THAT REMINDS ME OF A STORY…

Annotated Bibliography

Books


The authors of this book, who are both on the same college faculty yet come from different faith traditions, describe the use of stories in helping to understand life transitions: eg. surviving adolescence, maturing in faith, preparing for marriage, coping with grief, facing death.

From introduction: “Each of us has stories to tell that allow the divine narrative to unfold and all human stories are potential windows to the story of God.”

On the power of stories: “Stories make claims on our minds and hearts, often before we know why or how. We may be reading a magazine or listening to the news when suddenly, without warning, some tale of heroism or tragedy grabs our attention. We had no intention of being emotionally hijacked during the news...we were drawn into a tale without permission, forethought or desire to be involved...” P 4

Why we tell stories: “...the external reason for telling a story may be to motivate our progeny, break the ice with a new acquaintance, resolve a family conflict, or maintain our equilibrium during a crisis situation...” P 9


This is a helpful book. Decidedly Jungian, the author first gives a comprehensive overview for understanding the need for and nature of storytelling then explains some practical steps for assisting others in telling their story.

“People everywhere are telling stories about some piece of their lives to friends and strangers alike. Putting our life’s events into the form of a story, even as a written narrative can help us bear a burden or see with a clearer perspective. The stories of our lives carry a great power because we tap into ageless universal themes...Stories connect us to our roots.” P xii

“Telling our stories strengthens family and community bonds. With so many families living so far apart today, and so many others still suffering from the effects of various hurts over the years spent together, any chance to reminisce and tell family stories is a wonderful opportunity...Sharing personally significant stories in groups like this sustains hope for the future.” P xiii

This is a delightful and readable collection of stories, many of which have been heard on the National Public Radio (NPR) show *All Things Considered*. See link at: http://discover.npr.org/features/feature.jhtml?wfId=1134160


Bradt became a narrative therapist out of his interest in family systems therapy. He maintains that the most successful therapists are those that almost exclusively confine their intervention to questions or requests for further elaboration. For who could possibly know their story better than the people who had lived and created it in the first place?

“Storying (sic)…unites teller and listener together in an event of shared experience, experience that is different but complementary. Together they create a story between them, but they do so as teller and listener, and, therefore, with different purposes, tasks, and obligations. Thus, while both are engaged in the unfolding of a single reality between them in which both partake, contribute, and interact, this same single reality does not reveal itself singly or identically to listener and teller. Instead this single reality, created not by the one or the other but by both parties together, is perceived multiply, that is, in different ways according to the attunement, mode and acuity of the different senses—sound, hearing—mediating that reality.” P. 12

Bradt uses examples from Walter Brueggeman’s interpretation of Israel’s storying and how that storying developed Jewish identity. He demonstrates how midrash helped develop Jewish identity and suggests that story and midrash can be used in preaching today.


101 stories designed to enhance empowerment, acquire acceptance, reframe negative attitudes, change patterns of behavior, learn from experience, attain goals, cultivate compassion, develop wisdom, care for self, and enhance happiness. (stories) not only relate the facts about what happened, but communicate something about us, our experiences, our perceptions, and our view of the world. For just as stories shape the way we perceive and interact with the world, and reveal essential aspects of ourselves, in the later years of life they help us recall the journey of our life, with all its trepidations and triumphs. Even when we are gone, our stories remain behind.” P xviii

“We all tell stories… to connect and reconnect with other people. P. 12

Stories of harmed lives for understanding the role of and use of pastoral counseling in a congregational setting.


Crossan, a Catholic theologian, is a member of The Jesus Seminar.

“Jesus spoke of God in parables but the primitive communities spoke of Jesus, the Crucified One, as the Parable of God.” P. 10

“Which do we prefer, comfort or courage? It may be necessary to make a choice.” P. 128


Estes used the term “cantadora”, meaning “the keeper of the old stories” in the Hispanic tradition.

“we consider the story as a living relative” P. 3

She shared an old family blessing: “Whomsoever is still awake at the end of a night of stories will surely become the wisest person in the world”


This is a collection of stories from a myriad of philosophers and diverse spiritual resources that speaks of the journey toward understanding one’s own story. The journey is a pilgrimage, a wandering that is not in a straight line; it loops and winds its way through not always progressing forward. Along the way, one comes to understand, the answers are not always clear. “In the end few answers may be found – simply many, many more questions. But that is OK.” P 13


This fictional work by a highly regarded Jewish author describes the pivotal role of the listener in storytelling.


Speaks of the use of story in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to bring the sacred to life.


Based on presentations at a conference titled: Sacred Stories: Healing in the Imaginative Realm”, this book is a compilation of narratives from widely varied sources. The narratives stress the oral tradition of storytelling and the therapeutic value of uncovering, telling and revisiting our stories.

