

STORY

Mary King threw the strand of pearls on her bed, her eyes blazing with anger. “My mother! My stupid, stupid mother! How can she do this to me?” Tomorrow was her graduation from high school and she had spent the day at the lake with her friends. They had each told about the presents their parents had bought them for graduation. How could she face them and tell them she had been given this old string of beads?

And that wasn’t the worst of it. While her friends had all been out shopping with their moms for new outfits to wear, her mom had handsewn a plain, simple dress and now she expected her to wear this necklace with it. It was just humiliating.

As Mary dressed for bed, she noticed an envelope on the top of her dresser. It was from Mr. Morse. Mr. Morse had been like a father to Mary. She and her mother had lived in his home for as long as she could remember. He had often given her gifts. “At least I bet there’s a check in here,” she thought to herself.

But as she tore open the envelope, there was no check. Just a long letter. .

She sat on her bed and started to read.

Dear Mary,

I had planned on giving you a check for your graduation, but that can come later. I was at the lake a couple of days ago when you were there with your friends and I couldn’t help but overhear what you were saying to them. You wished your mother’s face was pretty like your friends’ mothers instead of all red and cross looking. You wished her hair was thick and curly like theirs instead of thin and stringy. And you complained about how embarrassing it was to go anywhere with her because her one foot dragged a little when she walked and you thought it made people stare.

That’s when I knew that what you needed more than a check, was a story.

Mary rolled her eyes. “Has everyone gone crazy around here?” But she continued to read.

Many years ago, a young couple moved into town. Everyone loved them and they could tell how much they loved each other. The bride was so pretty and had such a bright smile that everyone was drawn to her. But being in a small town, it wasn’t long until the townspeople came to know their story.

The husband was the son of a wealthy mill owner in a nearby city in eastern Pennsylvania. His father had picked out the girl he thought his son should marry. She was from one of the other prominent, rich families. When his son refused and insisted on marrying this other girl, the father disowned him; told him he’d never get another cent from him.

The two moved to a nearby town to start a new life. The husband hadn't ever had to work before and wasn't used to hard labor, but he willingly grabbed any job that would take him. And she worked hard, too. Bit by bit they saved enough money to build a little house on the hill, and they were very happy.

Then one day there was an accident. The scaffolding the husband was standing on collapsed beneath him. His coworkers carried his bruised and bleeding body to their little home and laid him on the bed. That very night a little girl was born to them. Oh, how he fought to live for that little girl, but after a short time, he was gone.

The father-in-law, still bitter at the girl because he blamed her for taking his son away from him, sent word that he would take the child and raise her as his own. She would lack for nothing, only the mother was never to have contact with her again.

The mother sent back word: "I love her too much. I will find a way to provide for her."

And she did. She continued to work every job that came her way. Eventually she was offered a position as a teacher of young children. The job included room and board at the school for her and her little daughter. And they were very happy there.

Then, one day, when the little girl was about 3, the mother was downstairs reading a book when she heard a cry that struck terror in her heart. "Fire! Fire in the west wing!" That's where her little girl was! She threw down the book and flew up the stairs, two and three stairs at a time. By the time she reached the third landing, the smoke was curling down the hall from the bedrooms. She dropped to the ground and felt her way through the smoke.

Minutes past when firefighters on the main floor saw a figure stumble down the stairs. Her face, hands and feet were badly burned. All her hair was gone. In her arms she was carrying a bundle wrapped in a quilt, and from her hand dangled a strand of pearls. "I'm badly hurt," she whispered, "but I have rescued my two greatest treasures. Please keep them safe for me," and she collapsed to the ground.

For weeks she writhed in agony. No one expected her to live. But she was fighting to live for that little girl. Slowly, she started to heal. And then one day word came to her again from the father-in-law: Give me the child and I will raise her as my own. She will lack for nothing. Again word was sent back: I love the child too much. I will find a way.

