

My name is Marlis Enders, and this is the story of the items carried in my purse, how they relate to my identity, culture, and communication. Each one has a story to tell – let's listen to their conversation...

Wallet

The wallet was the first to speak up... "I am the most important item in this bag. I hold the identification and financial access of the owner, and I am so important that I actually have a special screen to prevent digital scanning. The cards I hold have to have special protection so that the owner won't be preyed upon by criminals. I do have to say that I am getting quite fat with all the access cards that this person carries."

Keys

The keys chimed in... "We would have to beg to differ – we think we're most important. We allow access to transportation and shelter. Without us, the owner wouldn't be able to lock her house to protect her valuable possessions, and she wouldn't be able to use her car for transportation. A key is access to other environments and worlds whether literal or metaphorical."

Miscellaneous items

There were some miscellaneous items that were quietly hiding in the background talking amongst themselves. They were minor players, not brought out to play too often but very useful when they did come out. The spare bandaids swelled with pride as they recalled the time they stopped a scraped knee from bleeding. The charger bragged about the time it saved the owner from being stranded with a dead phone, and the wipes teared up at how happy the owner was to have them in the height of a pandemic. The napkins stood casually aside waiting for their time to clean a dirty face or hands. The only ones with identifying text were the wipes and the bandaids, but everyone knew their place.

Change purse

'Nobody uses me much anymore' lamented the change purse. Although the writing on the outside was a fond reminder of a warm, sunny, place travelled to in times past, the contents were a little used currency. In the age of digital currency and plastic credit, cash, especially coins, were a token of a decreasing economic exchange system. The text on each coin and paper denomination indicating a hierarchy of worth that is becoming more rarely used.

Cheque Book

'I hear you' said the cheque book. 'I'm just an old relic myself, nothing more than a promissory note or 'IOU' that nobody takes seriously anymore.

Receipts

'And why are we here?' the collected paper receipts wondered aloud... 'We're just clutter unless the owner needs proof of the item she bought to exchange it'. So many of us are printed up, but does anyone actually look at us and read us? Nobody cares what we have to say unless they're unhappy with the purchase.

Writing Utensils

'We're still useful' said the pens and pencils, 'we add colour and express creativity in pictures or writing'. Still a useful tool when it is inconvenient to pull out a digital device to quickly record data or information.

Mask

'I'm enjoying my glory for now' said the mask. 'I know that nobody likes me, but since I come in so many different colors and versions, I am an expression of identity. Eventually, I'll no longer be needed and I'll become forgotten in a dark corner of the bag, but for now, I'll enjoy my usefulness.'

Piccolo

The piccolo quickly piped in – 'I can evoke emotions and tell stories depending upon what kinds of sounds my owner makes with me. When the owner plays music with me, she expresses her personality and her mood. Her taste in music is part of her identity, and she communicates through me. When she joins other people with other instruments, they communicate back and forth with each other and tell another story together.'

Digital device

The digital device was listening carefully and took in all of the information around it and processed it just as its computer brain was programmed to do. It had many talents such as recording memories for the owner, storing important information and reminding her of her appointments, communicating with friends and family, and entertaining her when she was bored. The digital device could present information in many different ways – visually, audibly, and textually. It was truly a multimodal device but with all of the other talking going on around, it was unable to get a word in edgewise. It knew, however, that it was the best example of how information and communication was evolving.