

**JOURNEY** INTO YOUR OWN UNEXPLORED DEPTHS & **LIVE AGAIN!**



# INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING

**YOU CAN'T STOP ME  
FROM BECOMING A  
STORYTELLER!  
EVEN IF YOU ARE ME!**



**(11)  
STORYTELLING  
TRICKS  
TO HELP YOU  
OUTWIT  
YOUR OWN  
NAYSAYER!**



# INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING

## STORY SHARING GAME: LESSON #2 HANDOUT

*“It’s like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.” – Patrick Rothfuss, Author*

{Storytelling} *“It is our chief means of looking into the future, or predicting, of planning, and of explaining.” – Mark Turner, Cognitive Scientist and Author*

*“I was served lemons, but I made lemonade.”*

*- What Hattie White, Jay-Z’s grandmother, says at the end of Beyonce’s song ‘Freedom’*

### ON YOUR MARK !

- ✓ Each player has a printed copy of the lesson  
*(this is the ideal way to play, a copy in hand and ability to move about)*
- ✓ Each player has paper and pen to write down ideas  
*(for when you have a thought and it’s not your time to talk)*
- ✓ Talking Stick ready to pass during Talking Stick rounds
- ✓ Stopwatch ready for timed rounds *(players take turns timing each other)*
- ✓ Players take turns reading aloud the lesson
- ✓ Have a device to audio record your session

*(Don’t videotape because the files are much larger to save, and having a visual image will be distracting if you do decide to go back and listen to the recording to transcribe - write out - the ideas and stories you share.)*



### AUDIO RECORDING: LISTEN TO YOURSELF TO LEARN HOW YOU THINK

Make the recordings available to all players. Sometimes by listening to ourselves as we express our thoughts, we can figure out our own answers to questions we have, as well as hatch new ideas from ideas that didn’t make sense at first. Sometimes listening a few minutes is enough to inspire us.

### TIPS FOR LOGGING YOUR AUDIO FOOTAGE

At some point (maybe sooner than later) a player might want to go back and turn an orally shared story into a written story. Or maybe a family member or friend who loves to write and wasn’t even part of the sessions will agree to turn content into written stories. Transcribing the audio recording can be their starting point.

**SAVED DOCUMENT:** Make it easy to find material later by typing into a document:

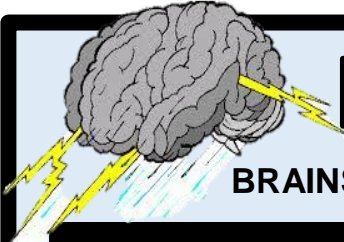
- 1) The date / title you put on the audio file
- 2) The names of the storytellers present
- 3) The topic being discussed or the title a storyteller gives their story
- 4) The time on the recording when discussion starts or a player shares a story

A player can volunteer to be the official documentarian responsible for organizing your audio library of sessions. Otherwise take turns each session inputting the information.

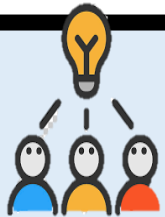
Here are [transcribing interviews tips](#). Note: when transcribing stories don’t correct the signature grammar or language of the speaker.








# INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING (cont.)




**BRAINSTORMING CIRCLE: OPEN DISCUSSION (5 minutes)\***

**WHAT CARTOON CHARACTER WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET?**



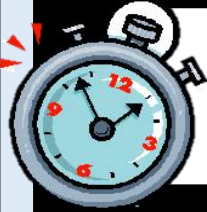
SPONGEBOB? HOMER? BUGS BUNNY? KATARA?  
HUEY FREEMAN? SCOOBY DOO? LUCY?



- Players call out favorite cartoon characters, then choose one everyone knows.
- Start stopwatch. Players call out everything they know about the character:  
*(Someone volunteers to write it down)*
  - Favorite Sayings - Wardrobe - Habits - Weaknesses - Strengths - Relationships
  - Physical Description - Problems - Goals - What Other Characters Say About Or Do To

## GOOD STORIES HAVE GREAT CHARACTERS WHO YOU REMEMBER !

Before you'll need to describe the people in your own story, describing cartoon characters is a great exercise because they have clear physical descriptions and predictable behaviors



\*Initially set stopwatch for (4) minutes. The Talking Stick is not used. When you brainstorm you want to throw out ideas quickly and spontaneously. Whoever wants to speak can. For the fifth and final minute, go around and everyone makes one last comment about the cartoon character.

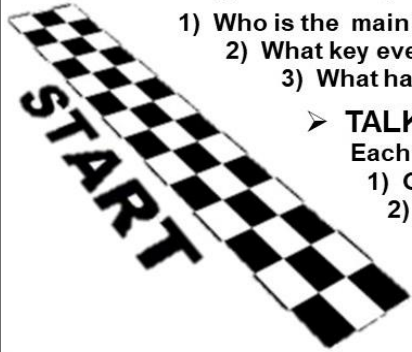
## SILENT PREPARATION & TALKING STICK ROUND

### WHAT KIND OF STORYTELLING DO YOU LIKE?

Before you do your own storytelling....