Mr. Morse continued. "That's when I stepped in. I built a large home far enough away from the town so that no one would know what had happened and you and your mother have lived here ever since. I have watched your mother find work to do with her hands, even though they were stiff and painful to use. Many a time I passed her room and found her on her knees pleading for strength. I watched her carefully save every penny so that you could go to college.

I wanted to tell you these things, but she made me promise to never tell you. She said it would kill her to have your pity. She wanted you to love her just for who she was. But when I heard

you talking to your friends like that, I just couldn't keep silent any longer. Now you must never tell her that I have told you.

Sincerely,
A.E. Morse

Mary sat in stunned silence. And then hot tears started flowing down her cheeks. How could she have been so selfish? All this time, she thought it was Mr. Morse that was sending her to college. No, it was her mother. All those times that she was embarrassed that her mother always wore the same homemade dress...she was saving for her.

Dear God, please forgive me, she whispered.

She now heard her mother's familiar shuffle coming towards her room. Somehow it didn't annoy her this time. Her mother knocked on the door.

"Mary, is everything OK?"

Mary remembered her promise to not let her mother know she knew, so she hurried to wipe the tears from her face.

"Oh, come on in! I guess it's just the excitement of the graduation and everything tomorrow.... Mother...the pearls....they're beautiful. Have you had them long?"

"Oh, yes. I've had them for many years. Your father gave them to me. He had to work so hard to earn them. I love every pearl on that string. I saved them for you once in the long ago because I wanted you to have something that he had earned for us."

Mary could hardly speak. She gently wrapped her arms around her mother and held her close as she whispered, "Truly, I have the most beautiful mother in all the world."

It was more than 50 years ago that I heard this story. I couldn't have been more than 7 or 8. It made such an impression on my heart that every time I saw a pearl necklace, it made me think of this story. I remember clearly the little book my Sunday School teacher read it from. In fact, everytime I saw a little book of stories, I would open it up looking for the story again.

I'm going to come back to this story of the pearls, but I want to push a little pause button to share an experience I had while I was working on the Forgotten Classics Family Library I have told you about. I learned so many things I had never known before and was anxious to share them with families. But I ran into a problem. How do you make old books with no pictures appeal to children who aren't reading so much anymore; who are used to flashy video games and entertainment? I knew the rich, beautiful language they used could be a barrier to many children.

I pondered over this for many months. And then one day when I was out in Utah visiting my mother, I was heading out the door to go out to dinner when I had a feeling that I can best describe as how you feel when someone walks up to you and says, excitedly, "Come here for a

minute... I want to show you something.”

So I slipped downstairs to get on to the computer for a minute and went on Internet Archive where I spend most of my time. I said out loud, “I don’t know what I’m looking for!” and then a keyword came into my mind that I entered in. A long list of books came up and I started scrolling through them until I came to one title that seemed to jump out at me. It wasn’t a particularly interesting title; it was “The Use of Story in Religious Education” by Margaret Eggleston. I started reading and immediately knew this was the answer I was looking for. Before I went to bed that night, I discovered there had been a revival in the art of storytelling about a hundred years ago for the very purpose I was looking for—to warm and open up the hearts of children so they want to learn more. I found a whole circle of warm-hearted storytellers and educators who started teaching me how to reach the hearts of children.

Opportunities started coming to me to share what I was learning and as I taught about restoring the art of storytelling in our homes, I found the stories that I most often told and that made the deepest impressions were Margaret Eggleston’s, such as this one:

One day Margaret went to visit a friend and when she walked in the front door, she could hear her friend’s six year old son, John, upstairs kicking, and screaming and throwing things. The mother explained that he had disobeyed her one time too many and had been sent up to his room without his supper. Margaret asked if she could go upstairs and see if there was something she could do. The mother didn’t think it would do any good but agreed to let her try.

As she entered the bedroom, she found John curled up in a heap at the foot of the bed. He didn’t even look up at her. She sat herself down on the floor and proceeded to say, “I think I’ll tell you a story. You needn’t listen of course. Away up in the far north where it is very, very cold, there lived a little boy who had a sled. Now, he didn’t pull this sled with a rope. Oh, no. He hitched it up to four little dogs and how they would fly over the snow.” By this time, John was facing her and had stopped kicking.

