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Narratives of Developing Counsellors' Preferred Theories of Counselling Storied Through Text, Metaphor, and Photographic Images

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Abstract

Reflective practice is integral for developing counsellors to maintain self-awareness and to recognize influences upon one's personal theory of counselling. In this exploratory narrative inquiry research, four doctoral level counselling psychologists participated to uncover "What are the personal stories of developing counsellors and in what ways are lived stories reflective of counsellors' personal theories of counselling?" The researcher employed a butterfly metaphor, and photographs to illustrate lived stories. Dawn, East, Crystal, Sean, and the researcher's own lived stories elucidated personal counselling theories and approaches. The view that all theories are constructed portraits of theorists' lives is substantiated. A strong link between lived stories and preferred theories in counselling is demonstrated. Directions for future research are provided.

Keywords

Narrative Inquiry, Counsellor Theory Development, Reflective Practice, and Metaphor

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Narratives of Developing Counsellors' Preferred Theories of Counselling Storied Through Text, Metaphor, and Photographic Images

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Reflective practice is integral for developing counsellors to maintain self-awareness and to recognize influences upon one's personal theory of counselling. In this exploratory narrative inquiry research, four doctoral level counselling psychologists participated to uncover "What are the personal stories of developing counsellors and in what ways are lived stories reflective of counsellors' personal theories of counselling?" The researcher employed a butterfly metaphor, and photographs to illustrate lived stories. Dawn, East, Crystal, Sean, and the researcher's own lived stories elucidated personal counselling theories and approaches. The view that all theories are constructed portraits of theorists' lives is substantiated. A strong link between lived stories and preferred theories in counselling is demonstrated. Directions for future research are provided. Key Words: Narrative Inquiry, Counsellor Theory Development, Reflective Practice, and Metaphor

As a doctoral counselling student, in this first supervision session drawing on reflecting team practices with a fellow colleague (Corey) and a counselling supervisor (Adam), I prepare to describe my counselling work of three sessions with a family. I had learned, through previous experience, to spin a tight cocoon around myself and the clients I presented. In previous case meetings and supervision sessions I began with a brief description of a client, only to find myself interrogated with a flurry of questions often founded on diagnostic labeling or rigid "expert" observations. I learned to retreat into my cocoon, struggling against this expert orientation so counter to who I am as a person.

I enter this supervision session in my self-protective stance, and cautiously describe what this family has shared with me as their issues. And as I describe the family, I am shocked that neither Corey nor Adam interjects with a declaration of the possible underlying culprit to the family's problems, and the stream of "Did you ask this?" "What did they say about that?"

Instead, Corey and Adam listen intently to what I have to say about the family. Thus begins a subtle thinning of the chrysalis web I had been spinning in my professional practice. I perceive that I am being respected

as the conduit of information for this family, that my work of three sessions with them warrants my perceptions to be valued and respected. Corey's and Adam's respectful approach continues as we review a video portion of the previous counselling session with the family.

Adam then invites Corey and I to engage in a reflecting process, with me bearing witness to their reflections on my work with the family. We agree, although unsure of what exactly this entails.

I sit back in my chair as Corey and Adam direct their reflections to each other rather than at me. Because of this, I am able to position myself as an observer, free to take or leave their comments as I see fit. A sliver of light penetrates the chrysalis. Adam begins, "Well first, I want to say how impressed I am with how connected Gina is with this family. It looks like this family is really comfortable talking with her. I wonder if she's noticed how much they're trusting her." He offers this in the form of a statement, not a question to be answered.

In the ensuing 10 minutes they ponder my internal reactions to body language; how Jealousy, Conflict, and Disharmony have made their way into this family. Corey and Adam offer their personal experiences of parenting and their remembered experiences of being adolescents.

As I listen to their reflections, I imbibe the essential nutrients for nourishing the wings forming within the pupa. I attend to everything: Many reflections trigger further thoughts of my own about how the stories I live inform my work with this family and provide luminescent insight. A shift happens because they aren't prescribing what I SHOULD do, nor am I told what the family's REAL problems are. Instead, I am invited to witness two subjective impressions coming together that tentatively and respectfully collaborate and contribute insight, questions, and added experiences to my work with this family.

The use of reflection in counselling supervision is a metamorphosis to the development of my counsellor self as a full butterfly with an open-reflective stance: This experience marks the time I found my wings¹.

¹ Portions of this excerpt published in Pare, Audet, Bailey, Caputo, Hatch, & Wong-Wylie, 2004.

This experience, so contrary to my prior experiences in counsellor education, sparked questions around coming to know stories counsellors live by, and how these stories inform our professional counselling work. The exploratory research inquiry informing this study was "What are the personal stories of developing counsellors, and in what ways are lived stories reflective of counsellors' personal theories of counselling?" Specifically, my vision was to capture lived stories of developing counsellors, and to juxtapose these stories with each person's articulated personal theories of counselling.

Kramer (2000) underscored the importance of counsellors developing into reflective therapists. He maintains a consistent focus on personal development, and proposed that a good therapist is "well along in personal evolution, moving toward Maslow's ideal of self-actualization, authenticity, autonomy. The more integrated and fully functioning as a person, the more these qualities perfuse therapy" (p. 71). Kramer focused on the humanness of therapists as well as ways of enhancing creativity and learning appropriate self-disclosure in becoming a master psychotherapist. His work is refreshing in its central focus on the person of the counselling professional: Nevertheless, Kramer is one of a few practitioners who directly addresses and provides guidance for integrating oneself into the practice of counselling.

While there has been wide recognition within the counselling profession, regarding the importance of counsellor self-awareness, there is limited guidance in many counsellor education programs for this development (Schwebel & Coster, 1998). The reflective practice literature in counselling education predominantly focuses on considering one's therapy style and interventions from an intellectual and "consider your experiences with clients" perspective. There is much less of a focus on counsellors' personal lives as professional development (White & Hales, 1997). Moreover, studies of reflective counsellors have been absent from the literature. Consequently, there is a paucity of in-depth and contemplative understandings of the practice of reflection for counsellors. The volumes of counselling textbooks that discuss reflective practice often do not illustrate the process. Self-awareness constitutes more than relating psychological concepts and theories in a personal way. It also involves reflecting on the person of the counsellor and her or his willingness to embark on a reflective journey, to relate to one's developing personal counselling theory. The intent of this research was to fill the gap by examining personal experiences of developing counsellors, and juxtaposing them with preferred counselling theories.

Narrative Inquiry

In this study, narrative inquiry informed the research process. This qualitative and naturalistic research paradigm is focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those involved. Narrative studies are exploratory, inductive, and emphasize process rather than outcome. In this approach, storying and restorying lived experiences were central to furthering self-understanding (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991), and gaining insight into professional foundations.

Narrative inquiry acknowledges the centrality of the researcher's experiences: her or his own tellings and retellings. When one is involved in narrative inquiry, the inquirer becomes part of the process. The inquirer's narratives are embedded within the research

experience and are lived, told, and retold in the process. The engagement in narrative inquiry is an ongoing self and other reflective process.

Echoing this sentiment, Bird (2000) drew attention to stories as relational constructs rather than mere reflections of the self. She suggested that newly shaped discovery is possible within the relational process of conversation, and that in this relationship narratives are being “narrated.” This narrating in the moment is the storying that occurs relationally, in the present moment, with another person. Bird posited this notion of narrating lives for storying with clients in her *Heart's Narrative Therapy* approach, but it is an equally meaningful process considered in storying lived experiences in general. Thus, the composing, improvising, or narrating of story in the present moment has an active component. Participants in the present study did not merely take something from the past and share it: Rather, they made the past into the present and transformed and reformed it collaboratively with the researcher.

Story is the primary phenomenon behind narrative. It is viewed as one of the most basic human forms of sense-making, and it serves to help us create a semblance to the experiences that shape our lives. As Winter (1988) so aptly expressed “We do not ‘store’ experience as data, like a computer: we ‘story’ it” (p. 231). Stories are as ever shifting as sand, and the act of storying conveys the dynamic and relational quality of narrating lived and living stories. Trinh (1989) echoed this sentiment as a “story never stops beginning or ending” (p. 2). Metzger (1992) described story as “enlivened by details, by the insights and associations that flesh it out, take it deeper, give it a larger perspective, put it in another context, relate it to other experiences” (p. 59). Stories heal us because “we become whole through them. In the process of writing, of discovering our story, we restore those parts of ourselves that have been scattered, hidden, suppressed, denied.... Stories alter us. We re-story, re-member, re-visualize, re-juvenate, rescue, re-cover, re-claim, re-new” (Metzger, p. 71).

Stories themselves are large metaphors in that they are representations of the way we order and make sense of intricate details of our lives and ourselves. Gergen (1992) emphasized this constructivist notion that reality and truth, such as beliefs about oneself, are a matter of perspective, and influenced by social and cultural processes, conventions of language (Derrida, 1976), discourse (Shotter, 1985), and issues of power (Foucault, 1979, 1980). Bruner (1991) argued that “we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons...” (p. 4). Stories and metaphors indeed represent constructions of perceptions shaped by the environment and historical contexts in which we are situated.

