

Michael White workshop, March 22-23 2007.

Linda Moxley-Haegert's notes taken at this workshop.

Centre de psychothérapie stratégique.

Séquelles de Traumas, d'abus et de violences : Une approche narrative.

Response to Trauma and Abuse: A narrative approach.

Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Michael White workshop, March 22, 23, 2007, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

A narrative approach to the sequelae of trauma, abuse and violence.

March 22, 2007

*Code: brackets and italics and non-bold – my comments or additions to try to make more sense of some of my notes. Hopefully these comments do not take away from what Michael meant with his words.*

*: Italics and bold alone – Michael's comments as he is going through a therapy story and any verbatim questions of his.*

**: Underline and bold – key narrative practice concepts.**

#### Assumptions

1. **People are always active in giving meaning to their experiences of life – even young children have meaning making skills.**
2. **In order to give meaning to our experiences in life, we need a meaning making frame.**

**The dominant meaning making frame are the stories of our life**

**The experiences in life give us our identity and affect our relationships.**

3. **These meanings that we give to our experiences in life shapes our actions, shapes how we proceed with life.**

i.e. If we think we are being disqualified by someone we may distance ourselves

- Maybe we talk to friend B and this person interprets this in a different way, how about clarifying that with friend A. We may then get a different interpretation of the event.

We are **highly selective** in terms of what we take into our story lines of our life. We only render a fraction of our experience significant. What we give meaning to is determined by themes.

4. **Life is also multi-storied, never single storied.** The dominant story has subordinate stories which lie in the shadows of the dominant story. Many people who seek help have negative stories that are dominant and give negative conclusions about their identity.

They may feel that life is frozen in time, trapped with no possibilities.

**The assumption associated with all of the above assumptions is that people are always telling stories.**

A story is:

Circumstances

Events in Time

In Sequence

Through time according to a Theme (ex. – losing my life).

People also reflect on these story lines.

Our work is to encourage these people to use their meaning making skills (*to move towards the story they want for their lives*), which is what they usually do in life but towards the negative story-lines.

We try to draw attention to what has been neglected in (*the*) experiences of life that are outside the dominant story – these are positive conclusions.

With these Re-authoring Conversations, subordinate stories come out of the shadows.

(*In*) using narrative practices it is not the therapist's role to interpret – that would make the therapist the primary author (*and the person who consults needs to be the primary author*).

Using narrative practise it is not the therapist's role to give affirmations and applause.

The therapist's role is to support them to take a more primary authorships role of their lives.

There is always a stock of lived experiences that has been neglected. Everyone has the skills and knowledges in them to address their problems – they (*these knowledges and skills*) are just not very visible.

Example – pee and pooing – self regulation. Have had them since young, (*the therapist helps a person*) search for ways (*of self regulation*).

Story of Diane (10)

(*Diane*) was withdrawn from home because of abuse. Diane has a sense of shame. She had not many questions about abuse; it was like she had deserved it.

Michael: (*She*) was asked if we assigned failure to new born babies, what would she think?

Diane's response was that she would think it unfair.

Michael: Where does the sense of unfairness come from, how did she figure it out (*my comments – absent but implicit*).

*We found out that Diane escaped into Pippi Longstocking books– Pippi challenges the imbalances of power, of gender, culture, challenged her teacher.*

*There was a response to abuse – no one is a passive recipient to trauma – very often these responses, however, are invisible. We need to make them visible.*

*Traumatic memory = ½ memory. Need to restore traumatic memory to its fullness.*

*(Story of the) Pippi and the Tea Party Episode –*

*Michael: What did this say about values? – What was Pippi teaching about values?*

Next session – *(Michael)* invited other children who had escaped shame after trauma.

*Addressing the injustices that others have been through.*

The children re-interpreted Diane's story of Pippi.

Michael interviewed the children about what they noticed. *What was it like to be present to hear this story? (retelling).*

Several meetings later – A woman author of children's story was invited to the session to represent Astrid Lindgren the author of Pippi Longstocking.

Questions *(to this woman)* – *What is your guess about what Astrid Lindgren would respond to, what would she think of what Diane stood for? What would it be like for Astrid Lindgren to know what her story did to Diane?*

Old dominant story line – Diane is a passive recipient of abuse and shame.

*(Double story listening)* The subordinate story of Pippi Longstocking values and beliefs came out of the shadows.

Story of Jason

Jason (15) – lives with his mother (Mary). *(See chapter two in Michael's book Maps of Narrative Practice for this story in more detail).* His mother is worried about Jason. He does not go to school, is morose, suicidal, and has the conclusion of messed up and damaged. His mother is very worried, can't work, has no social life, her salary is the only income. Mother thought Jason would not want to come, but that he would come for her. When he came he said it was a waste of time to talk about his life, his mother went through something much worse (he gives value to his mother's life). There had been abuse from his father and his mother's husband. They managed to get free when Jason was 13.