➤ **SILENT PREPARATION (3 min):** Off on their own, each player remembers a story they really like – *one they can outline what it's about in a couple of sentences!* It can be a story told to you by a real person you know; a famous person; or a fictitious story you love (*from a book, film, series, animation, song, or play*). Use this time to figure out what you're going to tell the other players:

- 1) Who is the main character and what do you like about them?
- 2) What key event happens that disrupts the character's world?
- 3) What happens at the end? Anything learned or changed?



➤ **TALKING STICK ROUND:**  
Each player has the Talking Stick for (3) minutes:  
1) Give the outline of the story you like  
2) Explain why you like that type of story

*(Example: It keeps you guessing (or laughing) / You are awestruck by the challenges / You like the details describing a fantasy world (which is any world not your own) / You identify with the hero ...*



➤ **NEXT PLAYER**

## INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING (cont.)



### WHAT IS A 'THEME' ? THE 'BIG IDEA' OF A STORY



The heartbeat of a story is what makes all the characters and descriptions feel alive to the reader. You can give lots of details about what happened in a situation – *It was in a park; there were two people; one shouted and one had black hair and waved an apple* -- but that's just listing ingredients.

To bake a tasty cake you need a recipe. Even if you're not exactly sure how your recipe is going to taste, you need to know in general what you want to make – is it sponge cake, bread pudding or cornbread?

In storytelling '**themes**' are like recipes; they give you guidance on how to order and use your story's ingredients (**characters, setting, and plot**), -- and help you decide **what to leave out** of your story !



### WHAT ARE BASIC THEMES?

- Growing Up
- Family
- Friendship
- Being Part of a Group
- Love
- Courage / Speaking Out
- Identity (who will you be in the world -- including racial, sexual gender, work, faith, etc.)
- Anger / Release of Anger
- Loss / Grief

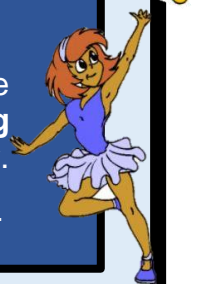


- Bullying
- Fear Of Being Unjustly Targeted
- Threat of Physical Harm / Death
- Emotional / Sexual Abuse by Someone You Know
- Economic Security / Poverty
- Jealousy
- Feelings of Inferiority (of Self or Community)
- Personal Creative Expression
- Opportunity

### PICK A THEME AND NAME A MOVIE !

After taking turns reading through the list of themes, have a moment of silence while players think of a movie they've seen that fits one of the themes. Pass the **Talking Stick** and each player names their movie pick and what theme it fits under and why.

No comments on another player's picks; OK to see different themes in same story.



### PUTTING YOUR SPIN ON



As you shape your story you'll be figuring out *what the message is you want to communicate* about your basic theme:

Such as 'love': *love takes work; love heals; love blinds you; love changes minds; love renews hope* and so on.

If your theme is 'growing up', you can spin it as: *struggling with the rules, warnings, and behaviors of your parents and teachers; growing up too fast, burdened by responsibility or someone dying; realizing you have to learn how to look out for yourself when your world is threatened* and so on.



# MEMOIR

*The story of your own life*



**SAMPLE**

## 'PRINCESS DIANA'S GOWNS' by Trayce



From [www.catering2us.nyc/amazing-moments](http://www.catering2us.nyc/amazing-moments)

'PRINCESS DIANA'S GOWNS' is my account of what it was like to serve Princess Diana\* as a waiter at a cocktail party in Manhattan for the (1997) charity auction of her dresses. Following the story is the lesson '(11) **Storytelling Tips To Help You Engage An Audience**'. You'll read all the Tips aloud. Then you'll discuss how the Tips are being used in the story.

### MY STORY'S THEME

For me it was about 'identity' – both mine and Princess Diana's

### MY SPIN ON THE THEME

'She Who Is Not Who We Think She Is'

Now read the story aloud. Will you agree with my theme – or see a different theme? Can you guess what my Storytelling Tips are going to be?

(\*Yes, *that* Princess Diana -- the mother-in-law Meghan never met and a focus of Netflix's fourth season of [THE CROWN](#) )

## PRINCESS DIANA'S GOWNS

"One of New York City's biggest social events of 1997, was on June 25th, when Christie's auctioned seventy-nine of [Princess Diana's gowns](#) for AIDS and Cancer charities. Two months later, on August 31, 1997, Princess Diana died in a car crash at the age of 36. (cont.)



