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“The use of metaphors in treatment”

Life is a journey and

other metaphors....

Final Reflections

Athens, June 2015
From my first contact with “Narrative Approach”
I was impressed by the use of metaphors in treatment context
So I began by standing the “Map of narrative approach” (Michael White, Norton, 2007) and I found a lot of things about the use of metaphors very important and useful for us counselors and the client by facilitating our work and making the purpose of the treatment clearer.
Then I commenced my research by describing what is the term metaphor.
I can make an emotional or real-life situation easier to understand by a metaphor.
In literature, the use of metaphor is very common. It makes text more comprehensible because it refers to real life which give us something; namely an image we can understand.
In this novel “The human beast”, Emile Zola uses the metaphor of the train locomotive to represent human progress despite the destructive consequences of the war, thus a double significance of the train.
“...Regardless of the victims whom the locomotive had crushed on its way! Didn’t move towards the future indifferent to the blood dispersed all around? Without a conductor, in the middle of hell, as a blind and deaf animal abandoned in the midst of death, it ran it ran charged with flesh for the guns with tired and drunk singing soldiers”, Symbol of the future and death: War was declared, these train which led to the 20th century, became the instrument of a cruel massacre.

In treatment the use of metaphors has the same impact. They give our problems an image because they came from nature or from the real life, human habits, morals, customs...actions.

In our reflection we use the metaphor of a journey to show how we travel along our life, which are the obstacles and how we can overcome them, who supports us during this journey, until now and in the future and we use other metaphors to show how we can construct the different parts of our stories.
THE USE OF METAPHORS IN TREATMENT

Therapy metaphors use a story or illustration to try alternative ways of looking at something. In our culture we use metaphors, stories and analogies to illustrate our point of view concerning parts of our life to explain why we can treat any problem as a journey, a storm, a lesson, a mission, an illness, even death…and that help us to use specific tools to treat our life as a storm, an illness, incorporate this knowledge into real life.

Linguistic views on Metaphors

“My father was a warrior”, simple metaphors consist of two terms and the relationship between them, the (appearance) or the courage, as a warrior, the term used metaphorically as a vehicle, my father is the subject while. The tenor (Fernandez, 1977) and vehicle belonging to different domains are the literal domain and the metaphoric one. Tenor is commonly a human being who has an abstract quality made more specific by the vehicle. In treatment the tenor is most often the client himself.

Theoretical Approaches

According to the Oxford Dictionary metaphor is: “the figure of speech in which a name or a descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but, analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable, an instance of this, a metaphorical expression.

According to Richard when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things acting together and supported by a single word or phrase whose meaning is a result of their interaction. The resulting meaning is new and transcends both thoughts.
Metaphor, requires two ideas which cooperate in an inclusive meaning, they interact or “interpenetrate” with meaning (Wheelwright, 1968). In this view, it is the differences, not the similarities between tenor and vehicle which are significant. Haymes (1975) believes that the new insight provided by a good metaphor suggest further questions “tempting us to formulate hypotheses which turn out to be experimentally fertile” (p.274). Good metaphors can literally lead to reasoning by analogy. Authors who emphasize a psychological approach to metaphor regard metaphorical thinking as a creative activity (Brunner, 1951, Rotherherg, 1979, 1984).

**Therapeutic Strategies and Tactics The Use of metaphor**

The therapist’s task is to unthaw the patient’s creative energy and proceed proper problem solving activities:

Fernades (1977) refers to metaphorical statement representing metaphorical images which he considers plans of action. Helping clients bring their metaphoric images back to life stimulates them to further develop these plans of action and eventually to implement them.

According to M. White (“Maps of narrative practice” p.30) during the externalizing conversations (externalizing investigative-reporter conversations) at a certain point when people have reached a degree of separation with the problem concerning their identity and begin to give voice to intentions and values with the intention to respond to trauma or contradict the problematic identity a second posture is taken on, in alteration or conjunction with the investigative-reporter posture. Along this posture people react to reduce the impact of the problem and realize what they have identified as important to them.

This second-phase posture and the actions that follow it, are significantly shaped by the metaphors employed to paint the impact of these situations or problematic stories.