*Michael: There is always a social and relational history to what people give value to.*

Mother is asked this question. *What does the story of Jason saying you went through something much worse than he say about what Jason values?*

Mary responds” He values my life”.

Her response to Michael’s question: *How would you know this?*

Response: “A mother always knows”.

*This is a cul de sac.*

Michael: ‘*Tell me a story that would show this*’.

Mary responds with the story of herself being beaten by the father. Jason threw a rock through the window. The dad chased, beat and ridiculed him for it (*valuing his mother’s life*), but mother was no longer being beaten.

Michael asks Jason: “Do you remember this story?”

Jason did not remember this story.

Michael asked: “What name could be given to this story”.

Mother called it an act of protection.

*Michael states to us: ‘Seven years later this story was rendered significant.*

Michael asked; ‘*What does it tell you about what is important to Jason?*’

Answer by mother: ‘Justice, courage’.

Michael: “*Jason can you relate to that?*”

Jason cannot relate to this.

Michael asks: *Can you see why your mother could relate to it?*

Jason thinks he could.

Michael asked the mother: “*Mary, what makes you see this as Justice?*”

The answer is – “It is what a mother knows.”

Another cul de sac so Michael asks for another story. (*It seems that cul de sacs call for a question about a story*).

Mary tells another story – age six, Jason used to give his lunch at school to a kid missing his mother and another child who was being teased.

Michael asks if Jason remembers this story.

Jason does not remember this.

Michael asks Mary to paint the picture (*for Jason*) “What does this story tell us about the purposes and importance Jason gives to in life, what he gives value to, in terms of justice?”

*Jason gradually comes to relate to these stories.*

*Michael states that one often has to have several stories before the person can relate if the dominant problem story is extremely strong.*

**Michael asks to Jason: “How come you can relate to this?” He then asks: “Are there any recent stories that would show your value of justice?”**

**Mary reminds Jason of speaking to his cousin. Two years ago, Jason was suspecting that his cousin (father’s brother’s daughter) could be being abused. Jason set in motion protection for this cousin.**

*This story was named 2 years later as an example of Jason’s value of justice.*

**Michael asks Jason’s mother: “What is your guess was about what this story would tell me about Jason?”** *(Michael seems to be searching for ideas and stories that contradict the negative dominant story).*

**Mary answers: ‘He has purpose in life; he has value, tell of what he stands for in life, what is important to him.’**

*Michael tells us about his book and that this story is in the book, ‘Maps of Narrative Practice’, coming out in March – Google [www.norton](http://www.norton.com).*

## **Story of Frederick**

**Frederick (age 25).**

*(Michael’s introduction to Frederick’s story)*

**Frederick spent a life in the streets. He was referred by accommodation services. He had been very skilled at discouraging the interest of counsellors.**

**First time – came 50 minutes late, Michael gave him a 20 minute session.**

*(During that time Frederick)* **confirmed that he had abuse as a child, from family, foster home and institutions. He kept escaping and as an adolescent had done sex work – now (*he is*) feeling suicidal and despairing. Three of his peers had committed suicide in the last 18 months.**

**Michael starts questioning ‘Despair’. (*Externalized problem*)**

**Michael:** *“I don’t understand why the despair is not worse? Everything you have told me would make people think that you are resigned. The despair suggests that this does not suit you.”*

Eventually Frederick was able to say that he did have a hope of a different life, but currently felt futile and abandoned.

*This is a point of entry – hope –( bringing forth the Absent but Implicit).*

**(Michael to us):** Discussion of the French critical theorists – \*1. Michel Foucault and \*2 Jacques Derrida.

**Philosophy of deconstruction.**

Every argument depends on a counter argument that is absent but implicit. We read between the lines. Every expression involves an act of distinction.

The expression of despair is despair in relationship to something – we found out HOPE with Frederick.

The expression of pain is in relationship to something – to what– we need to discover what it is.

**Discussion of Naturalistic Understandings.**

**It is the habit of western thought to go naturalist.**

**For example (the assumption that) pain is the natural outcome of abuse (is a naturalistic understanding) – this can obscure so much.**

*(Another example is the naturalistic western thought assumption that) despair is a natural outcome.*

**(Michael stated that) If I had thought Diane’s outcome was the result of resilience and assumed as much then (I) would have stop asking questions.**

Naturalistic understandings are cul de sacs to rich stories.

