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roadSIGNS Newsletter

Vol.15 No. 7  
December  
2015

Greetings!

One of my favorite Canadian authors, Donna Morrissey, once stated that "a life untold is a life unlived". In other words, if we fail to share our stories, whatever they may be, it is as if we were never here; we leave no memories for others of who we were, how we lived or what we achieved.

This past Friday evening, my nephew Greg and I were looking at documents from the Hayes family genealogy. There were records of births, deaths, marriages. One of my uncles fought in WW1, something I did not know even though I visited him many times during my childhood and teen years. I am saddened that so much family history was untold and that the only memory I have of these relatives comes from the archives

Greg has been able to uncover.

There is so much unsaid. I fear this is even more prevalent today as we myself included, live with our many electronic devices on and visit through social media. Is there still hope for the art of storytelling?

With the holiday season approaching and many occasions to visit with family and friends, we have the opportunity to share of ourselves. Why not make a commitment this year to share a few stories from your life and to ask others to share theirs. You never know what you might uncover.

Welcome to **The Power of Storytelling!**

Enjoy the read!

Betty

For the fall of 2015, we are taking a sabbatical from retreat work and Our Labyrinth Walk in September while Betty completes her certificate in Applied Positive Psychology. We will be back with ME FIRST, our annual Intentions and Vision Day and more in 2016.

We will be continuing HEALTHY LIVING CAFE in collaboration with the QUIRKY CARROT. **As of this month we are returning to Tuesdays for our events** - 3rd Tuesday of each month (November 2015 to June 2016) excluding December.

On January 19th, Betty Healey will be sharing some of her learning from the Positive Psychology program she is engaged in. The title of the talk is "Self Compassion".

Find out more and register [HERE](#)

The next Labyrinth Walk will be held Saturday, December 19th, 2015.

For details go [HERE](#)

Our annual Intentions and Vision Day is scheduled for January 23rd, 2016. This is a popular event so you will want to sign up early. For details go [HERE](#)

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## This month's roadSIGN



Facebook Image, November 30, 2015

## December Newsletter

*"After nourishment, shelter and companionship,  
stories are the thing we need most in the world."*

Phillip Pullman

### **THE POWER OF STORYTELLING**

In the late 90's I had the opportunity to participate in a series of Leadership conferences

sponsored by the Public Service Commission of Western Canada. I have always used storytelling as a way to convey certain messages and these occasions were no exception. I would gather stories from leadership texts and books like Chicken Soup for the Soul, and occasionally throw in a personal story as well.

At the end of one of the leadership programs one of the participants approached me and shared the following: *"Betty you are an excellent storyteller. I just wanted you to know that when you tell your stories, the ones from your life and your own experience, they are much more powerful."*

This feedback had a huge impact on me. I now rarely tell a story unless it was mine, rooted in what I had lived or experienced. Yes, I recognize that this makes us vulnerable; it is challenging at times to reveal the hidden self to others. And, it is what makes us human, what really connects us to others.

Here are three of my stories.

### **Mining Diamonds**

In December of 1967, just before Christmas, I received a phone call from a lovely young man named Jim. I was so shocked that he had called me I could barely respond. You see Jim was the all-around athlete, Mr. Football and Mr. Hockey, well known throughout the school. I, on the other hand was your classic wallflower, unpopular, academic, certainly no athlete. He asked me out on a date. I said yes, all the while wondering why he chose me, for you see I was nothing.

That first date led to a second, and a third. We started going steady. When we were in university we were 'pinned' and this led to our engagement. We married in June of 1973 and all the while I was wondering why he had chosen me. So I asked him.

At first he did not answer, just shaking his head as the question for him was nonsense. When I persisted he finally said simply this, "because I see the diamond in you that you are unable to see". (Yes, this man is a keeper!)

He said this to me repeatedly from that point onward. He was unable to understand that I could not see myself the way he did.

