

# Truth

I publish my stories on the World Wide Web. I probably don't have many readers, but I treasure each of them because I am happy to have someone accept my writing. Good or bad, my offering is indeed a gift and a gift needs a recipient. Else, I'd be writing a diary, which is like sitting in a corner and talking to a wall.

My readers often write to ask if one story or another is truth or fiction. I write back and tell them I don't know. If anything, my stories are usually both.

I've noticed there are different kinds of truth in my telling of tales, different from when I am careful to be honest in my daily affairs and conversations.

There is so-called literal truth, but I've never been very interested in the literal truth of anything, whether a religious document or a likely story told by a friend. The sharp accuracy of fact is not something I worry about.

The Oglala Sioux shaman Black Elk would begin each spiritual tale by saying, "This is the way it happened. Or maybe it didn't, but it could have. And anyway, this is what carries the truth." I

try to carry the truth, if not always the facts. I understand there are those who think literal truth is very important, but outside of legal contracts I'm not one of them. For me, truth is seldom precise. It is often confusing.

There are factual truths such as gravity and other scientific concepts that we feel pretty sure of. There is truth that is much more personal. It touches us where we live and for me it parallels the "three times" of discernment spoken of by Ignatius of Loyola. Truth may come from the experience of living life. Truth may rise from a certainty lying deep within us, a conviction we may not be able to measure or describe. We just know it's there. Truth is not arithmetic. It is language. It comes not from working a formula, nor is it a dramatic testimony. It is more like the continuing unfolding of a story.

I sense that behind it all there is a single truth in the Universe, though I can't begin to define it. My failure to explain the ineffable speaks only to my humanness and not to a lack of truth in creation. It is there, all around us. If I needed proof, I can think of only one piece of evidence for the existence of truth ... our desire to find it.

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**Windswept Press**  
**Saugerties, New York**

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