**Cultural and Historical Ideas**

**Example. Strengths and resources, weaknesses and deficits. These are current ideas which capitalize on resources – private property and commerce.**

**It is helpful to question these two ideas.**

**History in metaphor – releases us if people think outside of the box.**

**Foucault – deconstructed these metaphors – he traced the history of these taken for granted ideas.**

**Exoticise the Domestic. Western culture domesticates the exotic.**

**Anthropologists – when go into cultures and bring back ideas, couches these ideas in their own framework.**

**For example – Hope is part of human nature – this is a very thin understanding and conclusion.**

**To hope through tyranny – maybe not so easy – it is possible that hope could be (*being*) extinguished by Frederick’s friends’ suicides.**

**Next session – Frederick had come 40 minutes late but Michael had not booked the next session so had 1 hour and 20 minutes for him. (*This is very different from what modernist psychologists are taught – that is if a person comes late stop the session at the time planned – this idea is behavioural – the person will learn to come on time. What happens if like in the case of Frederick, that person does not value therapy or counsellors?*)**

**Michael started: *‘I am curious about the idea that at one point in your life you gave value to the hope that your life would be different. How have you managed not to abandon this? Did anyone validate this hope?’***

**Frederick began telling Michael a story he had only told one person – and this person was dead. Story- This was a story of a 7-year-old who was beaten by his dad and had fractured his leg. A woman came to the door and saw Frederick. She shouted at Frederick’s father. She took Frederick in her car. She couldn’t speak she was crying so hard. She brought him somewhere and came back with food. She cried again and attended to his bruises. She walked holding his hand. She took him to her office. He heard raised voices and then she returned him to his father. Six months later he was removed from his father after an investigation. Frederick never saw this woman again.**

**He guessed that this woman was a Social Worker – maybe a student – she had broken the law by taking him.**

***Frederick began filling in his history through the eyes of this woman (based on Michael’s questions).***

***The next session, Frederick came early.***

**Michael asked, *“What did this woman contribute to his life?” “What were in those tears?” “***

Frederick answered, “Understanding and compassion”. Frederick choked up – he had to take a cigarette break – he was flooded with feelings.

Michael questions about feelings – Feelings of waking to care – warmth – emotion – then had to stop (*again for a cigarette and emotional recovery break*).

Michael’s questions: ‘*Why would this Social worker make this contribution to your life? What was she appreciating about you that you parents were oblivious to?*’

Frederick: “That I’m worth something, that I have value.”

*The questions are helping him witness his identity through her eyes.*

Michael: ‘*What was it like for this young woman that she responded as she did?*’

Frederick: “I honoured what she had to offer. I took her hand.”

*He was beginning to think that his response gave something to her.*

Michael; ‘*If she were here and she understood that she had helped you open up to hope?...*’

Frederick: “It would be awesome for her, it would reinforce her purposes.”

*Michael talked to us about how he had seen Social workers who had been referred for blurred boundaries. This might have been such a case – but....*

### Telling and Retellings.

Michael: “*What is your guess about what this young social worker would be drawn to in hearing this story? What did she see in you? How would this be transporting for her?*”

Frederick: “This would honour her purpose and her belief in herself.”

*Another meeting another memory.*

Frederick remembers his mother’s cousin – Aunt Deidre – she had been kind.

*Michael and Frederick were able to locate her. She was honoured that he remembered her.*

*Deirdre’s extended family adopted Frederic formally. Michael went to the ceremony. Frederick’s life turned around with a few hiccups.*

## Video

**Identity becomes re-peopled – many modern identities are de-peopled. Narrative conversations ARE BECOMING THE ANTIDOTE TO ISOLATION.**

*(In this) video Michael is trying to establish a gateway to conversations of this woman's (Sue's) healing. Sue wants relief from depression, emptiness and despair. She had been through trauma and discussed (it) with her psychiatrist. Her psychiatrist sees positives but Sue disqualifies them. However, she did mention one recent initiative which did reflect some creativity.*

*Initiatives give an entry for a re-authoring conversations.*

**Michael:** *'I am just curious about this.'*

*(The questions might have been - Was there someone in your life who might have contributed to this initiative)*

**Conversations** – Sue could not think of a person but could suggest books.

*If we can't find a person we can ask for a book. For example a favourite book or author.*

Sue mentioned, 101 Dalmatians – the dogs rescue their puppies and others help.

**Michael:** "It had you dreaming up a different world – *this was a contrast to the real world. Did someone introduce you to these dreams or this book?*"

**Sue:** "No one took interest."

**Michael:** "The Dalmatians repeatedly rescue and help. *What did they recognize in each other?*"

*(Michael had to repeat this kind of question several times in different ways).*

**Sue:** "They were different creatures who were accepting difference, they did not have to fit in, and they were accepted."

**Michael:** "Did this other world help? How did it help you?"

**Sue:** "With coping."

**Michael:** *“Did it give you hope?”*

**Sue:** ‘No.’

**Michael:** *“Accepting differences? Has that been important in your own life?”*

No response.

