



# Healing the Mind through the Power of Story: The Promise of Narrative Psychiatry

*Lewis, M.D., Ph.D. Mehl-Madrona*

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Psychiatry that recognizes the essential role of community in creating a new story of mental health

- Provides a critique of conventional psychiatry and a look at what mental health care could be
- Includes stories used in the author's healing practice that draw from traditional cultures around the world

Conventional psychiatry is not working. The pharmaceutical industry promises it has cures for everything that ails us, yet a recent study on antidepressants showed there is no difference of success in prescribed pharmaceuticals from placebos when all FDA-reported trials are considered instead of just the trials published in journals. Up to 80 percent of patients with bipolar depression remain symptomatic despite conventional treatment, and 10 to 20 percent of these patients commit suicide.

In *Healing the Mind through the Power of Story*, Dr. Mehl-Madrona shows what mental health care could be. He explains that within a narrative psychiatry model of mental illness, people are not defective, requiring drugs to "fix" them. What needs "fixing" is the ineffective stories they have internalized and succumbed to about how they should live in the world. Drawing on traditional stories from cultures around the world, Dr. Mehl-Madrona helps his patients re-story their lives. He shows how this innovative approach is actually more compatible with what we are learning about the biology of the brain and genetics than the conventional model of psychiatry. Drawing on wisdom both ancient and new, he demonstrates the power and success of narrative psychiatry to bring forth change and lasting transformation.

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