

For Mental Health Boost: Take Charge Of Your Personal Story

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WBUR Radio:

I have a friend who, from my perspective, has a great life: fabulous job, cool wife, close family.

Still, this guy sees himself as perpetually at the mercy of life's twists and turns. When work is hard, he feels like "a failure." When his relationship gets complicated, he becomes "unloveable." I've always wondered why he perceives such ugliness looking into the mirror.

Well, it appears that the stories he — that we all — tell ourselves about our lives have a huge impact on our mental health.

Indeed, a new study of patients in therapy suggests that taking control of your own personal story, that is, spinning a narrative in which you are in the driver's seat of your life, can clinically improve your mental health and sense of well-being.

The study's big takeaway, says Jonathan Adler, its lead author and an assistant professor of psychology at the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering in Needham, Mass., "is for people to realize that they are the main character in their story — but they are also the narrator. That means it's possible to re-write the episode with a greater sense of agency," or power and autonomy over one's life.

Read the whole story: [WBUR Radio](#)