**PRINCESS DIANA'S GOWNS (cont.)**

If I had not served Princess Diana at that June auction, I would not have cried as I did when I heard of her death. And I would not have understood that people called her 'Lady Di' -- with the same kind of fond reverence for her extreme human realness -- as people had when they called Billie Holiday\* -- 'Lady Day'.

At the Christie's cocktail party I was given explicit instructions, that with each tray of hors d'oeuvres I carried I was to get close to Princess Diana to offer it to her. (*I was very good at arm spiking the tray straight up in the air and zipping gracefully through a crowd to get to the target.*) It wasn't that our event planner thought Princess Diana was famished and would really eat. It was that *her* client was keeping pace with the Princess and wanted to see trays !

I myself of course knew of Princess Diana. This was a time of newsstands and magazine covers, and she was everywhere. But I literally had read nothing about her and only knew what I overheard (*like Prince Charles had first dated her older sister!*). I really thought all the fuss was just another case of celebrity worship.

But then I served Princess Diana. She was tall! I'm 5'6. I later looked it up; she was 5'10 (*two inches taller than Prince Charles*). And she was big boned. No frail lady was she. Not what I had expected (*if I had thought about it*).

What I really was not prepared for was how nice she was to me! As a server you can hate being told to go up constantly to a guest who has already indicated she's not interested.

*(We prefer the hovering off to the side from the guest watching to see if they look at the tray, and then directly approaching.)*

Almost every time I presented a tray to Princess Diana she looked at me and smiled, even if it meant briefly breaking off a conversation. She did partake twice. Both times thanking me with such a big smile, I'm almost sure she ate to please me.

And on top of all this --- she glowed! Princess Diana had such a calming, caring presence, I could see and feel it. I knew I was in the presence of a special person. In the midst of wealth and the elites, she made me feel oddly hopeful about humanity.

After working the cocktail party, I told the story of meeting Princess Diana to friends. But I didn't go beyond that; still didn't follow her in the news -- and she was everywhere in the headlines in those months leading up to her death. Followed everywhere by the [paparazzi](#) -- which is what led up to her death.

When I heard about her death in the car crash, I gasped for air.

I wouldn't have watched her televised funeral if I had not served her. In the United Kingdom 32 million watched, and 2.5 billion people worldwide; at that time it was one of the biggest televised events in history. (*In 2017 it was determined that Princess Diana's funeral was [the most watched televised live event](#) in England's history.*)



**PRINCESS DIANA'S GOWNS (cont.)**

Born Diana Frances Spencer, she grew up with position and wealth, yet in her teens and twenties she worked as a babysitter, a part-time cleaner, and a kindergarten teacher! In 1995 on BBC TV Princess Diana spoke publicly – at a time when neither celebrities nor friends did -- about her bouts with [bulimia](#) to help others combatting the eating disorder. She actively supported over 100 charities.

But what impacted on me was that night -- when I served Princess Diana as a waiter and she recognized me as a human being. Since then, when someone much more affluent than me has been rude or dismissive of my presence – when I approach them as a server or an artist or an organizer – I see Princess Di's open smile -- it was in her eyes as well -- only for me, like if she could, she'd be talking to *me* rather than refusing a bite from a server. I gained a new ability from that encounter. After that I knew **I had the right to watch out for those who don't see you."**

*(For the record: Dress size: 8; Shoe Size: 9 US)*



**MORE HISTORY**

[The Cocktail Party & Gowns' Auction](#) (1997) (Video)  
[Princess Diana's \(1989\) NYC Visit With Community People](#) (Article)  
[How Princess Diana Became A Global Household Name](#) (Article)  
\*[The United States Vs Billie Holiday](#) (2021) (Film) starring singer Audra Day as the legendary jazz singer.

**A WORD FROM THE GAME CREATOR**

There are easily recognized themes that run through all our lives  
**What Else Runs Through All Our Lives?**

**WORK (Paid & Unpaid)** / Activities in which you use your strength or abilities to do or perform a task, duty, or assignment, often being a part of a larger activity. This includes being a student, volunteering, internships, caring for family, starting a business, artistic projects, or forming a band!

**CULTURE** / Things that help us develop a group identity with others -- food, music, film and streaming shows, sports, language, religion, shared rituals, clothes, cars and skateboards!

**LIFE** / The heartbeat connecting us to people, pets, nature, the world and our own internal sanity.

**There's so many experiences we can write stories about!**  
**How about some help in turning a fuzzy memory into an engaging story!**



**LET'S TRY ON THE  
(11) STORYTELLING TIPS  
TO HELP YOU ENGAGE  
AN AUDIENCE !**



## (11) TIPS TO HELP YOU ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE !

(Take turns reading each Tip aloud but don't discuss yet)

### 1. NARROW YOUR FOCUS

Choose a general theme. Call up a memory that fits it; a situation that had a little friction or a small breakthrough -- among people or with the environment. You don't have to know your message (or spin on the theme) yet.

