



# Story Re-Visions: Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World

*Alan Parry PhD, Robert E. Doan PhD*

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"Once upon a time, everything was understood through stories....The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that 'if we possess our *why* of life we can put up with almost any *how*.'...Stories always dealt with the 'why' questions. The answers they gave did not have to be literally true; they only had to satisfy people's curiosity by providing an answer, less for the mind than for the soul." --From Chapter 1

Each of us has a story to tell that is uniquely personal and profoundly meaningful. The goal of the modern therapist is to help clients probe deeply enough to find their own voice, describe their experiences, and create a narrative in which a life story takes shape and makes sense. Emphasizing the vital connections among personal experience, family, and community, the authors of this provocative new book explore the role of narrative therapy within the context of a postmodern culture. They employ the interactional dynamics of family therapy to demonstrate how to help people deconstruct oppressive and debilitating perspectives, replace them with liberating and legitimizing stories, and develop a framework of meaning and direction for more intentional, more fulfilling lives. Blending scientific theory with literary aesthetics, *Story Re-Visions* presents a comprehensive collection of specific narrative therapy techniques, inventions, interviewing guidelines, and therapeutic questions.

The book examines the development of the postmodern phenomenon, tracing its evolution across time and disciplines. It discusses paradigmatic traditions, the meaning of modernism, and the ways in which the ancient, binding narratives have lost their power to inspire uncritical assent. Methods for doing narrative therapy in a destoried world are presented, with suggestions for meeting the challenges of postmodern value systems and ethical dilemmas.

Numerous case examples and dialogues illustrate ways to help people become authors of their own stories, and each of the last four chapters concludes with an appendix that provides additional information for the practicing clinician. Detailing ways in which a narrative framework enhances family therapy, the authors describe how the therapist and client may act together as revisionary editors, and present techniques for keeping the story re-vision alive, well, and in charge. Finally, the book examines re-vision techniques for clinical training and supervision settings, with discussion of how therapists may help one another create stories about their clients, as well as themselves.

Accessibly written and profoundly enlightening, *Story Re-Visions* is ideal for family therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and anyone else interested in doing therapy from a narrative stance. It is also valuable as supplemental reading for courses in family therapy and other psychotherapeutic disciplines.

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