

Chapter 9

Leya's Survival

Our awareness will be drawn to the agitation in our mind, if we allow ourselves to sit still and listen to our inner self. Sitting quietly was not a part of Leya's life. Her life was dominated by an inner urgency to keep moving and to continue achieving. She was driven by the desire to learn in order to have a better life than her parents had. When she reached her goal, she was unable to recognize that she had achieved what she had set out to achieve. Her internal blindness evolved into a web of selective premises on which her reasoning was based, justifying her single minded pursuit in attaining her goal. This internal blindness also obscured the fact, that doing psychotherapy would take her back to her starting position as a nurse, now transformed into the guise of psychotherapist and servant to the suffering. Her desired future therapeutic role in the face of incurable suffering and at other times the alleviation of suffering, obliterated the humble position as a comforter to those who needed more but were unable to afford lengthy therapeutic interventions.

Leya's life story is presented in her own words in italics. In order to create a context for her mother Elena's letter and Leya's reply to that letter (also in italics), this lengthy autoethnographic account of Leya's life is necessary to understand the conditions that led to the development of her craving to become a clinical psychologist. Her life stories are also necessary to understand the stressful, turbulent and secret life Leya lived for almost twenty

years. My decision to include Leya's own account of her life and facilitate the process of forgiveness was born out of circumstance. When I was introduced to her for the first time as her 3rd and final supervisor for her Master's dissertation, she had already written her life stories, and I had already read her primary writings. Her stories provided me with a wide open window into her life and into her wounds. Having been provided with a coherent idea of what Leya was struggling with, her stories aroused a deep compassion within me. My whole being began to reverberate with her expressed emotions, unlocking my own path of suffering as a reversal of figure and ground.

The fact that I had read her stories made a lengthy story-telling interview obsolete, and reading the story as it flowed from her own pen, seen through her own eyes, told in her own voice preserves the authenticity of the account. It also allowed me to concentrate entirely on the complex task of NLP practitioner, executing numerous therapeutic interventions. The interventions were performed in the course of one day at the points of difficulty, misunderstanding, judgement, anger, and incongruence within the material of her stories. Interventions were also performed when Leya expressed feelings of hatred, fear, humiliation, despondency and negativity, and thoughts of retaliation, discrimination, unfairness, and death. Only those interventions that are relevant to forgiveness have been fully documented.

Leya's life story begins 30 years prior to her actual birth in 1960. She had asked her mother, Elena to write a story related to her own upbringing in Port Elizabeth in the 1930's. The story that Leya's mother, Elena, sent in the form of a letter to her daughter, opens the pages of chapters of unforgiveness in the book of Leya's life.

Elena's Letter

I Elena Verde was born in No 6 Anderson Street, South End, Port Elizabeth. We were two families that lived next door to each other my late dad's brother and our family of 9 children including our late parents. At the age of 14 years we were forced to move to South End, my dad's brother and his family that lived next door to us and another brother that lived just around the corner from us moved right out of S.A. to Australia. My dad had a shoe repair business in South End, he had three workers helping, he had a thriving business. My dad could not afford to move out of S.A. because of his big family, with the result he decided to move to an area called Fairview. My dad could at least purchase property, the plot of ground which he bought with a wood and iron house was a Morgan in size, it could be divided into 9 building plots. His intention was to give each child a plot. The majority of people that owned property in Fairview were "coloured", there were very few "whites". Then came the devastating news that Fairview was also claimed under the Group Areas Act. At this stage my dad had almost paid for his property. One can imagine what a struggle my parents had to keep the wolf away from the door. I had to go out to work to help them. My mom became ill, because of all the worry not knowing what would happen to us as a family. Then at the young age of 50 my mom passed away after a severe heart attack. I blame the system of this country for her death. My dad could not even buy property now because of the amount which he received from the government for his property. I was married now so my husband could buy property in Korsten, my dad and the rest of my family could stay with us, we had a double storey house and my one married sister lived at the bottom level of the house, then we heard a rumour that the group area system was going to claim Korsten as well. We decided to move out of P.E., and we moved to C.T. Today I can say that the forced removals really affected us as a family. We left our families behind. Also many of the older folk just had sudden deaths, some could not take being separated from their children. I would never like any one to experience what we had gone through due to the system in our country. The group area system is also the result of all the hatred in our country. At times I also feel hatred, but I just try to forget and carry on although the scars will always be there.

Leya's Reply to her Mother's Letter

You know, Mummy, for the past few weeks I've been struggling to write a paper for one of my professors. I've read quite widely – including the book called “South End – as we knew it” that you so kindly loaned to me. It's been very difficult for me to write this ‘academic’ paper because it entails writing about my family's history – a painful history. I ask myself – how can I write it in a way that pays due respect to the pain that my family has endured. How do I write it so that it's not just another cold academic clinical paper. How do I write without just rewording what others have written before. How do I avoid the pitfall of simply adding more and more words to libraries already full of words that have gone before. Then I realize that somehow words just cannot fully capture what our hearts and minds feel, yet they are necessary. They do add meaning and deepen our understanding of events that have gone before.

They in some way verbalize and put words to that which has gone before albeit in an insufficient way.

In the words of my professor, Mom, what my family has endured, needs to be written down. Thank you for starting this enormous process by writing me this letter. What you have written down, Mummy, enables me to start writing. It transforms words into meaning and adds a depth to our trying to understand what you and your family have endured.

Recently I felt quite hurt in class when one of the students in my class implied that the loss we as a family experienced happened 30 years ago and that we should've dealt with it by now. I then, very emotionally, replied that we as a family have hardly ever spoken about the

losses we experienced many years ago. I also said to her that my youngest sister doesn't even know much about it.

We have been silent for a very long time about the havoc that was wreaked in our lives and in the lives of our grandparents. We've never spoken about growing up, about our teenage years about your impressionable years as a child suffering as a result of Apartheid. We have never spoken about how our family has been scattered around the world because of Apartheid. We have never spoken about the families we don't even know who have been living in different parts of the world. Some we don't know about because they'd been classified as white and we've lived apart for many, many years. Just last year, you facilitated my meeting with one such family member. Auntie T, who lives around the corner from me, in a historically white neighbourhood. I found it amazing that she had to go via Port Elizabeth and Switzerland to find her family who lived around the corner from her in Johannesburg. These are the untold stories and experiences that continue to unfold today. It hurts me deeply when someone tries to minimize our families' experiences by implying that an event that happened 30 years ago and is gone, should be forgotten. How can I continue to contribute to the pain you have experienced – that has torn you apart – by maintaining the silence– by making it appear as invisible– history. How can I continue with my life and my career, confronting other people's pain and not even ask my dear mother to share with me her pain. I feel only when we can confront our own pain can we dare to confront another person in his/her pain. How dare I try and facilitate someone else's bearing of his/her pain when I continue to perpetuate the silence and invisibility of the pain that my family (ancestors) have been forced to bear.

Mummy, you have been instrumental in starting to open up many years of pain that has been silenced. As I begin to start writing our history, I pray that your spirit and the spirit of God that has enfolded you all these years will enable me to write in a way that somehow

bears witness to your life – to Daddy’s life – your extended family’s life.

*Mummy, you and Daddy could have unleashed your anger and hatred and become very bitter over the years. It seems as though over the years you have accumulated wisdom and a wealth of experience in how to deal with loss and how to live life in a meaningful way. In all our experiences over the years that life has dealt you, not once have I heard you cursing God or cursing another human being. You have courageously and with fortitude turned (and indeed continue to turn) your stumbling blocks into stepping stones. You have taught your children far more about life than any educator or teacher could ever have hoped to teach us. You have taught us that it is not what happens to you in life that counts but **how you deal with what happens to you**. The book you have written is inscribed in our hearts – the teachings you have instilled within us are teachings that no university could ever hope to teach us. This metaphorical book you have written within our hearts through your living examples contains the values that we try to live by. This book also contains the untold legacies of your unspoken past. You have taught us amongst others, Mummy and Daddy, through your lives, through your silence and through what you have endured – to love our enemies – to respect other human beings despite the evil they mete out to others. You have taught us not to take revenge on those who persecute us because we have been born with brown skins and curly hair. You have taught us to respect all of God’s creation. You have taught us that life can still have meaning even when our oppressors try and squeeze the life out of us. You have taught us how to bear suffering with courage and dignity. You have taught us to look beyond our immediate gratification and to focus on developing inner strengths that no other human being could ever take away. You have taught us about divine justice. You have taught us how to remain united as a family amidst the tearing apart that was happening in society and amidst the tearing apart that you experienced for the greater part of your life.*

Even though today I cannot make sense of how you made sense of your life, Mummy, I can only marvel at how you and Daddy managed to create a home where we felt safe, amidst all the struggles and turmoil. You teach us how to be human, how to go through life with dignity and respect, how to continue to believe in God despite how the Apartheid government presented their version of God to us in the form of punitive inhumane, destructive policies.

When I look back at my life, through my 'psychological lenses' I see how my developing asthma became a symptom of the greater suffering that my family was enduring. I see that my asthma represented a breathing difficulty in response to how the Apartheid government was withdrawing the living breath out of communities. I reinterpret my asthma as a physical struggle to find oxygen amidst the stifling and suffocating cruelty of Apartheid. As Apartheid drew the living breath out of my grandmother's life, so her children and grandchildren struggled to maintain their breath some literally, like myself, others more figuratively. Some, like my mom and dad, provided shelter and breathing space for other family members while they struggled to recover from the harshness of the Apartheid system. Some were driven to lives of poverty, alcoholism and other social ravages that were wreaked upon their lives through deliberate deprivation as a result of the Apartheid policies. Others tried to find a living overseas – in foreign lands – where they were more welcome than in the land of their birth.

