



Story of Hope RESOURCES

Chapter 1 My Story is Priceless

Resources – Sweets, bowl, whiteboard and markers, rock, diamond, 2 local currency notes (One clean and new, the other old and dirty), masking tape, story keeper (Notebook), Gift (Clear glass or diamond bead with bracelet/wrist band or band for keyring)

Chapter 2 My Unique Story

Resources — Whiteboard, markers, building blocks, pens, pictures of people from all walks of life, images/object for sale, price tags, story bead (unique).

Chapter 3 Value My Story

Resources - Images of healthy/unhealthy choices, ball, 3 x coloured playdough, pictures of people, items for what's missing, priceless cube (or video clip) story bead (purple)

Chapter 4 My Story is Mine to Write

Resources - Random images and or objects to tell a story, whiteboard, markers, story bead (red)

Chapter 5 My Story Meets Yours

Resources - String, scissors, whiteboard, markers, toothpaste, sheet of paper, Matches, fireproof bowl. story bead (blue and white)

Chapter 6 True Story

Resources – Milk, Clear plastic cup or glass, water, large bowl, stones, sweets, bowl, whiteboard, markers, matches, 1 fake egg and 1 real egg, story bead (Yellow and/or clear).

Chapter 7 Designer Storyline

Resources – Jigsaw's, gift, seed, coloured markers, story bead (green/brown)

Chapter 8 Today for Tomorrow

Resources – Coloured markers, stickers, magazines or printed pictures, glue stick, inspirational video clip or story giving an example of resilience, whiteboard, markers, story bead (shiny or metallic)



Role of the Facilitator

Create a relaxed and safe environment

Each member of the group needs to feel relaxed and safe to share. Confidentiality is a must. The environment needs to be comfortable and functional for the activities, so keep these in mind when choosing a place to hold the course.

Build an atmosphere of value and respect

An atmosphere of value and respect is built when each person is heard without being judged or interrupted. This may be something that needs to be modelled and taught by reminding the group of each persons value. Encourage asking questions rather than making statements. Initiate and draw out encouragement for each member of the group.

Encourage involvement

It is important to encourage each member of the group to be involved and participate. The more involved the more likely to retain the information. Some people will dominate conversation and others are happy to remain quiet and just listen, but it is important that every person has an opportunity to share. The role of the facilitator is to keep an even balance.

Keep a good attitude

Regardless of how you might feel at times, it is imperative to be an example. No matter what comes our way, we can choose what kind of influence we have on others. Keeping a good attitude and not reacting but choosing to think and respond is what will teach far more than words.

Be Creative

Keep in mind this is a basic structure for teaching these concepts. It is vital to use as much creativity as possible. If you think of a better illustration or activity then use it. If you know of a more creative way to teach the concept then do it.

Keep Relevant

Sharing personal stories, local stories and interpreting your groups dynamics is a creative way to be relevant to your group. Keep in mind age appropriateness, cultural sensitivity and any other factors that might influence how and what you share. For example:- Mixed age group, mixed sexes, group size etc.

Be prepared

Make sure you have all your resources ready and are familiar with the teaching material well before you start. Have your room set up before participants arrive and keep teaching resources handy.

Chapter 1 Wy Story is Priceless.

Resource—Sweets, bowl, whiteboard and markers, rock, diamond, 2 local currency notes (One clean and new, the other old and dirty), Masking tape, story keeper (Notebook), Gift (Clear glass or diamond bead with bracelet/wrist band or band for keyring)
Introduction—The life that you are living right now is your life story being written. It's your story to write how you want it to go.
Your story is priceless and worth writing well!

Activity—A sweet, a treat

Hand around a bowl of sweets. Tell the group they can take as many sweets as they like but they are not to eat them just yet. Each member is to introduce themselves and for each sweet they have taken they need to share 1 interesting thing about themselves. For example if they take 2 sweets they share 2 interesting things. The facilitator and helpers can go first as an example.

Illustration—My Story

Tell your own life story as if it were a story you had heard. For example 'There was once a boy/girl who was born many years ago...'. Fill in your own life story (No need to be too graphic or too long, just tell high's, low's and milestones). At the end explain that this is your own life story. It's yours to tell, yours to choose what comes next and it is valuable!!! It is priceless!!! (perhaps include some part of your life that has influenced or been influenced by someone else)

Q&A

Ask these questions as a group. You can record on a whiteboard if possible for later reference.

- 1. If a person has many riches are they more valuable than someone who has nothing or very little?
- 2. If a person does great things are they more valuable than someone who has done very little for others?
- 3. Does where a person come from make them more or less valuable?
- 4. Is a boy or a girl more valuable?
- 5. Do you think that where you come from has an influence on what you think makes a person valuable?
- 6. What does your community say makes a person valuable?
- 7. If your community had a scale to measure value where would you rate yourself? (Give a minute to think about this and ask them to remember their answer for later.)



Illustration—Rock and a Diamond

Show the rock and ask it's value. Ask what they would be willing to pay you for the rock. Ask why it has no or little value. (Perhaps because it is common and there is nothing special about it or it has no value to others.) What we see may be

different to what a trained eye might see when looking at this rock. They might see something beneath the surface that is far more valuable than an ordinary rock. What if I told you this rock is worth a lot of money. How?

(Show the diamond) What if I told you that inside this rock is an amazing diamond. Only a trained eye might know the true value of this rock. What do you think of the value of the rock now? Why?

When we see the value in people (ourselves and others) it changes the way others look at them.

Q&A

- 1. Are people valued often only by what is seen?
- 3. Can a person loose value?

- 2. Do you feel valued only by what others see on the outside?
- 4. Can a person become more valuable?

Illustration—\$\$\$\$ Local Currency

Have 2 notes of local currency. 1st note—dirty old scrunched up (placed in the garbage bin earlier). 2nd note—crisp, flat, clean condition (Hidden away). Act surprised when you find the scrunched up note in the bin and ask the group what it is and what it is worth. Question them about it's true value as it has been thrown away, dirty and has probably done some pretty bad things.

When they assure you of it's true value, act excited and pull out your crisp clean note.

Ask them if this one is worth more as it has been kept clean and protected and has not done anything bad. (They will let you know both notes have the same worth). They may have done different things, be in different conditions and have had different experiences but they have exactly the same value.