As I approached my mid-thirties I finally understood that while it was great that Jim saw my diamond, it was time that I saw it as well. It was time for me to manage my strong self-critic who had an extraordinary knack for putting me down, and begin to steadfastly re-program her and the stories I had been telling myself.

This has become my life's work. As I shared this work with others, I learned that I am

not alone with my critic's voice; we all have them as annoying as they are and most of us want to turn down the volume. The great news is I have 'mined my diamond', allowing myself to see my strengths and gifts and to celebrate them. This has saved my life. And now that I can see my diamond, I also see yours!

### **Beyond Courage**

Fast forward many years and it is now November 2008. Jim and I are in California to attend a week-long event called Beyond Courage. I had chosen this event intuitively. It was not that I felt that I lacked courage, at least in most aspects of my life. It was that I realized that I rarely challenged myself physically as I still had that built in fear that I could never be an athlete and that anything physical was to be avoided. I feared failing.

I chose well. The first event of this five-day 'courage camp' was a ropes course. Oh yeah! I managed most of the course, barely, and then I was faced with the following: climb a telephone pole; once at the top step up onto the top of the pole, stand tall, jump off grabbing a trapeze that was placed a few feet away from the top. Okay, while you do this you are supported by a team of 10 people and you are attached to a harness so that you really cannot fall and hurt yourself. And it is amazing how easy it is to forget this,

I climbed the pole with great prowess and ease even if I do say so. And then I reached the top. There were two narrow footholds to step up onto at the top. There is nothing to grab onto - you have to absolutely trust your own will and strength to make that final step. I was breathless. And then my self-critic came in, my mother's voice, 'Betty Jane don't do it. You might fall and hurt yourself!'

I considered the message and then rallied, "You know I can't fall. I am on a harness and I have 10 people who will hold me up here if I miss."

Not to be deterred, my self-critic came in with round two, "Well what if you try and then don't make it. That will be a failure!" I considered her concern then responded, "Not trying would be the failure. Even if I miss, the mere fact that I gave it my best will be a success."

With my team cheering me on I managed to get one knee up on the top of the pole, then the other foot and with all my will I raised myself into standing. OMG - I was shaking so badly that the entire telephone pole was quivering. My team captain yelled up, "Betty bend your knees and tuck in your butt." It was like lock and load because once I did this everything calmed down, I looked around me. I could see the Pacific Ocean to the west and the mountains behind me. I felt elated and with a great "Whoop, Whoop" jumped off the pole and grabbed onto the trapeze. I had conquered my fear and more importantly, I

had conquered my critic. (BTW - I hold the record for lingering the longest at the top of the pole while those conversations took place.)

This experience has followed me everywhere. It taught me how to examine and manage fear and has given me the courage to go onto other adventures, including skydiving.

### **The Numbers**

Back to 1991 in the physiotherapy department of St. Mary's Hospital. Working in the out-patient department allowed me to see a variety of cases. The one person that has remained with me is a 69 year old women, whom I will refer to as Mme Klein. She and her husband ran a small convenience store. She managed the stock room, ordering and receiving and as a result of this role was required to do a lot of heavy lifting. She came to the clinic complaining of severe shoulder pain.

It was easy to see when I met her that her shoulder pain was 'large', as if she carried the weight of the world on those shoulders. As I began my examination of her shoulders and subsequently her elbows and wrists, I saw the tattoo on her right wrist, the faded blue numbers of a previous era. I said nothing to her even though I felt a strong visceral response within me.

My treatment turned out to be quite ineffective. Although she derived some comfort from the heat and exercises, nothing really changed. On her fifth treatment she shared with me that perhaps the treatments were not working. Instead on insisting that we continue, I sat down beside her, took her hand and simply asked her what was really going on. As I listened for the next hour, her story poured out. She had been in three camps during WW2 the last being Auschwitz where her entire family disappeared. She was the sole survivor. This was the burden that she carried, the survivor's guilt, the trauma, the loss. At the end of her story, I thanked her for trusting me and sharing. We cried together. We hugged. A few days later she called me and said she did not need to continue her treatment.