**Michael:** *“So much of the story tells me what is important for you and what you value. You accept differences for example, how is that expressed in your life?”*

**Sue:** Kids – accept them for what they are rather than what I think they should be.

*(Is this meaning) She should be who she wants to be?”*

*Michael’s comments to us: More recently I am finding new ways of putting these ideas into action. It caught my attention, the question approach.*

**Michael summarized his understanding with Sue:** *‘Relating to the honestly, to creative imagination. Has this served you well? The world in which you valued people helping and rescuing each other. Is there anyone else who knows this about you?’*

**Sue:** Cheryl – 17 year old friendship.

**Michael:** *“You could be there for her. How did you reach out to her, what did you do, what happened?”*

**Sue:** Knowing when it is too much, when to back off.

**Michael:** *Where did those learnings come from? The knowing when to back off. (Looking for history, new things, and themes). Were these coping mechanisms that you made available to Cheryl – creating a world – Is that true? What would you say about a person with these coping mechanisms – (A person who uses an) imaginary world to make this world bearable? How is this conversation going?”*

**Sue:** “It has made me realize that there were things that were important to me, these were always there.”

**Michael:** *How are you getting more hope to get rid of this depression?*

*Michael is interested in team members – Dody Smith is the author of 101 Dalmatians.*

**Michael:** *‘What would Dody Smith think about what you have done in you have done in keeping what is important to you close?’*

**Mr. Pigwhistle by Enid Blyton – makes wrong things right. – (I (Linda) do not know why this is here but maybe Sue’s response.)**

Michael – *(to conference members)* - We are investigative reporters. We distance from the immediacy of the experience. TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE BECOME THE AUDIENCE OF THEIR OWN LIFE. This gives Sue, for example, a voice of authorship with Sue being the primary author.

People come for advice. These sorts of questions get 180 degree turn. They, *(the people who consult us)*, become curious about their own lives, and then they become fascinated, searching for what is tailor made for them, the unique aspects of their life, and then they share the characteristic.

We look for the absent but implicit. Follow up with what people accord value to – what they intend for their life – their purposes, aspirations, goals, hopes, dreams, possibilities. These are all gateways to rich story development.

March 23, 2007

Important question - HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT YOURSELF?

Community Work – Projects with indigenous peoples, people in Africa

11 million children from 16 African nations have lost families to Aids.

These people become disconnected from their culture and history.

People always respond to trauma.

It is important to orient these children to their actual response so they would have restored personal agency, so they can have social-relational-cultural history of their knowledges of healing.

Thus our work can produce the initiative to reconnect these children to communities by acknowledgment to those who helped them.

To do this Michael tells us that he meets with figures from the community who played a significant role to what these children gave value to.

This work can support people in the reinterpretation of their own lives.

The History of Understanding

- Trauma-

The consultations are Double Storied

Trauma and -- Themes to Shape a Program  
Responses -- for a Community Gathering

Outsider (*witnesses*)

Elders introduce the theme

Small Groups addressing questions.

Team members retell what was addressed in small groups to the complete group.

Community members give their ideas about the team members' accounts (*retelling of the retelling*).

Rich story Description Team puts together a document – solutions that were not available before.

Narrative Practice in *Exotic Lives* (a book written by Michael)– discusses Problem Dissolution not Resolution

Intentional vs. Internal  
About Understanding  
understanding  
life

What one does in such narrative practices:

Question: What are people expressing in reference to some difficulty or completing a task?

1. Listen carefully to people's expressions;
2. Interview what these expressions might reflect in their responses;
3. Interview about what these responses say about what one gives value to, their problem solving skills, and healing knowledges;
4. Trace the social cultural and relational history of what they give value to, the problem solving skills, the healing knowledges etc.;
5. Play a role in identifying figures who have contributed to these values, problem solving skills, healing knowledges, etc.;
6. Actively support these people in reconnecting with these figures – evoking their presence or material presence – acknowledge the figure's contribution – Re-membering conversations.

**SELF – Associations of Life**

**A club – has a membership. One can revive any membership in their club of life.**

**Michael: Questions of Plans – treatment of trauma can be re-traumatizing, this is an important awareness. I have tried to find ways that would not be re-traumatizing in the questioning.**

**We can do this (*avoid re-traumatizing*) by asking the following questions.**

*What are your thoughts about our conversations today?*

*What do you want to focus on today?*

**These questions provide a foundation for re-visiting important things without being traumatized by it. We want to be able to revisit what is painful to them without re-trauma, revisit without hurt.**

*(It is important to) allow for them to pull the plug on this at anytime.*

**Example. Two woman friends coming together to see Michael (*Ginger and Tamara*).**

**Michael: *What are some of your favourite things, things that are valuable for you?***

**Response: Making masks. Listening to music - can take breads and...**

**Michael: *So if I ask any questions that don't relate to you just say pass.***

*I heard how trust is important to you. How important is trust?*

**Response – Very important. I have a trust issue.**

**Michael: *That gives me an idea of how important it is to trust someone?***

*Is trust something that you treasure?*

**Response: It is priceless.**

**Michael: *So trust is priceless. Can you tell me a story of how important trust is to you?***

*Do you have children?*

**Response: Pass.**

**Michael: *I take that question back.***

*(Michael has talked about recognizing when a question does not seem helpful and taking it back. This is such an example).*

**Response: *Do you have children?***

Michael: I do, I have a daughter, her name is Penni.