People are to be valued in the same way. We have been created with priceless value. When something is priceless it cannot loose value or gain value no matter what.

You are priceless because you are who you are! Nothing will ever change that truth!

Story Bead

Each member of the group will be given a bracelet or leather strap and a bead added each chapter to represent the truth they have learned. Explain the meaning of each colour bead as you hand them out. For this first chapter give out the bands and the first bead. Then do the following activity. (This chapter is a clear diamond like bead representing value.)

Remind them as you hand them out that every life has equal value.





Activity—Missing in action

Tape each persons thumb and fingers tightly together on both hands, so that they cannot use their hands easily. Give them their story bead and have them thread their bead onto their bands. Take off the tape after a few minutes and use this to teach that sometimes we don't value something until we don't have it. (If you have someone who has lost a hand or limb they will understand the value of something they have lost and encourage them to value the functions they still have.)

Explain that this bead they have been given is a reminder of the fact that they are valuable and can never have their value taken away. Every life is priceless!!!

Story Keeper

Your story is worth writing well, It is also worth keeping.

Give each person their story keeper (Notebook). This is a place they can record the important things they want to add to their story. Things that are new to them, things that have meant something special to them or things they don't want to forget.



Throughout 'Story of Hope' they will be given opportunity to record in this book. It is theirs only and no one else's to read. They can write, draw, paste things in, use stickers or whatever creative way they want to remember important things. (Provide coloured markers, stickers, etc for them to use)

Give some time now for the group to record in their own way where they saw their value come from as they were growing up and how they have valued others. Challenge them to reflect on how that might have changed after what they have learned. They can also record anything they have learned or seen that they want to remember.

Chapter 2 My Unique Story

Resources – whiteboard, markers, pen and paper, building blocks, pictures of *people of the world, images/object for sale, price tags, , story bead (unique).

Review—My Life is my story. My Story is Priceless. Remind the group that they are priceless and their value can never be changed no matter what.

Introduction—You are unique and things that are unique are irreplaceable making them Priceless!

Activity—Someone like me!

Have the whole group participate. Get them to gather in groups of people starting at 1 then change to 2 etc

- 1. Same or similar hair type/style (e.g. long/short thick/thin straight/frizzy etc)
- 2. Same or similar height.

3. With the same shoe size.

4. Same or similar hand size.

5. Born in the same season (Summer, Autumn, winter, spring)

6. Same favourite colour.

(Make up as many as you have time for)

Ask if any 2 people were in the same group throughout the game. Use this activity to show the group how we can have similarities but we are all different.

Illustration—What makes up a human being?

Ask the group to tell you different things that make up a human body. As they call them out draw them up on the board. (Head, body, arms, legs, neck feet, hands ets.) Explain that we are a unique combination of these things, even down to our fingernails and eyebrows. (Encourage finer details, hair colour, eye shape, skin tone, facial features etc.) These are all physical attributes we can see with our eye's. What If you couldn't see your friends, how would you know who they are? (Voice, scent, laugh, etc) Now what are other things that make us up? (Personality traits, attitudes, sense of humour, sensitivities, temperament etc)

We are all made of a unique combination of all these things. ...and more.



^{*}resources at www.storyofhope.me

Illustration—building blocks

Have 3 different coloured building blocks. Use these to illustrate how each of us are made up of the DNA from both our parents. We have been uniquely designed to have the exact DNA to make up who we are. All those things that make up who we are as a person are built into the DNA we have. Unique only to us in all the world of people. Everything that makes us who we are is packaged in our DNA and our DNA is written on every cell in our bodies...like a name tag that is completely and totally our own.

We have been so UNIQUELY WONDERFULLY MADE for a unique purpose!!!

Activity—Happy and Sad

Explain how we are all different and feel differently about things. Because of this we might make someone sad when we are trying to make them happy. Others might make us sad and not even realise it. For example:-



- If we are made happy by kind words, we will probably feel really sad when people say hurtful words to us.
- If we feel happy when we spend time with people we love, then we will probable feel really sad when others don't have time for us.
- If we feel happy when we are given thoughtful gifts, then we will probably feel really sad when we have special things taken away from us.
- If we feel happy when we are hugged or given appropriate physical affection we will probably feel really sad when we are never hugged or given physical affection.
- If we feel happy when others help us with our jobs then we will probably feel really sad when we have to do everything ourselves.

We are all wired to feel happy in a unique way. It's important to not only understand ourselves but to understand what makes others around us happy and sad.

Hand out a small piece of paper and pens. Have each person write or draw what makes them happy and what makes them sad. (Put a smiley face next to happy and a sad face next to sad) Get them to put their name on the back of the paper and hand them in to the facilitator when done. The facilitator is to read them out one by one . As a group you are to guess who each one belongs to.

Illustration—Body Parts

Using the drawing on the whiteboard of what makes up a person, show again how there are many body parts, many we can't even see. Each part is different and has a different function but equally important. (Remember the activity from Chapter 1 with valuing our fingers and thumbs) BUT what if the eye decided it was sick of just looking and wanted to have a turn at talking. Or the ear wanted to smell all the amazing smells. (Draw an image—the eye where the mouth should be and the ear on the nose.) It would make a very mixed up person that doesn't function very well at all. The same thing happens when we compare ourselves to others. We are trying to fulfil a role that we have not been made for. We need to be the best us we can be, not try to be someone else.

People should inspire us and encourage us to be the best us we can be, but we need to remember we were never made to be them. We all have a different purpose and we need to make sure we live out the story we were made to live...not someone else's!



Just like there are different parts of the body there are different roles in every society.

Activity—Influential Roles

Divide the *Pictures of people of the world amongst the group. Have the group place these people in a line from least influential to most influential. Once they have done this ask them if all these people have the same value. Ask them if they are all needed in society. We are all uniquely, wonderfully made for a unique purpose and therefore priceless!

Our purpose is valuable not matter how big or small our influence! We are not things that can be replaced!

Activity—Which price is right?

Give the group pictures of various items including a house, car, jewellery etc (Include a pic of a girl and a boy). Have them place these items in order of monetary value from least to most. Have a enough blank price tags for each item. Have them guess the value. When they are done, ask them about the price tag for the girl or the boy. Use this opportunity to establish that **human life is not an object that should be bought or sold**. There is no monetary value that can be placed on a human life because we are priceless, irreplaceable valuable members of society.