Use of Photographic Image in Storying

The use of photographic image in storying within narrative inquiry has, for the most part, focused on capturing or eliciting a therapeutic process from participants’ experiences. For example, the British photographer, Jo Spence, captured her experiences of living with illness. Her narratives went beyond oral and textual accounts to include photographs of herself during her 10-year battle with cancer (Bell, 2002). Similarly, images can be found within narrative inquiry research focused on phototherapy, which is a therapeutic means for clients to use the camera to own their stories, histories, traumas, difficulties, and insecurities, which were previously denied (Amerikaner, Schaubler, &

Ziller, 1980; Horovitz, 2001; Martin, 2001). Likewise, Weiser (2001) promoted phototherapy with images as a central tool for client's self-exploration and healing. Additionally, other researchers have discussed visual narrative inquiry where images are employed as field texts of the research (Bach, 2001). Bach described the depth of story in adolescent girls' photographs of their lives in and out of school, which served to capture the evaded curriculum (Bach, 1998, 2001). Johnson (2002) also employed visual narrative inquiry by collecting teachers' drawings, which were seen as visual representations of professional practice. However, there are few narrative inquiry studies where photographic image is used as the researcher's tool. Harrison (2002) conveyed how images serve as a resource for the narrative inquirer, and how they can aid in the story-telling. Indeed, within the present study, metaphor and photographic images were used as a means for the researcher to narrate.

Participants

Formal ethics approval for this research was acquired from a Western Canadian's University institutional review board. Following full approval, recruitment of research participants was initiated. Purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) was utilized, and is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain the richest insight. To further this aim, participants were sought who had completed at least one year of doctoral study, had experiences of reflective practice in their counsellor training, were willing to share personal experience, and were comfortable with audio-tape recording of research conversations and transcription for use in research and dissemination. Beyond these criteria, co-researchers were selected on the basis of their ease of accessibility and willingness to participate.

It is my sense that the intimate and personal nature of this research (sharing and reflecting on personal experiences) detracted individuals, who did not have an established relationship with the researcher, from participating. Initial recruitment of doctoral graduates in counselling proved unsuccessful. Past graduates declined due to time constraints, which may well have been the case; however, I suspected that the self-revealing aspect of this study was also a factor. Instead, four graduate students and one past graduate student, who all knew the researcher well, volunteered participation. One person was unable to participate due to her unavailability for the research conversation.

As such, four developing counsellors, three female and one male, were involved as participants in this narrative and narrating inquiry. Participants signed a written informed consent, outlining their rights and freedom to withdraw from the study. Narrative inquiry facilitated the process of sharing personal experiences between each participant and myself, in an attempt to engender the reflective process and attend to the lived experiences of developing counsellors. They were past or current graduate students of a Canadian Psychology Association, accredited Counselling Psychology department, at a Canadian university. Participants ranged in age from 27-50 years old. They were invited to share in unstructured, individual research conversations lasting between 2-3 hours, focusing on the person of the counsellor to "discuss poignant personal and/or professional stories and to engage in discussion about those stories." Each research conversation began with a description of her or his personal theory of counselling and orientation to counselling practice.

Participants were involved in consistent member checks of stories and confirmation of written drafts of the research and telephone consultations, depending on the extent of their interest and availability for collaboration. Nevertheless, I remained keenly aware that this research was merely my own partial and perceived understanding, as is all knowledge.

Similar to case study methods (Merriam, 1988), narrative inquiry can facilitate multiple methods of data collection. Data triangulation or “crystallization” of the research is suggested, as it “provide[s] us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic” (Richardson as cited in Janesick, 2000). Sources of data in this study included audiotaped conversations, participant's written stories, journal entries, collages, letters, books, course assignments, photographs, and memorabilia brought to the interviews. These sources contributed to the crystallization of the researcher's perspective of participants' lived experiences.

The researcher transcribed the research conversations verbatim. Participants received copies of transcripts and were asked to make any changes, corrections, or deletions. Two participants provided changes that were editorial in nature, and one additionally provided further clarification and depth to an aspect of a story. Following these minor revisions, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts, and reviewed excerpts from audio-tapes to elicit the “art” of writing narratives of others' experiences. A discussion of the process of representing these narratives through the use of photographic image and metaphor is described next.

Stories and Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) addressed the fundamental connection between *self* and metaphor. They noted in their view on the self that “...we do not have a single, monolithic, consistent way of conceptualizing our inner life... Instead, we have a system of different metaphorical conceptions of our internal structure” (p. 267). Capturing and depicting metaphorical conceptions further enhance understanding of perceptions that guide us. Kopp (1985) wrote about the metaphorical world and that

in this mode we do not depend primarily on thinking logically or on checking our perceptions... we depend on intuitive grasp of situations in which we are open to the symbolic dimensions of experience and to the multiple meanings that may all coexist, thus giving extra shades of meaning to each other. (p. 3)

He asserted that metaphor throws light on character by expressing one thing in terms of another.

As I began to transform participants' shared stories to written narratives, I was guided by an intuitive voice and compelled by my own reflective process, sense of understanding, and symbolizing experience. My uniquely personal response in being open to the stories facilitated my awareness of metaphor. This reflexivity belies my work in writing narratives as metaphor and image, assist me in capturing the verisimilitude of story. I was guided by Bolton's (2005) assertion that a “creative leap is required to

support widening and deepening perspective and ability to mix tacit knowledge with evidence-based or explicit knowledge effectively” (p. 11).

The butterfly metaphor, a symbolic framework representing stark growth and change, resonated intuitively as I read and re-read verbatim transcripts. Once acknowledging this metaphor, and researching the life cycle of various butterfly species, the re-telling of the stories poured out: Working on a visual and metaphorical canvas more vividly allowed me to capture participants’ life experiences. The stories were substantiated throughout with original first-hand accounts, and member checks confirmed accurate portrayals of lived stories. All participants enthusiastically endorsed the butterfly images and metaphor of the life cycle, and required no changes to the stories. Remarks from participants were about how the metaphor framed their story, and how it was a heartfelt depiction of their experiences.

The Elusive Butterfly

A butterfly metaphor is used with each developing counsellor's story to facilitate spoken stories conveyed through written language. The concept of a butterfly is a uniquely powerful one, with its somewhat unpromising start from larva to caterpillar, followed by its dazzling finish of visual symmetry, where it emerges from the chrysalis (pupa) with rare beauty and fragility. These mythic creatures are symbols of change, transformation, and growth, and stand for both personal growth and professional development. Rather than a linear process of problem-solving and appropriating counselling techniques, counsellor development and theory preference are represented in this study as a life process of self-awareness involving multiple factors.

Butterfly in Ancient Greek denotes “psyche or soul.” The reader is invited to witness, observe, and perhaps be induced into a trance in reading this gallery of soul stories. Each soul story is conveyed in a format that preserves the depth of the story and uniqueness of each butterfly. In the process of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991), we, butterflies fluttered in the air, landed, and sipped flower nectar together, and explored, changing each others' experience of the flight. Meteorologists speak of the *butterfly effect* in which the flutter of butterfly wings in one country can alter the weather system of another. Such was the impact of the lived stories of participants upon my stories.

Permission to use photographic images of butterflies that were copyrighted was sought and granted through email correspondence with photographers whose images were found in various websites. Photographers also sent electronic copies of images for use in this manuscript. The reader is invited to visit the following gallery of butterflies in which participants' stories of courage, strength, family connectedness, resilience, and loss, to name a few, were symbolized through the illustrious butterfly species of Tiger Swallowtail, Monarch, Painted Lady, Mourning Cloak, and White Admiral. Observe scenes of impact on my flight as we engaged in a sharing of space and time within this poetic process called life. In all, this gallery of butterflies, including my own story of transformation to an Island Blue butterfly, conveys the narrated stories behind developing counsellors and the shape these stories lend to emerging professional wings and preferred theories of counselling.

Researcher: Buckeye Butterfly

Weaving in a dance, spinning tight, nestled in this cocoon of misgivings and waverings, I break free of the encrusted cocoon of youth and uncertainty. In this third decade of life, I am able to discard the protective and unyielding pupa. I am thankful in noticing how I have become a butterfly of strength. I shed my chrysalis web of self-doubt and acknowledge that I am my own person.

Course blood through veins of strong wings... unfold and reveal colorful orange with dark pupil-like colored scales. I am Lepidoptera (butterfly), species Buckeye: the research butterfly. Eyespots cast outward, but my gaze to self-knowledge always exists. My unmistakable bright colors serve to protect me, and my large eyes adorning the upper surface of my wings reflect my inquisitive nature. I feel from within how stable wings have taken me in flight. Journey with me as I soar through sand hills, old fields, and fallow agricultural lands--- witness the unfolding and narration of personal stories and the emergence of professional wings of other butterfly species.

Figure 1. Buckeye butterfly. ©Rod Nave, 1977.



Gallery of Butterflies

Dawn: Family Connections

Monarch butterfly

Providing essential nutrients and ideal habitat conditions for this larva within its protective pupa, Dawn's family nurtures the development of strong wings that enable her to soar through any torrential rainstorm of life. Like the Lepidoptera Monarch with its attractive bright royal orange, black, yellow, and cream wing coloration, Dawn is full of vibrant life and energy.

The Monarch butterfly, the most familiar, recognizable, and beloved North American butterfly, capable of flying to fearless heights, has been spotted at the Empire State Building at 1,000 feet.

Figure 2. Monarch butterfly. ©Scott Camazine, 2004.



Dawn is also engaged with life as an adventure full of possibilities and few limitations.

Researcher journal entry

Big backyard... the open window frames my body slumped comfortably on the couch. The view is of a crisp, cool, and sunny Winter's day in February. The long stretch of gleaming hardwood is strewn with Legos, baby stroller, and toys. More toys are piled somewhat neatly under the makeshift fireplace. A single branch sways in the gentle breeze. Cherry-like clumps of blossoms nod back and forth with the breeze. I love this old house of ours... fragrant ambiance of newborn Iris and the newborn newness of a couple becoming three...

