

## Should I Share My Personal [Failure] Stories?

by Heather Flies

### Training Notes

Stories are so important to teenagers! So are stories about when you've been wounded.

Teenagers view adult leaders as having all the answers and having their life all put together.

Your story might be a tangible example of God's love and redemption.

*But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:19-20 (NIV)*

God wants to redeem the story in your life! Or, the choices you've made...

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 (NIV)*

#### **MYTHS THAT YOUTH WORKERS OFTEN HAVE:**

- "If I share my story it will give them permission to act a specific way."
- "If I share my story they may not respect me as much."

**1. Make sure the sharing of your story is not for therapeutic reasons.**

**2. Make sure you're age-appropriate, but share enough that they know you "get it."**

**3. Write out your story: especially those parts that were wounding.**

## ? Reflection questions:

To get the most out of your online video experience we encourage you to take some time to answer the following questions:

- How would you rate your tendency toward sharing your life/struggle with students? Why?
- Read Genesis 50:19-20 (NIV) *“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.’”* Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_ intended to harm me, but God intended it for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Heather mentioned two concerns/myths youth workers believe about sharing their story. Which do you identify with, or do you have an additional concern she didn’t mention?
- What is one story from your life that you haven’t shared with students but God brought to mind while watching Heather’s teaching?
- Someone once said, “The most comforting words in the English language are, ‘me too.’” As you think of teenagers, what are some “me too” moments that come to mind? (i.e. My parents don’t understand me, I’m being bullied, I feel lonely, I struggle with my body image. etc.)
- This session--and its questions--may have stirred up some parts of your story in which you still need some healing. Who can you talk with to help you process this?
- Have you taken the time to articulate/write out your own faith story? If not, why? If so, how has the written story played a part in your ministry to teenagers. On a separate document, take some time to write out your story.



If you’d like to receive a DYMU certificate at the end of this course, be sure to answer the questions online.

## 💬 Talk it over:

- Consider sharing what you’ve learned with others.
- Process this information with another leader on your team.
- Write out specific questions you want to ask someone on your leadership team.
- Leave a comment in the space below the video window and engage with other DYMU participants.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Heather Flies

Heather Flies is an outstanding youth worker; she’s highly relational, she’s incredibly fun (and funny), she’s got a huge heart for helping youth workers, and her hugs will crush you like you’re an aluminum can. She has been serving at Wooddale Prairie Church in Eden, MN since 1996. She’s a speaker, author, trainer, and all around good person who also graduated from Bethel Seminary. You can find more about her at <http://www.heatherflies.com>.