

*Scientists wanted to use a supercomputer to find the meaning of existence. They gathered data from every possible source – historical, biological, anthropological – having explored every possible avenue. They fed in all this accumulated data, taking many days and nights, sometimes wondering if their task would ever be finished. Finally, when the last bite of information was entered, they set the computations going, and left the mega machine to do its work. After what seemed like an eternity, the computer completed its superhuman task, and printed out the answer to the problem that had been alluding philosophers from the earliest times. The words appeared on the printout – “That reminds me of a story.”*

Stories are an ancient and deep part of humanity. Human beings are deeply embedded in stories and archaic explanations of our place in life and what it all means to humans to be human. Our individual and social identities are constructed and perpetuated in the stories we tell about ourselves and live individually and socially. We are our stories and our stories are us. They give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Indigenous cultures are everywhere in their death throes and can only have the chance to rise out of their own ashes like a phoenix by breathing new life into the ashes. By giving voice to the indigenous stories and sharing them with the young people, their culture can be reconstructed.

## Choices

*The Swami Beyondanada writes in Beyondanews -- December, 2002 “One of my favourite stories recently is about a Native American grandfather talking to his young grandson. He tells the boy he has two wolves inside of him struggling with each other. The first is the wolf of peace, love and kindness. The other wolf is fear, greed and hatred. “Which wolf will win, grandfather?” asks the young boy. “Whichever one you feed,” is the reply.”*

This is very different from simply saying that we have a choice about our future. The message is there, but when we read what we read, we make our own conclusion, and don't feel instructed or preached to about what we should do.

At the same time that stories are so crucial to us humans, and as they shape our very being, they are also “just stories”. In the presence of a story, we take and leave what we want. We can relate the story to our own individual circumstances, perhaps in a compelling way, but there is nothing forced or imposed. It is this powerful combination of a compelling invitation to relate to the story with an openness to take up the invitation or not, that provides such a relevance to the hypnotic experience in particular and learning and experience in general.

Stories are also entrancing by their nature. From childhood we have been spellbound by stories of magic and heroic adventure.

## Monsters

*A long time ago, before humans walked on the earth, all the animals lived in harmony with one exception. Nose Monster was causing increasing fear because he would walk up to an animal and stick his hard spiky proboscis into their soft underbelly and suck out all their blood, leaving a shrivelled up bag of skin.*

*Desperate to find a way of protecting themselves from this monster, the other animals called a meeting and coyote was elected to take charge because he was so cunning and clever. Coyote*

*ordered the animals to go into the forest and bring back garlands of prickly bushes and spiky branches, He ordered other animals to cook up two huge vats of blood soup, which he placed, steaming hot in the meeting hut. He organised the animals to decorate the doorway with the garlands of prickles and the spiky branches, and then went looking for Nose Monster.*

*Before long coyote found Nose Monster who was looking wide eyed with hunger and wanted to get close to coyote. Coyote told him about the two huge vats of blood soup and offered to escort Nose Monster to the hut. Nose monster was very keen.*

*In the hut, Nose Monster rushed up to the first vat of steaming blood soup and greedily stuck his spiky proboscis into noisily sucked it dry. He looked pleased, and was beginning to feel full, but the other vat was too tempting so he stuck his proboscis into that vat and noisily sucked up every last drop of blood soup. He was so full he could hardly move. He was so bloated, that he could hardly stand. But he was Nose Monster and so, greedy for blood as ever, he turned towards Coyote. "Now it's your turn" he said, lunging clumsily at Coyote who deftly stepped aside so that Nose Monster rolled onto his round bloated stomach. He struggled to get to his feet and lunged at Coyote again, and again Coyote easily stepped aside. Each time Nose Monster lunged, Coyote moved closer and closer to the doorway of the meeting hut, until, just as Coyote stepped into the doorway, and Nose Monster feared that his next blood meal might get away, he mad a super huge attempt to get Coyote and his body, hugely bloated with all the blood soup, fell onto the prickles and spikes lining the doorway, and exploded into a million pieces.*

*And that is how the mosquito came into existence.*

Is this story about overcoming fear, dealing with problems before they become large, starting small with any endeavour, finding the right strategy, working together, being realistic, giving up greed, lightening up? It might be about any of these, or a combination, or something totally different. The story is a story, and each individual has the opportunity to remind themselves of anything that is relevant to their individual situation. The speaker might even find out what the story was about after the listener responds.

