



PREFACE

10 days ago, I started wondering what Laddership would be like if we were doing it in person. The thought brought me to a side quest where I decided to see what emerged if the engagements here mirrored the way in person engagements occur. I considered that, in person, I'm mostly socially reactive in large group settings - in that I'm more likely to engage if someone approaches me first. It also crossed my mind that if someone sat through even one of my admittedly and unapologetically long winded stories in person, I'm sure I'd be curious about that person afterward.

The sacred spreadsheet I used to keep track of this side quest informed me that 50 people gave me the gift of their attention throughout this process (which tickles me considering this is the metric Nipun often uses to discuss how we're collectively going from being Gandhi to Gandhi 3.0).

The gifts of these 50 folks rippled out into 146 meaningful interactions where I had the privilege to see inside their hearts and dreams and souls. As I contemplated how to make sense of all this content, I started doing what I do, and their words (and just the sparest of mine) wove themselves into the following compendium of stories.

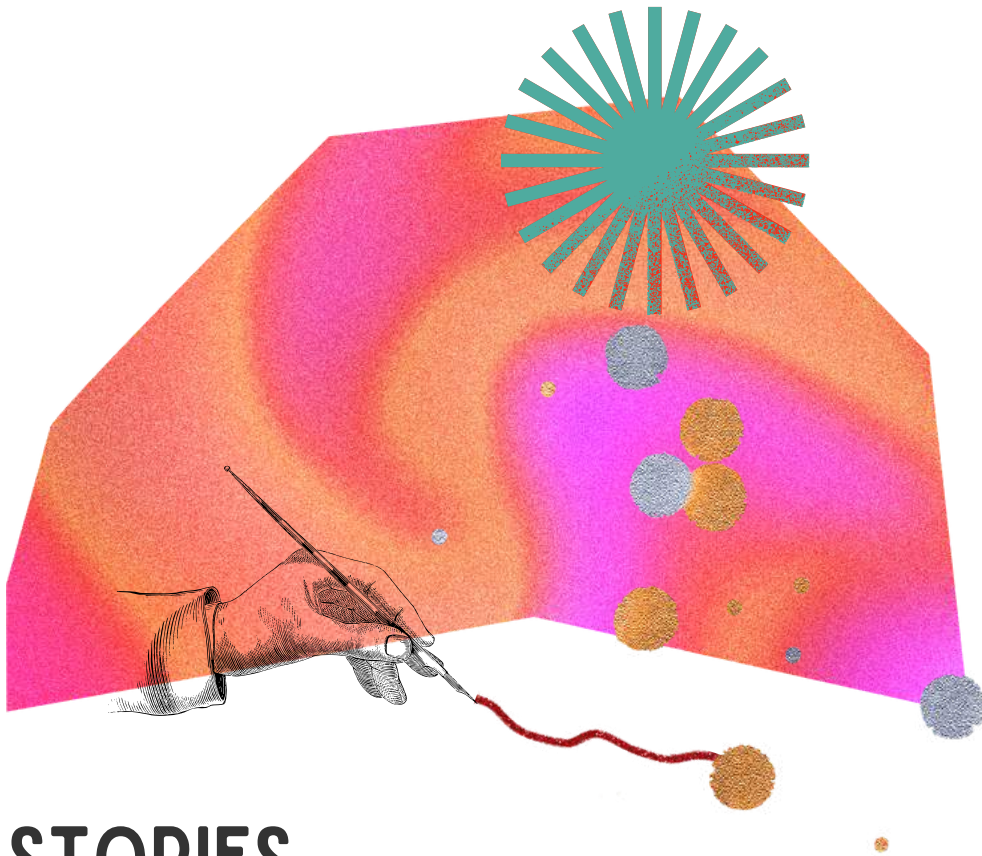
EMOTIONS



Both children and the elderly are here to remind those of us in the middle what we sometimes miss as the river of time marches ever forward: our best friends are more important than winning and radiating pure love for this moment is at once rich, frugal, and peaceful.

We serve this reminder when we open the release valve that allows the love, kindness, and compassion that lives within each of us to flow. The flow of these forces within us allows for us to completely and wholeheartedly surrender and trust in nature (or the universe, if you will) and deepen our self understanding. This surrender dissolves our fears, worries, and anxieties ever so imperceptibly and incrementally we become unafraid to show our feelings. Because if not now, then when?

We marvel when we realize that without changing ourselves, we are capable of creating the space for someone else to be completely themselves. We help those around us feel safe, loved, and seen. We come to know that we are all on this journey through life on exactly the same planet, giving us license to love all those we encounter along the way.

