



Ariadne's Thread

A maze of meaning

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In life we can often feel trapped in our head due to an inner thought or due to something or someone in society causing an impact on our psychological boundaries. We can become lost in thought through the concepts of shame, anxiety, anger, fear and sometimes feelings of numbness and feeling completely lost. In this reading we will discuss how we can create breathing space and how we always have three foundational choices for each scenario in life; to do nothing; to react; to construct. If we use the metaphor of Ariadne's thread we can visualise an alternative route to entrapment and we can visualise a route of standing still (nothing), a route of negativity (react) or a route of maturity (construct).

Imagery and stories are powerful ways for us to understand the world around us and our own thoughts and feelings. The ancient story of Ariadne's Thread can be used as a metaphor to help us not only understand our current predicament(s) but also a way for us to find a constructive and positive next step out of our own internal maze. Is the maze eternal and ever present? The maze is a visual for any time you feel lost in life and this visual with the below guidance can provide structure and narrative to your predicament.

As the myth goes Queen Pasiphae slept with a bull sent by Zeus, and gave birth to a Minotaur, a creature half bull and half man. King Minos was ashamed by this creation and instead of killing the Minotaur he hid the creature in the Labyrinth. This construction was a maze where King Minos placed his enemies; a maze where they could not find their way out alive and would be eaten by the Minotaur. King Aegeus of Athens was asked by King Minos to send men and women every year to the Minotaur to avert a plague. Theseus, son of Aegeus decided to take on the quest of killing the Minotaur to stop further human sacrifices. Theseus and Princess Ariadne (daughter of King Minos) met and began to fall in love. Ariadne provided Theseus with a ball of thread so

that he could unravel the thread to find his way out of the Labyrinth after he killed the Minotaur. Although this is a fascinating story and there are many further chapters to the tale, here we will focus our attentions of the life lessons of the Labyrinth.

Please note these are the personal metaphors and conclusions of the author and we hope that these concepts will help you in life. You may come up with your own metaphors and conclusions. We will at times use the term 'we' and 'our' and this is referring to the authors view point and those at Meaningful Paths.

THE FREEDOM OF THE THREAD

Have you been involved in a situation that upset you and you were not able to let that situation go for several days or more? Do you believe that circumstances of your past maybe controlling your daily actions in the present moment?

Dr Joe Dispenza discusses the idea that if we had a past problem and we did not deal with that problem it will manifest inside of us. The longer this problem remains unresolved it can then become a trauma and be with us decades later. This trauma subconsciously can massively dictate our current present actions and future actions. We will discuss more on this below with 'Shame of the Minotaur.'

According to Dr Joe Dispenza;

"How you think and how you feel creates a person's state of being. Often a person's state of being starts in the past. This means that a person's past will

soon become a 'predictable future'. If you believe that your thoughts have something to do with your destiny and you can't think GREATER THAN YOU FEEL because you are thinking in the past and these are linked to past emotions, you will keep recreating the past."

It is natural for us to get ourselves into a situation and then once forms of anxiety, or shame, or anger begin we do not know how to then alter our path. This often results in our bodies taking subconscious actions and this can get us deeper into our own personal labyrinth.

What can we learn from Ariadne's thread to help us with problems that we face today? What was the initial purpose of the thread?

The initial purpose of the thread was to go back the way we came and find our way out of the maze. If we have the thread with us at all times we are allowed to take one step backwards to make two steps forwards. Sometimes it is best for us to take one step back and do the exact opposite of what we last chose to do. We can then recreate our entire dynamics and the entire future outcome. At other times we may feel it is best to move forward for our best future outcome.

What most people do is they stay trapped in the maze and allow their negative feelings to manifest and they allow that manifestation of negativity to turn into real world actions chosen by our subconscious. Such decisions are either from doing 'nothing' or 'reacting'.

Through re direction and assertiveness we can get out of the Labyrinth maze and re-define our future outcomes. Therefore we chose to 'construct' and make the mature decision.

If we look to take one step backwards how far should we go? This is up to you, however a good ideal could be to go as far back as the last decision you made that had a foundational effect on your current predicament.

Please note in our foundational book Paths of Meaning we said; “Sometimes in life it is better to do nothing at all and at other times we have to take a chance down a certain path and be brave enough to take on such a challenge.” In this way our idea of doing nothing was from a mature choice of being patient and choosing to do nothing. This is very different from doing nothing because we do not know what to do and when compared to being paralyzed in thought.

If you act a certain way that is out of character or you are feeling unfulfilled and you cannot quite put your finger on why; picture a maze in your head use the thread to take a step backwards. Sometimes trying the opposite is the perfect way to re-define the future outcome.

Dr Joe Dispenza discusses ways to break free from bad habits and past decisions. He suggests that by the age of 35 the way your subconscious mind navigates your decisions is pretty much set from your past decisions. This is often why many people struggle to make changes in their lives. He suggests several methods to change the way the subconscious mind works and one way is through new daily habits. Every morning you get out of bed on the same side, brush your teeth at the same time, go to work the same route. He describes this as you being directed by a subconscious programme and your life is being driven by this programme. You must change the programme in order for you to make significant changes in your life.

