

Final Written Assignment  
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Project: 'The Rhythm of Life'



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## The context of work and connection with Narrative Therapy

This paper attempts to present the application of narrative practice, and specifically how 'the Rhythm of Life' methodology worked in my experience with a group of women. My acquaintance with the group was in 2009-2010 when I still hadn't come in touch with Narrative Therapy philosophy. As I began to espouse the ideas of narrative in my practice over the last year, my work with these women in the previous period was based on a different approach.

In other forms of therapy, the therapist is mostly seen to be the expert, but in Narrative Therapy the client is seen as the expert in his/her own life, and the therapist thereby assigns authority to the client- an empowering exercise which is instrumental in the client taking responsibility in the writing of their own narratives (Kazdim,2000).

The truth is that, when the members started to compliment my 'special' knowledge, I felt embarrassed and realized that the role of 'authority' in which, the directional way of interacting with them, had placed me, were involving the potential danger of a passive acceptance of the 'right' or 'truth'. That didn't match with my personal values of respect for each and every person's local knowledge.

During the same period, the book of Kenneth Gergen (1991) 'The saturated self', fell into my hands. The position that our construction, our perceptions, our beliefs, our goals and our commitments are not the end of individual logical associations, but the result of the collective expression of our cultural experiences, communication and dialogue, caught my attention and put me in a reflection process. It was then that I met for the first time with the narrative therapy and a sense of relief generated for me.

In the dominant discourse of traditional psychology and society, there is a strong agreement on norms of 'right' and 'wrong' behavior. However, Narrative therapy is based on the supposition that the lives and the relationships of persons are shaped by the knowledges and the stories that communities of people negotiate and engage in, to give meaning to their experiences and certain practices of self and of relationship that make up ways of life associated with these knowledges and stories (Morgan, 2002). The postmodern narrative therapist isn't interested in discussions that try to detect the causes of the problems. Instead, he and his clients, re-construct preferred narratives which match with the experience of the individual, couple, family, regardless of whether they fit (or not fit) with any other ideas about 'people like them' or 'couples as these' or 'families as those' (Weingarten, 1998, pp: 4).

A new challenge intrigued me. How could we establish our group therapy as a context in which the consciousness and qualities of the participants will be at its center, without losing their sense of security or stability in the way we used to work as a group? It was important, therefore, to find a way to illuminate and honor all those special skills, abilities, knowledge of life, commitments, values and dreams that consisted the personal agenda and the driving power of each to handle situations, overcome obstacles and remain faithful in trying to give their lives the preferred direction for them. In short, the awareness of the ability of people to reconstruct their perceptions of who they are and to participate actively in the evolutionary processes of the broader social context in which they are integrated, has been the cornerstone of my work with the group.

Thus, the idea to introduce the practice of 'the Rhythm of Life' (Müller, March, 2012) was born. The participants welcomed this invitation initially hesitant, but as the process were going on, warmly with joy and enthusiasm.

## **The idea of 'The Rhythm of Life'**

As mentioned above, the group were meeting regularly in the recent years and what had set, from the beginning, the context of our work, was the jointly agreements to integrate music as an essential tool of conciliation. So, we have always been using music as a means of expression, creativity and an incentive to explore new possibilities of communication and action. However, in the context of the training program, we had to find a way to connect the new narrative ideas with that love we both, me and the group, hold for music.

The 'Rhythm of Life' is a methodology, introduced by Adriana Müller, which draws on narrative ideas and musical metaphors. The key themes that are included in the Rhythm of Life are: responding to social issues through a methodology that focus on strengthening the alternative story, re-remembering significant people and honoring them, helping people to understand that their lives are connected and that one's story can contribute to someone else's story, and sharing all this knowledge through collective documentation (White, 1991, 2007; Drewery & Winsdale, 1997; Monk, 1997; Epston, 1998; Denborough, 2008; Newman, 2008; Madigan, 2011).

When I read about this idea, I thought that perhaps this particular practice could be the perfect opportunity for the group to experiment with different ways of perceiving things, especially this time when Greece is plagued by many social and economic hazards, which affect people's lives in various ways.

The aim of this experience was to create a context were the members of the group would have the chance to reconnect, on a very pleasant and spontaneous way, not only with all these significant elements in their lives that give them strength but also to generate a rich shared sense of purpose, a diversity of memory and perspective. As people have chosen for their own reasons, to embody a different instrument in the orchestra, and each of them were sharing different experiences every week, it became clear that every history is unique and diversified but in the same time they are all part of a unity, an orchestra, which shares similar obstacles to make music, instead of noise, and to have the same purpose of giving their life a preferred direction. Paulo Freire words reflects the idea of orchestra of life 'the invention of unity in diversity' (1994; cited in Denborough, 2008).

## **Nature of the group**

In our group, ten people were participating, all women aged 30 to 65 years. They all came from around the same middle socio-economic backgrounds. The people who composed this particular group were members of 3 different groups, with which I had been working separately in the past and they were now united. Some of the participants knew each other while others were in the same group for the first time. We were meeting once a week, from September until May, for two hours, over my place.

Even though it might seem like the participants didn't had any particular difficulty in common to face, when in the first meeting we discussed about some expectations or fears they have as members of our group, they all talked about similar things. As it became obvious the members shared the aspiration to untangle dilemmas that plagued them, to reconnect with people and values important to them and to give a new direction in their life where they could invite calmness, joy, spontaneity and peacefulness to accompany them. They also expressed a desire to increase their understandings about emotions, relationships and life with the observation and feedback that

they would receive from the experiences of other members. Finally, they all admitted how precious they hold music and their willingness to let this become an ally in the effort of the group this year.

It is worth to note that since we started our meetings in mid-September and we will conclude them in late May, we made all together an agreement, to work alongside the 'Rhythm of Life' project, with other issues they might want to share, as they were arising from people's everyday lives and were harassing them. So, we have been devoting some meetings alternately in the continuation of this project and some others in conversations about issues from the problematic stories that participants were bringing, which had not to do with this methodology. For this purpose, at the end of each meeting we have been keeping in the so-called 'group box' all the drawings and documents related to our project, and we were opening it when we were deciding to continue from there. In this paper I will focus mainly on the 'Rhythm of Life' part.

## **The journey starts...**

*The Rhythm of Life* methodology is a five- step process(Müller, March, 2012)).