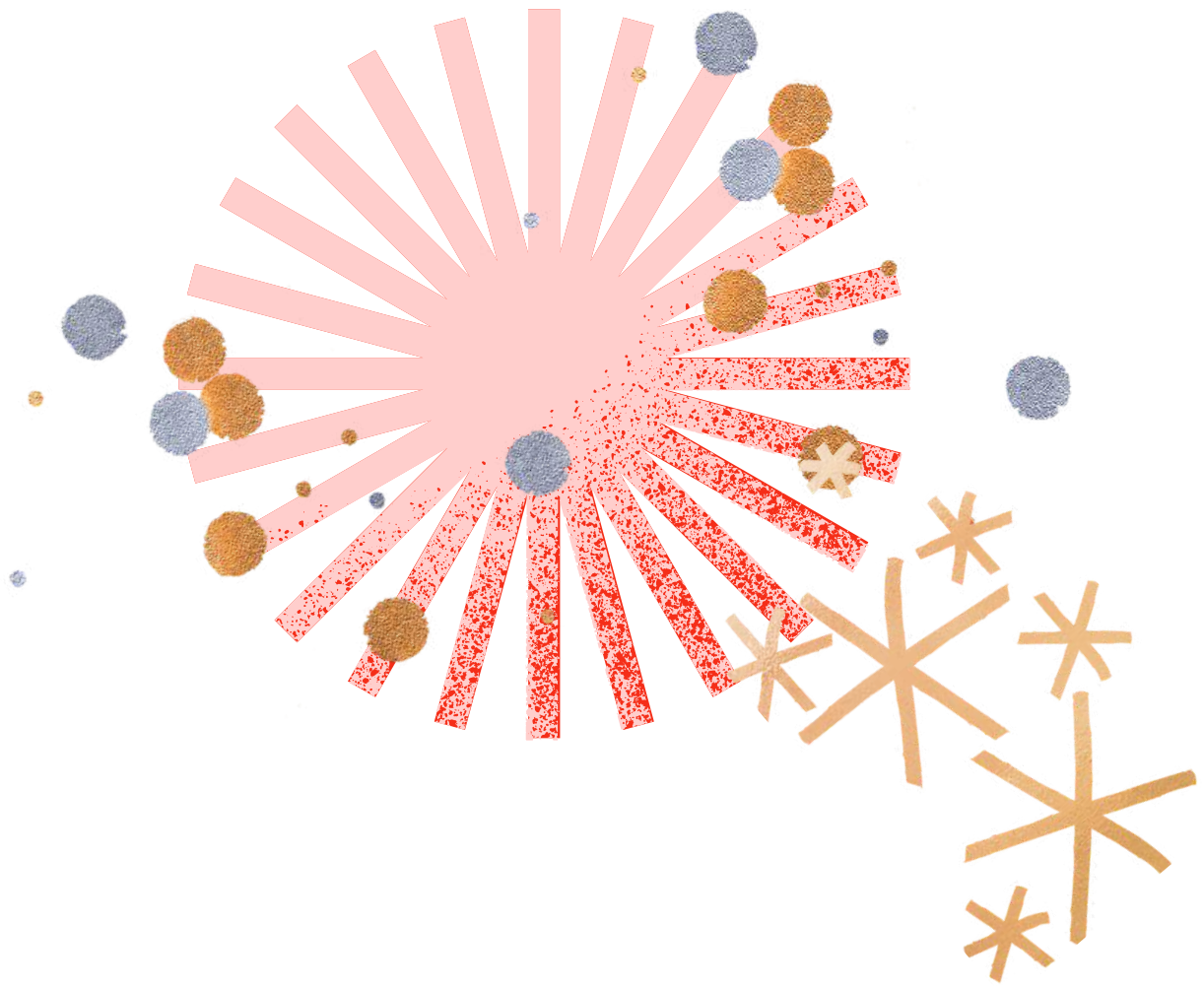


STORIES

Our reality is shaped by the narratives we tell ourselves and those we share with others.