We can use the thread as a metaphor to take a step back and to make new choices through constructive daily habits starting with a morning routine that alternates its practices.

We can also step backwards with our thread to gather breathing space and learn new skill sets to change our future outcome. If we take on a new job that is well paid but it results in us not seeing our family and loved ones much and we are financially 'trapped' via our high mortgage payment and car finance; how do we change this?

It is natural for us to use money from our well paid job to buy additional gifts for our family and we can also spend further payments on our home. This however will not remove the long term anxieties such a 'trap' can provide.

Could we not use our thread to take a step back and talk to our partner? Could we go to classes together and buy books on financial health and create a 3 year plan to leave such a job and be financially strong so that we as a family can spend much more time together and without financial anxiety? We all have choices in life, and there is always more than one choice moving forward. We often say we cannot do something or blame outside circumstance for predicaments that we face. If we learn to mature and take charge of our future outcome and if we use the metaphor of the maze and our thread as a visual we can calm any anxious state of being and see that there is several routes ahead. Which route do we take next? Could it be through the guardian of our personal riches?

THE MINOTAUR GUARDING OUR RICHES

The Minotaur could be seen as a guardian to our personal riches and this could be seen that he is a monster who is in our way or a strong guardian mirrored by 'ugliness' to the best treasure of all; our best selves.

David Goggins was the only man in history to complete elite training as a Navy SEAL, Army Ranger, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller. He shares his personal way of facing suffering head on and pushing through suffering via daily

constructive action to reach the 'other side' of happiness. Most of us shy away from any form of challenge and find ways around suffering.

David Goggins says suffering is the path to true fulfilment;

"Life is too hard, life isn't fair, these things in life are not easy for me. You look to your left and you look to your right and you start to judge yourself off other people.... You have to judge yourself against yourself".

When you begin to compete against only yourself and yourself alone and you realise that this is your own path then you can truly focus on your end goals without the stresses of the outside world. If Theseus focussed on what his father would think, what his love would think, and how the world would judge him then he would have been too distracted.

"Once I got down to the real mineral soil of who I was we can start real growth".

If we define ourselves and create ourselves based on other people's opinions and if we are dictated by world views then we begin to partially build ourselves based on a lie. If we can focus our full attentions on what makes us happy and if we can use our energy on what is good for us and our loved ones as opposed to allowing negative feelings from shame and more (explained below) to control us then we can see a truly clear next decision ahead; a decision that is right for us.

David Goggins shares his idea for when we are at our lowest moments and we want to 'tap out of the ring' if we can stick in there and we don't escape we can begin real character growth and change. This could be compared to a runner who stops when tired.

Do we turn back on the thread back to the entrance? We feel fear, darkness and we do not know which way to turn in the maze. Our mind begins to question our motives and doubt creeps in. Do we turn back on the thread? Or do we follow the methodology of a David Goggins and do we lead the thread forward into a new room or space? We are allowed to pause, to reflect and to think but if we can learn to carry the thread forward into the unknown then we can truly change our lives. If we dare to face the Minotaur and take assertive action we can come out as a better version of ourselves.

It is important to note that two crucial learning points here are carrying forward the thread (sometimes this can be via one step back and two steps forward) and also taking assertive action. If we were to spend too long in the company of the Minotaur and we did not take any action at all we could fall into a negative space. The Minotaur can be seen as a reflection of an unwanted self and a change we need to make for character growth to remove the Minotaur. We may grow on our journey to meet the Minotaur, but we will never truly change unless we take assertive action to confront him. The riches of our best selves come from going through him. A simple analogy for this would be a fear of public speaking. If we spent too much time dwelling on our fear then we are indeed spending too long with the metaphor of the Minotaur and we would eventually feel worse. If we accepted our situation and committed to improving our skill set for example we started new hobbies to mix with new people and improve our social skills then we are moving our thread down the mature path and we are leaving our own internal maze. Having said this anxiety could come back to us at a later date over this issue even though we have improved our social skills. The true freedom from this situation lies in going through the Minotaur which in this situation would be successfully speaking on stage in front of an audience. Therefore we can achieve personal growth through the right route in the maze but to achieve our best selves we must go through the Minotaur.

The real actions of going through the Minotaur comes from new skill sets. Are we ashamed or anxious over a task in life? If we become better at our areas of weakness instead of making excuses we can confidently go through the Minotaur.

Please note we are not suggesting that you should seek or pursue suffering. We are suggesting that through the courage of taking mature action through times of difficulty and the willingness not to give up can result in a more complete form of happiness on the other side through character growth.

Is the Minotaur always present? Anytime you feel lost in life we suggest that you visualise the concept of the maze and the Minotaur will always be present as a task to face as long as you face that current predicament in your life.

Naturally each time a new predicament or stress in life arises you can visualise the maze again and the Minotaur will always be part of that new visualisation.

The next time you feel unfulfilled in life remember the concept of learning new skill sets outside of your comfort zone and visualise Ariadne's thread and the Minotaur ahead.

