



Peninsula Chinese Business Association

美國華聯商會

Leading because we care

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Writer's message

December 1, 2024

Dear Members and Friends:

Sharing stories has been part of societal culture and educational guidance since the dawn. Whether deaf, blind, or average, we all find ways to share our feelings, joy, pain, sorrow, and experience. Great, inspiring stories and those who retell them have completely reshaped empires.

There is a mystery in mythology and the art of storytelling. Passing along the history of our ancestors to our loved ones and the people we care about to know in the present day is an asset and essential endeavor.

Stories are much more memorable than statistics and facts. When we tell a story, it is incredible that the listeners' brains sync up neural pathways to mirror the storytellers. The journey of the character in the story can change listeners' brains toward new and better ideas. Whether listening to a TED Talk, reading a powerful book, or watching an exceptional movie, our brains may be hooked to feel the experience of what we are hearing and seeing.

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I have been lucky enough to share stories for over thirty years, and the responses have been incredible. Many listeners were on their hero's journey, influenced by the stories. Some of them paved a path toward better brain health and well-being. They mirror the storytelling arts to help improve the lives of those they care for and speak to. Watching them evolve their storytelling techniques and help change people's lives with their life stories has been excellent.

I love hearing stories, too. A great memorable story moves me to thankful tears and action. They inspire me constantly. What a gift!

With warm regards,

Johnny DeRosa

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Which part of our body is important?

At twelve years old, Jen and her mother strolled in the park when she saw a squirrel holding a walnut, breaking the shell with its teeth. Jen grabbed her mother's hand and said:

Mom, see how vital the squirrel teeth are; without them, the squirrel would be hungry! The teeth of the squirrel are indeed quite important.

Mother quiets momentarily and wants to ask Jen:

What is your body's most important part?

Jen thought for a minute and replied,

"It must be the eyes and the ears because I can see the world and listen to the teacher's words."

Mother: ***"Some people are blind, and some have hearing loss, but they can enjoy the world and learn."***

A few weeks passed, and Mother asked Jen again. Since making her first attempt, she had contemplated another answer. So, this time, she told her mother that the mouth is crucial because she can speak to the world.

Mother: ***"You are learning fast, but the answer needs to be corrected because mutism people can express themselves."***

Stumped again, Jen continued her quest for knowledge. Over the years, her mother asked Jen several more times, and her answer was always "No."

A year went by, and Jen's father passed away from a heart attack when she was eighteen. As Jen's father's body was about to be taken away, everyone was not able to control their emotions, shedding tears for one final goodbye. Jen's mother approached her and asked in a low tone,

“Do you know the most important body part yet, my dear?”

This is certainly not the moment to think about such a question, and she always considered this a game between mother and daughter. Mother saw the confusion on Jen’s face and told her,

“This question is critical; it shows that you have lived in your life.”

Every part of the body she gave her in the past was told wrong, and she gave her an example of why. But today, the mother wants Jen to learn this lesson, so why? Jen rested her head on her mother’s shoulder and spoke softly,

“Mom, I am sad. I don’t have the answer. Please tell me.”

Mother’s eyes looked up with tears, and she said,

“Sweetheart, the shoulder is the most important part of our body.”

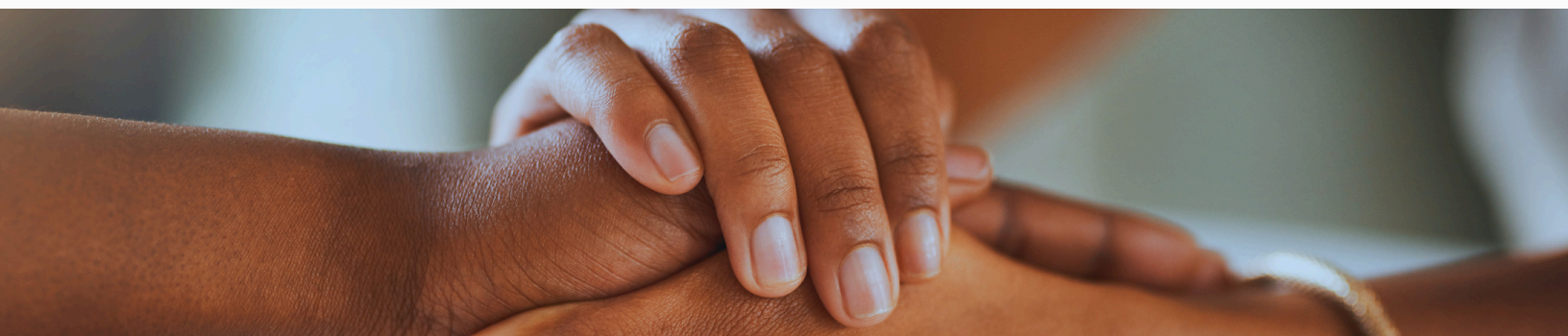
Jen: “Is it because it holds up my head, including eyes, ears, and mouth?”

Mother: “No, because it holds the heads of others when they cry. Everyone needs a shoulder to cry on, especially in times like these, as we are going through now.”

Jen could genuinely feel the gravity of her words as she was going through the same range of emotions then. Mother let her head rest on her shoulder as she bid a final goodbye to her father.

