

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

(*The Labyrinth: abstract*)

[Sound of touch-tone telephone keys being pressed, followed by ringing, accompanied by reflective guitar music. The music plays throughout the show.]

[We hear five different voices, to be identified later, coming over the phone]

Voice 1: Hello, Tony! How are you doing?

Voice 2: Hey, Tony!

Voice 3: Hey, Tony!

Voice 4: Hi, Tony! How are you!

Voice 5: Hi, Tony! How are you?

Tony Kahn:

Hi, everybody! This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston. From the start, this has been a conversation that we've had with all of you around the world about the moments in our lives that matter. An exchange of personal stories that let us walk a while in each other's shoes.

And this last week, I called up five of our listeners who've been with us pretty much from the start. Just to look back a bit on where we've been together, and to appreciate how much our partnership with all of you has meant and, I hope, will continue to mean.

Voice 1 [Bruce]:

You know, I define myself as this sort of, you know, polar explorer-adventurer type, and it's like, when I go to the field, I'm with people from no less than four or five other countries. I realize that we have much more in common with each other than we have differences. And *Morning Stories* really go a long way to restoring that quality of slow, thoughtful communication.

The conversations that you set up. They feel very much like a small conversation in a coffee shop between two or three people.

And I think it's really the small stories that are the ones that transform your life. I'm fifty-four, and I've been together with my partner for about ten or fifteen years, and prior to our being married, I had a life that was made up of going to exotic places. But for the first time in a long time I was there, and after a month I said, "You know what? I'm ready to come home." [chuckles] I decided to obey the first rule of polar logistics: Never pass up an airplane going your way, because you never know when the next one may be coming. [Tony laughs] And

so, I, I left actually a couple of weeks early, and I came home to my wife, and she was delighted.

You are certainly an Olympic-class listener, and I think you have the knack of bringing out the best in people.

Tony Kahn:

I've got to thank my family for being such big talkers that I had no choice in the matter. [both men laugh]

Voice 1:

I wish you all the luck in the next transformation of *Morning Stories*, and I hope you guys hang in there and keep doing what you do well.

Voice 2 [Sonny]:

So many people heard my story. I would go places and do things, and they'd say, "Are you the guy with diabetes?" And I'd say like, "What? You know? "Does it show?" [chuckles] One guy said that he had been living with diabetes his whole life and everything I said he felt. The email ended with: "After listening to your story, I love you like a brother." You deal with this thing twenty-four/seven, and you try not to let you show, but it's always in your head, and I think other diabetics who heard it, finally said, "Wow! You know, somebody else feels the same way I do about this thing!" I showed weakness here and I don't usually do that, and, uh – but I guess maybe you made me a little more human. And maybe that's why more people felt something. You listen. That's the part that I'm totally impressed with. It gets to another level. And I'm, I'm sorry to see these stories go. Made me feel like I was glad I, I talked.

Voice 3 [Kevin]:

Sharing my story with your listeners has made so much to me, and people tracked me down. I was like, "I heard it going to work!" "I heard it waking up this morning." And they told me stories. And, and I thought, "Wow! This is just wondrous. That it, it literally networks one person to other people. That's amazing.

Tony Kahn:

Sometimes, Kevin, I think stories are viruses that use human beings to spread!

Voice 3 [Kevin]:

And I hope that continues, because you have been the greenhouse, or the petri dish for the virus. [both men laugh] You spread it well, and, and that's what's so great about *Morning Stories*. That is has spread, and been so enjoyed.

Voice 4 [Ginny]:

I actually have been going through them very slowly, because I really want to savor each story. I wonder who the person is, where they live, what they do in the morning, what other stories do they have in their life?

I have very profound hearing loss, and the transcripts that you provided allow me to read the transcripts as I plug myself in with different equipment to the audio on my computer. At first I thought I would just read the transcripts, but to get the full feeling of the story, to hear parts of the person's voice, to hear them laugh, to hear them, to hear them pause . . . That's what makes a story. That's what makes a storyteller.

From the poignant to the absolutely silly, to the weird [both laugh]. To the wonderful, to the road trip! To the ham! I mean, that was one that – a guy driving around with a ham! I mean –

Tony Kahn:

[with laughter in his voice] What's wrong with that?

Voice 4:

There's nothing wrong with it! [heartly laughter by both, especially by Voice 4 [female]] That's what *Morning Stories* does – it brings the human connection right to us.

Voice 5 [Stacia]:

You were the first podcast I found, and downloaded the first episode, and I was hooked.

When we got to the Betsy Bunn story that you produced, and Gary and everyone – of *Marshall Junior and Louise*, your show kind of changed my life. When Betsy said, "I don't think we try very hard. I wonder if we ever will. Do the best that you can." It was exactly what I needed to hear, exactly the right time. You know this, this person I've had animosity towards, I wasn't trying very hard. For us to be able to look at one another and say, "You know what? I'm really sorry." And then, not only to have the chance to do that, but we're great friends now! He's the first person I talk to when something really great happens. Or when I really, really need somebody. And I'm kind of the same for him. That's amazing to me. And you needed to know that. I honestly picked up my cell phone to dial you before I realized I didn't have your number! [Tony laughs] "And he doesn't really know who I am yet!"

