

Identity of the Mind

Personality Psychology Research with Professor Jon Adler
June 2010 - June 2011, Olin Years 1 & 2

Over the past year, I have worked conducted **research in Personality Psychology**. Jon is a professor and researcher in narrative psychology and he got us interested in how people narrate their own lives and develop their identity along the way.

Aim: To understand the way in which people diagnosed with **Border-line Personality Disorder** make sense of their lives.

BPD is a third-rail mental disorder that does not have many therapy options or too many (a little from all other disorder treatments) that it is time-consuming and expensive.

Design: We watched, for the first time in recording, video interviews of these people telling their life stories. From that, we identified and coded key thematic characteristics of narrative identity to see how these subjects interpret their lives. Our findings are going to be **published** in the **Journal of Personality Disorders** in the coming months.

Other research included: studying peoples' reconstructions of experience in **psychotherapy**. We studied how their narratives change (for good or for bad) over the course of therapy and how this affects the outcome of their experience. And our most recent study has been about how **mid-life adults make sense of their body** as guided by the ageing process. How do these physical changes alter their personal identity and meaning-making?

My experience with psychology has given me great insight into how people think and make sense of the world around them. As an engineer, having this psychology background is a great asset when designing for users and with users.