THE SHAME OF THE MINOTAUR

Could we look at the creation of the Minotaur as a metaphor for shame due to King Minos hiding away the creature and using the creature for destructive habits of life? The Minotaur could also be seen as male specific feelings of shame in the way the story of Medusa could be seen as female specific feelings of shame? For the purpose of this discussion we will focus our attentions of the feelings of shame for the human being and not gender specific.

We can feel shame from three specific concepts;

1. Someone else's negative projection.
2. We feel guilt for doing something wrong.
3. We feel we are not good enough.

People can sometimes be negative towards us when we in essence have done nothing wrong. We can recognise this person as a narcissist and because they have internal shame and they are not happy with themselves they can project nasty habits towards you. We can learn to recognise these people and smile back and walk away from them without letting them enter our own personal boundaries. If we allow them to 'get to us' we have allowed their personal shame to become our own personal shame. We must learn to quickly recognise these individuals and respond with nothing but positivity back and then we can walk away without wasting our energy on letting their shame become our own.

If our shame comes from guilt due to an action that wronged someone else then we need to do the mature thing and take responsibility. If we can accept our wrong doing and do our best to make amends to those that we wronged we have a platform to move forward. We then need to mature as a person and learn from such mistakes. If we become a better version of ourselves and if we push our boundaries constructively such as David Goggins suggests we can begin to let go of that shame and move forward.

We often bottle up our shame and it manifests and then subconsciously we take action based on that negative manifestation and release it into the world through action. This can then begin to lead our actions in life as earlier described in freedom of the thread.

What most people do is they stay trapped in the maze and allow their negative feelings to manifest and they allow that manifestation of negativity to turn into real world actions chosen by our subconscious.

Through re direction and assertiveness we can get out of the Labyrinth maze and re-define our future outcomes.

The mature thing for us to do is to recognise what the source of shame was and to then be assertive and take positive actions to improve ourselves to do good things in the world. We should work on our skill sets, we should work on our humbleness and our appreciation, and we should work on the way we communicate with others in a positive and constructive way. If we have done something wrong and feel guilt we should take responsibility for our actions, make amends and then move on to do good in the world.

We can visualise our own personal Labyrinth and use our own personal thread by Ariadne to find our own positive and constructive solutions. If a boss has humiliated us at work (although this is wrong by them) we have three paths ahead with our thread;

1. To remain in our space and allow shame to fill us up and long term direct our future behaviours through our subconscious.
2. To move down a path of resentment and anger and potentially revenge.
3. To work on our boundaries and recognise the narcissistic values of our boss and their own immaturity. Then we move our thread forward based

on mature decisions; we will not let their shame become our own; and we will learn new skill sets to dedicate ourselves to being the best at our job.

How do we learn new skill sets?

We can focus our attention on being the best version of ourselves. Become the best communicator in the office, become the best sales person, become the kindest person in the office, and stand out and use that negative emotion from your boss and fuel it for good.

Robert Kiyosaki once described how he and his colleague volunteered on the phones for two hours each evening after work to cold call the public for a local charity for donations. This enabled Robert to become an expert over time at selling but he also proudly raised a nice sum for a worthy cause.

As you will learn in the book *Paths of Meaning*; how to live a meaningful life there is a strong difference between arrogance and confidence;

“Arrogance is thinking you are better than others and putting them down. Confidence is believing in yourself, having faith in your future and helping others grow alongside you”.

Therefore you can push to be the best in your working environment but you can do this in a humble way and be kind along that journey. We do not need to become arrogant and we can keep note of this concept to keep ourselves in check along our journey.

There are always three foundational choices and we can visualise our own maze and hold onto Ariadne’s thread to give us room to think and then take a step forward on the mature path.

A MAZE OF MEANING

How can we use the metaphor of Ariadne's Thread and the Minotaur in the maze?

We have learned that if something from the outside world hurts us it can come into our personal psychological boundary. We have learned that if we do not handle this form of anxiety, anger or shame quickly then it can manifest. If we allow this to manifest and cover this up with distractions such as alcohol or over compensating then we do not truly deal with the issue at hand. If we use the metaphor of Ariadne's thread we can visualise an alternative route and we can visualise a route of standing still, a route of negativity or a route of maturity. This visualisation gives us some breathing space and we momentarily do not feel lost in our own maze. We can then make a mature choice to take the thread down a path of assertiveness and learn skill sets that will take us out of our current predicament. We are allowed to take the thread backwards to reassess our dilemmas and then move down alternative paths.

We have also learned that for true character growth and in order to radically alter our future for the best version of ourselves then we can carry the thread towards the Minotaur. We can gather the riches of our best self beyond him through courage and new skill sets by putting ourselves in an uncomfortable environment and making real change through assertiveness and the humbleness to learn new skills.

Never again will you feel completely lost and alone when you pause to visualise a maze and hold onto Ariadne's thread. Using this tool and metaphor we can always visualise alternative healthier routes for our best selves. Learn to ask questions and take charge of your future.

Wishing you every success on your journey in life.



David is the founder of www.meaningfulpaths.com a platform to help people reach their best selves. David is also the founder of www.skipitcommunity.com where people 'skip' unhealthy foods and habits and instead use that money saved to donate for the health and well-being of children internationally.

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