StoryCrafting Our Lives – Episode 2 Lineage Stories

This is StoryCrafting Our Lives. A podcast and more with Spiritual Teacher and Healer, Coleen Rhalena Renee.

We explore how the power of story moves through our lives. Stories don't just happen, lives aren't random. It's our stories and how we carry them that creates the lives we live. Let's explore more.

Episode 2: StoryCrafting **My** Life – Lineage Stories

Hello, listeners. I hope you're well on this fine November day

Today I want to explore stories that enliven us & stories that betray us. They're both part of this adventure of finding our most authentic selves. I'll invite you into StoryCrafting your life by sharing how I'm StoryCrafting **My** Life.

Let me say that understanding our stories isn't a linear endeavor. We rarely understand the fullness of the story happening in the moment. All our stories dance with each other. They're like the ingredients in a stew, it takes time for them to meld together into a satisfying and delicious experience.

I once lived a story and forgot it rather quickly – until 30 years later it popped into my head when a sound tech taught me about microphones. The information he gave me totally shifted my understanding of what had happened. I hadn't consciously remembered that story, but it was tucked away, affecting my life in ways I hadn't seen. The sound tech showed up in my life when I needed that story to change. That's part of the magic and wonder of StoryCrafting.

That specific story's for another time.

Today I want to share how threads of a story can show up at different times in our life creating questions, carrying you on a path that straddles the past and the future. Each story requires an awareness of the present and asks us to open to revisions and shifts in perspective.

Let's get into. This is a BIG life story. We all have them. They tend to be tied to our purpose and the threads of it can only be doled out in right timing. Often a single thread is spun in one time and understood in quite another.

I've always felt I don't quite fit in. I grew up in a conservative Catholic family that was filled with love and music and stories. We had a big family that celebrated together with traditions old and new. This is all true.

And, a lot more was going on that I wasn't supposed to notice – like the inconsistencies in what my parents taught us, what they did, and what I knew in my heart to be true. I've always been oddly confident in my knowing but a bit uncomfortable because I didn't know how I knew. As a child I often felt caught between realities when I was with people. I felt more comfortable talking with trees, seeing stories in the clouds, and daydreaming.

In my 30's I left the Catholic church and became a massage therapist. No, those things aren't particularly related except they happened in the same time period – and they each opened me up to new worlds.

Little did I know that learning massage would awaken my psychic intuitive gifts I started getting all kinds of unlooked for information when I worked on some clients. My gifts helped me learn the language and wisdom of the body. We hold so many stories in our muscles and fascia. Emotions and memories are carried within our cells, waiting to reveal themselves when the client is ready to work with them.

The human body has been one of the most significant teachers in my career. It's truly amazing and endlessly fascinating. It was a springboard for finding my highest calling. You see, The physical body is only the tip of the

iceberg – the mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies opened my eyes and heart to the unseen mysteries and the interconnectedness of all things.

As all this was happening, I intuitively I needed to balance this new work in my life or I'd become lost in it. Luckily, when I left the Catholic church, I explored Wicca, an earth-centered spiritual tradition - a practice that taught me about balance, boundaries, and how to understand and work with the psychic gifts opening up in me.

My early 30's were an exciting time of personal discovery and creativity. Yet I still felt that I didn't fit in the "real" world. I felt even more like a freak in my family. Nobody else was a healer. relatives on my mom's side talked about seeing ghosts and other unusual things. Her Irish family embraced such possibilities as normal occurrences but when seriously questioned denied the reality of them. My father's family had no tolerance for such things, except in scary stories to tell around a campfire. I still knew things and didn't know how I knew. I was learning skills to work with my "oddities" and I met others in the world who understood me. But in my family I was a freak.

I carried this story about being a freak for nearly 40 years. The story taught me to hide who I was. It also protected me when I was young, because I never spoke about communing with the sky, trees, or spirits. I never shared the inconsistencies I noticed or the truths I could sense before I understood them.

Eventually, this story that had protected me became one that betrayed me – it kept me small and hidden. It failed to enliven me. It became an unworthy story. Now, It took me a while to figure this out.

Changing this story started with a dream. I stood in a family cemetery and the ancestors said, "There's something here for you, but it won't be here for long." I called my dad to ask him where the family cemetery was. Turns out there are five. We left Seattle on a road trip to northwest Ohio, the land from which both my parents came and to the ancestors who were whispering to me. – I call it the Cemetery Tour.

At each of the five cemeteries, the ancestors told me the same thing, "We know you, you don't know us. Feed this land." I didn't share this with my dad. It was simply too big and it challenged my story about being an unacceptable freak in my family. Afterall, the ancestors called me home. They recognized me, they wanted me to know them.

I was quite hesitant. To 'feed this land' in Celtic tradition means blood, sweat, and tears on the land. That's not something I could do from 3000 miles away. Northwest Ohio is considerably more conservative than Seattle. I was certain that my work would not be accepted. But as we toured the cemeteries my father would tell me stories. It turns out I have two relatives who were chiropractors and my grandfather could successfully douse for water. Being a healer and talking to the land were not unique to me. My fathers stories revealed the gifts were in our blood.

During our visit, I stayed with my mom's sister, Aunt Bonnie, who told me more stories that I'd never heard, like that I had a great aunt who made her living doing tarot readings in Toledo back in the 1950's. My mother's lineage was full of people with psychic gifts, some were quite open about it. I knew my mother had some gifts but she was afraid of them and pushed them away.

