

ERIC

We need our community, we need our history. How else can we teach the next generation who they are and how they got here? Human culture from time immemorial has been transmitted through stories.

Think about the ancient epics: the Odyssey, the Mahabharata, oral histories that allowed cultures to understand themselves. In order to become an honorable Greek, one had to study the actions of Odysseus. A young Hindu would reflect on the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna on the battlefield. My grandmother, as early as I can remember, taught me about the Shoah and her experiences as a refugee. And perhaps as a result of these intergenerational conversations, passed along in some cases for millennia, history is conveyed and cultures survived. Greeks thump their chests and reflect on the invasion of Troy. Black children stand just a little taller at the mention of Rosa Parks. And in queer culture, we feel the stirring of pride when we reflect on the meaning of Stonewall, Marsha Johnson, Edie Windsor, Matthew Shepard, Islan Nettles, and the bravery of people on the front lines of the epidemic. And to let that go means we've relinquished a part of ourselves. If we can't have a conversation with our past, then what will be our future? Who are we? And more importantly: Who will we become?

Who will I become?