Snuggling into the couch at home with reminiscent thoughts of family brings Dawn immediately to the forefront of my mind. Lingering with her ambiance in my home after our research conversation, her presence still hangs in the air. Dawn is an outgoing, enigmatic, confident woman; a natural born leader and athlete. She has an infectious, gregarious laugh and a wide, captivating smile. I first met Dawn in a course we both enrolled in at the university. We shared the similarity of research supervisors, and this served to bring us together in friendship.

The most touching story that Dawn shared with me, and why thoughts on family bring her to mind, is of a nurturing close-knit family. Her family fostered, early in the larva stage of development, a strong sense of hope and belonging within Dawn.

Without a second thought, when people ask where my hope comes from I immediately say, "My family." It's hard to describe how I feel about my family because words don't seem to do the experience justice. I cannot

imagine a life without them and yet I know if they were gone, I would still be okay. I would be okay because of what they have given me. They are my foundation. They are what helped to keep me grounded. They are my roots. My parents have a unique ability to provide nurture without suffocating, to allow me to forge my own paths, even when they don't think they are exactly the way I should be going. They were wise enough to let me experience life for myself and always stood behind me with arms outstretched, in case I slipped and fell. I have been allowed to develop a strong sense of self and independence. I have never been told that there are things that I cannot do, only that some dreams would be more difficult to attain than others. I have always been encouraged to search for that which is positive and not permitted to dwell on the negative. My life at home has been filled with laughter, love, sharing, and unlimited support. As a result of all of this and so much more, my hope has developed the strongest of roots, which keep me securely grounded and, at the same time, it has developed the largest of wings with which allow myself to soar.

A call to home

Like the Monarch with its massive annual migration from Canada to Mexico, the eastern United States (a journey that may span over 2,000 miles), and then a gradual stepwise progression all the way back to Canada, Dawn has always had an affinity home, no matter where she has been, both as a child and as an adult. Even more astonishing is that second and third generation of Monarchs in the migration process stop at the same destinations, the exact trees their ancestors perched upon in the migratory journey. Explanation for such a curious phenomenon has eluded scientists for decades. It is a profound occurrence: a call to home reaching far and wide with outstretched arms.

Dawn laughs with a fondness as she relays that she would become homesick at slumber parties at a neighbour's house when she was a young girl. Her flight always led her homeward...

I'd go to a sleepover across the street... and I couldn't stay because I'd look at my house and I'd want to go back home. I [would] take the house key with me because I knew I wasn't going to make it all night long. I would sneak out and it would be, like, two o'clock in the morning. And I unlocked the door, but we had a chain on the door too, so I'd ring the doorbell and I'd hit the chain and I'd ring the doorbell and I'd cry... and my mom would be, like, "I'm coming! I'm coming!" And I remember a time... it was six o'clock in the morning and I was throwing rocks at the bathroom window because I wanted to get into my house. I didn't like sleepovers; I wanted to be at my house.

Even today, the yearning for home is powerfully imbedded within the core of this butterfly. Dawn now phones her mother four or five times a week, as her journey has taken her to another province. "So when I'm getting ready in the kitchen in the morning

I'll just pick up the phone and walk around and talk to my mom and see what's going on and we'll just blather about anything."

Reflecting strong family ties and deep roots planted in home, Dawn's story compels me to think about the kind of home I am creating for my family. A fond wish I carry is to someday become a cherished great-grandmother. The living out of this longing involves fostering love and connectedness throughout the span of four generations. Dawn's story of profound family connection warms my spirit in this regard.

The personal is the professional

The Monarch pumps the lifeblood of stories into her wings. As the brightly colored orange wings dry in the cool mountain air, her stories, stories of family support, expand her professional wings.

Dawn articulates how her parents never focused on the outcome of her involvement in such things as sports: "Like, it was never about how I performed: They were just happy that I was performing." Dawn recognized that she too values the process rather than focuses on the end result.

I believe very much in the process orientation towards counselling. I'm a supporter of the belief that there is integration among thoughts, feelings, behavior, spirituality, all of that. I think that, for different people, the hierarchy, if you were forced to put, like, what's most important, would change for different people. So someone might be more sensate, feeling, emotional, experiential. Other people might be more thinking, other people might be just more action oriented and, in general, obviously you need to integrate that and then do what's best for the person. But I think that change occurs primarily through the process and through the therapeutic alliance created between client and counsellor. So my belief is more strongly into the process orientation of counselling.

Kramer (2000) suggested, "Ultimately, what we have to offer is not a technique, not a theory, but who we are" (p. 24). Reflective of this, Dawn's attention to the significance of the therapeutic alliance in her counselling philosophy mirrors her own experiences: Dawn conveys the profound impact of her relationship with her mother in her life.

The relationship with my mom has helped shape and develop who I am today. My mom is the glue in the family, clearly. Just the special things, the connection, the making sure everybody knows what everybody else is doing and really motivating that...

In one example, Dawn remembers how she had decided at the age of 16 to drive to the bowling alley with some friends during a snowstorm after having just received her driver's license.

And she [my mother] so much did not want me to go. She was just so worried about driving and I was adamant that I was going to go.... We discussed it and agreed that I would go and phone her when I got there.

Dawn's mother was able to nurture Dawn's independence, and put it above her own fears: It is through this relationship, and her relationship with her family that she is able to experience life as a series of unlimited possibilities.

I don't recall ever in my whole life being told that I couldn't do something—ever! Or that it would be too impossible or too... like, I don't recall ever receiving any kind of message that I had any type of lack of ability or lack of anything. The home I grew up in and the way they parented never made me feel threatened or insecure or worried. There was no yelling in my house. We just... we talked about things and we worked it out and you didn't hold grudges and you didn't dwell... like, I don't recall any of that, ever. There was no fighting or yelling or screaming, we always were always allowed to share how we felt, and I was never told what I could and couldn't do.

Living life as an adventure full of possibilities, Dawn shares, "I think that my whole life, in general, is a 'choose your own adventure' book because I think there are these critical moments where you get to decide something right now [that] will really make an impact." She describes choosing to turn the pages, to enter the story of a counselling doctoral program without regretting she did not pursue the story of a sports psychology doctoral program. Dawn adds that she is turning the pages in her adventure series, eventually to live stories of Dawn as partner and mother. This Monarch is perched for the unfolding of these future stories.

East: Caring of the Soul

On a brisk September morning, sun streams through the blinds and casts a horizontal pattern across two faces engaged in dialogue. East and I indulge in cinnamon buns, fresh out of the oven, and herbal tea. A gentle serenity fills the air in this humble abode, and sits still with us in conversation. This serenity is absorbed into us like the sun casting a warm envelope around our interaction. There is a depth here: I feel East's soul, and the openness with which she is engaging in this process with me. She reminds me a little of myself with her deliberateness. It is clear that she has been distilling her thoughts and jotting down remembered fragments to share. I can see the thoughtfulness and intention, a genuine sense of honoring, listening, and valuing what she commits to doing. This reflects how East cares for her soul.

East arrives, having recently celebrated her 50th birthday, and offers me a gift of a shimmering crystal. "It may call to your soul and its connection with the universe." This crystal symbolizes my relationship with East. She encourages me along this soulful path of life. She reminds me, as does Thomas Moore (1992) in *Care of the Soul*, of the importance and meaning in cultivating my soul. East also brings a container of seeds, a cherished gift from a client, and she accidentally leaves it behind. This vividly captures

the spreading of many seeds of thought and the wisdom she leaves with me about life, loss, death, discovery, and a metamorphosis of the self.

The personal is the professional

Therapy is the outcome of an intricate concatenation (fusion) of factors, many intangible— a mystery. The one thing we can be certain of is the importance of the inner world of the therapist. Maturing as a person both inside and outside the consultation room, ultimately, you will find that what you have to offer is not a technique, not a theory, but who you are. (Kramer, 2000, p. 259)

East's personal theory of counselling significantly portrays who she is as a person. She describes her approach as eclectic yet grounded in humanism. East speaks about a growing comfort with "things being not necessarily as they seem to be... there are always layers underneath." She conveys that in counselling she strives to touch the lives of others, at the level of emotions, which is where she believes the core exists. Identifying herself as a transpersonal counsellor, she aligns herself with the Shamanic perspective that "we are all one and connected to the universe and knowing oneself is the foundation to hope."

In the process of unfolding and narrating East's lived stories, the shape of her professional counsellor wings emerges for our understanding. Her story of larva to imago (adult butterfly) reverberates and echoes not only inward, extending into her professional counsellor self, but reaches far outward into her work with clients.

The Larva Stage of Development

It is during this larva stage of the butterfly life cycle that much of the catalyst for growth occurs. As the larva grows, it sheds its skin (molts) so as to enclose its rapidly developing body.

East recounts how, at the age of 39, after 20 years of thinking/working in the analytical business world, she no longer felt fulfilled, despite a successful career and financial affluence. She experienced a feeling that something was missing in her life, and began to desire something more. She began her search by enrolling in several communications courses, which brings her awareness into "living life through communicating and connecting with others." East continues in these courses over the next 2.5 years, and begins to get in touch with an emotional and spiritual way of being. These courses initiate substantial changes within East.

The larva sheds its skin when growth outstretches its being. Intervals between molting for a larva are called instars... This larva undergoes several molts, three or four, before entering the chrysalis stage of the life cycle.

