

# portland woman

*Serving the women of the  
Portland/Vancouver area.  
Dedicated to women  
everywhere.*

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## editor's note

### Thanks for listening

It seems like someone is always coming up with a proposal to set aside a day, week or month in honor of some cause. For example, did you know that Jan. 8 is National Bubble Bath Day? Or that March is Adopt a Rescued Guinea Pig Month? Carpenter Ant Awareness Week starts June 19. And you may have missed National Be Kind to Lawyers Day (April 12).

Every once in awhile, one of these efforts hits the mark. I think I've found a winner in National Day of Listening.

On Nov. 25, the day after Thanksgiving, people across the country are encouraged to set aside just one hour to record a conversation with someone important to them. While most of us would choose our parents, grandparents or another older relative, it could be anyone you want to interview, anyone whose story you would like to hear.

I love this idea.

National Day of Listening is a project of StoryCorps, an independent nonprofit, sponsored by National Public Radio and others, with a mission of honoring and celebrating one another's lives through listening to each other's stories. StoryCorps does this through its StoryBooths, located in New York City, San Francisco, Denver and Atlanta, and through its MobileBooth, an Airstream trailer outfitted with a recording studio that travels around the country. The narratives collected – over 30,000 since 2003 – are ultimately archived at the Library of Congress; many of the stories are also shared on public radio and the Internet.

National Day of Listening takes the StoryCorps concept one step further, urging all of us to listen to others' stories and record them on our own. This is only the fourth year of this national effort but I, for one, strongly hope that it catches on. As I've grown older – and perhaps even acquired just the smallest iota of wisdom – I've come to realize how very important listening is. As a child I probably needed to be listened to more than I was. As a young adult, I learned to listen, but more as a courtesy – it was the polite thing to do but it wasn't from the heart.

It's only in middle age that I've begun to absorb what a blessing listening is, both for the "listenee" and the listener. If you believe that every life matters – and most of us do – then listening to another's story may be the ultimate act of kindness. It's probably the most direct method to achieve wisdom, to be witness to the human experience. If done with an open heart, it's really a spiritual experience.

At least a decade ago, maybe more, I sat down with my parents and taped an interview with them. My intent was to have a string of these conversations in which they would recall their lives more or less chronologically. But, as so often happens, I got busy – you know the drill: kids, work, volunteering, dishes ... I will always regret not completing that effort – my parents both passed away in 2008. But I am forever grateful that I have that one tape.

So I'm on a mission of sorts here. I really, really hope that you'll consider observing National Day of Listening. I can pretty much guarantee that you will not regret taking the time to listen to someone's story, particularly someone you love who may not be around forever.

Give it a try on Nov. 25. Visit [nationaldayoflistening.org](http://nationaldayoflistening.org) for more information.



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