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**Who Tells Our Story? Virtual edition.**

*Better Said Than Done Presents the 2021 virtual Women's Storytelling Festival, based out of Fairfax, VA*

February 9, 2021 -- Fairfax, Virginia -- The Women's Storytelling Festival, hosted by Better Said Than Done, will take place March 19-21, 2021, online, with performances by 36 storytellers from across the US and Canada. Better Said Than Done hosted the first-ever Women's Storytelling Festival in March 2020, in the City of Fairfax, VA. This year, the festival will be entirely virtual, and while some segments will be recorded in advance, most stories will be performed live online.

The 2021 festival features a greatly expanded schedule of 24 hours of content in one weekend. All ticket holders will receive links to complete recordings to watch at their leisure for two weeks following the festival. For schedules, other details, and tickets, visit <https://www.bettersaidthandone.com/womens-festival/>.

About this year's festival being virtual, Jessica Robinson (Fairfax, VA), founder of Better Said Than Done and festival producer says, "I miss performing in person, almost as much as I miss hugs. But virtual performance spaces have been a lifeline for me over the past eleven months. I have connected to so many people through virtual storytelling shows – and have truly felt connected to a larger audience and a wider group of storytellers." Or, as storyteller Kim Weitkamp (OH) puts it, "State of the art will NEVER replace state of the heart, but you gotta do what you gotta do."

Laura Packer (Orono, MN) adds, "Virtual storytelling means I can hear and perform with people all over the world. While I miss the in-person interaction, online storytelling connects us in new ways."

And though we are all distanced in our own homes, perhaps feeling that distance, Rachel Hedman (West Jordan, UH) explains why storytelling is the perfect salve. "Storytelling is all about connection. While we will disagree with each other--as those differences are part of being human--we can listen to stories beyond our usual group, people, creed, or culture. With that understanding, there is the potential for peace."

“Stories build community,” adds Donna Washington (Durham, NC). “It is hard to hate someone when you know their story. At this time in our history, it is important that we learn our stories and come to understand each other.”

Jenn Kamara (DC) agrees. “Storytelling is powerful because you’re sharing this intimate moment with other people. You’re inviting them into the inner workings of your mind and allowing them to experience your emotions.”

The Women’s Storytelling Festival kicks off Friday, March 19, 2021, at 6:00pm EST, and concludes Sunday, March 21, 2021, at 9:30pm. The festival will include performances – both live and pre-recorded – from 36 female storytellers; a Story Slam, hosted by the National Storytelling Network, with an opportunity to perform and win prizes for any ticket holders who put their name in the hat and are selected; and a Story Swap, which is an open mic storytelling event, open to all ticket holders.

[Performer [bios here](#).]

Better Said Than Done is addressing the current economic crisis by offering pay-what-you-can tickets. Contributions of \$40 per person are suggested, with a minimum contribution of \$10. A percent of proceeds from the festival will be donated to the National Storytelling Network. All other proceeds will be split among the storytellers. Contributions are encouraged to help support the performers, Better Said Than Done, and this fledgling festival.

Festival storyteller Robin Bady (Brooklyn, NY), says this about the power of storytelling, “Storytelling is immediate, creates empathy and community, and always goes straight to the heart of the matter. Since we always know that the artist/performer is there telling the story (not being the story), we can both laugh and learn.”

“The memories and the projections of the human mind and a people’s experience are suddenly illuminated the moment a storyteller begins,” says Carol Birch (Southbury, CT). “In a very tangible way, storytelling enlightens the world.”

Rona Leventhal (Northampton, MA) continues on the theme. “Storytelling has the unique ability, without the aid of props or costumes (most of the time) to engage the imagination and allows audience members to go on a collective journey and come out wiser and/or more joyous.”

“Storytelling is the oldest form of communication. It is the first form of teaching in every culture,” adds Arthuretta Holmes-Martin (Woodbridge, VA). “Storytelling directly affects the brain and affects human thought and behavior.”

“From the time fire was invented, we have sat around and swapped stories,” Mo Reynolds (Montana) points out. “Storytelling is human and relatable and, even in a

room full of people, it creates this one-on-one experience because it is just one voice telling one story, but every person in the room is hearing a different version based on the story they are bringing to the moment. It is simply flat out magical."

"When I tell, I can move outside of myself and I feel I am tapping into a heritage of stories and sharing it with other people," continues Jane Dorfman (Bethesda, MD). "There is a great river of tales and it's a delight to swim in it."

"Stories are the way we understand our lives and our place in the universe. It is the most fundamental, simple, and essential art form," says Jennifer Munro (Madison, CT). On women in storytelling she adds, "Women's voices have always been marginalized - and continue to be. Women have something unique and powerful to say, so why not have a festival showcasing the diversity of women's voices?"