For example, we try to stop thoughts, but that’s impossible. It’s like constantly holding enormous consignable beach ball under the water, but it keeps popping up in front of our faces. We can allow the ball to float around us, just letting it be. So rather than stop the thoughts, we can stop fighting them and let them be without reacting to them.
Sometimes, it also feels like we’re being carried away downstream, struggling to stay afloat amongst all the mud, filth and debris. That muck and debris are thoughts, sensations, events, feelings, and that river is our distress as we drift helplessly downstream. But we can stand on the riverbank watching by, as those thoughts, events, sensations, feelings go by, we might notice individual items as they pass-perhaps a thought floating as a leaf, a sensation as a log an, event as an old bicycle, which we can stand and watch. But we can face the problematic situations by reacting against the problems. We can deflate the beach ball (externalizing conversations) or get the river to rid the floating objects using “special cleaning boats” (values, abilities, knowledge, information, education, definitional ceremonies, etc)

Literature leads people through metaphors to understand situations, take position, a response to any difficulty, disappointment, loss, research, trauma with “contests” or “battles”. The aim is to “defeat” or “vanquish problems.

Michael White listed an array of metaphors with their apparent source (list pg. 32-33 Maps…)

During a therapeutic conversation, a single or several metaphor could be employed.
In our thesis we’ll try to develop life as “a journey” with the assistance of our narrative group formed by everyday people who struggle with everyday problems namely personal failure. During this voyage we’ll learn about the formation of our personal team of life, using the football metaphor, we’ll also try to face problems of the heart and retell the preferred story of our life.

Thirty hours of travelling through our imagination and experiences (twelve sessions, 2h 30´ each).

The story of our lives contains ups and downs.

Problems insignificant, serious or grave persist and make our everyday life and relationship problematic. So it’s time to begin our journey in search of a new…preferred story.

So we made a journey which contained some intermediate stopovers which show us how we could respond to problems and overcome obstacles created by these problems.

Our journey began with observing the whole of this journey from beginning to end which we called “Life is a journey” the following stopover were “Questioning normality and escaping failure”, “escaping Adult-self Abuse, how I would raise myself if I was my father or my mother”, “How I link my life to the other’s lives”, “When love is a problem”, “I write the preferred story of my life”.

“Life is a journey”

We asked to voyagers to prepare a journey in a well-known destination. They answered to the question. “How do you do prepares a trip to Paris?”

They answers - Research on the met for programs, costs, dates, weather…
- Parking clothes following the season, camera, a city guide, a book for the flight ipad or smart-phone, or tablet, medicine.
Someone brought family by photos…, willing to have a good time.

We put all this things in a “first aid kit” because they love used some in comparable journeys.

We continued by asking them to prepare another journey but this time in a less known area;

“How do you prepare a journey to the summit of a mountain? Your will be the first to attempt this ascent. Are there things you used in the first travel in Paris?

They answered
- Research on the not to find information concerning this destination and find the best season to try that.
- Maps, or GPS, or a phone…
- A good guide who knows the region
- Special clothes and shoes for the mountain, a torch.
- Sleeping-bag, tent, and everything useful for camping in the wild.
- A team of friends who wished to make the same attempt.
- Courage, education, good feeling, faith in their forces, self-confidence and strong belief in the success of this attempt.
- We added all this things to the first aids kit and we understood the “journey of life” witch we tried to prepare like an ordinary or less ordinary trip.

We asked the voyagers to drawn a winding path way. At the midpoint of the path they were asked to draw a circle. To the left of this circle the path way is
the “road already travelled” To the right is the “path yet to come”. Write these phrases in the appropriate places.

Part me: Looking back

1. Where you have come from
Consider the following questions and record the answers in some way at the beginning of your path.

- Who made it possible for you to make this journey by attempting it first?
- What are the gifts they gave you that you are carrying with you on this journey?

2. Your circle of support
Who are your companions on this journey (alive or not). Individuals, group, communities, or organizations people from different generations, spiritual figures, invisible friends, pets and so
In the circle that you drew at the midpoint of the path, write the names of every-one you have chosen.
You may use photos or draw pictures of them. This is your “circle of support” (soccer metaphor)

Around the circle of support, write down some of the key values, beliefs and principle that guide you on the journey of life. These values serve as a compass where or whom have they come from?
Along the road that you have already traveled, note some of your favorite places.
What are some of the key things you have already accomplished on this journey? Draw two of these.
- How were these things accomplished?
- Who played a part?

