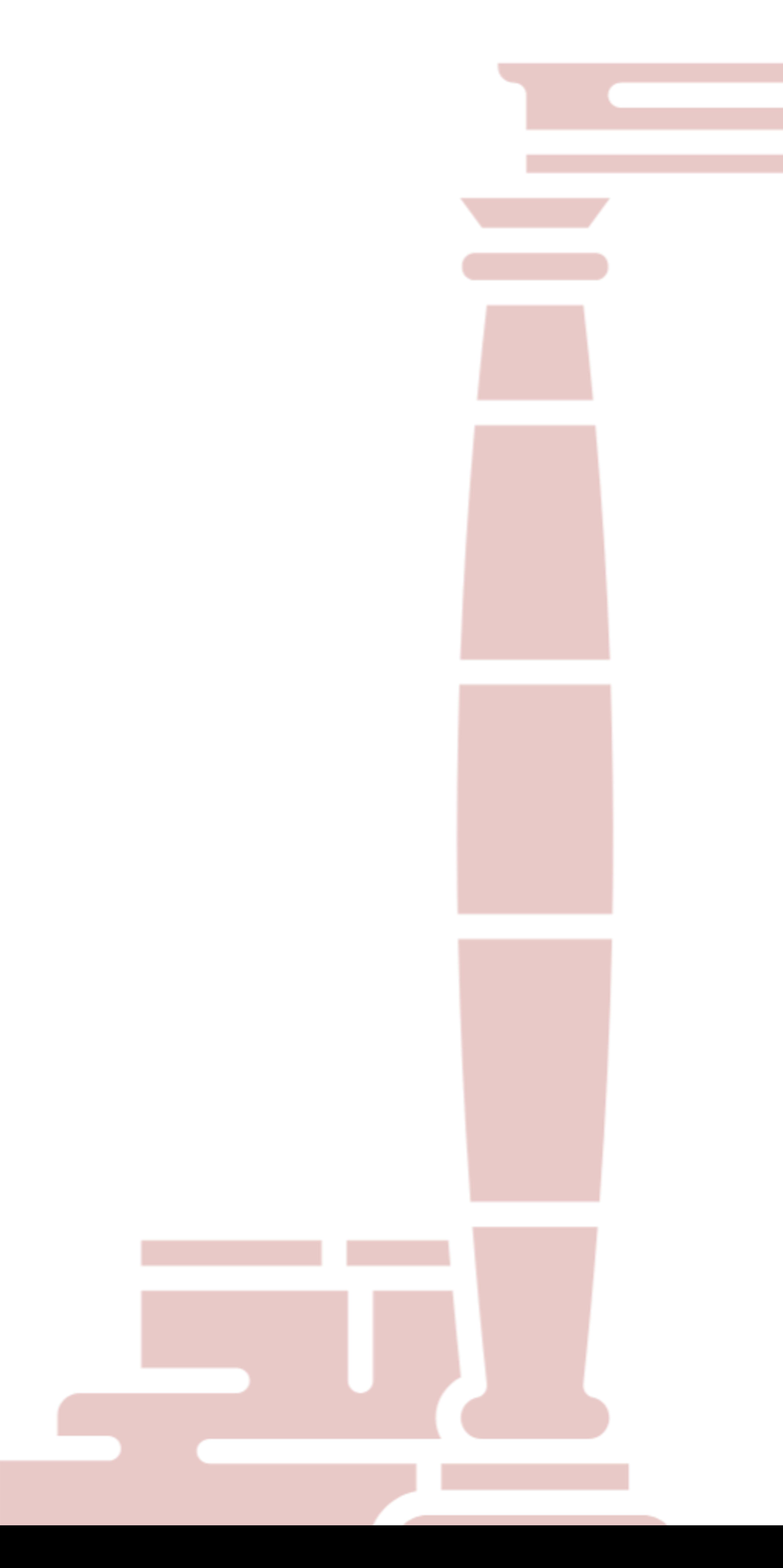


#### Storytelling for Heritage

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# Among other things storytelling is ... • Tradition Bearing

- The communication of a real or imagined narrative to one or more people.
- A process of pattern finding/ linking together of information
- The use of symbols to convey meaning (s)
- A performing art/Entertainment
- Recall and sharing of experience
- A vessel to allow accumulation of collective knowledge
- A mode to process experiences individually and collectively
- A ritual of bonding
- The creation of Empathy
- Expression of identity
- Inate

# Did anyone tell you, you are a natural storyteller?

Storytelling is Innate. Human's didn't evolve the capacity for language, culture and community and then start telling stories, they/we evolved because we started telling stories.

