



WE TURN HISTORY ON!

In my work as an author and publisher, I am motivated by a simple, observable truth: many young people — and even some adults — find history boring.

- They bridle at the suggestion that they might enjoy time at a museum.
- They tolerate the family tour of a historic destination, anxious to get back to their friends both online and off.

The truth is, all they lack is context.

History is a collection of great stories: Stories of extraordinary adventures, incredible innovations, revolutionary breakthroughs, horrid acts of injustice. If told well, such tales can capture even the youngest imaginations.

#TurnHistoryOn for the young people in your life.

Here Are My Top 10 Tips:

1) Take them there. Okay, I realize this isn't always realistic, but there's nothing more personal than standing at the site where history took place. It gives you a closer, more personal perspective of events. It makes them more real.

2) Even better if you take them there with someone who lived then, or who has encyclopedic knowledge of the people who did.

3) Can't get there? Then set up an exchange with one who was there or who knows: a relative, scholar, friend. In my experience, witnesses to and/or experts about historical events are always eager to share their personal knowledge. And they usually do so through anecdotal storytelling.

4) In short, look for ways to give young people access to the proverbial photo album: the stories, dress, diet, music, dance, rituals, hairstyles, living conditions, fears, hopes, etc., of those that lived through humanity's most seminal moments. Looking at artifacts, such as old photos, paintings, or clothing, is a great way to create associations, spark memories, and make meaning of a former time.

5) Put young people close to the action through family film night. Even if the story is fictional, it will be based on true events and placed in an authentic setting. (Besides, is there really any better way to get close to your kids than sharing some popcorn and a snuggle on the couch in front of a movie?)

6) Read a book together placed in that setting: whether novel, biography, autobiography, history, it's all good; another way to be transported back in time. And here's a tip-within-a-tip: kids respond to 1st person tales best, as they more readily put young readers right into the action.

7) Let them lead. Whether they choose to explore World War II, for example, through the Diary of Ann Frank or a non-fiction account of Patton's military strategy, every avenue is a "way in," and the best "ways in" to history are motivated by personal (i.e., intrinsically-motivated) interest.

8) Watch a documentary. But don't start here. Once they are intrinsically motivated by a particular topic, young people will find a documentary riveting. Until then, they tend to view documentaries as dull (could it be the 3rd person delivery?). Yet another turn off.

9) Make it relevant to today. What is happening in the world right now that can be linked to that historical moment and story in question? How is banning the confederate flag from the South Carolina Capitol grounds, for example, relevant to the US legacy of slavery and racism? Make it the topic of dinner table or classroom conversation.

10) In short: Seek out ways to make history personal, relevant, real. That way, you reach young people through empathy, on an emotional, human level. This is when history transforms from mere facts and dates to the stuff that tugs at heartstrings, never to be forgotten. This is when History Turns On.

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**That's how we
#TurnHistoryOn**