
A Million Miles in A Thousand Years

Editing to Live Your Life

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Review of
A Million Miles in A Thousand Years
by Donald Miller

Introduction

What are your favorite TV shows? Are movies on your list as “must” entertainment? Have you thought about why these stories are so engaging for you? I’ll bet one thing is sure, none of them are boring!

As a Mystic Shawoman, I find that stories are a common way that we as human beings make sense of their lives. We point to some past story event for the answer as to “why” life is so difficult. Or look at the stories others are living and wonder “why” they have it so much easier. It is difficult to have an experience and not try to make up a story about oneself, the other people, God, parents, bosses, teacher and life in general.

Donald Miller in his book, **A Million Miles in a Thousand Years** writes, “I don’t know why we need stories, but we always have.” Many know this also and yet **Miller** brings story into its rightful place of power in this book. He writes, “I once thought confident people were confident because they were confident.”

Editor’s note: This reminded me of **Dr. Dweck’s** book, **Mindset**)

He continues, “The truth is, we are all living out the character in the roles we have played in our stories.”

And therein lies the Power!

My hope is that this review booklet will spark an interest for you. Written with a personal story line, there is much Miller shares that you can ponder about your own story and the roles you have been given. This concept may not be totally new to you, however, I think that his particular slant will open new doors of possibilities.

Enjoy!

Sharon Riegie-

Story



What are you living?

Miller was catching up on his friend Jason's life over lunch. Jason's 16 year old daughter was causing lots of concern for her parents. She seemed to be involved with the "wrong" crowd. She was dating a young man who did drugs and Jason was suspicious that his daughter was also experimenting. She was missing school, less available to her parents and the tension in the home was growing.

"Your daughter is living a terrible story," pipped up Miller.

His friend was shocked. "What does that mean?" he asked.

"It is simple," author Miller told Jason. "Story is a character who wants something and has to face many difficulties to get it. What are her options?"

And Jason realized that he was gone a lot. His wife worked and carried the load. Everyone was busy with their own responsibilities, barely talked and certainly not about important things. Miller talked to him about the components of a good story.

Jason took action. He researched what was going on in the the world and what heroic actions were being called for. Then he thought about the things his family found interesting and important. Putting the two together, he made a non-sensible decision. He and his family were going to build an orphanage - in South America that would require \$25,000 - money that they did not have.

In making this bold step to create a different story possibility, a heroic act for which they were not prepared, and with difficulties they would have to face to complete, Jason saved his family.

An Editor's Eye



How exciting is your life?

If your life were made into a movie, would the audience stay riveted to every scene?

- Would they cheer you on in your quest for gas stations with cheaper gas?
- Would your concern about what to fix for dinner after you have supported your daughter at her soccer game excite them?
- Would they be thrilled for your yearly vacation as they watched you wash and dry all the clothes the family needed to pack?
- Would they high-five you as you fell into bed after a long day of meetings?

Probably not.

People have a difficulty being drawn into a story that has no inspiring focus, does not elicit support to overcome some difficulties or challenges. Actions that do not add meaning become boring repetitions with no meaning.

Don Miller's was such a story. After published a book about his life, two film makers asked his permission to put it on the big screen. Bob wondered why they thought his life ought to be documented.

Deciding to agree was a turning point in Donald Miller's life. What happened can cause a turning point in your life also.

What Am I Living?



Who wrote this?

We expect our life or others in our life to add meaningful, to fill our emptiness, to give us purpose while we continue to live our day to day, ordinary experiences. What is the old saying? Oh yes, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.”

What Donald encountered as the two movie producers came and worked with his normal day to day experiences was that his life was boring. They suggested that in order to make a movie that others would like to watch, they needed to edit, which translates to “add or change, some things in your life.”

At first, Donald was hesitant. Was it honest? But he watched as they worked on the story line. Watching the character attributes, the inspiring “wants” and the life challenging situations bring vibrancy to hold the viewers interests, Don’s life changed.

He wrote, “If the point of life is the same as the point of a story, the point of life is character transformation.”

Instead of letting his life be about random experiences that added up to ordinary, Miller found himself building experiences from the character he had become in the movie story line.

He challenged

He invited

He set huge goals such as

And he refused to give up because the character in his movie would not have.

Starring in Your Own TV Series



Where to begin the script?

Look at your life like a long running TV series. What is your series about? What role do you play? What are the results that this role has brought you? Have you mastered the role? Do you want your future acting offers to be more of the same? Do you want to be pigeonholed as this specific character actor?

Is your life really a good story? By that I mean, is there a character who really wants something important to her? And, is she willing to face all of the obstacles that would prevent her from getting it?

