

## Narrative vs Set of Ideas

Neuroscientists are discovering more and more about how the brain stores input as memory. With my interest in language as a process of coordination, a major component of the foundation of this whole website, I have become interested in two different modes of language that relate to memory. One is where the brain establishes the coordination of a set of ideas that can be remembered as a rationale for a decision, a theory or a philosophy, a political platform or a business plan. The brain associates the various ideas into a whole so that each piece can be stored as part of the whole. Remembering the whole brings up individual pieces as they are important to create the whole, and remembering the pieces reminds the person of the larger whole it is part of.

Narrative is a different process. Here the associations in the brain are chronological. One part is remembered because it comes before or after another in the sequence. The coordination is in the story that flows from one event to another. This is different from the coordination of the set of ideas where the association is one of logic or a fit that makes sense.

Both are modes of memory for the brain to retrieve information so it does not have to rely constantly on the current experience. My interest is in language as a process of coordination, but increasingly in how this coordination in language is the way we create and maintain the self. This new idea leads me to think about how these two forms of memory, Narrative and Set of Ideas, work together as a way to remember who we are (which is how the neuroscientist LeDoux describes the self).

I have just incorporated this idea into my book about decision-making where I present how a person can change the self by modifying his or her pattern of decision making using language. As people get to know their own narrative, remembering who they are in that mode, they can use the other mode, set of ideas, to make sense of that narrative by recognizing the patterns of decision-making that have created that self. Then changing that pattern, by using language that does not play into the old pattern, begins to change the story, and then the patterns change and can be recognized, and the coordination flows back and forth between the two modes.