The Power of Story

Gabrielle's Life Lessons

The joy of loving another human being and connecting with them outweighs the void left when they're gone.

Memories are real, as real as the love that created them.

The opportunity to tell your story shouldn't just be for the celebrated or the notorious.

<u>Everyone</u> has a story to tell and a life of meaning.

"Story opens up a space between people that is unbound from the reality we are standing in. Our imaginative ability to tell story, and our empathetic ability to receive story, can take us anywhere and make it real. In the act of telling story, we create a world we invite others into. And in the act of listening to story, we accept an invitation into experiences that are not our own, although they seem to be."

-Story Catcher by Christina Baldwin

Watermelon Memories

What I Learned From Craig

- Story breaks isolation
- Sharing memories strengthens our individuality and connects us to our collective humanity
- Listening heals

From Interview to Lasting Legacy

Push Beyond the Surface

- Practice active listening
- Ask questions that encourage expanding answers
- Ask for details
- Indulge your natural curiosity
- Talking about the hard stuff

Walking in a Valley of Dry Bones: Rena's Story

If they have the courage to live it, we can have the courage to hear it.

Celebrate Voice

- Tuning your ear to hear unique-"isms"
- Help put story into an emotional context
- Play back the memories to honor the teller
- Clarify language and context

Write For Life

- Use the first person voice of the participant
- Celebrate vivid memories through descriptive writing
- Put memories in chronological order
- Use active verbs and vibrant adjectives

To the Farm and Back Again: Jack's Story

Sometimes you don't have to tell the whole story

Mining for Memories: Questions that Dig Deeper

- What was your most spiritual moment?
- What is the hardest hard-knock lesson you've learned?
- What is one thing you did in your life that you were terrified of doing, but did it anyway?
- How did you meet your spouse?
- What unexpected gifts have you discovered during your illness?

The Process in Four Easy Steps

But First…
Your Mantra for this Journey

"Ohm"

It's NOT about perfection, it's about the PROCESS!

"Ohm"

Step One: Initial Interview

- The primary purpose: To get to know the person and develop trust
- Develop a rapport
- Ask simple preliminary questions
- Get one or two stories

Step Two: Writing

- First person voice
- Fill in the emotional blanks
- Remember, this is a collaboration and a gift
- Clarify voice with the participant
- Don't think too much
- This is heart writing, trust your intuition

Step Three: Second Interview

In Two Parts

Part One: Playing Back the Memories

Reading back the stories from the first interview:

- Honors the teller
- Encourages more memories
- Clarifies voice and facts

Part Two: Going Deeper

Ask More Questions

Remember, memory is like a ball of string, the more you pull, the more you get!

Not all memories will be in chronological order.

Listen and let it unfold.

Step Four: Write, Repeat 1, 2, 3, 'Til Complete

- Each interview session will be written and added to the story
- Each memory will find its natural place in the order of the book
- Each part can be replayed to the participant again and again
- You both will know when you've come to the end

Question

How do you eat an elephant?

One bite at a time!

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Putting Together The Book

Note:

For the technologically challenged: collaboration is your friend!

Step One: Gathering the Pictures

- Gather photos with the participant- It encourages further reminiscing
- Use photos that compliment the story
- Don't overdo the photos

Step Two: Putting the Pieces Together

- Explore different book making programs
- Be creative
- Break the story into chapters
- Don't be afraid to break up the text with pictures, songs, quotes

Step Three: Saying Goodbye

- It's ok to hug, it's ok to cry. You went on a journey together and now this part is over.
- It is up to you if you want to continue the friendship. If not, let them know the stories you will carry with you, let them know your visits will be less frequent, but it doesn't mean you don't care.

Dias De Los Muertos and the Three Deaths