Slowly and quietly, the storyteller unfolded the story of little Jimmy Standby of Labrador who had stood by the dogs all through the night and the day in the bitter cold because he had promised Dr. Grenfell he would stand by. As the story progressed, John crept closer and closer to her until he had crawled up in her lap, his face eagerly looking into her face as he followed Jimmy Standby to the very end.

When Margaret stood up to leave, John said, “Please, will you ask my mother if I can come downstairs for just a moment? There is something I need to tell her.” After some coaxing, the mother agreed and John, with his dirt-streaked little red face, came down the stairs and walking right up to his mother said, “She has told me a nice story and I want you to know I’m going to have a name like his. I’m going to be Jimmy Standby, too.”

And he walked upstairs like a man.

When Margaret was asked if storytelling really made a difference, she answered the question

with this story:

One day she told a story to a group of adolescent boys among which was a sort of rebel. She didn't think he was paying any attention to the story. It was a story of a young boy who had a job sweeping up a bank at closing time. As he went to empty one of the trash cans, he noticed a large roll of money that had accidentally been thrown away. As he held it in his hands, he thought how much this money would mean to his family. His father was a drunk who spent most of what he earned on drinking. The little bit of money this boy brought home went toward food for his little crippled sister and his mother who was very ill. The doctor had told him that if he didn't find a way to get medicine for his mother and move her out to the country where she could get fresh air, she probably wouldn't live past the fall.

He looked around and saw that no one had noticed him, so he slipped the money in his pants pocket and headed home. Along the way, the money felt heavier and heavier in his pocket. He moved it first to his outside jacket pocket and then to the inside pocket. But the closer he got to home, the heavier the money felt until he at last realized he just couldn't keep the money.

He headed back to the bank where a security guard let him in. He marched straight to the bank president's office, knocked on the door, walked in and threw the money across the desk to the president, explaining how he had come by it. The president looked surprised. "Son," he said, "I know how much this money would mean to you and your mother. No one knew you had it. Why did you bring it back?" Without hesitating, the boy leaned across the desk, and looking straight into the eyes of the president said, "Sir, as long as I live, I have to live with myself and I don't want to live with a thief."

That was the story. There had been no particular reaction to it and Margaret lost contact with this young man until years later when she received a letter from him. He was now a soldier fighting on the war front in France. As she opened it, she read, "Years ago on a wet and rainy day when the ice was dangerous on the sidewalk, you came and told a story to a group of boys. I don't remember the details of the story, but I remember how it ended: "As long as I live, I have to live with myself and I don't want to live with a thief." That one story has kept me from lying and stealing and from being a coward. And here in France, it has kept me true to my manhood. I have a class here in the barracks—I know that may be hard to believe—some of my men need that story. I want it for all of them for all that I am, I owe to that one story and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

There was another story Margaret told that I loved, but there was something about the story--I couldn't put my finger on it...something I was understanding just wasn't right. She had reluctantly included it in the final chapter of her book. Although she had told the story several times, it was of such a personal nature that she didn't feel comfortable putting it out there for just anyone to read. Yet, she felt she should include it.

She had happened to step into a Sunday School class one day where the young men in the class had been grilling the teacher – Does anyone really know there is a God? He had exhausted all his answers but had not satisfied them. Margaret looked into their sincere and eager faces and said,

“Boys, yes, I do know there is a God. If you’ll come back next week I’ll tell you how I know.”

The next week all the boys were there plus a few extra as she unfolded this story:

Some years previous, her father, as I understood, had been diagnosed with a serious illness. The doctor said he needed to be out in the fresh country air, undisturbed by anyone or anything. He needed quiet. It was decided that they would head to a campsite in Maine where she had already spent several summers. They took with them ‘a little girl of 7’. I wasn’t sure who she was...maybe a little sister or a helper.

