

Storytelling for Leaders

Tuscany, Italy

Dates: April 16-20 or 22-26, 2025

Join your leaders: Lisa Hope Tilstra and Russ Watts
on a transformational leadership experience to develop the art and craft of storytelling.



“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

— Maya Angelou

Overview

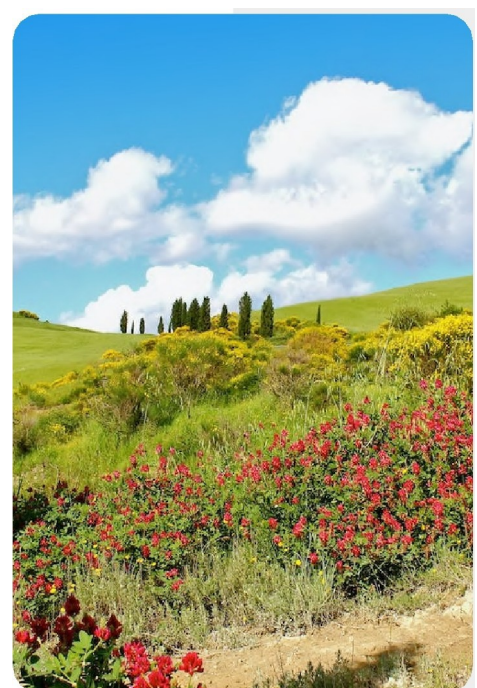
For 5 days/4 nights, your home base will be Roccone, a beautifully restored Tuscan farmhouse. The ground floor houses the living room, wood-burning fireplace, dining room, large and fully equipped kitchen and laundry room. There are private bedrooms and bathrooms on the two floors above the ground floor. Adjacent to the farmhouse is a private consecrated chapel. The grounds are surrounded by the dense vegetation of the Pigelleto Nature Reserve, a welcoming landscape to admire, embrace, and explore during nature walks as you reflect deeply on your inner landscape, your spirit, and your story.

This experience is for a select number of leaders who want to purposefully step back from day-to-day responsibilities and into an awe-inspiring environment to reflect on their leadership journey - where you are and where you want to go. This will happen in a lightly guided format that begins with content before you arrive and ends with several post-trip follow-up conversations to help bring to life the insights you discover and the personal goals you may set on this trip.

This trip has been designed and curated to be deeply nourishing in multiple ways and to remind you of what really matters. It's an opportunity to slow down and be in a place that (re)grounds you in what is true, good, authentic, and beautiful.

You'll be immersed in moments to reflect and learn, to be emotionally challenged, to take in the natural beauty, and to be quiet and listen. In short, each day is designed to refill your mind, body, and soul and for you to be rejuvenated.

You will come away from the trip and follow-up conversations ready to step into a world that desperately needs leaders who are inspired and well-prepared to lead with presence and a greater understanding of storytelling.



Participants

This leadership retreat is designed for a curated group of senior leaders who want to weave the art of storytelling and their own story into their work. Specifically, this experience is intended for those who are:

- **Curious**
- **Open to being challenged and stretched in new ways**
- **Interested in growing their current sphere of connection and influence**
- **Life-long learners**

This is a space for leaders who want to be more grounded in their own presence, expand their capacity to hold space for others, and see more potential in themselves and those in their sphere.

"I have always loved telling stories and have understood the power of storytelling, but this was the first time that I absorbed the learning that telling my stories was a deeply transformative practice for myself."
-Deiadre, Workshop Participant

Retreat Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at Roccone, your Tuscan lodging for the next 5 days.
Group dinner and Leadership Reflection Session.
- Day 2 & 3** Wake up, enjoy fresh baked local foods, coffee, and engage in Leadership Sessions: Tools for Storytelling, Narrative Building, Personal Branding, 1:1 Coaching (all blended with nature walks, cooking classes, wine tasting, and cultural exploration).
- Day 4** Wake up, breakfast, time spent in nature, time for deepening connections, our final leadership discussion, and a group celebration dinner.
- Day 5** Sunrise yoga, breakfast together, enjoy the last morning including intentional reflection time. Contemplate what you want to focus on as you return home and what strategies you can put into place to be mindful towards success and renewal. Options to extend and custom build adventures are available.

Dinners are custom designed to accent seasonal foods and based on eating preferences/needs. Evenings will include Leadership Reflection time and fireside discussions. There will also be plenty of time to relax on your own and connect with others.