Following a molting initiated by the communications courses, East and her husband adopt an 8-day-old baby girl. A significant event for those with a 9-month

preparation, East and her husband find themselves busy with the role of new parenting with less than 12 hours notice.

East conveys her belief that

the spirit chooses which parents... it just makes a lot of sense that she chose coming into our family, from a spiritual level. Maybe that's what the soul of a child chooses because that's what they need to learn from.

East finds reassurance in the view that we don't choose our children: They choose us.

Chrysalis Stage of Development

When the juvenile hormone in the larva is high, it is time to enter the chrysalis phase. The chrysalis (or pupa) is the transformation stage in which the larva tissues are broken down and adult structures emerge. The larva spins a silken pupa to build protection and isolation against harsh elements in the environment during this intense phase.

Slightly more than a year after adopting their daughter, East's husband ends his own life. She describes the vivid details still etched in her mind of the last 10 days before losing her life partner of 25 years to suicide. In these details, this larva weaves a shell to protect herself from the dramatic transformation to come. Through a solid basis of trusting friendship, East allows me to peer into her window of darkness. She shares with me the devastation of recognizing the indicators, so obvious to her now as a trained professional. With deliberate slowness and a self-forgiving tone, East conveys how her husband had paid visits to friends and family before that fateful Sunday evening.

We had a Lab (dog), so both of our cars were eternally full of white dog hair. So that night, he said, "Well, I can't really sleep so I'm going to go out to vacuum my car." And I said, "Well, why don't you vacuum mine while you're at it?" Because I had just had a new car and was trying to keep the dog hair down (laughter). And he said, "Oh, sure. I'll do that." And so, just about 9:30 or so, we'd already put [our daughter] to sleep, he had always walked the dog about that time. So he did that and then he...

East pauses at this point in our conversation. In her eyes I see the anguish of loss that years of overcoming, processing, and forging ahead cannot dilute. Determined, as if her telling of this story would move her to a new healing ground, East continues to share the accounts of the last few hours to a traumatic life-changing event.

So then he walked the dog, came back, and said he'd go out and vacuum the cars. And we had that conversation...he just said, "I love you," and gave me a kiss [pause].

And that was it... And I went to bed. I had no idea. And then when I woke up the next morning, I noticed that the dog was waiting to be walked and he (husband) wasn't around. He hadn't come back in. And so I noticed,

"Oh, he hadn't come back." So then I went and looked around the house and – nothing. And so I got some clothes on. I was starting to think, "What's happening here?" And then I slipped outside with my coat because it was a chilly morning and windy. And I walked down the sidewalk and then up the walk. The garage was at the corner of the lot and I was coming around and going up the garage pad. I could hear the vacuum going with the garage door shut and I thought, "Oh, my God!" And I had the garage door opener.

And I just knew... So I still stayed quite a distance away and opened the garage door and I could still see... he had been vacuuming his car, so by then the rigor mortis had set in... He had vacuumed my car first and it was spotless.

East finds herself alone for the first time in her life.

All of a sudden he is gone, and so there is my coach gone. I am on my own. That's a big change because, until I married, I lived with my parents on the farm until I was 18. When I turned 18, I went to university, into residence, and then married, so it was kind of like never being out on my own. I never had to stand alone and now to be a single mom of a one-year-old; that is quite a shock to my system.

East reveals how she went to automatic "survival mode" after this loss. She shares that having an infant to care for provided structure and gave her a reason to continue... "I couldn't let myself fall into a depression or let anything happen to me. So I had to take really good care of myself... And having lots of family and friends that really helped."

Figure 3. Mourning cloak butterfly. ©Glenn Corbiere, 2004.



Butterfly: Mourning Cloak

The adult butterfly (or imago) of the Mourning Cloak hovers in the wetlands, forest edges, and waterways. Its larval host plant is the weeping willow. A butterfly of resilience and profound inner strength, the Mourning Cloak survives harsh, cold winters.

This life-changing event moves East into "the spiritual and intuitive side of my life." She begins to incorporate practices of Reiki, Qi Gong, and, more recently, Shamanism into her daily life. It is from aligning with these Eastern philosophical practices that East chooses her pseudonym. Through guided imageries, Qi Gong, and quiet meditations at the early-morning hour of 5:30, East spends nearly an hour "just be[ing] with myself... and the other things I'm learning is that it is a catharsis, a getting rid of all that old stale energy in my body, and just kind of sounding it out."

Mourning cloak: Seeks answers from within

In these times of quiet meditation, East begins to listen to the voice within herself.

And so that's where I start to ask myself more and more questions and look internally for my own answers, whereas, up until then, I'd ask my girlfriends, or family, and I am kind of getting the answers externally, and my teachers, and everybody else knows better than I do. Now, I've shifted... I'm getting my own answers really clearly and strongly, and I feel good about that.

The Mourning Cloak is named for its dark, somber wing coloration; however, this species of butterfly is more a welcome reminder of approaching spring than a symbol of passing. A difficult butterfly to approach at first, it is a swift and fervent traveller through life.

Hailing a reminder of the approaching newness of spring, East listens for her own voice, which calls forth a budding self-confidence. She begins to challenge the influence under which the logic of a "patriarchal analytical model" structures her development. She moves into a deeper level of reflection by questioning the influences and roles that the corporate environment and social environment play in shaping who she is as a person.

Solitude in flight

East describes having roots solidly planted in a rural upbringing, and that spending time with animals fostered a sense of awe and respect for the cycle of life: "I think that growing up in connectedness with animals, and just the life and death cycles of the cattle and the pigs and the horses made [brought] a different groundedness to my life."

She speaks of the sadness in recently losing her mother, and the revelation that she is now really on her own.

So maybe at 50, I've reached kind of a growing point... one of my mentors was saying that when he was 72 his guides just left him and they said, "You don't need us anymore." So he's kind of on his own. I'm wondering if that's where I'm now heading because my physical supports, my emotional, mental [supports] are gone, which were my grandparents and my mom... and then [my husband] being a guide and kind of a mentor for me for so long. So it's all kind of dropped away. And as it's dropped away it's just leaving me standing up here, in solitude and yet in strength, because in many ways I've never been healthier.

Standing in solitude and strength, spreading wisdom, pollinating growth of others... a new soulful butterfly emerges.

Figure 4. Tiger swallowtail butterfly. ©Don Desjardin, 1996.



Free spirit in flight and lacking constraints, the Tiger Swallowtail butterfly is an elusive creature who significantly pollinates many wildflowers. This gentle winged species is a powerful flier. So named for the long "tails" on the hindwings, which resemble the long, pointed tails of swallows, the colorful brilliance in her wingspan is even more awe inspiring.

An old soul

East speaks of spiritual journeys and a growing wisdom through an empowered voice. She is an "old soul" at the pivotal age of 50: A soulful, wise, intuitive woman who seeks to learn about women's rituals and admirable women in herstory.

Rituals were a way of getting in touch with these wonderful women of the past and this Hildegard deBingen sticks in my mind. Just being such a feisty little woman, who dared in 1007 AD to write letters to the Pope telling him off.... this little woman in this Catholic monastery!

Following the fervent pursuits of this woman, East's activism in letter writing to effect change in society is also admirable. At the time of our conversation, she worked on composing a letter expressing her concern for the few hospices available to persons in palliative care.

East's life stories stand for perseverance and capture the continuing life cycle of a courageous woman, transforming herself following the devastating loss of a life partner. Her strength and wisdom reaffirm and validate an essence of life, living a reflective life, an awareness within, and pollinate my growth as a butterfly and as a woman.

Researcher journal entry

East seems a different person from when we first met three years ago... or perhaps my understanding of East has transformed from this intimate conversation. Her story alters my flight... moving me profoundly as if picked up by storm fronts and moved hundreds of miles at altitudes of several thousand feet. My Buckeye flight is profoundly shifted by her courage in rediscovering herself. Hers is a story of metamorphic change from larva to chrysalis to butterfly, now a butterfly aged with the enduring wisdom of an old soul.

Crystal: Conversation between Friends

On a warm summer's eve, I enter Crystal's home, carefully closing the door behind me so that her cat does not slip out. The apartment is inviting and familiar to me. I am warmed by the candle burning and the photos of babies, friends, and kittens adorning her walls and shelves. Removing my sweater, I settle back into the soft, sloping couch. I feel greatly at ease with Crystal. We are old friends, colleagues from the counselling program. We were first drawn to each other because of similar values and counselling styles, and have become closer confidantes over time.

Soft background music emanates from the stereo. It is the same stereo Crystal invited me to use at the birth of my daughter nearly a year ago. I smile in anticipation of this chance to sit with a dear friend and converse about her life experiences and counselling approaches. Although ostensibly quiet and unassuming, Crystal is a profoundly insightful and reflective woman, with a strong sense of who she is and what she wants out of life. Through the comfort of our friendship and her genuine passion to strip away the layers of herself, Crystal unabashedly conveys her *self*.

Crystal's cat drinks out of our water and gnaws at my fingers: The cat too seems aware of the privilege of this conversation and tries, in earnest, to be a part of it. Three hours slip away through laughter, tears, seriousness, and fun. Our friendship is deepened as the shadows of hidden selves disappear into the night. She is a soft-spoken woman with a twinkle in her eyes as she speaks of her reflective nature.

Like a pirate showing her lost treasures, Crystal takes me through the pages of a book of collages she has lovingly created through the years. It is as if she rediscovers the jewel of each collage as we admire them together. She describes them as "pasted fragments of images collected from magazines, of dreams and goals, and of how I would

like to define myself." Crystal voices the validation in discovering collages done many years ago, and finding that her passions have remained the same: "Babies, marriage, travel are things I still want in my life... skiing, sailing, rollerblading, nature and animals, camping, poetry, partners, oceans, music, coffee with friends are all still important to me."

