

The Epic Turn | An Overview of the Conversations

Preview Session | What Story Do They Think They Are Watching?

Focus: How others perceive your story versus how you perceive it.

- **Introductions:** Who are you, and how do you usually answer, “What do you do?”
- **Explore:** The idea that the throughline of your story is hiding in plain sight.
- **Exercise:** Review the Mastery Path | Executive Examen Exercise, Confer with Others on Your Answers.
- **Discussion:** Where do these perceptions align? Where do they differ?
- **Takeaway:** Your story isn’t just yours—it’s also the one others see you living.

Session 1: What Story Do You Think You’re In?

Focus: Your self-narrative—how you frame your own journey.

- **Reflection:** What’s the recurring theme in your career and life?
- **Explore:** The Indiana Jones metaphor—being a protagonist, but not a know-it-all.
- **Exercise:** Review the Hero’s Journey| Life Storylines Review. Go as far as you can without forcing artificial responses.
- **Discussion:** What turning points most shaped this narrative? What assumptions are you making about your role in the story?
- **Takeaway:** Recognizing your assumed storyline is the first step in getting it straight.

Session 2: What’s the Throughline of Your Story?

Focus: Connecting the dots—identifying the deeper pattern beneath your roles.

- **Explore:** How your past jobs, choices, and pivots are part of the same story.
- **Exercise:** Map your career or life journey like a movie plot—what’s the arc?
- **Discussion:** What patterns emerge? What’s been driving you all along?
- **Takeaway:** You may have had different “jobs,” but you’ve likely been playing the same role all along.

Session 3: What Happens When the Story Takes a Turn?

Focus: Dealing with plot twists, setbacks, and unexpected challenges.

- **Explore:** Indiana Jones survives by adapting, recruiting experts, and making it up as he goes.
- **Exercise:** Identify a major turning point in your story—what did it change?
- **Discussion:** How do you respond to disruption? Do you cling to the old story, or do you rewrite?
- **Takeaway:** Mastery means learning to adapt without losing the core of your story.

Session 4: Who Are Your Supporting Characters?

Focus: The people who shape and challenge your story.

- **Explore:** Even Indiana Jones needed allies—and had to learn the ups and downs of relationships.
- **Exercise:** Identify the key characters in your story—mentors, rivals, partners, guides.
- **Discussion:** How have these people changed your narrative? What roles do you play in their stories?
- **Takeaway:** No protagonist thrives alone. Who you surround yourself with matters.

Session 5: What’s the Story You Haven’t Been Telling?

Focus: The gaps, hidden themes, and deeper motivations.

- **Explore:** The idea that some parts of our story remain unexplored or unspoken.
- **Exercise:** Write the “deleted scenes” of your story—the moments that shaped you but don’t make it into your usual narrative.
- **Discussion:** What’s missing from your public story? What fears or truths keep you from telling it?
- **Takeaway:** Owning your full story—flaws, struggles, and all—creates a more powerful narrative.

Session 6: What’s the Story You’re Going to Tell?

Focus: Integrating everything and stepping into a clearer, more congruent story.

- **Reflection:** Revisiting your “movie trailer” from Session 2—how would you rewrite it now?
- **Exercise:** Share your story—the real one, the one worth living.
- **Discussion:** What’s different? What’s clarified? What are your next steps?
- **Final Takeaway:** Getting your story straight isn’t just about clarity—it’s about alignment and action. And when it’s over, the guild will be here—to affirm your story and learn our way forward into them together.



The Epic Turn | Preview Night (May 1, 2025)

Preview Session | What Story Do They Think You're In?

Focus: How others perceive your story versus how you perceive it.

- **Welcome, Intros: Offer: Name, Location, A Favorite Movie as a Child**
 - How do you usually answer, “What do you do?” or “How’s your week going?”
- **Explore:** The idea that the throughline of your epic story may be hiding in plain sight.
- **Exercise: “En-Roling as a Protagonist.”** What is a Protagonist? Where am I in the story arc? What would come next in a good story? Note: This exercise is preceded by a instrumental meditation and a selected reading from the Worth It Bookshelf.
 - Review: “Mastery Path | Executive Examen” and “Hero’s Journey” worksheets.
- **Discussion:** Looking at through a “Johari Window,” how can the people around us help us “get our stories straight?” What might others say they are watching? Where do perceptions align? Where do they differ?
- **Takeaway, De-Roling:** Your story isn’t just yours—it’s also the one others see you living. What if your story interacts with theirs? What if you “bring back the elixir of life?” What if you cultivate “Islands of Sanity?”