*Resources at www.storyofhope.me

We are NOT ITEMS for sale!



When something is unique, it can never be replaced. It is Irreplaceable! It is priceless! You are Irreplaceable! You are priceless!

When something is priceless, a price cannot be placed upon it. It is not for sale!

We have each been uniquely, wonderfully made for a unique purpose!!!

Story Keeper

You have been uniquely, wonderfully made. Record what you like about your unique self. What you have seen or heard today that you want to remember and add to your life story!



Story Bead

Your story is unique.

Have an assortment of coloured and patterned beads for each member of the group to choose from. Allow each person to choose the unique bead they would like to add to their story band. Remind them that they have all chosen the bead they like uniquely. They can celebrate the choices of others and their own without comparing. They are unique and no price can be placed upon them!

Resources—*Images of healthy/unhealthy choices, ball, playdough x 3 colours, pictures/items for what's missing, priceless cube (or video clip) story bead (teal/purple)

Review—My life is my story. My story is priceless and unique. Because I am unique I am priceless and irreplaceable.

Introduction—As we have seen in the last chapter you have been uniquely, wonderfully made! When something is uniquely, wonderfully made it is of great value. When something is of great value you do everything you can to not only keep it safe but to also appreciate and care for it in the best way possible. You are irreplaceable! You are priceless!

Activity—Healthy Choices

Have 2 x 20 items (see resources on www.storyofhope.me) of healthy and unhealthy lifestyle choices. (you can use pictures of activities, food, drinks and lifestyles.). Split the group into 2 and have them separate the cards and/or objects into 2 groups. Healthy and unhealthy. They can race each other to make it more interesting. If you have time to you can ask each group to share with the whole group why they chose the cards they chose for unhealthy and healthy.



Q&A

(Using a soft ball throw to a member of the group and ask them the first question. Have them then pass the ball to another in the group until everyone has had a turn.)



1. What are some ways we can value and care for our physical bodies?

(You can use this time to teach personal hygiene, skin care, things we put into our bodies what we do with our bodies, seeking medical advice if necessary, personal safety and household safety if applicable.)

(if age appropriate share on sexual health and the transference of STI's and diseases. Illustration as follows)

^{*}Resources at www.storyofhope.me

Illustration—Colours stick

Explain how when 2 people are sexually active they are in the closest physical state they can be with another human (apart from pregnancy). Because of this there is a transference of cells. Use 2 different coloured playdough and squash them together. As you pull the playdough apart you should have residue of one colour on the other. Use a third colour to show that the colours are transferable. When that person has had the same interaction with another, cells can be passed on to you that you don't know about.



Explain that STI's and diseases are spread in this way. Even when precautions are taken cells are transferred. If you think you have contracted something you should seek medical advice no matter what the cost. You are worth caring for!

2. How can we stay safe around the home? (Use this time to teach basic safety ,Incorperate Electricity, poisons, gases, fire safety etc)



3. What are some dangers to people your age? (Allow them to answer and use these answers to discuss other ways you can stay safe and healthy)

Activity—What's Missing?

Have about 15 random items on a tray. Have the group take a good look at the items for a few minutes. Now have them look away and remove 5 items. Get them to guess what's missing. You can repeat this activity a few times.

Use this activity to discuss how things go missing in our lives. A shoe?... Might get lost. A car ?....Might get stolen. A house? ...Might be pulled down for a new one.



What about a girl? Maybe she is sick, runaway, movedshe could have even been stolen or sold.

4. How can you keep safe socially?

(Again choose friends wisely, be a good friend, be aware of your surroundings [avoid walking along looking at your phone] think about what's going on around you, use discernment, Stay alert [say no to substances that are mind altering] cover your drinks, Use this time to share the dangers of being drugged.

Don't give out too much information on social media. (Use this time to teach on internet safety)



5. What ways can we value our minds and our emotions? (Be deliberate about the things we listen to and watch, think about good things, learn new things, choose friends wisely, laugh, keep relationships healthy, prayer etc.)

Illustration—3 Needs

There are 3 basic needs all people around the world have.

1. Financial security

2. Education

3. Social and emotional security.







many

These are the 3 major areas pretenders will use to deceive people. Pretenders are men and women who use

ways to deceive people to gain control over their life story.

Job or career opportunities, romance, education opportunities, opportunities that seem too good to be true. These pretenders can even threaten the safety and security of those you love to gain control over your life story. But your story is your own! Your life story is valuable and is worth protecting and keeping safe. So are the lives of those around us.

Illustration—Priceless Cube

Priceless cube can be found at https://compass31.org/product/priceless-cube/ There is also a link to a video presentation you can download.



Story Keeper

Record ways you can value and protect your life story. Include some healthy choices you can make and ways you can keep yourself safe.



Story Bead

Purple bead representing that you are as valuable as any form of royalty and therefore worth protecting and keeping safe and healthy. Remind each member of the group they are priceless and need to value their story.



Resources—Random images and or objects to tell a story, whiteboard, markers, story bead (red)

Review—My life is my story. My story is priceless and unique. Because of this I will value and protect it!

Introduction—My story is mine to write. I am the only one that can choose how my story is written. Others may influence my story at times but I get to choose which direction it takes.

Activity—Tell me a story

Have the group sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle have a multitude of random objects and images. They have to choose 3 items each to use to add to the story you are going to tell as a group. As facilitator you start the story. Then each person is to use the 3 items they chose to continue the story you started until everyone has had a turn. (Example...(Picture of a house) I ran across the street to my neighbours house (Scarf) to borrow a scarf. (Picture of a dress) The only problem was that she didn't have a scarf so I borrowed some shoes.)

Illustration—What can influence my story?

Draw an image of a book with many pens on a whiteboard. On these pens or next to them record the answers given. Ask the question 'What can influence my life story?'



Give examples so they get the idea. (Natural disasters, romance, family, friends, hate, forgivness, abuse, violation, being deceived, being sold, being stolen....EMOTIONS)

Have the group identify those influences that are wanted and those that are unwanted.

Now have them identify the influences that we can choose and those out of our control.

Q&A

Some influences we choose for ourselves. Others we have no control over.



- 1. How can we write our own story when something or someone influences us without our choice. Eg. Being trafficked, natural disasters, death etc.
- 2. What can we do to bring our story back to the direction we want it in?