Over the next several weeks, the father seemed to be doing a little better. The flowers were in full bloom and they picked fresh blackberries that grew in abundance in the hills around them. And then one day, he took a turn for the worse. The doctor was sent for from the nearest town 20 miles away. He left them with some medicine and went on his way. It seemed to give some relief and they had all gone to sleep when Margaret heard some noise at the flap of the tent. The doctor had returned. He quickly explained that the blood work had shown there was a poison that had spread throughout the system of the sick one and the medicine he had left wouldn’t do any good. It was a very serious situation. The doctor gave her new medicine and told her she would have to administer it every 15 minutes throughout the night. But even with that, he said death could come at any moment. He could only stay a little while because he had other patients to tend to.

Margaret stood at the opening of the tent and watched his lamp fade away into the forest. And she was alone again.

She began to administer the medicine as she had been instructed. In between dosages, she tried to write letters, but her hands were shaking too much. She tried to read, but she couldn’t concentrate. It was now the middle of the night. She stood at the opening of the tent, wrapping both hands around the pole, bracing herself against the night breeze. For the first time in her life, she was afraid. Really afraid.

The moon shone on the lake before her and reflected on the hills on the opposite shore. As she looked out into the stillness of that scene, the same words that came to the Psalmist came to her mind: “I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth. The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord shall preserve thee.” The words came again, only this time she repeated them softly, aloud. “I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.” But this time as she spoke the words, a peace and a comfort filled her whole soul and the fear completely left her. She felt strengthened to face the hard things.

Finally, the morning broke and death had passed them by.

After a pause, she quietly said, “Boys, that’s why I know there is a God.”

And they were satisfied.

Well, remember how I said I have been looking for the story of the pearls for over 50 years? A couple of years ago I happened to be in a thrift store and I found a little book of stories. I opened it, and there it was! I was so excited to find it that I stood in the aisle and read it right there. It was exactly as I had remembered. What I didn't expect and what caught me completely by surprise was that at the end of the story, it said, 'by Margaret Eggleston.'

Shortly after I had found the story again, I was invited to our Stake Girls Camp. They wanted me to come after dark when the girls were gathered around the campfire and tell them a story. You can guess the story I told them. It got me thinking about Margaret Eggleston again and after I told the story, I wondered if she had any other books of stories. I looked and found she had another book published in 1921—the year after her first book. It was called "Fireside Stories to Tell to Teenage Girls."

And then I glanced through the titles of stories and there was my story of the pearls! I smiled at the coincidence that I had just told a story in a campsite to teenage girls that Margaret had specifically written to be told at the campsite to a group of teenage girls.

Well, more months passed by as I continued working on my project. And I had one of those moments when you've been working hard on something and you pause for a minute and reflect on what you have accomplished. I had now filled nearly 60 volumes of stories of all sorts from this wonderful Golden age of children's literature. I had also selected and organized an online library for families from the same literature and had over 2000 books available. I had spent several months going through my stacks of notes, trying to organize what I had been learning about reaching the hearts of our children so I could share it with others and had recorded over several hours of audios that we posted on line.

I thought about how much my own life had been enriched by spending so much time with all these stories and storytellers. I can't even begin to describe the joy that has come into my own life and I have been filled with so much hope.

And my thoughts turned to Margaret. And I thought, "Margaret, you are the one who opened the door to all of this for me and introduced me to all your friends." I was so grateful to her. I pulled her book from the shelf—her "Use of Story in Religious Education" and started to re-read it. Knowing what I now knew, I appreciated even more the depth of her wisdom. I could feel the goodness of her soul. And I found myself wondering, "Margaret, who are you? What do you look like?"

I searched and searched online to learn anything about her and couldn't find anything at all. Only a birth year—that she had been born in 1878. I told my husband how disappointed I was that I couldn't find anything about her, and he suggested I get on a site that has a lot of public records available. He does a lot of family history and thought I might could find out something about her that way.

