



Value of Storytelling

Arthur shares some reflections on the art of storytelling and the role stories have played for him as an individual and for humanity.

Arthur's journey into storytelling

Over 12 years ago, after an academic education he participated in a storytelling workshop where he felt his heart beating and was drawn to explore this domain.

The Lens of Everything as Story

In a certain way we can look at the world and see that everything is story. From the sky and the cosmos down to the flowers and the grasses that grow and the seeds that seeded them. All our understanding of the world around us is synthesised through story. Our interactions are storytelling. There is a deep need within us to tell and listen to stories.

Stories Connect Us

Stories connect us to many things. They connect us to our past and the ancestors. There's an image that many share of ancestral people by a fire sharing stories. When we reignite this art within us in whatever context, be it social, one to one, be it telling stories to children, be it telling stories to adults, by the bedside of someone... There's something primal and heartfelt which is revived within us. We are connecting to something ancient.

Community Connection

In our modern world in many ways we have become more separated. There's the idea of the nuclear family, families are often split and living further away from each other. There's been a digital revolution and a lot of communication goes online. But at the same time, there's still this hunger for true heart to heart connection which storytelling brings. Whilst this technological revolution has been going on, there's been a balancer and in the 21st century, storytelling has revived itself in many parts of the country and in many parts of the world.

If you are telling a story to a group of people, when you enter into that realm, there may be a bit of chit chat maybe at the beginning and things settle. But if you get to that place where you all sink in together, there is a magic and a harmony and a oneness that can be felt quite viscerally. This is one of the antidotes to our modern ways that storytelling can provide in this magical connecting moment.

Connection to the Story

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In order to find that magic moment referred to above, it really helps to have formed a relationship to the story. You can see the story as a being, in the same way that a human being is infinitely fascinating and you will never know anyone fully as there are always secrets and mysteries to unfold, the same is true with a story. The more you form a relationship, work with that story, think about the elements of that story, the stronger it lives within you and the more it has to reveal to you. So a reverence and a connection to the story not only nourishes you in your soul but will also nourish your listeners and will help create that magic moment of community and connection.

Imagination

Deeper meaning resides in the Fairy Tales told to me in my childhood than any truth that is taught in life. To imagine is everything. Albert Einstein

Another gift of the great realm of storytelling - when you hear a story, a wonder tale or fairy tale, the physical confines of our normal world, the laws, gravity, don't necessarily apply. We can break down those barriers, you can soar, the potential is endless. When you're hearing a story that does that, you can feel it, it's enlivening, it's enriching.

This capacity to work the imagination that you get from crafting stories, forming relationships with them, listening to them, can also then be applied to problem solving. Before we do anything, before we manifest anything in the world, it starts as an idea and we need to feed that idea and imagine it through before it happens. In a world that's uncertain and is full of challenges, what more can we give each other and young people than this capacity, imaginative flexibility to work and experiment in order to create and change things for the better.

To Inspire and Prime Activities

Stories sometimes feature a character who has aspirational or even magical skills or qualities. We often utilise stories to inspire an activity or theme during our time out in the woods. For example if you were wanting to bring sensory walk or blindfold activities such as a blind fold string walk or 'meet a tree', you could start the session with the story of **The Blind Man and the Hunter**. Participants are often, knowingly or not, already wanting to try out using their other senses after this story and so are really ready to engage with such activities

Heart

In the context of our time now, there are a lot of things that separate us and the heart space that a storytelling circle provides, the nutrition of a story, really connects us to our hearts and to the hearts of each other. And now more than ever that is really important.