- 3. Are there things we can do to avoid unwanted influences?
- 4. How much do our emotions influence the direction of our story? Explain that our emotions are a very big part of the influences in our choices.

BE QUICK TO THINK.....SLOW TO REACT......SLOW TO RESPOND

Activity—Be quick to think!

Have the group stand in the middle of the room. They will be given 2 preferences. One preference will be on one side of the room and the other on the opposite side.

They need to choose immediately which side they will go to.

Examples of options might be :-

Summer/Winter

Rice/Noodles

Sweet/Sour

Birds/Fish

Dog/Cat

Cow/Goat

Sport/Music

Talking/Listening

Movies/Games

Fruit/Veg

You can make up as many as you need for the time you have.

Use this activity to explain that sometimes we need to be quick to think about a decision. Sometimes we don't really think about decisions we make in life, yet each decision will give direction to our story. For some decisions we have a lot of time to think about what we will choose and others we need to think quickly, just like the game. Thinking about decisions is like exercising muscles. The more we do it the stronger and better at it we become.

Use your intelligence when making decisions......things to think about ...

What is happening? What are my options? How will this affect my life story.? How will this affect other peoples life stories? What will the outcome be?

Illustration—Be slow to REACT

Its easy to use our emotions instead of our intelligence! We can get so emotionally high in a situation that we want to react without thinking about the situation.

Shake a fizzy drink and pretend to open it in the middle of the group. Ask them what would happen if you were to open it. Explain that once it has sprayed every where there is no way of taking it back. It's the same with our emotions. When we are emotionally high we can feel like we just want to explode...but what will happen if we do just explode? We will make a mess that will affect all the people around us, it will be difficult to clean up and we might say things we cannot take back.

Be Strong! It takes a lot of strength to think before reacting. Decision making is like a muscle. The more you use it the stronger you become. We need to be deliberate in our small daily decisions so when we need to make big decisions we are strong enough. Example decide how much water you will drink each day, don't just drink when your thirstyOur emotions are important but not our decision makers.

Our emotions are indicators!

Illustration—Car

If you are driving along in a car and the fuel light were to light up. What would you do? Would you get out of the car and leave it on the side of the road because your scared your not sure where it's going to run out?



Would you start yelling at the car for not having enough fuel?

Would you think about a solution to the problem that is being indicated?

Of course you would think about the indicator and what it is telling you. You are getting low on fuel so you would look for the nearest fuel station and put fuel in the car.

Our emotions are the same. They let us know something is not right. Or sometimes they let us know just how things are going. Our emotions can tell us many things and give us information so we can make educated decisions. When our emotions are high we can ask ourselves some questions so we can process them.

• Why am I feeling like this? What is the true feeling here?

How long have I felt like this?
 What has caused these feelings?

Sometimes the feelings we are having are not equal to the experience. If we react we might be sorry. If we think about it, we can stop and ask ourselves why we have such strong feelings? Where are these feelings really coming from?

Illustration—Be slow to RESPOND

Every decision we make will influence our story. It is so important to choose a helpful response to every situation that will have a good outcome for your story and others. We need to be able to work out what our choices are and in what direction those choices will take us. We want to write our own story and choose what will happen next and what direction we want our life to take.

Use a whiteboard to demonstrate how to make a mind map of choices.

• What direction do I want my story to take? What are my choices right now?

What are the possible outcomes of my choices?

How are these choices going to influence my story?

How are these choices going to influence others stories?
 What is the best response?

• How do I respond this way?

Every decision we make will impact our story., from choosing to brush our teeth everyday to choosing to forgive a wrong that has been done to us. (Show on the map how not brushing your teeth everyday might not affect us now but as we journey to where we want to get to it can be an expensive detour with the need of painful and expensive dental work.)

The great thing is that we have choices, this is our story to write. Even when others want to write it for us we still have the choices we can make. We get to choose what influences we allow to impact our story and which ones are limited. We have the power to choose influences in our lives.

Illustration—Boundaries

Having healthy boundaries in our lives not only values us, but helps other to know that we are valuable and so are they. Having boundaries gives us the choice of what influences we want and don't want to allow in our lives by choosing what we listen to and what we do. Boundaries protect our life story and other peoples life stories.



As we discussed in Chapter 3 when something is valuable you protect it. Setting boundaries protects us from damaging words or actions of ourselves and others.

Draw the image of a healthy boundary on a whiteboard.

Ask the group for some influences that they want to keep out of their boundaries. Write them outside the image of boundaries. (Negative words, substance abuse, violation, those things that lie about your value.) we need healthy boundaries to keep negative influences outside our boundary area.

Ask the group for some influences they want to allow into their boundary area and write them down inside the boundaries. (Education, encouragement, those things that affirm our value and the value of others.)

Discuss as a group ways to set boundaries to keep the unwanted influences out and the wanted influences in.

Note: We also need to remember to respect other peoples boundaries.

Activity—Break into small groups

Discuss the following scenario. (If you have a smaller group of less than 7 you can do this a one group)

You are working at a restaurant and your job is to take out the garbage. Your boss is away on a trip. You take out the garbage and your shift is over. The restaurant becomes unusually busy later that evening and the garbage has filled again. The boss comes home from his trip away and see's the garbage full and thinks you have not done your job. The next day when you come into work he is very angry with you and fires you immediately. You need this job because you want more than anything to become a teacher and this job is paying for your school fee's.

- 1. What do your **feelings** tell you to do?
- 2. What are your choices?
- 3. What will you choose to do?

(Keep in mind how much you need this job but also how important healthy boundaries are.) Ask a person from each group to share briefly.

Illustration—Story Map

As a group show on the story map how each response, option has a different outcome. Which is the best option with the best outcome to help you achieve your desired goal?

Story Keeper

Your story is yours to write! No one else's! You have the power to choose how your story will go! Record what you have learned or anything you want to remember about writing your own story.



Story Bead

Red Bead—Representing that fact that our emotions are an indicator and we have the power to choose to BE QUICK TO THINK, SLOW TO RESPOND, SLOW TO REACT!





Resources—String, scissors, whiteboard, markers, toothpaste, sheet of paper, matches, fireproof bowl. story bead (blue and white) **Review**—My life is my story. My story is priceless and unique. Because of this I will value and protect it. I will write my own story using my emotions as an indicator to help me choose and setting healthy boundaries.