- ✓ *My instrument*, which is split in two parts:
  - The Sounding Board
  - The Vibration
- ✓ *Playing the song*
- ✓ *The Orchestra of Life*
- ✓ *Getting attuned*
- ✓ *Our song*

### **1) My instrument**

In our first meeting, participants were asked to choose and draw a musical instrument which they like for its sound, shape, or even one with which they feel close as it is connecting them with a personal experience. The main idea of collective practices is to enable participants to share powerful personal memory and history but in a way that link to a collective theme. That brings people together while also acknowledging a great diversity of experiences. (Cheryl White, David Denborough, 1998).

Sheets of paper were shared and each member draw an instrument which expresses them and they would want it to be the one which will represent them in the journey that was about to start. This process provided the opportunity to emerge many beautiful stories of people's lives, as some of them went back to their childhood memories and the desire they had since then to encompass music as a company in their life. Some remembered relatives who were involved in music and had them introduced in this music world, others remembered funny stories of their efforts to try to play a musical instrument. Finally, some participants reported their family's financial difficulty which prevented them from taking lessons with music teachers, but on the other hand, that gave to creativity the opportunity to emerge and lead them as children with their friends to build improvised instruments.

'As we all experience events every day and live our lives we constantly give meanings to our experiences'. (Alice Morgan, 2000). The participant aspects of life that were illuminated on the occasion of choosing their instrument, were 'enabling people to tell their stories in ways that made them stronger' (Wingard & Lester 2001; cited in Denborough, 2008).

At the end of this conversation, all participants agreed that in one way or another, music is an important part of everyone's life, not only in this group context but also besides of that, as the shared love for music gives the chance for people to connect each other. This feeling seemed to work as an antidote to the "dividing practices", mentioned by Michel Foucault (1965, 1973), that separate, through the ascription or assignment of a spoiled identity, the poor, the untalented, from the general population.

## **1.1) The stage**

Then the participants drew a line under their instrument, meaning the stage, the place where the person is playing this instrument. The scene symbolizes *the present life* (Müller, March, 2012). At this point, participants were asked to talk in pairs for one of the roles they assumed in their daily lives, as parents, spouses, friends or citizens as well as for some of their daily activities.

When we assembled together as a group to resume their conversations, participants expressed the desire to talk about the stress which seemed to have a significant part of their daily life, as they realized that they were not only sharing common roles but also common concerns about how to handle all these roles.

The group members used internalized expressions such as 'I'm very nervous, I cannot do anything about it'. It was obvious that many of the participants came to believe that their stress was internal to their self or the selves of others, a reflection of their own identity, like they were the problem.

As we were closing the meeting we agreed to dedicate on this next time and try to expose the intentions of the stress in their lives.

### **1.1.1) The stress**

- **Deconstruction of stress- theatrical practice**

The main objective of this meeting was the deconstruction of anxiety using externalizing practices, which could provide an antidote to the internal understandings by objectifying the stress. The externalizing conversation facilitates the unraveling of the history of the problems 'politics'. This is a history of the power relations that people have been subject to and that have shaped their negative conclusions about their life and their identity. The context of externalizing conversations makes it possible for people to experience an identity that is separate from the problem: the problem becomes the problem, not the person (Michael White, 2007). If the person is the problem there is very little that can be done outside of taking action that is self-destructive. But if a person's relationship with the problems becomes more clearly defined, as it does in externalizing conversations, a range of possibilities become available to revise this relationship.

The next session began with listening to a classical music piece of Rimsky-Korsakov called 'the bumblebee'. The rhythm of this piece is very quick and it refers to the attempt madden agonizingly by the bumblebee to fly. Participants closed their eyes to let themselves to the images and feelings that would come alive during the hearing.

In the conversation, followed the experience they had, what emerged as a common denominator for all participants, was stress. I asked them to draw this feeling as they have experienced it and it was amazing that everyone depicted it as a circle, larger for some, smaller for others, with more vigorous or more subtle colors. When I asked them what was this cycle expressing, the participants answered that primarily it reflected some kind of confusion or fear.

Then we decided to take one of the participant's picture and turn it into a mask that symbolizes stress. As Mr. Stress has his own voice now, we could have the chance to take him an interview. So I played the role of the interviewer and the other participants of the group recorded the things that impressed them during this process, as to the tactics used by Mr. Stress to take the control of people's lives, his intentions and dreams. This theatrical practice illustrates the potential of externalizing conversation to approach problems that were not only considered intractable but also unpleasant and serious in their social consequences, in a playful, lighthearted and joyful ways.

Mr. Stress had been asked about the ways that he invades in people's lives, any kind of tricks he uses and about his allies who are helping him. He had also been asked about the way that he used to affects participants, physically or their relationships and lives, about the things he had been whispering to them or about his intents and purposes. He reported on circumstances that nourish him but also on things that scares him as they are able to weaken him.

Here are the words of Mr. Stress as the other members of the group recorded them:

*'I want to destroy people, to see them unhappy, as they don't have the control of their lives. I want to have this control, to see them being closed in themselves and alone. I envy them when they do not need me and when they are making it without me. I do not get the permission to go in their lives, so I use to slink away uninvited. Unhappiness and confusion are assisting me and I manage to penetrate when they feel vulnerable. When I sit beside them, I whisper them that they are unable to recover their lives from my hands, that they are not able to cope with difficulties and that they do not worth as people. I'm also affecting their body. I tightened them, so sometimes I'm making them to feel a lump in their throat as if they are choking. I'm taking them away from their own people. I make them closed in themselves. Sometimes, I bring conflicts with their family or other relationships. Their tangles and their dilemmas about how to handle problems, nourish me. Culpabilities are also helping me. They are my pals. But there is something that I fear, that threatens me. When people clarify what is important to them, when they share their concerns with each other, that can weaken me. I do not want people to support each other at any level neither on family nor community nor society level. I feel strong when I manage to have a voice in their relationships with themselves and other people. But I know that I'm not omnipotent. They have succeeded to weaken me in the past and that makes me hesitate to try again to get into their lives. I'm afraid that they will reuse their ways, they will turn their head on the other side if I attempt to whisper to them. I cannot always fool them. I fear the communication, their truth'.*

In the ensuing discussion in plenary, participants admitted regarding to the personality of stress that is cowardly and rude. He is secretly trying to get in their lives when they feel more vulnerable but he hasn't the courage to confront them face to face.