A lot of us have hidden stories in our families. It isn't always safe to reveal them. Some families had to hide to survive – and they hid so well that future generations didn't know their own stories. Some lineage stories live on in our DNA and resurface when need calls. My lineage stories were resurfacing and the ancestors were helping by calling me home.

So, instead of being a freak in my family, I was a daughter carrying inherited gifts from both lineages. Instead of feeling like a misfit, I felt deep connection and pride. Not only was I recognized but I was also called home to be with family and the land. I left my home in Seattle and moved to Ohio to answer that call and spend time getting to know the ancestors of my lineage and the ancestors of place. That year was full of surprises!

Perhaps the most touching experience was when I encountered an elm tree who remembered me from when I was a small child dancing around him. To be remembered by a tree is a wondrous thing. He taught me to sing the rivers. He told me each river has it's own uniquely authentic song. When it's dammed or polluted that song becomes weak. All it takes is for someone to hear that innate song and sing it back to the river. The river will remember and it's song will grow strong again. There are three rivers in the area and I was tasked with singing each at least once a week. When the rivers found new strength each week, they listened to my innate song and sang it back to me so I could become stronger. Singing the rivers gave me a lot of experience in deep listening. It taught me the power of song and connection. It taught me a process that can be used with a person, a tree, a mountain. Every being has an innate song and can be strengthened by hearing it sung. This has become a very strong thread in the tapestry of my work.

One day, near the end of my time in Ohio, I decided to visit the old homestead. All that was left were two lines of aspen trees on each side of the driveway. I sat in the driveway, letting memories move through me. I was in 6th grade when my grandfather died. My dad decided we needed to move closer to my grandmother to help with the farm. The plan was to move from Columbus after the school year was out but he was offered a job two months early. He returned to Columbus on the weekends to help with packing so had little time on the farm. The garden needed to be planted by mid-May, so he took me out of school for a week. Each night he'd show me what to plant and how. During the day when he was at work, I was planting the garden by myself. I never could remember much about the actual planting. I do remember my mom teasing me because the peas came up in perfect spiral loops instead of straight rows. I looked out over the now barren fields of what was once our home.

Then my mind took me back to the fond feeling and a kind of sparkly warmth I experienced during my time planting that garden. When I thought of the peas again, I saw out of the corner of my eye something fluttering among the aspen leaves and I heard a giggle. To my astonishment a Faerie flew towards me in a spiraling pattern, giggling all the way. He told me he planted the peas and everything else in the garden while his kin took me into their realm for training as a healer. They knew I'd need the training, but they blocked my memory of it until it was safe for me to know.

The tapestry of my life changed a lot that year. I pulled out the thread of story about being a freak in my family. I stopped hesitating with clients when my intuition told me to do something I'd never done and didn't remember learning - cause I now knew how I knew – the Faeries taught me. I was no longer the same person. As I wove in the new stories of my ancestors, embraced my inherited gifts, and treasured my time with the Elm, rivers, and the faeries who taught me – I crafted new stories about who I am in the world.

- I am the one who carries inherited gifts.
- I am the one the ancestors called.
- I am the one taught by trees, rivers, and Faeries

That time in Ohio re-storied my life. I came away with this new understanding that stories are living things. They change with experiences, secrets revealed, new connections, the benefit of hindsight, and the choices I make about how to carry the threads in my story.

I totally re-crafted my long-held story about being a freak in my family. I'm very grateful for that opportunity and thrilled that the ancestors helped me transform it. The bit about not fitting in? I've also transformed that story, not by changing it but by understanding it. The truth is that I'm unusual. The path I chose – and continue to choose – takes me between the worlds gathering ancient wisdoms needed for our times. I didn't come into this world to fit in. I came to heal and transform. I came to reclaim lineage inheritances and in doing so, I've helped to heal some of the pain in my lineages, to celebrate that we no longer need to hide.

I hope my story opens your heart to your own story and gives you ideas and encouragement to StoryCraft your own life. I invite you to explore the stories that pop up this week. Stories don't lie around passively; they show up when they have something new to teach us, when it's time to re-craft them, when it's time to resolve them or put them to rest. So when those stories come into your awareness, hold them gently and loosely. Listen to them from a place of wonder. Notice any emotions or thoughts of blame or shame – but don't be bound by them. We need to let our stories breathe so we can hold them in new ways and receive the gift(s) they have for us.

My dream teacher taught me that one can never fully understand a dream until one sees the beauty in it. The same is true of stories. Even the most difficult story holds a gift. Look for the beauty and you will find the gift.

Before I go I want to mention that ancestral stories are not always the easiest ones to work with. So feel free to take away some of the general teachings in this episode and use them to play with whatever stories want to emerge for you at this time.

I chose the topic of ancestral stories for this episode because this time of year lends itself to ancestral stories. The veil between the worlds is thin as we move into the darker time of the year (here in the northern hemisphere). It's a bit easier for the ancestors to communicate with us. With the upcoming holidays we might just hear stories we've never heard – or we might now hear them in a different way.

Wherever story takes you this week, remember, stories are living things! Welcome to the adventure of "StoryCrafting Our Lives".

Your questions and insights are welcome. Please post them below and subscribe to my channel.

In next week's Episode, *The Landscape speaks,* we'll explore landscape stories, how they shape who we are, and the unique way they connect us as beloveds.

Bright blessings to each of you. May your harvest be plentiful and your days hold wonder.

In song and joy, this is Coleen Rhalena Renee signing off.

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