Introduction—You story connects with many other stories. Your story is connecting and influencing my story right now and my story is connecting and influencing your story right now. If our stories connect with and influence other stories then we need to make sure we are adding something of value to each others stories.

Activity—All tied up



Give each person a length of string. Have one person sit in the middle of the group on a chair. (Choose someone who is confident, preferably one of your helpers, and prepare them for what the activity will contain.)

Explain to the group that words spoken have great influence. Others have said things to us that have influenced us greatly and we can feel like we are bound up because of those words.

One at a time have each member of the group speak out words that have been spoken to them that they have been influenced by in a negative way.

As they do this they are to tie the string to bind up the person on the chair as a representation of how words impact our live.

Once they have all had a turn get them to say words that counter the negative words spoken over them. For example if they have been told they are too short, they can respond that they are just the right height, wonderfully made unique for a unique purpose. As they speak out the truth that is life giving have them cut the string they tied the person up with.

Explain the effects of our words and how they affect us and others around us.

Illustration—The Farmer in the City (Story)

A farmer and his friend were in the City. It was during busy hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, motorbikes were revving their motors, people were yelling. The sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly the farmer said to his friend 'Do you hear that?'. 'Hear what?' his friend asked with a puzzled look on his face. There was so much noise. 'A cricket!' exclaimed the farmer. 'What? You must be hearing things.' said the friend. There was so much noise how could he possibly hear a cricket. 'No, I'm sure of it, I hear a cricket.' 'Your crazy!' said the friend.

The farmer closed his eyes and listened carefully and headed toward a large pot plant where some shrubs were growing. He looked I into the bushes, beneath the branches and sure enough, there was a cricket. His friend was completely shocked. 'That's incredible! You must have superhuman hearing!' 'No, my ears are just like yours.' The friend was quite confused. 'But I would never have heard that cricket.' The farmer decided he would understand better if he were to show him. He pulled a few coins out of his pocket and said 'Watch this.' Then with the noise of the crowded, busy city, as he dropped the coins on the footpath all the people within a 20 feet radius grabbed their pockets and looked to where the money had been dropped. He explained that it's not about the noise, it's about what your listening for.

We hear many things through our lives but we can choose what we listen to and allow to influence us.

We all want others to say only good things. We are valuable and want to be respected as we are valuable. We are all priceless, we are all unique. When we respect others we are telling them they are as valuable as we are.

We all want to be respected and valued! We all nfluence someone else even if we don't feel it or mean it.

Words we speak are so important. We can speak freedom or bondage, just like the activity earlier. Our words can be like honey or poison to others.

Illustration—Toothpaste

Ask for a volunteer to help. Get them to squeeze out the whole tube of toothpaste onto a sheet of paper. Then ask them to put all the toothpaste back into the tube. When they realise they can't, explain that our words, once they have left our lips are impossible to take back and our words influence others.

This includes words spoken on <u>social media</u>. Often we think that the things that we post on social media are different to the words we speak directly to a person but the effect is exactly the same to peoples hearts. When we respect others we respect their privacy and don't tell their stories or say hurtful or negative words to them or about them.

Illustration—Bitter or Sweet

We cannot control others and sometimes we are hurt badly by their words and actions. When someone hurts us we can choose to forgive them and set healthy boundaries. Even if they have hurt us badly we can still choose to forgive them.





Forgiving is not saying their behaviour is ok and neither is it a guarantee of an immediate healing of our pain but it stops that influence in our life story. If we choose not to forgive we can become bitter and that poison will influence every part of our life story and will influence all of our relationships, BUT we can choose to release that influence in our life by forgiving those who have hurt us. Share a personal story or give an example of the freedom of forgiveness.

Here is an example of forgiveness.

(Corrie Ten Boom and her sister were arrested and held in a concentration camp in Germany in the 2nd world was where her sister died due to ill treatment. This is part of her life story.)

Corrie Ten Boom Story on Forgiving" It was in a church in Munich that I saw him—a balding, heavyset man in a grey overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives. "It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land, and I gave them my favourite mental picture. Maybe because the sea is never far from a Hollander's mind, I liked to think that that's where forgiven sins were thrown. 'When we confess our sins,' I said, 'God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. ...' "The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room. "And that's when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. Betsie, how thin you were! [Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent.] "Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: 'A fine message, Fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!" "And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women? "But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood

seemed to freeze. "'You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,' he was saying, 'I was a guard there.' No, he did not remember me. "'But since that time,' he went on, 'I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein,' again the hand came out—'will you

forgive me?' "And I stood there—I whose sins had again and again to be forgiven—and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking? "It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. "For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses,' Jesus says, 'neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.' "I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that. "And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature silently. 'I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.' "And so woodenly, mechanicalof the heart. '... Help!' I prayed ly, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. "'I forgive you, brother!' I cried. 'With all my heart!' "For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely, as I did then"."

Activity - Choose to forgive.

This is an opportunity for each member of the group to choose to forgive. Invite each member to write or draw something to represent any offence they feel in their heart on a small piece of paper. (Make sure it is paper that will burn well) They can choose to step out, make the choice to forgive just like Corrie Ten Boom thrust out her hand. Even if you don't feel it you can choose it. You have choice unlike a river.



Have those who want to, walk forward and place their offences in a fire safe dish. Now burn the papers and as they are burning have them think about how they are choosing to forgive the person or people. (If you can't use fire you can tear them up and throw them in the garbage)

Explain that the choice to burn/destroy these pieces of paper may not take away all their pain but will release them to begin to heal. We may have a situation that we cannot change. Someone might be always inside our boundary area, someone we love, and we don't want their influence. We can step by step put in place boundaries that guard our heart and our value. We can choose to believe the truth about ourselves and make every effort to change the situation but still respect others. We can even speak out truth of other's value and uniqueness and perhaps bring a positive influence to their story. We were not meant to live life alone. We have been designed to live in community, to interact with one another's stories. We don't write other peoples life stories nor read or tell their stories without their permission but we certainly do influence their life stories.

Illustration—River junction

When 2 rivers meet there is influence from one to another. If one river has a lot of garbage in it, it will influence the other river. If one river has fresh clean water it will influence the other river. What kind of influence do you want to be.

Unlike rivers we can choose our path. We don't just have to take the path of least resistance like a river does.



