

THREE SIDES TO EVERY STORY

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Introduction (p. 4)	<i>There are three kinds of people in this world: people who make it happen, people who watch what happens, and people who wonder, “What happened?”</i> — Tommy Lasorda	* <i>Mary Jewel Ledbetter</i>
1. Words (p. 8)	<i>By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.</i> - Confucius	* <i>Coffee and Cliches</i> * <i>Cutting Comments</i> * <i>Valentine Chocolates and a Few Bad Words</i>
2. Purpose (p. 16)	<i>I follow three rules: Do the right thing; do the best you can; and always show people you care.</i> — Lou Holtz	* <i>Good vs. Evil</i> * <i>A Tattoo and a Few Takeaways</i> * <i>Gifts and Traditions</i>
3. Place (p. 23)	<i>Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love; and something to hope for.</i> — Joseph Addison	* <i>Celebrity Sunsets</i> * <i>Front Steps</i> * <i>Signs of the Season</i>
4. Metaphors (p. 33)	<i>There are three classes of people: those who see, those who see when they are shown, those who do not see.</i> — Leonardo da Vinci	* <i>Life as a State Fair</i> * <i>The Ninth Wonder</i> * <i>A Mother Hen and Her Peacock</i>
5. Determination (p. 43)	<i>Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge.</i> — Plato	* <i>Hope Is a Rascal</i> * <i>Mud Pies, Hopscotch, and Dandelion Soup</i> * <i>Tin Can Resolutions</i>
6. Perspective (p. 53)	<i>Zen pretty much comes down to three things – everything changes; everything is connected; pay attention.</i> — Jane Hirshfield	* <i>Chicken Bones and Good Customer Service</i> * <i>It Starts by Holding Hands</i> * <i>Shoes in the Road, Shopping Carts, and Saggy Pants</i>
7. Love (p. 63)	<i>Never forget the three powerful resources you always have available to you: love, prayer, and forgiveness.</i> — H. Jackson Brown, Jr.	* <i>Moons and Milk Jugs</i> * <i>A Father’s Devotion</i> * <i>A Home Without Anger</i>
8. Mothers (p. 72)	<i>Now faith, hope, and love remain – these three things – and the greatest of these is love.</i> — 1 Corinthians 13:13	* <i>Kitchen Sink Memories</i> * <i>Pins and Needles</i> * <i>Beauty of a Woman</i>

**9. Miscellaneous
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There are three constants in life...change, choice, and principles.
– Stephen Covey

*Pop Culture
*June Jam
*Table Settings

**10. Emotions
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A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to rediscover, through the detours of art, those two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened.
– Albert Camus

*Sherbet Cones, Candy Dishes, and Boomerangs
*Bad Smells and Good Moments
*The Pyramid Needs Another Level

**Final Thoughts
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In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.
– Robert Frost

*Moments Blinked to Memory

Mud Pies, Hopscotch, and Dandelion Soup

I am not a great cook, but I can make a mean mud pie. My sister taught me in my first decade of life beneath a large evergreen on the west side of our house.

The shaded grotto was our kitchen, and we cooked on our hands and knees beneath its prickly green branches. We mixed water with black earth and pressed the thick muck into discarded aluminum Banquet pot pie tins.

Like many pastry fillings, my mud was chunky with rocks, twigs, rebellious weeds, and an occasional luckless bug. Of course, we didn't eat our creations. A good chef rarely does. It was the process we enjoyed, as well as our impressive pastries which, when dowsed by the hose, returned to the ground from whence they came.

Yes. Our clothes were soiled from the soil. Our fingernails were gunked with grime, and the bubbles in our bathwater turned a murky grey, but Mom didn't mind. We were using our imaginations. Wide blades of grass became whistles when pinned between our thumbs. Thousands of single daisy petals, pulled one by one, would eventually give me the answer I wanted: the boy down the block really did love me. Dandelions were held repeatedly beneath the chin to validate I liked butter. Old ice cream buckets became cauldrons of dandelion soup by simply popping off the golden crowns, splitting the sticky stems, stirring them into cold water, and watching them curl like rotini.

Such free time was just that: free.

A rock was an excellent substitute for chalk when sketching a hopscotch board into the sidewalk. My friends and I could spend hours throwing that same rock into a square, hopping like a one-legged rabbit to "heaven" and back, then doing it another fifty times. Similarly, a good

game of tag required only your legs, eyes, fingers, and lungs. Run like you were on fire. Hide like you were naked. Search as if you had x-ray vision, and make sure your enemy felt your poke, so it could be your turn to hide.

I spent many an afternoon playing “I Dream of Jeannie” in my neighbors’ sandbox. It was an enormous tractor tire thrown into their backyard, like a giant’s life preserver. But when I stepped in, it became a magic bottle. I’d cross my arms like Barbara Eden, blink an imaginary Major Nelson to life, re-enact one of the episodes, then press my hands together above my head, and slalom back into the bottle.

And, while I was into playacting, others enjoyed sports: basketball in driveways; football in front yards; baseball in open fields; and kickball down our streets. Trees were for climbing. Curbs were for balancing. And ropes were for jumping. We’d leave the house in the morning, stop back for lunch at noon, then drag our tired bodies home when Mom called us in at sundown. Approximately two years ago, a survey revealed 75 percent of American mothers said their best childhood memories took place outdoors while playing with a sibling or friend. Yet, today’s statistics show only one in five children plays outside during the week for approximately four hours total.

Alongside this sobering news, Pew Research found more than one-third of parents, with a child under 12, had introduced him or her to a mobile device before the age of five. Ten is the average age children get their first smartphone, and 50 percent of 12-year-olds have a social media account.

A Kaiser Family Foundation study determined today’s children between eight and 18 entertain themselves nearly eight hours a day with a screen (e.g., TV, computer, or smartphone),

despite pediatric experts warning they can damage a child's development and cause behavioral problems.

Parental use of them doesn't help. A survey of 168 moms and 165 dads revealed technology interrupted quality parent-child time three or more times a day; and paying more attention to their smartphones than their children caused their children to act out and misbehave. The several-hundred-dollar "smart" phones have proven to overstimulate the brain with "hits" of dopamine and adrenaline. These feel-good chemicals, released when using the device, are addictive. They cause children (and adults) to disconnect from other basic needs such as sleep, nutrition, fresh air, and physical activity, not to mention a sense of belonging and meaning in life.

Now, I recognize smartphones are not going away any time soon. Like dandelions, they have become a part of life. And there are certainly good things about today's technologies. They can teach our children about the world and introduce them to the high-tech environment in which they will one day work.

Yet, I hope all of us will encourage the children in our lives to use their imaginations more and discover games they can play for free. There's a hopscotch board and chunky mud pie waiting to be made--right outside the back door.