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STORIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

and for Story-tellers who love telling them

I would like your help. Young children love stories, particularly at bedtime, and there are none better to tell them than their parents, grandparents and carers. But how often is this special time regarded as an inconvenient chore? To speed the process and to make it easier, story books with pictures help the reader who can narrate the words and point to illustrations, saving verbal explanations that sometimes tax the brain of busy, practical adults. This, however, should be quality time for all concerned, a few minutes of interaction so precious that they need to be savoured. That's what Moonberry Pie is all about.

Our stories don't come with pictures, so the reading of them has to make them come alive. Emphasis means everything to the young and can transport them from bedroom normality to the magical world of make-believe. Without illustrations, only the way the story is told can take them there. To do this, as a narrator you must suspend disbelief, forget your age and start to think again like a child; try to remember how you were delighted in your early years. The magic carpet, the fair Princess, the handsome Prince – they were all real for you back then: your job now is to revive that reality; for yourself as well as for your children.

Moonberry Pie presents to you an opportunity for improving your relationship with the young, to cement yourself as a true mentor who will be remembered for the stories YOU told that sent them to sleep feeling warm and safe; and in later life they will wish to be as loving and caring with their own children as you were with them.

The problem with that, you will be thinking, is they aren't YOUR stories. Not right at this moment maybe, but when you are sitting on the edge of the bed and begin to relate them, you will make them your own. The lilt of your voice, the happy or sad inflexion, the concern for the situation in the story at a particular time will be yours. Moonberry Pie is simply your guide. Whatever the scenario, you will be there, telling it as you see it.

Without the help of pictures, your listeners will ask questions and you will have to fill in the blanks, describing the scene and its elements as you imagine them to be. That's your job – to be a true story-teller. To achieve this you have to be convincing. It's no good reading off a sheet of paper you've barely glimpsed before. You are telling a story, one you know and can narrate without stumbling over words and events. You have to familiarise yourself with what's coming next, and you need to have created an idea of how characters in the story look and react before you can convince a child that what you are saying is real. That's story-telling, and it requires a little forethought and preparation. Can you be that story-teller?

Too hard, you may be thinking. Well, no it isn't. In fact, most of you will enjoy the experience as will your children, once you get the hang of it. So, I ask you to give it a go. If it works, I believe it will add a new, refreshing relationship between you and your children that you will all be grateful for, a personal gift from you to them that will last a lifetime.