The call to reflect

Within one of the collages, I see an eye pasted near the center of the page. "That's like the inner eye to my soul, looking inward at who I am, deep down." Crystal recounts the story of when this inner eye became significant in her life. She talks about a time in her mid-20s when she has a profound dream and realized that there are things in her past that she must confront.

In the dream, she is in a crowd of people who are covered in shadows.

They had their eyes averted and wouldn't look at me. I hear them saying to each other, but loud enough for me to hear, that if I won't look at them and get rid of them, that they will have to look at me and destroy me.

Crystal goes on to describe the palpable fear she experienced, and the shift from this fear when a friend takes her hand in the dream. In that simple gesture of connection, Crystal felt safe enough to look intently at the shadowed figures and conquer them.

Upon waking from this dream and writing about it, Crystal recognizes that it is a call for her to reflect on her life and to give voice to her past. "I was determined to figure out what those demons were and to look inside myself." Crystal's awareness of the profound difference that the feeling of being supported made is also strengthened through this dream. It is this awareness that likely informs her emphasis on the therapeutic relationship in her work with clients. Also, consistent with the message of her dream and the resources that enable her to look inside herself, Crystal values the therapeutic relationship, client choice, empowerment, and the accessing of painful experiences in order to heal them as central in her personal theory of counselling.

A vital transformation

Intent on looking her demons in the face, Crystal recounts a very difficult time in her life. She goes back several years in her mind and takes me to a time when she finds herself isolated in a new city: no job, no family, and no friends. She moves in with a boyfriend despite nagging doubts about the relationship.

Crystal looks away from me, averting her eyes down to her folded hands as she discloses that the relationship became abusive: "I was thrown into a wall, and was left with bruises and welts on my body, and an unimaginable fear. I was faced with a realization that I was not truly safe, anywhere."

With pursed lips and her head shaking back and forth, Crystal goes on to say that this is not what was most upsetting to her about the experience. With her eyes cast further down, Crystal speaks of the shame she felt, "I promised myself that I would never put up with that..." Barely audible, she whispers, "And yet I stayed."

The Painted Lady begins its life cycle as an egg that is the size of the head of a pin. The egg is pale green with 12 to 14 longitudinal ridges and is laid on thistle, mallow, or hollyhock leaves.

Crystal does stay, but she also knows that a catalyst for change is necessary, and insisted that she and her partner seek counselling. She describes her first experience of couples' therapy.

There was a power in going there. As I faced my demons and confronted myself, I began to take control over my life. I felt myself growing stronger. Through my tears, through my fear, I forced myself to tell the truth. It is one of the hardest things I've ever done – sit in that room and bare my soul – but I could feel myself growing and healing with each risk I took. I came to realize that the unsaid somehow had power over me and, in this realization, I forced the words out.

Without help, 9 out of 10 caterpillars will not survive long enough to become butterflies. Few people realize that many species are endangered. Egg to caterpillar to chrysalis (pupa) to butterfly, irresistible habitats (basking sites, water sources, shelter) are foundational for transformation to be realized. Any butterfly can be fatally damaged if handled improperly; for example, the vein on front wing, if broken, will render the butterfly flightless evermore.

This multi-colored, yellow-green striped caterpillar is able to nourish and grow continuously for days before she pupates. She builds a silky, webbed nest as she feeds.

A profound change from egg to caterpillar, Crystal is unaware of the shift and her transformation to come: Crystal tells me that, one week, the counsellor asks her what happened to her since their last session.

Not realizing the implication of her statement, I look at her, confused. "Nothing," I say. Then I think for a moment and add, matter of factly, "Oh. I got my hair cut." The counsellor shakes her head and chuckles softly. "No, not like that. Something has changed in you. You look completely different... "I deny that anything has happened and shrug off her comment.

"Pupa" is Latin for girl or doll and comes from the root meaning "pupil" or student. The adult Painted Lady is mostly black, brown, and orange, with some white eyespots; the underside is gray with white and red markings.

The Painted Lady, a "student" of life, may be the last to recognize that the seemingly imperceptible shifts to her have catalyzed a dramatic, life-altering transformation.

In reality, the week before that session, I had done many things, all of which I considered to be insignificant, but that were, in actuality, very important. A deep desire to be independent had been ignited and had sent me scurrying, trying to put my life on the road I wanted it to be on. In seven short days I had bought myself a car as well as a used computer. Although I was struck by the excitement and freedom I felt in making those purchases, I did not consider the fact that I had been relying on my partner for all of my transportation and for him to take me to his place of work to use a computer. So, with these purchases, I had taken steps toward independence.

In that last week, Crystal also strengthened her support network by visiting with family and friends. She also took steps toward graduate school by finding a volunteer position at a hospital and enrolling in counselling courses.

And yet Crystal truly felt that she had done nothing. A dramatic shift had indeed taken place. "Unknown to me at the time, many of the wounds that I had been carrying had started to heal through my work in counselling." A few weeks later, after gaining what she described as "my strength and my *self* back," Crystal makes the final decision to end the abusive relationship.

When the life cycle is near completion, the adult emerges from the split chrysalis and pumps blood into its four wings, inflating them. The Painted Lady waits for her delicate wings to dry.... She can fly a few hours after emerging.

It is some months later that Crystal realizes the tremendous gift from the counsellor.

If it wasn't for her and the work we did together, I may not have made the decisions I made and I would not be where I am in my life. I know that I worked hard in our sessions, but she walked with me on that journey.

Crystal voices how she carries this with her in her work as a counsellor: "I hope that I convey the warmth, caring, and support that will help clients find their way out of the murky, muddled waters and into a place of greater peace and happiness."

The Painted Lady is a stunningly beautiful butterfly and may be the most widespread beloved butterfly in the world. It is also known as the thistle butterfly and the cosmopolitan (because it is so prevalent, occurring in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa).

Figure 5. Painted lady butterfly. © Robert J. Benson, 1999.



Personal theory of counseling

In telling this story, Crystal breathes life into her theory-preference that includes emphasis on the therapeutic relationship, client choice, empowerment, and the accessing of painful experiences in order to heal them. Evident in her telling of how she fights her own demons and through her reflective writing and collages, Crystal also values restorying experiences in her work with clients. She speaks to her draw to narrative therapy, where clients are viewed as constructing their own reality in a very personal manner and are given the opportunity to tell their story.

It also comes as no surprise that Crystal sees her *self* as the basis through which she formulates her theory preferences.

I feel that I have adopted an eclectic theoretical orientation, which uses my personality, beliefs, and values as a basis for technique and theory selection.... I think I have, not a theory, but basic guidelines of how I want to be. I want to be supportive and empathic and warm and caring. I think those qualities come naturally to me. So if I am struggling with them [qualities] in session, then I walk away and need to think about why.

Crystal's reflective nature is further illuminated as she speaks of her quest for self-awareness in her work with clients.

Soul of Crystal

Toward the end of our conversation, Crystal privileges me by showing me a "crystal" sphere that safely fits in the palm of her hand. She tells me that she has always held the metaphorical belief that her soul is a glass ball, very precious and fragile. Crystal shares: "Whenever I become close to someone, I feel that I am giving them a part of this glass ball. I am hoping that they will honor and cherish it as it can be scratched, cracked, or shattered very easily." She continues to say that its fragility represents her soul. I felt deeply honored for Crystal to share this very private symbol with me: I felt that she has

entrusted me with her soul in our conversation. I watched as she, very gently and carefully, returns the ball back to its protective stand. From my perspective, the crystal ball in fact represents how this Painted Lady butterfly caringly nurtures and cradles the growth of her own soul.

Sean: Being Open

It is a gray October autumn afternoon. I feel incredibly honored for the opportunity to talk with Sean. Having recently attended the launch of his new book, in which he shares his and others' experiences of coming out, I feel privileged for his time. In awe of his accomplishments, I begin with lighthearted conversation to ease my own nervousness. A profound inner beauty emanates from Sean. As he speaks, I feel my anxieties drift away. There is something very serene about his presence and energy. Sean speaks slowly, with deliberateness and intent. He measures his words carefully. This quality adds to his engaging presence and reflects his genuine nature as a person, professional counsellor, and author. He is lively and charming; with a wide, gregarious smile that reveals much joy and balance in his life.

We sip decaffeinated coffee. Sean begins by contextualizing his experiences.

I grew up in a family that was not, in many ways, open to people of other cultures or of different persuasions of any kind. It was a very redneck family of origin, and by that I mean narrow-minded.... I had absorbed all of those conditioning messages... that “this was not okay” and... “this was not good” and... “you should fear this” and “you should fear that.”

These conditioning messages have had a profound impact on Sean. Over several cups of coffee he privileges me with his disclosure of three painful life stories that have brought him to a place of humility and strength. Sean eventually breaks down the conditioning messages from his youth and, with them, crumbles down the wall of conformity and homophobia within his own mind. These experiences transform him to new heights as a person and professional. With the wingspan of a full butterfly, he awakens, coming through the other side.

Love and denial

In his first experience of tremendous struggle and pain, Sean reveals how, at the age of 22, he moves away from home and develops intense romantic feelings for a male roommate.

He saw me as his best friend, and of course I was. I would have done anything for him. His lifestyle was considerably different from mine, though. We often smoked marijuana together, and that aroused feelings in me that I couldn't, or wouldn't, understand. Meanwhile, he brought young women over almost every night, and I didn't understand why I was going through emotional hell, tortured by bedroom sounds I heard through paper-thin walls.

