**SOW FORTH –**

**HOW TO CRAFT YOUR STORY OF THE WEEK (S.O.W.)**

For the sake of time, I am going to assume that if you are reading this, you already understand the value of the Story Of the Week practice or are at least *open* to trying this out and don’t need to hear much from me as to WHY you might want to do this but rather **HOW** to do it with the greatest ease and for the most benefit so you can do it as regularly as possible.

I will just remind you that The Story of The Week is the centerpiece of my approach to help you feed your spark. It is a practice to help you focus on *creating* the experiences that matter most to you and then on *shaping* *your narrative* so you can celebrate and remember what is best and useful in your life and let go of the rest. It is geared towards helping you live what matters most, live lyrically, live the gratitude attitude, live your best story and live connected.

What did you experience during this past week that you really want to SOW in the garden of your life, so to speak?

The most important thing about your story of the week is that it is part of a *practice.* As such it really helps to do it every week or at least several times a month, so it really has to be something you can do with ease and flow.

These stories do not need to be perfect and should not be. You will say “um” and “er” and that is fine. It is an imperfect, organic form and I really want it to stay that way. It needs to be something you can do in ten to fifteen minutes, not an hour and a half or you won’t do it for more than a few weeks. I have seen many people try that and I don’t hear stories from those folks any more.

I have shared with you before that I want anything and everything you do with me to feel like *play* not *work*. This is particularly true with the Story Of the Week. Whenever I hear someone saying “I have been working on my story of the week, I get concerned. I do not want you to regard this as a “to do”; I want you to experience it as an invitation to be in conversation.

Also, it is a *verbal* form. This not only enables you to do it in less time but it gives it an immediacy and an intimacy that the written form cannot. You will only do it if it is easy, not time consuming. If you REALLY want to write it out and the writers among you might, that is fine.

Honestly though, I do not even recommend listening back to your story or you will feel (as I do most of the time) like you need to re-do it and you will never end up posting it. This is just an audio snapshot of a moment. This gives it its intimacy and its value for you and its power. Speaking from the heart about what is inside you also helps get this story a little more inside you so you can “remember this.”

Here is my STEP BY STEP guide. There are ten steps. The first four have to have happened BEFORE Friday afternoon (or whenever you craft your SOW, or you will not be crafting a SOW, you’ll just be telling a story. Which is ok, too!

**Step 1. Generate Your GLI**

Craft your own Good Life Index by articulating what you want to experience each month to feel like your life is on track (what is truly important and what is enough?) If you have already done one with me, check in to refresh it and make it real. A huge part of the S.O.W. is about being accountable at the end of the week to share a story out of your GLEE and to therefore stay focused DURING the week on what matters most to you.

**Step 2. Put On Your Gleeses Each Morning**

Review your GLI each morning to remember what you are aiming at so you can look for ways to create GLEE out of whatever presents itself to you.

**Step 3. Gather Your GLEE**

Try to jot down some very rough notes once or twice a day to reflect the moments you feel most alive and are living what matters most to you from your Good Life Index and tuck them in to your Good Life Experience Envelope (GLEE) for safekeeping.

**Step 4 Track Titles**

Listen throughout the week for words or phrases you hear spoken that seem distinctive to you. Maybe a song lyric, something on the side of a bus.

Keep a running list of these somewhere in a way that will enable you to find the list easily. For example, “Thin Cover and Bare Spots,” “No Green Trails.”

**Step 5 Go Over Your Glee**

Once a week –preferably on Friday afternoon before you leave work-- review your GLEE and enjoy the “Afterspark” that you will hopefully feel as you see how full your life is now that you are aiming each day at the experiences that are truly important to you.

**Step 6 Start With Significant Developments**

Write down any significant developments from the week (one part of this can be to consider the most *emotionally resonant moments* as a hint to help you find your SD, even if these were more “Story Material” than GLEE).

For example,

Watched Tsadia go to the emergency room

Heard that my mom was going to the emergency room

Heard that the surgery on my Achilles was still “intact”

Did a ton of prep for ALIGN 2016.1

Drove to ALIGN against doctor’s orders

**Step 7 Build Your BJQ**

BEFORE you start recording, even before you choose a title, you should get clear on what the ***Big Juicy Question*** or insight is that you are raising for yourself (and for others listening) to consider out of your Significant Developments.

*For example, “How do you know when to focus on trying to change the “externals” in your life –like your job or relationship --and when to just try to shift your perspective and narrative?*

***The significant development and the Big Juicy Question should both be explicitly stated within the first thirty seconds of your post. Usually, right after your first sentence!***

**Step 8 Try On A Title**

Give your story the hook and lyricism by looking through your list of possible titles of Story of The Week you tracked and find some of the best ones. See if any of those make sense with any of your significant developments and BJQs. Is there a title that might thematically connect two or three of your sparkiest moments when you felt most alive with some moment of Story Material?

Then do a gut check to ask yourself is THIS really THE story of my week this week? That is, does this vision of your SOW with the significant development(s) of your week chosen, Big Juicy Question and title, really *capture the essence of this week in your life*? If the crafting of this story really did help you to “remember this” and intentionally carry forward the memory of at least a few of the experiences from this week and some insight from the week in the context of a story, would that capture what was most distinctive about this week of your life?

**Step 9 Build Your Beginning and Your End**

Decide on how you want to start the story with a distinctive, catchy topic

sentence and perhaps how you want to end it. Some of you might get clearer about how you want to end it only when speaking but come in for a landing with a clear ending, don’t just peter out.

**Step 10 Review And Record**

Look again at the two or three moments you have decided to share and the juicy question and then press record and talk for five to seven minutes, hopefully opening with your engaging topic sentence.

Please keep your story to under seven minutes. All the SOWs should be easy and engaging for people to listen to. Not all stories have to have dramatic tension but if you don’t have dramatic tension and/or some *really* interesting insights, it is all the more important to keep them short!

SOW Forth. Let’s hear from you soon, please.

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