Content

What we will be covering throughout the retreat:

- Why storytelling is a powerful agent for change
- Structure of storytelling that can be used in every context
- Exploring when and where to share stories and what stories to tell
- How storytelling can build trust, team cohesion, and improve outcomes
- Story intelligence - what it is and how to develop it
- Choosing the right story for the right experience
- How to hold space for self and others in storytelling
- Story co-creation for growth, connection, and impact
- Narrative Storytelling and how to shape your own in ways that will allow you to flourish



As part of the experience, you'll receive a personal journal, and other resources to help prepare you for the leadership reflection sessions and the discussions we will be having.

Costs

\$2800 covers all trip expenses including activities mentioned above, lodging, food/drinks, and two intentional follow up 1:1 conversations in the months after the trip with Lisa and/or Russ to build on what you learned and discovered on the trip. (Price does not include flights and transportation to/from Roccone.)

We believe that the combination of trip activities, the connection with the peers with whom you will be sharing this experience, the leadership development content, and the continued leadership conversations you will have, will translate into one of the best investments you've ever made in yourself and your leadership.

Fees cover Single Occupancy. If you bring a colleague/business/leadership partner you receive a 10% discount.

"Storytelling is the purest and finest expression of humanity. It's a creative space we explore since we are kids, and we should consciously continue to explore...."

The few days at Roccone confirmed the power of storytelling. It was a shared moment of bravery and humbleness. A colorful and intense succession of moments that made you "work" with others and experience the power of storytelling to lead, to heal, and to transform."

- Catarina, 2023 Retreat Participant

Lisa Hope Tilstra

Lisa learned the transformative power of storytelling firsthand through sharing pieces of her journey after losing her husband to a brain tumor in 2005. Storytelling was a pivotal part of her path to healing and growth. Many years later, she realized storytelling was missing from her life, so she began to intentionally incorporate storytelling again. This time it helped her overcome depression and a deep stagnation in life. Ever since, story has been a foundational part of her work.

Originally from the U.S., Lisa has lived in the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, France, and Sri Lanka. Her work as a Leadership Coach has taken her to 40+ countries, and she has had participants in her courses and workshops from over 130 countries. At the heart of her work, she seeks to respectfully explore cultural differences, deepen awareness of similarities that connect us, and create ways to communicate with strategic precision for greater connection and understanding.

Lisa holds a master's degree from the University of Florida, a certificate in Leadership Coaching from Georgetown University, and the designation of Professional Certified Coach from the International Coach Federation. Lisa hosts regular Story Slams in her community and is the host of two podcasts. The Make Life Less Difficult podcast is her passion project focused on sharing people's stories as a way of connecting and knowing we aren't alone in our journeys.

She's an avid nature enthusiast, loves to be in the mountains, is a paragliding pilot, and actively seeks out opportunities to test her limits physically and emotionally.



Russ Watts

Russ is a leadership coach and facilitator who works with leaders to find their own trail and design their future narrative by using mindfulness, the ability to assess situations and behaviors objectively, compassion, humor and authentic support. Russ works to develop leadership awareness for the betterment of themselves, their communities, and institutions. He has strengthened and encouraged hundreds of clients in understanding their patterns, potential, strengths and weaknesses, thus providing a richer understanding of themselves and the culture and relations they are surrounded by.

His clients are often seeking a change in their old story, a shift in their patterns, a way to tap into their deeper purpose and create transformation, find meaning, become the better leader that they know is possible. They often feel trapped, stuck, buried in lists, emails, meetings and are seeking a new way to operate that is filled with personal and social growth, ready to leave stress behind and open doors to their and others higher potential. The power of designing and standing in one's narrative is one of the most potent and powerful ways he has found to help clients.

Russ holds degrees and certificates from Georgetown University; an Executive Master's Degree in Leadership (M.L.) and is a graduate from the Executive Leadership Coach, Health and Wellness certified coach (NBC-HWC); holds a PCC level of certification from the International Coach Federation (ICF) and is a Master Integral Facilitator.

Some of his other passions include paragliding, mountaineering, river kayaking, ultra-running across the alps, rock climbing, cooking, photography and sailing with his family.



Reach out to learn more and embark on this magical journey of self exploration, self nourishment, and vulnerable companionship.

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“Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today.”

— Robert McAfee Brown