It is heartbreaking to breathe in the air and walk through the streets where we as children had been torn apart. It is equally heart wrenching to see the foundations of some of the homes of my ancestors. Yes, white people had forcibly moved us from the places of our birth. They denied us our God given human rights – they literally destroyed our shelters – our homes – communities.... and because there were too few of them (i.e. too few whites) to fill up the barren spaces they'd created by destroying our homes, these barren and desolate, destitute

lands bear testimony to the pain that tore through our communities as bulldozers reduced to dust what communities had taken years, sweat and sacrifice to build up.

Yes, Mummy, when you emphatically stated a few years ago that you didn't ever want to go back and live in P.E., I couldn't really appreciate what exactly you were saying or implying then. If I may now paraphrase what I think you were saying then, you were probably implying that you don't ever want to go back and be visibly reminded of your painful past. You were probably saying that you want to maintain the geographical distance between your past and your present.

Daddy, when I brought you the map from the Deeds Office a few years ago so that you could point out to me and Ruben where exactly our Fairview home had been situated, your face fell. I will never be able to describe the untold pain in your eyes that day. You may wonder, Daddy, why I only requested that Mummy try and write a letter to me expressing the losses she'd experienced many years ago, it's because I didn't want to inflict more pain. I have seen that kind of pain in your eyes on a few occasions in my life – most of them when I was suffering from asthma and you and mummy would rush me to hospital. That kind of pain which I as a child used to see in your eyes as I lay suffering and you would tenderly hold my hand was the kind of pain I saw in your eyes on that fateful day when I handed you the map. I didn't want to be instrumental in re-inflicting that same kind of pain. I hope you understand my reservations.

When I suffered from asthma as a child, it felt as though I was causing you pain and yet there was nothing I could do about it. I felt that I was adding to your financial burden when I used to take ill and you had to fork out money for my treatment. There were times when I wished I had died to save you financial costs. How naive my thinking was as a child. As a parent now I can appreciate the anguish and helplessness you and Mummy must have felt.

One example that comes to mind was when you took me late one night to Victoria Hospital. We could hear the white doctors laughing loudly while they were having tea. We had to patiently sit in the waiting room. You held me in your arms – I could see the anguish in your eyes as you held back and contained yourself. You wanted to confront those doctors and ask them to help your suffering child. But you knew that you couldn't appeal to these white doctors – you feared that they might victimize me and not give me the treatment that I so desperately needed. I imagine that you must have prayed very hard that night, Daddy – for God to undertake something. It is seeing the pain in your eyes on these occasions and when I handed you the Deeds Office map that makes me reluctant to ask you to revisit your pain.

I now realise how an “event” that happened 30 years ago could continue to wreak havoc and pain in generations of people. Forced removals was not a once off event that happened on a specific day and the next day people just went on with their lives. No, it continues to have an impact on people's lives today. I can now see that the negative impact of Apartheid could be perpetuated within families, albeit on a subconscious level – if it's not addressed.

Leya's Story

I was born on 4 December 1960, as the second child of four siblings born to Elena Markos and Gianni Verde. I have an older brother, Carlos (now aged 45) and two younger sisters Gina (41) and Anna (34). Carlos, myself and Gina were born in P.E. and Anna in Cape Town.

My mom is the eldest of nine siblings. She would have loved to have become a nurse, but needed to leave school at the age of 14 in order to work so that her family could survive financially. She initially worked as a factory worker and then later as a counter hand in a department store. My dad's biological mother died when he was 11 months old. His father remarried and had 4 sons and 1 daughter from his second marriage. My father was therefore reared first by his paternal grandmother and after she had died, by a paternal aunt. Dad would have loved to attend university but was unable to do so. He became a primary school teacher after attending a teacher's training college.

I married Robin Stark in 1985. We have two children, one boy aged 11 and a girl aged 7 years and a menagerie of 3 dogs, 11 fish and a cat. We live in a suburb, east of Johannesburg and our house is conveniently situated opposite the school that our children attend.

My fondest memory of early childhood, prior to the forced removals, is that of walking hand in hand with my dad to a nearby stream and sitting under a weeping willow tree. Another fond memory is that of myself, my mom and my older brother going to visit Grandma – myself in the pram, Cedric standing on the step of the pram and mom pushing us.

My next most vivid childhood memory, at the age of 4 years, is that of standing beside the coffin of my 50 year old maternal grandmother. According to my mother, my grandmother had died prematurely as a result of the harsh effects of forced removals of the previous Apartheid regime. Apparently, my grandmother couldn't cope with the threat of being forced to move a second time as a result of the Group Areas Act instituted by the Apartheid government.

Shortly after grandmother's death, the Apartheid government declared the beautiful suburb

of Fairview, P.E., for the habitation of whites only. My grandfather and my parents lost their properties and were paid out meager sums of money, insufficient to serve as a down payment for the purchase of another house in a designated 'coloured' area. My father and grandfather subsequently entered into a financial agreement that enabled my extended and nuclear family to share adequate living space. The financial agreement enabled my dad to purchase a fairly luxurious and spacious double-storey home in an area called Korsten. My grandpa, five of his children (my mom's siblings) including the husband and four children of one sibling moved into our double-storey house. A total of sixteen members of our nuclear and extended family thus attempted to live in harmony and managed to do so for approximately two years. I have fond and vivid memories of playing with my cousins and siblings in this double-storey house in Korsten, P.E.. Then came the devastating rumours that Korsten was also going to be declared a 'whites only' area. My pleasant childhood recollections now give way to sad memories of being separated from my extended family. My father decided to make a pilgrimage southwards, to Cape Town, a place where the majority of the population was classified coloured.

My school career was marked by instability and uncertainty related to the political situation in S.A.. Chronic asthma exacerbated an already challenging school situation, but I nevertheless excelled at school. In 1974, I commenced secondary education at South Peninsula Secondary School, in Steurhof, Cape Town. Each year the government's threat to close down the school hung over our heads since this school for coloureds was located in a 'white area'. White people seemed to resent the presence of coloured children in their neighbourhood and their remarks of protest gravely affected us. We were constantly reminded by our school principal to behave in an exemplary manner in order to ensure that our school was not closed down and reclassified as a school for white children. Steurhof, the area in which the school was situated, had previously been occupied by coloureds and also suffered the fate of being re-labeled a 'whites only' area.

I had always dreamt of attending university full-time. I had been socialized into believing that full-time university studies enabled one to find a good job and hence a better life. However, during my matriculation year in 1978, I started realizing that due to my family's financial constraints I would not be able to attend university the following year. My parents were already paying for my brother's university education and couldn't afford to financially support a second child at university. A career in nursing seemed to be the logical option since this would provide me with an immediate income (starting salary of R163,00 per month) in order to supplement my parents' income, and I would be able to study at the same time. I felt saddened and silenced.

I undertook my general nursing training from February 1979 to February 1982 at Nico Malan Nursing College, a college for the training of coloured nurses. My practical training took place at Groote Schuur Hospital. I hated every minute of my initial months at Groote Schuur Hospital. I despised being told by the sister-in-charge to offer urinals to all the males in the orthopaedic ward on my very first day on duty as an eighteen year old student nurse. How they ridiculed my innocence and naivete. I enviously thought about my matric classmates who were now at university. I longed to be afforded the opportunity to study full-time at university and pursue the career of my dreams.

I did not, however, even allow myself to imagine what I might have studied, because it was probably too painful to explore the emotional impact that those thought processes might have had on my life. I immersed myself in my work, pledging to care for my patients in the best way I possibly could. Having been an asthma sufferer for the greater part of my childhood and exposed to the health care system on a regular basis, I realized the difference a nurse could make in the life of a patient and therefore made a conscious decision to dedicate myself unreservedly to my profession.

I excelled in my career as a nurse. I did the integrated course in Midwifery (from March to September 1982). This course was described as the accelerated course for those nurses with intellectual capabilities. Thereafter I worked in various intensive care units (ICUs) for approximately one year. I then successfully applied to do a one year course in intensive nursing science and completed this in March 1985. I silently nurtured ideas as to how I would find a way to escape from the nursing profession. Unfortunately, I only heard of UNISA in 1985 for the first time through a nursing friend's sister who was studying towards a BA degree through UNISA. I immediately decided that I would study my way out of nursing. At that time a lot of my friends also started to pursue degrees in nursing via UNISA. I could not understand why they wanted to stay in nursing. I wanted so desperately to get out of it. At the time (1985) I felt that my matric teacher was correct in pointing out that I was wasting my potential by pursuing a career in nursing.

My work schedule was structured in 12 hour shifts, alternating night with day duty. I also had two part-time research jobs during my days off from night duty. I hardly had time to attend church. I felt as though there was a growing sense of emptiness within my life that threatened to consume me. I decided to study theology through UNISA and not nursing. This choice was partly due to the fact that at the time my husband was studying theology.

It happened while I was working in the ICU, and nursing very sick and dying patients, that I started connecting with people on a psychological level rather than only attending to their medical needs and monitoring their progress via high-tech machines. For the first time I started realizing the importance of physically and emotionally touching patients, holding their hands, rubbing their backs and combing their hair as opposed to focusing on ventilators, pace-makers and other human-made mechanisms that were keeping them alive.