Along the road already traveled you met obstacles (rocks, mountains or rivers) which you or your circle of support had to face. How did you do that? Who helped?

Don’t forget your survival (first aid) kit in it, write down that helped you during the difficult moment of this travel. Values, skills, people, customs,
beliefs, proverbs, song... You might include survival skills which you had obtained during other journey.

Part two: Looking forward

We repeat the same procedure to draw their “path yet to came”, their future including hopes, dreams and wishes for them elves, friends, community or the next generation

- How long have they had these hopes, dreams, or wishes?
- How have they held or to them?
- Who had helped them?

We invite our members to name places they want to see (or other people in their circle of support), to mark three future milestones they and their cycle of support are aiming for.

(One in relation to their own life, one for their community, and one for the next generation), choose some gifts given to them and mark on their future path these they wish to share with others (Even things they never had in their lives but they wishes for the others). These gifts are for children and adults.

On the future path there are rocks, mountains or rivers to cross.

- How will they be able to say when these challenges are coming up?
  How will they and their circle of support try to avoid, get around, or overcome these difficulties?

How will they stay strong aw they face troubles? Look back at their survival kit (first aid). Will they use different tools, to add these to their survival kit.

They may add songs they will be taking with them. Why these particular songs?

Part three: Looking down at their journey (Like an Eagle)

Good memories: (sounds, sights, tastes, contacts, smells associated with the described good memories)

Who played a part in these memories? How and when do they remember these times?

Why is each of these memories important to them?

What does it offer to them and their circle of support?

What will it continue to offer in the future?
We asked them place their responses to these questions inside or alongside the start.
Then we ask the members to name their travel and choose a name to symbolize what this journey of life means to them.

We conclude this journey inviting people to look back and share a message, a proverb, a story or a song with a younger person just starting out his journey. (What is a lesson you have learned that you would like to pass on to others)
(Annex Myrto's journey)
Responding to Normality and Escaping failure

“The phenomenon of personal failure has grown exponentially over recent decades. Never before has sense of being a failure to be an adequate person been so freely available to people, and never before has, it been so willingly and routinely dispensed” (White, 2002 b, p.33)

In our western culture un individual system of self-control and adjustment is imposed based on a big number of expectations imposed by the so-called system which needs peace to continue its function without resistance or arguments.

A vast array of expectations or norms governs our lives and pushes us to follow these norms strictly, if you want to be correct, happy productive…

In the effort to serve thus norms we are on alert during our life we spent a lot of energy and it’s very easy to be unhappy and miserable when we can’t respond to a norm which is precise to us.

Michael White and David Epston (Narrative means to therapeutic ends, pg 67-71) refer to Panoptic on based on the worth of Michael Foucault, who trough this metaphor described the way by which the “system” controls us all the time, and pushes us to control ourselves because we will be punished every time we deviate and we don’t follow the norms imposed by the society which always functions following the expectations of the dominant system

In present time the markets or funds play this role for the whole western world. Local cultures play a part in this phenomenon.

The team “Life is a journey” we tried to realize the impact of this “normality” and find ways to avoid it.

To do that we used the list of expectation from “Retelling the stories of our lives”, David Demborough, questioning normality pg 160-161 (Appendix) and we asked the member of the team to note the expectations that they measure themselves against and those that they do not (or that they used to but not longer do)

We gave 10 minutes to complete the list. After that we discussed the following questions.
• Are there things that you value now, or that you think are precious, because you have lived a different sort of life?

• When you think about the life you aspire these days what would you call it? How have you learned that this is the sort of life that you take a degree of pride in? What are they? How did you develop these skills? How do you put them to use in your daily life?

    Studying the list of expectation the members of the team realized that. It was normal until. Now to follow expectations provided by the society because they couldn’t do otherwise.

    On the other hand they realized that. It was very difficult to them to fulfill these expectations and their lives became difficult to have quality and any time they had a bad moment they considered that as a failure and they were disappointed or depressed.

    Escaping expectations which don’t fit with their preferred story of life isn’t easy but they discovered that any time when they escaped any expectation which it absorbed their energy and misguided their happiness they felt better. The questionnaire helped them to realize what is good for them to search for abilities, values, principles, skills and try to incorporate them in their everyday life.
Escaping Adult Self-abuse
«If I was my father or mother»

As a child living in an open democratic family we were subjected to emotional or physical abuse “for our own good”. In our team all people had been experiencing a comparable abuse mainly emotions I triggered by their behavior against parents or their school progress.

