

## The story of our times

### Becky Hall's reflections on the work of Betty Sue Flowers at the 2008 Pegasus conference in Boston, USA

The world is in transition. We are moving between stories – grand stories, mythological stories. Stories define us – who we are and how we are in the world. They let us tell the tales of facts through different lenses, and in doing so we make sense of things. Each different, each true. And stories help lead us into our future; as we tell the story of things to come, so we create the patterns of what will be. As we imagine what we will do, so we follow the script to do it – written and imagined by us. And in times of great challenge – such as now – we need stories to help us clarify our dream, our possibility, how we will walk into the future that is already part of our story, we just haven't lived it yet. This is the creative act of being alive, every day, every person walking into actions, realities, stories that they have helped create. Today is the tomorrow we dreamt about yesterday, and so our stories unfold.

Our grand narratives – great myths – have helped humans to shape themselves, frame themselves and talk about themselves authentically and collectively in the world. Betty Sue Flowers, poet, mythologist and academic frames “four myths that have made us” and then adds the fifth – the myth that we are moving into - like this.

	<b>Hero</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Democratic Scientific</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Ecological</b>
<b>Ideal</b>	Excellence	Goodness	Truth	Growth	Health (wholeness)
<b>Behaviour</b>	Competition	Obedience	Reason	Maximum advantage	Communication (connectedness)
<b>Actors</b>	Heroes	Saints & Prophets	Philosophers & scientists	Consumers Business	Creators
<b>Communication</b>	Stories	Scripture Prayer	Logical argument Mathematics	Image Numbers	Expressive (including style)
<b>AGE</b>	Ancient	Medeaval	Enlightenment	Industrial	Now – our emerging future

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We are exactly at the point where we are moving from one grand narrative, one story of ourselves to another. This is collective story telling on a huge scale, and it is being propelled forward by the urgency of events. It is now 2009. We have until 2012 to limit the effects of climate change in order to prevent climate catastrophe on a huge scale. The world markets have just collapsed, and the possibilities for us to move forward into a new value system are there for the taking.

So now is the time when we need to focus on telling the stories of our new age. Stories that may not come true, stories that will turn dreams into reality, stories that will help us become who we are, stories of ourselves in the future that will define and shape a new age.

So our work is to facilitate ourselves, our colleagues, friends, families, communities, organisations, cultures into the new narrative – the story of our future, that we write not so that we can control it, but so that we can walk into it.