#### APPLIED STORYTELLING

Applied storytelling is the purposeful use of story as a tool for personal, community or organisational development, learning or information gathering and sharing.

#### Key Elements are that...

- The roles of storyteller and listener are often fluid
- It is a person centred oral practice, i.e. The autonomy, needs and voices of the participants, rather than the group leader/ artist / facilitato/ funder/external influencer, are centred. Built from therapist, Carl Rogers' Core Conditions, empathy, unconditional positive regard, congruence
- Works well alongside other art forms and activities, it can be the discussions which take place when we are deeply immersed in a satisfying activity.
- It is Strengths based A belief that the power, expertise and knowledge is innate and exists already in the participant (We can't give power but we help participants identify the resources they already have, imagine potential and help to remove barriers to access it as fully as possible) built on work of Educationalist **Paulo Friere**, and his work Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
- Draws from more developed Applied Theatre practice and practitioners particularly, Augusto Boal Theatre of The Opressed , Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton's Process Drama.
- As a highly flexible art form which requires minimal resources it can take place anywhere.

#### Tales and Legends

These are the types of fictional stories I imagine you are all very familiar with and in the UK are what the general public imagine when one pictures storytelling; myths and legends, fables, fairy and folk tales - stories of wonder and adventure. We could consider these traditional stories as they are deeply rooted to the geography and cultures from which they have evolved over hundreds if not thousands of years.

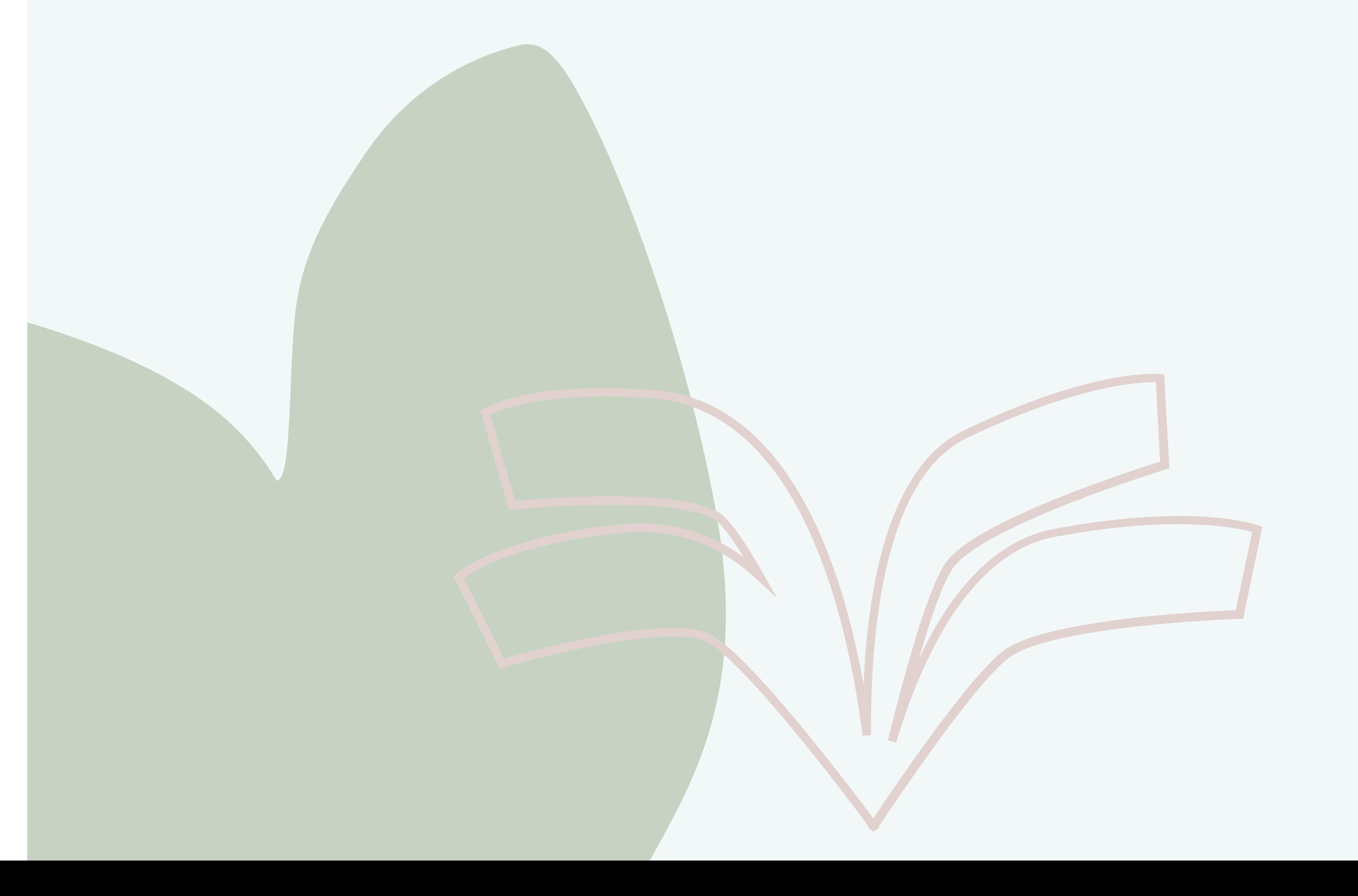
These stories share a sense that they are not set in our time or even in our world and it is precisely this element which can make them such powerful Applied Storytelling tools. Their distance from reality can offer participants space to reflect and an opportunity to imaginatively leave their own day to day lives for a time, escape established thought patterns and personal narratives, which if handled with care, can be a powerful intervention to combat emotional distress or simply offer a welcome mental break.

