

## The Power in Storytelling

Storytelling is considered an art by many but has always been a respected skill and an important traditional method for teaching younger generations the ways of living in every culture. Community elders have always held a “treasure trove” of their societies’ knowledge, history, and wisdom [1]. It is believed that storytelling developed not too long after the development of language. Stories of some of the earliest cultures have been discovered in France as cave drawings that date back as far as 30,000 years ago. It has been suggested that the scenes on the cave wall depict storytelling of animals, humans, and objects at the time. Oral traditions usually take the form of using voice and gestures and can “take the form of epic poems, chants rhymes and songs in myths, legends, fables, religion, prayers, proverbs and instructions” [2].



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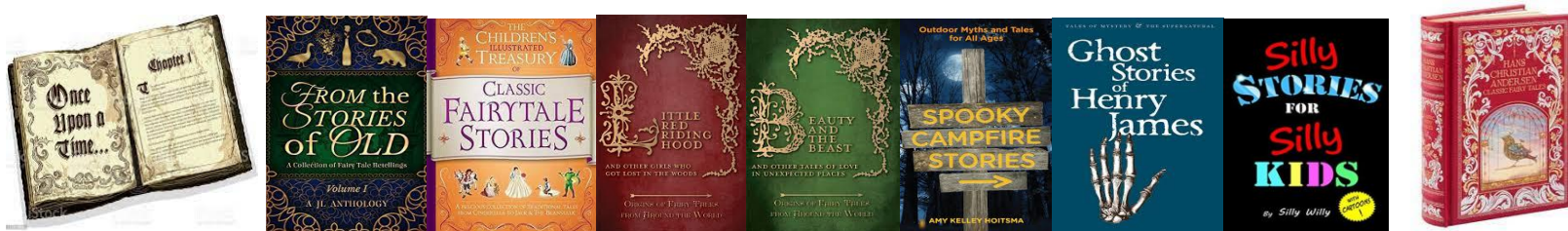
The engagement of stories with others is also considered essential for human growth, whether stories are fiction or non-fiction. Stories have an ability to enhance empathy and increase emotional intelligence through the process of simulation and understanding the motives, thoughts and emotions characters in the story are experiencing. Social skills are learned with acknowledgement of the aspects of various situations others are experiencing. Learning how to interact in these situations makes a person more authentic and is considered as cognitive empathy. We can also learn more about ourselves when learning about other people from other cultures and ways of living. After having learned about how others think and live their lives, the listener or reader can think about their own personalities and grow from learning about others. Another benefit behind storytelling is by developing a more open mind from hearing or reading stories, we can become more flexible in thinking and creativity [3].

Native Hope recognizes the powers of storytelling as a “unifying tool that connects mankind, breaks down barriers and heals wounds”. The medicine in indigenous stories “comes from being present with yourself and the audience and speaking from the heart. “Living with historical trauma through generations, stories can provide powerful opportunities to embrace strength, honor and courage in the face of difficulty”. It is an indigenous belief that stories are to be passed along and not to be kept to yourself. Others may be able to identify with your story that can help them to understand their experiences and help them heal [4].

Having numerous benefits to telling and receiving a good story, it is also critical for a good story to have some essential elements that keep listeners engaged and thinking creatively.



A good story is being crafted when the elements to a story are met and well developed: the main character, some sort of problem, a helper or a guide, a plan of action and a threat of failure. These are elements that are known to capture the hearts and minds of the audience [4]. There are also some key features that a good storytellers need to practice and be mindful of: practicing storytelling as it is an art, avoid distracting words that could lose the audience,



well-described details will enhance the effects of the story and convey the emotions and excitations behind the scenes of a story [5].

The benefits of storytelling as well as engaging in stories as an audience are numerous. Stories are helping cultures to re-engage with cultural traditions and identity, community relations and language revitalizations [6]. The audience must develop good attention and listening skills to the orator to receive the full benefit of each story. Engaging in stories requires good attention of information, verbal or written, while remembering each event and character. Stories are often told from a perspectives experience that relies on the audience to formulate a creative network of activities that are temporal to anchor events in a reconstruction of a timeline [6]. Memory must be constantly engaged to monitor these events and determine the relations between and among events and the characters. Spatial reasoning is necessary to imagine the setting and events around each setting. A construction process of implicit memory (perceptive from learned memories) is used that involves abstraction of information not provided in text but is conveyed through good storytelling [6].

A good storyteller will engage the emotions of the audience using descriptive words and body movements, perhaps with sounds, such as a drum



## References

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