Ironically, around the same time (1989), I started realizing the necessity of treating people holistically rather than in a compartmentalized fashion. While pursuing a Bachelor of Theology through UNISA I had the option of studying one non-theology course, and I chose to do Psychology 1. This marked the first time that I had allowed myself to dream and imagine what I would enjoy studying. Thus my interest in psychology was born in 1989. Now that I was delving into psychology, it seemed okay for me to start entertaining the conflicting feelings within me. It was around this time that I started feeling a heightened awareness of the discrepancy between what I was learning through my theological studies and what I was practicing as a 'practicing' Christian. I remember feeling torn apart a lot of the time. It was as if I was struggling with the commandments contained within the Bible, which were highlighted through my theology studies. My favourite scriptural passage (Luke 19:45) was where Jesus unleashed his anger in the temple. I strongly identified with this aspect. I certainly was not going to embrace the text: love your neighbour as you love yourself. In fact, at that time, I wasn't even able to love myself. How could I love myself with my black skin that caused severe restrictions to be placed upon me. At that time I was too scared to even attempt to work through the reasons why God had created us with black skins and others with white skins which afforded them lots of privileges. It just didn't seem fair. How could I love a God who had created humankind in an unequal manner? Well, despite these internal debates, I continued to study theology. I took a course in comparative religions because at that stage I felt open to embracing a belief system that advocated a revolutionary religious approach that would allow my anger, in fact, my hatred to be ventilated.

Providentially, in 1989, my husband received a bursary to study in Michigan, USA, and I accompanied him. The move to the USA exposed me to a different environment altogether. The bitter cold probably 'put on ice' for a short while, the untoward feelings of racial hatred and envy I'd been nurturing up until then. I excitedly made enquiries to commence full-time

psychology studies but was curtly informed that I was under-qualified to do so.

During this period (i.e. my husband's full-time study in Michigan) I found a job as an unskilled nurse in a nursing home. I encountered what I considered American racism towards an increasing Hispanic community. My complexion seemingly made people classify me as Hispanic. A white American nursing sister shouted at me in front of patients and nursing staff. I felt humiliated and very angry. I called her into a side ward, scolded her, stormed off to the matron, gave one minute's notice and slammed the door behind me. I never returned.

In retrospect I think this is what I'd longed to do in the country of my birth, but knew it was pointless and dangerous to do so. I felt that in the USA, the land of the free and the brave, I could exercise this action. I enjoyed the momentary power I felt having taken the risk to give vent to my anger in a way such as this. I soon realised though that I would have to control my anger and find other releases for it.

Now jobless and somewhat bored, and disappointed, and lonely, I engaged in a vigorous exercise program, and in this way managed to cope with my anger and hatred.

It was during our stay in Michigan that Mandela was released in February 1990. I longed to be in South Africa. We watched his triumphant march out of prison with tears in our eyes. Mandela's release signaled to me that freedom from racial oppression was to become a reality in my lifetime.

After spending a year in Michigan, my husband, Ruben, then continued his theological education in Switzerland, the most neutral country of all. I was compelled, according to Swiss law, to study as well. This seemed to be rather incongruent with being in a free,

independent, and politically impartial country. Nevertheless, I registered as a first year BD (Bachelor of Divinity) student. While delving into full-time theology studies in Switzerland, I continued to study part-time through UNISA. I learnt that the Jungian Institute was situated on the opposite side of the lake to where we were living and studying. I couldn't contain my excitement and asked Ruben to accompany me to the Institute. I remember dreaming, as I walked through the corridors of the Jungian Institute, that one day I would revisit the Institute as a qualified psychologist. On the one hand I felt that this was a pipe dream. On the other I started believing that it could be possible. After all, my dad had always drummed into me that one could accomplish whatever one set one's mind to.

Switzerland epitomized a great opportunity for me to have learnt, even if just for one of those years, to live in the moment. I learnt to just be. I learnt to appreciate the beauty of nature. I particularly enjoyed long walks in the Swiss Alps as well as traveling through the neighbouring countries on a shoestring budget. I also learnt to enjoy life and activities that didn't require monetary input. Most of all, I derived a lot of pleasure from expanding my horizons through studying at leisure.

During my first year of study in Switzerland I chose psychology-related subjects like 'death and dying'. Deep down I hoped that one day my then prescribed book by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross would come in handy when I'd study psychology full-time. During our second year in Switzerland, I gave birth to our first child, Emanuel. I managed to attend classes while Emanuel was looked after in a creche. I didn't manage to fulfill exam requirements at the seminary. I found it extremely difficult to cope with sleep deprivation, the demands of motherhood and full-time studies. I felt ashamed to have failed an exam for the first time in my life.

I did however manage to write my UNISA exam. After a long trip that involved navigating my

way to another village where a South African embassy was housed, I sat for the exam. I felt that I was being treated in a contemptuous manner by the invigilator – needless to say, a white South African. I dreaded having to return to S.A.

My transition into becoming a mother and continuing with my part-time studies through UNISA proved to be the greatest challenge up until then. While my part-time studies continued, I had taken a break from full-time seminary studies since I was allowed a period of maternity leave. I therefore chose to focus on my part-time UNISA studies, while trying to take care of my newborn baby. I, who had nursed 15 babies simultaneously in a postnatal ward, couldn't cope with one baby of my own. I felt helpless, exhausted and totally incompetent. I felt I was at the end of my tether. Robin's mother had died during my sixth month of pregnancy. He returned to S.A. to attend the funeral. On his return to Switzerland he had a lot of catching up to do with his studies. He was therefore absent most of the time as I struggled to cope with a demanding baby who was suffering from colic and sleeplessness. I constantly prayed for perseverance.

Slowly but surely I started realizing the steps I needed to take to ensure that my needs were balanced with baby's needs. I verbalized my need for help and Robin started being more actively involved as a care-giver. I started nurturing myself. I took time out to look after myself. I started going to a gym and I went for long walks alone. I would wake Robin up at night to take his turn at comforting Emanuel. Gradually I started rebuilding my strength and my inner capacities. I was later able to be in touch with the 'good' and 'bad' mom within me – the mom who couldn't cope with continual sleep deprivation and was struggling to come to terms with a new role as mother, traversing unknown terrain. This was a very humbling experience for me. During this time I remember thinking that one day, if I were to become a psychologist, I would run a support group for the first-time moms.

During our stay in Switzerland (1990– 1992), we traveled quite extensively through Europe with fellow seminary students. Due to limited financial resources, we relied on our fellow classmates for accommodation and food. During a brief visit to Austria, I remember thinking – may I feel inspired by the Austrian air that once filled the lungs of Freud.

Once Robin and I had returned to South Africa in November 1992 with our then one year old son, I started feeling less and less optimistic about ever studying psychology. I would always make a point of connecting with people from the field of psychology while working as a research co– coordinator of a breast cancer study. Later, I facilitated group therapy for three colleagues and myself and looked forward to our once– weekly sessions at the psychologist’s private practice. I listened very carefully to what she was saying and how she was saying it and told myself that one day I might get there. I then toyed with the idea of getting into psychiatric nursing and doing the psychiatric nursing course, but dismissed the idea because I didn’t want to work 12– hour shifts anymore.

Silently I continued to dream of becoming a psychologist. I didn’t dare tell anyone for fear that my dream might never materialize and I would be dismissed as a failure. At the end of 1995 I finally wrote my last UNISA exam towards my theology degree (B.Th.). By this time we had relocated to Johannesburg. I then enquired about doing the Psychology 2 and 3 courses simultaneously the following year. I was prohibited from doing so. I was close to tears because by this time I was already 35 years old and felt that time was against me. Around this time I coincidentally met 2 psychology professors who both encouraged me and urged me to not give up.

At the beginning of 1996, I gave birth to our second child in Johannesburg. In 1997 I enrolled for Psychology 3 at UNISA (part time). At around the same time, my then employer offered me the opportunity to do a Master’s degree in Public Health. I felt torn. I wanted to

take up the offer but that would have meant giving up on my dream of becoming a psychologist because I could not possibly do both. I told my employer I would think about the offer.

Meanwhile (1995/1996), I became more involved in church work and actively nurtured my desire to do counseling work. I started a counseling commission at our local church. I facilitated an HIV/AIDS training course for lay persons. I was also co-chairperson of our church's National Committee for Social Responsibility. It was during this time that I decided to play devil's advocate and apply for ordination as the first woman within the Baptist Convention. I didn't want to be a conventional minister i.e. running a church, preaching every Sunday, etc., but a minister in my everyday work. After a lengthy process and intense interviews by our African male dominated committee, I was finally recommended and later ordained.

The following year (1997) I changed jobs and started working for a pharmaceutical company. This job necessitated regular local and international travel. I enrolled to do three honours courses, against the advice of the university and trusted friends.

On the odd occasion when a colleague did encounter my reading a psychology book I would minimize it and mask my dream by claiming that I was 'interested' in psychology. At times like these I felt incongruent but rationalised it away by convincing myself that I was in self-preservation mode. I needed my job and I couldn't jeopardize it, hence I couldn't disclose my true feelings about my dream of becoming a psychologist.

On one occasion I ventured to confide in a colleague with whom I felt safe enough to do so. When I asked her 'hypothetically' how she thought the company would respond should I apply for one or two days' study leave (to go and write exams!) She said very assertively that

I wouldn't be supported because my studies were unrelated to my work. I therefore dismissed the idea of coming out of the closet with regard to my psychology studies and instead applied for annual leave when it was time to write exams.

I felt the urge to get my Honours degree behind me as soon as possible. However, on the home front, life became almost unmanageable, with two young children and a distant husband whose job had taken him to Cape Town for a year. I felt I wasn't coping.

It was during my two years of study towards my Honours degree that I felt I did myself the greatest disservice ever. I pushed myself beyond my limits. I couldn't talk to anyone at work about my study-related stress for fear that I should make a mistake, they would blame it on my divided loyalties. I remember during these two years I was utilising post-it labels to help me keep track of what I had to do, and where I needed to be. I vividly remember a particular night when my son had injured himself. After eventually putting him to bed at 9pm, I stayed up until midnight completing an assignment. I put a post-it sticker on my case, reminding me to go via the UNISA assignment drop-off box to the airport – at 4am in the morning – in order to catch a 6am flight. I lived by my diary and detailed agendas. I needed to remind myself about the names of people I'd be meeting and in which province I actually was. At one point during 1998, I felt a strong urge to give up my part-time studies because I felt that I was falling apart. I felt tearful a lot of the time, exhausted, irritable and found it difficult to concentrate.

