



The Things They Carried

Quotations about the Value of Storytelling

The following quotations speak to the value of writing and telling personal stories. Choose two quotations that you particularly like and write a two-paragraph response that explains why you appreciate what each quotation states. In your response, consider what telling personal stories can accomplish.

It seems to me that writing is a marvelous way of making sense of one's life, both for the writer and for the reader.

—John Cheever

Had I been blessed with even limited access to my own mind there would have been no reason to write. I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear.

—Joan Didion

We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection.

—Anaïs Nin

The way we tell our life story is the way we begin to live our life.

—Maureen Murdock

Every person is born into life as a blank page—and every person leaves life as a full book. Our lives are our story, and our story is our life. Story is the narrative thread of our experience—not what literally happens, but what we make out of what happens, what we tell each other and what we remember.

—Christina Baldwin

Your biggest stories will often have less to do with their subject than with their significance—not what you did in a certain situation, but how that situation affected you and shaped the person you became.

—William Zinsser

What is healing, but a shift of perspective?

—Mark Doty

What is the source of our first suffering?

It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak.

It was born in the moment

When we accumulated silent things within us.

—Gaston Bachelard