From the introduction: “Stories seem to be everywhere. But while some stories entertain, inform or teach us, others move us deeply. They change us and bring us closer together. There are sacred stories.”


P4 “At the end of our lives, after we have passed on, all that is left of us is our story. …these stories are our ticket to immortality.”

P 13 “the loss of story has depleted our culture of time-honored heroes and wisdom, robbing us of our deep connection to our ancestors and ancient guiding myths.”

p. 19 “I have consistently found that for most of us who are sighted, it’s the images of past events that are most accessible to recollection.”

p. 26 “In a world in which we privatize everything, including personal experience, story may be the one thread that can connect us to more expansive realities.”

p. 47 “By telling the story, I am no longer the victim of circumstances beyond my control. I have wrested back control by the simple act of description, turning what seems to be a failure…into a heroic saga. …even acute suffering can be redeemed.”


A disciple once complained, “You tell us stories but never reveal their meaning to us.” Said the master, “How would you like it if someone offered you fruit and chewed it up before giving to you?” No one can find your meaning for you. Not even the master. P 20

The authors talk about the value of narrative therapy as opposed to family systems therapy. They recognize that people often heal themselves by telling their stories to someone who will listen (or actively listen.) The format of the book is unusual making it difficult to follow and limiting its usefulness.

**Journal Articles**


“The thesis of this article is that those we care for will be cared for better if we know them.”

“Those of us who ‘take care of’ people will usefully ask questions concerning what things we share in common with those people in what ways particular people are unique in their experiences.”

Frazier, Richard T. “The Stories We Hear, the Stories We Tell.” *Quarterly Review:* Fall, 1999, p223-236.

An article written for the clergy and other professional storytellers.

…the richer stories ring with the mystery and fullness of life. Rather than being deliberate vehicles for deeper truths, they have a life of their own. They raise questions rather than provide someone else’s answers. They speak to the complexities and richness of human experience. They open people up. They invite. They surprise.

…the great writers who speak to moral issues (i.e., O’Connor, Eliot, Dickens, Tolstoy) provide two functions with their narratives. (1) the stories hold up a mirror that exposes the hypocrisy and moral shallowness of contemporary society. (2) the stories show us people struggling with their own personal tensions, such as a choice to be made or a path already taken.


...told or untold, our current circumstances influence how we relate to one another or to God. These stories beg to be talked over with someone, sometime. They are the background static behind our prayers.

Retelling an incident from our life allows us to reframe it, to see the story as Jesus might tell it to a crowd pressing him for a parable of good news.

The power of a story is sure to attract all kinds of responses. So tell it sincerely, and anticipate mutual intoxication. P. 20.

This article is interesting but very academic. She concludes that we need to use every medium to convey the Christian message, not just for factual material but for understanding, as well.


Without a history, or without a story, there is very little that we can say about ourselves. P. 102.

The inability to tell a story leaves an unintelligible residue in our lives that is too large. T There are too many feelings that lie fallow because we are not able to connect them with the reality of the self. ... To live without a story is to be disconnected from our past and our future. Without a story we are bound to the immediacy of the moment, and we are forever losing our grip on the reality of our own identity with the passage of discrete moments. P. 103.

Internet


Psychologists tell us that role-playing is a normal part of our psychological development.

Stories are a powerful tool in shaping our sense of self. As we hear, read or watch a story unfold, we get caught up in the characters and their adventures. We look at the world through their eyes for a while. We share in their experiences as if they were our own. This is valuable, as it helps us to learn important life lessons without going through all of the heartache that the lesson would ordinarily require if experienced first hand.

Stories shape our vision of the world around us.

Bruno, Beth, Ed. The Power of Stories an article on the website of SNET Internet www.snnet.net/features/insights/articles/2002/03230101.shtml

Sometimes all we have are our stories. When you lose a beloved, you feel compelled to tell the story of your loss over and over until it becomes something you can believe. When a child cries out in nighttime fear, an impromptu story of the silly old monster that is simply searching for his baseball glove shrinks terror on the spot. There
is simply no way to illustrate values such as honor, compassion, endurance and community other than to paint them into a story. A story that makes us laugh allows us to reaffirm ourselves and acknowledge the crazy world in which we live.


This site discusses “Life stories as well as theories needed to understand aging”


Each person has a unique story, unlike any other. These stories are constantly changing and being rewritten, reconstructed, even discarded from the moment we are born until we die.

When a loss or significant life change occurs people need to adapt their life story to include the loss. ... To assimilate a major loss the grieving person needs to create a private personal story and then confide that story to others.

For many patients telling or writing their story is what helps them to heal... Telling a life story can be particularly beneficial at the end of-life for the person dying, the family and the survivors.

It is known that a healing, nurturing relationship develops between storyteller and the listener.


By telling of story and listening to each other’s stories, we are able to make sense of our own life.