Particular reference was made in the circumstances that Mr. Stress exploit, this time of economic crisis, as he finds more open windows to invade, when people are worried about their future. It is

common in our days of economic crisis in Greece to objectify people's identities as inadequate or incompetent persons. Externalizing conversations in which the problem becomes the problem, not the person, can be considered counter-practices to those that objectify people's identities.

It has been particularly impressive for the participants to note that Mr. Stress is afraid of collective action. The investigation of people's problem beyond the frame of individuality and everyday life and the connection with the broader relationships of power, the circumstances and the social factors that reinforce them paved the way for participants to reconnect with values such as mutual support and solidarity.

They have been reported on ideas that are out there and sometimes they make them feel vulnerable to Mr. Stress efforts of having the upper hand in their lives. The group members talked about the climate of terror, that the existing political system tries to spread, about ideas that are trying to steal their hopes and system's enterprise to paralyze their will to react. For this reason, they talked about their commitment to share their concerns more openly with other people and to support those who may be facing similar challenges, to reveal the strategies of Mr. Stress, now that they have had a clearer picture of his plans.

However, it is worth noting that, as mentioned Mr. Stress is not always operating with the worst intentions. There are times when he helps them to remember things that have value and importance to them, such as the importance of sharing. The specific placement of the group members illustrate the importance of avoiding totalizing problems, as that might obscure or invalidate what people value to and what might be sustaining.

Many of the participants expressed their desire to take a stand against the effects of Mr. Stress as they were no more willing to give him the control of their lives. Moreover, what was mentioned as particularly revealing was the realization that instead of being angry with themselves or other people, they could redirect this feeling to Mr. Stress himself. This unraveling of the stresses plans and tactics deprived their conclusions of a 'truth' status and called them into question. As an outcome, people found that their lives were no longer tied to the negative conclusions and this put them in a position to explore other territories of their lives.

At the end of the meeting there was a mood of unity and jocularly around the participants. They found particularly comforting the playful way that the confusion, expressed on the cycle they had initially paint, had now been unfolded, as Mr. Stress's tricks but also weaknesses had been revealed. We decided, for the next time, to explore their own ways to respond to the imperatives of Mr. Stress, so they could be more prepared when he may decide to visit them again.

- **Stories of resistance to stress**

In the following meetings the main objective was to develop further understandings of the meaning-making activities related to the resistance to the influence of stress, that the group members engage with in everyday life. 'The ways in which events are understood and interpreted and the sort of story-line they are placed into makes a significant difference as to the effects of that event in people's life'. ( Michael White, 2007).

My thought at this point was that Re-authoring conversations (Epston & White 1990; Epston 1992;White 2001a), which involve the co-authoring of story-lines, would assist in addressing the predicaments related to stress, that group members had brought. 'The imaginative application of

the narrative mode strives to put its timeless miracles into the particularities of experience and to locate the experience in time and place' (Bruner, 1986, p.13).

The meeting started by asking participants to think of an experience they had with Mr. Stress and in which they ought to make some effort to cope with. When did they manage to reveal his intentions, prevented the effect of his efforts, turned their back on him or even slightly reduced the control he was going to steal from them? Taking a position of inquiry and seeking to notice any unique outcome that contradicts the dominant story (White, 2007) led the discussions in neglected aspects of the history of stress in their lives.

The group members had the opportunity to illuminate some of the steps they have been taking to respond to some difficult situations in their lives caused by Mr. Stress and some of their skills or tools of resistance they use.

Specifically, some of the participants reported their ability to develop an internal dialogue in which they employ their composure and patience to settle down Mr. Stress. Others talked about their ability to utilize art, either in the form of poetry or in the form of music, to give time to themselves to relax. Some mentioned the ability to prefix the factual knowledge they have on some things in order to prevent stress to outsmart them. For example, one of the participants talked about this time she had some exams for her driving License and how she decided to focus on the knowledge she knew she had received, instead of the ideas of incapacity that Mr. Stress were whispering to her. They also made some references to the awareness that life is tragicomic and the feature that humor gives to debunk difficult situations. Some talked about their faith in God, which is affirming their efforts, as it gives them the security that on difficult times He will take care of them. In addition, some have designated as their shield against the stress the communication with their beloved ones, as this is relaxing them and taking a burden away from them.

Finally, participants described all these practices and their attitudes towards stress as 'enlightenment'. 'By naming the alternative story, personal preferences and choices become more visible' (Alice Morgan, 2000).

When I asked them, what aspects of their lives, what things important to them had been illuminated in their ways they have to resist, a new cycle of stories opened, concerning their intentions and aspirations in life. Narrative practices are interested in notions of 'intentional states of identity' which contrast with notions of 'internal states of identity' (White, 2001 b).

Some of the participants talked about their desire to enjoy the freedom of choice, that a life far away from the effects of stress could provide them. Others referred to their value of confidence that work as anathema to the prevailing sense of isolation, which stress seems to expect for their interpersonal and social relationships. For some, it became very important to defend the pleasure of their own and their children. Finally, they described how precious value is for them, the experience of relationship to the 'whole', as they had defined their relationship with themselves, with others, with nature and with the spiritual dimension of things (participants referred to the idea of 'whole' as it has been described by philosophers of Ancient Greece). The landscape of identity questions encourage people to explore the implications that this alternative story-line has in terms of people's understanding of their identity (Michael White, 2007).

At our next meeting all these values were linked with stories over time that reflected their importance in the lives of participants. This processes involved 'thickening' their alternative, preferred story. Questions concerning the association of these values by future actions also proved to be very interesting. 'The emergence of the alternative story and the access to people's skills and



capabilities are considered to affect the future operations' (Alice Morgan, 2000). So the group members had been asked:

- *Which of the practices that you have found effective in the past, could you enroll a bit more on your effort to deal with stress in future situations?*
- *How could you use your knowledge of life that you have?*
- *What differences would you notice in your mood, your relationships, your everyday life if you had these life skills as a close companion in the coming days?*
- *How do you think your people around you may welcome these changes?*

At the end of our session, participants were asked to re-paint their own figure next to the figure of Mr. Stress. This time, their own figure was greater as this was expressing their belief that they have more tools to face it, than the stress has to invade their lives.

