

USG SGM ~ STORY ~ May 2021

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Introduction

Stories don't just embellish our lives; they make and even dictate our lives. This might be the most important reminder of this month. Indeed, who of us hasn't felt controlled by a story? Stuck in a story? Hopeless about the way our story will end up? Simply put, our stories often write us as much as we write them. . . .

So fate and freedom. This month is much more about the tension between these two than one might have thought, leaving us with questions like: Are you an actor conforming to the scripts handed to you? Or have you found your own way of becoming the director or screenwriter of your life? . . . How are you and your friends working to regain control of the storyline of our community? Our country?

Spiritual Exercises

Author and motivational expert Daniel Pink advocates distilling the essence of your life's story down to one single sentence. It's a focusing device that connects people to clearer purpose. . . .

Use this exercise to ask yourself: Do I know the purpose of my life's story? Or have I allowed my life to become a muddle of mixed and undeveloped storylines? Do I know the central theme of my life or do the plotlines of others dictate my days?

Chalice Lighting

We do not experience a world and afterward make up stories to understand it. Stories teach us what is real, what is true, and what is possible. They are not abstractions from life (though they can be that); they are necessary for our engagement with life. . . . [David Loy](#)

Check-in

Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

There are no true stories; we are making up every one of them. *Pema Chodron*

There are only true stories. We are discovering the truth in them. *Christina Baldwin*

There is a you telling yourself another story of you. Listen to her. [Pádraig Ó Tuama](#)

Your heartache is someone else's hope. If you make it through, somebody else is going to make it through. Tell your story. *Kim McManus*

Storytelling is dangerous to those who profit from the way things are because it has the power to show that the way things are is not permanent, not universal, not necessary. Having that real though limited power to put established institutions into question, imaginative literature has also the responsibility of power. The storyteller is the truth-teller... We will not know our own injustice if we cannot imagine justice. We will not be free if we do not imagine freedom. . . . *Ursula K. Le Guin*

As I considered it, the truth of the matter was that we were living within an old story; and a new story needed to be told, but we didn't have the language for it. The old story was of victimization, marginalization, oppression, oppressors; and the new story would see all of us evolving, self-expanding, and finding a new place in this wonderful cosmology that is a reality we have not paid attention to. So, in order to get to that point—and here is where my transformation begins—I had to reconsider what I thought about people, because I had hardened my view of others and who they were and what they meant. I had spent my time raising two little African American boys who had to be taught how to survive in society. In doing that, I taught them to view the world in only one way; and I myself was hardened into a position that either you were with me or you were against me or us. [Barbara Holmes](#)

Those who tell the stories, rule the world. *Proverb, exact source unknown*

Questions

1. What story does your family of origin tell about you? Does that telling leave you feeling seen or misunderstood? Celebrated or unfairly characterized?
2. Are you faking a story right now? Are you following a storyline that isn't really you?
3. What does it take to walk away from a story you've been living for a long time?
4. Is it possible you are only in the middle of your current story, even if it feels like you've arrived at the end?
5. What unrecognized current cultural or political "story" strikes you as most dangerous?

Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Story means for you and your daily living.

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening

Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.

Reflection and Gratitude

This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.

Singing (or watching a video of someone else singing)

Wanting Memories, Sweet Honey in the Rock

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHJe0mv_oYU&list=PLvXOKgQQVYP52JG70n0bKUYS-pciU0VR2&index=11

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
Songwriters: Ysaye M. Barnwell

Extinguishing the Chalice

Change the story, change the world. Terry Pratchett