I never knew before how many Margaret Egglestons there are in the world and I didn't know how I was going to find her. I went back to her book for clues. On the title page, it said she was a

teacher at Boston University and she dedicated the book to her little daughter. In 1920, when she wrote it, she would have been 42 so I assumed she must have had only one child because you wouldn't single out one child if you had others, would you?

Using those clues, we found her in Boston in the 1920 census. She was living with her widowed mother, Elizabeth White, age 72 and her 13 year old daughter who I noted would have been born around 1907. What I was sad to learn was that Margaret was also a widow. What happened?

We found her again in the 1910 census. She was living in Brooklyn, Kings County, New York. Her husband, Gurdon Eggleston, was a clergyman and they had a little 3 year old daughter. So now I knew I was looking for a death certificate of Gurden between 1910 and 1920. We found one in 1914, but it said that he died in Stoneham, Oxford. I told my husband that I didn't think that was him because, wasn't that England? My husband said to hold on and he said, no, Stoneham, Oxford is in Maine. I pulled out a map and found Oxford. It sits at the northern tip of a lake, about 20 miles from the nearest large town.

Suddenly I realized what I had missed in the previous story. She had worded it so that I wasn't clear who the people were in the story. She referred to the father of her family, and I assumed it was her father. Now I knew it wasn't her father at all—it was her husband. The little girl of 7 was their little girl. This was the story of how she faced the loss of her own husband and the story became even more meaningful to me because I, also, had a husband who faced a serious illness. I wasn't alone out in the wilds of Maine, but I felt just as alone. I knew well the fear that overtakes you in the dark hours of the middle of the night. I, too, had felt that comfort and peace pour into me that gave me the strength to face the hard things. Only my husband had been restored to health. She had to say good bye to hers. In the story, it said death passed by for the time, but evidently not for long as the death certificate said he passed away in the middle of the summer on July 31, 1914, just before his 36th birthday. The cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage from a brain tumor. His occupation was still clergyman.

What more could her stories teach me about her, I wondered. I returned to the Fireside book, I had only quickly scanned through before. Now I read carefully. The first story was about May—with an M—who had been told by the doctor in the spring that her father was very ill and she needed to take him somewhere it was quiet and they wouldn't be disturbed. She took him to a little cabin in New Hampshire. As winter approached and she became fearful, she went to the lake and was strengthened as she looked to the hills from whence cometh her strength. The details of the story had been changed, but I clearly recognized it as her own true story.

Then it hit me. What I had learned from Margaret was that the stories that will make the deepest impact and will leave the most lasting impressions are those you draw from personal experience. Was it possible that the story of the pearl necklace, that for all these years I had assumed was a good story but purely fictional, was actually based on true events in the life of this woman who has come to have such great influence on my life? I certainly knew she was a practical woman; I couldn't imagine her making up a sensational story just to stir emotion. She would have grounded it in true events and I started looking for evidence to back it up.

I discovered that her mother, Elizabeth White, immigrated from England in 1870 when she was 22 years old. In the Fireside stories, I found several stories about an Elizabeth who had come from far across the ocean. The only work she could find was working in a factory and she couldn't afford to live anywhere but a boarding house. One story told how lonely she was and how she longed for a friend. Some of the rich people in the town snubbed her, but she caught the eye of one of their most popular and favorite sons who was attracted to her goodness.

In the story of the pearl necklace, the wealthy mill owner lived in eastern Pennsylvania. When the young couple married, they moved away to a nearby town. Margaret was born in Walton, NY. It was a small town then and is a small town today and it lies just over the north-east border of Pennsylvania.

After the fire, Mr. Morse took the little girl and her mother to a place far enough away that no one would know what had happened to her. In the story, Margaret describes how they loved to play at the lake. There's a lake about 100 miles north of Walton. Not far from the lake is a little college town: Kirkland, NY. In the 1900 census, I found the name of a college student there: Gurdon Eggleston.