I think you've created a family that goes all the way around the world. And we're all connected with one another because if we started talking about our favorite stories, there's eight, or ten, or five hundred other people listening.

“You know, that touched me in a certain way, too.” It’s, it’s so unique. That’s magic! *Morning Stories* gave me my friend back. If you ever doubt the importance of what you do, just think about that. Keep in touch.

Tony Kahn:

Take care.

Voice 5 [female]:

Bye, Tony.

Tony Kahn:

Bye.

Voice 2:

So thank you, Tony!

Voice 4:

Take care.

Tony Kahn:

Bye-bye.

Voice 4 [female]:

Bye-bye.

Voice 1:

Thanks for being there, and keep up the great work.

Voice 2:

Take care.

Voice 4 [female]:

I wish you well!

Tony Kahn:

That was Bruce Vaughn, Sonny Dufault, Kevin Jankowski, Ginny Mazur, and Stacia McClure that we spoke with there. I want to thank them all, and I want to thank you! While I’m at it, a few other people I’d like to thank. All the engineers at WGBH who’ve helped us sound as good as we can. That’s Allan Matthes, Mike Wilkins, Jane Pipik, Ray Fallon, Robin Moore, and Antonio Oliart.

I’d also like to thank Bob Lyons, and Marita Rivero, Darlene Wilson, and everyone else at WGBH for giving us encouragement, and a safe harbor to launch what Darlene once called (and I’ll never forget) “our little tugboat of a

program.” And especially thanks to Gary Mott for being there in every way I could possibly imagine. And then some.

To all of you – “Thank you” is just too short a phrase. In the weeks to come, we’ll be working on ways to keep our conversation with you going, and the stories coming in. So, keep in touch as always by dropping by the *Morning Stories* website at <[wgbh.org/morning stories](http://wgbh.org/morning-stories)> You’ll find all our stories there, the latest news, and a link to contribute what you can to our costs. We want to know where we can find you, too. So please, send us your email address at <morningstories@wgbh.org>.

This podcast began almost four years ago with a simple story, and that’s how we’ll end it today. From Jackie Lantry, today’s *Morning Story: The Labyrinth*.

The Labyrinth

Jackie Lantry:

I quit my job. I had no idea what I'm going to do. There just has to be something more. I thought, "Well, I'll spend the summer building a labyrinth." All the twists, all the turns, all the going back on itself – you'll find your way. That's what happens when you walk in a labyrinth.

[Piano music begins, indicates building tension; it continues under the narrative.]

My dad was a construction worker. Eight kids. He would leave before it was light out, and he would come home after it got dark. And I could see when he came home that he was exhausted. Absolutely filthy, from just working. Just working hard. It was summer, and we had just dinner. And he said, "Let's go see the job I'm working on." And we drove to Binghamton, New York, from Whitney Point. All of us in the back of the truck. And we went and we looked at this huge iron skeleton of a building. And thought, "WOW!" And he told us how he walked across beams eighteen inches wide. And there was no tying a person off, then. You were up there three, four, five stories! And he would walk across the beams. And a crane would lift a beam and it would come to him, and he'd couple them, and he riveted them together. And, you know, just hearing him, and looking up at the sky, and seeing that, thinking of his shadow up there and I was just amazed and astonished, that he could do that. And that he would do that . . . for me. I thought to myself, "I'm so safe."

[Sound of birds singing; traffic in background]

He's close to eighty years old, he's retired. He has a house in upstate New York. He gave it to my brother. He lives in a tiny trailer in Florida, and he has a lawn-mowing business. If you're a widow, he cuts your lawn for free. If you're on a

fixed income, you tell him how much. And he's never raised his rates. He's a very simple man. He really is. You know, I wasn't his favorite. (I know that, Dad!) [laughs] I was more intellectual. I liked books. It looked as if then, we didn't have much in common.

He doesn't know about it yet, but we are going to pick him up in the summer. And we are going to go back to upstate New York, and we're going to visit with all of his relatives again. And then I'm going to bring him to my house and, and uh that's when we'll show him the labyrinth. I think at first he'll say, "What the hell is that?!" And then, he'll look at it and say, "Wow! You built it? That was a lot of work! How did you do that?" And he'll be fascinated by that part of it. And then, you know, probably when I'm not looking, he'll walk in it. And you know, he'll - he'll think it's a pretty cool thing.

[Music - folk strings]

[Jackie speaks tearfully here] When he was very sick, and he went into surgery, he said, "I'm ready to go." And he said, "I worry that sometimes I wasn't a good father." I don't want him to worry about that. He gave me that faith, that unbelievable, unshakeable core that lets a risk-averse person take a risk.

Thank you.

[Music becomes fuller and, joined by bird song, plays alone for a while.]

[End of Recording]

Notes from transcriber:

What a perfect way to wrap up the last four years of stories - Tony and Gary, you showed yet again your exquisite taste by choosing just the right comments to cull from your longer conversations, enhanced by just the right music (and bird songs!).

Everyone who reads this transcript - let's all promise to keep in touch with Tony and Gary, and by doing so, keep in touch with each other.

That way, when they begin the next incarnation of *Morning Stories*, we can all join around the world again, rejoicing!

Transcribed by Liz Cooksey