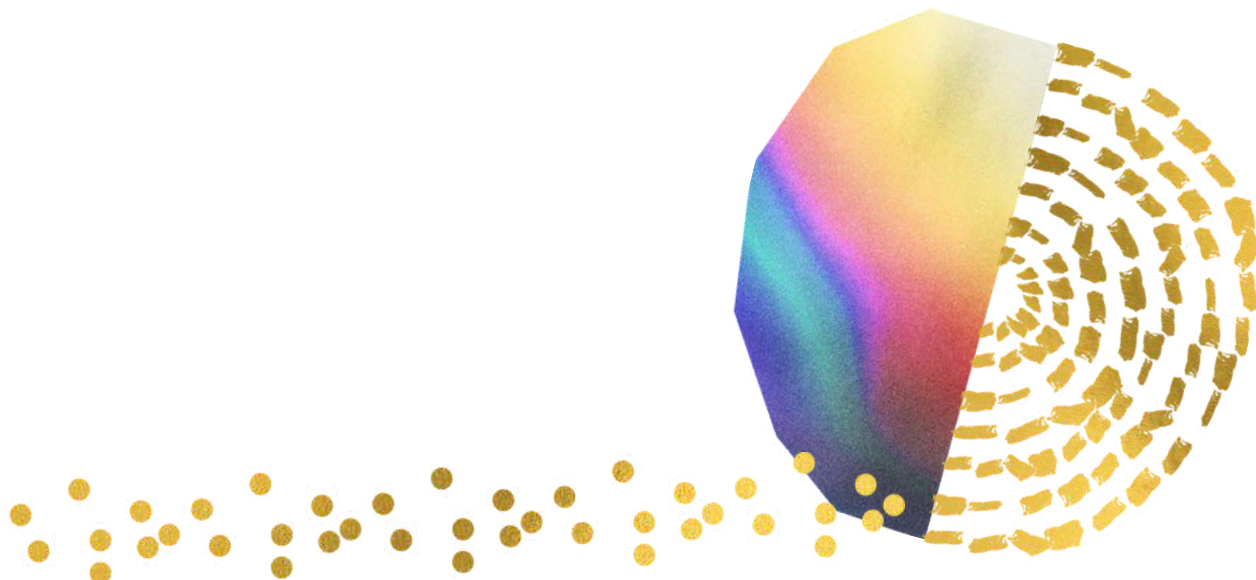
Stories that unite are self-aware, uplift the human spirit, and celebrate coming together. These unifying stories rely on the belief that there is a huge scope for feeding the hungry (the hunger for love, god, purpose in life, and so on).

Stories that keep us hopeful for the future come from a place of embracing and accepting our current circumstances and gathering enough quiet love, hope (and hopelessness), and faith to act. They require the belief that amongst all the clutter there is a solution that will emerge that comes from within.



STORY OF "I"

The harder we try to get the core of our "I," the more we suffer. Perhaps this is because the 'I' is simply a pinpoint of view; a lens thru which 'the whole', or 'the One' experiences. Like the image of a fiber optic light spray, there is a single source of light that illuminates all the fibers. Yet each filament or fiber appears as light unto itself, when viewed only at it's terminal end. With this metaphor in mind, we can have a notion of self that is more fluid, and centered around the story that regardless of our "I" we are all worthy of love.



CHANGE

We have the heat, fuel, and oxygen within us that nudge us to live our lives as examples. When we radiate inner strength, beauty, and awareness outward it reflects back the strength, inner beauty, and awareness of those around us. Hopefully, if enough people do this, the individual and societal transformations needed to create collective social change will happen together in some way.

When we interface with those who are not as far along on their path of change as we are, we remember the wisdom of our teachers. We remember how they taught us that no matter how many times we try to tell somebody a short cut, they're not ready to hear it until they're ready.

When we distress ourselves through expectations, rushing, hopelessness, and disappointment when things don't materialise in the way we imagine, we remember the wisdom of our teachers: when the mind jumps ahead, the body is left to hold the impact, our energy is blocked, and those energy blockages rest behind all illness that manifests.



VALUES

When in the state of financial constraint, we come to discover wealth in things like time, attention, health, family, friends, nature, literature, music, art, culture, family history, joy, spirituality, and activism. We begin to value volunteering more than money, and come to discover that we are regenerated when we share our wealth with others. When someone tells us, "I won't take up much of your time," we are able to interrupt and say, "Take your time. I'm all yours."

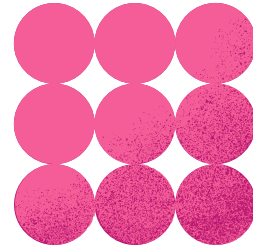
DESIGN



To avoid getting trapped in ideological echo-chambers, we constantly question our own beliefs & convictions. This process requires compassion, introspection, acceptance, insignificance, and interaction. We learn to see our bodies as our wise friends and guides. We ask our bodies how it feels when contemplating a decision or a course of action and feel the body's intuitive guidance. We take care of our bodies with adequate rest, movement, hydration, and nutrition, which allows us to offer our best to whatever we choose to do.

On purpose, we walk down streets we have never walked before, simply to enjoy discovering all the things that are there. We greet people for the first time while walking, a seemingly insignificant act at the moment. When we repeat the greeting, we end up talking. Repeated talking leads to increased comfort to have larger conversations. We periodically walk home with our hearts expanded - probably our context and content too.

