

Types of Stories - Faith Spotted Eagle - OSEU #5

How do you remember what you remember? And so all of us said, storytelling. So I remember growing up, going to sleep at night with the fire. We had an old stove. And I remember when they'd turn off the kerosene lamp. So then I'd be looking at the ceiling. And then the fire would be flickering on the wall. And then I'd fall asleep while Grandma was telling a story. And there were so many stories. Some were designed to just make you laugh. Some were designed to tell you how not to be.

Some, Ella Deloria talks about, Auntie Ella Deloria talks about two kinds of stories. An Oyakopi story is a story of oral history where they say, this is how it was told. This is what happened. So it's a recounting of an event, much like a physical winter count or an oral winter count. And then the other kind of story was what we call a Ohunkake. An Ohunkake story is one when the animal still talked. I think there's a perception that when you say oral history, a lot of it, the majority of it, is from a very, very long time ago.

But some of that oral history is happening right now. Like this story that I told you about the lacrosse, that's oral history. So hopefully, that'll go on the day when the birds came to play. They still remembered. But I think that the role of oral history, when it came to thinking about our traditional society, when the grandma said, how did you learn, we decided that we would have four days in our community for storytelling every year. Because people don't tell those stories anymore.

And so if anybody's watching this as students or young people, I encourage you, when you find your stories or you learn about a story, that you retell it to your kids. I remember when my kids were growing up in the urban area, I would have days of storytelling. And I'd say, OK, we have a storyteller coming to our house. So I recreated that scenario in my home in an urban area. And when I came home and we revived the society in March, we named our storytelling institute the Water Lily Storytelling Institute after Ella Deloria.

And so every March, when there's still snow on the ground, and hopefully there'll be snow on the ground this year, we have four days of storytelling. And then we tell those stories and we tell those kids, we're going to tell this. And we might tell it again next year. And we might tell it again. But we're doing that so you'll remember it. And then you'll be able to tell it to your kids. So that's how we've revived it. But anybody can do it. And enough of that oral history is written down now. So it can be read. So, yeah.

If it's missing in a family, they can pull it. They can retrieve it, yeah. And there are a lot of elders around that have many stories they just need to be asked. So I would encourage young people to find an elder. And that elder might be bashful about it or may not think that they can. But there's some out there that have some delightful stories. Yeah.