We can choose the influences in our lives. Sometimes we spend time with people who are polluting our lives. Sometimes we are unable to change that path for the time being, but we can choose to bring clean water to the situation by speaking words of life and encouragement. We can choose what we listen to and believe. We can choose how much that influence directs our story. We can use our intellect over our feelings to choose.

What kind of influence do you want to be?

Do you want to be the one that brings garbage and pollution or the person that brings refreshing clean life, the one they will invite in to influence their life story?

You get to choose what kind of person you are and what kinds of people you want in your life story and just how much their choices will influence your story.

Activity—Break into small groups

Share in your group how your story has been made better because of someone else's influence in your life.

Story Keeper

Your story meets many stories...Record the influence you discussed in your small group and the difference it has made to your story and now record some way you can make someone else's story better.



Story Bead

Blue to represent that we influence one another's stories like when 2 rivers meet. It is a reminder that because we value ourselves and others we choose what influences we want and what kind of influence we will be.



Resources—sweets, bowl, milk, clear plastic cup or glass, water, large bowl, stones, whiteboard, markers, matches, 1 fake egg and 1 real egg, story bead (Yellow and/or clear)

Review—My life is my story. My story is priceless and unique. Because of this I will value and protect it. I will write my own story. **Introduction**—Make your story a true story. Walking in truth in every area!

Activity - Sweet truth

Hand out the bowl of sweets as you did when you were introducing yourselves. For each sweet you have to tell a truth about yourself. You have to add 1 untruth as well. So for example if you choose 3 sweets, you need to share 2 true interesting things about yourself and add 1 untruth. So you are telling 3 things, one not being true. Everyone is to guess which is the truth and which is not.



Honesty = Trust Q&A

- 1. If you tell the truth most of the time but not all the time will people trust you? (No you are not making it clear for people, they will not know when you are telling the truth or telling a lie)
- 2

- 2. Should you trust someone else who tells the truth only some of the time?
- 3. Why is trust so important? (Trust is the basis for safe relationships and a safe environment)
- 4. What are ways you can be honest and truthful without being vulnerable to everyone? (Don't need to tell everyone everything)
- 5. What are some ways others might try to deceive you? (False job offer, romance, holiday, education)
- 6. How can you tell if someone is not being truthful with you? (They might change the story, push you to make a decision quickly, get you to avoid asking others about it)
- 7. How can you find out if a person is likely to tell the truth or a lie? (Do they always tell the truth to others? Ask people that know them about the person's character, get as much information about the person and check it out)
- 8. What can you do if you see others being deceived? (Tell them the truth, tell others who are influential in their stories, tell a trusted authority)

Illustration – Seeing clearly

Use a glass of water with a couple of gems and small stones in the bottom as your illustration.

Explain that we can see clearly through the water and that the stones represent our faults and weaknesses while the gems represent our gifts and talents.



When we are honest we are transparent. Even though our faults may be seen by others we are transparent so others close to us can trust that what they see is what they are allowing to influence their story. We don't always have to tell our whole story to everyone but we always need to be honest!

Add enough milk to the water to make it unclear. (It doesn't take much)

When we tell half truths, exaggerate or outright lie we make it hard for people to trust us. When others are deciding what influences to allow into their story they need to know the kind of influence you will have on them.

If we allow influences in that we really don't know or are unable to see we can let some very damaging influences into our lives.

We don't want people to be sorry they allowed us to be part of their story either!

Now add clear water to the glass. If we continue to add clear water eventually the water becomes clearer and clearer. (This takes a lot of water)

It's the same when we have lost trust it takes time for it to come back but eventually it can be built back into your relationships if you always walk in truth.

What are some reasons for telling half truths, lies or exaggerating? What do these do to relationships? Honesty and transparency are more valuable to your life than trying to impress people with untruths or deception. We need trusting relationships to stay safe!

Illustration – Real or Fake

(If you can't use a fake egg you could make a fake rock out of foam or anything you think would work the same) Using a real egg and a fake egg explain that sometimes things are not what they seem. Have both eggs in a paper bag. Pull out the real egg and crack it into a bowl. Now pull out the fake egg and quickly throw it up in the air into the middle of the group.

Use this illustration to explain that some things are not as they seem. On closer inspection they will see for themselves that the egg is fake.

Let them know that the more information they have the more equipped they are to make good decisions for their lives.



Activity - Guess the body language

Sometimes what we hear someone say and what their intention is can be very different.

We have built into us the ability to communicate without words, otherwise known as "body language." By developing your ability to read the signs and signals of body language, you can more easily understand other people, and more effectively communicate with them.

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It's important we can see clearly how other people want to influence us. Some people use deception and try to influence our life or take control of our life story to benefit themselves. They don't understand that every person is unique and priceless!

What are some indicators in others that tell you what they are really thinking? (Behaviour, emotional reactions, reputation, responses, body language)

Have the facilitator or co-facilitator act out different intentions or emotions.

Angry, Sad, Nervous, Happy, Scared, In love, Deliberately trying to deceive/sell a false idea. (Perhaps use the fake egg)

We all have intelligence built into us, the ability to think and analyse, (Figure stuff out). When we are not sure or don't know someone very well or find them hard to read, we need more information. Information is what we use to analyse.

We need to think clearly, Remember be quick to think, slow to react, slow to respond, get as much information as possible so we can tell if we are seeing clearly.

Don't be forced into a quick decision!!!!

Q&A

- 1. How do we get information? (Ask for more information from the person, read their body language when you ask them questions,)
- 2. Who can we ask about people that we don't know well? (People that know them, contacts they may have given, head office of the company they say they work for, search out independent resources for information on the issue at hand)
- 3. Who can we ask for advice from? (your family and trusted friends. What they think is important even when your emotions might say something else. Keep them informed of all your decisions and listen to them.)

Remember There are 3 basic needs all people around the world have.

- 1. Financial security
- 2. Education
- Social and emotional security.

These are the 3 major areas pretenders will use to deceive people. Pretenders are men and women who use many ways to deceive people to gain control over their life story.

