

Why These Stories for Shalvah Means Serenity

Because I write stories. When you write, play, dance, sing, paint, generally there is no reason for it or if there is a reason it's buried deep and may be the very engine of creativity and you don't want to mess with that.

Also because serious challenges call for imaginative responses. The next careful response is circled by the stories. Everybody feels the pressure of the time.

So here we are, a threshold moment, we descend or ascend and sitting next to us on a bench or on a rock is God or nature or one of the prophets or Prince or a prince or whatever it is you believe in that takes you beyond the silences and darkness and danger and complacency.

We became frustrated asking others to help spread the message. Most of the time we sat with it's a matter of attraction not promotion and then someone went dark on our watch and we became impatient.

I wrote the stories because I can and because confidentiality does not mean secrecy. At this time secrecy is part of the problem. We could be more out loud about our struggles because it will help someone else. We change the names to protect the innocent.

I pull stories out when I'm asked to give a talk or do a program and I share them in places where I think there are people who understand and in places where I think people will not understand. Which place is this.

In my community, we are good at congratulating ourselves. We do not congratulate ourselves on these subjects. There was a huge opening in my location and we drove a truck into it with just a few strategies and nothing fancy. We started talking writing teaching singing about suffering.

Our purpose is to teach and inspire. There is so much room for good work in these spaces.

Our purpose is also to save lives. We don't say it much because it sounds too heavy for what we are doing, at one time around tables and now with Zoom, we are laughing and eating cookies and drinking tea and teasing, but that is what we are doing:

We are saving lives.

jsg

for Shalvah means serenity meeting Mondays and Thursdays, 7 PM working the drug and alcohol jones

For Shande means shame there is none, meeting Sundays, 1 PM, riding the mental health continuum

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