Now I found a story about May—with an M-- about to graduate from college. Several young men are interested in her. Should she choose the rich one so she would always have financial security? Or should she choose the football star who always made her laugh. Or maybe she should choose the scholar. She didn't know what to do and sought the advice of a favorite professor who told her she should look at them through the eyes of who would she want to be the father of her children. She had gone back to her room and found bouquets of roses from her suitors. But there was also a plain lunch box. She opened it and found it filled with forget-me-nots which she loved. But who were they from? She placed a few of the flowers in her hair and tucked some in her belt and left for the ceremonies. On the way, she saw her friend, Gene, with a G. "Oh, I see you got my flowers!" He said that he had left very early in the morning because he wanted to pick up his mother to meet her. Along the way, he spotted the forget-me-nots, which he knew she loved, emptied his lunch box and filled it with the flowers, and put them on the mail train that was just going by. He had hoped they would get to her.

She had met Gene in her Geology class and they had spent many happy hours combing the hillsides looking for rocks and wildflowers. He was always so courteous and cheerful and good-natured, even when things weren't going right. And here he was being so sweet to his little mother. Yes, Gene was the one she would choose to get to know better.

One more little piece of evidence that would seem to back up the story. In 1921, Margaret applied for a passport. It had a picture of Margaret in it. She was beautiful! As part of the application, she had to include an affidavit of someone who could vouch they knew her. The writing was the same as whoever had filled out the application, which I would assume was Margaret. But the person vouching for her was her mother, Elizabeth White, who had only signed her name. Clearly, the signature was made by a hand that wrote with great difficulty, which the story of the pearl necklace would have explained.

I can't say for sure that the story of the pearl necklace is true. Details of the story were likely changed. But I believe the evidence suggests it was based on true events in Margaret's life and the life of her mother and somehow that makes the story even more meaningful to me.

As I mentioned, my husband loves to do family history and he likes to see if people are related to him. So he searched on the Family Tree Search and found someone had already placed Gurdon Eggleston's name in their family tree. He didn't have to go back very many generations before he found that Gurdon's family line merged with one of my husband's family lines. But what was missing on the record—what was left blank because it was unknown—was that Gurdon had a wife and a little girl.

But it's not left blank anymore. Almost exactly 100 years from that sorrowful parting in a lonely camp on a lake in Maine, the names of Margaret White Eggleston and Gurdon Eggleston with their little girl have been re-united, always and forever.

So why have I spent your time telling you about Margaret Eggleston?

Well, I have lots of reasons. First of all, I wanted you to feel the difference between a story and information. What if I had introduced Margaret this way? Margaret White was born in Walton, NY in 1878. She married Gurdon Eggleston, a clergyman, who died in 1914. In 1920, while teaching at Boston University, she wrote a book, *The Use of Story in Religious Education*.

Would you have cared about her? Would you have any pictures of her in your mind? Would she have any personality? Notice how each story revealed different facets of her personality.

The function of story is to stir feeling and awaken emotion. We use words like dry, cold and hard to describe facts, but stories breathe life into them. Stories help us to care. They fire up desire and passion. If you find the right story, you can create an interest in any subject. Stories help us to see clearly and to understand things in our hearts that our eyes alone cannot comprehend and that facts, alone, cannot reveal.

Stories are one of the most important tools you have in teaching your children and are best used in that first step in the pattern for learning.

My grown up son recently finished reading a story for a second time—Charles Dicken's *Tale of Two Cities*. He was home when he finished reading it and I happened to be in the kitchen when he "Wow." and again "Wow". If you've read a book like that, you know exactly what was going on inside of him. To borrow the words of someone else, it was enlarging his heart, enlightening his mind and it tasted delicious to him. It was good fruit. The deeps of our souls, like the deeps of the ocean, are silent and I didn't want to intrude on the work that was taking place inside of him with mere chatter. In ways I don't fully understand, that story was making him better and wiser and thereby, happier.

Not all books have that affect on us. What gave this book that power?

