



"When I put the noose around my neck I thought about how I used to think that people who killed themselves were weak: I was struck by this thought as I prepared to kill myself."

A Recovered Addict Creates a Good Life

A Case Study Narrative

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Case Study

- ▣ *"Case studies can take us to places where most of us would not have the opportunity to go"*
-Donmoyer, 1990; p. 193
- ▣ Bounded-case
- ▣ Holistic
- ▣ In-depth investigation
- ▣ Rich description

Narrative Inquiry

- ▣ **Purpose:** To describe the lives and experiences of individuals through story telling
- ▣ "...narrative organizes the structure of human experience."
-Bruner, 1991: p. 21
- ▣ Retelling individuals lived experiences (restorying)
- ▣ Finding meaning in lived experiences
- ▣ Provides insight to both the nurse/researcher and the participant
- ▣ Setting, context, plot, includes beginning-middle-end structure

Case Study Methods



Determine research question

Prepare for data collection

- ▣ Data collection
- ▣ Data analysis
- ▣ Write up findings

Ethics and Consent

- ▣ International Review Board (IRB)
- ▣ Consent forms
- ▣ Pseudonyms
- ▣ Ethical responsibility
 - ▣ References on ethics:
Adams, 2008; Brody, 2002; Butler, 2000; Carson & Fairbairn, 2002; Ellis, 2007; Punch, 1994

Case Study Participant

- Started drinking alcohol and using drugs in Jr. High School
- Addicted to heroin and alcohol for over 10 years
- Became homeless
- Arrested over 25 times
- Attempted suicide in prison
- Currently, he's been sober for 8 years
 - Elite level triathlete
 - Strength and conditioning coach

Research Question & Methods

What is Shane's current life experience?

Data collection:

- Interviews
- Observations
- Artifacts

Generated data:

- Research journal
 - Reflexivity (Dowling, 2006)

Interviews

Types of interviews:	Interview procedures & strategies:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Focus groupsStructuredSemi-structuredUnstructuredConversational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create an interview guideAudio-tapeBuild rapportWait timeEncourage participants to expandFlexibility & follow-up questions

Interview Guide

Name of participant: _____ Location of interview: _____

Date: _____ Description of participant's attire: _____
 Consent Form

Pseudonym: _____

Interview Purpose of the Study and Procedures

1. The purpose of this study is to explore your current life experience; the specific direction of the study will emerge as the study unfolds. The end goal of this study is to
2. Interviews will be analyzed continuously after they are conducted; in other words, I will not wait to analyze data until the very end of the study but instead, I will analyze data throughout the case study.
3. The first interviews will dictate which other individuals are interviewed as well as artifacts that are collected.
4. A case study analysis involves validity check with the participant(s). I will closely work with you to ensure that no inaccurate abstractions are made. In other words, I will check with you regarding my interpretations of our interviews. Also you will have opportunities to read the manuscript as it is developed and I will make changes, as you feel fit.

As a reminder, you may stop the interview at any time.

Tell me about your current life.

What is most important to you?

What are the greatest challenges you currently face in your life?

Leading Questions

Researcher: "How often do you drink alcohol?"

Participant: "Every day."

Researcher: "Do you drink in the afternoon and evening?"

Participant: "Yes, probably."

Researcher: "After you've had several drinks, is it typical for you to lose motivation?"

Participant: "Yes, I guess so."

Using Probes

Researcher: "How often do you drink alcohol?"

Participant: "Every day."

Researcher: "When do you start drinking?"

Participant: "As soon as I finish painting, usually in the afternoon."

Researcher: [Probe] "Can you tell me about how your day progresses after you start drinking?"

Participant: "If I start drinking in the early afternoon I rarely leave my house and I drink until I fall asleep. If I get off work in the late afternoon, then I'll often meet up with friends at a bar."

Researcher: [Probe] "Could you tell me more about the night you

Interview Example

- Second Interview → Following up
- Question: "I was struck by your discussion about you seeing things happening in your life. You can see them happen: and you said that was a distinction from how it was before. Can you expand on the difference between seeing that vision happening now contrasted to how it was before."
- Participant: "Before, eventually, before... there was a void, right, there was no sense of meaning in that kind of behavior, your existence has no utility. By virtue of the way I lived, there's no sense of meaning there is no sense of purpose. So now, the contrast is that I was given the opportunity and time in prison to evaluate and examine what I wanted... I am able to start from scratch and maybe I could just start developing a sense of what would be good? Like what would a good life look like?"

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzes the data to:

- Interpret the data
- Produce a core description (of the experience)
- Organize the data

In essence, the goal is to:

- ★ Make sense of the data

Data Collection & Analysis Always Circular



The diagram illustrates a circular process with four stages: Data collection, Data analysis, Data collection, and Data analysis, connected by arrows in a clockwise cycle.

