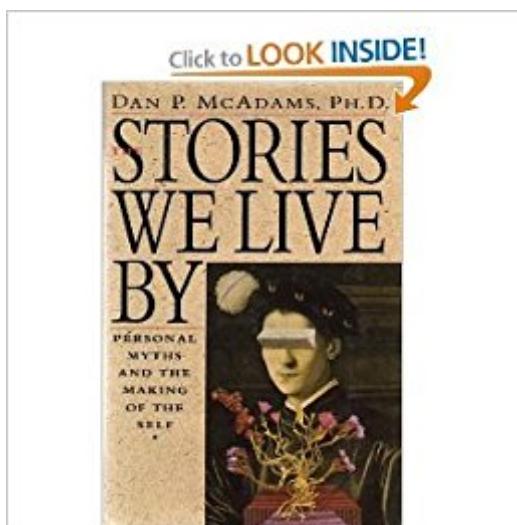


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# The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths And The Making Of The Self



## **Synopsis**

For readers of Composing a Life, an innovative theory about the way humans create their personal identity through the stories they tell about themselves. These extraordinary narratives collected from real people provide readers with lucid insights into our society, our families, and ourselves.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

No self-help treatise about exorcising fatalistic visions of one's life, this frequently wooden but intermittently arresting book proposes that "each of us comes to know who he or she is by creating a heroic story of the self." McAdams, a Chicago psychologist, argues against archetypal myths, although he makes tantalizing if fleeting references to fairy tales and other properties of mass culture. A little heavy on developmental theory, the work hypothesizes how people begin to "gather material" for their "self-defining stories" in infancy and early childhood. In several case studies McAdams demonstrates the role of myth, while one of the stronger sections explains how to write a narrative to uncover personal myths, offering a list of questions for that purpose. Elsewhere, McAdams discusses "imagoes"--defined as idealized concepts of self, the characters in personal narratives--and explores how such historical events as the Kennedy assassination are assimilated into one's own saga. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ranging widely within the canon of Western psychology, McAdams claims to offer a new perspective on personal mythmaking. He discriminates between the collective myths that people inherit and the private myths that individuals create to formulate their identities. Using the

terminology of literary narrative study and behavioral psychology, McAdams attempts to combine the two into a new theory of identity. There is a great deal of discussion of themes like grief and intimacy; references to Freud, Erik Erikson, and others; and reviews of the passage from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. While the book is easy reading, its theme has been dealt with before in numerous psychology textbooks. However, it could serve as an introduction to psychology and mythmaking. For large psychology collections.- Nancy E. Zuwiyya, Binghamton City Sch. Dist., N.Y. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

An interesting book, clearly written, about the development of identity and presentation of self. A good read for anyone who studies and writes about people.

If you want to understand narrative psychology in a developmental framework here is where to start. It is not overly technical, which is actually a bit of a drawback for those of us who would like more background and theory. But, it is an excellent introduction to the field, very readable, and many people cite McAdams in their subsequent research (which I certainly will be doing).

Dan McAdams' book is a powerful book that helps the reader understand the importance of one's personal story. While the book is essential for all Christians, it is an essential resource for clergy and those in ministry leadership. McAdams highlights two major themes in the book; that individuals are their stories, and the need for revising and claiming our personal stories. The book includes significant research to support McAdams' thesis.

It came in good condition as stated. I purchased it as a required book from which I was to teach. I would not use the book again. The basic constructs were good, but the heavy theory and weighted writing was difficult to get through.

The book is a great read and informative of how one's identity is shaped through one's own narrative story.

I really like this book, and consider McAdams to be an engaging theorist. I'd have liked a little more clarification on how we determine our own personal myths, but the book is a smooth and worthwhile read.

A dear friend and life long student of Psych, who is about to become a doctor of Psych gave me this book several years ago. She'd written so many notes in it, which to me translates into value and reverence for what one reads. I always meant to read it, life just kept getting in the way. Finally it was time for me to meet the mind of Dan McAdams, at least as it was when he wrote this book, I think perhaps, slightly before it's time, maybe. It helped me to foster insights that have been like donning good reading glasses in a life with some patches of fog. It's always so refreshing to relearn something we already knew at a deep unconscious level and be able to resonate with that on a higher level. This is what this book does for me. I highly suggest it to those who are interested in writing (anything) or learning more about them selves and how we all effect each other as well. No man is an island we are simultaneously land and water to each other. Thank you Dr. McAdams and Dr. Sunshine my friend for giving me this ray of light.

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