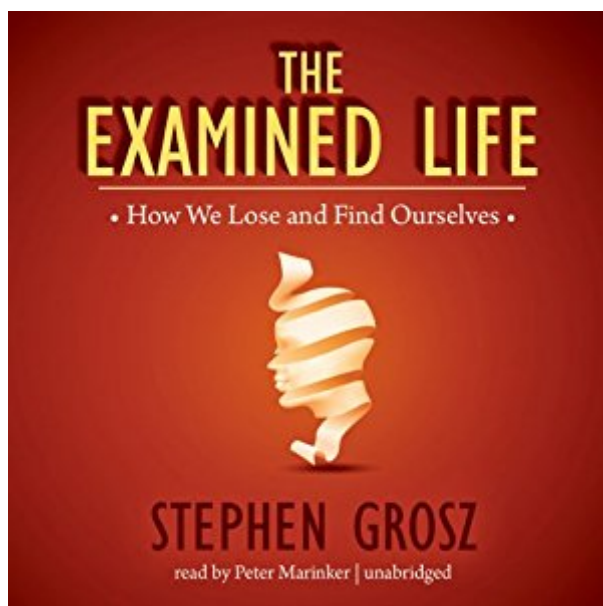


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# The Examined Life: How We Lose And Find Ourselves



## Synopsis

An extraordinary book for anyone eager to understand the hidden motives that shape our lives. We are all storytellers—we create stories to make sense of our lives. But it is not enough to tell tales; there must be someone to listen. In his work as a practicing psychoanalyst, Stephen Grosz has spent the last twenty-five years uncovering the hidden feelings behind our most baffling behavior. *The Examined Life* distills more than fifty thousand hours of conversation into pure psychological insight without the jargon. This extraordinary book is about one ordinary process: talking, listening, and understanding. Its aphoristic and elegant stories teach us a new kind of attentiveness. They also unveil a delicate self-portrait of the analyst at work and show how lessons learned in the consulting room can reveal as much to the analyst as to the patient. These are stories about our everyday lives; they are about the people we love and the lies we tell, the changes we bear and the grief. Ultimately, they show us not only how we lose ourselves but also how we might find ourselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is one of those rare instances in which I have to say that many of the 1- and 2-star reviews are as accurate as the 5-star ones. The main difficulty is expectations. *The Examined Life* is, at a superficial level, a series of shared experiences from the author's casebook, suitably anonymized, but it differs from the more traditional collections of essays by practitioners (Oliver Sacks, Atul Gawande, or, reaching back decades, William Nolen) in being less structured, more focused on a specific insight that the reader is left to ponder, very possibly with ramifications for his own life. Each of the chapters or sections is short; most are incomplete in the sense that they only touch on an

individual patient's life without even giving an account of the arc of his treatment. They are like epiphanies distilled from case studies, tantalizingly brief but written with extraordinary lucidity and sensitivity. They are as good as many short stories in this sense, not by being obscure but by rewarding multiple readings. If you are expecting detailed accounts of a patient's life, followed by a description of diagnosis and treatment, you will likely be disappointed. But if you are willing to entertain the possibility that patient case histories can be used as a starting point for an experienced therapist's reflection, insight, and wisdom, you should not feel misled.

A wonderful and compassionate book. The author, a psychoanalyst, captures the humanity of working with people to help them relieve their suffering. He is a true "mensch" and writes with warmth and a respect for the people he treats. As a psychotherapist myself, I was moved and - in the chapter about his father - brought to tears.

Very insightful and inspiring. Finally, psychoanalytic case material made accessible to lay people that only heard mixed opinions about psychoanalysis' usefulness. It reads like the best short stories you read by a fireplace in a dreamily and pensive mood.

Highly recommended for everybody, each story captured psychological truths about our life's. Sometimes painful realization or confirmation of our feelings. After reading the book we can grasped our life easier.

It's becoming a fashion for the psychoanalysts and psychotherapists to write fiction from their clinical cases. That can often be an interesting reading but rarely it's well written. This is to my mind one of these cases when a reader really meets a piece of literature - laconic, intriguing but clear and reflective short stories. Difficult genre well elaborated

Very interesting and illuminating series of patient vignettes from which you can learn a lot about yourself, or it at least lends useful perspectives to whatever issues you happen to deal with in your life.

As interesting for his personal reflections on his practice as it is for "losing and finding ourselves". I like how some of the chapters appears to leave questions for you to write yourself, as if the story has ended but is not quite finished.

Excellent read. I deliberately didn't read it straight through as I didn't want it to end. It's a collection of vignettes from the author's psychoanalytic practice and experience. It's an honest book about real people with their privacy well protected by the author. Not every ending is happy. In real life, some of us learn from hardship and mistakes, others of us do not. Or we learn but can't seem to change or recover from the past. The only other book I can find by this author is in Spanish which I cannot read sufficiently enough. (Maybe I'll work on that) In any case, this little book jewel will stay with me for the rest of my life as I'll read it again and again.

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