

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. Professor Jonathan Adler is a professor and researcher in narrative psychology at Olin College and he got me very interested in how people narrate their own lives and develop their identity in life.

Aim: To understand the way in which people diagnosed with Borderline 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. Over time, as I've become more interested in user-experience and UI/UX design, the bridge between personality psychology and engineering has come to me from this earlier research.

Our paper on Borderline Personality Disorder is currently **in press with the Journal of Personality Disorders**.