Housekeeping Business

1. Schedule - Seeking 100 percent a 100 percent of the time. We will doodle dates. Roughly, every 7-12 days. We will circulate a Doodle Poll to refine the meeting dates for the those who opt-in.
2. We will craft a Renewal Circle Compact. These will be 5-7 “Grounding Rules” that create invitation and boundaries to hold the careful work we do together here. Consider suggestion to make this a brave space.
3. We will sample “Worth It Meditations” from select readings that informed our thinking and the design process.
4. Same Zoom Link will be used for all six sessions.





What To Remember When Waking

David Whyte, Chapter Three, Excerpts



A WORTH IT MEDIATION

When you're below the radar screen of life, when you can be mistaken, or your life can be mistaken for any other person's life, then it can't be distinguished so much you can't be found out, therefore you can't be touched. There's a kind of immunity in anonymity. There's an immunity in not giving yourself or attempting to give yourself your proper name. As soon as you stand up and speak out and say, This is what I am, or this is what I'm attempting to be, you do risk laughter humiliation, and you do risk the disappointment of all of your best hopes, but this is a doorway that must actually be walked through. But you also find out how serious you are. You find out the internal ground you must walk that is immune to all outside scorn.

And there's an astonishing little piece by Goethe, the great German poet and scientist and all round Renaissance scholar called the *Zeiligen*, which, translated into English, means something like the holy longing, you know, the deepest longing that you must follow. And in that poem, his first lines of the whole poem is incredibly impactful, but first lines are really powerful indeed, because he says, [German], "Tell a wise person, or else, keep silent. For those who do not understand, will mock it right away."

I praise what is truly alive, what longs to be burned to death in the calm waters of the love nights where you were begotten, where you have begotten, a strange silence comes over you as you watch the silent candle burning. Now you are no longer caught in the obsession with darkness and a desire for greater love making sweeps you onward, distance cannot make you falter, and a desire for love making sweeps you onward, distance cannot make you fall to now, arriving in magic, flying and finally, insane for the light, you are the butterfly, and you are gone. And so long as you have not experienced this, to die and so grow. You are only a troubled guest on the dark earth. And so long as neat asked these is stab and we had done best after dunklin Adam. And so long as you have not experienced this, to die and so to grow, you are only a troubled guest on the dark earth.

... Any serious path, any sincerity, will lead you through a lot of little deaths as you're actually becoming more alive in a greater definition of the of the sense, but many of the parts of yourself that are afraid of the world will not survive the encounter. I do remember that when I first stepped out as a poet, and I did step out, not just as a writer, but as a speaker and reader, someone who had a very public face, and I knew that public face would always be a part of my future vocational life, that there was certain quite astonishing phenomena that would happen when you were standing in front of a large group of people. One of the dynamics of standing in front of a large group of people is that the larger the group, at least, to begin with in the profession, the more nervous you become.

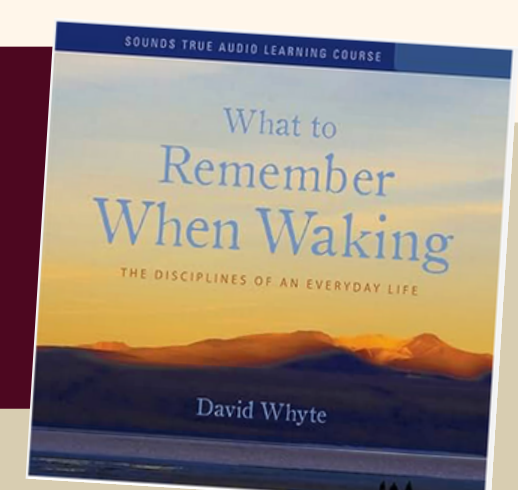
And I had a good old think about this one evening, and I remember coming to the conclusion that it was because the more eyes and ears there were looking at you and listening to you, in particular, the less place you had to hide. And so if you had 500 people in a room and you actually were trying to cover something up and not being truthful, there was a good chance that one or more of those 500 would actually smoke you out and would actually understand the covering dynamic that was occurring, that You weren't quite being truthful, you were being a little artificial. And so when you're speaking to a number of people, it's always an invitation to be as honest as possible, to be as straight as possible, and to have the least artifice in your attempt to artfully recreate the beautiful truth that is in poetry and in reality itself, and have them meet together on stage.