Fantastical themes and historic plots may not initially appear relevant to our modern lives, but in fact the content of these stories has been edited by countless people in order to process and express the most difficult, shared, human experiences. Dragons for example, could represent fear of the other, the unknown or unmapped. Their hoarding of treasure can represent concerns about unwieldy power, greed and wealth inequality, all issues which are deeply resonant today. The narratives can offer safe vessels through which to begin talking about, processing and challenging these complex and potentially polarising themes in an inclusive and non-threatening way.

Beyond narrative content, the experience of hearing and sharing stories offers a moment of deep connection, pleasure and fellowship which can be deeply felt and even transformative for an isolated person.







#### Personal Stories

Personal stories can be a powerful autobiographical testimony amplified through microphones on a beautifully lit stage but can also be a conversation shared on the bus, the short anecdotes and chit chat which make the basic elements of day to day communication.

On a stage or on a bus, having a safe and accepting space in which to share personal stories can be an incredibly powerful applied storytelling process, resulting in profound reflection. Individuals quickly recognise that they are worthy of being heard and what they have to say is important and interesting, which itself may not be a narrative they are used to. Through the process of sharing, we often find that stories are not set in stone and our relationship to the story can change through their telling and retelling.

Stories really are all around us, indeed, it's through constructed narratives that we understand and experience intangible things like our pasts, the present, our identities and cultures and how we imagine our futures. With Applied Storytelling we can sensitively examine those stories and consider which ones serve us and which may not. We can gain skills in imagination, creation and expression and take authorship over the stories we have been told or tell about ourselves and importantly consider what happens next.

## One Step Removed




Nearly real stories involve the use of stories which are like real life but not. The approach offers the distance and objectivity necessary for a group to consider themes and issues which directly affect them without feeling overly exposed. The group then has the ability to regulate their own disclosure, adding only as much of their own story as they feel comfortable to contribute.

The stories are collaboratively created by the group as a whole, the central characters and the issues and decisions they are facing are built up and discussed progressively through various exercises and techniques. A particular focus is given to identifying realistic solutions and positive futures for the characters, a task which is much easier to do for an invented character than for oneself!

This process will be discussed in more detail throughout this toolkit.