### Creating Possibilities - Indirectly

An adolescent may have been inspired by Superman, Mighty Mouse, or Grace Kelly.

An adult might be moved by modern heroes like Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Ghandi, Stoltenberg or ancient heroes like the Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, Lao Tzu. Reading stories about these people create the possibility for a listener. Something which may have seemed impossible becomes possible. If they did it, it must be possible. Perhaps I can do it also. When we hear the stories of these people, we may change the direction of our own lives. When Mandela spoke the importance to him of his small patch of garden in prison, anyone listening may spend more time in their garden and feel more gratitude as well.

Leaders are strong leaders by creating strong stories to make sense to their followers. Unfortunately not all stories are helpful, and some of the worst atrocities have happened from atrocious stories about ethnic differences whether they claim superiority or inferiority.

### The Experts - A Sufi Tale

*A man thought to be dead was taken by his friends for burial. When the coffin was about to be lowered into the grave, the man suddenly came to life and began to bang on the lid of the coffin.*

*The coffin was opened; the man sat up. "What are you doing?" he said to the assembled crowd. "I am alive. I am not dead."*

*His words were met with stunned silence. Finally one of the mourners said, "Friend, both the doctors and the priests have certified that you are dead. The experts can hardly be wrong."*

*So the lid was screwed on again and he was duly buried.*

## **Wisdom?**

*The American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.*

*The Mexican replied, only a little while. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish?*

*The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, "but what do you do with the rest of your time?"*

*The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life."*

*The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."*

*The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?"*

*To which the American replied, "15-20 years."*

*"But what then?"*

*The American laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."*

*"Millions.. Then what?"*

*The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."*

## General steps in the constructing stories

- decide what resource is missing for the client
- look at their likes to find areas where this resource is being used already
- invent a story about the use of that resource.

### *Clinical Metaphor*

"I had a client not unlike yourself who ... [describe client's problem] ... and [describe solution]

### *Life Metaphor*

look in the client's hobbies or competences to find resource. Construct and speak the metaphor which includes the resource from the hobbies or competences.

### Exercise:

*As you are attending to your experience in any way that you are, you could ... continue doing that. You may be aware that you are aware of your experience, or you may be aware that you are unaware of some of your experience. Whether you are more aware of your awareness or more unaware of just where your awareness is, you can allow yourself to ... **do what's best for your learning.***

*Now that you are doing that, there may be some changes already happening. It's so unimportant that you ... notice the stillness ... first, or some flattening out of your facial muscles. Perhaps it will be the changes in the colour or temperature of your skin that will be most noticeable. It may be that the deepening and slowing of your breathing, and even a tendency for you to ... close your eyes ..., if they haven't already, can assist you to ... learn something useful here.*

*When you first learnt to do something that you now enjoy, it may have been difficult or burdensome, but now that you have learnt it, it is so much a part of you, that any difficulty that you may have had can so easily and naturally be left in the past where it belongs, and you no longer need to have any concern about the ease and value of that learning. All that's important now it to enjoy the experience.*

*A client came to see me who was not unlike yourself. They had this problem, and in spite of their best attempts, they felt stuck, and unable to resolve it. After they experienced a pleasing and useful hypnotic session, they were delighted to discover that they had many more resources to draw on than they had previously recognised, and they were able to begin to make the adjustments that lead to the resolution of their problem, with a sense of relief and satisfaction.*

*Someone told me that they were having trouble getting some of their vegetables to grow. Peas were fine; tomatoes did well; but the lettuce ... such a disappointment. They discovered that the lettuce they had planted were from the wrong climate, and when they planted a variety that suited their climate, the new lettuces were so lovely, and there was enough to share with neighbours. They could hardly believe the difference finding the right kind of lettuce made.*

*As you are continuing with your experience, you could ... become even more absorbed ... in whatever you are already experiencing, and as a part of that, there may be something pleasant or useful that you could ... notice, ... memorise.*

*It's not important to know that you are memorising the experience, because you can experience memorising an experience without needing to know that ... **you are memorising it.***

*And you can remember remembering an experience or not need to remember that you have remembered it, so that when you are ready, and only when you are ready, you could ... bring that experience back with you as you ... reorient yourself to your external experience.*