

 A Messenger Mini-Book 

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# **Once Upon A Time There Was You**

**Remembering Your Story**

**Liz Byrne**

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By  
Liz Byrne

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## Remembering Your Story

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## Chapter 1

# Childhood Dreams

Once upon a time there was you.

Just like the classic beginning to so many childhood stories: “Once upon a time there was you...” – an innocent child just waiting to experience the world. Your brain was a beautiful canvass upon which anything could be drawn – an absorbent sponge waiting to soak up images, words, emotions and feelings. These images and words filled your imagination and perhaps as you grew up you had hopes and dreams of what you would be... desires and ambitions for your future.

How interesting to think that at the beginning of our physical life here on earth, we have the opportunity to learn anything and to be anything. Our caretakers are given the responsibility of teaching us what they choose to teach us. If we are born in an English speaking country, that's what we are

taught. If we are born in China, then we are taught Chinese. We were taught to have specific beliefs and perhaps a religious faith. Along with those teachings, came behaviors and thoughts that we were taught were “right” and “wrong.” We may have been taught to love, or to hate; to be fearful, or to be empowered.

Beyond our immediate caretakers, we were exposed to others in the world such as teachers and community leaders. All of these people taught us, by their actions, words and deeds, how we are “supposed” to act and feel. We learned when to be sad and when to be glad. We learned when to panic and when we could be calm. We were taught what the “normal” reactions were to various people, places and things. As we became adults, these reactions were validated by the words of others in our community. Got laid off from your job? “Oh that’s so terrible!” These words can translate into panicking and feeling stressed. The opposite might be “Wow, this will be a big

change for you!” which can translate into grasping an opportunity to be something different in your life. If you are insulted or berated by another person, the initial instinct may be to feel anger, fear or inadequacy; as opposed to recognizing and acknowledging the power and beauty within yourself.

Which of these feelings and emotions arise within us is often based on what we have been taught to feel and not necessarily how we choose to feel. In fact we can teach ourselves to feel differently about any situation in our lives by just taking a moment and really thinking about how we feel. We can take a second look and learn from each experience and choose how to react. I'm not saying it's bad to feel anger or sadness or to have concerns. I'm just suggesting that we have the knowledge deep within ourselves that will allow us to look at things differently and decide for ourselves how we choose to feel in any given moment.

You are the same person you were the moment you were born. Perfect in every way and with the ability to learn anything and be anything you want to be. Do you remember the hopes and dreams you had as a child? Can you remember how you felt when you had those dreams? This is an opportunity to remember your story – the ‘Once Upon a Time’ of You. You can’t re-write the past, but you can write the future, and the future begins now. You can rediscover your true self and begin living your best story today, now, in this moment.

## Chapter 2

### **How I Began to Re-Write My Story**

I have a short story I'd like to share with you about my own life. A couple of years ago, I was laid off from my job. I was, and am, a single mother and sole supporter of my child. Can you guess what my initial reaction was to losing my job after 24 years in the same industry? You got it – my initial thought was to panic. I felt quite fearful and stressed. Let's throw in a little anger just to make it a full house. Those around me validated those feelings: "Oh I'm so sorry." "What are you going to do?"

Well, I wallowed in these feelings of fear and anger for a while and went through the traditional tasks of looking for new employment. But at the same time, I knew that I had been unhappy in my career for quite some time. The work was stressful, I worked very long hours and it involved a lot of travel which was all difficult to coordinate with the care of my child. I was not happy.

At this exact moment in time – funny how these things happen – I was introduced to a counselor. With his gentle guidance, I came to realize that it was time for me to make a dramatic change in my life. It took me a while, but I was eventually able to move myself into a place where I recognized that being laid off was a huge opportunity to pursue something completely different in my life. It was not time to panic. It was time to feel joy at the chance to reinvent myself; a chance to write a new story for myself; a chance to be who I wanted to be. I changed how I looked at the situation and therefore changed how I felt about it.

I was able to create a new perspective about this occurrence and therefore able to change how I was feeling. You can learn to do the same thing. You have the ability to change how you choose to react to any situation; you have freedom of choice at any moment in time to decide for yourself how you are going to feel. You can choose

negative feelings or positive ones. You have the power to feel any way you choose.

Now I'd like to take a moment here and talk about the labeling of emotions and feelings as "good" vs. "bad" and "negative" vs. "positive." I do not believe there is any emotion or feeling that can be called "bad." Every emotion we feel is real and good and has a purpose. We learn from every experience we have in our life and are enriched by a broad range of feelings and emotions. If we experience the loss of a loved one, we will most likely feel sadness and begin to grieve. If we are being abused by another person, we may feel fear and anger. These feelings are all natural; they teach us about ourselves and can also protect us.