### 2. INCLUDE MORE THAN JUST YOUR STORY

When the situation was happening to you, your focus was on *you*, and not all (and who) surrounded you in the moment. Go back and research the times, the place, trends then (even if your situation is from last week). You can describe history, geography, the weather, wardrobe, hair styles, and the music that was playing. Anything that catches your attention.

### 3. PUT THE AUDIENCE IN YOUR SHOES (What Size Do You Wear?)

Tell the story as if you are sucked back into the actual moment ! From the 'I', speak as if you, yourself, are discovering what happens next as you reveal it to your audience !



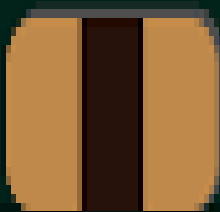
### 4. MAKE YOUR STORY CINEMATIC

Imagine seeing your story on a screen ! What's the wardrobe? What props/objects being handled? Furniture or trees? Sounds?



### 5. EMPLOY ELEMENTS OF FICTION WRITING TO BRING YOUR STORY TO LIFE

A memoir is not an **AUTOBIOGRAPHY**, which deals with events in chronological order, and you should be able to double-check its dates and facts. A **MEMOIR** is an intimate and passionate approach to describing your own feelings about looking back on a time. In a memoir you craft a vivid picture of how you felt and how your life was impacted. You decide if you want to be dramatic, suspenseful, funny, or over-the-top-silly in how you tell it.







## INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING (cont.)



### (11) TIPS TO HELP YOU ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE ! (cont.)

#### 6. TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING WITH YOU

Admit when you felt awkward, embarrassed, in-the-wrong, surprised, not-part-of-the-group, or not in complete control.

#### 7. CREATE AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

Have big and small emotional moments, achievements, and obstacles.

EXAMPLE: As you recount how you lost the key to your home - don't just quickly go on to tell us you called your family member / roommate who let you in. Instead linger on your frustration at losing the key. Wonder where you lost it. Is it a sign of bad luck for you ?

#### 8. SHOWCASE YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH

Did what happen change your approach to life ? Did it change how you thought about others or yourself ? Did you become wiser in some way? Or do you jump now every time you hear a certain sound?

#### 9. GIVE YOUR STORY A BEGINNING, MIDDLE, & END

Three Act Structure:

- I. What was the main character's life like before the situation happens.
- II. What disrupts the normal world of the main character, causing a life changing situation ?
- III. What happens to the character after the situation is over?

#### 10. GIVE YOUR STORY AN EXCITING OPENING

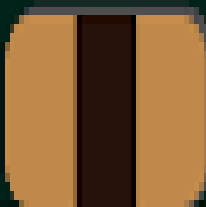
A wow image; amazing fact; emotive reveal; surprising admission.

#### 11. GIVE YOUR STORY A TITLE

Coming up with a title lets you step back from your story, to start thinking about the impression you want your story to make on your audience.

With a title you try in just a few words (or less) to capture the feeling, intent, or impact of the story, or else highlight a key detail or person from the story.

*(Relax ! You can always change it !)*



## INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING (cont.)



# QUIZ!



**WILL YOU FIND THE TIPS AT WORK  
IN THE STORY OR NOT? LET'S FIND OUT.**

### TALKING STICK ROUND

Now that you've read the story 'Princess Diana's Gowns' and all (11) Tips, it's time to go back and try to apply each Tip to the story.

Player #1 – Holds Talking Stick and reads aloud again Tip #1 (*Narrow The Focus*). The player then answers how (*or if*) the writer of the story used that Tip. The Talking Stick is passed to each player, and all answer how they thought the Tip was used. Finally the Game facilitator reads aloud what the writer of 'Princess Diana's Gowns' wrote about how she used Tip #1. (*Find the Writer's Responses in Game Instructions.*)

Player #2 - Holds Talking Stick and reads aloud Tip #2 (*Include More Than Just Your Story*). Talking Stick passed for another round of answers. So it goes until each Tip has been used to analyze the story.

**LAST QUESTION EVERY PLAYER ANSWERS!**  
Do you think the Tips will help you when you put together your first story for the Game?

### Next Session – We Play The Game!

**COMING SOON**

- ❖ Pick A Theme
- ❖ Answer ?s About Your Idea
- ❖ Silent Period To Outline & Fill-in Your Story
- ❖ Timed Talking Stick Round To Share Stories
- ❖ Scoring, Crowning, & Appreciations Round

You're going to surprise yourself with the great ideas for stories about your life you come up with !



### (1) SENTENCE CLOSING ROUND !

**PASS THE TALKING STICK**

Each player shares (1) sentence to sum up their experience of the (2) sessions they've done to prepare to play the GAME.