

Your Life is a Series of Narratives

Narrative is selective truth. It is the little patches of reality that contribute to a cumulative purpose. Narrative is always in the eye of the beholder, for he selects which parts of reality he considers important for his own purposes. To know your narrative in life is to know which end you are trying to reach. It is paying attention to the parts of your experience which bring you closer to that state.

Without narrative, life is a stream of chaos, absent of order. Meaningful progress becomes impossible, because you have no way to measure how far you are from your goal. There are no means to determine the significance of past events, or what you must do next. Narrative is the map of a purposeful life. It is the formula for excellence created in a specific way.

Look for the overarching narrative theme to the incidental events of your life. This is how you create progress. The theme builds upon itself with each new experience. Small stories either contribute to the larger meaning behind your life, or else they loop endlessly, dooming us to solve the same problems time and again until we expire. When you understand your narrative, you know what lessons every trial has to teach you about yourself. You embrace these lessons at every opportunity.

What narrative are you in right now? Get over your heartbreak so you can learn to love again. Prove your love to someone who matters. Cut the correct wire before the ticking bomb goes off. Beat the bad guy, save the girl, and ride off into the sunset. When one narrative reaches its conclusion, the start of another is surely soon to follow.

You are never living just one life. You are living a series of many lives, concurrently and sequentially. A new life begins with each new problem you dedicate your life's resources to solving. The setting is established by the conditions you are already accustomed to. An inciting incident alters the status quo, bringing a series of signature challenges. Your character must change himself and acquire the tools he will need to surmount these obstacles, before vanquishing the source of the dismay. The world is restored, but your character is never the same.

Life's narratives arise organically as a component of living. You can't help but react to the universe's random changes of within this framework. To begin to write your own narratives, you must first live beyond narratives. You must learn to look at your life without this imposed order to your experiences. Then you can select for yourself the story you are trying to tell out of all the themes available. This is the only way to direct the actions of your life toward the outcome you desire: by making a conscious choice about the problems that consume you.