What I am saying is this: if you find that you are not happy with your feelings, then you can change them. If you find yourself wallowing in negative emotions or find yourself feeling poorly without some thought

as to why you feel this way, then you can choose to look at the situation and decide how you want to feel about it going forward. If you want to feel differently, you have the power and the ability to choose something different.

It's as simple as that. You are a creator in this life. Whether you encounter big or small situations, you can change the way you feel about things. Being laid off was a big occurrence in my life, but it was by looking at the small components of it that I was able to work through the event and decide how I was going to be going forward.

If you'd like to hear more about this particular occurrence in my life and the guidance that was given to me by my counselor, you can access an audio called "The Lay Off" in the BOOKS tab at my website at [www.VisionOneOnline.com](http://www.VisionOneOnline.com)

## Chapter 3

# Create Your Own Story Anytime

You can begin to re-write your story now. This does not mean that you are walking away from who you are – you are still you. All of the experiences in your life up to this moment define who you are. It may be hard to accept this but everything that has happened in your life to date has all happened perfectly in the way it was meant to be. How can you know this? It is because it has brought you to this moment, this place where you are reading this book and ready to re-embrace your best self.

In order to be anything, we will begin by addressing our thoughts and emotions about particular situations. How we think and feel drives how we act and therefore define who we are. I will use the terms positive and negative as they relate to emotions in order to help you decide if an emotion is something you want to feel in any given

moment, and not as a judgment of feelings as being “good” or “bad.”

I have created a process to assist you in working through your feelings and learning how to choose what emotions you'd like to feel in any given moment. It is called STORY. It is a tool you can use at any time to help you transition out of any negative thought or emotion and into a positive one. By beginning with creating new stories for those specific moments that challenge us, we create a mechanism within ourselves that we can draw on at any time.

STORY is an acronym that stands for: Stop, Tag, Objectify, Revise, Yes. What this means is that if we can Stop ourselves any time we have a negative emotion or thought, then we can learn how to change our perspective and end up feeling as we choose to feel. We can change our STORY around whatever Object caused us to feel negatively, and then choose to move forward into the next moment with a positive feeling.

Before we begin, it is important for you to record your answers as you go through the STORY process. You can simply grab a pen and paper or I also invite you to visit my website at [www.VisionOneOnline.com](http://www.VisionOneOnline.com) and go to the BOOKS tab. Once there you can enter the Lessons section for Chapter 3 to record your personal STORY's. These are personal; not to be shared with anyone unless you ever choose to.

So let's begin with this moment. How do you feel? Are you happy to be reading a book? Angry at something that happened a moment ago? If you are feeling happy and positive, I ask you to take a moment and remember a recent point in time that you were not feeling good.

What was that moment? Take a minute here to get back to how you were feeling at that time. Remember where you were and what time of day it was. Remember what was going on around you and what other people were present. Are you back in that

moment? Are you feeling the emotions that were occurring at that time?



Ok – now **STOP!** STOP your train of thought in that moment. Write down where you are, or were, who else was there and the date and the time.

Now we will **TAG** the emotion. To Tag it means to give it a label. Are you feeling angry, lonely, sad, hurt, anxious, or nervous? Define the emotion. Recognize it. Give it a name. Don't resist it. Feel it. Take a moment now and really get back to that feeling.

Write down what you are feeling in your journal. If you have many or mixed emotions then write them all down. Be honest. Don't place any limits on what you are allowed to feel. Don't judge yourself and don't worry about what anyone else might think about your emotions. This is confidential between you and you! Go deep here – don't just

identify a thought that is on the surface – take a moment and find the emotion, find your deepest feelings from this moment.

If you would like some guidance on how to tag emotions, on how to differentiate between thoughts and feelings, you can visit my website again, and within the Lessons for Chapter 3, under TAG, you will find some guidance and examples for thoughts vs. emotions.

Next we will **OBJECTIFY**. We do this by recognizing what “Object” caused you to feel this way? An “Object” for these purposes is any person, place, thing or occurrence. Did someone say something to you? Were you in a physical place that has bad memories? Did you see a particular physical object? Did something happen to you or around you? Did someone do something to you?

It is not always easy to recognize the root cause of how we feel. We may have always felt a certain way around a certain thing and

never taken the time to ask why. Again with Objectify – be honest. It may be difficult to admit when a child or an elderly parent is the root of negative emotions that we feel. Don't worry – this is personal and private to you. This is your time, your opportunity to recognize and acknowledge that these people, places, things or occurrences have a negative effect on you. Don't judge yourself, just be aware. Take a moment and write down the Object under the emotion you Tagged a minute ago.