I still get a tightness in my throat when I remember and share this story. It taught me so much about being a good therapist, how important listening is and how important it is to be heard.

### **Final Word**

These are three of my stories. I encourage you to search back and choose a couple of your stories, experiences that have informed you, forced you to grow or perhaps even face yourself.

When you share, when you allow yourself to be vulnerable, you connect deeply with

others. Your relationships flourish and you live your life. And you will be remembered.

## Your asSIGNment

- In the upcoming weeks, as you gather with friends and family, turn off the phones and electronic devices.
- Ask everyone around the table to offer the gift of a personal story. Be prepared to lead the way.
- Expect to be surprised.

## Travel Tip

Stories are the footprints we have left on this earth. They are our legacy and our future. Take time to share.

## Conscious Communication Coaching

Conscious communication is mindfulness. Our coaching clients are experiencing amazing results in their life as they learn to be clear about what they want and to take action in doing and being.

roadSIGNS is dedicated to offering coaching packages and retreat programs based on the principles of Conscious Communication and designed to assist you in living the life of your choice.

Here is what two of our coaching circle participants shared with us recently:

***... the nuggets of wisdom that have revealed themselves throughout our short and powerful six weeks (of coaching) will continue to unveil themselves to me and lead to new questions and discoveries.***

***...The coaching sessions in FROM CRITIC TO COACH have helped me discover how to return to pure energy, to experience the true meaning and purpose of the game I call Life.***

Give yourself the gift of coaching. [Contact us](#) to arrange a coaching consultation and explore the options.

## Lumina Learning Systems

Learn about your personal preferences and your core qualities/strengths through the Lumina Spark Portrait. This comprehensive psychosocial assessment leads you gently down the path of self-discovery through a unique portrait of who you are and how you show up in different life situations. It is a great starting point in developing your awareness and learning strategies for being resilient.

**I have always wanted to learn to mother myself first  
but I did not know how to do it.**

**Lumina has given me the tools to understand  
what it is I need to do for myself and how to engage my strengths.  
It has opened the door to being coached through my top qualities/strengths.**

**Monica**

Check out the website, [www.roadsigns.ca](http://www.roadsigns.ca) for more information and/or contact [betty@roadSIGNS.ca](mailto:betty@roadSIGNS.ca) .

## Events:

For details regarding any of our upcoming events in 2015 [visit our website](#)

### **ME FIRST Self-Study Program**

The ME FIRST Self-Study Program offers a structured approach for your ME FIRST experience. This 10 module self-study program replicates the ME FIRST Retreat experience allowing you to complete it at your own pace

For more details go [HERE](#)

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### **Healthy Living Cafe - Tuesday January 19th,2015**

The title of this month's Healthy Living Cafe is "Self-Compassion". Join Betty Healey for a discussion on learning to treat yourself with love and compassion regardless of the circumstances.

Betty Healey is a teacher, coach and facilitator. She is currently completing a Certificate in Applied Positive Psychology.

At the HLC you can also indulge in some coffee or tea and a Quirky Carrot sweet treat which is included in the price of admission.

For more details and to register go [HERE](#)

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## **Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk**

Join us for the next Labyrinth Walk on Saturday December 19th, 2015.

For more details go [HERE](#)

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## **Intention and Vision Day**

Join us for our annual Intentions and Vision Day which is scheduled for January 23rd, 2016. This is a popular event so you will want to sign up early.

For more details go [HERE](#)

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Your comments and suggestions on this newsletter are greatly appreciated. Forward this e-mail to a friend or colleague who you think would appreciate the message. A simple way is to use the "forward e-mail" button below my signature.

If you would like to sign up for my monthly e-mail, please follow this link

<http://www.roadsigns.ca/newsletters.html>

Sincerely,

Betty Healey  
roadSIGNS