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And I remember sitting down and actually having an internal dialog with this part of myself. And I had to laugh to myself, because the height of this young lad inside me would have been about the height of a podium. And I I thought that's the reason we have podiums on stages, so that your inner seven or eight year old actually has somewhere to hide, and you can pretend to be this all knowing, mature human being actually giving the talk over the top of the parapet. But I remember saying to this imagined part of myself, I really need you on stage, because if you're not there, then there's a part of me missing, and people will notice it out there, but also, more importantly, it won't be as truthful or as real. The honest answer this part of me gave back to my adult self was, I can't do that. You can do that, and I can't give a talk, so you go out and be the greatest in the world, and I'll stay back here because you actually, you don't want me. And I remember offering to this part of myself, the solution that all he needed to do was actually come out with me and and that he didn't have to give the talk. Some other part would give the talk. But he actually didn't have to give it. He just needed to be there.

Of course, this is an amusing way of getting in there and just having the conversation. There's no one way of bringing yourself together and bringing yourself in an integral way. **It's just an example of the way you can apprentice yourself to the whole way you're made up and to learn about the parts of you that are afraid of the world, the parts you might not even associate with your adult received identity, but still live inside you.** In other words, part of the early stage of apprenticeship is not only an apprenticeship to the physical elements of your work, but to self knowledge and to understanding how those physical elements actually frighten parts of you and that there's a part of you wants nothing to do with the revelation at all that's a central part of your vocation.

What to Remember When Waking: The Disciplines of Everyday Life
David Whyte (Author, Narrator), Audible Audiobook



Mastery Path | *An Executive Examen*



EXECUTIVE RENEWAL SERIES

RW WEST, PH.D.

The Mastery Path | An Examen

*Examen is an ancient practice rooted in Benedictine spirituality, offering a disciplined approach to reflection and prioritization. The term “examen” originates from Latin, meaning “examination” or “weighing.” Traditionally, it has been used in spiritual contexts to review a specific timeframe—whether a day, week, season, or year. This version of the exercise, however, invites leaders and high-performing teams to focus on life mastery through three interconnected Latin concepts: **obsessio**, **epiphania**, and **habitus**.*

Why Use This Framework?

*While rooted in spiritual tradition, these concepts transcend theology. W. Paul Jones proposes that every individual operates from an underlying narrative that shapes their worldview. By exploring **obsessio**, **epiphania**, and **habitus**, professionals are invited to engage with their narrative—not through dogma, but through introspection, emotional intelligence, and action.*

This approach is particularly relevant for executives and high-performing teams because:

- *It fosters self-awareness, a cornerstone of effective leadership.*
- *It provides a structured way to examine priorities and eliminate distractions.*
- *It connects reflection to actionable change, ensuring meaningful growth.*

Obsessio (Core Preoccupation)

Definition: The central concern, drive, or longing that organizes your life’s energy. It is the lens through which you see the world, the force that both drives and constrains you.

Relevance: Understanding your **obsessio** helps you identify the foundational priorities or challenges you may not even realize dominate your thoughts and decisions. For leaders, this clarity reveals the “why” behind your work, relationships, and leadership style.

Epiphania (Moment of Liberating Insight)

Definition: An insight or moment of clarity when something hidden or obscured becomes apparent. It is the “aha” moment that redefines your understanding of your **obsessio**.

Relevance: **Epiphania** allows professionals to transform challenges or limitations into opportunities. It energizes innovation and helps reframe obstacles as moments of discovery.