Objectify is a very important part of this process. The ability to recognize what causes you to feel poorly will help you further down the road. It will help you to anticipate situations that might affect you and be prepared to make a conscious choice regarding how you will react to them.

Now take an extra minute and see if you can identify WHY that object made you feel that way. Is it an automatic response to something you see or that occurs regularly?

If you know the WHY then write that down as well. It's not always easy to identify the "why" so if you can't, that's fine. Sometimes things affect us a certain way and we initially can't pinpoint why. Just pose the question to yourself and see if an answer comes to you. It's most important to find the Object now. You can think about the Why later, and in fact, as you do more of the STORY process, the Why may come to light on its own.

Now we **REVISE**. Take a look at what you are feeling in relation to the "object" and ask yourself – do I have to feel this way at this time about this person, place, thing or occurrence? Can I choose to feel differently? And what new feeling, or Story, would you like to create for yourself as relates to this Object in this particular moment? You are not changing the Object - you are changing your Story in relation to the Object.

If you are dealing with something or someone in a very intense situation, you may not be able to 'Revise' your feeling into something

incredibly positive right away. There are things in life that just plain old make us angry or sad, and it may seem impossible to be joyous or happy about them. I get it – I've been there often. However, what I have learned is that I can usually acknowledge those feelings, and then think about how I would like to be going forward.

Maybe you can choose ACCEPTANCE. It is a thought that I have learned to bring into almost any situation. Yes – I get annoyed when my car breaks down! However, I realize that I can either choose to have a tantrum and get my blood pressure elevated, or I can choose to accept the situation calmly and think about my next step and a solution. You probably can't feel joyful that your spouse is yelling at you, but maybe you can take a moment – mentally step out of the situation – and just accept it for what it is at that time. If you can't feel freedom in the job you don't like, then perhaps you can just accept it for now while you begin to think of solutions.

Acceptance is the one thought that you can bring into any moment, at any time, in any situation. If you choose, you can learn to make the shift from annoyance, anger, fear or hatred, into acceptance. Acceptance is a terrific thought because, once you have allowed it in, you may begin to feel calm. And along with the calm may come a feeling of peace. This is not a magic potion – but something that works for me that I'm sharing with you. Shift into the thought of acceptance, and accept the calm and peace that follow.

Acceptance is an empowering feeling. Some may think of it as a weakness – as if it represents succumbing or giving in. I say: “Yes, I gladly give in to something I cannot change at this moment. I accept this is happening.” I have made the decision to be in a state of acceptance, which means I am empowered by my use of free will. I am exercising my right to choose; it's my choice to feel acceptance over anger or fear.

Think of this: maybe my spouse wants me to react and cry or yell back; maybe my boss likes to wield power and wants me to feel powerless. Regardless of what they want, I choose to accept who they are and what they are doing. By choosing acceptance, I feel calm and peaceful. By feeling peaceful, I have a sense of joy that overcomes me.

Take some time with the 'Revise' step. Really think about what you would like to feel in this moment as relates to the particular object. Can you find humor and laugh; can you choose joy or happiness? There is another tool in the online environment that may assist you in the 'Revise' stage. It is also within the Lessons tab in Chapter 3 in the Revise section and it is called "Emotional Opposites". It gives examples of what your feeling may have been and what new feeling you might like to choose.

So now take a minute and journal the new emotion you choose to feel in the 'Revise' section. You may have a few new emotions.

Write them all down.

Now say **YES!** Say YES to the new feeling you have chosen. Take that new, positive emotion and allow it to wash all over you. Take a nice long soak in this new feeling; immerse yourself in it like a soothing bath.

YES, YES, YES! Celebrate the new feelings. Take a moment here to celebrate. You changed the way you feel. **YOU CHANGED THE WAY YOU FEEL!** You created a new experience for yourself. **YOU ARE A CREATOR!**

Just a few moments ago – you had a thought or emotion that did not serve you. Now you have a new one that does. Isn't that amazing!?! You have a new **STORY** about yourself.

Acknowledge what a great creator you are. You have created a new story for yourself about that particular object in that particular moment. And if that's the case – who's to

say you can't create your own story for every moment, forever, going forward...!!! But more on that later...😊

Once Upon a Time There Was You! And here you are again – recreated! The step of YES is the most important because it is the celebration of the new you that you have chosen for yourself. This is the reason we started on this process in this book – so you could reach back into yourself and find the person you want to be; the person you have always been; the person you knew you could always be. Celebrate that.

Now take a moment and write down your thoughts now that you made the choice to feel the way you want to feel. Take a moment to revel in your new STORY.