Participants agreed that they are maintaining a relationship of sympathy- antipathy with the stress as sometimes it motivates them to be active. In conclusion, they underlined that even if Mr. Stress try to visit them, with no good intentions, next time they will be better prepared.

### **1.1.2) Pleasures in life**

The following question was addressed to the group during the next meeting: Could you bring to mind a particular story of your life where you left yourself in a pleasure? A story that you left yourself free to enjoy something that happened in your life?

The idea was that 'our lives have been narrated many times, there are many stories that happen at the same time and no story itself never touches or includes all possibilities of life' (Alice Morgan, 2000). So, apart from the history of stress in the lives of participants, it would be interesting to explore the history of delights where the stress was not invited and did not have the authority to intervene.

Stories were described and listened to with great emotion, while Re-membering questions (White, 1997) provided an opportunity for the group members to engage in a revision of the membership of their associations of life, affording an opening for the reconstruction of their identity.

We heard about a 'top-rare love story' that enabled one of the participants to revise her ideas about sex, which were influenced by the teachings of the church and her mother's beliefs. So, from a practice of fear it became a beautiful expression of love. She recognized her ability to flirt and her intention to defend love. She also realized how precious it was for her the values of respect, communication and trust in relationships. Questions concerning the things that her partner seemed to appreciate about her, led to the reconstruction of her sense of identity as a woman and as a human being in general. Moreover, our conversations threw light on a commitment to her life, which was 'to enjoy every little moment'. Some of the group members appeared to be associated with this value and declare their desire to let it accompany them the next days in their steps.

Participants recalled many stories about 'happy gatherings' with friends and 'enjoyments of dancing'. All these stories have contributed to a rich description of their skills and interests, as the value that many of them give to the camaraderie on their relationships with friends or their ability to employ music to chase away the "blackness" of life's routine. As Myerhoff (1982) mention 'thick description involves finding linkages between the group shared values, beliefs and symbols'.

Some of the questions that led our conversation was: 'what image comes to your mind, how do you imagine yourself as you are describing these scenes? Would it be helpful if this picture was staying with you and if you had more of them? How could you do some steps in this direction of 'joy' in

your life? Who else could be your companion in this direction? How could you track his attention to engage in your effort, who could get involved and in which way? Thickening alternative stories, Remembering conversations are moving people towards their preferred territories (Russell & Carey, 2002).

We had already completed the conversations relating to the stage of our lives and it was now time to draw the inside of our instruments, starting with the 'the sounding board'.

### 1.2.1) The sounding board

According to Adriana Müller (March, 2012) the sounding board symbolizes *the precious memories* of people's lives that give them strength. That might include the place where the person was born, special moments on the participant's childhood, significant persons, particular songs, places the person has been to, and many other memories that each one holds precious and that give them strength.

Our meeting began with listening to music, in the context of a specific relaxation practice with breathing techniques. Participants closed their eyes, let their imagination free to travel wherever it wanted with the melody's assistance and I said the following words:

*Take a deep breath and relax ...*

*Your eyes are being heavier, your body sinks into the chair ....*

*You are calm, relaxed ...*

*From far away you see a train approaching you...*

*You get on the train ...*

*It slowly takes you back in time ...*

*Indulge in images of the past ...*

*Outside the window you see favorite places ... places you've been..*

*You feel the breeze ...*

*We go even further back in time ...*

*You notice the countryside were you have been walking ...*

*Houses familiar and cherished..*

*People who have contributed to your life ... they salute you ... they are smiling ...*

*Feel their love ....*

*Smell your most favorite aroma.. the most close to you..*

*Listen for the sounds around you ... Let the music come the colors alive ...*

*From far away some figures are approaching you..*

*It's the people who give you strength ..*

*They are the people who have taught you the most important in life ...*

*Note their facial expression ..*

*Feel the energy that they transmit to you ..*

*You are calm .. you are feeling fulfillment..*

*Happiness and power fills your lungs ..*

*It spreads all over your body ... and around it..*

*Now you can enter the train maintaining that feeling ...*

*Take it with you as the train slowly brings you to present..*

*Keep the thinks that were important to you, acknowledging that it was something of your own to which you can return whenever you want ..*

Much of the account of my idea to use this technique was drawn from the work of William James (1892), who referred to the language of inner self as the "stream of consciousness". As he mention, "it is in states of reverie or meditation, in which we have stepped back from tasks of living

and from our immediate social and relational contexts, that we experience immersion in this stream of consciousness. At such times we become aware of the roaming and wandering form of this inner language and of the images and themes that are associated with it.

The above practice has led to the emergence of several stories implicating smells, old neighborhoods and people who have played an important role in shaping the life and identity of the participants. The basic idea was to take into participant's personal storylines, these memories which lighted up and were powerfully visualized, resulting in a heightened sense of "myself". All of this were experienced while at the same time as William James (1892) says "one is aware that it is" I "who is doing the remembering".

Michael White (1997), drawing on the work of Barbara Myerhoff (1982), has proposed the metaphor of membership for examining the relationships that shape our perceptions, intentions, and actions. Thus, there were given specific questions to the participants in order to explore how their ethics, their purposes and their ways to perceive their possibilities, were shaped by the people who have significant membership in their lives. They were divided into groups of two or three, so that they could spend time reflecting on these questions:

*- Describe your journey, smells, images, people you met, feelings, thoughts.*

*- Who are the people who have loved you and influenced your life positively? How did they contribute to your life? How have you been influenced by these people on your aspirations, values, beliefs, orientations in life?*

*- How were all these things they offered to you made the difference in the way you understand yourself and your life? How did this contribution make you feel about yourself and your life?*

*- What have you done, in which way have you contributed in their own lives? What do they appreciate on you?*

*- How can the life of these people have been different because of your response? How might your contribution had been affected their own lives, their sense of what is life about? Of what they believe is important in life? How have these people been affected by you regarding to their goals, values, beliefs, orientations?*

Some very heart-warming replies followed, as participants narrated stories of love, tender, friendship and felt reconnected through shared values, with dear persons, relatives, or people who were no longer alive. Remembering, as defined by Myerhoff (1982), 'contributes to the development of a 'multi-voiced' sense of identity and facilitates activity in making sense of one's existence'. This Re-remembering conversation gave the opportunity for the participants not only to revising their memberships in life (that is, choosing who they carry in their hearts and minds as members of their lives) but also to re-remembering the stories of who they are and have been and what is and has been and can be possible within those memberships.

