audience to question superficial judgments and instead adopt a more empathetic view of others' hidden struggles.

Gus's story follows in a clear and attractive order of the narrative proposed in Labov's framework. From a short abstract introducing him with his loss, the heart of the story is so attractive that the audience listens to him more for emotional reasons. Orientation then contextualized his relationship with Angus for further deepening his feelings upon the loss, providing the proper base for empathic involvement.

The complicating action, with the shocking suicide news of Angus, amplifies emotional investment. The audience expects something else, so this twist produces a sense of crisis, increasing emotional investment. Burgess et al. (2022) explain that through the process of storytelling, one is

able to make meaning from a complex emotional experience. In this case, Gus's story offers the audience a moment for reflection about the deep emotional pain related to mental health issues.

Wrapping the narrative with evaluation and solution sections, where Gus contemplates the broader implications of his story and appeals for greater empathy and connection, helps firm up the emotional resonance. This evaluation invites the audience to reflect on the importance of listening to others' stories and understanding their emotional experiences, aligning with the idea that empathy is not just about emotional engagement but also about fostering compassionate action (Burgess et al., 2022).

Last but not least, the coda reinforces both the emotional journey and support for others in their times of mental crises. This is a notion brought to conclusion by researchers like Zaki (2019) and Morelli et al. (2015), who suggest that, as a psychological process, empathy may galvanize prosocial behavior. Gus's story did not just emotionally engage people; rather, it also urges one to extend empathy towards other people, especially those suffering from some form of mental health problems, and thus makes a lasting impact.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The personal story of Gus Worland effectively uses the element of Attitude in Appraisal Theory and Labov's narrative structure to emotionally engage the audience and create empathy. By expressing his emotions and making moral judgments, He invites the audience to reflect on the complexity of mental health, while the narrative structure ensures the audience is emotionally involved from start to finish. It is highly recommended that a narrative such as his heartbreaking story be used in more educational and health contexts, so society can raise emotional understanding, empathy, and stigma reduction regarding mental illness. Not only for society, but for other researchers too, such insight into the dynamics would help future research in the field of developing empathy and emotional support mechanisms to further develop more effective therapeutic, educational, and social interventions.

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