When, they became adults, they felt a kind of injustice or failure because they didn’t live up to their parents expectations.

And in other cases they imitated the behavior of their abusers.

The team was invited to answer the following questions.

• How do you imagine your life might have been if you’d had yourself as a father or mother?

• If you had yourself as a mother or father, what would you have appreciated about yourself as a child that wasn’t appreciated in you as a child or adolescent?

• What difference would it have made to you growing up if you’d had yourself for a father or mother?

• In what ways would you have been more accepting of yourself?

• In what ways do you think that you might have experienced yourself as a lovable one?

Members had o long list of changes because all of them had arguments with their parents concerning their attitude or their expectations depending on the time they lived.

For example, a member referred to her mother who believed that. Girls didn’t need to study or work. They had to be married a man with a good career and money and have children.

In her parent life she tries to support her son in his decision concerning studies because she learned that parent’s expectations prevent people from following their preferred ways of life.

Another point was children contribution to parent’s life.
Members of “life is a journey” were invited to react to the following questions.

- In what ways do you think your father’s or mother life was riches if they had met you as a child and adolescent?
- If your father or mother had been less blind to what there was appreciative about you as a child and adolescent, and if they had been truly interested in acknowledging and experiencing this in you, what effect do you think this would have had on their quality of life?
- If you had yourself for a son or a daughter, what potential would your interaction with this son or daughter have for enriching your life?

First thing was the surprise because they had never thought about that. How a child contribute to his parents life. After that they had a lot of thought concerning their contributions to their parent’s lives;

Being carefree, freshness, new ideas, open horizons, news perceptions about life, courage and optimism about the future and they had made everything to support and adopt these attitudes to make their lives better.

Another very interesting point is that. If they were less blind, they could distinguish some characteristics or talent of their kids, so they would avoid orientating them according to their expectations. (I wasn’t very good at mathematics, but I was competent in art or technology)
Soccer metaphor: Remembering
Who is Important to Us

To signify this special type of recollection, the term re-membering may be used, calling attention to re-aggregation of members the figures who belong to one’s story (Barbara Myerhoff (1982))

We are not alone in this world so around us there are people who give and receive support from us. We have our supporting club and at the same time we are members of other supporting clubs.

But who are the members and how could we form these clubs?

At first, we will try to present the different members of this group using a soccer metaphor and secondly we will try to describe how we select the different members of our “team of life”.

A sporting metaphor
We choose soccer because is a very popular sport in our culture in order to be described easily.

So we drew a soccer field and we asked the members of the team to create their soccer team, supports clubs etc.

To achieve that we used the following questions inspired by David Demborough, Retelling the stories of our 2 lives, 2014, pg 96-106
Part one: Creating Your Team sheet

- Goal keeper, Safety, Center
  
  If you had to name who is the most reliable, who looks out for you and guards your goals, who would this be? This could be a person, a group, even an organization.

Defense
  
  • Who else assists you in protecting your dreams?

In protecting what is precious to you?

Coach
• Who is it you have learned the most from life? It is possible to have more than one coach. And it’s possible that they may or may not still be alive. What are some of the things that they have taught you?

Your offence
• Who assists and encourages you in trying to score?

Other Teammates
• Who are some of other teammates in your life? Those you play with? Those whose company you enjoy?

Your position
• What is your position in this team? Where would you place yourself?

Substitutes
• Are there people who occasionally enter and exist your team people who are very helpful to you in life sometimes and then or other days not helpful at all? At what times do they help? And when don’t they? How have you learned the difference?

Spectators, Fans, Supporters in the stands
• When you play at home, who are the supporters you imagine in the “stands”? Who are the people (living or not living) who are wishing you well?

Key values you are Defending
• What are some important values of your team? What is this team standing for?

What values are you defending? (Put this behind your goals). What is their history? Have they been a part of your team for a long time?

Home Court / field
• What is your home ground? Where are the places you feel most at home? You may have more than one place. They may even be somewhere that you go regularly, or it may be somewhere that you visit only in your memories or dreams now.

