



WHY DO STORIES MATTER?

Transcript: Origins of StoryCorps

TRANSCRIPT:

ORIGINS OF STORYCORPS

ANIMATION

Dave Isay & Benji



Benji: I just start by asking you one of the questions on my list, right?

Dave: Anything you want.

Benji: Okay. So what were you like as a kid?

Dave: I was pretty weird. I didn't want to do anything but watch TV, and I spent a lot of time by myself. But I always liked talking to older people, like the waitress at the luncheonette near my house or my grandparents.

I remember when I was just a few years older than you, your great-grandpa Abe, and your great-grandma Rose, and her sisters came over to our apartment for Thanksgiving. After dinner, I found this tape-recorder lying around and somehow I got the idea to interview them. I didn't have a clue what I was doing, but I recorded their voices and stories, and I saw how much they loved being listened to. A few years later, your great-grandpa and great-grandma and all of her sisters passed away. But I'd remembered I'd made that tape, so I went looking for it. But I couldn't find it. Even now when I go to your grandma's house I go looking for that tape, just hoping it's going to turn up.

Benji: I don't get it. Why do you keep looking for it?



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Dave: Because it would make me so happy to hear those voices again, and I'd love to play that tape for you. You know, doing that recording really taught me something. You can find the most amazing stories from regular people. All you have to do is ask them about their lives and listen.

Benji: Really? That's it?

Dave: Yeah, it's simple. We can learn so much about the people all around us, even about the people we already know, just by taking the time to have a conversation. And if you pay just a little attention, you'll find wisdom and poetry in their words.

Benji: Do people really want you to ask them about their lives?

Dave: Yeah, they do. Most people love to be listened to, because it tells them how much their lives matter. All you need to ask are questions like, "Who is the most important person in your life?" or "What are you proudest of?" Really, listening closely is simple. When you're curious, treat people with respect, and have just a little courage to ask the important questions, great things are going to happen.