

## The Story behind Narrative: Getting more from telling and listening

122- Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

10:45-12:15, Friday, 2 October 2009

**Description:** We hear a lot about narrative these days. And, without doubt, there is much to be learned from sharing stories. But does storytelling always work? Through presentation and group participation we will explore the world of narrative looking for **what makes stories tick**.

**Bio:** Anne Doyle's work is called *Drawing Attention to Life*. Influenced by her background as a perceptual psychologist and from her time living abroad, Anne helps others through workshops, groups and one-on-one exchanges as they seek insight, meaning and spiritual intensity. Considering herself a dedicated pilgrim, Anne works with others on pilgrimages both near and far. Learn more about Anne's work at <http://drawingattentiontolife.com/>

You can read more about the project of eating for \$2/day that Anne described during her presentation at <http://WeCanLiveWithLess.wordpress.com/>

### Key Points:

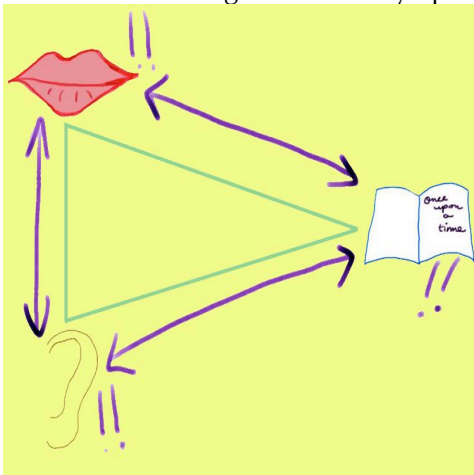
Why do we TELL stories?

- To share an experience
- To help others get to know us better
- To find out what we have in common and in what ways we are different
- To learn something about ourselves
- To remember some one or some event
- To draw attention to something that might otherwise not be seen
- To share information
- To demonstrate a point or lesson, in other words, to teach
- To entertain
- To raise awareness

Why do we LISTEN to stories?

- To learn something
- To connect to another person
- To share an experience
- To be compassionate
- To be entertained

Triangle of Attention in the light of the Holy Spirit



Stories need INTENTIONAL tellers and ATTENTIONAL listeners.

To make storytelling really hum, I suggest that you must recognize which part you are playing and do it well. If you are the teller, then you need to do so genuinely and with careful intent to create for your listener the most important aspects of what you are telling. And if you are the listener you need to listen. You must **want to listen**. You need to call the story forward to you from the Teller, letting the Teller know with your face and body that you want to hear what is being told. And both Teller and listener need to let the story be what it will be. Neither contrive nor manipulate. Don't interpret or anticipate. Let the story be what it will be.

We tell stories when we want to be a community. And why do we want to be a community? So we can live out God's will for us and for the world.

But sometimes story doesn't work.

To read about the story of We Can Live with Less, go to <http://WeCanLiveWithLess.wordpress.com/>

### **Reflective Questions:**

What happens when we use the words of others in a story?

What happens when we listen to a story in person?

Do we have automatic reactions to certain stories?

Do we listen to different kinds of stories differently?

Does it make a difference if you are one of many listeners?

How does the media affect the ways we listen to other stories?

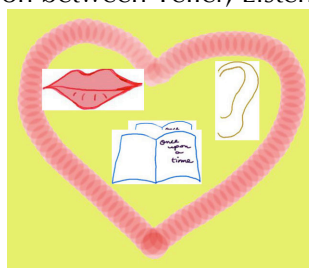
What happens when the story...the teller's story...is about a cause?

Are there some stories to which we become numb, where we are no longer good listeners?

But what happens when our stories need us to find extra strength both to tell them and to listen to them?

What happens when stories aren't told just to bring us closer together or to learn more about one another, but are told to elicit something specific within us?

Do you think the Holy Spirit affects the interaction between Teller, Listener, and story?



Then maybe it's the heart that makes story tick...