I had the bravery to apply for admission to the Psychology Master's program at three Gauteng universities. During the selection processes in July/August of 1999, I had to manage my diary very carefully in order to get to the selection processes and fulfill work responsibilities as well. I feared that I'd be exposed and fired for going to selections while on duty.

Miraculously I was accepted for a Psychology Master's program at two Gauteng universities. I wept tears of joy. I had finally come very close to realizing my life long dream. Then the dream nearly slipped away. In December 1999, my younger sister's husband was killed tragically in a car accident. This happened one month before I was due to write my final Honours exams. Additionally, work pressures, relationship pressures and study pressures threatened to consume me and render me incapable of doing anything.

I wrote the exams and waited patiently for the results. In the meantime I was provisionally accepted into the MA Clinical Psychology program at UNISA and at another Gauteng university (hereafter referred to as X). Trying to fit selection processes into my hectic work schedule proved to be quite challenging. I hadn't been informed that the selection process at X would last an entire week. I had applied for leave for only the first two days. I then had to run between work (Randburg) and X for the last three days of selection. I remember having a change of clothing in my car as I stepped from one world into another.

An invitation to the selection process at UNISA was the cherry on the cake. I had applied for annual official leave from work for the initial selection dates received from UNISA. The dates were then changed at the last minute. The revised dates coincided with the prearranged dates of an international strategic planning meeting linked to my full time job. There was no way that I would be excused from work during the visit of our international bosses. I phoned UNISA and asked for clarity as to when I would be called in for interviews. No one could help me. I then explained my situation and was indignantly told to reapply for admission the following year if the current dates did not suit me. I couldn't believe what I was hearing! Eventually, and through divine providence, I think, I was able to attend the UNISA selection process as well as fulfill work related obligations.

By the time I started the Master's program at UNISA at the beginning of February 2000, I

was completely burnt out. Additionally I was anxious as to whether I'd passed my Honours exams.

Eventually I got my Honours results in mid March and could allow myself to begin to feel the joy of having passed, and having made it into a Master's program. The journey had been tortuous, but alas I couldn't celebrate. By this time there was already so much discontent both in class, and at our practical training site, that the whole experience seemed like a nightmare for me – an absolute anti-climax. To be disillusioned so early in my training was tragic beyond words.

During my Master's training program at UNISA (2000–2001) I reflected on various aspects of my life. One of the main things I reflected on was what it might have been like had I gone straight from school to university. Maybe I might have experienced the joy that seemed to elude me during my training. Maybe 20 years ago I might have had the energy to be jubilant and elated.

NLP Interventions

Leya was referred to me by a colleague who had been relocated to Cape Town. A few weeks ago Leya had entered my office with trepidation. I was a little nervous myself because I had been primed about the sensitive nature of her story and the urgency with which she wanted to

complete her dissertation that according to my colleague was in a deadlock. Leya appeared to be at the end of her tether after having been faced with changing her supervisor and dissertation topic three times. She was now faced with me her new, third supervisor. I told her that I had read her 120 page account of her struggle for education under the apartheid system, and that at times her story read like my own life story. She looked at me incredulously, since I was very obviously one of the “privileged white class”, while she belonged to the deprived shadowy “coloured” category. She was unsure of what to do with the information of her story, and seemed enormously relieved when I suggested we use it as the basis for an autoethnographic study. A week later she presented me with the initial topic and outline of her proposed dissertation.

During our second meeting, I recognized the signs of a burnt out person at war within herself. I invited Leya to my home for the day, in order to have a private therapeutic session with her. The feeling I had was one of an all-encompassing compassion, coupled with an urgent need to de-stress her, explain some misconceptions, correct some mis-perceptions, and deal with a number of unresolved issues in her life, that I felt needed to be cleared before she could be sent into the world to heal others.

We scheduled a day visit at my home for the 9th May 2003 at 9:00. Leya arrived punctually. Despite the short time of having known each other I felt invisibly connected to her. I welcomed her like an old friend into my home, and we immediately commenced our session in my private lounge.

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”.

Ephesians 1:2 was that morning’s daily reading. When St Paul wrote these words to the Ephesians, he was using the then familiar greeting to express something deep, rich, and meaningful. Paul and the Ephesians were living “in grace”, which is the unmerited love of God in action in peoples’ lives everywhere and at all times. When we have received the grace of

God we are at peace with him, which is the awareness that we are accepted by Him and are secure in Him. We know that He is busy healing us, and His peace renders us to be peaceful inside ourselves. When we have accepted this great gift of God, it enables us to be grace and peace to those around us. It was astounding that my morning devotion prepared me for my meeting with Leya with this deep and supportive guideline. My task was clear – to be grace and peace to Leya – and I knew God’s love was going to be active in Leya’s and my life that day.

While I wondered where to begin, my spirit was silently praying for guidance: “Please Lord, direct my thoughts and show me where to begin.” Almost immediately the following words from Leya’s 120 page long life story came to mind: Racial hatred and anger.

“Do you still feel angry?” I asked.

L *It is very difficult not to feel anger when the government requires me to do one year of community service in addition to one year of internship, after having struggled for 17 years to obtain my qualification as a clinical psychologist. It’s unfair that I am placed into the same category as the privileged whites, having to give two years of my life to those who are underprivileged.*

B Do you still consider yourself to be underprivileged?

L *Hmm*

B On what level would you consider yourself to be underprivileged? Financially? Socially?

L *Since Robin has been working for his present employer, he is earning a very good salary, and we can afford to buy things we wouldn’t have been able to afford without his income.*

B Does that mean that you are no longer financially underprivileged?

L *Yes, I suppose at this point we have a good income.*

B When I recall your starting salary as a newly matriculated student nurse in 1978, you began with R163,00 per month. In 1976 I held a BA (languages) degree, was working at a surgery for seven doctors in a small town, and earned R110,00 per month. Your

starting salary with only a matric qualification was higher than mine with a three year language degree, and I was doing very similar work to what you were doing. Since my husband and I owned absolutely nothing except our university books, a suitcase full of old clothes, and a homemade bed, I was very grateful for the job. It was not the most challenging job, but I also knew it would not last forever. So I opened my eyes and ears and learnt everything I could from the experience.

L *Wow, I can't believe you couldn't find a better job with your qualification!*

B As a result of the political situation in South Africa, few schools continued to offer German as a third language, and my other major subject, Italian, was equally useless in the small towns. I might have been able to find a job in a city, but I was married and living in a village, which narrowed my choices. Following my husband around the country, sacrificing my own career development in the process, was not my ideal, but I did it because that was all I could do under the circumstances.

L *Why didn't the banks or businesses employ you?*

B Some of them told me they could not give me a job because I was not a South African citizen, and others said I am overqualified and would get bored very quickly. It was quite exasperating because I needed to supplement my husband's meager salary. We owned nothing besides our degrees, and neither of us had family to support us.

L *I didn't realize that whites also had a hard time in those days.*

B Oh, many people experienced hard times, particularly those who lived through two world wars in Europe.

L *Was your family also affected by the war?*

B It was unfortunate that we had to flee from East Berlin in 1956 leaving a fully furnished house and our extended families behind. My parents together with my two brothers, aged 1 and 2, and myself almost 5 years old arrived in West Germany with only the clothes on our bodies.

L *Can you remember when you fled with your parents?*

B Yes, some things are still very clear in my mind. For example the two days we stayed in a refugee camp, I recall waiting for ever in long corridors with hundreds of people.

I will never forget my mother's face. She had wide open staring eyes yet she saw nothing, and a tenseness around her mouth that forbade me to ask any questions. When we were allocated accommodation, it consisted of a room with a table and three chairs. There was only one bed under a small window. We had to take turns to sleep, and my parents only spoke to each other in a whisper. This experience lasted for 5 weeks, and I remember the tension and the hushed atmosphere that surrounded our family. We then moved to a smallholding in northern Germany for 6 months, where it was cold, rainy and muddy most of the time. We wore hand-me-down clothes that didn't match, and my mother was knitting scratchy woollen underwear. My father was seldom with us, since he scoured the country for work opportunities. Six months later, a newly built apartment allocated to those who had fled became available in southern Germany. We moved into the still dripping, wet apartment and slept in the middle of the rooms on inflatable mattresses.

L *What happened to your furniture and your belongings that were left behind?*

B The police confiscated everything. What they did with it, I don't know. My parents only spoke about the loss of their newly acquired study which consisted of solid mahogany bookcases with leaded glass doors, a large executive writing desk and lots of books.

L *What happened when you lived in the wet apartment?*

B Well, it eventually dried after half a year, and my parents began to buy a kitchen table, four chairs, and coal. Later we got three easy chairs, a glass table, and a writing desk. My father found work in central Germany, but he could only afford to come home once a month. We (the children) had to be almost invisible when he was home.

In 1960 my sister was born, and in 1961, my father received an offer to work in South Africa. Again the furniture stayed behind, and I recall living on camping furniture until I was 17 years old. My youngest brother died within the first year of our arrival in South Africa. We inherited old clothes from the friends we made as time passed, and each year for Christmas my mother sewed a new outfit for each of us. My father put everything he earned into paying the school fees, with the result that I grew up with the

feeling of constant lack. Attending 7 different schools due to moving as my father's work required, made it difficult for my parents to provide us with full school uniforms. At the one school I was not allowed to take part in the choir performance because I did not own a blazer. At another school I could not attend a dance because my parents could not afford to buy me a dress and shoes. Not to mention the constant harassment of the prefects, who dutifully pointed out that I was not wearing what I should be wearing. When I went to university I owned 3 skirts and 6 blouses, which I wore during the entire four years. At that time my mother was already terminally ill with cancer. Eighteen months later she died at the age of 46, when I was 20. My mother's medical bills were exorbitantly high, and my father was paying off heavy monthly bills. During my first year at university, the women's league of our church kindly provided me with R5,00 pocket money every month for a whole year. I was extremely grateful for their generosity. It was however also a huge burden for me to be classified as a welfare case, and to experience the incongruent feelings of grief and simultaneous relief at my mother's early death. During her last year she had suffered an inordinate amount of pain of which her last 4 months on earth were endured in a coma. I was relieved that she was released from that pain, and sad that I had lost my mother before I had a chance to get to know her as an adult. She was a gentle and excellent teacher, and I missed her example and advice. My mother had been bedridden most of the time during the last 4 years of her life, and numerous operations to rid her of breast, uterine, and other cancers had reduced her to an "it", as she humourously referred to her maimed body. Thus my teenage years were spent in the cancer wards of hospitals, and as a "mini mother" caring for my father, brother and sister at home.