Michael: *Who is important to you in terms of trust?*

Ginger's response: This is hard, it sounds bad.

Michael: *Why does that sound bad?*

Response: There are issues of getting snatched on.

Michael: *Sounds wise. You hold trust precious, you don't just give it away. How is it that you have not allowed the experiences you have had to alienate you from trust?*

*Is there a history of the value you have given to trust in your lives, times when trust has been betrayed, times when you took care of who you offered trust to?*

Response: I always had a desire to be there for others.

Michael: *Did this trust play a part in your idea of helping others?*

Response: It meant being trustworthy.

Michael: *Showing others you are trustworthy people. This is a desire that you have had. What is your understanding of what that means to people?*

Response: Priceless, Cherish.

Michael: *Priceless, cherish, what is your understanding of how it would contribute to healing?*

Answer: Goes back to being young.

Michael: *Goes back to being young. Are there stories that you can remember that were an expression of this desire?*

Response: The only way someone can lie to you is if you believe them. I was trustworthy for my brother. I practically raised him.

Michael: *You raised your brother. What was it like for him to have someone who was trustworthy?*

Discussion of this segment of interview.

There was lots of pathologizing in their conversation – for example they said they had a trust issue.

What is the absent but implicit – they value trust.

Ideas of Normalizing Judgement as a Mechanism of social control – \*1 Michel Foucault traces the history of this.

Instead of getting into normalizing judgement – say – preserve trust – hold trust priceless. Then begin asking questions about the history of their relationship to trust.

Then we see a shift to the subordinate story line.

Outsider witness questions.

What were you drawn to – interest in the person’s life - if respond – amazing person – this is a judgement response – a power issue, it is not about a resonant response – thus think – what struck a chord, what sentiment, mood, expression one responded to.

What did this trigger in your mind? Think picture, symbol or metaphor. Be aware of what drawn to and conscious of what triggered in your mind. What mental pictures came?

Why were you drawn to what you were drawn to – not asking for an opinion.

Where did this take you to, where are you in reflections of your own life, your own work.

Katharsis with a K. (Find in more detail in *Maps of Narrative Practices.*)

Example - Interview continued.

*Michael: You refused to allow what has happened to you to harden you. What does it mean to you? Is there an example of how you have not allowed the traumas to take away this goal to be there for your brother and others?*

*Response: I met with Diane – our probation officer. She had faith in me.*

*Michael: You were available to it. What was she extending to you? She took a risk and you took it in.*

*Tamara’s response: She was extending respect, faith, acknowledgement.*

*Michael: Somehow you recognized the respect, faith, and acknowledgement.*

*Michael: (Summary or editorializing) Trust is very Important. There is a history of this which is strong. It is priceless – you don’t just give it away. Despite what you have been through, it has not stopped you from giving value to trust. You have kept this connection with trust. You kept a desire to help others.*

*The harder it gets the stronger the intention.*

*Michael: I wondered how was it possible to take in what this probation officer gave.*

*Tamara’s response: Story of between ages 0-4 being very precious to grandparents. The apple of their eye.*

*Michael: What helped you to get familiar with your grandparents love?*

*Michael’s comments –There is always a two-way account. (I) made many attempts for a story and they did not open the door.*

**Question – “What breathed life back into this?”**

***Suddenly there is history –***

**Michael: *For the first four years of life you were the apple of grandparents’ eye. ` Then Diane breathed life into it 7 years ago.***

***Video camera was stolen during the break when Michael was doing this session so we did not have second half of the session.***

**In the second half – Michael interviewed Ginger – the friend of Tamara and she represented the grandparents.**

**Michael: What was it like for the grandparents to find Tamara the apple of their eye?**

**Ginger’s Response: Honour, felt included, treasuring this gift.**

**Tamara: Tears.**

**Then interviewed Tamara.**

**Discussion – When someone has an issue with something it means that they must give value to it. Language of an inner life – it gave Tamara a sense of her actions being continuous through time. – stream of consciousness – the source of self – this is self founded on the language of inner life. – but self is relational – this relational self is always open to being re-invigorated. It is the outcome of social collaboration.**

**\*3 Piaget – observed and talked of egocentric language – a remnant of autistic thought. He thought that it served no purpose but \*4 Vygotsky argued that this private speech is the outcome of social participation.**

**Going from – Known and Familiar through proximal zone**

**To *(the)* Possible to Know.**

**Children distance themselves from the learning so *(adults need to)* scaffold the learning – caregivers do this – pre-language.**

