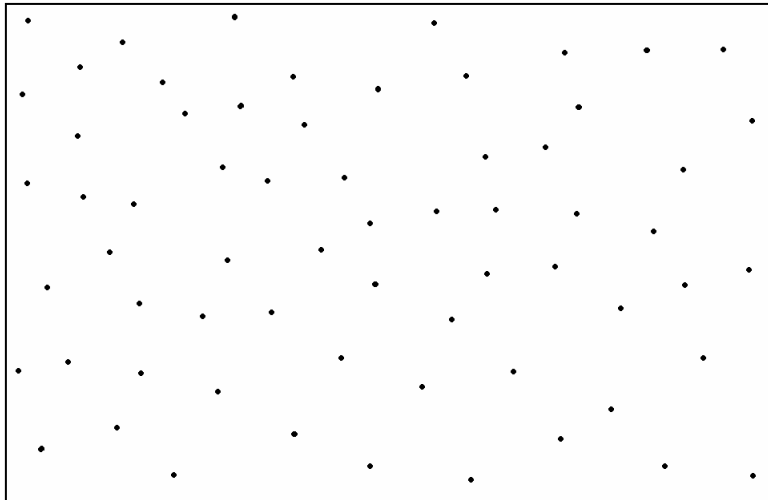


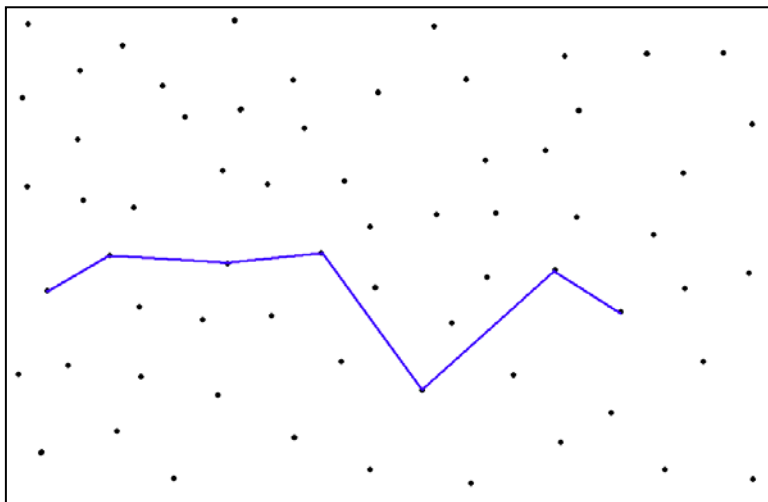
The Narrative Metaphor

In therapy organized by the narrative metaphor, we work with people to find new meaning in their lives by experiencing, telling, and retelling stories of as-yet-unstoried aspects of their lives.

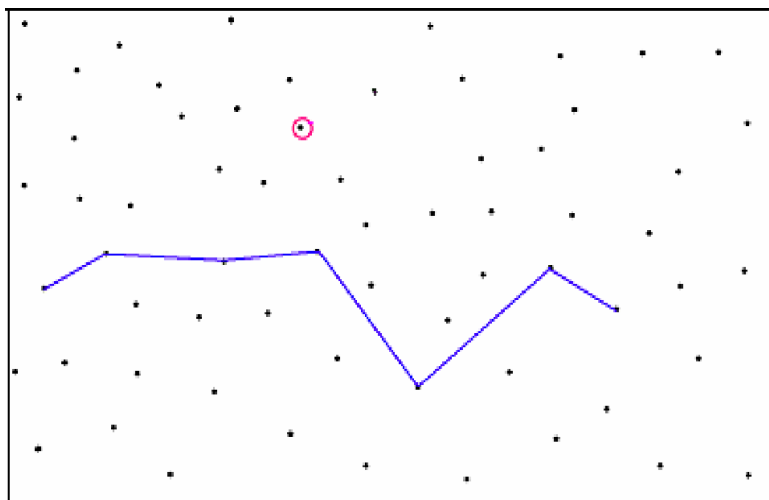
Imagine that each of the dots below represents a life experience.



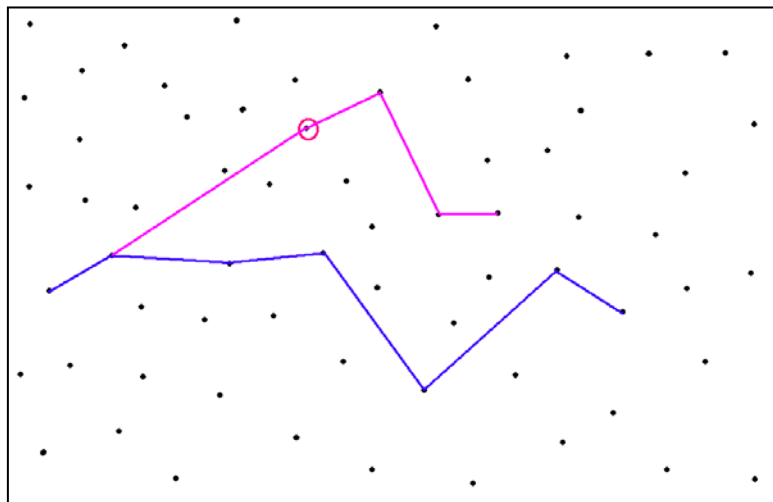
When people consult with a therapist, they are usually caught up in a rather thin story that focuses on only a few of their many life experiences:



As therapists, our first job is to listen to this story, and to orient to it as one of many possible stories. Listening with that attitude helps us notice when people make implicit or explicit reference to events that wouldn't be predicted by the plot of the problematic story:



We can then ask questions that invite people to step into those events, and to tell us (and themselves) about the events and the meaning of the events, developing them into memorable and vivid stories.



Over time, this process leads to the development of multiple storylines with rich and complex meanings that speak of multiple possibilities for people’s lives. This process does not take away problematic stories, but problematic stories often have a different meaning when they are only one strand of a multi-stranded story.

