



VP3

Life Story What Matters Most?

November 17, 2021

Life is understood backward, but must be lived forward.

Søren Kierkegaard

Welcome and Introductions

The Power of Story

Why is paying attention to our life stories so powerful in our growth and development?

Breakout Conversation (10-12 minutes)

- On a continuum of 1-10, 1 (difficult for me to engage/reflect on my life story) and 10 (this is a practice I am deeply invested in)... What's your number?
- What stands out to you from the "Tell Me Your Story" excerpt on page 3?

A Framework for Paying Attention

When we invite people to pay attention to their life stories, what are we inviting them to actually do?

Reflection: *When you are listening to someone talk about their life story or a portion of their story, what do you find yourself paying particular attention to?*

Wrapping up: Why revisit your story?

TELL ME YOUR STORY

If we are going to walk alongside others, seeking to pay attention with them to what God is up to in their lives, then we must get to know their life story.

Typically, there is far more going on beneath the surface than we tend to acknowledge or even recognize ourselves. We adults can live such unreflective and distracted lives. Your caring and curious presence can help your friend wake up to the depth and possibility of the life he or she already lives. Michael Casey unpacks this so articulately:

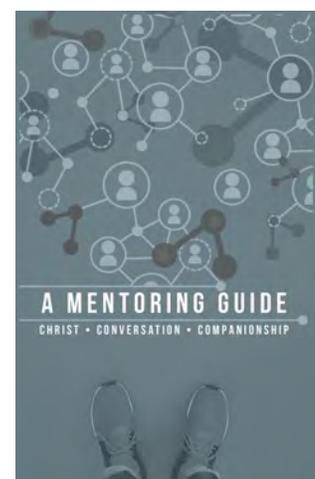
It is my belief that in Western society we tend to underestimate the depth of human experience. We are more at ease dealing with objective facts and overt happenings than in opening toward what is beneath the surface. Undoubtedly this complicates life. One finds beneath a cheery, well-adjusted facade a vulnerability and a history of hurt. In the short-term it is easier to interact by assuming a surface calm. Mostly we do not want to listen to pressures building up inside others; we prefer to hope they will muddle through, and (anyhow) we have enough worries on our own account. Perhaps the most necessary of all skills today is the timeless knack of being able to listen to others, allowing them to tell their story, knowing that telling it will ease their burden and help them become stronger.

It is a great gift to listen—leisurely and patiently—to another’s story and to discover how they have been making sense of their lives. As we help them place their many experiences into a lifelong perspective, potential has a way of being unlocked and discovered. They become thirsty for new, more truthful, and coherent ways of living. Be mindful of where you can speak words of significance, blessing, support, and challenge during each meeting time and over the life of the relationship.

At the core, when we come alongside others, God invites us to be living reminders of this stunning reality—*their story is unique and it matters deeply to God and to us.*

A Mentoring Guide: Christ • Conversation • Companionship
(VP3, 2019), 48-49.

amentoringway.org



For Further Reading

- Frederick Buechner, *Sacred Journey: A Memoir of Early Days*. HarperOne, 1991.
- Leslie Leyland Fields, *Your Story Matters: Finding, Writing, and Living the Truth of Your Life*. NavPress, 2020.
- Keri Wyatt Kent, *Listen: Finding God in the Story of Your Life*. Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Randy D. Reese and Robert Loane, *Deep Mentoring: Guiding Others on Their Leadership Journey*. IVP, 2012. Chapter 2.
- Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Keith R. Anderson, *Reading Your Life's Story: An Invitation to Spiritual Mentoring*. InterVarsity Press, 2016.