It inspires us to take the time to sketch our gratitude for others, instead of drawing sketches that end up in the trash. Service becomes a way to express ourselves, contribute, speak our minds, and make someone's else's day better. We learn to truly hear others - hear how "their" needs are just like ours and everyone else's on the planet -- we share needs for love, safety, equanimity, expression, and service.



GROWTH

Nature always moves a lot of blocks here and there so that events unfold in a certain manner. As we grow, our nature becomes the capacity to balance the visible and invisible, direct and indirect, tangible and intangible, and to live in the space between ... not "either/or" but "both/and." With one eye on the microscope (perhaps in the time between breakfast and dinner) and one eye on the telescope (perhaps before breakfast and after dinner), we can see the subtlest and the most vast — and know we are part of all this. Which means even with awareness of all we don't know, we can choose what feels truest and right. We instinctively go sit in our hearts' "marching orders" for the important choices we face.

REFLECTION

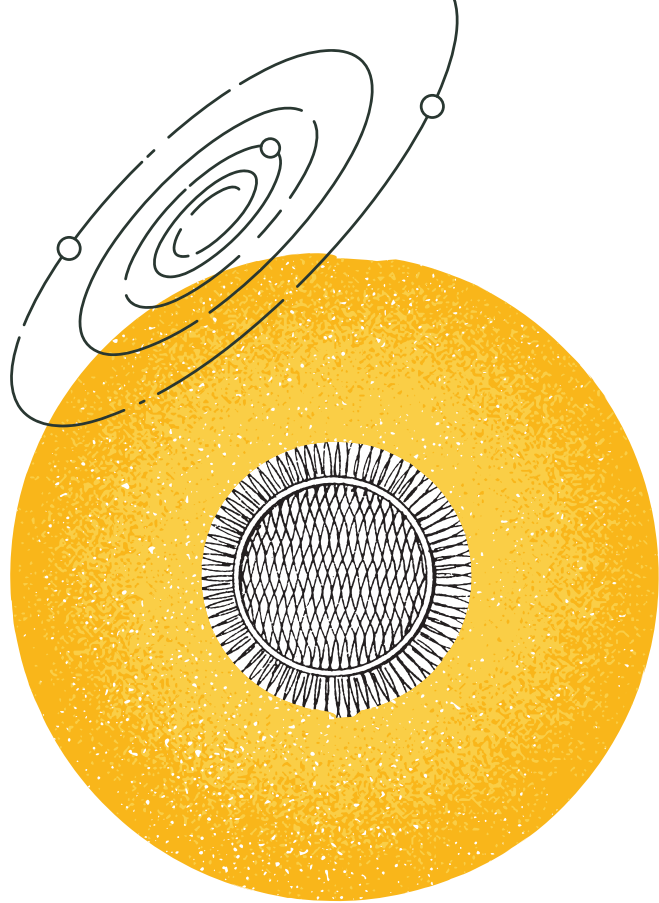
We were amazed by the power of storytelling, because we can only reach a higher level of consciousness through exchange with other human beings. As we saw ourselves in the mirror of the reflections of others, we learned how closed we had become in regards to giving and compassion.

We realized how financial Capital is attached to status, fear, shame and security. However, in our awe of the collective kindness, gratitude for action, and in noticing how those on this shared journey showed up with love, we felt "held" in a wonderful, warm embrace. This triggered in us a spark to change back into a giving person. To invest in forms of capital that better serve our needs through their regenerative nature and capacity to create and maintain trust and community. We committed to relax and keep going, one step at a time. To remember that life will support us no matter what. That our job is simply to make the light brighter.



GENEROSITY

Generosity is like a muscle; it builds itself if we work on it. Too much of a workout will create spasms and pain, and too little will make things frigid. Giving becomes regenerative when we hold no expectations, no pressure for a specific outcome, lead with humility, observe internal conditions, and walk at the pace of our inner resources. When we give what we have there is authenticity, and with authenticity emerges that which has no limit. So, give. Go first.



HUMILITY

Humility is honoring the great unknowable or the mystery. What creates life? How is all of Universe unfolding? Where do our lifeforces come from? It means acknowledging our ignorance and not having an inflated idea of our selves, our capacities, and our importance.

As an example of this, many mothers we happen to meet are usually like super moms to us. They're multitasking at the highest level and taking care of everyone at home and of the guests who visit. Yet, they're so humble to not take any pride and consider their hard work as something which ought to be done.



CURIOSITY

A sense of wonder, a longing to learn, listen, and be amazed helps us to be curious. If we can still ourselves a bit and open our hearts to others, it can help us to shift from listening to respond to listening to learn and hopefully from there listening without a defined objective. When we listen, the knowledge can grow even further when we start giving it to others because we want to learn more and more before teaching others. Education is something that will still be there with you no matter how much you give to others.