**Low level distance task: What colour is that block – Categorizes then characterizes.**

**Medium level distancing task - next level – characterizing - Which of these blocks fit together?**

**Draws distinctions around similar and differences. This sponsors learning. Building – what will happen if?**

**Higher level distancing task - Prediction — adolescent learning – hypothesis.**

**This helps them develop complex thinking – rather than saying – if just say – irresponsible.**

*(Metaphor that Michael used for what narrative therapists try to do in therapy) **House with scaffold.***

*(This is a metaphor for what we do in our questions, from low to medium to higher level distancing tasks).*

**Problem solving culture – outer speech goes underground and becomes the language of inner life.**

**Children early in life – think in heaps of unsophisticated chains of association – then thinking becomes more sophisticated. Chains of Associations provide foundations for ideas of life – pre concepts become concepts.**

**Without conceptual thought personal agency would not develop.**

**i.e. Brother means Larry - later brother becomes a concept.**

**Humour relies on the confusion between the abstract and concrete.**

**Responsible and autonomous action.**

*(Humorous story from the audience – exemplifying the lack of the concept – mother – meaning all woman who have children rather than my mother – When introduced by a friend to the friend's mother (tall and slender) this person from the audience as a child said that this is not your mother, your mother is short (like her own mother). Her friend believed her and was upset. This has to be sorted out by the parents).*

*Another story example.*

**Ricky – 12 or 13.**

**Introduction by Michael: Ricky at home is assaulting others, at school is suspended and expelled, in the community there is police involvement and gang involvement.**

**Michael was trying to get him to characterize the violence, the ‘hurting’ (a term the mother had used).**

**Michael is trying to characterize the effects of this ‘hurting’ on his own life.**

**Mother's Response:** It takes away his energy, interferes with his education, and isolates him from his family, anger controls his life.

**Michael:** *Why would he want education?*

**Mother:** To get a better job.

**Michael:** *What does it do in relationship with family?*

**Mother:** It splits him from his family.

**Michael:** *Is that OK for him?*

**Mother;** He does not want to be like sister. She misses out on belonging.

**Michael – to Ricky -** *Do you mind that it takes energy from your life? (Getting Ricky's evaluation of whether this is a problem to him or not or whether he minds or not).*

**Ricky:** Yes.

**Michael:** *Why do you mind? (Introducing why used in a different way than was traditionally used in psychology and then not wanted as a question in more recent modernistic psychology).*

**Ricky:** No football. Sad.

**Michael:** *What would you notice that would tell you that you were sad? (Distancing question to open up possibilities of knowledge).*

**Michael:** *Would you notice tears?*

**Ricky:** Sad would show in a different way.

**Michael:** *Where in your body would it show? (This sounds like some of Jeff Zimmeman's current questions).*

**Ricky:** A feeling in my heart.

**Michael:** *What sort of feeling in your heart?*

*(Giving him a learning task so can support him).*

### **Reflections.**

**Michael:** *Do you mind the sadness or do you want to leave it there or want to be free of it? (More evaluative questions).*

**Ricky:** (I) want to be free of it?

**Michael:** *Why is that? Some people accept feeling sad. (Getting justification of the evaluation).*

**Ricky:** (I) prefer to be happy.

**Michael:** *Let me summarize this so I can see if I am getting it right. ----repeated what just had been said.*

**Michael:** *What is it like for you when you feel that you belong?*

**Ricky:** I would have more energy for school work.

**Michael:** *What difference would it make if you had more energy for school work?  
What different would it make for football?*

**Ricky:** I could play better.

**Michael:** *Are there other ways that ‘hurting’ is interfering with your life?*

**(Michael asks Mom).**

**Mom’s response:** Makes him angry.

**Michael:** *So hurting others makes him more angry? Does that fit for you (to the youth)? Is it O.K.  
by you?*

**Ricky:** Not good.

**Michael:** *Why are you uncomfortable about the anger building up?*

**Ricky:** Yes.

**Michael:** *Are you attracted to feeling angry or want to get angry?*

**Ricky:** No.

**Michael:** *Why do you want to get away from it? Why are you concerned about the anger  
controlling your life?*

**(Discussion)**

**What I was doing was:** 1. Characterization of the Problem.

2. Mapping the consequences of the problem.

Using such questions as: What is your experience of this?

