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Favorites

—be they objects, places, events, or people—are special. They feel special, significant, extraordinary. Psychologist Tom Guarriello argues that this feeling arises from the fact that you and your favorite are in a relationship—one that indeed is special, significant, extraordinary.

Let's say you have a favorite chair. At some point, you and the chair didn't know one another. You had experiences in life before the two of you met. The same is true for your chair; it was designed and crafted by someone and then found its way to a store, where it was purchased by you. Or perhaps the chair had several owners before you laid eyes on it in a second-hand store. It's also possible that someone threw the chair to the curb, and you or someone came along to take it and give it a new look and a new home.

In any event, you and the chair came together at some point, and a mutual story developed that was uniquely yours. You sat in this chair every evening to read, watch television, or talk with your family. Perhaps you held your children or grandchildren while sitting in this chair. For you it was the perfect chair because it gave you the best view of the winter sunset. Now, some years later, you can't imagine life without your favorite chair.

Guarriello believes that the relationship you have with this chair is

like a gravitational field, and he points out that among our collection of favorites, there are varying levels of relationship. "Some favorites are like the sun, or large planets. Their gravitational field is large and strong. They pull us toward them powerfully and persistently . . . Other favorites create weaker spacetime relationships and are easily replaced by other things after a much shorter time. So, while some objects become lifelong favorites that we couldn't imagine replacing, others burn intensely and brightly for a while and then drift away, losing energy and fading into the background (sometimes abruptly)." (<https://tomguarriello.substack.com/p/what-is-a-favorite>)

Guarriello suggests that favorites are like "major or minor characters in our life stories." Your favorite chair is a favorite because it plays an important role in your life, one only understood by examining the stories you have in common, the stories that define your connectedness.

Therein lies the magic of favorites; they are partners in the journey of life and are featured in the stories that we tell about our life. And sooner or later, as we try to understand or make sense of this thing called life, we come to realize that stories are everything. And how can you tell a story about your life without mentioning at least one of your favorites? ❄️

