I remember sitting in Sunday School to hear the stories. How the whale swallowed Jonah. How David slew Goliath. How the Red Sea parted. How Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt. How the sun stood still. How God knelt on the river bank and made man out of mud. Then I went to theological college and seminary and heard the same stories with academic finesse that took away just some of the imaginal power of the stories and infused them with a new layer of literary significance and a whole lot of apologetic baggage. Then I entered the world of rigorous critical scientific research and philosophic argument. My Bible stories seemed to lose all credibility and meaning. I looked through only the critical lens. Flaws and doubt loomed large and marred any other value.

I remember sitting in first year psychology class and hearing the stories. How behaviour is determined. How feelings are sublimated. How experiments result in fact and indisputable causal connections. How the researcher knelt on the lab bench and understood the human out of data runs. Then I went to graduate school and heard the same research story but with a new understanding of the power of methodology and design and control and statistical analysis and inference and generalizability. Then I began editing a research journal, teaching research methods, and reviewing studies and proposals. I looked through only the critical lens. Flaws and doubt loomed large and marred any other value.

I sat with a person whose life had lost all meaning and motivation. Who saw only failure. Who knew no hope. Who felt no love. Who heard no advice. Analysis, criticism, historicity, authenticity, and factuality of my stories seemed irrelevant. The stories as stories, poetry, music, expressivity, feeling power of images, and love of the story-teller mattered. The human and not the data runs counted here.

A year ago I was asked to advise a record company on the development of a new product that would be "scientific" and "research-based" in terms of its music and sonic effects to create a more powerful response. They knew about relaxing music. They knew how to trigger memories and images with sound. But, how could music be more powerful? My criticisms of psycho-acoustical studies and evaluative factors in preference studies and experimental aesthetics seemed irrelevant. I needed to make judgements and best guesses and give specific direction. My broad knowledge gained from making music in many contexts, listening to music of great variety, hearing people's response to music, conducting my own systematic inquiry, reading others' research reports, and examining the latest attempts and paths being followed by researchers despite flaws all came together to provide practical suggestions. But, the users of my advice placed trust beyond my own in what I quoted as research. The scientific citation carried more weight than my own opinion (not unlike the story appears to have more credibility in Sunday School than the ideas of the teacher).

Finally, a review of the lessons in my editorial homily. Unquestioned acceptance and attribution of
authority and power to literal "story" and "results" is based on inadequate understanding of reality and an over-reliance on transmitted lore. Seeing only with critical scientific lenses misses much that is of truth and value. In education we must blend, as we are capable, human love and practical attempt in the context of the best research scholarship, artistic wisdom, and spiritual insight.