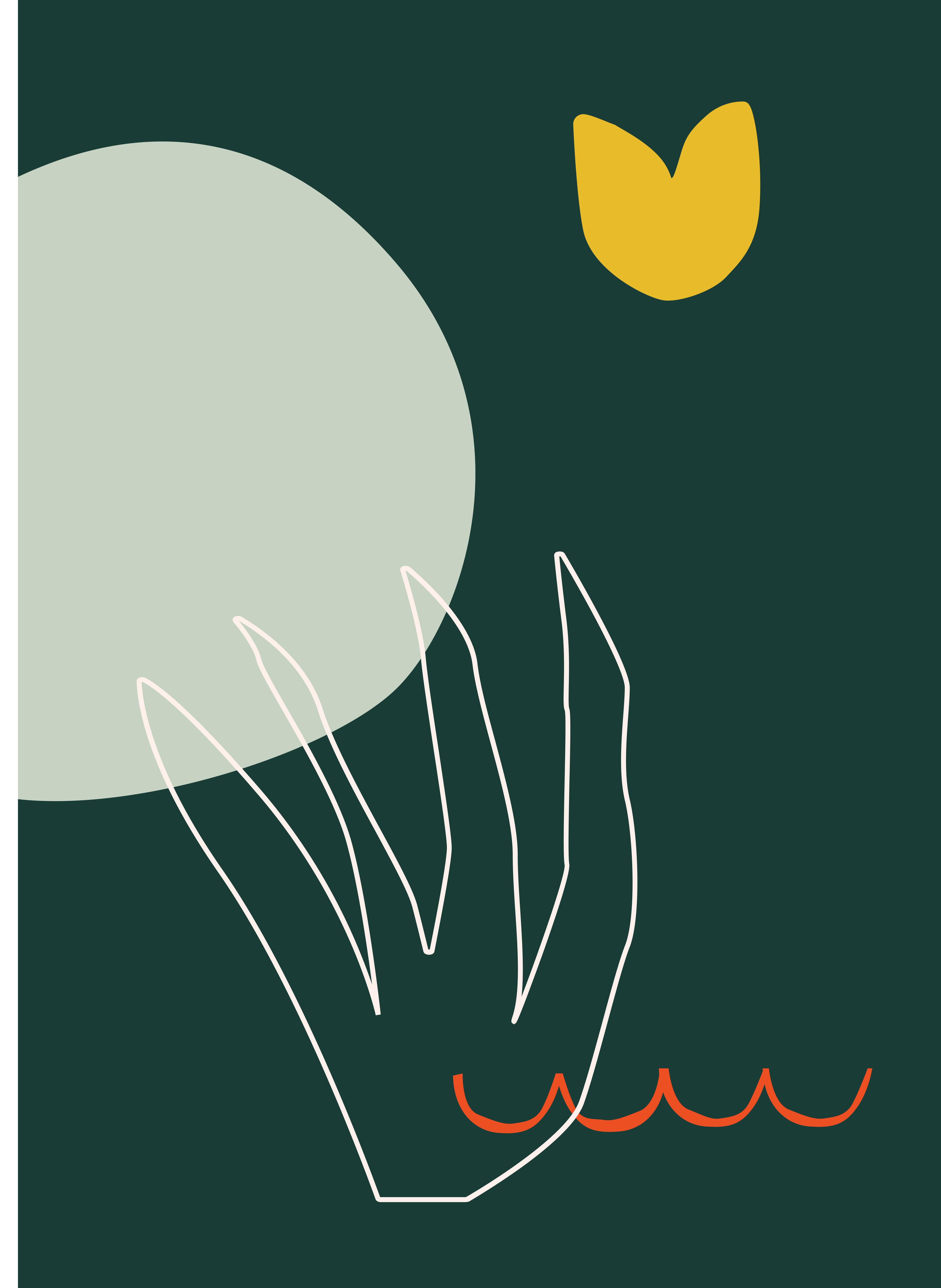
The Hero's Journey, or the monomyth, was coined by Joseph Campbell in 1949 and refers to a common structure found in stories worldwide, wherein a character ventures into the unknown to retrieve something they need or discover something about themselves. Originally conceived of 12 steps, it has been reduced here, also known as the journey as



### The Hero's Journey

Draw a circle and, in relation to your case study, plot these 5 key moments of it's narrative.

- 1. The beginning: An introduction to characters, their relationships and the current status quo.
- 2. The call: A call to action/adventure that sets the protagonist off on their journey.
- 3. The helpers and the help: Friends, allies and other characters they meet along the way that may be of service to them.
- 4. The opponents and the setbacks: Challenges they face and antagonists and the characters encounter.
- 5. The arrival: The protagonist emerges on the other side, whether victorious or not. The characters must adjust to the new status quo.



# THANKS FOR JOING ME!

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