

The Power of (Your) Story

I could have sat there for hours.

It was opening night of [Rock Solid](#)—a gathering of leaders who come together to understand more fully what it means to be *rock-solid on the inside and dangerous for the Kingdom on the outside*. Seated comfortably in circle, the twelve of us began by introducing ourselves first by sharing a snapshot of the most significant people in our lives.

And then came the best part.

We took a time to review the account where Old Testament leader Joshua instructed the people of Israel to roll up their sleeves and pile up some stones as a memorial—a memorial that would serve as a pedagogical prop from generation to generation of how God led His people through the Jordan River on dry ground while being hunted down by their enemies.

In a similar spirit, each of us had come prepared to talk about the “memorial stones” of our lives. Having searched the hard drives of our own pathways, one by one, we rehearsed a challenging chapter in our lifelong journey—and how God met us in the middle of it. From family heartaches to a near-fatal accident, the bitter realities of life were as clear as could be.

But juxtaposed against the certainty of those harsh realities was the certainty of God’s remarkable intervention. God showed up. Each gave witness that our God is a game-changer. Behind in the fourth quarter with the clock ticking away, He came through—one more time. At one moment, what looked like certain doom and defeat, turned out to be yet another billboard of God’s undeniable presence and power.

Story after story. Witness after witness. Testimony after testimony. Like I said, I could have sat there for hours.

I was overwhelmed by the power of remembering, the importance of memorial.

As a leader, you have faced and will continue to face repeated encounters with crises and uncertainties. They are simply part of the leadership space.

And in those moments of crisis, when every eye is trained on you with that “what now?” look, the battle-tested leader reaches deep into the bank account of memories and recites, better yet, relives one of the ways that God has come through for you in the past.

Mark it down: remembering the past gives power to the present.

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In a word, leaders need to be storytellers. But to be a good storyteller, you first need to be a good story-collector—archiving a mental (better yet, a written) inventory of the “God-stories” birthed in the landscape of your life and leadership. For example, if you are a leader of an organization, what are the one-of-a-kind stories about how God came through for you when you had no idea if you would meet accounts payable last summer? Or if you are a parent, what about how God gave you strength and peace beyond your understanding to deal with the life-threatening illness of your six-year-old daughter?

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You get the picture.

Stories remind.

Stories teach.

Stories inspire.

In short, stories have power.

Do you think there’s a connection between the power of story and the words in Revelation: *They overcame him [the evil one] by the blood of the Lamb and **by the word of their testimony***?

I think so.

Chuck Olson

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