After a few months of living with unspoken anguish and heartache, the days become filled with blackness and bleakness for Sean.

It gets to a point where I become completely immobilized by it... by the depression. There is a period of a week where all I do is stay in bed, and get up to shower and eat, and then I go right back to bed again.

Utterly and completely broken-hearted, Sean is unable to deal with or admit to his feelings. The homophobic family and culture Sean is raised in disables and paralyzes him from acknowledging his inner feelings and of accepting, or even considering, that he could be gay. "So the depression just is unrelenting and it gets worse and worse until I am hospitalized." The one-week hospitalization is a humbling first-hand experience of being a patient, but does nothing to minimize a depression that lasts nearly eight months.

During that time, Sean begins seeing a Christian counsellor who also does not help minimize his inner turmoil and pain.

Somehow, I could never utter that I felt completely heartbroken, and he [counsellor] could never ask. I didn't have a vocabulary for that gnawing pain, so I kept on hurting for months, adhering to a code of silence that perhaps only the military would commend.

In retrospect, Sean speaks to how this experience teaches him about the power of denial, and how easily a therapist can collude with that denial. "I just do not have the vehicle or the forum to talk openly because it just isn't allowed. He can't go there and I can't go there. So that means it all has to stay within." Imprisoned within the confined walls of homophobia, neither Sean nor the counsellor acknowledged Sean's true feelings of love for his roommate.

A pupa is often camouflaged to hide from predators of various kinds.
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In this case, the Pupa also hides from himself. The caterpillar within the Pupa is in desperate need for release, but butterfly wings remain unformed within. He is indeed unaware of the changes to come, and the changes necessary to break free from the encrusted cocoon.

Overcome with exhaustion

Somehow, life goes on for Sean... eventually the depression subsides and the graying of his heart is lifted. He believes that he finds the source of the problem. "I understood what daily marijuana use could do to a young man's mind. It could twist your feelings around and make you believe things that are not true." Instead of admitting to his true inner feelings, Sean accepts this as the explanation for his pain and suffering, and vows never to smoke again; nevertheless, he does not become immune to suffering.

In 1984, he completes a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology, completely exhausted and burned out. Unable to recognize and adequately acknowledge his own

need for a break, Sean accepts a prestigious position at a hospital in a different city. Right away, his misery intensifies: Not only is he working in an unfulfilling job, he is homesick for his friends. His only refuge, at the time, seems to be the emotional support and solace of a woman to whom he is engaged to be married.

For what seems like the longest three months of his life, Sean works an unrewarding job and falls into the "worst mental state you could imagine." With less than a moment's notice, Sean leaves the new job and city, but does not escape the anguish. For the following 10 days he is unable to sleep.

Eventually, severe sleep deprivation, mental and physical exhaustion, and depression culminate to a peak. Sean begins to experience psychotic episodes.

I would hear and see things. I would hear something and it would be turned in my head, so that laughing, I would experience it as crying. I also didn't know when my stomach was full or empty. I was just a total wreck.

Sean thankfully gets help from a psychiatrist and is hospitalized. Once again, he experiences what it is like to be on the other side.

That was profound because it taught me so much about the vulnerability of our clients and the head space they're in and the need for them to be listened to, and heard, and for their fears to be dealt with honestly and directly.

Sean leaves the hospital after six weeks of recovery. Although no closer to recognizing the source of his pain, he feels reasonably better and ready to resume his life.

Coming out: Free at last

In the fall of 1992, nearly eight years after his breakdown, Sean's life appears picture perfect. He seems to have everything going for him. Employed at a college, he counsels, teaches, and mentors students. Sean also has a successful private practice and is married. He has a 4-year old son and a daughter only a few months old; and yet, he felt completely unfulfilled and devoid of pleasure, rather, he has few "acceptable" pleasures. "My greatest pleasure was coming from getting to know two young men at the college where I worked. One I taught, the other I counselled... my professional boundaries were getting stretched."

Sean experienced great anxiety and unhappiness about the deep feelings he developed for these men. He drank frequently to drown out the noise of unrelenting emotions and confusion. "I felt like I was going crazy, and I didn't know why. I yelled too often at my kids, I drank excessively; I had my own separate bedroom at home.... So all of this was coming up for me."

Sean described feeling "dead" inside. Attempting to stimulate excitement in his life, and to assure himself that he is "alive," Sean begins shoplifting.

I started stealing, just stupid stealing. I wasn't taking things I needed; I was just taking things for the excitement of it. My passion for life was... it was

gone. And it was being channelled into doing something that was criminal.... When I was stealing something and risking getting caught, it was like finally there's some life in my blood!

Eventually, Sean is caught and charged for the stealing. The lawyer he seeks for counsel offers sage advice: "He (lawyer) says, "What is wrong? This doesn't make any sense. You're a successful psychologist and you're stealing. Where is this coming from?" He says, "I think you might want to seek out your own therapy for this." Sean takes this advice to heart and, after much consideration, goes to see a psychiatrist. This proves to be critical turning point for Sean. He begins seeing a psychiatrist who is not afraid to speak the "unspeakable" and probe into "forbidden" territory.

He (the psychiatrist) was brilliant, insightful, and caring. He asked poignant questions that deeply frightened me, however. At the end of our first session, I felt like vomiting. I couldn't imagine having just shared such deep thoughts, feelings, and fantasies.... Near the end of our second session, he told me that he knew what my problem was. He said. "Your problem is you're gay, and you've never come to accept this in yourself." And I was like "What!? I'm seeing you about my shoplifting problem and you're telling me I'm gay?" And yet, right away, I knew that what he was saying was the truth. I just knew it... I knew it. It was all there.

Sean was in shock. He realized that he does not know anything about gay people. "And I didn't want to know because I was raised extremely homophobic... so that was the last thing on earth I wanted to be." Sean felt incredible pain and contemplated suicide often during this difficult time. He credits the psychiatrist for saving his life. "Ending it all" became less of a consideration after the psychiatrist revealed to Sean that he knows what he is going through because he is also gay.

Then the bond between him and I was so strong. I began to idolize him. He was my role model at that point. He helped me with the coming out [process] and worked with me through the months that followed. Then I was able to completely let go of the homophobia that I carried around and it further helped me develop a philosophy of equality.

Confronting and accepting his innermost feelings, Sean was finally able to fully engage with life. Vividly, he shares his experience of finding his voice.

Until there is a voice, there are no words to make sense of experience. My therapist helped me find a voice. At first it sounded like a scream, but even that was better than the sound of eternal silence... my emotions were no longer serving hard time. My escape had given me a passion and a zest for life, which I had never experienced earlier.

Indeed, Sean's escape enables him to live life authentically and with integrity. He confesses to having been a very good liar up to that point in his life.

I lied about so many things. My own experience... I mean like the incredible infatuation I would have for men and love at times. Denying all of that meant I had to lie to myself and others in the worst ways.

The coming out process was a breakthrough of the biggest lie of his life. "Once I came out I realized that I can't lie again."

Figure 6. White admiral butterfly. ©Glenn Corbiere, 2005.



The White Admiral, a most beloved and admired butterfly, breaks free of the encrusted pupa. He is large, predominantly black with a broad white band through the middle of both wings – his badge of honor. Well-known for his strength in flight, the White Admiral soars along forest edges. His wings proudly salute a profound inner courage.

The personal is the professional

The experiences of intense human suffering and finding a voice greatly humble Sean as a person and as a professional. Defining himself as a humanist counsellor, Sean views these experiences as building blocks to becoming a stronger person and profound lessons to him as a professional.

I see very much that the way I can benefit others is mostly the result of how I've grown as a person. My life experiences have the most profound impact on my practice, more so than any training that I've ever taken.

Sean regards the pain, and working through the pain, as rich blessings, not as shameful experiences. In fact, he is proud to have a deeper understanding for the human condition, and brings this insight into his work with clients, helping them to find the way. He also speaks to saluting clients' suffering and not being afraid of exploring painful territory. Sean believes in challenging clients through Socratic dialogue to help them face theirs because of his experience of facing his own fears.

Living with integrity

Sean's courage to work through the biggest lie in his life, in coming out to himself and others, enabled him to live his life with integrity. "I have often wondered if there is anything more important than this (integrity). Being true to oneself is the lesson I most want to teach my children. I think I finally know how."

Most important in his personal life, the value of integrity is also most valued to him as a professional. Sean conveys that he tries to be "fully and truly myself, so if I'm doing my job (counselling) right, it doesn't feel like a job. I'm just relating to my client as I am as a person.... That's number one in importance."

People as equals

Sean's experience of internalized homophobia and subsequent pain from self-denial taught him the value of respecting and embracing diversity, and considering all people as equals. This impacts his view of the hierarchy within counselling relationships.

I don't want to be coming across as the expert, although if I do know what I'm talking about, then I will come across as the expert simply because I've learned more than you have as my client about a particular subject.

Sean's philosophy of equality also comes through in his regard for how much clients have to teach him. "After a session is over, I reflect on what I've learned from that person and how I can improve my practice based on how that person's experience has helped me grow in some way."

Story: Reaching out

In Sean's sharing and writing of his story, he helps crumble the edifice of heterosexism in our society. With his courage and profound inner strength, he paves the way for other marginalized persons. I believe his story has the capacity to reach others, and perhaps save them from the inner turmoil and anguish that he experienced.

