Storytelling – the emotions as the main characters

WHAT IS STORYTELLING?

Storytelling is the skill of telling a story. It is aimed at conveying a specific information, idea and - most interesting in this discussion - emotion. It requires the storyteller to be creative and free to create.

What can you do to tell a good story?

1. Focus on the emotions you want to evoke and build tension
2. Speak in a way that is compelling and engages the audience
3. The story should feel authentic, so avoid clichés
   - It is good if it contains details
   - Satisfies the listener's curiosity and answers important questions
   - Presents a personal perspective or gives voice to witnesses to events
   - Uses accessible language (clear, not so complicated sentences, avoiding professional terms, avoiding impersonal forms, emotional colouring of the speech)

Some facts

Every autumn, the famous International Storytelling Festival, one of the largest events of its kind in the world, takes place in Giwatajim near Tel Aviv. In fact, what lies at the heart of storytelling is present in every culture. Before there was television and the Internet, in every corner of the globe people sat down by the fire to talk and listen to wise men who shared their knowledge.

Scientific research

Scientific research confirms that listening to and telling stories has a salutary effect on our mental health, not only in the case of soothing fairy tales and romantic legends, but also, if not primarily, in the case of reporting real events from our lives. This is because each of us plays several roles simultaneously: narrator, editor, protagonist and reader of our story, and only one of the authors (according to one of the most important specialists in this field, Dr Gary Irwin-Kenyon). Our story is influenced by every encounter, conversation and exchange of experiences with other people, who thus co-create our story.

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BREAKING TABOOS about MENTAL HEALTH

The impact of storytelling and listening to stories on mental health

According to the experts[1] we are all lonely in some way and need to get closer to others. When you tell a story, what happened to you is understood and accepted by the listener and you are no longer alone. Listening, in turn, causes something in a person to stimulate an emotion that can lead them to change.

How to tell a painful story?

It is useful to have the ability to tell a story in a way that allows us to control it. We don't have to relive the trauma all over again. It helps if we know both the beginning and the end of the story.
It is also possible to use language in such a way as to shift the focus from the emotions to the artistic dimension of the story.
Storytelling is, of course, not only about telling sad stories. It touches the whole spectrum of emotions, the happy ones too. Because the whole idea and concept of storytelling is based on telling and listening, on sharing emotions, but in such a way that you no longer feel hurt, on seeking a relationship with another person.

The healing nature of storytelling

Storytelling brings joy, it heals, it entertains, it positively influences self-esteem and self-confidence. It allows us to learn from people who are theoretically different from us, but even more - it shows us that we are all essentially the same. By interacting with them, we improve our communication skills and our creativity and imagination increases. Exchanging stories allows us to build ourselves up, creates curiosity and zest for life, improves our memory, calms us down. It allows us to appreciate what is important and good in life, thus awakening gratitude and a sense of purpose. By listening to the stories of others, we relive both their painful experiences and their joys, and so broaden the range of our life experiences. By sharing our own story in turn, we account for the past, choose to think about it and make room for new experiences. We draw on what has gone before, opening ourselves up to what is yet to come.

[1] Zwierciadlo.pl. **https://zwierciadlo.pl/psychologia/214232,1,storytelling--sluchanie-i-opowiadanie-historii-ma-zbawienny-wplyw-na-nasze-zdrowie-psychiczne.read**

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