

Every Person's Life Is Worth a Novel *

We love a good story

Most children love fables, fairy tales, love stories and adventure sagas, and at some point they get interested in real-life stories, especially about their parents' lives. If you've seen a child giggle herself silly at the sight of daddy's baby pictures or mom and dad's wedding photos, you know what I mean. Parents, please remember that, early on, you're the main object of fascination and guidance for the children. They watch you closely in order to learn to do things: how to eat, walk, talk, how to solve problems and just how to be. Their curiosity combined with the need for connection sets the stage very nicely for storytelling.

What prevents us?

A few obstacles: We don't tell our stories because we think they're nothing special, or because we're shy or embarrassed. We don't want to tell, because the kids might not understand our experience, they might gossip or even use the facts against us. Paranoia, anyone? Take a chance. Your assumptions may not necessarily be accurate.

Why bother?

a) Knowing our roots provides identity, a sense of family history, a sense of connection and responsibility to the family name and reputation. b) Knowing where we came from helps us know where we're going. c) Mutual self-disclosure is great for trust-building; if you want your children to be close to you, set the example by demonstrating how close you want to be to them. Showing them who you are and where you've been is a great beginning.

Getting started

A little encouragement: you need not be a master storyteller, and not every story has to have a beginning, middle and end. Stories need not include the spicy details about your naughty past, if there were any. You don't even have to try to make it interesting; it's naturally interesting because of who you are. Just trust it.

Show your childhood pictures and high school yearbooks. What a conversation starter! Bring out family heirlooms and other special objects. Take your child to your old neighborhood, and your old school if that's possible. Want to take it to another level? Get into genealogy and have your family tree drawn up. Now, there's a family project. Get going and have fun!

* This article is named for a book by psychologist Erving Polster.

"Those who are unaware of history are destined to repeat it." - George Santayana



Mark 4:2 "And he was teaching them many things in parables ..."

Mark 4:33-44 "With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable ..."

Workshop Schedule

July 24—Holmes Road church of Christ, Lansing, MI

August 7 & 8—Jerseyville, Illinois church of Christ

August 14, 21 & 28—Holmes Road c of C

September 11 & October 2 - East Glen Park c of C Gary, IN

September 25, October 16, December 4

Northwest church of Christ, Chicago

October 9—Servant Leaders' Workshop, Valparaiso, Indiana

October 23—Cardinal Drive, Illinois church of Christ

October 30—Chicago Celebration

November 6—Muscatine, Iowa church of Christ



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