That doesn't mean that every opportunity is not safe but you always need more information about opportunity offers. You also have instinct. This is a deep feeling inside you that something is not right (Sometimes our emotions can get in the way of this though) We do still have a certain amount of discernment. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN and your heart guarded....If you have a suspicion that someone is deceiving you or others don't ignore it...for yourself and for others. **Get more information!**

Activity – Learning trust

Blindfold a member of the group. There should be obstacles put in their path as they are to directed to the other side of the room by 2 different people. One person is to give directions that make them bump into the obstacles. The other is to give directions that get them around the obstacles. After the first or second obstacle the blindfolded person should be able to tell who is being truthful and who wants to cause them to stumble. (You can give other members a turn depending on time)



Once they get to the other side of the room have them remove the blindfold and make their way across the room avoiding the obstacles. Explain that when we can see the situation clearly we can easily avoid any of the obstacles. Now you have all the information. There are those in our life who want the best for us. They are people we can trust will give us advice that is intended to help us even if we don't like it.

There are those who only care about their own story and don't care if we stumble. They will give us advice that will make us stumble. A tree is known by it's fruit!

True information is just like this! Truth exposes lies and deception. Truth sets us free! If we know that someone is trying to cause others to stumble or rob them of their story we should let others know so that others have the truth too.

Activity - Break into small groups

Discussion questions:-

- 1. If we were designed to live in community and community interacts with each other, do you think when we see someone else being undervalued or deceived that we should do something to help them?
- 2. What can we do to help them? (We can go to a trusted authority or help that person see the truth. We can help them see the value of their unique story and how it is worth protecting.)
- 3. Does the truth protect you and others? Why?
- 4. Tell the group of a time you were deceived and how it made you feel.

Story Keeper

Record how truth can set you free and protect you and others! Record any other points that you want to remember from this session!



Story Bead

Yellow and clear to remind us that trust and truth are important values in our lives to help to keep us safe. We and others arounds us are priceless and unique, irreplaceable so therefore worth keeping safe.

Remember to Live a TRUF STORY!

Chapter 7 Designer Storyline.

Resources—Jigsaw's, gift, seed, coloured markers, story bead (green/brown)

Review—My life is my story, my story is priceless and unique. Because of this I will value and protect it. I will write my own story thinking of others. I will live my life in truth.

Introduction—You are uniquely, wonderfully made and have been designed that way for a unique purpose.

Activity—Jigsaw

Have the group split into 2 groups. Give them a simple jigsaw puzzle of the same size. Make it a race to put together the jigsaw puzzles.



Use this activity to explain that some of our gifts and talents are like a jigsaw puzzle that need deliberate choices, they need to be developed through training, discipline and using them. Just like the jigsaw puzzle. For example:- Singing, drawing, athletics, music, writing, painting, sewing. Some are like a Gift (show the gift). They are the things we are born with that are ready to be used from birth. We often display these things from when we are very young. They too can be refined but more to suit specific needs in our lives For example:- Teaching, encouraging, leading, serving, compassion, etc.

Illustration—Gifts, Talents and Dreams

Using the example of a tree. (You can draw this on a whiteboard as you discuss) The trunk and branches represent our gifts and talents and our dreams are what we are reaching for with our gifts and talents. The fruit that grows is the product of the use of our gifts and talents and the impact it has on others.

We are all unique and have been created with a unique set of talents, gifts and dreams. The gifts and talents we have been born with we use to fulfil our unique dreams. These are what we reach for so we can grow tall and produce much fruit. We have a deep desire to

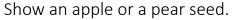


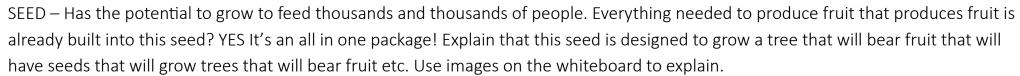
achieve certain things or see certain things accomplished in and through our lives. For example:- To see a better traffic system in your town, to see the homeless given a home, to see a better justice system in your area, to build a business, to fly planes, to write books etc.



Our specific, unique set of gifts, talents and dreams have been planted in us so we can write the story only we can write to make a difference in our world. The perfect combination for the unique purpose of our lives is already planted within us. The better developed your talents and well used your gifts the stronger and healthier the tree and the more fruit will be produced.

Illustration - Fruit seed





Unlike Genetically modified foods. They are designed to grow tree's that bear fruit quickly. The problem with GM fruits is that they are like a mule. They bear fruit for the immediate use only. The fruit is unfruitful. When we use our gifts and talents just for our ow benefit it becomes like GM fruit. Only producing fruit for the immediate satisfaction.

If this seed is going to fulfil its ultimate potential and produce fruit that will produce fruit it needs to THRIVE, not just survive.

NEEDS – to be positioned in a good environment, live a healthy lifestyle, have healthy boundaries, allow good influences in and protect your life from negative influences, develop and use your gifts and talents, allow yourself to dream.

YOU - Have the potential to change your world and bless others with your gifts and talents. To bring your unique influence to the world and live out the story you were made to live. Like the seed. You were designed to bear fruit that will bear fruit. Your gifts and talents are for yourself and for others.

Q&A

If your not sure what your gifts and talents are there are some questions you can ask yourself.

1. What do you like doing in your spare time?

- 2. What are you good at naturally?
- 3. What are you passionate about and want to see happen or changed?
- 4. What do you do easily?

5. What do others say you are good at?

- 6. What do you get excited about and like talking about to others?
- 7. What do you desire to learn more about or how to do?
- 8. What gives you energy when you do it.?

Based on the above questions, what are your GIFTS TALENTS & DREAMS

(When you are young you may not realise the gifts and talents you have within you. Some great advice would be to try lots of things that appeal to you. Do this while you are young and as you find what you are gifted and talented in you can then focus on what you were made to do.) Some gifts can be hidden. For example you may have a gift of hospitality but be an introverted person. You still have this gift and if you use it when you can it can bear fruit that bears fruit.

Activity - Sow a seed

Give each participant a paper cup filled with soil, a seed to plant and provide water.

Encourage discussion as they do this activity around what environment will help the seed to grow and the plant to fruit. How does this relate to their lives.



Activity - Break into small groups

Use the questions above for the group to ask each other. Get them to discuss what each others gifts are.

Story Keeper

Hand out a seed to each member of the group. Get them to stick the seed on the bottom centre of a page in your story keeper. Draw the fulfilled purpose of that seed filling the page. Use the illustration of the trunk being the gifts, the branches being the talents. Use your imagination and make it as creative as you can. Create whatever fruit you want on your plant.



Record on your tree what your gifts, talents are.