Habitus (Embodied Practice, Disposition)

Definition: The habits, behaviors, and routines that consistently shape your life and reinforce your values. It is the daily expression of what matters most.

Relevance: For leaders, **habitus** represents the practical structures that sustain high performance and alignment with purpose. It’s about creating disciplined rhythms to achieve meaningful results.

HOW AN EXAMEN WORKS

The Examen involves a guided process, asking participants to reflect on:

1. **Obsessio:** What consumes your attention, drives your energy right now? Productive or limiting?
2. **Epiphania:** What recent insights or patterns shifted your perspective? What clarity is emerging?
3. **Habitus:** What habits or practices align—or misalign—with your values and priorities?

Through this exercise, participants gain tools to bring focus and mastery to their lives, fostering both personal growth and professional excellence.

Mastery Path| Examen

A REFLECTION ON INNER WORK OF PRESENCE | PRACTICE | PERFORMANCE

Instructions. Over the next year of programming, let's cultivate a view of mastery that is right for the story you are called to live into. Your coach hosts a studio for your executive mastery. The executive capacities under focus: presence, practice and performance. Over the year, we will look at three movements as likely responses to the training experiences that will unfold. Your coach will explore each.

ACT ONE | COMFORT



OBSESSIO - OBJECT OF THE SOUL'S ULTERIOR LONGING



What are the contours of your comfort zone? Where are you in resistance to responding to a wider world, a deeper life and impact that must come forth in your life? What are you keeping in, keeping out?

Where in Comfort, What One Focus Must I Now Adopt??

ACT TWO | CONFLICT



EPIPHANIA - UNEXPECTED SATISFACTION OF THE LONGING



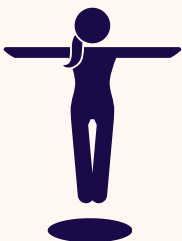
If you act, resistance will be your immediate companion. You must exert and sustain focused effort to break through its comforting hold on your smaller self and views. It asks: What do you love, to what do you pay involuntary attention and duty? What are your loves making of you?

Where in Conflict, What One Focus Must I Now Adopt??

ACT THREE | CONQUEST



HABITUS - DISPOSITION REFLECTING LOVE'S PROGRESS



When we have sided with our deeper self, our deeper loves, an inexplicably calm authority emerges. It is visible in all our unhurriedness, invitations to deeper connection, a legacy mindset to live deliberately. What is your life speaking, giving, leaving?

Where in Conquest, What One Focus Must I Now Adopt??

You are the able Protagonist in a series of unfolding scenes that make up your life, your leadership opportunity. In every story we know and love, the protagonist is the one who must act. This may be the year you settle the legacy that must emerge from your life.



Who We Choose to Be

Mrgaret J. Wheatley



A WORTH IT MEDIATION

The powerful always defend the status quo because it is the source of their power and privilege. Any change that benefits others would destroy their position. And their position is all they care about defending.