3. Why? – Justifying the evaluation.

**Michael:** *What stories could you tell me that would help me understand why you are unhappy (with  
the consequences of the problem)?*

**Michael to the mother:** *Why is it not a good experience for him?*

**Mother:** Belonging.

**Michael:** *How does the hurting touch him?– Sets him up as a reporter.  
What do you notice?*

**Response:** He gives value to happiness – to not being tired.

**Michael:** *Why do you not accept a life of tiredness?*

**Response:** Anger controls his life.

**Michael:** *Tell me more about that. What is that like for you?*

*All responses contradict the dominant conclusions of what it is thought that he intends for his life.*

**Michael's discussion.**

**It is important to characterize.**

**To map the consequence.**

**Get an account of the experience of the problem.**

**Justify what these experiences are.**

**RESURECT the WHY.**

**There are 'why' questions that are problematic – why did you do this – this is a loaded question.**

**But ---- Why do you evaluate this in this way? – These are very different questions – asking why value this.**

**Michael states that he could have taken up different themes – he decided to take up the belonging one – pre-concepts.**

**Re-authoring conversation – in which the meaning of this word is restored. I am looking for stories that reflect the different theme, contrary to the problem story.**

**For example –**

**Went camping for 5 days.**

**Michael: Tell me more.**

**(Points of entry to development of re-authoring are:**

**The Absent but Implicit;**

**Unique Outcomes;**

**Values – what they give value to.**

**Tell me a story –**

**Tell me what it says about belonging (*Landscape of Identity Question*)**

**Michael: *What is this hurting doing to the belonging?***

**Ricky: It is borrowing my belonging.**

***(Need to think, what step might be possible for him that might fit with his valuing of belonging and try to formulate questions around that).***

The videotape of the session was offered to him to take home and show to his father who would not come to the session because he was so fed up. This was a new initiative.

A new story example with a young woman who cuts:

*Questions – Externalizing questions which make the problem the problem instead of the person as the problem.*

Michael: *What does this self hate talk you into?*

Response: The idea that I am useless, worthless, bad.

Michael: *What does this self hate have you do to your body, with how you treat your body. Does it make you treat your body in caring or hurting ways?*

*(These questions ...encourage her to reject the cutting requirement of self hate).*

Michael: *Does self hate affect your relationships? Does it influence the building of relationships or does it affect relationships in a way of splitting off or isolation.*

*(What one is doing with these questions is characterizing self hate? Finding the consequences of self hate.)*

*More characterizing –*

Michael: *What would you say about a person whose intent is to split you off from relationships?*

Response: Jealous.

Michael: *If self hate was a voice how would it speak?*

Response: In judgemental and evaluative ways.

Michael: *Are there echoes of this voice in your history?*

*(Linking the voice of self hate and abusive people. We are aware of the politics of self-hate)*

Michael: *What is it like that self hate makes you cut?*

Response: Relief.

Michael: *What is your position on this self cutting?*

Response: I have no position.

*(Working on getting a position).*

**Michael:** *If cutting was served up as a fate in life – you would have no question about it?*

**Response:** Maybe a small question.

**Michael:** *Why would you have a small question?*

**Response:** I am entitled to things.

**Michael:** *Entitled to what?*

*(Beginning a re-authoring conversation).*

**Response:** I have a small entitlement to respect.

**Michael:** *Why would that be? Are there any stories in your life that would bring that to mind?*

**Response:** There was a teacher in second year high school. She moved me to the front of the class.

*(A re-membering conversation opportunity).*

**Michael:** *What was this teacher valuing in you that she brought you to the front of the class?*

**Response:** She was valuing my responsiveness.

*(This conversation can be seen in more detail in *Maps of Narrative Practice*).*

### **Stories of Perpetrating Violence.**

*(Michael's comments):* These men are not the originators of techniques of power and control. They are not the authors of the techniques used for power and control. They did not construct women's identity, children's identity nor men's identity. This was shaped by the discourses of men's cultures. Truth claims about that masculinity was constructed over time by our society. These discourses were characterized by truth claims of the nature of life. For example, the truth claim of men's entitlement of supremacy. There were truth claims of hierarchy of voices – men's voices were most important and children's knowledge ranked very low.

Discourses are characterized by rules of what knowledge is legitimate – men's voices are then legitimized over other voices.

There are rules about the circumstances of the how and where the knowledge is expressed.

Again, these men are not the creators or manufacturers or the originators of these techniques of powers. These men are accomplices, this is not an excuse, they are responsible but they are recruited, they have undergone an apprenticeship in these abusive ways of being.

The previous ideas counteract the idea that abuse is an expression of anger. This understanding does not diminish their responsibility for acts of tyranny. It should be the shared responsibility of men to address abuse. Men need to get together to make retribution. Men as a group need to develop non-exploitive and non-abusive ways of life.

The responsibilities of men:

1. Responsibilities of action.
2. Responsibility of reparation.

Making it ones business to find new ways, new practices of relationship that are antidotes.

These are hopefully done in non-shaming and non-confrontational ways.

These men need the space to confront themselves – so that identity is not totalized.

Men - tend to minimize

- tend to deny

- tend to blame the subject

- tend to excuse

Techniques employed need to reduce these tendencies.

Such as – lists of overt and covert strategies of power intimidation.

gaze

intimidation – implicit and explicit

techniques of control i.e. inconsistency

To help in the goal of finding overt and covert strategies of power intimidation- be investigative reporters.