At the end, some of the participant's comments had to do with their surprise when they realized that some of their values and beliefs, have such a long history to their life. As one of them mentioned, 'I will make it through in difficulties, I have an ally, my fighting spirit!'. This value is rooted in a story of survival. The participant recounted a memory she had, when she was a child hanging from a cliff, in which a week earlier another child had been killed. The thought that 'I will make it, I will fight to climb', saved her life and from that day she has been committed to her value of fighting spirit and took it on her journey of adulthood.

Other group members have stated very excited when they realized that their relationship with precious people meant so much to them and that they had contributed significantly to their lives. One participant said, 'I had never imagined that I have contributed so in the life of my friend, I did

not expect that our relationship meant so much to her!'. The same participant continues 'In the past, I thought that I didn't need anyone to sustain myself, but now I understand that relationships are not just about that, they are not monodromy and other people get things from our relationship and I want to be more open now'.

For some members of the group a particular chord have been touched for them by the idea that they had received a spiritual heritage (the feeling that they worth as people and as women). One of the participants revealed for the first time in her life, the 'illegal' platonic love-fair she experienced with a family friend, who have passed away, while she was married. She felt relief when she shared her story, 'talking openly to you about that, made it less burdensome', she said. In addition, she mentioned that our conversation about the things that he had offered to her and the ways she has contributed to his life, was a way to honor their relationship and his memory. 'When we reconnect with those we have lost, and the memories of those we have forgotten, then we become stronger. When we see ourselves through the loving eyes of those who have cared for us, our lives are easier to live.' (Barbara Wingard, 2001, p. 43). Furthermore, as the conditions did not allow her to grieve and say goodbye in the way she wanted, the members of the group proposed to organize a trip to go to the village where he was buried. That way she would have the chance to express some last words to him from near. These conversations provided a foundation for achieving her personal intimacy with the other members of the group. 'This is an intimacy that depends upon one's ability to express an inner experience that can be shared with others, and that will have a resonance with the inner experience of others' (William James 1892).

Finally, there were those who reported satisfied and happy when they found out that their nearest people had embraced their own values, 'I think it is wonderful to realize that my son engaged with the importance I give to 'Besa' for life!' (unique Albanian word meaning honor determination and dignity). It is through Re-membering that 'life is given a shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future' (Myerhoff, 1982, p.111).

### **1.2.2) The Vibration**

The vibration it's about what makes the instrument have this specific sound (violins sounds differently from flute, and from cello, and so on...) (Müller, March, 2012). This part of the instrument symbolize some of *the values, abilities, skills*, and everything else that is important in person's life. Things that participant would never leave behind; what makes each one of them to be unique in a world of 7 billion people.

Narrative therapy assumes that its clients are skillful and competent and that they have many beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that can help them to manage the problems that they face in their lives (Morgan, 2002).

As the journey continued and every week different aspects of the participant's life and identity were illuminated, the process of filling these elements in their drawing remained throughout an open case. At the end of each meeting, they were noting the new understandings they had demonstrate, in order to shape the vibration of their instrument. When people develop their own descriptions of self by connecting them to personal knowledge and values, they create a greater sense of agency (Denborough, 2008).

Some of the significant qualities they decided to capture on their drawings had been related with values such as: offer, companionship, security, love, freedom of choice, respect for diversity, communication. Understanding Narrative therapy as a metaphor, facilitate the comprehension of authoring or re-authoring as a process whereby the individual is able to 'articulate and experience

other ways of being and thinking that are available to them as they experience some of the purposes, values, beliefs, commitments and so on that are associated with these alternative accounts of life' (White, 1995, p.20).

As the picture of group member's instrument had been completed, music began to play and the waves of melody pumped into the universe ... How far will our music get? It was time to move on to the next step of our project.

### 1.3) The sound

The sound is represented by waves coming from the instrument to the edge, just like musical waves. These waves represent the person's *dreams and hopes* (Müller, March, 2012).

Once again, we relied on relaxation techniques and music's magical and immediate way of drawing attention on aspects of people's lives. Participants lied down, I asked them to close their eyes and allow the music waves to drive their dreams wherever they were to go.

In the following replies, the notion of duality, which Michael White refers to as "absent but implicit", became highly visible. Descriptions are relational, not representational (White, 2000). A singular description can be considered to be the visible side of a double description. It is that which is on the other side of what is being discerned, and upon what this discernment depends.

In some conversations that took place, participants referred on things that hindered their dreams to forward. In these cases, my interest has focused to what it is that these difficulties speaks to or what their concern is a testimony to, in terms of the absent but implicit. This interest were taken up in these conversations in response to the particularities of the participants expression, where to be found the traces of a multiplicity of unstated signs that have contributed to the possibility of the discernment of the concerns.

Here is an extract from a conversation we had with one of the participants:

*S: (she describes an image of her, dancing and being on a bridge where the wind blows and she feels a calmness and serenity).*

*K: How is this image linked to your dreams? What is this image talking about?*

*S: Freedom.*

*K: From what would you like your life to be released?*

*S: From the guilt related to my father. (she mentioned some problems that came up recently in her relationship with her father and the difficulty of speaking to him about these as she wouldn't want to hurt him ... she also refers to the over-protectiveness of her parents and how much that has been bothered her since her childhood and until now)*

*K: S., I feel that there are two different paths that our conversation could follow. One is to talk about the problems in your relationship with your father and the other is to remain to the things that your dream is expressing. What do you think? Would it be more interesting for you to change the course of our conversation?*

*S: No, let's stay on that.*

*K: You were saying about this over-protectiveness.. What things important to you did this over-protectiveness restrict, what things did it make difficult to express?*

*S: I felt like I wasn't being recognized, I was always the chubby kid, I didn't graduate from any university ... I always admired the educated and cultured people ... I felt that I wasn't being recognized...*

*K: I was wondering, how has it been possible for a person who had never received the recognition from his parents to manage to come in touch and maintain the understanding that recognition is a worthwhile direction in life?*

*S: When I became a mother myself and I was taking hugs from my children, then I felt it.*

*K: What may have made it possible to get the recognition of your children? What do you think they may have seen to you and appreciate it?*

*S: I think the time I was spending with them and my telling that 'I will always be here for you'. I wanted to be a good mother.*

