***Truth and the Stories We Tell Ourselves***

—The truth will set you free.

— I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth…

We live in an age of warring truths on many fronts: political, scientific, cultural, and religious to name the most obvious. Amidst all the noise of what is “true” or what is “right”, how do you find true north, your center in the midst of the storm? How do you discern the wisdom of firmly held beliefs — things you “belove” — as the bedrock of the truth, not only for you, but for all of creation? Is it possible that the "truthiness" mess our country/world now faces is a sign of the emergence of a larger, more life-giving truth, beyond all our current loyalties and ideologies?

Join us at our July Brown Bag lunch to discuss the intersection of our conscious (and unconscious?) stories and how they inform the truths we hold to and live by in hope for the healing of our world.

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1. To what extent is my belief in “the truth” dependent on the stories I tell myself about who I am/who others are?
2. How do I get in touch with the stories I tell myself, and the “truths” that are reflections of those stories?
3. In America, we reflexively favor an individual experience of truth. How do we hold the meaning of church/faith, or any other common-union's larger truth, such as that of Moses, Isaiah, Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, indiginous people, or those marginalized and enslaved, while still recognizing the truths of another tradition?

**Further Musings on Truth and Story**

Stories are like little time capsules. They carry pieces of truth and meaning overtime. Whether it is a myth from 4000 years ago or your own untold story from childhood, the meaning weights like a dry ration; only by the next telling does it enlarge and soften to become edible. It is the sweat and tears of the telling the bring the meaning out of the sleep as if no time has passed. It is the telling that heals.

— Mark Nepo

Your problem is how you are going to spend this one odd and precious life you have been issued. Whether you're going to spend it trying to look good and creating the illusion that you have power over people and circumstances, or whether you are going to taste it, enjoy it and find out the truth about who you are.

― Anne Lamott

Is this story I’m telling myself true? Do I want to live in this story? Is my interpretation true? Do I want to die in the story? Do I want to grab hold of the responsibility to reinterpret and to look at how God might see my story so that I can be birthed into something new? If you find yourself in the wrong story, leave.

—Taken from *Typology* Podcast, January 31, 2019

...the only way we can make sense out of life is through the stories… Sometimes what appears to be a catastrophe, over time, becomes a strong foundation from which to live a good life. It's possible to live a good life even though it isn't an easy life.

--Dr. Naomi Remen, OnBeing interview. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2207/the-difference-between-fixing-and-healing-on-being/>

America has always had a more individualistic culture than any other places, which Tocqueville noticed back in the 1830s. But when individualism becomes the absolutely dominant ethos of a civilization — when it is not counterbalanced with any competing ethos -– then the individuals within it may have maximum freedom, but the links between the individuals slowly begin to dissolve.

—David Brooks, *The Second Mountain*, page 10.

Growth comes from allowing your ego's story to drop away.

—The Enneagram Institute.

As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, “Well, that proves once again that I am a nobody.” . . . My dark side says, “I am no good. . . . I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned.”...Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the “Beloved.” Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence.

— Henri Nouwen Daily Meditation, 1/10/19

...Telling our truth, even when it means being an outcast, is like Jacob wrestling with God. He was blessed, but will always walk with a limp. This limp will remind me of the cost, what lies behind me... Page 153

...True belonging is the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness. True belonging doesn’t require you to change who you are; it requires you to be who you are. Page 157

— from *Braving the Wilderness* by Brene Brown

“Above all, don't lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love.”

― Fyodor Dostoevsky, [The Brothers Karamazov](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/3393910)