

## Storytelling or Role playing?

Is there a difference between storytelling and role playing? Yes, the difference is in the participation of those listening. Storytelling is a narrative, a story that is told to an audience who passively listens. Role playing is interactive. The game master presents a setting in which the players ask questions and make observations to gain information. Using this information the players determine a course of action and then act. This verbal give and take between game master and players is what differentiates storytelling and role playing.

Secondly, storytelling is just that, a story being told. The story is predefined and the outcome will be the same regardless of how often it is told. However, role playing is dynamic. The game master presents an outline that will be detailed by player action. These actions, when completed will create a story. This is classic role playing.

My final point concerns the satisfaction an individual receives from a story being told compared to playing a character in a role playing game. Stories, good ones, have an emotional impact on those listening. The emotion created by the storyteller for the listener. I think of it as borrowed and when the story ends the emotion subsides. All that a listener has left is a fond memory of the story. Role playing self-generates stories through game play. This is because their character is taking an active role by playing the game. Furthermore, the players have a sense of accomplishment that is evidenced by character advancement.