The White Admiral is truly a courageous butterfly. Watching this "soul" in flight is most enriching to me as a person as well as a professional. I am in even greater awe and even more profoundly struck by the inner beauty and wisdom of this individual.

Researcher: Impact of Stories

The researcher eyespots on the Buckeye butterfly peer outward and turn inward again, as participants' stories vividly confirm that the professional counsellor's wingspan is greatly shaped by self-awareness and personal development. Indeed, my professional wingspan is marked by personal growth. Turning inward, I become acutely aware of how profoundly my hope has been influenced by participants' stories.

First, Dawn's story of family connections engenders my hope in the limitless possibilities and rewards that come from loving children and nurturing families. I am

struck by the close relationship that Dawn has with her mother: I truly hope that I am fostering such a relationship with my daughters.

Second, East's incredible life metamorphosis through the loss of her husband to suicide, and her development into an Old Soul (a soulful, wise, and intuitive woman) nourishes my hope about the resiliency of the human spirit to endure intense human suffering.

Third, Crystal's acknowledgment of her strength in leaving an abusive relationship and taking control over her own life is admirable. Her story quenches my hope for how much we can help ourselves through reflection. I am also reminded of the tremendous power in the counselling relationship.

Finally, Sean's story instills hope, for he was able to break free of the homophobic prison and overcome cultural and family constraints. In our culture, a deep-rooted belief prevails that the apple does not fall far from the tree. Sean's story confirms my hope and my own experience that we do not have to live out our parents' scripts or adopt their values if we intentionally choose not to do so.

My Story: Mothering

I share my own journey of metamorphosis through poetry, past journal entries, and reflections. It is a transformative story to motherhood, the process beginning early in my toddler years.

The Island Blue butterfly usually lays a single egg. It is typical that this butterfly does not tend to the young after the egg is laid.

Shredded Worth

*My tiny frame shakes hysterically,
I am beyond fear.
At the age of 3, I know terror
as it rips through my small frame.*

*Screaming and shrieking at the top of my lungs...
Heaving and sobbing so greatly that the air
fails the expression of my helplessness.
Huge silences fill the gap between bellowed fear.*

*The basement cellar is my
Forever imprinted burn of abandonment.
The floor is cold and hard...
darkness makes my dismal aloneness all the more palpable.*

*There are spiders here - no time for fear.
I must get out before the ghosted blackness snuffs out my existence.
Heart pounding with a life of its own,
I hold my breath, close my eyes,*

and wail for reprieve as I live out my necessary punishment.

Punishment for what?

*Perhaps I spilled my drink;
didn't finish dinner;
touched something not mine;
lied.*

*The crime is not what sears my anguish.
The punishment creases my dignity...
folds it tidily and
tears it to shreds.
(Wong-Wylie, 2006)*

Each egg is surrounded by a hard outer shell, known as chorion that protects the developing larva. The shell is lined with a fine protective layer of wax, which helps the egg to survive in harsh elements.

Although my parents loved and love me deeply, some of their methods of teaching merely served to fortify the development of strong chorion. The authoritarian and punitive style of parenting and the cultural chasm between immigrant parents and a rebellious first-generation Canadian-born child were significant barriers to a close mother-daughter relationship. It was not until adulthood, when I became pregnant with my first child, that the next phase of metamorphosis was catalyzed.

July 4, 1999

Hello Little One,

You are 28 weeks old in my tummy. You are so active today—bulging out in the front and my sides!

I seem to be going through some emotions these last few weeks. I am feeling a lot of fears about being a good mother to you, what our life will be like with you, and if we'll be able to manage in providing you a nurturing environment. Mostly they are my own insecurities surfacing.

July 16, 1999

Dear Iris,

According to the ultrasound technician you are a girl. This might sound awful, but it frightens me a little that you could be a girl. I've missed having a close relationship with my mother, and I'm afraid that I may not know how to foster a strong and caring mother-daughter relationship with you. Silly... because I know, deep down, who I am is

very unlike my mother. Some part of me believes that if you were a boy, I would have a better chance of having a different relationship with you.

August 30, 1999

Dear Iris,

I just turned over in bed, slowly and painfully so that I can write to you. Boy, are you (am I) big at 37 weeks!! Doug thinks you will be 8 or 9 pounds. We'll see. My candidacy is in one week. I can't wait to get past this hurdle so that I can focus all my energy on you.

I took part in a woman's Ph.D. dissertation research on the culture of mothering. I talked about not feeling like a mother yet. I described the non-supportive relationship I have with my mother and the trepidation it has fostered in my image of our relationship. I talked about how scary it is to me that you might be a girl, with an expected due date right on my birthday. It's hard not to worry about repeating patterns when you could be born the day my mother gave birth to me. However, I also talked about the potential for healing, to know for myself that I can love you and be a good mother.

The chorion layer is broken down before the egg becomes a caterpillar and before the larva stage ensues. It is during the larva stage that caterpillars do most of their growing. These "growth machines" take few breaks, even for resting. When the caterpillar becomes too large for its skin, it molts, or sheds its skin. At first, the new skin is very soft, and provides little support or protection. This skin soon hardens and molds itself to the caterpillar.

Just before they pupate, Island Blue larvae spin a silk mat from which they hang upside down. While the process of complete metamorphosis looks like four very distinct stages, changes actually occur continuously within the larva.

My beautiful daughter was born on the 8th of September. The final stage in this life cycle metamorphosis was stunning, my initiation into motherhood truly transformative.

October 18, 1999

Dear Iris,

An unbelievable 6 weeks have gone by. You are lying next to me and, for the first time since your arrival, I have a few moments to write down some thoughts. I could never have imagined how instantly I fell in love with you, and how strongly and powerfully I feel that love. Every day I tell you... I can't tell you enough. All the anxieties and insecurities I had about being a mother were washed away when you crooked your head up to gaze into my eyes seconds after you were born. Oh Iris, you are truly a blessing. Your birth was incredible, brought out the best in me while challenging me to the fullest.

I know you will continue to do this the rest of our lives. Thank you for coming into my life and for showing me my strength and ability to profoundly love a daughter.

I have many hopes that I can be a good mother to you. I hope that someday, when you read this journal – many, many years from now –you will be able to say that you have a good relationship with me, and know how much you are loved and cared for. I hope you will be able to say that I've been supportive of you and always let you know how important you are to me.

I feel that my life will not be as rich and meaningful if I cannot engender a feeling of worth and love in my children. This is why it saddens me to not have a close relationship with my own mother, but it is, at the same time, a huge contributor to why I know and feel it is so valuable and important. But I have been forging new ground and new ways of being a mom that feel right for me. You're 9.6 pounds today, every ounce a joy!

Figure 7. Island blue butterfly.



The Island Blue has a wingspan of 21 to 29 millimeters. The female's upper side is dark brown with a bluish sheen, and there is a row of faint orange-capped black eyespots on the hindwing margin (similar to that found on Buckeye wings). The Island Blue is a mysterious butterfly; little is known about the details of her transformation, yet she is stark. What is known is that the Island Blue is found only one place in the world. She has a distinct place she inhabits: the east side of Vancouver Island.

Undoubtedly, having a place to call home with my loving partner is essential in supporting my transformation to motherhood. My daughter was born during the process of completing this research: In the soulful and enriching experience of becoming a mother, I gained tremendous self-acceptance. In my metamorphosis to motherhood, I recognized, as did Sinclair (2001), that

our children offer us the sacred opportunity to overcome our deepest fears, challenging us with our life issues, our fallibility, and our humanness.

Also in the process, we have the greatest opportunity to witness a new beauty in life and experience a depth of gratitude and joy that stops and stills us. (p. 139)

October 30, 2001

Dear Iris,

You sleep so restfully and peacefully beside me in this tiny bedroom in Vancouver. Your gentle eyelids are closed... precious tiny mouth so relaxed. You curl into your pillow and make relaxed humming sounds. I lie face to face and breathe you in, my attempt to transcend time. First, to drink up what I missed of your exploratory day full of wonder and discovery, still that incredible sense of loss I feel in not being with you during the day. Second, to preserve the moment in time when I lay transfixed by the suppleness of your skin and your existence. I cherish the ever-changing moment that slips away from my grasp the moment I savor it. Your "crazy" gentle curls tumble and fly like wings that frame your face. Thin, wispy tendrils of hair... definitely your dad's hair. I smile when I can identify what you get from him and what you get from me.

My favorite time of day with you is before bedtime. All three of us lay in bed and I feel how much you can sense that you are loved, and that we are a family. We interact without distractions and talk, and tickle, and laugh, and tell and read stories. You lavish us with kisses and hugs. It's such precious time. And I know that you are a confident child.

I look at you now and listen to the rain rattle and beat against the pavement outside. You've grown so much in a year...

Last look, your ears are just like Doug's. He's just crawled into bed on the other side of you. Sweet slumber and rest my love.

October 11, 2002

Dear Iris and 9-week-old baby in my tummy,

It's past midnight on Friday and I just got into bed. Am thinking about how lucky I am to have you all in my life. Doug and I decided last night that 3 is the best age! Iris, you are so capable, independent, and articulate. You're throwing the Frisbee well and hitting the ball with the bat. You love biking and want to go skiing. I love your sense of adventure and risk-taking. I feel proud that I am able to encourage you to explore your world and to stay a far enough distance, to let you learn from your own mistakes, but close enough to catch you if you need me. Though never "perfect," I know that I am a nurturing and loving mother to you.

... and the metamorphosis journey of motherhood is never fully complete.