A story in which there is meaning and clarity in each action or random experiences all strung together by time and space?

Miller wrote what he came to understand as the script for the documentary was discussed. "I didn't mind putting my character through conflict, because I knew no matter what happen to him, we would make things work out before the end."

Maybe some of us are a little unsure and being small is a way to pretend we are safe.

You aren't in a good story? What do you do?

- Be a writer. Take down a blank notebook and begin writing.
- Begin with the character - you.
- What has enough meaning that you would face the fires of fear?
- What actions does your character take, a character is what s/he does.
- What are your values and what brings you joy. Others will know who you are by your choices.

The Deeper Writer



art by Mara Earthlight

Where to begin?

Perhaps what we fear is that a soon as we stand up to declare that we are going to “climb that mountain”, we realize how much we have to give and how foolish we might look if we fail. A question to ask ourselves is “At the end of life will you have something interesting to say or will you sit in your rocking chair with your dreams and passions locked inside of you?”

You are writing the script and so you are not going to write obstacles and then neglect writing a grand overcome. You are designing a magnificent script and so the difficult situations that incite you to greater effort will be part of the story.

Beyond that, there are other forces in our world that you will encounter. Have you ever sat down to write a story, or to paint a picture, and as soon as you were in the flow, the words, the colors took over and something magic happened? Where did that “new” story come from with its conversations, its actions, and an outcome you had not considered. In that deeper part of a human psyche there exists a Muse that is just waiting for you to open the doors. That Muse holds possibilities for you that you have not even considered. And, you are the key because Universal Law decrees you the authority for your life.

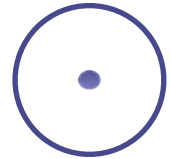
You begin and write the best story with the best character, the most meaningful dream and then know that the Deeper Muse will work the magic.

Writing Your Script



A powerful process

You are at the center of your story. You are the one who will live your life. And so, you begin with you. What are the qualities that you want to radiate? The values you want to be known by?



Oh, and by the way, readers, viewers and others would like to cheer you on and that only happens if you are a likable human being. So, how do you treat people, where have you helped others? What makes you a good person?

You write all this first.

Now, a story is a character, YOU, who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it.

What do you want? What is big enough that it will challenge you? What is meaningful enough that it will instill commitment? Where does the world need heroes in areas that interest and call you?

Next, overcoming conflict. How the character chooses to act when faced with difficulties, in split second challenges will show the world who you are. And so write how you, the character, respond.

When this is all done, step back and write one statement that encapsulates the story. This is your North Star, the statement that will guide your feet, feed your Soul and determine your choices.

Template for Your Script



A powerful process

“Once I understood the power of story in my personal life, I wanted to know more about how to create a good one.”

- Donald Miller

A simple template. Complete these statements:

- You: I have the Qualities of... I hold Value to.., I am likable because..
- Dreams: I have accomplished by first new dream of... (Make it a Big enough, Hero type, New adventure)
- Actions: I have acted with name the qualities as I made mistakes, identified problems and created an effective plan to accomplish....
- North Star: Write the statement and use it often. “My North Star, my current calling, is...”

Simple Hows:

The sentences become Reality Statements that you can use in the Reality Shift process. This process is beyond Affirmations. It invites your unseen Muse to be a part of your walk and the Muse can powerfully transform energy from the old TV scripts.

Formula: Focus on these Statements often for 5 days. Ask your Muse to transform what fear, procrastination, doubt, etc. comes up by activating healing with the words, “TAG and Transform.”

Transition



What script will you accept?

Now that you have the new story outlined, you may find that the external world will come to you with scripts based on the old roles. You had become so good at them! Before you accept the script, consider if you want the world to know you as a character actor that is only qualified to play the old roles. Or, are you willing to put in the time and effort to build your fame as a new hero actor, accomplished, inspiring and content?

Transition is difficult to the degree that you sit and take no actions or make no plans to accomplish your goals. Then, the old ingrains patterns will move you right back to the old.

You need new habits? Design and commit to them.

You feel like a fraud? Reach out for some mentor to walk you into your new role.

You are afraid to begin? Break the goal down into smaller steps and put them on the calendar. Then act on them whether you want to or not.

Donald Miller writes, “We got robbed of the glory of life because we aren’t capable of remembering how we got here. .. you wake up slowly to everything.

“It is when people do not allow Good to show up through them that the world collapses in on itself.

“The world needs us to have courage. The world needs us to write something better.”

Choices and then Actions. That is what life is all about. Choose a Grand Story!

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