*K: Are you saying that you have developed some principles as a person about what it means to be a good mother?*

*S: Yes for me, my principles of what it means to be a good mother has to do with finding the balance of unlimited love and rigor whenever it's necessary.*

*K: How did you manage to keep alive in your daily life this principle of balance? What helped you?*

*S: The discussions. We talked a lot with my children. I was inviting them to discuss many different issues. I remember for example once I was watching a documentary on TV that talked about the relationships between child and parents, I called them to watch it together and then I asked them for their opinion. I asked them if they would like to have such a relationship.*

*K: And what did they respond to the kind of relationship they wanted?*

*S: Yes indeed we have such a relationship, an open one. They feel free to talk to me about things that trouble them.*

*K: These skills you have, to invite the discussion with your children, to find the balance between unlimited love and rigor to give them the assurance that you will always be there for them, what have all these brought on your relationship with them?*

*S: Confidence*

*K: What else has helped to cultivate your relationship with confidence?*

*S: That I didn't criticize them. I wanted them to feel free to make their own choices.*

*K: How important is for you the value of trust, the lack of criticism, the freedom of choice in your relationship with your children?*

*S: Very important although I struggled at first with this issue. I didn't want to be overprotective like my parents.*

*K: How did you manage to quieten the over-protectiveness?*

*S: I thought that since they trust me I should let myself trust them.*

*K: That was the crucial thinking that brought the balance in your relationship with overprotectiveness? I'm wondering how did you manage to give space to this thought? What does this say about your abilities?*

*S: It has to do with the discussion again. Because we had created an environment of open discussion and we felt free to talk about things, there was confidence between us.*

*K: So your ability to invite discussion, created a strong relationship of yours and your children with confidence, which overshadowed overprotectiveness. Is that what you are saying?*

*S: Yes, I had never thought of that. I hadn't ever put these understandings in a row, I thought that some things were just happening, but as we are talking I think that's it...*

*K: When do you remember in your life that these abilities and values of trust or freedom of choice, which you hold precious, have bore a difference in your relationship with overprotectiveness?*

*S: Well, I wanted my kids to go to church and perhaps initially I was overprotective about this but then I managed to expellee the overprotectiveness and talked with them, to let them have the relationship they want with the church. We discussed that it is their decision on their beliefs.*

*K: Why was it important for you to see your children going to church? What values important for you steered this desire?*

*S: the honesty and the offering value.*

*K: Thinking for a while about your children choices in their life, as we had discussed it in our previous meetings, in what level do you feel that they coordinate with these values?*

*S: Yes they coordinate indeed. I am very happy and proud of my kids. (at previous meeting we had been discussing about the history of the values she is sharing with her children and how they are manifested in their lives).*

*K: As we are talking about your principles on what it means to be a good mother, giving unconditional love but rigor where necessary and some of the values that you hold as important, the value of trust, honesty, freedom of choice and also some of your skills, to invite discussion and to assuage the overprotectiveness, how are all these shaping now your sense of yourself as a mother?*

*S: I feel very happy. I had never thought before that I carry on all these values, I hadn't realize that I have such abilities. I feel full.*

*K: What may all these values say about the things you want to give your devotion in life, about the things you want to invest in?*

*S: I want to invest in the offer. It gives me joy, that's something that gives meaning to my life, it relaxes me and it makes me feel full. It has to do with my involvement with charities.*

These scaffolding questions made possible for S. to alter her relationship with her own history. This wasn't to reframe or change it by re-visioning it, but to re-engage with her personal history of 'lack of recognition' and 'overprotectiveness' in new terms. For S. one of the routes to her re-engagement with recognition was through the identification of her relationship with her children which made it possible for her to give meaning to recognition, and to put into circulation, aspects of her lived experience. This new understanding has also provide her with options of a re-engagement with what she called 'overprotectiveness'. That which were absent but implicit that this inquiry brought, included 'wishes' to be elsewhere, in other territories in her relationship with her children, away from 'overprotectiveness'. Once this accounts were identified, I introduced her questions to encourage her to identify the skills and knowledges that she engage with in maintaining her relationship with this wish. Her values, which were leading this wish, were explored and her commitment to 'offering' emerged as central point in her life.

#### **1.4) The audience**

The process of supplementing the particulars in participant's instruments had been completed. It was time for them to choose who they would like to have the honor and act as *an audience* hearing about the developments in their lives, their new realizations. At the bottom of the drawing the participants were required to write down the names of the ones that they would like to be there, listening to the beautiful music that they are playing (Müller, March, 2012).

Inspired by the work of Denborough, D. (2008), I suggested to the participants to think of the people, dead or alive or even spiritualities, who have been involved in the cultivation of their dreams, as members of their own football team. They might regard as members of their team, people with whom they had been connecting during life. Although, some of these members might have been invited consciously in their lives, for some others they might have had little choice for their integration (Morgan, 2000). But for this meeting we decided to make our own choice of who we would like to have a more active role and be honored as the audience of our song.

The questions given were:

➤ Goalkeeper

- Who acts as a guardian of your dreams? That may be a person, a group, a spirituality, an organization. Who watches over you, who is the most reliable for you?
- In which ways is he watching your dreams?
- How does the goalkeeper affects the way you feel about yourself?
- What is possible for you when he is watching your dreams?
- Is it important for him to watch your dreams? Why? What does your relationship mean to him, the role he has been engaging in your life? How does your relationship affect his sense of his own identity, how is it making him feel? What can be said about the meaning that this gives in his own life?

➤ Defense

- Who is helping your goalkeeper to protect your dreams, these that are valuable to you? In which way?
- What is important for them to do this? With which of their own values, is this role they have been engaging in your life, associated?
- Which of these values coordinate with your own choices in life?
- How is it for you to realize that you are connecting with these people through your shared values?

➤ Offense

- Who is encouraging you to stay in touch with your dreams?
- Which of the ways to encourage you has been the most helpful?
- Why is it important for this person to encourage you to defend your dreams?
- What may his stance and way to encourage you, mean about the things that he appreciates in you; what is he seeing in you that keep his excitement to encourage your dreams, alive?

➤ Other teammates

- Who are some of the other team players in your life, those who know about your dreams, or actively participate in them?
- How did you introduce them to your dreams? How do they know that they are important to you? What have they been witnessing?
- Would it be more helpful if you involve them more in your dreams? How could you track their attention? What steps would help on that?
- What difference would it make to the sense of yourself and your life if you were letting them to be more involved in these ways?

