

The Stories That Wire Us

Narrative Identity, Memory Reconsolidation, and the Healing Power of Truth

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"What is something you believe about yourself that you have believed for so long you don't even remember deciding to believe it?"

THE CORE INSIGHT

Something happens. The mind immediately asks: What does this mean about me? Before long, what began as an interpretation becomes a story. The story becomes a belief. The belief becomes a way of living. Eventually we stop saying, "This is something I learned." We start saying, "This is just who I am."

You are not the story you learned to tell about yourself.

YOUR BRAIN IS A STORYTELLER

Memory is not a filing cabinet — it's dynamic. When we remember something, the brain reconstructs the experience. Under the right conditions, new emotional information can become connected with an old memory. Scientists call this memory reconsolidation. It means we can change what we believe the past means about us — even if we cannot change the facts.

We're not changing the past. We're changing what we believe the past means about us.

THE EVENT	THE STORY WE CREATED
"My father left."	"I wasn't worth staying for."
"They didn't call back."	"Nobody ever stays."
"The relationship ended."	"I am unlovable."

We cannot change the first chapter — but we can stop requiring every new chapter to prove that the first chapter was right.

WISDOM ACROSS TRADITIONS

Spiritual traditions have always known what neuroscience is only now confirming:

- ✦ Jesus met people assigned a story — sinner, unclean, outcast — and looked past it: "That may be the story people tell about you. It is not the deepest truth about you."
- ✦ Paul: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." — Neuroplasticity language 2,000 years before the MRI.
- ✦ Buddhism's Two Arrows: The first arrow is what happens. The second — the story we tell about it — is where consciousness can do its work.
- ✦ Hinduism: samskaras — impressions from the past that shape our responses today.
- ✦ Judaism: teshuvah — returning, turning back, choosing again.

Different language. Different traditions. One invitation: Wake up to what has been shaping you. And choose again.

THE FOUR-STEP PRACTICE

NOTICE	Catch the story when it appears. Ask: "Is this the truth — or a story I learned?"
HONOR	Don't judge it. Get curious. Ask: "What happened that made this story seem true?" Offer compassion to the younger you: "Of course I learned this."
REVISE	Separate what happened from what you decided it meant. Ask: "What do I know now that I couldn't know then?" Then complete: The truer thing is _____.
LIVE	Give yourself an experience of the new story. Speak knowing that your voice matters. Ask for help if you can receive support. Make one different choice today.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is a story you've been carrying about yourself — perhaps so long you forgot it was a story?
2. Where might you have learned it? Was there one event, or a pattern of experiences?
3. What is the difference between what happened and the conclusion you drew from it?
4. What is the truer thing — not the positive spin, but the deeper truth you know now?
5. What is one concrete action this week that would let you live from the truer story?

**My past is part of my story, but it is not the author of my future.
I release what is no longer true. I choose the deeper truth of who I am.
I am still becoming. And I hold the pen. And so it is.**

You are not your wounds. You are the Divine expressing as a life still unfolding. Pick up the pen. Choose love. Choose possibility.