

HOW OWNING YOUR STORY CAN CHANGE LIVES



by Josh Holliday | Oct 6, 2020

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Have you ever been sitting around the dining table listening to your grandpa rattle off old stories about times past when he used to take the family on trips down the east coast in their beaten up old Suzuki carry van with no seats in the back?

Your grandfather probably has different stories and if you haven't already, go and ask him about them.

Owning your story doesn't just mean owning your story, it means owning the stories passed down to you as well... so that you can pass down those stories to your kids one day.

There's valuable lessons in stories shared through generations. The practice of owning the story is really a practice of curious questioning and active listening.

I personally have found little nuggets of gold scattered through my family lineage, uncovered by uncles and aunts who were open to my deep prospecting. Their openness mixed with my curiosity and listening gave new light to old (sometimes dark) stories.

My Irish heritage and bloodline was revealed to me during one drunken night around Christmas time. Turns out I'm not a Holliday after all... my true lineage is O'Connor!

All those school teachers who used to give me grief with the old, "are you on holiday Mr. Holliday" are none the wiser. I digress. Though you can see how a little curiosity goes a long way when seeking out deeper truths of your story.

I use this practice of Owning Your Story with my clients and the truths that have surfaced for them are equally as eye-opening. Not only is it a great way to learn new things about where you've come from... it's also an extremely healing experience to go through with your family.

Most importantly, with the older generations in your family, who may not have ever had a chance to share these things. Imagine the weight of all those old stories!

Or maybe they've been yearning to share these stories but haven't felt like it was ever the 'right time'. Another scenario is that it's possible they didn't feel safe sharing... it was never encouraged for them.

And they're not wrong to feel unsafe, sometimes old stories do have weight. Eager young ears may not realise the hurt these stories carry and may turn the stories back on their elders in a way that is victimising.

This is why the practice of storytelling is sacred and would be best treated with respect. I learnt about the art of storytelling off a friend of mine who's name is Warren Roberts.

Warren is an aboriginal man who runs an organisation called YARN Australia and he works towards bridging the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians through Storytelling. He is currently running a 12 month storytelling program where he teaches the cultural art of story.

Check out his work at www.yarnaaustralia.com There is great power in a story well told. Lean into the stories, you never know what magic you might find.