First aid kit
• When your team faces a difficult (an injury, a player going down), who do you turn to? What supports your team in hard times? What is contained in your first-aid kit?

Team/theme song
• Do you have a particular song that means a lot to you? That you could call the “Theme song” of your life at the moment? If so, what would it be? Why is it significant to you?

Other Themes
Team badge, team motto, team mascot, team sponsor, team manager.

Part two
Creating a Goal Map
• Draw a goal map that indicates the different contributions that people made to the achievement of this goal. Can you describe who was involved in the “scoring” (attaining) of your team of life? How? Did you coach encourage you or help you with tactics?
• What part did everyone play in this? Go through each theme (home ground, goalkeeper, defense, attack, teammates, etc.)
• What skills, knowledge, values did you others use in scoring of this goal?
• Where did these skills / knowledge / values come from?

What training did you and others have you to possible to score this goal? How often did you have it? Each day, once a week? Where did you train? How did you learn how to have this training? Did anyone show you how?
• Draw a scoreboard or one corner of the document and mark this goal!

(Appendix: Alexandro’s soccer team)
Re-membering conversations

How to create our supporting team? Re-membering conversations are a way to do that because by this metaphor we could see again memberships of our supporting team. For upgrading of some memberships and the downgrading of others; for honoring of some memberships and revoking of others; for the grading of authority to some voices with regard to matters of one's personal identity and for the disqualification of other voices with regard to this matters. Re-membering conversations are about engagements with significant figures of our story.

These figures and identities may be the authors of books important to us, or characters in movies or comics. They could be pets or toys and so on.

We asked following questions to facilitate our members to create their support team.

- What was it that person contributed to your life? What kinds of things did you do together? What was it like for you to have this relationship with them? What different did this make to your life back then?
  - What was about you that was appreciated?
    What might they have seen in you that were not visible to others? How did this contribute to your sense of who were? How did the relationship clarity what was important to you or how you wanted to live your life
  - What might you have contributed to the life of the figure? What might it have been like for them to experience this connection with you? What might they have enjoyed about having you in their life?
  - What was it that you appreciated about them and what do you think this meant to them? How might their connection with you have affirmed or supported what was important to them in life? How might this have influenced how they saw themselves or how might it have changed their picture of themselves?
- What has been like for you to remember this connection? If you were able to hold or to a stronger sense of connection with this person, how would it affect your relationship with the value, principle or commitment which you have in your life? What might it make possible or easier for you in your life now? What could you do to keep this person more present in your life?

Saying Hello Again metaphor

When we have lost someone we love

Another way to enrich our supporting team (club) by incorporating a loved one who was passed away and facing grief with another manner.

We invited our voyagers to answer the following questions (Demborough, Retelling the stories of our lives, 2014, pgs 208-209,0210-211)

- If you were seeing yourself through…eyes right now, what would you be noticing about yourself that you could appreciate?
- What difference would it make to how you feel if you were appreciating this in yourself right now?
- What do you know about yourself that you awakened to when you bring alive the enjoyable things that…Knew about you?
- What difference would it make to you if you keep this realization about yourself alive a day-to day basis?
- What difference would felling this way make in steps that you could take get back into life?
- How could you let others know that you have reclaimed some of the discoveries about yourself that were clearly visible to…, and that you personally find attractive?
- How could be aware of that which has not been visible to you for the past…years enable you to intervene in your life?
- What difference will knowing what you now know about yourself make in the next step you take?
- In taking this next step, what else do you think you might find out about yourself that could be important for you to know?
“When love is a problem”

**Art metaphor**

“Love is an art or a science”

The first step is to understand that love is an art. If we want to learn how we can love we might follow the same way as we advance when we want to learn an art (music, painting, carpentry or the science of medicine, or mechanic)

The procedure to learn an art can be divided in two parts: first the learning of the theory and second the practice. Only after a long period of experience could I become a real conquest or of this art. A third significant factor in this knowledge is the importance I give to my art. My art is the most important in the world!

Same applies to love. We might learn to love following the same steps like in the other arts.

Which are these steps?

Love is a personal experience which we can test everyone only through ourselves and for ourselves.

The practice of any art has a number of general expectations.

First is the discipline in any action. I should practice the art of love in every moment and in any case. Our western modus Vivendi doesn’t permit us to follow this attitude so we are obliged to make an effort to do that.

