

# The Power of Stories

*Stories are the threads that make up the fabric of our lives, weaving together a tapestry of past experiences.*

*They help us understand who we are and give us the courage to dream about who we hope to become.*

A presentation by  
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Parenting Through the Storm

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## *What we'll be talking about today*

On story making: why stories matter and how they work  
Why we tell ourselves stories about our lives  
How those stories change as we learn and grow

The science of story making  
On flashbulb moments versus reconstructive memories  
Identifying and organizing the chapters in the stories of our lives

Spinning new and better stories  
Restorative narrative: stories that emphasize resilience and growth  
Story shifting: how to change the stories you've been telling yourself  
Shifting from villain or victim to hero  
Taking a step back from the story  
Changing your story, changing your life

## *Resources*

*Parenting Through the Storm: How Restorative Narrative Made it Possible for Me to Share My Family's Story*

An article I wrote for the Images & Voices of Hope blog.

<http://ivoh.org/parenting-storm-restorative-narrative-familys-story/>

Schneiderman, Kim. *Step Out of Your Story: Writing Exercises to Reframe and Transform Your Life*. New World Library, 2015.

Pennebaker, James W. and Joshua M. Smyth. *Opening Up by Writing it Down: How Expressive Writing Improves Health and Eases Emotional Pain*. Guilford Press, 2016.

## Worksheet

What stories have you been telling yourself about your own life? How have those stories changed or evolved over time?

What flashbulb moments stand out in your life? They might be high points, low points, turning points, defining moments, originating moments (signalling the start of something new, anchoring moments that confirm that you're on the right path, symbolic moments that really stuck with you).

Can you think of some reconstructive memories that you use to tell the story of your life? (Example: "When I was a baby..." "After school, I always...")

When you think of telling the story of your life, what themes or organizing structures suggest themselves? What "chapters" can you spot in the story that is your life?

What other ways could you tell your story? Can you frame it in a new or different way — one that better supports your understanding of what you've learned from your journey, who you are today, and where you're headed; a way that better reflects your hopes, dreams, values, and goals?

Would you like to share some insights with the group re: what you've learned today or what you've been inspired to start thinking about?