## Chapter 4

# The Next Step

Congratulations! You have just taken a giant step forward in the creation of you, in the process of writing your own story. I hope it makes you feel as terrific as it makes me feel. Anytime I realize that I am able to change how I feel in a given moment or about a certain situation, I feel incredibly empowered. I am still learning to do this just the same as you are. I often encounter situations that I need to take a second look at and choose who I am in relation to that situation. Life is life in all of its wonderment and it is ever changing. New things are happening constantly, and we are living in relation to everyone and everything. We are surrounded by people who are writing their own stories every day. That's right – whether they are doing it consciously or unconsciously – everyone is writing their own story every moment of every day.

Which leads us to the next step: to make

conscious choices about how we'd like to feel all the time. To realize that we have already been making choices every moment of every day – whether consciously or not. We make choices all the time about how we will feel and act based on what we believe is the “right” way to feel and act. As we discussed at the beginning of this book, we are conditioned to feel in certain ways. Some of those ways are “good” and some – not so much! Well, now you have the opportunity to choose how you want to feel - always - and to realize that you can make a conscious decision to learn to choose how you'd like to be in relation to everything in the world.

Can you imagine the benefits of feeling positively at all times? Can you imagine the possibilities life can offer if you look at things just a little bit differently? Some would say this is not realistic, that it is not possible to feel happy all the time. I say – pshaw! In fact, in my life, I couldn't begin to count the times people have asked me “are you always

so happy?” It’s not that I am always happy – it’s just that I learned from an early age to be optimistic; to find the glass half full; to know that I can be happy no matter what the situation (thanks Dad!). In my later years, I realized that I was working through a very specific process, what I now call STORY.

In order to make conscious decisions at all times begin to use the STORY process on a regular basis. The first step towards doing this is to be able to recognize the moments when we are not feeling positively, and to learn that we don’t need to accept feeling poorly. To begin to have an awareness of when we are not being who we want to be or feeling like the person our story tells us we want to be. Begin to recognize those moments when you would like to feel differently.



If you haven’t done the STORY process at least one more time while reading this book,

then please take this moment to do it again. Go to the Online Environment, or get a pen and paper handy. If there is not something going on for you right now that causes a negative feeling, then once again, reflect back to a recent time when you had negative thoughts or emotions.

Take a minute here and go back to that point in time. Where were you; what was going on around you; what time of day was it? Are you back in that moment? Are you feeling that emotion?

Now STORY. Stop, Tag, Objectify, Revise, Yes. You can refer back to pages 15 to 23 for working through the steps of STORY. Take your time at every step in the process.

Make note of the Stop date, time and place; the Tag; the Object and Why; the Revised thought or emotion and how you felt after you said Yes!

Take the time once again to celebrate the

new, revised story that you just created for yourself. Celebrate that you are an amazing creator; that you can be anything you choose to be in any moment; that you can re-write your Story at any time. This is a wonderful tool that you now have that you can use in any moment for the rest of your life.

As you begin to remember to use STORY spontaneously, you may begin to realize that you are feeling much better. You will notice that your emotions and thoughts are in a positive stream more of the time. This will happen differently for each person as the Objects that impact our thoughts will have varying degrees of importance and severity. However, you can expect that STORY will become a part of your life without you even thinking about it.

If you have been in an angry state of mind lately, you may begin to find that little things don't bother you as much. In fact, over time, you may find that even the "big" things won't affect you in a negative way.

## Chapter 5: **Moving Forward**

Once upon a time there was you. As you are making these small adjustments through the use of STORY, the larger picture of who you want to be will begin to become clear to you. This is your time to dream big and begin to think about who you will be going forward.

You have already done something amazing for yourself. You have learned that you can feel better any time you choose. The next best thing you can do is to pass this knowledge along to someone else. Pass it along to those you love. You don't have to be a master to teach – you simply need to have the desire to teach. You have a new, valuable tool – pass it on!

You are a creator! You are amazing!

Namaste

## **AFTERWARD:**

My dear friends, while we have reached the end of this book, we have not reached the end of our journey together. As you begin to incorporate the STORY process, you will begin to see first small, then larger changes manifest in your life.

If you have not already visited it, I encourage you to visit my website below where you can further your learning experience and begin to share your experiences with others who have read this book.

Within the Books tab in my Online Environment you will find:

- Lessons for each chapter.
- Journaling guidance.
- Additional Resources.
- My audio clip called The Lay Off.
- Plus much more to come.

At time of publication, I am working on my next book which will take you further on your STORY path. I will discuss how to spot and focus on trends within your STORY journal and how to begin to implement larger changes in your life.

[www.VisionOneOnline.com](http://www.VisionOneOnline.com)

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