

27th September 2021

Story

**"The sailor tells stories of the winds, the ploughman of bulls;
the soldier counts his wounds, the shepherd his sheep."**

Sextus Propertius, Elegies (16BC)

The BBC calls it "feelgood furniture". TV presenter and furniture restorer, Jay Blades, has opened a new workshop in Bradford in a TV series called *Jay's Bradford Workshop*. In each episode, members of the public nominate local heroes to receive a handmade piece of wooden furniture in recognition of the outstanding work they do for their community. The workshop is staffed by people who've come through their own times of trouble, and who put love and understanding into the work they do.

In a recent episode, an amazing grandfather clock was made from scratch for Sharat, a dedicated youth worker from Bradford, who goes "above and beyond" in the time and commitment he gives his young people, and has done for many years. Trying to work out a suitable inscription for the front of the clock, they chose the phrase that Sharat uses with his young people *all* the time. It's what Jay Blades described as a "mash up", two Punjabi words *ke* and *heh* with an English word in between, making *Ke story heh* – "What's your story?" The dedicated youth worker asks a young person to share their story, prepared as he is to listen and try to understand. And it's the beginning of lives being changed.

Craftsmen and women testing their skills to create beautiful things. People being healed in the making of furniture and understanding the healing others need. Dedicated people having their contribution to society recognised, with a "thank you" being offered in a tangible way. It's all about *Ke story heh*, a story being told, listened to, teased out, understood.

What's your story? I hope someone asks you that today, to encourage you to share. And you might like to ask someone else to share their story with you too and see it as the beginning of a healing for them.

Ke story heh. Thanks, Jay, and thanks, Sharat, for reminding me that everyone – sailor or ploughman, soldier or shepherd, furniture-maker or youth worker, young person or broken individual – has a story that's worth the telling. All they need now are people like you who're prepared to listen.

A prayer for today

Goodness, Lord! If you listen to my story, can't I give some time to listen to others? Amen

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