L *Wow, you really had a hard time!*

B Since I knew nothing else at the time, I did not know what that meant. What I did however feel was an inordinate amount of responsibility. The knowledge that if I failed at university, I would have to work at the OK Bazaar imperceptibly drained the life out of me. That is why I can relate very well to students who have no money and no support. I also know what it feels like to be discriminated against on unfair grounds. When I won

a scholarship for excellence in my final year Italian, it was withdrawn on the grounds that I held a German passport. At the time I could not understand what my citizenship had to do with intellectual ability, but I accepted the university's decision, graduated and got married to a civil servant.

L *How did you manage to get over this traumatic time in your life?*

B My faith in God sustained me. God was and still is the only stable person in my life, and I know I could not have coped without God. It was around that time when I began to dissociate from the world in a sense that is difficult to describe. My roots became inverted. They were anchored in God. After having been uprooted several times in the country of my birth, and the country of my parent's choice, I refrained from becoming rooted to a place. Instead I became rooted in God.

L *You could have fought for your rights.*

B Yes, I could have, but fighting has always been very tiring for me, and continues to be so. It drains the energy out of my body, and somehow I have always managed better without choosing to fight.

L *Wow, how did you solve problems if you didn't fight?*

B Reading books helped me to overcome most difficulties and to solve many problems. Fortunately I was able to read from the age of 5, and the world of books has been my best source of assistance and comfort ever since.

Did you enjoy reading when you were a child?

L *I enjoyed reading, but when I was a child I would have actually preferred to play with the others. That is why I felt resentful towards having been born with asthma. Why was I created with a dark skin **and** with asthma? It is unfair that there is supposed to be a God who makes people unequal, so that others discriminate against them.*

B At the time, did you think the others discriminated against you on purpose? Did you think they wanted to hurt you?

L *No, when I think about it now, I don't think they wanted to hurt me.*

B What do you think why they discriminated against you?

- L *I suppose because it would have been uncomfortable for them if I had succumbed to having an asthma attack.*
- B Maybe they were ignorant and helpless when faced with a person having an asthma attack.
- L *Yes, even my father felt helpless when he sat on my bed and watched me wheeze.*
- B Just imagine how helpless your peers would have felt if even your father felt helpless in the face of your suffering!
- L *Yes, I never thought about it from that perspective.*
- B You know, children often do things because they don't know any better.
- L *That's true.*
- B And children also believe things because they don't know any better. You believed it is unfair that you were born with a dark skin, because people discriminated against you on the grounds of your dark skin. Others, like myself, would have loved to have a darker skin, and thought it unfair, that I was unable to stay in the sun for long without getting burnt. That meant that I was excluded from taking part in extended outdoor activities.
- L *When we were in Switzerland I noticed the down side of a light skin for the first time.*
- B By then you were an adult. It is unfortunate that certain people in South Africa chose skin colour as a determinant for political discrimination. This kind of thinking is very similar to the way children think. They choose some visible trait in order to make distinctions solely for making their own lives easier. Using it as a means for political discrimination fits in with immature thinking that was not only limited to the issue of skin colour, as in your case, but also extended to citizenship and academic excellence, as in my case.
- L *Hm.*
- B What we desire with all our heart may be completely undesirable for someone else.
- L *That is sometimes hard to understand.*
- B Only when other meanings have been attached to something that is inherently of a certain kind can reality and facts be transformed into value judgements.

Your desire to study full-time is such an example. I studied full-time at a residential university, without being able to enjoy life, because of my terminally ill mother slowly dying at home. I think in both our cases, we were mismatched with our current realities. The university systems presupposed that students are immature, know very little, and need to be taught by controlling them. Neither you nor I fitted those presuppositions for different reasons, which made it very difficult for us to thrive. We were actually required to undo our previous learning and return to a lower level of functioning if we wanted to cope.

L *Yes, you are right. I didn't see it that way before.*

B Your nursing experience had for example provided you with an understanding of life and death issues, master and servant dynamics, and an intimate knowledge of physical exhaustion, tiredness, and mental confusion as a result of both, that some people may not even experience at all in the course of their lifetime.

L *You are right.*

B In your case it might have been better if you had continued with a Master's in nursing, because you already had a good foundation, and your previous training and experience would have been acknowledged. That would have prevented your being treated like a child, which can make one rather unhappy with the whole situation.

L *Yes, I felt resentful a lot of the time, and I also thought it was unfair that I was discriminated against.*

B Sometimes life seems unfair, and sometimes people are unfair. I have found when people are unfair they usually do not understand the situation, and when life seems unfair it is I who does not understand God's reason for allowing me to go through this experience.

L *That is a good way of putting it!*

B The best thing to do in such situations is to ask God for help. He is the only one who understands all situations simultaneously. That is why prayer is so important in our lives. We cannot read other people's thoughts, but God knows every single person's most intimate thoughts and feelings, and He is the only one who can advise us on how

- to behave in specific situations so that the problem is resolved efficiently.
- L *You know, I have actually neglected to maintain my relationship with God for many years now.*
- B It would be a good idea to reconnect with God before you begin to practice. I actually do not know how you are going to do God's will as His instrument without being connected. Therapy is the one profession in which we are least in charge. I actually prayed this morning for guidance, and I could not have guessed that God would lead me to tell you about my past. God has mysterious ways of working in our lives. And now that we are talking about connecting with God, would you like us to pray for connecting you with God?
- L *It has been so long since I prayed to Him.*
- B How did you manage for so long without speaking to God?
- L *When I come to think of it, I actually didn't manage. I was beginning to get more stressed and frazzled, and there were times when I asked myself whether this was really worth it. But then I stifled my doubts and continued. I was adamant that I was going to make it against all odds. My father always said you can do anything if you put your mind to it, and I wanted to be a clinical psychologist.*
- B You do have a strong will, I noticed that when you applied for being ordained without wanting to serve in a congregation. I would have never been able to do something like that.
- L *Yes, I forced myself to go on. It was hard at times, but I pushed myself even harder because I wanted to succeed.*
- B How do you feel today about having succeeded?
- L *You know, I feel I haven't succeeded yet.*
- B And how did you reach that conclusion?
- L *I still have to finish my dissertation, and that hangs like a stone around my neck. I actually feel I am not coping.*
- B Is the completion of your dissertation the evidence of having succeeded?

- L *I will only feel I have succeeded when I am a registered psychologist. But I don't know if all the effort was worth it. Writing this dissertation is worse than anything I have ever done, and I feel I am not coping.*
- B That is why we are sitting here together. You have made a lot of little compartments inside yourself in which you keep things. You have many years of practice in hiding parts of yourself from other parts of yourself, and from other people, and it is now time to open all the boxes and look at the contents. Can you take out the information, look at it, as you have done while you were writing your stories, see it through the eyes of an adult, who has become a qualified psychologist and integrate the new understanding into your present adult being?
- L *I think so.*
- B Take your time with the process of integration. It takes a while to complete. This is the work you need to do before writing your dissertation. At the moment you are sitting with all the pieces of your complex life which is mostly still viewed through the eyes of a child, and as a passionate adolescent in the apartheid era. This child has passed through adolescence and young adulthood, has experienced the abolition of apartheid, has been ordained as a minister, has qualified as a psychologist and is now able to understand the reasons for having believed what she believed then. Your partial understanding of life has passed. You are now an adult who understands fully and has the capacity to understand life from several perspectives. You have achieved what you set out to achieve, and that means you have been successful in whatever you attempted to do. The next step in the process of success is the integration of all parts of yourself into one mature adult with different roles.
- L *Hmmmm.*
- When my son wrote me a card for mother's day, he said: "Mom, you weren't always there when I needed you, but thank you for always having tried". Those words broke my heart. I wished I could undo the damage I have done and be a better mother.*
- B It is hard to hear that from one's child. Have those words changed you in some way?

- L *Yes, I have tried to be there when he asked me to attend his school functions. Sometimes I was able to make it , but often I simply couldn't.*
- B But you did try!
- L *Hm.*
- B Now that you have more time since your studies are behind your back you can choose to spend more time with your son and with your daughter. And knowing you with your strong will and determination, you will easily accomplish that.
- L *But I'm scared that it is too late.*
- B It is never too late to do something positive unless you die now. Your children are still young, and at the age of asking a lot of questions, which you are well equipped to answer now.
- L *Hm.*
- B Have you thought of forgiving yourself for not having been there for your children?
- L *No, I haven't done that yet.*
- B Think about it. It will help you to act positively towards them now. When you have a clean slate you can start anew. It will also help you to focus on the present. That is where the new actions take place.
- L *Hm.*
- I will definitely make more time for my children.*
- B That is a very good start, to take time off to be with them.
- L *How did you manage when you were studying with Unisa?*
- B I budgeted time for everyone in the family and stuck to my program. For example I never studied in the evenings, because that was the time I had allocated to my husband. The afternoons belonged to the children, and the weekends to family, pets, house, garden, and church activities. If I did not manage to achieve my goals during the allocated study time, I wrote exams without having worked through that material. Throughout my life I have always chosen to first attend to the people and only then to my studies.