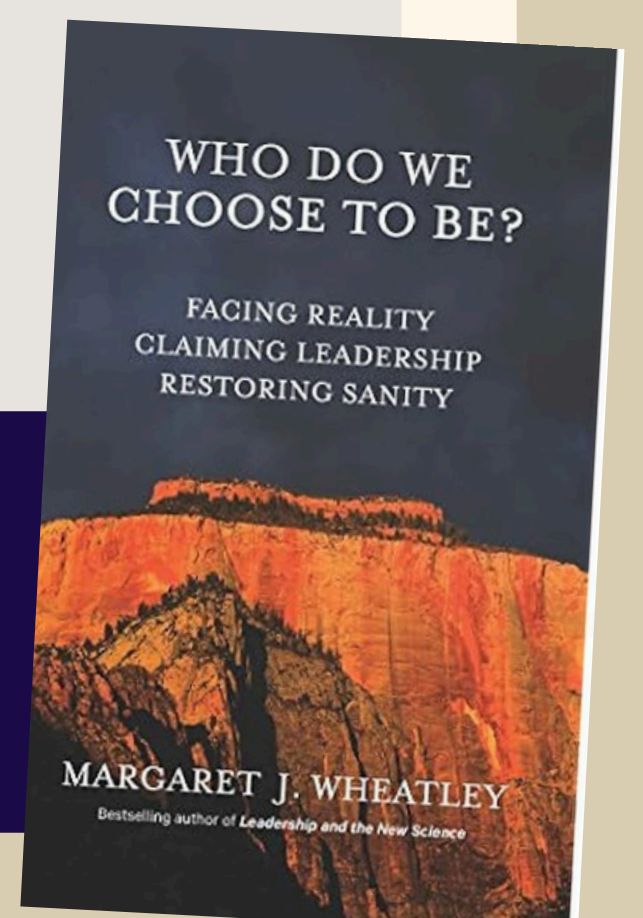
As a lifelong activist focused on changing leadership in large systems, as one still inside those large systems as a consultant, advisor, and friend, I realized years ago that **large-scale change was not possible**. Leaders were grasping for control, overreacting to crises rather than thinking systemically, treating people as 'units' rather than as humans. Yet I also met and worked with extraordinary leaders who were creating islands of sanity where good work still got done and where people enjoyed healthy relationships in the midst of chaotic conditions, fierce opposition, heartbreaking defeats, lack of support, isolation, loneliness, and slander. I have been with them in circumstances that caused most other leaders to give up and walk away, yet still they kept going. [...]

Several years ago, in the face of irreversible global problems and the devolution of leadership, I began to challenge every leader I met with these questions: Who do you choose to be for this time? Are you willing to *use whatever power and influence you have to create islands of sanity* that evoke and rely on our best human qualities to create, produce, and persevere? **Now I'm asking you.**

Our Question



Who Do We Choose To Be?: Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity. 2017
by Margaret J. Wheatley



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The Epic Turn | Life Storylines Review

Read the following descriptions of the 12 stages in the hero's journey and make notes in the left hand column of how this stage is shown in your studied text.

The Ordinary World

The hero exists in a world considered ordinary or uneventful by those who live there. The protagonist is outcast in their every day life and considered odd by the rest of society.

add text here

The Call to Adventure

The hero is called away and removed from the ordinary world. Usually there is a discovery, event, problem or danger that spurs them on their journey. Adventure awaits them.

add text here

Accepting the Call

The hero is given a task or quest which only they can complete. They are faced with a choice to either accept the task or refuse it. Of course, they eventually accept the adventure.

add text here

The Mentor & the Talisman

The hero meets a mentor who exhibits special skills, powers or wisdom. They give them a talisman - this might be a magical object, training, insight or advice that they need to succeed.

add text here



Crossing the Threshold

The hero leaves the ordinary world and enters an environment they've never experienced before. This new world has its own rules and the hero must learn to adapt if they want to survive.

add text here

Tests, Allies & Enemies

The hero is faced with a series of challenges to overcome. This makes them stronger and wiser. They may come across enemies or meet other characters who become helpful companions.

add text here

The Approach

This is the lead up to the final battle, also called the supreme ordeal. In this stage, the hero is confronted with something that motivates them or prepares them to complete the final task.

add text here

The Supreme Ordeal

Prepared with the skills and knowledge they've acquired, the hero overcomes their biggest obstacle. The tension is relieved but they usually lose something important to them.

add text here

The Reward

There is usually some kind of reward that awaits the hero for showing strength and endurance through the supreme ordeal. This could be treasure, love, information or admiration.

add text here



The Road Back

The hero decides it's time to return home to the ordinary world. They understand they've accomplished a great feat but they still might face further troubles or obstacles.

add text here

Growth or Atonement

The hero has learnt important lessons through their experience and now uses this newfound wisdom and strength to confront whatever holds the ultimate power in their life in one final test.

add text here

The Return

The hero has proved themselves worthy and achieved victory which is life-changing. They return with an object or ability that allows them to finally gain acceptance in the ordinary world.

add text here



The Epic Turn

- 6 Conversation-Centered Sessions
- 12 Brief Before/After Exercises
- 2 Transition Coaches to Guide, Witness (Not Lecture Nor Instruction)
- Step-by-Step Guides in virtual Renewal Circle Resource Center