Another factor is concentration, indispensable in the learning of an art. I might be concentrated to learn loving like painting or carpentry. We might stay alone with ourselves which is very difficult in our culture and obliges us to think about many things at the same time.
A third factor is patience. Indispensable if I want to finish something. The fast result is superficial and we could never learn something well and deeply.

But the biggest requirement to conquer an art is the highest interest for this art. If love isn’t the most important thing for us, we could become a good amateur but never a teacher or a master of this art. So I’m obliged to give all my love or link my life to love. To learn love, I might begin by training myself in discipline, concentration and patience in any moment of my life. To close our reflection concerning the “art of loving” is that we must believe in our abilities or skills concerning our capability to love.

(Erich Fromm, The art of loving, 1956)
- Feedback -

“My preferred story of life”
Alexandros

When I began with the “life is a journey” group, I was very different. My western culture had convinced me that I was obliged to collect degrees (masters, doctorate…) to have a successful life, and I always felt guilty because our society pushed me to be better following a lot of social constructions (norms) which demanded a lot of energy from my part and a continuum of attention to respond to all these norms. So I made a lot of studies which didn’t interest me but they led to social recognition. At the same time, I tried to do some things which were close to my preferences. I studied film direction but just as a hobby, I directed a small number of short films until my contact with the group of “life is a journey”. Now I am thinking of making that my main profession, and I feel happy.

My travel with the group showed me how I could avoid the “normality” imposed by the western culture, by giving my energy to things I like, choose my friends by creating my team of life. I discovered that I am not alone in this world. There are people who really love me, even diseased or imaginary, or heroes of my preferred books or films. So I filled up my first aid kit with knowledge’s, abilities, songs, hobbies, films, comics, pleasant thoughts, dreams relative memories…And now in difficult times I have resorted to this kit and I draw up what I need to take a rest or to continue my life. Now I can hear the other people speak about their problems because I’m not the center of the world but a part of the universe and I can learn by hearing others. Through the stories of my “fellow-travelers” I discovered real life and authentic entertainment, the adventure of life. My mind is full of vivid images and I’m ready to follow my heart and undertake a new way of life.
This journey was very revealing to me because I discovered a lot of things concerning my life. I understood the force of the expectations created by the society which governs our behavior, is transmitted by one generation to the other and haunt our lives, by absorbing our energy during our efforts to follow them.

During this journey, I could fill up my first aid kit with my values, purposes, commitments, and with people who are precious to me and avoid people who are annoying to me and my life.

I could see my life grow by another point of view. I made the decision to love Athina, myself first, avoiding people who destroyed my life and my relationship with my husband and my kids. I got rid of responsibilities which didn’t concern me.

I became my parent to correct things which had traumatized me during my adolescence. Suffering from lack of trust and support concerning my studies (material and psychological), I decided to give all the trust to my children and move on with my life deriving strength from my family and my surroundings.

I left behind obsession for people and things. I can now see forward. I’m not absolute anymore, I’m facing situations with flexibility, I’m showing my anger by letting others speak and I’m listening to them because by doing so, I’m learning new things and new ways to face problems.

Now I can help the other people move on with their life.
Eric

“Life is a journey” showed me that I’m not alone or unique in this world. Our team, so heterogeneous in the beginning had a lot of common elements which helped me integrate myself because our needs and expectations were common.

When we were invited to describe an ideal day, we discovered that love for ourselves through positive things, delicious food, working out, going outdoors and friendship. Nobody associated pleasure with self-destructive behavior (drugs, alcohol or dangerous sports)

So a core of people had been created by the end of the journey. A qualitative correlation of criteria. A high level of communication, interactive and feedback.

We were within a circle during the experimental exercise where everyone took a stand with a different way but in the end we arrived at the same result.

The atmosphere was extremely positive. This journey helped me to result and re-experience some instances which have an impact on my life.

The recall of my grandfather helped me to understand how I function, how I think…I discovered principles like my appreciation concerning spiritual cultivation by my grandfather and my parents. That was redemptive because I realized why I’m thinking the way I do, revising beliefs which are dysfunctional. For example my grandfather who was a communist made me realize that I live in a world of inequality.
I realized the great impact the norms had on me (like professional performance) I deconstructed this because it was harmful to me: It prevented me from being calm, I was under stress. While now I am able to live comfortably, without frustration. That changed other dependencies like financial impasse.

