

How Your Story Can Help You Find Hope and Healing

By Jessica Isom, MD, MPH

Like many of you, as a young person of color I often wondered where my life journey and the stories it holds fit into the larger history of my community. While I recognized that storytellers have long held the power to inspire hope and resilience, I questioned whether my own narrative might do the same.

My comfort with storytelling began in the small, intimate spaces – first with people I trusted and then in larger circles. With time, I received affirmation and support and realized sharing my story wasn't just a personal act – it was a contribution to a rich legacy of narratives that have uplifted our community. I accepted then, and embrace now, my role as a storyteller. In telling my story, I not only honor the past but also actively inspire hope and resilience in myself and others.

Stories are bridges connecting you to your past, present, and future selves. Stories offer glimpses into your resilience, strength, and possibilities. When you share your story, you invite others to witness your experience and truth – the joys, struggles, and triumphs that shape your life and understanding of yourself.



Here are three key practices that have supported me in tapping into the power of my stories while encouraging me to lead with vulnerability.

1. Build a Daily Storytelling Practice.

- **Daily Journaling:** Writing about moments of resilience and hope each day helps you cultivate a consistent habit of reflecting on your story positively.
- **Affirmation Practice:** Starting the day with affirmations reinforces the importance of your experiences and strengthens your mindset for sharing.
- **Daily Reflection Prompts:** Using structured prompts provides focused reflection on daily challenges and coping, encouraging regular storytelling.

2. Practice Self-Expression and Vulnerability.

- **Storytelling in the Mirror:** Practicing aloud in front of the mirror helps you grow comfortable with hearing yourself express vulnerability.
- **Voice-Record Your Story:** Recording your thoughts allows you to practice sharing in a low-pressure setting, while also becoming familiar with your storytelling voice.
- **Talk to Yourself:** Conversations with yourself can strengthen your comfort with vulnerability and help you articulate personal experiences clearly.

3. Track Progress and Build Confidence through Action.

- **Start a Private Blog:** A private blog offers a space for ongoing storytelling without the pressure of public exposure, letting you build confidence at your own pace.
- **Track Your Story's Impact:** Reflecting on how your story has influenced others helps you recognize the value in sharing, increasing your motivation and confidence.
- **Share in Small, Safe Spaces:** Sharing with trusted individuals or groups in low-risk environments helps build confidence and creates a supportive foundation for wider sharing.

The Takeaway

Your stories matter! As you raise your voice, share your truth, and listen to and affirm others, you gain understanding of yourself and your experiences. Building our storytelling skills, practicing self-expression and vulnerability, and taking action to increase our confidence helps us find the hope and healing we need for the next step on our soul-care journey.

About My Digital Sanctuary

My Digital Sanctuary brings information and creativity together to support soul care, a holistic approach to emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being from the Steve Fund. Created by mental health experts who specialize in serving young people of color and their families, My Digital Sanctuary shares the help, hope, and healing we need to not just survive but to thrive.