- L *Did you work?*
- B Sometimes yes, sometimes no. That depended on where we lived at the time.
- L *Do you always do what is placed in your path, even if it deviates from your goal?*
- B Yes, because I am not in charge of my process, God is.
- L *So you trust God implicitly?*
- B Yes.
- L *You know I lost my connectedness to God in my struggle to become a psychotherapist. There were times when I wanted to give up altogether.*
- B What made you continue?
- L *I did not want to be dismissed as a failure.*
- B How do you feel about being a psychologist, now that you have completed your studies?
- L *I am not sure that it was worth it. The Master's Course was very disillusioning, and I felt I was again victimized and discriminated against.*
- B In what way?
- L *The Agape experience is very unstructured, and sitting in the dust for a whole day doing nothing, while I had so much to do was a total waste of time for me.*
- B What would you have preferred?
- L *I would have liked to do therapy under supervision in a decent room, in privacy. There wasn't even a room, and the excessive noise, the heat of the sun in summer, and the cold in winter without privacy, and a measure of peace made it impossible to do therapy with anyone there. As far as I am concerned it was a total waste of time, and I feel we could have used that time better to prepare ourselves for practicing. When I began to work at the hospital, I realized how ill equipped I was opposed to the students who had come from elsewhere.*
- B If you could do it differently now, what would you have chosen?
- L *I would have gone to X where I could have finished in one year, and I would have missed the new legislation for doing one year of community service.*

- B You do realize, that the new legislation was designed by the new government.
- L *I guess I am completely exhausted, and every extra obstacle makes me more despondent! When I began the Master's Course, I was already at the end of my tether, and the stress of having to wait for my Honours marks while I was already attending Master's classes was too much to endure. I also witnessed how one student who had failed, had to leave the course after the marks were released. That finished me off completely. I also felt I could not trust the lecturers, because when I did reveal parts of the real me, I was horribly disappointed. They were often only physically present but emotionally and cognitively absent. I guess my expectations were too high. I expected to be trained to be a therapist but the training never started. It was as if people constantly threatened to engage in training but stopped short of doing so. Students have expectations of training and trainers, and maybe it would have helped to discuss these expectations in a group session.*
- B Did you realize at the time that you were exhausted?
- L *I knew I needed sleep, but I had never experienced life without studying. I have been at it for 17 years now, and in those 17 years I have never had a holiday.*
- B Do you realize that one needs to rest every 7th day after one has worked for 6 days in a row?
- L *That is what the Bible says.*
- B Yes, that is true, but have you observed yourself and noticed how long you can keep going continuously without becoming ineffective, discontented, and/or irritable?
- L *No, I have always been extremely busy, doing two or three jobs, and studying at the same time.*
- B When you are in a service profession, you need to be able to look after yourself in such a way that you do not become irritable when you are assisting others with their unbalanced lives. It is also important to reflect on your day, to pray, and to listen to the answers to your prayers.
- L *Yes, I am glad I met you, because I realize that my connection with God has been*

sorely absent in my life for many years. I would like to pray again.

B Would you like to pray now?

L *I think I would like to pray now.*

B Would you like to pray, or shall I pray?

L *I will pray.*

Dear Lord, thank you for having brought me to Beate. She has helped me to return to you. Thank you for accepting me and helping me to find clarity in my life. You are my dear Lord who knows everything and who can help me with everything. Please be present in my life here today, in my parents' lives, and at home with Robin and the children. They have all endured my absence for such a long time. Help me to regenerate my relationship with my husband and my children, and help me to be a better mother for them. Please dearest Jesus restore my relationship with my husband and the relationship between Robin's sisters and us. There has been a lot of animosity and jealousy between us and I ask you to please restore our relationship. My dear Lord, please bless Beate and her family. She has unselfishly welcomed me into her home and opened up her heart to me. She has shown me kindness and understanding. Dear Lord your suffering cleanses us from our sins. You have suffered greatly so that we can be released. I thank you, sweet Lord for your suffering.

B Thank you Lord for being here today. You have heard Leya's prayer, please accept her plea and allow her to experience your great love. Help her to put the past feelings behind her and to begin a new way of living with You from today onwards. I ask you please to show her Your way and to allow You to create a new way of seeing the world. Guide her in her life as a psychotherapist, and show her that she can rely on You in every way. Remain with us today, that we may do your will and complete what you have asked me to do. Amen.

L *I am so happy that you have reconnected me to my maker. It had actually troubled me in the past that I lost touch with my faith.*

- B I am happy for you. It must have been very lonely out there without divine guidance. No wonder you were stressed out of your mind.
- L *Yes, it feels wonderful to have peace inside. I haven't experienced this for a very long time.*
- B That is wonderful, and I am very happy for you!
Is there anything else you would like to change or want solved in your life?
- L *Well, there is this bad relationship we have with Robin's sisters.*
- B Would you like to tell me about it?
- L *You know, his family has built up a lot of resentment towards Robin because so far everything has always fallen into his lap. When we got married, we made a vow to each other that he would study first, while I worked, and then I would study while he worked. It didn't work out exactly the way we thought, because at times I was doing one full-time job and two part-time jobs at the same time while I was studying. Robin has had the privilege of studying full-time for the first ten years of our marriage. His sisters seem to feel that Robin has had a far too easy life, and that he has never had to work very hard for anything. They tend to perceive Robin's ten years study period as my having spoilt him. They appear to resent the fact that Robin had the opportunity to study while they had to work very hard to earn a living. Robin has a very good job now, and we can now afford luxuries that we could not afford in the past. I sometimes get the impression that they may be envious of what we are now able to enjoy, and somehow feel entitled to share what we have. When the family house had to be divided amongst the siblings, turmoil and conflict arose. The situation became so bad that there is no longer contact between our nuclear family and Robin's sisters and their families. One of his sisters also seemed to hold the view that I had betrayed womankind by not being feminist enough. I have always supported Robin, and finally now it's my turn. He has been more actively involved with child rearing and household chores since I have been doing my Masters full-time over the past two years. The situation is not good, because our children do not know their first cousins due to*

their parents' differences. I would like to be reconciled with Robin's sisters despite the hurt we caused each other. I think I would have to forgive them, and they would have to forgive us.

B It must have been tough for your sisters in law to work, live alone without support, and to bring up children.

L *Hm.*

B What his sisters see, is their brother with a university degree, a wife, who 'spoils' him by working and studying, two healthy children, a good income, and a claim to a portion of the family house. What they also see is themselves without a university degree, no man who spoils them or cares for them, children, a small income, and a similar sized claim to a portion of the family house. Technically this seems to be an unfair distribution from their perspective.

L *Yes, I suppose so.*

B From their parents' perspective everything was done fairly. Every child receives 1/4 of the house.

From your perspective, you know that you and Robin have endured many hardships in order to attain degrees, and procure good jobs. Your sisters in law probably do not know that side of the story. It may be good to tell them your side of the story, and discuss with them the division of the lawful inheritance from their parents. One can only be grateful for the windfall of an inheritance.

L *Hm*

B Is there a way to break the silence?

L *It will be difficult, because they are very cross with us.*

B Now that you have more information with regard to your part in the silence, would it be possible to think of finding a way to talk to them?

L *Yes, I think so.*

B When you are ready, could you forgive them for seeing the situation only from their own perspective?

L *Yes, I could try.*

B What else would you need in order to forgive them their reaction to their ignorance regarding your life?

L *I don't think I need anything.*

B Could you imagine gathering all the negative feelings you hold towards them and let them go?

L *Yes, I could throw those feelings away.*

B Are you sure you can live without all those negative feelings towards them?

L *Yes I think so.*

B Have you gathered all the negative feelings?

L *Yes.*

B Can you go through them and check if it is OK to throw them out?

L *Yes, I can live without them.*

B Where would you like to leave them?

L *In the waste bin. I'll go to the kitchen and throw them away.*

B OK, that is a very good idea. When the dustbins are emptied, the waste disposal truck will take them to the dumping grounds where they can decompose. Would you like me to accompany you?

L *I'll do it on my own.* (Leya goes to the kitchen.)

B (Leya returns) Have you thrown them away?

L *Yes.*

B How do you feel now?

L *Much lighter.*

B Good.

Can you imagine visiting Robin's sisters? (I observe Leya imagine the visit.) Do you notice a difference in your interactions?

L *Yes, the hatred has gone.*

B Your hatred?

- L *Mine and theirs.*
- B That is interesting, so your new way of interacting with them has made their hatred disappear together with yours?
- L *Hm.*
- B Is there something else that is different?
- L *I am more relaxed, and I can actually see myself having a conversation with them. They seem surprised to see me in this way.*
- B That sounds good!
Now that you are freed from the hatred, can you imagine interacting in a compassionate way with Robin's sisters?
- L Yes.
- B Will you be able to interact with them as gently as you would with one of your patients?
- L *Yes I think so.*
- B Can you picture yourself doing that now?
- L *Yes I can.*
- B When I meet you again, after you have communicated with your sister's in law, will you give me some feedback on your interactions with them?
- L *Yes, I will do that.*
- B Right, I think we have worked very hard this morning. Shall we have lunch before we continue?
- L *Are you going to have lunch?*
- B Yes, I am quite hungry, and it gives us a good opportunity to begin with your new balanced lifestyle. Eating the correct food at regular intervals is a part of maintaining a healthy balance.

Lunch break

After lunch I continued to do more NLP interventions for a variety of other problems in Leya's

life, which will not be described, because they fall outside the realm of this thesis. At the end of the day we closed the long day with prayer, and when Leya left me that afternoon she looked as if a huge burden had been lifted off her shoulders. That day was the beginning of her journey towards peace, and the beginning of a life without feelings of hatred, anger, fear, desperation, and thoughts of retaliation.

