Title: Evolving Narratives in the Course of Retirement: A Longitudinal Study
Authors: Jonsson, Josephsson, & Kielhofner

Major Finding: While narratives play a role in shaping the direction of persons lives, they also interweave with and change directions as a result of ongoing life events and experiences.

Participants:
- Phase 1: 32 workers
  - Aged 63-64, anticipated retirement age 65
- Phase 2 (2 years later): 29 participants
  - Now aged 65-66
  - 14 women, 15 men: 27 retired, 2 not retired: 8 engaged in some work other than former position
  - Former professions: blue collar (8), white collar (15), management (6)

Method: Each participant engaged in an informal semi-structured interview in phase I, and then a second interview tailored to each participant was conducted 2 years later.

Analysis: Narrative slopes were analyzed by examining how participants evaluated the course of their lives and then classified as progressive, stable, or regressive.

Findings:
- 8 participants anticipated that retirement would be a loss. Of these, 3 experienced retirement to be negative, but 3 sought to avoid the anticipated loss by continuing to work. They experienced no problem during the transition to retirement.
- 11 who anticipated that life after retirement would stay the same stayed stable (9), but 2 experienced an experiencing unexpected loss of meaning.
- Among 9 who anticipated an improvement in life after retirement, 7 had positive experiences, 2 experienced their life as “stable” and not improving, telling that their expectation of “to be escaped” did not turn out positive way.

Conclusion: Most participants expectations did not differ greatly from experiences, suggesting that their actions influenced events in expected directions. Also, narratives may take new directions as a consequence of external events.

Implications for future research: Further research should examine how narratives evolve throughout a life course and what may be understood from a narrative slope.

Evidence-based practice implications:
- The narrative approach is useful to understand how a client will act in the future and/or respond to life changes.
- Therapy that provides opportunities for engagement in new experiences may shift the life course narrative.