It is an ongoing procedure; I continue to deconstruct stress inducing factors.

From the very first session with the group my headache disappeared!!

I was a person who observed life from my window. Now I made the decision to go outdoors and participate in real life.

Myrto

I was integrating to this group of “Life is a journey” after my parent’s divorce and the death of my beloved grandmother. In this time, I experienced grave psychological instability and I needed to feel better. It was my first participation in a group and in the beginning I was stressed. But I enjoyed this journey because I discovered a lot of things during the twelve stopovers.

Firstly I became very optimistic because all the procedure helped me see better into myself and understand who I am, which are my values, my beliefs, purposes, my commitments and I could retell my preferred story about the future.

What was very helpful to me was the possibility to create a first aid kid with people who assist me in every difficulty, values like power, hope, faith, optimism, independence, freedom. I learnt not to give up, to fight against problems and difficulties and be honest.

I could distinguish real love from living together. I discovered the art of loving, to love myself, to give from my surplus, to avoid egocentrism or narcissism.

During the remembering practice I could recall loved ones and incorporate things which are very helpful in my future life, like my grandmother’s advice concerning freedom and independence, and the pleasure of a work in nature with my grandfather.
When I began this journey I had another version of myself with me who represented my dark side, my problematic story, who had the same height with me. She still exists but she is a short person, just like a dwarf.

Irene

Escaping normality was my favorite stopover of “Life is a journey” because I grew up in norms which had serious impact in my life. During this stopover, I could understand many things and I discovered what I couldn’t imagine a few months before my journey with this team. My resistance against norms: First I realize that norms lead our lives and sometimes they make us go backwards in life.

I remember that my mother was very negative because I wanted to became a hairdresser, a profession exercised by a people who belonged to a lower class, girls who didn’t have any morals. She said “Girls of our social class must be married to someone rich, make kids...”. My two parents considered studying useless for a girl. And if I didn’t have the opportunity to meet my husband, who is a chemist, I wouldn’t be able to study. He gave to me the chance to be a chemist’s assistant and that opened to me a number of opportunities. I worked with him in the chemist’s, I also worked in a medical centre and now I am working for the National health Organization.

When I was young I challenged my parent’s normality. I learned English, I did ballet for years. That wasn’t easy. It was a product of my will and my obstinacy. I can now realize that and I’m very proud about my “journey”.
During this “journey” I understood that if I was my mother or my father I could be a better schoolgirl, I could continue my studies in the university maybe I wouldn’t be married in my 22 years or I could be a hair stylist…

As a parent I assisted my son to choose his studies encouraging him until his final decision because I wouldn’t feel like me when my parents were negative to all my wills, thoughts, ideas.

But this journey revealed many things for me. My love for freedom, my courage to battle difficulties, my ability to find solutions in difficult situations.

I discovered that respecting and responding to my sentiments, giving priority to myself and my needs. When the others ask something from me I respond to their demands, but I avoid doing things only to gain their recognition.

Now I don’t feel alone; my supporting team contains my fellow-travellers with whom I exchanged feelings, memories, values, ideas…

I’m a new person with a new identity.
APPENDIX
Survival box

Friends  Faith
Values
Experiences
Love
Behavior

Hyrto's Journey

To day 10/10/2019

University degree
Go away for some months
Do whatever I want
Paris, New York, London, Tokyo
Be healthy, have a nice life
Finish university

- People have to be strong
- Believe in themselves
- Be independent
- Do everything for what they want

I met experiences of other people and it enriched mine.
The problems are common.
I was born in Athens, in Greece, 25 years ago. I grown up with my parents but mostly with my grand-parents. I learned two foreign languages - English and French. I learned also musical instruments like piano and guitar. Furthermore, I went to a private Greek-French school which, I believe, helped me go to the University to study French Literature. The most important people in my life who were next to me are my parents, my friends, my grandpa who raised me and my latest dog, Rudy.

The obstacles in my life, but my fear too, are myself and the death. Often, myself seems to be the worst enemy but I believe I surpass it most of the times. Secondly, my worst fear is the death of people I love, but then I try to be strong and think logically.