Story Bead

Green or brown bead to remind them of the potential within them and that they can thrive and fulfil their unique purpose with the gifts, talents and dreams already in them.

Chapter 8 Today for Tomorrow

Resources—Coloured markers, stickers, magazines or printed pictures, glue stick, DVD clip of Derek Redmond, Olympic runner, laptop or DVD player, whiteboard, markers, story bead (shiny metalic)

Review—My life is my story, my story is priceless and unique. Because of this I will value and protect it. I will write my own story thinking of others. living my life loud and true so I can live the story I was made to live.

Introduction—Today is the first day of the rest of your life story! Your choices today will impact your story of tomorrow. So...what do you want in your story for your tomorrows?

Activity - If I could I would...

If I had UNLIMITED RESOURCES I would... If I were GIFTED AND TALETED enough I would.... Using the whiteboard record the answers called out to these questions. Use this activity to draw out the ambitions and dreams of the group for their future story. Encourage them to dream BIG!

Q&A

Is it possible to achieve any of these things? How can you achieve these things? Even though some things seem impossible, should we work toward them anyway? What could happen if we do, what could happen if we don't?



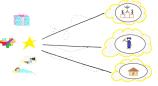
Illustration – Plan Map

Working out what your gifts, talents and dreams are is an important part of the rest of your story. You need to make a plan to position yourself so your gifts and talents can thrive, so your story is written how it was meant to be written and how you want it written. Using the whiteboard help to devise a plan map for their story. (Using the plan map from chapter 4) including their gifts and talents and more than 1 dream. Encourage them that though every dream they have may not be fulfilled their story is a journey of experiences, using their gifts and talents to fulfil dreams and discovering new ones along the way.

How do you want your life story to go?

What do you want the next chapter of your story to contain?

If you know where you want your story to go you can reroute when you have unexpected, unplanned influences to your story. You can also make your everyday decisions, keeping in mind the direction you want your story to take.



e.g. If you want to be a pilot someday, you will decide to study instead of play, you will go to bed early so your mind is alert, you will do everything you can to pass your exams so you can study further to become the pilot you want to be. You will keep yourself safe and sound and surround yourself with good friends. Set good boundaries around your life.

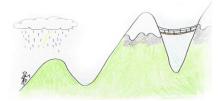
The lines are the plans we can make to reach our desired dreams or goals. Sometimes they work out differently to when we start and obstacles appear in our way. We need to reroute to get back on track not loosing sight of the dreams we have for our lives. Sometimes our ambitions change and that's ok. Our desires for our future are all linked to our gifts, talents and dreams. It's our unique design. Sometimes we just need to start heading toward a goal to find what we are designed for.

Illustration – Resilience

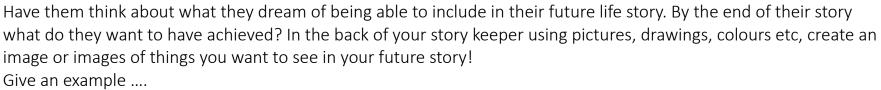
There are many obstacles that come up in life to hinder us from our dreams and goals. During these times we need resilience and persistence. What do these mean?

Use an inspiring story or video clip of resilience. A great example of resilience is the video clip of Derek Redmond, Olympic runner who ran his race even when it cost him extreme pain.

Being resilient and persistent mean that you don't give up even when it all seems lost, when you keep getting knocked off course you continue to reroute even when it is painful to do so. It means you get back up when everything in you wants to give up.



Activity - The End





Story Keeper

In your Story Keeper create a plan map for your future story, thinking about which gifts and talents would be required for those dreams you have placed at the end of your Story Keeper. Which talents need to be developed further and what could your next step be from today? What everyday decisions will affect your plans? Dare to dream big!

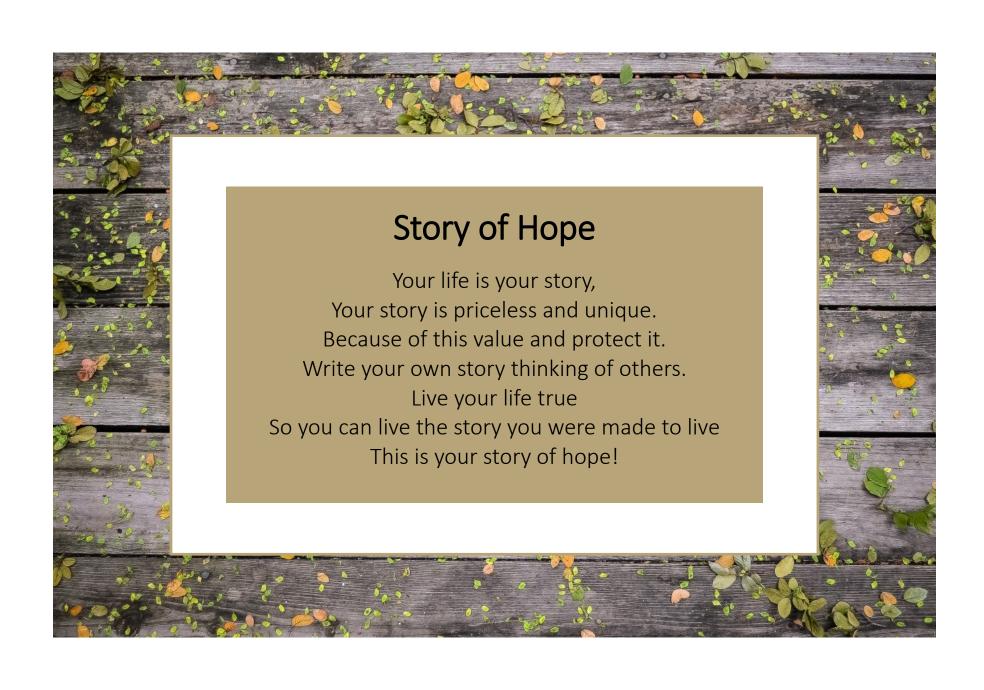


Story Bead

Metalic – Reminding us that we may not see what is in our future, but we have the strength and choice to write to write our own life story that we were made to live!



THE END THE BEGINNING OF THE REST OF YOUR STORY STARTS HERE!



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Other Helpful Resources

Story of Hope manual downloads and links www.storyofhope.me

E3 Resources—Priceless Cube https://compass31.org/product/priceless-cube/