Three Months Later - Leya's Feedback

It then hit me afresh that studying in the old South Africa would have been very different to studying psychology in the new South Africa. For example, if I had the choice of attending a university after I had completed my secondary education in 1978, I would only have been able to apply to one university i.e. the University of the Western Cape, reserved for coloureds. When I did eventually meet the criteria for applying for a Master's program in 1999, I had approximately 15 universities to choose from. I also realised that 20 years ago I would not have had the enriching life experiences I now brought with me into the classroom.

UNISA's training, it seems, is designed to expose trainees to alternate contexts, particularly contexts previously avoided at all costs by whites. In this regard Agape is a unique environment in terms of facilitating that kind of exposure. The context of Agape lends itself to the development of cultural and political sensitivity for those who come from very different and previously advantaged communities. There were times, though, when I felt the training program could have been tailored to the specific individual needs of the trainee in order to maximize learning.

Nowadays, shortly before graduating and being registered as a clinical psychologist, I find myself struggling with various thoughts. I think about how my studies impacted negatively on my relationships with my husband, children and friends. I think about how my studies impacted negatively upon my health. I feel as though I've missed out on a huge part of my life. Seventeen long years of struggling, watering the seed of a dream of becoming a psychotherapist. I wonder whether it has been worth it. I ask myself whether I would do it again should I have the opportunity of reliving my life. I sincerely doubt it. But then again, it's always easier to say so with the benefit of hindsight.

This process of becoming a psychotherapist seems to be a process that continually unfolds. The process has created room for stuckness and also opportunities to move beyond the stuckness. My new supervisor intervened and started facilitating a healing process within me that I feel is an absolutely crucial prerequisite in these final stages of my becoming a psychotherapist. Beate seems to have restored my faith in the discipline of psychology. I reiterate Watson's (1996, p.26) sentiments that "the quality of the relationship between supervisor and trainee is crucial". My current supervisor fosters a safe environment for me through self-disclosure and exposing her vulnerability. In so doing, she gives me the confidence that she has both personal awareness and empathy. Beate is instrumental in not only nurturing my professional development but also promoting my personal growth (Aponte, 1994).

Beate's relationship with God and her capacity to have integrated her religious life with her psychology is a model that I have needed to encounter as I trudge the final steps of my long journey. I have always been scared to openly declare my allegiance with God. I have experience in not only having been a closet psychology student for more than a decade in my life but I have also been a closet Christian. I have feared being victimised by my

psychology colleagues for believing someone who surpasses human understanding. In the process I have become less of who I am, and I have experienced a nearly soul destroying deprivation. Beate has been instrumental in rekindling my love for my Creator. She has also helped me to begin dealing with a number of long outstanding issues that have sapped and drained me. I finally am able to begin the forgiving process involving my sisters in law, my husband and myself. I am also beginning to develop forgiveness towards the Apartheid regime, but above all, forgiving myself. I am realizing the strength in being vulnerable and relying on help outside of myself. I am thankful towards Beate for allowing God to work through her and in so doing, enable me to begin to integrate my being that has been fragmented and compartmentalized the majority of my life up until 9 May 2003. While I seemed to have been integrating my emotional self, there was a vacuum within the spiritual dimension of my life. Good supervisors serve as role models for trainees.

Nine months later

I now realize that whatever happened that day was multidimensional in more than one sense. Leya reported in the middle of June that her asthma which had riddled her since early childhood had miraculously disappeared a day after the intervention. She did not want to tell me immediately until she was absolutely sure that it was true. She observed and tested her lungs for six weeks by running, not using her asthma pump, and by eventually discarding the pump altogether.

She was overjoyed about her ability to pray and find peace in the presence of God. She has forgiven herself, her husband, and her sisters in law, and when I saw her recently almost a year after the intervention, she articulated the apartheid era as an unfortunate historical event. She had a softness and gentleness in her face that I had never experienced or seen before. When she told me about the satisfaction she gained from helping people in the mental institution

where she was placed for doing community service for one year, she glowed like burning embers in the dark. Her facial physiology was relaxed and her voice sounded a few notes lower than before. I immediately noticed that Leya's way of speaking had also changed. Her words and sentences were now flowing fully articulated from her lips in a steadily paced tempo and a well modulated voice.

Leya's goal, to forgive the people and systems, has had an overall effect of well-being on herself. She has let go of the desire to be vindictive, by refraining from venting her anger indiscriminately on the nearest person. She has also achieved to care for herself and her family, by resting enough and eating regular nutritious meals. By observing daily prayer times, Leya has attained the peace she so desperately longed for.

NLP Strategies and Comments

Leya's anger and racial hatred was a diffuse mass of animosity towards anyone and everything remotely related to treating her in a brusque, abrupt, or unfair way. I therefore began by sorting out whether she was indeed still angry, and at whom or what the anger was directed. She focused on the present, which became visible by her answer to my question "Do you still feel angry?" Her "yes" related to her latest irritation at having to complete one year of community service in addition to the required 12 months of internship. Although we have been living under democratic rule for almost 10 years now, Leya thought about the government as she did during the apartheid era, considering herself to be underprivileged, and the "whites" as privileged. Her mind was still thinking, feeling, and behaving in the apartheid mode. In order

to draw her out of her ingrained, antiquated thoughts and feelings, I asked if she still felt underprivileged. By bringing her changed situation to the attention of her conscious mind, she needed to create a new reasoning sequence in her mind, in order to build new neural pathways in her brain. This happened when accompanied her to logically follow a path of reasoning aloud, and concluded that her husband was now earning a very good salary, and as a result of that fact their family was therefore probably no longer financially underprivileged.

Having dealt with the incongruence in the present, I now compared her past starting salary with my past starting salary. My intention was to point out that her belief of “whites” being privileged did not correspond with my situation during a similar time in South Africa. Her exclamation of unbelief demonstrated that Leya had never considered the reality of “whites”. Having generalised her idea of “privileged whites” to all whites under all circumstances, created a stereotype in her mind which had clung to her mind like a leech. I subsequently proceeded to uncover incidents in which discrimination occurred on other levels besides skin colour, such as circumstances, citizenship, job reservation, and an absence of family.

When Leya had reached the insight that some whites also had a hard time in those days, I linked her newly found understanding to hard times in other countries in war torn Europe. She wanted to know whether my family had also been affected, and she learned from my longer explanation how we had fled, lost our belongings, were separated from our extended families, and endured further hardships from which my mother never recovered. Enduring the trauma of loss, death, discrimination, poverty and displacement as a white person was news to Leya. She was equally astounded by my attitude of choosing not to fight for ‘my rights’, not understanding that it was not a question of ‘rights’ with regard to what happened to us as a family and me in particular. Foreigners have no rights, neither do victims of loss, death, poverty and displacement.

When she learnt that I had coped with the trauma by becoming rooted in God, and solved problems by reading books, she offered childhood information of her resentment towards God

because she was born with asthma and a dark skin. This comment demonstrated to me that she was thinking like a child, who failed to understand that skin colour, and congenital defects had biological and environmental origins, while a political system was a human construction.

Realising that at times she was still reasoning like a child, I facilitated her growing up process, by allowing her to reach her own conclusions, as a grown up, by highlighting the children's helplessness in the face of unnatural circumstances such as an asthma attack. Her understanding became clear when she agreed and added that even her father had felt helpless when she had asthma attacks as a child. The other children were thereby freed in her mind from her ancient accusation of having discriminated against her purposefully. This new understanding, became clear when she answered "Yes, I never thought about it from that perspective", indicating a shift in consciousness.

Leya's misperception with regard to her belief that everybody has similar desires, was usurped by linking it in her mind to her recently gained theoretical knowledge in psychology. The fact that she had not seen it that way before suggests a deeper insight which has resulted in an immediate mind shift. I now stacked anchors and linked the latest insight to her other experiences in which she had felt resentful and discriminated against. My little exploration on unfairness, caused another shift in her consciousness, indicated by Leya's exclamation "That is a good way of putting it". I immediately created another link by connecting efficient problem solving skills with totally relying on God's input when we are faced with problems. Reinforcing the fact that God is also in charge of the therapy process, Leya is urged to return to connecting with God. This statement opens the door for Leya to reconnect with God. The logical sequence of my argumentation surrounding Leya's disconnection from God, her difficulty to manage her life without being connected to God, and her sheer determination to pursue a course she was not sure she wanted now, are ways to integrate the aspects of her life, and to reinforce the necessity to connect with God. When Leya exposes her feelings of being unable to cope with regard to writing her dissertation, I immediately link her past struggle for an education with the current session at my home, by making her consciously aware of her

compartmentalized creation of her life. By asking her to examine the contents of each compartment, asking her to see it through the eyes of an adult, I am explicitly asking her to combine the contents of her compartments, and implicitly preparing her for writing an integrated view of her life stories.

While Leya unpacks the contents of her compartments in her mind, I provide her with the freedom of time, which she never had before. The idea of having enough time frees the mind to work faster and more efficiently, and while I calibrate the movements on her face, I choose the moment when I detect that she has examined most of the compartments, by providing her with a synopsis of her passage through life, growing from child to teenager and adult, growing in understanding. This serves to reinforce her growing up and integrating all the experiences viewing them from a number of adult perspectives. By emphasizing Leya's achievement with regard to what she had set out to achieve, and integrating all the parts into one mature adult with different roles aims to link her past with the present. It also serves to anchor in her mind that she has already achieved her goal, thereby removing her expressed fear and inability to cope. Leya's "hmmmm" signals to me that she is still busy with her internal process. When she begins to speak, I know that the intervention was successful because she expresses her concern with regard to becoming a better mother. This wish relates to the present after having understood the consequences of her study process for her family and particularly her children. For the first time Leya becomes aware of the fact that she may not be able to correct the possible damage to her children's psyches. I assure her that it is not too late, thereby emphasizing no time constraints. This provides her once more with the freedom to move forward without any form of external pressure. While she is busy with her internal process, I link the thought of forgiving herself for having failed to be there for her children, by focusing her attention on the present, explicitly stating that the present is where changes can be made.