➤ Coach

- Who is the person from whom you have learnt the most, from whom you gained some knowledge of life to approach your dreams, to make some steps in their direction? There is the possibility that



these people are still alive or they may have passed away. What are some of the things you have learned from them?

- How does these learnings guide some of your choices in life?
- If these people knew how their knowledge have been affected your life, how do you think they might have feel about that?

➤ The Hymn

- Is there a particular song that means a lot to you, that you could call it the 'hymn' of your dreams for this moment and if so, which might that be? Why is it important for you?

➤ Supporters in the stands

- When you're in your court, who do you imagine to be the supporters in the stands, who are the people (living or not) which you would hopefully make them feel good, knowing that you have these dreams? Who would be glad about you for having these dreams and about your willingness to keep them alive?

➤ The First Aid Kit

- When your team is facing some difficulties (one injury / one player coming off), when things that happen in your life, are trying to steal your dreams who do you approach? What is it that supports you in difficult times? What is inside your first aid kit?

➤ The Stadiums (Fields of Dreams)

- What are your courts? Where are the places you feel more 'at home'? That makes it possible for you to recollect your dreams? You can have more than one places. They could be found even in more than one countries. Your court could be somewhere you go often or you may be visiting it using your imagination.

## **2) *Playing the song***

The next meetings were dedicated to the presentation of participant's each instrument, openly, after my invitation to stick their drawings up on a cardboard. This created 'the orchestra of life'.

We took some time to reflect on this orchestra of so many and unique instruments. We talked about the kind of music that participants imagined coming out and many of the group members reported in various forms of Greek traditional music as these melodies, were connecting them with their culture and some pleasant valued memories. Some imagined their audience as being moved to the sound of their melodies, while others stated that their music would make their audience to feel joy.

Furthermore, we discussed the differences and similarities participants observe, as they were facing all these instruments of different shapes, sizes and sounds to coexist. They were people with different experiences but some shared dreams and values that unite them as a group. In the end of our session they admitted their surprise as they came to realize how this process had played an important role in establishing a climate of trust and acceptance among the group members.

### **3) *The Orchestra of Life and Getting Attuned***

A highly entertaining encounter followed as we decided to try some rhythmic music plays and to talk about the challenges we had to face, interacting together now as an orchestra.

We all agreed that it is very different to play individually rather than all together as it is important to synchronize our instruments with each other to a common rhythm. What participants admitted that might have complicated their effort was the concentration they had to exercise, while on the other hand, what helped them to be in harmony as an orchestra was their common intention to be part of the whole and to actively participate in creating beautiful music.

The participants mentioned in the contribution of everyone to the orchestra and particularly in their mood, their feelings, their willingness to invest in our project. When we talked about the skills they may have that are unique for everyone in this orchestra, we all finally agreed to the feeling of responsibility, by the meaning "the ability to respond to", what Adriana Müller (March, 2012) calls the response-ability. Finally, they recognized the contribution of the orchestra in participants personal effort to coordinate with each other and specifically to the fact that the climate of trust and intimacy that has grown, prevented the fear of criticism and enhanced the intention of the members not only to experiment with rhythms, but also with alternative ways of thinking and acting.

### **4) *The song***

All these months we were gathering material from our work with the group, so in the next session we decided to link participant's skills, knowledges and stories, together, in the form of a song. The aim of this document was to highlight and celebrate the significance of these new understandings.

We started to write the lyrics sharing what the participants have learned about their own abilities, values, hopes, dreams, and 'response-ability'. After some experimentation in the melody our song was ready! In the following meetings we recorded it, so a musical collective document has drawn up.

As David Newman (2008) describes 'the use of documentation is to link people to their networks, to have significant messages or knowledges as more enduring, to build living double-storied documents around certain themes'.

### **5) *The Finale***

After the generating of our song it was then time to identify who it is that our collective document could make a contribution to, with whom we could share it.

I suggested to send it to my colleagues of the rehabilitation center for people with disabilities, in order to act as 'Outsider-witnesses' (White, 1995,1999). As I was involved with that institution, I knew there were people being for years in the same position, that had many requirements. I thought that it might be helpful for them to have the opportunity to reconnect with values and hopes, and strengthen their effort to continue the meaning-making in their work and life. Participants expressed, also, their desire to share it with their loved ones.

Furthermore, Adriana Müller proposed to present the song in Brazil, to a group of people with whom she met. So, our song traveled overseas! Finally, we discussed the song with one of my client which in this period of her life, were dealing with her 'migration of identity' (White, 1995).

Narrative practice is founded on the idea that the stories that we tell about ourselves are not private and individual but are a social achievement. My aim of using the Outsider-witness practices was to challenge the isolating and individualising effects of problems and let this sense of 'realness' or 'authenticity' to come, when participant's preferred stories of who they are were being witnessed and responded to by a significant audience.

The outside-witnesses described images and values that stood out for them while they were listening to the song, as the value of simplicity, contact, creation, solidarity and sharing. Some reported that the song gave them the chance to illuminate the meaning they treasure to the pleasure of small everyday moments and to make more visible that this, to a large extent, reflects the essence of life for them. One of my colleague said, that the song has created for her a desire to bequeath to her children the value of giving, despite the adverse social conditions prevailing in the country, which often require the idea of competition as the only way to survive.

Another woman reported that her participation in this process awakened her desire to reconnect with the sense of "togetherness" and to preserve it in the coming days as she is being in a transitional phase of her life. For another witness, what stood out was the value that the song seems to give to the laughter, while at the same time it created for her a sense of militancy that reminded her stories from the Athens Polytechnic uprising, as they have been described by her family. She felt being reconnected with her mother, as she had the sense that among the voices of the participants she could have heard her mother's voice. Moreover, she stated that being an outside-witness of this particular song, encourage her future steps and strengthened her belief, that "acting all together and putting everyone their own small stone, we could change the world".

