

# MAY CHALICE CIRCLE STORY

**OPENING WORDS/CHALICE LIGHTING:** (a poem from The Lost for Words Bookshop by Stephanie Butland)

I sometimes think I want to write a book of my life  
So that when I meet you - or anyone new - I can hand it over and you can read it,  
Instead of trying to read me.  
You can take it away and decide whether it's worth giving me your time.  
You can think about if, the next time we are walking towards each other, you'll smile without slowing  
down  
Or cross the street and pretend you haven't seen me  
Or stop and put an arm around my shoulder, steer me into the nearest pub, and buy me a pint of  
stout,  
Because you'll know, having read the book, that stout is what I drink.  
You see the elegance of my proposal.  
But every time I sit down to write the book, I hit a snag.  
I could tell so many stories.  
I could be a poet or a magician or a failed mathematician.  
I could be happy or soul-sore or lonely.  
I could start when I was born, when I was twelve, when I left university,  
And the book would be different for each story I choose.  
And the book would be true, and untrue, for each.  
Our pasts are a unfixed as our futures, if you think about it.  
And I like the freedom I have to tell a different story.

**CHECK IN:** In just a few sentences, tell YOUR story of your experience of the 2020/21 pandemic.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PEOPLE OF STORY?

Stories are important in our lives. As the introduction suggested, "our stories often write us as much as we write them." As we reflect on what it means to be a people of story, think about your role in your story...are you an actor conforming to the scripts handed to you or are you the director or screenwriter of your life? Have you lost control of your storyline - somewhat adrift at the present time? Does that make you want to regain control of the storyline, or to change it and send it in a different direction? Have circumstances closed the book on one story, inviting you to jump into another? Let's look at some ways others have viewed this topic and reflect on how their views might intersect with our own experiences.

### REFLECTION 1:

*There are no true stories; we are making up every one of them*  
*There are only true stories. We are discovering the truth in them.*

Pema Chodron  
Christina Baldwin

**How can these two quotations both be true? Does your life reflect one more than the other?**

### REFLECTION 2:

*There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.*

Maya Angelou

**Do you have an untold story inside of you? Even if you don't, how do you feel when you think about people who have stories that can't/haven't been told?**

**REFLECTION 3:**

*There is a you telling yourself another story of you. Listen to her.....* Padraig O Tuama

**What does this quote mean in terms of the story of our lives? Are you listening...why or why not?**

**REFLECTION 4:**

*Those without power risk everything to tell their story*

*And must.*

*Someone, somewhere, will hear your story and decide to fight,*

*To live and refuse to compromise...*

*Telling, by Laura Hershey*

(full poem: [www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/telling](http://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/telling))

**Do you have a story someone needs to hear? Have you heard a story you needed to hear?**

**CHECK OUT:**

What have you learned/experienced in this session? What will you take away?

**CLOSING WORDS:**

*Your heartache is someone else's hope. If you make it through, somebody else is going to make it through. Tell your story.*