Priscilla Howe (Lawrence, KS) explains, "I would venture to say that most US storytellers who come to the art form from school or library storytelling are women, but on the festival stage men are the frequent headliners."

"I have a twelve-year old daughter. There have been instances where she's been told that boys are better. Personally, I don't think anyone is better than anyone else," says M.J. Kang (Los Angeles, CA). "Hearing from women's voices doesn't take away from anyone. It just allows us to take time to listen to a certain voice and perspective that still connects to everyone. For me, amplifying women's voices is important because why not? Why don't we amplify different voices? I like to hear from different voices and not live in a bubble."

Diana Veiga (DC) agrees. "Since we have just elected our first female Vice President of the United States, an all-women's storytelling show is right on time. As a graduate of an all-women's college (Spelman), I'm a firm believer in the power that happens when women gather, share our truths, and tell our stories."

"We continue to hear about the 'first' woman to be this and that. Whereas I cheer those firsts, it feels like we should have left that behind long ago. Women are fifty percent of the population. We should not be fighting for the right to be equally heard, equally considered, and then feel lucky when that happens," adds Ingrid Nixon (Gustavus, AK). "Women's voices need to be heard. We need to be able to share our thoughts, interpretations and points of view, without risk of mansplaining or a counter argument. Men would do well to tune in for an education."

"When you listen to a Traditional Storyteller, you are whittling all forms of theater and storytelling down to its earliest form, its roots. Sometimes you need to go back to your roots to know who you are and where you are going," says storyteller Misty Mator

(Pittsburgh, PA). "And if there was a time for us to figure out where we are going, it's 2021."

Festival attendees will find a range of stories and storytelling styles featuring diverse experiences and cultures. Vijai Nathan (Fairfax, VA) describes her style of storytelling as "Hilarious, true, personal narrative. Comedy storytelling." Like many of the festival storytellers, Lyn Ford (Columbus, OH) couldn't be pinned down to just one style. "Affrilachian: It's my heritage and my comfort zone. Original: I twist folk and fairy tales and share personal stories. Creepy: Spookers and haints are some of my favorite pieces."

Sheila Arnold (Hampton, VA) sums up the diversity of story thusly: "I am a lover of stories, so I don't have a genre of storytelling. I believe storytelling is a way of building community, bringing down walls while inspiring, educating and entertaining."

Join these 36 storytellers online, starting on March 19, 2021 at 6:00pm EST. Festival tickets are on sale now at <https://www.bettersaidthandone.com/womens-festival/>. The stories are intended for a mature audience; people of all gender identities are welcome to attend.

"I am grateful to be part of WSF, to amplify female voices, to stand and tell with sisters across a diverse and inclusive range and perhaps share and hear stories which might not otherwise be told on other festival stages," says Kristin Pedemonti (Allentown, PA).

Sarah Snyder (Herndon, VA) back this year, adds, "I'm grateful to take part in this event for the second year in a row with my sister storytellers! Sharing the stage with such talented women from around the country is an honor and a thrill."

Of last year's festival Megan DuBois, the Cultural Arts Manager for the City of Fairfax, VA, said, "I knew next to nothing about storytelling when Jessica showed up in my office one day and said she wanted to do a Women's Storytelling Festival in Fairfax. After attending and helping to organize last year's, I know to expect heartfelt or funny stories about being female, personal stories, historic legends. We sing, we laugh, we cry, and celebrate being a woman through story."

Better Said Than Done is grateful for the continued support of The City of Fairfax, VA.

Of joining the festival for the first time, Jennifer Munro exclaims, "To be invited to tell stories anywhere is a privilege, but to be invited to tell alongside this powerhouse of dynamic women is simply the best!" Robin Bady concurs, "I am honored, thrilled, excited to be a part of the 2nd women's storytelling festival. May there be many more!"

**Better Said Than Done** *usually* defines storytelling as the art of performing a true, personal story in front of a live audience. Storytelling is a performance, an art, a form of

entertainment, and, from our mouths, a reality the audience will not forget. **Better Said Than Done, Inc.**, was launched in May 2011 by **Jessica Piscitelli Robinson**, to bring the art of storytelling to Northern Virginia. For more information on upcoming shows, storytellers, or workshops, please visit <https://bettersaidthandone.com>.

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#### Storyteller Bios:

The 36 storytellers in the 2021 virtual Women's Storytelling Festival are joining us from Alaska, California, Toronto, New York, Washington, D.C., and many states in between. They will be sharing personal stories, folk tales, stories of history, and stories of adventure. Some of them are new to storytelling and some have been performing for over 30 years. Among the festival performers, we have authors of books, creators of CDs, stars of TV shows, podcasters, and contributors to the Washington Post, Snap Judgment, and the Moth. There are too many credits to list. Please check out all of our [storytellers' bios here](#).