Data Analysis

- Holistic analysis (Creswell, 2007)
- Thematic analysis
 - Highlighted significant quotes/data
 - Examined data for patterns across all data sources (Fraser, 2004; Taylor-Powell, & Renner, 2003)
 - Labeled themes
 - Organized data under the themes

Findings:
7 themes
emerged

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graph TD; Shane((Shane)) --> Envisioning((envisioning)); Shane --> Urgency((urgency)); Shane --> Movement((movement)); Shane --> Persistence((persistence)); Shane --> SelfDoubt((self doubt)); Shane --> Purpose((purpose)); Shane --> Reflection((reflection));
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"Our hopes and dreams provide a sense of purpose and meaning to our existence. . . Without a sense of direction, we lose our sense of self."

"I could see so much more purpose and utility, I could have so much more impact."

"I had a year to develop a plan. What would give me a sense of purpose or meaning?"

"I intend to progress and evolve as a person until the day I die. I will always have a vision and a sense of purpose for my life. I know too well the perils of losing your sense of direction."

Case Study Narrative for Understanding Recovered Addicts

- Constructing strategies that work for recovered addicts
- Understanding and anticipating challenges in recovered addicts
- Providing voice for recovered addicts
- Facilitate in developing theory centering around long-term recovery
- Building relationships among nurses, researchers and the participants
- To create a community of partnerships
- "Researchers in nursing have stories to tell." (Fairbairn & Carson, 2002: p. 12)
- Increasing awareness and optimism for what is possible

Creating an Iron-Good Life

Exert from "Creating and Iron-Good Life"

Shane reaches across Mandy's sleeping form to turn off his alarm – it's race day. The clock reads 4:30 am and Shane wonders if he'll ever get any actual sleep the night before a race. He shakes his head – no, there's too much anticipation. Sleepy, but energized, he rises to face the familiar combination of nerves and excitement. Shane moves around the small hotel room, checking and rechecking each pile that he already examined the previously day. Looking around, he contemplates the gear, nutrition, and preparation that go into a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and 26-mile run—the distances of an Ironman triathlon—all of it absolutely vital for success. Following Mandy out the door, Shane wonders what emotions he'll be feeling when he returns at the end of the day. An hour later, climbing out of the rental car at the race site in the pitch black of early morning, the energy feels electric. Shane takes a moment to marvel at the contrast of his life now, compared to his life before.

-Kirkland, R. A., & Smith, C. M

Shane crosses the finish line an hour after his expected finish time and continues a painful jog for a few feet before he is able to slow his legs to a walk. He continues to the end of the shoot, bows his head to receive his finish medal and moves out of the way. Feeling dejected after another disappointing race, he immediately takes off the medal, thinking "Triathlon is a self-serving, selfish endeavor. A medal, for what?" Shane questions his motives in pursuing triathlon – all the time, money, energy, effort. "What is the point? What is the utility?" He absent-mindedly moves through the crowd of people, wanting to be alone with his thoughts, to contemplate the outcome of this race. Always coming back to his intentions, Shane wonders "What purpose does this serve me?"

Two hours later, while Mandy drives back to the hotel, Shane is quiet as he replays the race in his mind. While assessing the highs and the lows of the day, he is prompted to reflect on his strengths and weaknesses as a person on a broader level. He stares unseeing at the scenery passing outside the window and finds himself using this time to reflect on his life and his goals. Shane feels befuddled; simultaneously feeling frustrated with today's race and gratitude that he is able to race at all. He realizes he is disappointed, but not disheartened. Making a conscience decision to use the outcome of today's race to act as a catalyst for growth, Shane feels encouraged. Shane thinks about his true ambitions and where the growth from this race can be applied and how it can be used effectively. He knows that there is more to life than triathlon; there is always something more for him to achieve. Shane reflects that life is bitter, life is sweet, but mostly, life is what you make of it.

Climbing into bed beside Mandy, Shane turns off the light. He takes a deep breath and holds it in for a moment, as if he is trying to absorb the fullness of the day. The fatigue has settled into his muscles and his body feels weary, though his heart is lighter than it has been all day. Shane starts to consider the outcome of the race once again, until Mandy nuzzles up to him and places a kiss on his cheek, breaking his cycle of thought. Shane smiles; then falls asleep.

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A (Good) Life

It's funny that you can see things happening,
in your life that you have envisioned.
And that is a very distinct departure.
... how my life used to be. It was indescribable really.
But no, I don't think about it too much.

Pour myself a drink,
go administer, like 20 units of uh, heroin.
Your existence has no utility...
No sense of meaning...
No sense of purpose...
A void.
Unsustainable.

One final attempt to exert control...

Cold,
Hard,
Concrete cell.
My new life began.

Prison was very good.

Start from scratch.
The first step,
to build the life we envision.
What a good life would look like.
Not taking no for an answer.
Become something more.
Understand that,
that,
that man, things are possible.

A lot of times I'm scattered.
Just pure venom... horrible things... really hurt them.
It's not an excuse, it's an explanation.
These reactions don't serve me.
...that was a step back.
Time wasted.
But I believe, right.

I have traveled a great distance from the place I
once was.
Always trying to perpetuate and drive growth.
Move or force people to examine,
where they are in life.
Maybe I could be very, very good at it,
maybe one day.
Things have come,
come a long way.

Smith, C., & Kirkland, R. (Submitted).
