

# Why The World's Best Mentors Use Storytelling

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The ability to use storytelling for mentoring and educating is one of the closest things to real magic that exists in human life.

The right story can weave spellbinding fantasies with the power to set you free or keep you permanently stuck in a rut.

Stories are an essential ingredient to how people understand the world.

But unfortunately, most mentors & teachers don't realize the most simple & impactful ways to apply storytelling in order to spark a transformation in other people.

The way you tell stories can dramatically change your outlook on life... but you might be surprised to discover that the best storytelling is actually quite different from what most people think.

## A New Paradigm Of Storytelling

Typically when people think about storytelling, they might imagine a really formal setting, like sitting in a circle, and listening to one person speak.

It might conjure up mental images of ancient bards, or people with extraordinary gifts for communication that move an audience to learn, laugh, or cry.

Or a child lying in bed at the end of the day, listening to their parents read them a story.

It's this whole experience of "story-time" when everyone gets quiet and listens to a single person speak of far-off magical lands.

It's typically done in a one-to-many setting.

Or at the very least... *it's a setting where there's little to no interaction while the story is taking place.*

But did you know there's a different kind of storytelling that's actually much more powerful for the context of mentoring & teaching?

It's something much more down to earth and doesn't rely on any special gifts of eloquence, or memorizing mythical tales.

It's something you already do unconsciously, whether you realize it or not.

And when you become conscious of how this other type of storytelling works, it opens up a whole new world of your ability to help others learn and grow.

## The Best Stories Are Invisible...

It all starts with realizing that human beings are natural born storytellers.

If you make a choice to pay attention, you'll notice that people are constantly telling stories. In fact, storytelling is one of the core ways that humans communicate with each other.

And this is important: *Storytelling is so built in to our everyday language and communication that we typically don't even realize we're telling stories.*

I've had students proclaim in full belief that they can't tell stories.

Oh I'm just not a good storyteller. I wish I could be, but I'm not."

Then 5 minutes later they come around and tell me an amazing story of their latest outdoor adventure and the experience they had in the forest last week.

And here's the kicker... they're not even aware that they're telling a story!

Most people are completely unaware they tell stories because they're telling stories unconsciously (without realizing that they're doing it)!

This is actually good news for you as a mentor, teacher, therapist, or coach because this is when your students will show their true beliefs, values, perceptions, and how they see the world.

Your students are telling you exactly what you need in order to help them, through their everyday anecdotes and stories!

All you have to do is listen carefully, ask some clarifying questions and watch as their stories transform right before your eyes.

## **The Real Power of Storytelling Is THIS...**

Have you ever had a conversation that truly opened your mind?

Maybe you were talking with someone who really listened to you, asked a few good questions, and somehow by the end of that short dialogue you felt changed inside.

Maybe it got you thinking about things in new ways that left you feeling a renewed sense of inspiration and freedom to move forward in some area of life.

I've had many conversations like this in my life, and it got me wondering how I could harness this potential more intentionally for my own growth, and to help those around me.

During my early research in psychology & communication, I became fascinated about why some conversations are transformational, while others are just boring and really have no long-term results.

I discovered that it all comes down to brain-patterns and blindspots.

It's the idea that everyone has habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, sensing, and perceiving the world. Most people are probably already familiar with this on some level, as they recognize their behavior & emotions tend to get stuck in the same ruts over and over again.

What's not quite so intuitive is how to change those patterns and blindspots because by their nature, we're blind to them!

## Identifying Brain-Patterns And Blindspots In Stories

There was a study done some years back with a group of individuals who witnessed a car crash. Each witness was asked to share what happened, and given questions like,

- Who was going faster?
- Which car hit which?
- What was the sequence of events?
- Etc.

The result was none of the witnesses gave the same story.

In fact, the stories remembered were so dramatically different, it was as though each person saw a completely different accident, even though they all witnessed the same event.

This is a perfect example of how blindspots and brain patterns work.

Your brain patterns have the power to open the doors of perception, and also inhibit your ability to see clearly.

Even when it feels like you're recounting real events, those memories have already gone through the filters of your brain patterns and blind-spots.

These blindspots are also what keep people stuck living the same patterns over and over again all throughout life.

So if you can simply shine some light into those blindspots, then instantly you create new brain-patterns. It's literally like forming a new neural pathway in the brain, and comes with a feeling of newness, inspiration and greater clarity.

I mentioned above those conversations that bring feelings of fresh insight, discovery and increased life freedom... Those feelings are the evidence that you've moved through a blindspot and you're now seeing something new about life.

You're literally seeing a different world because your perception has shifted!

## Seeing Inside The Storyteller's Mind...

As someone who is endlessly fascinated by human change and transformation, I have found [no better context for training the growth of new brain patterns than nature](#).

Nature is by definition the most complex and stimulating environment for the human senses and therefore the human brain.

My background of training and skills lives at the intersection between nature awareness, cultural anthropology, psychology and linguistics.

My work is to facilitate the awakening of sensory awareness and integration through [deep nature connection](#).

Here's how it works:

First, I start by sending my students on little missions into nature.

Their commitment is to practice [sensory awareness exercises](#) while exploring interests like wildlife tracking, wandering & exploring the landscape, following bird alarms to their source, etc. Then when they come back, I have them share their stories with me.

Just like the example above with the car accident... I ask a few simple questions to see what's happening inside their brain patterns & blindspots.

- What happened out there?
- Where did you go?
- What did you see?
- What were the birds doing?
- Etc

And just by listening to them speak, I can very quickly tell a whole host of information and clues that let me track their brain patterns through language.

It immediately becomes obvious how tuned (or not) they are with each of their 5 senses.

I can quickly discern their current level of knowledge about plants, birds, [ecology](#), animals, and any related blindspots.

I can also find out their overall emotional state, goals, desires, interests & passions.

Then I use all this information to offer highly targeted biofeedback in the form of questions, comments, or relevant stories of my own.

With practice and repetition, we gradually work through the blindspots to awaken their senses and awareness patterns more effectively in the natural world.

We eventually get to the point where they can track many different layers of nature across multiple sensory systems simultaneously and have almost perfect recall in the exact order and sequence it occurs.

Over a period of months I quite literally hear their stories becoming more linguistically rich and nuanced as the senses integrate together in the brain.

This is what Jon Young calls the storyteller's mind, and it's a very rare ability that comes along with all kinds of benefits relating to emotional intelligence, communication & leadership skill and practical life wisdom.

It's important to remember that all of this feels like a normal conversation.

It can be done completely invisible without the knowledge of whoever you're talking to, but the best results come when there is a certain level of consciousness about the benefits to interactive sensory storytelling.

When this is done skillfully, it's possible to completely change the course of a person's life in a 30 minute conversation.