

Your Life, Your Story, Sharing Wisdom through Words

Week One - Story Finding

Introduction

Many participants come to story work saying they can't think of a story to tell, or that they don't have any stories, but the truth is stories are all around us - all the time. It's just a question of noticing - making a choice to pay attention, look out for them. For this first class in our series, we will share a couple techniques for finding / noticing stories.

Purpose

Participants are provided with two techniques for finding stories (writing to a prompt and homework for life). These flexible tools can be used again and again whenever a teller wants to dip into the well.

Potential Outcomes

- Remember some stories that had (would have) been lost to time
- Notice a story that is unfolding now
- Become more choiceful because of this noticing

The Process

Today's class will follow a structure that we will use every week:

- you'll hear a story at the top of the class
- you'll reflect on that story (with a prompt)
- you'll tell a story (to a partner, or to a small group)
- you'll listen and give feedback to a peer's story

Since this is our first time, today we'll share some general guidelines

Don't Let the Perfect be the Enemy of the Good

In this class, it's not so much about the performance as it is about the story (and the work that you will do with the story to find its meaning). Sure, we will polish them, and yeah sometimes perform them, but the focus of this course is not "public speaking" per se.

- **Remember:** *You always control what and how much you share.*
- Tell from scars not wounds: if something is very raw or too vulnerable, now's not the time for sharing.
- We do the work of mining the meaning to understand what our stories mean to us, and we share them in small groups to learn what they mean to others before we take them to the stage.

Story Moments

Life is experienced in moments, which is probably why moments are a very good way to think about stories and to find them. When you are looking through your responses to the story prompt, do you see any moments? These are often anchored to specific images, or sense memories (smell, sound, touch). Can you go there in your mind's eye? What do you notice?

Pick One (moment)

Use it to build your “story idea” around. Notice that we’re not using the word story (yet). This is deliberate. It might help you to trust the process to tell yourself this is just an idea. We’re working on them together, they will be messy, we’ve all just found them right now! We’re in this together!!

- Using that moment, add enough setting and contextual information for your listener to be able to experience it and understand it with you.
- Think about what it MEANS
 - To you
 - Why is this moment “remembering itself to you?”
 - What wisdom or insight is there for you to find?
 - Does it say something about you / What you value / What you will fight to protect?

Guidelines for Story Listening

- **Curiosity over Critique:** We are here to listen, not to fix.
- **Confidentiality:** Stories stay here; lessons leave.
- **Reflective Questions** for Story Listeners:
 - What stood out?
 - Where did you feel curious?
 - Where did you connect?

One big thing for listeners to pay attention for: Where does the teller come alive? What’s the moment, the image, the feeling? This is the heart and soul of their story (where the wisdom lies?), so it’s a true gift to reflect that back!!

Resources:

Live Storytelling in Tucson: Odyssey Storytelling, Female Storytellers (F*ST), Tellers of Tales Odyssey’s monthly show *Whoopsie* will be at Gallagher Theater (UofA) Thurs 2/5 at 7pm

Homework for Life: Spend 5 minutes each day writing down one or more meaningful moments. A few sentences a day are all it takes to preserve your life story—and create a collection of memories you’ll cherish forever.

From Matthew Dicks

His TED Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7p329Z8MD0>

His book: *Storyworthy: Engage, Teach, Persuade, and Change Your Life Through the Power of Storytelling*



Scan here for Matthew Dicks' TED Talk