A year ago, my parents took divorce, was the worst thing in my life. All my world collapsed, the dream of having a family disappeared. I was angry with them, disappointed and hopeless of finding a good person I make family. My friends helped me to get over it by giving me the helping hand, they were listening me with understanding and sympathy.

Furthermore, in my short life I have some values. Firstly, I like to be independent, something that my father taught me. I learned to have dignity from my family, to fight for what I really want, to never give up even if something is really difficult. I learned also to have hope, to be optimistic, powerful and honest. Values who come from my friends, my parents, my grandpa or from my school.

The most important things in my life are the highschool where I have a lot of fun. But also I'm proud of going to university and getting the proficiency in English.

I imagine very often my future and my desires for it. I want to take the University degree to go away in a foreign country for some months. The places I would like to go are Paris, N.York, London, Dubai. My hopes for future is to be healthy, have a nice life and make a family.

The values I would like to pass in others are to be strong, to believe in themselves, to be independent and to do everything for what they want.

From this journey, I "gained" a lot. First of all, to be calm and listen to others. I met experiences of other people and I enriched mine. But the most important is that I realized that the problems are common for all of us.

In conclusion, I have a survival box which is including my friends, my strength I want to believe, character, a lot of music, to go out, make trips, have faith, use my values, think of my experiences and have love.

Myrto
Alexander's soccer team

1. Goalkeeper: Mother
2. Defence: Comics, Films
   - Coach: My girlfriend → set up high goals
     - keep self-esteem
3. Offence: Friends, music performances
   - My grandparents
   - Colleagues
4. Other teammates: My friend Stavros) when I meet him but not very often
5. Substitutes:
6. Spectators: relatives, colleagues
7. Key values: keep trying, self-motivation, dream, ambitions
   - always
   - when a relative died, finish my studies to school
Home ground: my room with all my books, my cottage and my
- First aid kit: girl-friend, mother, films, trips
- Team theme song: "Life is a movie, write your own ending" why? Because it makes my life flexible, since I can affect the end.
- Team mascot
- Moto: keep walking
- Sponsor: myself, manager: > Goal map

My mother encouraged me to start a difficult task. (moral support)
Myself: need to make a big step compared to my colleagues (ambitions)
My girlfriend: useful knowledge on theory and mathematics.
Movies: a pleasant stop when I was tired. (creativity)
Trips: a longer > > > (broader view of the world)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To keep it together at all times</td>
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<td>2. To be independent in all aspects of life</td>
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<td>3. To be able to handle myself confidently in all social situations</td>
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<td>4. To have a career path and trajectory</td>
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<td>5. To climb the corporate ladder</td>
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<td>6. To reproduce (to have children)</td>
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<td>7. To be in a long-term sexual relationship</td>
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<td>8. To find happiness in an exclusive sexual relationship with one other person</td>
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<td>9. To be wealthy</td>
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<td>10. To do as well as or better in life (whatever that means) than my neighbors/friends/colleagues/schoolmates</td>
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<td>11. To always be in control of my emotion</td>
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<td>12. To be productive; things</td>
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<td>13. To fulfill my goals for my life on a well-defined schedule</td>
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<td>14. To judge myself against how others are doing in their lives</td>
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<td>15. To have a six-pack abdomen</td>
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<td>16. To be successful at work</td>
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<td>17. To have hair that is always tidy</td>
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<td>18. To own possessions-especially my own house and car</td>
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<td>19. To know exactly where I am going in life</td>
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<td>20. To be able to perform under pressure</td>
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<td>21. To be able to balance a career, relationships, family, keeping fit and healthy, caring for elderly parents, keeping the garden watered—all with smile on my face</td>
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<td>22. To be on time</td>
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<td>23. To be comfortable speaking in public</td>
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<td>24. To be the best lover my partner has ever had</td>
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<td>25. To keep my home and office clean and orderly</td>
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<td>26. To do my taxes when they’re due</td>
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<td>27. To put others first</td>
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<td>28. To have 190 Facebook friends (or more)</td>
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<td>29. To find a knight in shining armor or glamorous princess (or be a knight in shining armor or glamorous princess!)</td>
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<td>30. Not hurting others</td>
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<td>31. Honoring those who have been good to us</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Being a good friend</td>
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David Demborough, Retelling the stories of our lives, (pgs. 160-161)

**References**

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