Jen’s story taught me to cultivate more friendships and positively impact many lives. Let us find more shoulders to comfort in and provide ours to people when they are in need.

Johnny DeRosa





Your Story Speaks for Your Identity

When you apply for college or a job, writing a personal statement, research paper, article, biography, business plan, etc., all is about storytelling. But before you write a story for a purpose, you must craft one about yourself—a story about your identity, a sense of who you are, and your self-view. It includes the distinctive, enduring characteristics of your personality and emotional sensitivity. You learned who you are from your experiences and from somewhat evolving your identity. Without a solid identity, your sense of who you are can change depending on who you with, what you read, or where you are.

Write a narrative of the significant events in your life through the years, including your exceptional successes, the lessons from mistakes, and what makes you proud, or you will never want it to happen again. Learning from history is a fantastic skill that can significantly improve the pursuit of well-being.

To analyze your writing, highlight the incidents that brought you the rewards and consequences. The stories are mostly related to the theme/s. In the theme, what role do you typically play? Are you a hero? The victim? An angel? Or the villain? Are you the star of your story or someone else?

If you were not the hero or the star, pause here; rewrite your story from the perspective you are while still sticking to facts. Focus on how you survived challenging situations and how the solution was raised. Craft the theme of the story as a positive one. How did you manage it differently from others? You may find the story's emotional tone or intention changes you'd missed previously.

If you find it difficult to rewrite the story, it may be because myths about your role in life have become part of your core beliefs about yourself, and it is challenging to see the story in any other way. When you are confused, your mind isn't thinking thoroughly; you can pay less attention to what is genuinely happening because your mind is busy thinking about events that haven't occurred. Thinking before you act requires pausing between noticing your thoughts and feelings before moving forward and acting. Sometimes, you may invent reasons for your feelings because the true causes can be complex and challenging to identify. Your story doesn't need to change to a pleasant one; you want it to reflect the strengths and positives that were evident in the real you or developed as a result.

Johnny DeRosa





Is Hastening Death Selfish?

Some might see hastening death as selfish because it can leave behind feelings of grief, guilt, and confusion for loved ones. From this perspective, it can seem like the act disregards the impact on family and friends.

However, it's also crucial to recognize that many people who contemplate or attempt to die feel immense emotional pain and isolation. They may believe their loved ones would be better off without them, highlighting the depth of their suffering rather than selfishness. In such cases, the person may not be fully aware of the consequences or feel trapped in a situation where they see no other way out.

The loved one of a friend of mine in her mid-age suffered from the final stage of cancer. The cancer cells spread all over her body, and she needs morphine several times an hour to ease the pain. With the sense of loss of autonomy over her health, she decided to terminal illness by hastening death. With physician-assisted dying, she used life-ending medication in the witness of her husband and family. I had a chance to see her last photograph with her husband before she took the ending medication. The photo recorded the memory of a smiling, happy couple. She put on makeup and was nicely dressed. After saying goodbye to her husband, she holds the medication cup, slowly zipping it to her throat. She went to sleep in a short time, and her life slowly ended with dignity and peace.

Ultimately, rather than labeling hastening death as selfish or not, it's essential to prioritize compassionate support and mental health resources for struggling patients. Once we realize someone's wanting to take away their life who's in severe pain, there is no way it's a selfish act. When they plan to leave this world in dark moments, they can always find a reason to stay, not to hurt those they love. We must realize how much of an awful place they had to be in to get to that point; they didn't want to burden those who loved them.

Those who remain after a loved one's died may not be able to move on, but they can undoubtedly stop asking the question "why" and should look to the living and move forward.

A selfish person can only be concerned with self-personal interest or pleasure without concern for others. When you look at how dark of a place someone needs to be in to take their life, it's genuinely a horrible and misplaced courage; how could they be selfish when they took their life?

"Dedicated to my good friend who lost her loved one."

Johnny DaRosa





President Message

December 1, 2024

Dear Members and Friends:

I am writing this message of gratitude from the bottom of my heart that the serendipity to lead Peninsula Chinese Business Association in the past two years. Serving PCBA is a great privilege; It is an honor to work with all of you and the directors, to advance our mission and to strengthen our community for improving lives.

From the moment I took over the presidency, I have been inspired by the fellow directors who make this organization what it is. We believe in the value of devoting, the power of unity and commitment and the ways that what we do here can benefit society. Those commitments matter today more than ever. Our work now is to focus on them with renewed vigor, rededicating ourselves to philanthropy excellence. That excellence is made possible by the free exchange of ideas, open inquiry, creativity, empathy, and constructive dialogue among people with diverse backgrounds and views. This is a challenging time, one of strong passions and strained bonds among us. But I know that we can find our way forward together because we share a devotion to help those in needs and because we recognize our pluralism as a source of our strength.

I am excited by what we had achieved in the past years and will have more to say about our efforts on many fronts when the next year begins. Meanwhile, I will do my utmost to ensure that we continue to advance knowledge and drive discovery even as we work to mend the fabric of our community.

I have to hand the torch to the new president in thirty days, but I will continue to service the organization without discount, and I look forward to seeing many of you on events before long. Thank you all and the directors for your support in countless ways, not only to make PCBA better but also to help PCBA better serve the world.

Sincerely,

President