



**THE ART OF
STORYTELLING**

H HUNDRED
LIFE DESIGN



THE ART OF STORYTELLING

HOW A NARRATIVE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

As you go through your day, you're bound to hear some of these common phrases: "How was work?" "You'll never guess what I saw this morning..." "I know you've heard his side, but here's my side of things."

Thousands of years ago, humans began handing down our history, traditions, and culture without writing a single written word. And back then, we used exactly what we cling to now: stories.

Stories have always played a significant roles in our lives, to the point that we often don't even realize we're telling them. But storytelling is a very useful (and underrated) technique for understanding our lives up until now, for deciding where we want to go, and for changing the course of our personal narratives.

WHY STORYTELLING IS SO POWERFUL

When you were younger, there were times when you gathered in a circle with friends, probably in a classroom or around a campfire, and listened to a story. Maybe you can remember that story even now, how you hung on every word of it. Likely it was a fairy tale, myth, or ghost story—and these are what our mind often remembers when we hear the word "story." But storytelling goes far beyond myths, novels, and fantastic tales. Storytelling is something that allows us to connect with each other as human beings, and with ourselves.

What's more, storytelling is something that literally changes the way we think.

One study from Emory University found that when we listen to a story with rich sensory descriptions, it activates our sensory cortex. And a study by researchers in France found that sentences that describe actions (i.e. "John grasped the object") light up the motor cortex of our brain almost as though we were experiencing that action in real time. In other words, stories activate the brain—and we're hard-wired to hear and tell them.



STORYTELLING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

When we think about our own lives in terms of stories, it can help us face the events of our lives in factual terms. Storytelling allows us to distance ourselves from real events, allowing us to view ourselves and our actions in a more neutral light.

With this new neutrality, we gain the opportunity to see where we've been—and where we want to go—in more objective terms. Furthermore, it allows us to make decisions about our past and future, to change our goals in life, and to strive for unlimited opportunities going forward. Whatever problem, situation, goal, or future

destination you are considering, putting it your decisions in the context of a story is a great first step. How do you want to tell your future story? How do you want to rewrite parts of your past? The story we tell ourselves is basically an inner voice, one that narrates the events and circumstances that happen. Our actions directly reflect this inner dialogue, and when we change how we talk to ourselves, and what we talk about, we begin to internalize those new sentiments and, in turn, alter our behavior.

Put simply: If you want to change your life, you have to first change your narrative.

TELLING YOUR OWN STORY

ONCE YOU BEGIN TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE IN A POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE WAY, IT ALLOWS YOU TO BECOME MORE FOCUSED AND MOTIVATED AS YOU STRIVE FOR YOUR PERSONAL GOALS. SO, CREATE A PERSONAL NARRATIVE, AND TELL IT OFTEN. MAKE YOUR STORY ONE THAT CAPTIVATES AND EXCITES YOU, SOMETHING YOU'RE DRIVEN TO PURSUE UNTIL THE VERY LAST PAGE.

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