Quotes Peg Neuhauser, author of “Corporate Legends and Lore, The Power of Storytelling as a Management Tool.” She makes two points, supported by research of social scientists. The first is that stories make information easier to remember. This is because stories create images in the mind. Images are stored more directly and easily in the mind’s memory bank than hard data... second(ly) that stories make information more believable.

Klein, Eric Dharma Counseling www.dharmaconsulting.com/pstories.html

Human life is composed of stories. From prehistoric cave fires to contemporary cubicles, we define our life together through the stories we tell. Our stories do not merely
report the past. They shape the future. In the beginning we tell our stories - in the end our stories define us.

Newfield, Australia

Newfield, Australia is an international educational and consulting company specializing in the development of coaches, leaders and managers.

Essentially, Christmas is a story, one of many stories that we live in, some more prominent and powerful than others. We don’t all share exactly the same story about Christmas, but many of us build our own individual story around some common elements.


A web-based newsletter from the Village Green, an OMNI-Way LTC in Selby, Ontario.

"Everybody from the nurses to the kitchen-staff to myself will sit down and spend some time talking and listening to the residents."

With this in mind, the life enrichment co-coordinator will schedule weekly 'memory moments' with certain residents. She and other members of the activity department will spend a few minutes in a day listening to and recording the stories that a resident has to tell ... Sometimes they help us figure out why a resident is behaving in a certain way."

Rabun, Joanne Todd http://www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/oralhist.htm

A list of oral history questions compiled from a variety of sources by Joanne Todd Rabun in 1993. They included a 6th grade class project of her daughter and a college-level Women's Studies class project of her nephew. She used them to produce a booklet entitled "The Life and Times of Winnie Lackore" to commemorate Winnie's 90th birthday celebration.


Stories can be spoken, sung, painted, sculpted, danced and dramatized.

A story has to have two equal partners, tale teller and tale listener. Jane Yolen, Touch Magic.

...telling stories is a universally accessible means through which people make meaning.
Telling My Story  http://www.tellingmystory.com

“Re-Member is a curious word. To dis-member is to pull apart. To re-member is to pull back together again.”


“Short story participants usually develop a friendly interest in one another, become a family with an opportunity to share interests, to sharpen their critical powers and to reinforce their sense of worthiness. Leading a group is also stimulating for the guide, who is introduced to a wide variety of life experiences and differing attitudes, as well as the pleasure of sharing in the discovery of good stories.”

The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education,  http://www.acpe.edu/, which functions as a collegiate group for the training of chaplains, is found this insight how one learns when others tell their story.

" By "living human documents," we mean both the people who receive care as well as a study of ourselves, the givers of care.” This phrase originated with Anton Boisen (in his work The Exploration of the Inner World, 1936) who wrote, “Not in any revelation handed down from the past nor in anything that can be demonstrated in test-tube or under the microscope, not in systems found in books, nor in rules or techniques, taken from other successful workers would I seek the basis for spiritual healing, but in the living human documents in all their complexity and in all their elusiveness and in the tested insights of the wise and noble of the past as well as the present. “

Movies/Videos
Since we live in broadcast and video world that uses more than printed media to tell our stories, here is a brief list of movies that utilize storytelling in the plot or theme.

Avalon
Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood
A classic Southern tale of hilarity set in a sleepy Louisiana parish, follows a group of lifelong friends who stage a rather unorthodox intervention to help a young playwright unravel the truth about her complicated, eccentric mother, find forgiveness and acceptance, and let go of her painful past.

Driving Miss Daisy
Fried Green Tomatoes (from the novel by Fannie Flagg)
How Green Was My Valley:
"There is no fence or hedge around time that has gone. You can go back and have what you like if you remember it well enough."

Little Big Man
My Big Fat Greek Wedding
Steel Magnolias
The Grapes of Wrath (from the novel by John Steinbeck)
That Reminds Me of a Story” D.K. Smith

The Horse Whisperer
"A million years before man, they grazed the vast empty plains living by voices only they could hear. They first came to know man as the hunted know the hunter. Long before he used horses for his labor, he killed them for their meat. The alliance with man would forever be fragile, for the fear he’d struck into their hearts was too deep to be dislodged. Since that Neolithic moment when horse was first halted, there were those among men who understood this. They could see into the creature’s soul and soothe the wounds they found there. The secrets uttered softly into troubled ears. These men were known as the whisperers."

The Joy Luck Club  (from the novel by Amy Tan)
Trip to Bountiful
Tuesdays With Morrie

TV/Radio
Garrison Keillor The News from Lake Wobegone heard on NPR and Minnesota Public Radio Show A Prairie Home Companion

CBS Sunday Morning

Magazines/Periodicals
Reminisce Magazine (also available on line at www.reminisce.com/)