And my answer is that it has everything to do with the heart through which the story flows. Charles Dickens had a happy childhood. He was a voracious reader and loved to spend time out in nature. But that season of his life came to an abrupt end when he was just eleven and his father was thrown into a debtor's prison. Dickens was left to wander the streets and fend for himself. He ended up working 10 hour days at a rat-infested, tumble-down shoe blacking factory. Over the next while, he experienced a cold, bleak winter of life where he knew hunger, loneliness, poverty and despair. As miserable as it was, the experience enlarged his heart and carried into his writings.

But there's another heart through which Tale of Two Cities flowed. Thomas Carlyle had been encouraged by his dear friend, John Stuart Mills, to write on the French Revolution. After five months of painful toil, he gave his one and only manuscript of Volume One to Mills for suggestions before sending it on to the publisher. Weeks passed and Carlyle hadn't heard anything from his friend so he paid him a visit and found that his friend had loaned the manuscript out where it had carelessly been left on the parlor floor. The housekeeper thought it was trash and used it to light the hearth fires.

Mills was absolutely beside himself with grief. He could think of no way to repair the damages, although he offered monetary compensation.

To Carlyle's credit, he confided to his wife, Jane, "Mills, poor fellow, is terribly cut up. We must endeavor to hide from him how very serious this business of life is for us."

And serious it was. The Carlyles had no money. They had hoped this work would help lift them from their poverty. And he had already destroyed his notes.

Carlyle wrote, "I remember and can still remember less of it than of anything I ever wrote with such toil. It is gone."

He had no hope of recovering it.

But that night, he had a dream in which his father and brother begged him not to abandon the work. The next morning, he accepted enough money from Mills to buy some paper and he started writing again.

First he wrote volumes 2 and 3, then he went back to recreate Volume 1, writing the entire manuscript from memory, using words, as Carlyle himself described, that came 'direct and flamingly from the heart.' He said, "It is as if my invisible schoolmaster had torn my copybook when I showed it, and said, "No, boy! Thou must write it better."

The result was a masterpiece that has remained in print to this day. He wrote as though he was a participant to all the events of the French Revolution, bringing it to life in such a way that the reader feels like he, too, is there.

It was this work that Charles Dickens read and re-read and that inspired him to write his Tale of

Two Cities. My son simply had to pull the book off a shelf, open and read and the souls and understanding of both Carlyle and Dickens poured into him.

Just as the wisdom and experience of Carlyle and Dickens was preserved within the covers of a book my son only had to pull off a shelf and read, so has the wisdom and experience of all ages been preserved and is now being made available to us in miraculous ways. A single book may contain an entire lifetime of someone's toil and effort. Today, we're not limited to the narrow view of our own experiences. We can see and experience life through thousands of eyes. And history has preserved the best of the best for us.

They have instant access to the greatest literature of all time. When they come to a word they don't understand, they can simply click and learn its meaning. We owe a great debt to Noah Webster who spent his life mastering 28 languages so that he could take each word, one at a time, and look at it through its roots and pass that knowledge on to us. When our children come to a word they can't pronounce, just click and there it is. Niebelingenlied....who would have thought. Where is this place again? Click away and it takes you to a map. Click again, and you can view it. Can you not remember who a certain person was? Click and find. Forget a fact? Click and find.

This is an education fit for royalty. We have the potential to raise the noblest, most cultured, most refined, the wisest and happiest generation in the history of the world. The eyes of those who have suffered, sweat, sacrificed and starved to bring forth truths are upon us. But here we are with a field that is white and already to harvest...but we're faced with a generation that has little desire to reap. It is your privilege and upon you rests the responsibility to light the fires of desire within their hearts. No one can do it better than you.

Nothing opens the heart like a good story. And some of the works of the greatest storytellers that have ever lived are preserved in the Libraries of Hope Library. Just as I brought Margaret Eggleston to life through her stories, these storytellers bring the great men and women of history to life so that they can have a real and personal influence on the lives of your children. Through stories, they can become some of their best friends.

