



Trauma narratives: What happened to me vs the narrative(s) I tell myself about what happened.

There's what happened to us and then there is the narrative we tell ourselves about what happened that shapes how our mind, body and spirit learn to respond to what happened and how we build capacity to handle what happened to us. It's the narrative we tell ourselves about what happened that can keep us stuck or move us forward. We might not have had **control** over what happened to us, but we have **control** over the narrative we tell ourselves about what happened, and this shapes the impact on our mental health.

There's:

1. What happened to me....
2. The narrative I tell myself about what happened....

These two things aren't always the same.

Say for example your mother and/or father never bonded with you or left you as a child. You may feel abandoned and unwanted. **Feelings aren't facts!** However, the narrative that you are not good enough, unlovable, people will always leave, etc., becomes the narrative that you tell yourself and as painful as it might be to carry this narrative, it feels safe – no one can ever make you feel abandoned if you don't engage, your armor goes up - if you enter every space expecting

others to abandon you, if you are strong and only depend on yourself, all is well (although lonely) OR you stay in spaces where you are not valued, cared for or loved, etc., etc.

Being able to identify how your choice of narrative(s) is comfortable even though it is unhealthy (and painful) as well as believing that you have the power to change the narrative can be the most difficult part of healing.

It might be difficult to partner with a therapist to change the narrative because the narrative you have chosen aligns with the bond that you have with your traumas. It is familiar and feels safe. What would you replace it with when you don't know anything else? How would you cope without all these survival skills that you have developed over a lifetime? Remaining in survival mode because it has kept us sanely traumatized becomes normalized.

If you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, please call the Suicide hotline at 800-273-8255 - 24/7. If you reside in Oregon or Washington and want to explore what it means to be sanely traumatized, please connect with us at <https://blacktherapistandcompanydx.com/contact/>

If you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, please call the Suicide hotline at 800-273-8255 - 24/7.

Dr. Rosemarie Hemmings, LCSW, LICSW, CCTP-II (she/her)
<https://blacktherapistandcompanydx.com/>