The personal is the professional

My approach to counselling has certainly been influenced by the experience of motherhood. My focus on relationship in counselling is highlighted as it is through knowing the importance of connecting with others, the mother-daughter relationship I have with Iris and Cassie, and that I am attuned to the counselling relationship. As well, I am influenced by narrative therapy, as I am keenly aware of the significance and power of restorying experience. I know personally, through restorying my mother-daughter story, that I am capable of mothering in a way that feels right for me. In a similar fashion, a "Just Therapy" approach, which takes into account the gender, cultural, and social and economic context of persons seeking help, is part of my counselling orientation. A Social Justice orientation highlights,

equality in relationships between people: it involves naming the structures, and the actions that oppress and destroy equality in relationships... In essence, Just Therapy finds its "expression in the movement in meaning from problem-centered patterns, to new possibilities of resolution and hope. (Waldegrave, 1990, p. 7)

This approach is representative of my feminism and attentiveness to cultural, gender, and socioeconomic factors that thwart individual growth, as I am keenly aware of these factors that influence and shape my own circumstances. Likewise, I weave conversations of hope and meaning into the counselling process. A humanistic-existential flavor exists to my approach because of my deep connection to my own hope, which has been profoundly strengthened through mothering.

Discussion

In this study, narrated stories of developing counsellors were found to intrinsically influence the preferred theories of counselling. Indeed, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) underscored the personal, practical knowledge (lived experiences) of teachers, and the influence of these experiences on teacher identity and practices. Likewise, Larsen (1999a) noted in her biographical research with long-time counsellor educators that one's orientation to counselling practice was recognizably foreshadowed by personal life experiences. These authors highlighted a constructivist perspective that our personality, experiences, and personal constructs fashion the craft of our practice.

Theorists as Storytellers

Drapela (1990) maintained that counselling theories "pulsate with life" (p. 22) as they embody the lived experiences and personalities of their originators. A view of theory as an integration of the theorists' personhood was asserted by Drapela and by Kottler (1995) and Larsen (1999b). Larsen suggested that all theories are theory-stories. Drapela concurred that every theory is a self-theory storied through time. In this perspective, theories are like narratives in that they represent perceptions of experience in a given time of the storyteller or theorist.

Theories: Telling of Personality

Hague (1989) discussed theories as reflective of theorists' personality and values. Kottler and Brown (1992) recognized that Albert Ellis, Eric Berne, and Fritz Perls branched off from their mentors to create new psychological approaches that reflected their unique values and personalities. Albert Ellis, who was considered a logical and concise debater of his time, developed Rational-Emotive behaviour therapy, which is a highly cognitive and action-oriented model (Corey, 1996). Likewise, Carl Rogers, the embodiment of genuineness, warmth, and congruency, devised a Person-Centred therapy that was truly an extension of his personality (Drapela, 1990; Hague, 1989). Kramer (2000) proposed that each theory is an accurate expression of each theorist's personality. "The best therapists take command using their unique person, their style, their strengths" (p. 9). Rollo May (1995) went as far to say, "If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, you will have betrayed yourself" (p. 29).

The counselling processes and approaches described by participants in this study were reflective of their personalities and values. Dawn is an outgoing and confident woman who values family, supportive relationships, and process rather than outcome; East is a thoughtful, spiritual woman who enjoys meditation and Eastern philosophies; Crystal is a quiet, reflective, passionate woman who values support and connection; and Sean is a genuine, humble, lively man who values integrity and honesty. As for myself, I am a reflective woman and mother who is relationship-oriented. I value the restoring of experience as well as equality, and I am acutely aware of my own hope. There is little doubt that we butterflies would be described in these terms within our professional lives. Our personalities and values invariably shape our counselling approaches. That is, these participants, similar to me, prefer less hierarchical orientations than ones informed by the medical model. We are drawn to Humanistic, Transpersonal, Narrative, Person-Centered, Existential, and Process-Oriented therapies. Certainly, one's orientation to counselling appeared to be influenced by personality and values: However, even more evident in this research, as was the primary focus was that preferred theories and approaches were influenced by lived experiences.

Theories: Telling of Experience

Further exemplifying theories as stories or portrayals, Drapela (1990) stated that "all psychological schools are extensions, or subjective self-interpretations, of significant life experiences of their originators" (p. 24). Drapela supported his beliefs through a discussion of Frankl's existential therapy, which was the product of Frankl's experiences in the brutal concentration camps of Auschwitz and Dachau (Corey, 1996). Frankl wrote and theorized about the search for personal meaning as the essence of being human (e.g., Frankl, 1963, 1965, 1978). This notion of counselling theories as portrayals of theorists' lives can be supported by examining Freud and psychoanalysis, Adler and individual psychology, Skinner and operant conditioning (Kottler & Brown, 1992) as well as by further exploring the lives of the participants involved in this study.

The theorists in this study, Dawn, East, Crystal, Sean, and myself, bring our stories, and the impact of those stories, into our counselling philosophy. Dawn focuses on

process, and is deliberate in recognizing the power of the therapeutic relationship, which is reminiscent of her stories of family. Likewise, East strives to connect with clients at an emotional level. She also recognizes the layers underneath what clients expose in therapy. These tenets echo her experiences of transformation and metamorphosis. In a similar fashion, Crystal's emphasis on the therapeutic relationship, client choice, empowerment, and the accessing of painful experiences for healing emerged out of her own experiences of facing and overcoming her own demons. Her pull towards narrative therapy emerges from her own experiences in the power of restorying her own experiences.

Sean's experience of intense pain and suffering in his process of coming to terms with his sexuality facilitates great lessons, which he brings to his counselling work. In his own experience, Sean was unable to live life authentically until he, similar to Crystal, truly faced his fears. He spoke of exploring painful territory, and challenging and supporting clients to enter into their pain. Having integrity, which meant being honest with himself and others, and embracing diversity, which meant treating all people as equals, became central to Sean in his life and in his work following his own process of coming out.

Lastly, my journey in motherhood, which involved doubting and fearing my ability to foster a close mother-daughter relationship, and rejoicing and healing after the first birth of my beautiful daughter, was transforming. The emphasis I place on connections and relationships, equality, justice, and hope in my counselling approach are greatly shaped by my experience of metamorphosis in motherhood. The portrayals of participants' lives and the influence life experiences had on counselling approaches confirms my own experience in recognizing how the stories I live by shape my professional self.

Theory as Self-Portraits

The portrait metaphor

Just as every theory is a story (Larsen, 1999b), every theory is a portrait of the theorist, as was captured in this study. Deriving a personal theory is striving to sketch the self just as a "painting is a striving to express life" (Carr, 1966, p. 117). In haste, the novice artist may throw colors and patterns together on the canvas or attempt to duplicate the work of an esteemed painter. In parallel, beginning counselling students may attempt to emulate their supervisors (Kottler & Brown, 1992). The struggle is, in part, in trusting the creative process. With time and understanding, artists, like Dawn, East, Crystal, Sean, and myself, begin to take ownership of each brush stroke, each deliberate tint and shade of their work. We begin to compose a self-portrait, recognizing the centrality of personhood in our work. The counsellor recognizes, just as the painter does, that one must be willing to sit still as well as to stand back in contemplation and reflection of the work in progress.

A masterpiece is rarely composed in a day. As Bateson (1990) wrote, "these works of art, still incomplete, are parables in progress, the living metaphor with which we describe the world" (p. 18). With each viewing of the portrait, the artist sees through different eyes. New experiences have altered his perceptions. Depending on the audience, she may choose to focus on a certain dimension of the composition, just as a counsellor

may focus on various aspects of her theory-portrait when working with different clients. However, that piece is integrally connected to the whole.

All theory-portraits are originals

Brammer, Shostrom, and Abrego (1989) asserted that all counselling theorists basically formulate ideas based on their unique life experiences and times. This underscores the significance of composing one's unique theory. Similarly, a postmodern perspective recognizes the implausibility of practicing theory in a purist sense. As Drapela (1990) stated, "It is impossible for any of us to be Rogerian, Adlerian, or Ericksonian purists since we did not live the life of these theorists" (p. 24). Instead, becoming a counsellor involves integrating existing theories and searching for a personal theory derived from our own identity (Brammer et al.; Drapela; Hague, 1989) and experiences.

Kramer (2000) captured well that who we are is the most powerful of what we have to offer in counselling. "You will do your best work when your method is consonant with your personality... experiment and find ways that resonate positively. Invent a fit that feels right, at home, natural..." (p. 216). This study involved a narrative and narrating inquiry of stories from developing counsellors, and how these stories are reflected in counsellors' preferred counselling theories. The intent was not to analyze stories or emerge with themes of developing counsellors' lives, but simply to engage participants in a reflective sharing of stories. These stories were juxtaposed with articulated theories of counselling with an open curiosity to personal stories reflecting professional counselling orientations. In so doing, unfolding personal narratives displayed professional counsellors' wings.

Directions for Future Research

This research sparks many more questions about the parallel between counsellors' preferred theory of counselling and their lived experiences. Further research on this parallel is warranted. Studies involving counsellors and psychologists at various points in the career trajectory would lend insight into the influence that personal experience has on professional development. As well, given that reflection and self-storying appear to centrally inform developing counsellors' personal theory and approaches to counselling, in what ways do counsellor education programs foster students in the reflective process to come to know the stories they live by? Finally, the researcher's use of metaphor and photographic images as story-telling devices in the present narrative inquiry requires further exploration. The depth of perceiving and experiencing storying as "art-making" facilitates new possibilities in narrative storying, which requires future research investigations.

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