She is working hard inside her mind, asking me for information of how I attended to my children while I was studying. My answer is different and new to what she has been used to. Trusting God implicitly, and doing what is placed in my path, even if it deviates from my goal is a process model in which God is the director. This approach to life is diametrically opposed

to Leya's process. She even disconnected from God for a while, while she struggled to become a psychotherapist. My positive trust in God provides Leya with the courage to admit that she often only continued with her quest because she did not want to be a failure. I immediately realised from that statement that she would need support in trusting herself enough in order to implement the positive changes with her children and her life-style. By exploring Leya's sentiments with regard to her studies uncovers still hidden resentments towards the Master's Course Program. Asking what she would have done differently, she uncovers her stumbling block . Sitting doing nothing, while she had so much to do, seemed to her like a waste of time. At this point it was clear to me that she had severed herself entirely from God, and was driving herself to reach her desired goal in a frenzy of activity. This provided me with the necessary insight in order to work towards reconnecting her with God. But before that could be done, we needed to explore what it was that had bothered her so much during her training. Again, for Leya the preferred mode for learning would have been a one year course in a structured environment in order to exclude the community service period. This indicates that she is still driving herself to finish, by focusing only on the goal while neglecting the process. When I point out once more, that the new government designed the new legislation, she mentions her exhaustion and stress related responses. Leya's description of her present stressful life is integrated, which tells me that the previous interventions have been successful, and that she has acquired a new understanding of her physical condition as exhaustion. She also realises that during her training she was unaware of being exhausted. Having effected this major shift, I connect her ability for introducing a sensible life-style indirectly with the contents in Genesis, which Leya recognises immediately as God's word. At this point I am heading towards integrating Leya's understanding with regard to her physical self, her intellectual self and her spiritual self. By uncovering the connection between herself as a helper in the service profession, which requires her to be a healthy, stable, integrated person who cannot afford to become irritable with those leading unbalanced lives, who are seeking assistance from her, while she has not been provided with the necessary nourishment from God, I integrated the parts of Leya, that she had diligently neglected or kept hidden from each other. The process leads Leya once more to her need to connect with God, when she

realises that a lot of her stress is the result of an unbalanced life –style. Allowing her to choose whether she would like to pray or whether I should pray is essential for Leya in order to learn to make this decision herself in the future. Our prayers reinforce the work we have completed up to that point, including reconnecting her with God. By placing the comment *“It must have been very lonely out there without divine guidance. No wonder you were stressed out of your mind.”* into the past tense, I reinforce the fact that this state has passed, and is different now. Leya’s answer *“Yes it feels wonderful to have peace inside.”* indicates to me that the intervention has been successful and that she is connected to God, and happy with the outcome.

By now we had achieved the most complex changes, which were necessary for Leya to enable her to complete her dissertation, and to be an effective psychotherapist. I therefore gave Leya the choice for working on something she wanted resolved. She came up with a situation that has bothered her for many years, and she proceeded to tell me the story. Since the sisters in law were absent, I spoke from their perspective, commenting on their difficulties. I knew Leya was thinking about what she had heard, because she only answered “Hm”. I therefore continued to describe their possible perspective. Leya was still thinking about what she was hearing, I therefore continued to describe the scenario from their parents’ perspective, encouraging Leya to tell her side of the story to her sisters in law. Leya was still thinking about what she was hearing. When her facial expression changed, I suspected that she may have a problem with a way to initiate the conversation with her sisters in law, since they had not communicated with each other for many years. Her answer confirmed my suspicion. I therefore introduced a question that contained a possibility to which Leya’s response was positive on the level of thinking (thinking comes first). I therefore continued on the feeling level (feeling comes second) by asking what else she would need (again a possibility) in order to forgive them their reaction to their ignorance regarding Leya’s life. Her answer was that she needed nothing on the feeling level. I therefore continued on the behavioural level (behaviour is always an outcome of previous thoughts and feelings). My statement states the obvious, namely that their prolonged silence has rendered both parties

ignorant of each other's lives. By linking it to forgiving them on the grounds of their ignorance, I opened the way towards forgiveness, to which Leya responded positively on the behavioural level. This important shift signaled to me that Leya had thought the matter through (thinking always comes first), and sees a way to act on what she has thought through. She was now ready to actually do the act of forgiving within her thoughts. The following sequence of questions and answers serve to facilitate the forgiving process by leading Leya to do what feels right and comfortable for her. Gathering the negative feelings, checking whether she can throw all of them away (there may be some she needs to keep for whatever reason), asking whether she has gathered them all, and checking once more, asking her where she would like to leave them (she chose the wastebin), asking her to walk to the kitchen and physically throw them away serves to reinforce her decision to act and let the negative feelings go. The fact that Leya chose the dustbin prompted me to complete the process of nature by making her aware of the negative feelings going to the dumping grounds where they would decompose. This completes an ecologically sound process, which implies the transformative nature of forgiving by emphasising the aspect of organic waste that is transformed through decomposition into reusable elements.

When Leya returns from her trip to the dustbin, I ask her how she feels, because thoughts that are acted upon always have repercussions in the realm of feeling. Her answer "much lighter" indicates that a heaviness has been lifted from her body. The next question serves as a check whether the intervention has been successful. Her answer "yes, the hatred has gone" is amazing, since she had not mentioned hatred at all. The whole intervention focused on forgiving the hurts they had inflicted on each other. This is Leya's reality and I therefore incorporate the new aspect of the vanished hatred in the further ecology checks in order to anchor the newly learnt behaviour in the future. Leya is mainly a visual person, and it is easy for her to disregard the feeling and behavioural levels, I therefore ask her to re-enact (behavioural) a future meeting with her sisters in law, and watch (visual) herself do (behavioural) a compassionate (feeling) interaction with them as if they were patients (feeling). This intervention serves to integrate the newly learnt behaviour on all three levels. Her answer

to all directives is a firm yes, and the fact that she can see herself interacting compassionately with her sisters in law in a relaxed body tells me that she has learnt the new behaviour.

Discourse Analysis

Forced removals in the forties were the precursor to Leya's life story (Casey, 1998; Rorty, 1999; Malachowski, 1990). By holding our past in our thoughts we relive the past now as if we were still living in the past (Hall 1994; Andreas & Andreas, 1994; Cameron-Bandler & Lebeau, 1986; Cacioppo, Berntson, Larsen, Poehlmann & Ito (2000). When political idealism is implemented without taking the details of life into account situations arise that destroy the basic human rights of people who are living together peacefully (Cloke, 1993). Leya's grandfather was one of many casualties of the inappropriate application of power within the context of inhuman political idealism (Thompson, 2002; Du Plessis, 2001; Solomon, 2001; Drucker, 1998).

Leya's story is marked by her internal struggle to portray the hurts her family has endured (the details of life) in an academically acceptable way (generalised and emotionally remote accounts of facts) (Coles, 1989; Clifford, & Marcus, 1986; Oatley, 1987). Leya has intimately felt how difficult such a marriage of perspectives is as she was struggling through her writings, reopening all her wounds, letting them bleed and then being forced to dissociate from her painful state in order to present a subjective yet not too uncomfortable account for her readers (Barbalet, 2002; Burkitt, 2002; Hall, 1994; DiCaprio, 1980). Her strength to attempt such a difficult task was supplied to her by the education she received from her parents, who taught her that "it is not what happens to you in life that counts, but how you deal with what happens to you" (Burkitt, 2002; Thompson, 2002; Arnold, 1998; DiCaprio, 1980). The realisation that an event such as forced removals, that happened 30 to 40 years ago, could continue to have

an impact on people's minds and lives today if it is not addressed (Thompson, 2002; Oatley, 1996) is an insight that needs to be acknowledged on all levels of our social structures (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002; Barbalet, 2002; Burkitt, 2002; Akhtar, Kramer & Parens, 1995). Putting the past behind us and focusing on the future can only occur when the offending restrictions have been removed *for* those without the power to remove them, *by* those who have the power to remove them (Strang 2002; Thompson, 2002; Arnold, 1998). Forgiving can be achieved under those circumstances in spite of the fact that the scarred individuals will always be reminded that life has maimed them (Strang, 2002: Arnold, 1998). They now know that their spirits have triumphed over their hurts, and that their future life will be better for themselves and their children (Wiesenthal, 1998; Arnold, 1998; Frankl, 1987).

When one has responded in ecologically incongruous ways with regard to what happened to one, self-forgiveness is necessary (Trainer, 1981; Von Krosigk, 2000). By forgiving oneself for having made mistakes in the past, the guilt and burden is removed, and the positive life energies can be released in order to begin a positive way of interacting and being with others and with ourselves. This release borders on the miraculous for those who experience it after having endured a burdensome past.

The roots of our ideals and dreams are often buried in the past, and the unconscious force they exercise on our emotions and on our thinking has been neglected in the many ways we have dealt with the effects of our thoughts and emotions regarding our ideals and dreams in the present. Our present behaviour can thus be understood as the effect of past feelings and thoughts with regard to our ideals and dreams. Before we attempt to remove, change, add and fix the present, we are preparing the ground for possible changes by actively listening to the stories of those who come to us for assistance. The combination of listening and intervening may at times make the transformation of our clients' complexly interwoven world miraculously happen instantaneously before our very eyes. God is a holistic God, and His/Her goal is the unification of all humanity that can only be achieved when we are actively involved in loving one another, by repairing past hurts, and by forgiving one another and ourselves.

Living according to our dream template is the ultimate experience of joy that allows each individual to reach their full potential.