All these wonderful stories were wrapped in love. These storytellers didn't shy away from sharing their love for the children. Dearest boys and girls—I love you. Signed, your loving friend; your affectionate friend. You'll feel the warmth.

So let's talk about using Story in your everyday life.

I strongly believe that our ability to maintain hope in the days ahead will be in direct proportion to how broad and how deep our reservoir of stories is from which we draw. There's an old saying that says 'What's down in the well comes up in the bucket.' You cannot draw from a story that's not there. What happens when we try to operate our lives from a puddle of stories? We see the answer to that question everyday in the news of people who take desperate measures because they find themselves locked in raw emotion for which there is no story to help find a way through. It doesn't mean you need to read stories all day long. Even if you only have time for

one story a day, 1 story a day is 365 stories a year and in 18 years when your children leave home, they will have heard over 6500 stories! That's a pretty good start, I'd say.

And if you want to instill a love of faith, freedom and family, you must find stories that reflect these values.

I happened to be looking for something on the secular humanist site and landed on the Frequently Asked Page. A parent asked for recommendations of books for his children that he could pick up at the library that would be free of any reference to religion or spirituality or faith. The response was if the American Library Association recommended a book, he could be confident it would be safe for his family.

Dr. Paul Fitz, Professor of Psychology at New York University, did a study of 90 of the most widely used reading and social studies texts used in our schools at the time. Keep in mind—this was back in 1986. In social studies, which was supposed to reflect American life to children in younger grades, not one of the texts examined—over 15,000 pages—had any reference to any word of any type of religious activity, such as attending church or worshiping in praying. Not one text mentioned marriage as a foundation of the family. Not one text used the words ‘marriage, husband, wife, homemaker.’”

In upper grades, there was not a single reference to any patriotic theme after the year 1780. Only one story focused on traditional male/female romantic love. No stories supported motherhood or showed any woman or girl with a positive relationship to a baby, a young child or even a doll. However, stories of sex-role reversal was common as well as stories of feminism.

We are seeing, truly, that what is in the well comes up in the bucket. Libraries of Hope exists to give you another choice.

Children and adults are naturally drawn to stories so it is one of your main tools in cultivating hearts. And the music in your voice is an important part of relaying those stories. So pay attention that you don't allow the words to come out as a monotone. Let your voice reflect the emotion of the story.

The music in your voice is the reason why readalouds are so vital in childhood especially. Their hearts need to be well stocked with stories and if the only stories they can get to are the ones where they have to work so hard to decode the words, it's a great loss of opportunity. Listening to audio recordings is a wonderful option as well. And having your children read aloud, too, opens that thought and emotion connection we talked about earlier.

One thing I hope you'll consider is recording yourself as you read aloud and submitting the recordings to Librivox. Librivox is well equipped to store recordings and then your labors will benefit so many others. I hope you'll start recording some of the heart books that are in public domain in the site. Choose the ones that touch your own heart, because that will reflect in your voice. Do bring the stories to life with the music in your voice! There are too many Librivox recorders who forget to do that one simple thing and it's almost impossible to listen to them. Let

me know which books you have recorded and I'll link them in the site.

Use stories to awaken interest in any and every subject. Even huge corporations are beginning to turn to stories. Rudyard Kipling wrote, "If history were told in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten."

And don't forget to tell family stories. These family stories have the power to bind the hearts of generations and give children such a sense of belonging.

Work towards being able to put the book down and sharing stories heart to heart. We are a story deprived generation, so we have some work to do to fill our own reservoirs. But many of you are familiar with scripture stories. Start there. You cannot measure the impression of a well told scripture story told in the dark from the heart of one who loves it just as a child drops off to sleep.

Once upon a time, I listened to a story of a strand of pearls – that story has lifted me up and changed my life forever. Lifting up and changing lives IS the power of a story. Stories can heal our hearts. Stories can heal our world. Don't underestimate the power of a story.