

Practice Notes



Narrative Therapy teaches us to see people as separate from problems. In order to help people change their relationships with problems, we work together in collaborative practices - clients, professionals, educators, community members and friends. Here I note some of the significant events and people that shaped the story of our collaborative practice this year.



In June, we faced the death of long-time friend and colleague, Don Moncrieff. I met Don through Christian Counselling Services in 1990 where he became a mentor, supervisor, colleague and friend. In 1996, Don and I began independent practices, sharing offices, phones, furniture and peer support, first in the offices of the Catholic Information Centre, then until 2008, at Windermere United Church. Don's career included chapters as a Jesuit priest, university professor, family therapist, airplane builder and most important to him - loving partner and father. When a series of strokes forced his retirement, members of our West Toronto Counselling Network celebrated his career around his dining room table where we presented him with the honorary degree: Master of Loving Arts. We always loved Don. Now he is loved and missed.

There were opportunities in 2011 to teach and share Narrative ideas and practices.

- o In April, I was MC for Bereaved Families of Ontario (BFO) Midwestern Region's annual conference in Kitchener on the theme, "Men and Grief". Tom Golden, author of *Swallowed by a Snake: the gift of the masculine side of healing*, was keynote speaker. Also in April, I was a keynote speaker at the North Simcoe Muskoka Palliative Care Network conference in Huntsville, speaking on ways in which we maintain ongoing relationships when loved ones die.
- o In May, Margotte Kaczanowska and I presented a workshop entitled, "Stories Well Beyond the Grave: Narrative Therapy and Grief," for the King's College (UWO) annual Therapeutic Modalities Day. We included a live interview to illustrate the Narrative practice of outsider witnesses in grief work.

I value the ongoing opportunity to work with colleagues Margotte Kaczanowska RSW, Dr. Judy Myers Avis PhD and Dr. Olga Sutherland C. Psych, RMFT. Margotte helps ensure that we see new clients quickly and works with those experiencing profound grief and loss. I collaborate with Judy to provide Narrative supervision for students working towards Clinical accreditation with the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Olga, who teaches in the Couple and Family Therapy program at the University of Guelph, provides supervised practice to our team when clients require professional psychology services. Sabrina Samsudeen, MSW, the Ryerson intern who created the opportunity for our 2010 Ryerson Field Placement of the Year award, works full-time as family therapist for the residential program of East Metro Youth Services. Silvia Gonzalez, who did a field placement from the Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College in 2009-10, has gone on to found the Canadian Centre for Narrative Coaching.



In August we welcomed Kristen Hodges, M.Div (Counselling) a graduate of Tyndale University College into the practice. Kristen was an intern in the counselling centre at the college as well as Catholic Community Services of York Region where she now works on contract. Currently Kristen works in my office each Monday. She brings a background in EFT (Emotion Focused Therapy) and CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and particularly enjoys working with adolescents, college and university students.

Changing the world through Christmas Cards.



This year, our Christmas cards support the work of two projects with Ten Thousand Villages. Long before terms such as fair trade, self-help, micro-loans were common concepts, the Mennonite Central Committee was active in providing North American markets to artisans in the world's poorest countries. In 1946, Edna Ruth Byler visited volunteers in Puerto Rico who were teaching sewing to women living in poverty. She brought their crafts back home with her, sold them and returned the profits to the women who made them. Self Help Crafts, the predecessor to Ten Thousand Villages, was born. Today Ten Thousand Villages sells products from over 30 countries, providing work for 60,000 people around the world.



The nine panel card was individually created by hand, from handmade paper from the Artisans of GET paper industries in Nepal. The company began in 1985 with a loan from the World Bank, employing 14 people making paper in the traditional Nepalese manner. Today, after learning to make the paper from recycled waste paper and cotton, banana tree stems, cornhusks, water hyacinth and jute the company employs 125 full-time artisans.



The four panel card was made by Salay Handmade paper in the Philippines. The Salay paper coop now employs over 300 coop workers and several hundred artisans working from their homes. It was founded by one woman in the late 1980s and uses cogon grass for fibre, a virulent weed that has devastated the Filipino ecosystem. Workers receive monthly pay, contribute to a pension and share in profits through dividends.



The Annual Category Winners

- Movies that Moved Us: Big Box Office: The Help. Outside the box: Sarah's Key, Life in a Day
- Most Helpful New Books by colleagues: Still Life: A Therapist's Responses to the Challenge of Change, self-published by Liz White (www.LizWhiteinAction.com) and Kicking at the Darkness: Bruce Cockburn and the Christian Imagination, by Brian J. Walsh (Brazos Press)
- Kristen's talking Book recommendations: True Self/False Self by Richard Rohr and How Can I Get Through to You? by Terrance Real.
- Our Favourite Live theatre: The Tarragon.
- Best radio documentary: Buried so Deep. The story of the new infant garden in Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver. Find it on the CBC Radio Sunday Edition site, October 16th, hour 3.
- Songs that Stirred Us and made us smile: The Afterlife from Paul Simon's new album So Beautiful or So What and Baba Yetu by Christopher Tin and sung by the Soweto Gospel Choir, originally written as a score for a video game, the song is a Swahili translation of the Lord's Prayer.
- Our favourite community cinema (for the fourth year): The Revue on Roncesvalles where this practice is an on-screen supporter. Take note of a fun new initiative: a monthly book+movie club! revuecinema.ca
- Best organization supporting artists in the business of being an artist: Well and Good (wellandgood.ca)
- Best transition service for seniors moving from home: New Season (newseasonforseniors.ca)
- Our Favourite Local Restaurant (third year): Dr. Generosity, where like in cheers, 'everybody knows our names'. Bloor at Runnymede. drgenerosity.com
- Best little coffee shop on Bloor and right across the street from the office is one year old Red Bean Espresso. Owner Iris is our local 'David' situated between two Goliath Starbucks and a Timothy's.
- Our favourite graphic artist and printer (his work is in your hands): Jared Olmsted and the Sherway UPS store.
- Our favourite Web-designer-Master (again!): Sinda Abbot. meandsid.ca
- Best Halleluiah Chorus video from an Alaskan school:
http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=LyviyF-N23A
Last year from a Welland Ontario mall:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXh7JR9oKVE>
- Best Innovation for clients: Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Debit join our faithful companions cash, cheque and Interact direct payment at the check-out line.
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