Lists of other practices that might interfere with progress.

Macro – when do not recognize – what have you witnessed in the outside world of these overt and covert practices.

Micro – which one might you have been recruited into, might you be an accomplice to.

*What are the effects of practices of power and control on the lives of others?*

Ask questions on the macro then micro level.

The effects of these techniques might make it impossible for richness of life, for surmounting hurdles – so identify possible effects.

Identify processes of recruitment into these practices of powers might be subtle – laugh at jokes against women.

might be explicit – boys encouraged by father to diminish the women's contribution to the boy's life.

Steps:

1. Mapping the consequences of these Techniques and Practices of Abuse
2. Deconstructing Operations of Power and Control

All this opens possibility for subordinate storylines.

-consequences

-your experiences of these consequences and others

-position – are you for this or do you have questions about it.

-why – bringing back the question why.

-giving value to acts of kindness.

Re-authoring – this is essential –gives the person options to respond in a different way.

– Stories

How did the person get introduced to these differences from dominant story?

What is the history?

Need to map out a different territory of behaviour.

Then need to try to get rich development of the subordinate stories

-need to develop words into concepts.

Person – takes responsibility for perpetuating abuse.

Men – take responsibility for making reparations, for finding new ways.

**Outsider Witnesses – are always there. There are men who have refused to perpetuate abuse and have changed ways of responding. This contributes to the exposé. It is not other challenged but rather self-challenged.**

**Outsider witness questions – What were you drawn to?**

**Why do you relate to that?**

**What place does this take you to?**

**Thread of Love – story of Joe. Reinforces Joe’s efforts to bring love into his life. (*I had to leave early so did not get to record the story of Jo which was to be the final story before short session of questions and comments.*).**

\*1 Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He has had strong influence not only (or even primarily) in philosophy but also in a wide range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. From the 1970s on, Foucault was very active politically. He was a founder of the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons* and often protested on behalf of homosexuals and other marginalized groups. He frequently lectured outside France, particularly in the United States, and in 1983 had agreed to teach annually at the University of California at Berkeley. An early victim of AIDS, Foucault died in Paris on June 25, 1984. In addition to works published during his lifetime, his lectures at the Collège de France, being published posthumously, contain important elucidations and extensions of his ideas.

It can be difficult to think of Foucault as a philosopher. His academic formation was in psychology and its history as much as in philosophy, his books were mostly histories of medical and social sciences, his passions were literary and political. Nonetheless, almost all of Foucault's works can be fruitfully read as philosophical in either or both of two ways: as a carrying out of philosophy's traditional critical project in a new (historical) manner; and as a critical engagement with the thought of traditional philosophers.

\*2 **Jacques Derrida** (1930-2004) was the founder of “deconstruction,” a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions. Although Derrida at times expressed regret concerning the fate of the word “deconstruction,” its popularity indicates the wide-ranging influence of his thought, in philosophy, in literary criticism and theory, in art and, in particular, architectural theory, and in political theory. Indeed, Derrida's fame nearly reached the status of a media star, with hundreds of people filling auditoriums to hear him speak, with films and television programs devoted to him, with countless books and articles devoted to his thinking. Beside critique, Derridean deconstruction consists in an attempt to re-conceive the difference that divides self-reflection (or self-consciousness). But even more than the re-conception of difference, and perhaps more importantly, deconstruction works towards preventing the worst violence. It attempts to render justice. Indeed, deconstruction is relentless in this pursuit since justice is impossible to achieve.

**\*3. Jean Piaget** (French: 9 August 1896 – 16 September 1980) was a Swiss developmental psychologist and philosopher known for his epistemological studies with children. His theory of cognitive development and epistemological view are together called "genetic epistemology".

Piaget placed great importance on the education of children. As the Director of the International Bureau of Education, he declared in 1934 that "only education is capable of saving our societies from possible collapse, whether violent, or gradual."

According to Ernst von Glasersfeld, Jean Piaget was "the great pioneer of the constructivist theory of knowing." However, his ideas did not become widely popularized until the 1960s. This then led to the emergence of the study of development as a major sub-discipline in psychology.

**\*4. Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky** (Russian: November 17, 1896 – June 11, 1934) was a Soviet psychologist, the founder of a theory of human cultural and bio-social development commonly referred to as cultural-historical psychology, and leader of the Vygotsky Circle.

Vygotsky's main work was in developmental psychology, and he proposed a theory of the development of higher cognitive functions in children that saw reasoning as emerging through practical activity in a social environment. During the earlier period of his career he argued that the development of reasoning was mediated by signs and symbols, and therefore contingent on cultural practices and language as well as on universal cognitive processes.

Vygotsky also posited a concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, often understood to refer to the way in which the acquisition of new knowledge is dependent on previous learning, as well as the availability of instruction.

Narratively submitted by Linda Moxley-Haegert.

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