Regarding the Brazilian group, since they didn't understand Greek, the music touched them in a very specific way: it touched them through the rhythm and the voices. They said they felt lightness and strength while many of them thought about a merry-go-round. One of them wanted to dance to the song, while many of them talked about the movement: the rhythm, the world going round and round, the merry-go-round, playing, vibration...Another women from Brazil ,was deeply touched by the idea of listening to women from Greece – 'the birth place of our culture', she mentioned. She said 'I felt so connected it was like I belong there'. One of the participants said she felt as if the song was so powerful it could make the world go round. Furthermore, they also were touched by the idea of nourishing, and sharing the juicy truth. They were connected with the idea of motherhood: giving birth, raising a child, nourishing, being strong and sweet. Many of them talked about 'Mother Earth' – Gaia. Finally one of the participants who wrote down some notes for us reported: "it gave me a sense of being kind and patient. It strengthened my willing to know me better and make changes at the right time. They've said that 'Life is beautiful' and I agree: Life delights me! While listening to this song I felt like hearing the others, the sound of other 'soul mates'".

Moreover, we were deeply touched by the song which the Brazilian group composed and shared with us, in response to our own. Participants expressed their surprise when they realized the contribution of the song and how the knowledge they had gathered during this journey, had had positive effects to the lives of others. A woman said: 'I could not believe that it made the difference in the way some people see themselves and their lives! I thought they would consider it something childish! I feel joy and pride!' When I asked the participants what images of themselves came to their mind as they were listening to the outsider-witnesses reflections and the song from Brazil,

they described a circle of people holding hand to hand and dancing around the world. One of the participants stated: 'the song made me feel that there are no borders, we are all together a team and together we can make miracles! I feel that the song did something more. It is empowering for women!

Then I asked them how hearing these comments might have moved them. One woman said: 'I realized that there may be people with different experiences and come from different cultures, but we all want to share, we have common dreams. This gives me courage!'. Another said: I was surprised that we have many possibilities. We can compose, create, coexist harmoniously with each other and share'. Another woman said: 'I feel full because we had the courage to express certain values and to capture the 'togetherness' while others are isolated'. For many of them it was important to bequeath the gained knowledge in dear people. A woman stated: 'This whole process has highlighted what are the important things for me in life and made me want to pass them to my children and grandchildren'. Another member of the group reported: I came to appreciate the value of offering. Although, I thought it wasn't something important to me, this process woke up this desire and that is making me feel beautiful.

Developing this form of collective documentation allowed 'conversations' and 'contributions' to take place between groups of people who never met in person. Persons become knowledge-makers and knowledge –makers become knowledgeable. Both their knowledge-making capabilities and their knowledgeableness are authenticated (Epston&White,1990). In this way, as the members of the group stated, they came to experience themselves and their preferred identity claims as part of a community of acknowledgement

Finally, a woman referred to our journey in its entirety said, that this year something different and new happened, that she had never experienced before nor had heard other friends to experience in relevant groups. She stated: 'I felt that we have enlightened the good in our lives, things that we had forgot or maybe we had considered them for granted. We have celebrated them, not wasted our resources delving all the time into problems. I watched again my life as a film, but it was a beautiful film this time!'

Here are the lyrics of our song:

### *Life is beautiful*

*If you have precious people around you,  
If the chirping of a bird  
brings you a smile,  
If the calmness of the sea  
brings peace to your soul,  
If the smile of a young child brings tears to your eyes,  
Life is beautiful!*

*What I want most,  
is to leave behind the bad things  
and to shout again,*

*Life is beautiful!*

*To exchange fear,  
with hope  
and to shout again,  
Life is beautiful!*

*Keep in your mind the good things  
Give a kick to the bad!  
When you remember voices  
Keep close to you the loving ones*

*Make colors alive  
With beautiful fragrances  
And passed them artfully  
to the depths of the soul.*

*Thousand pomegranates myriad seeds  
Together we will be  
A huge force!  
What love and what friendship  
fly us to anarchy  
to live, to feel  
to climb high!*

*Love as you are being loved  
Commiserate with people as they commiserate with you  
Laugh, fight  
Not looking back.*

*Laugh, laughter is life  
Make company to people  
your beautiful feelings  
These are what your heart request.*

*Look around, it is so simple  
to carry the friendship with you  
And a full hug  
with the whole world dreams!*

*Thousand pomegranates myriad seeds  
Together we will be  
A huge force!*

*I thought I was on my own  
But in the journey of life  
we have allies dreams,  
values, intentions and commitments.*

*Treasures we have inherited,  
Stories we have gained  
People who loved us  
We gave them joy and meaning*

*Our small company,  
Love wants to give you  
With this song  
And to strengthen you!*

*Let's close our eyes and let our imagination  
to travel our soul wherever it wishes  
To take us to beautiful places  
Where there are people with tenderness and kindness.*

*Let's get together in a circle  
Let's dance, let's sing  
Let's sing the song of happiness*

*A rosy pomegranate  
I hide in my soul  
I count its seeds  
And these are my strength.  
Pomegranate, pomegranate ....  
Our life is like a pomegranate*

*Therein resides  
every juicy truth  
Which nourishes and watering me  
And scares the fear!  
Pomegranate, pomegranate ....  
Our life is like a pomegranate*

*Every once in a while I open them  
I give them away  
Take, you too, my friend  
Plant them in the soul  
And wait for them to bloom*

*And another pomegranate to golden brown  
Pomegranate, pomegranate ....  
Our life is like a pomegranate*

*Thousand pomegranates myriad seeds  
Together we will be  
A huge force!*

## Epilogue

As the journey reached its destination, it's a pleasure to admit that it has been a great experience both for the group and for me. We faced several challenges in our path but we had the opportunity to enjoy its treasures.

The participants were able to create a safe space from their problems and demystify certain hardships they had to face in their daily lives, such as stress. They also had the chance to rescue qualities, skills, values, beliefs, significant persons, and to strengthened their identities. It was very important for the participants to realize that sharing through the song, their knowledges linked to their life stories, brought positive effects to people who heard them. They felt connected around shared themes, with people even from the other side of the world! Besides, music is a kind of language that can be understood by different people in different cultures. Music makes us sing and dance and it stays in our minds and can be accessed at any moment, in a way that written words can't (Denborough, 2002).

At this point, I will refer to a personal concern I had been preoccupied with as a therapist, one which, to my surprise, has faltered along the way. This hesitation had to do with my worry of how the group members would welcome the different way of using language that externalizing involves, as it was the first time I was introducing them to these new ways and they were not familiar with them. 'Narrative therapy does not only make use of words or language but relies solely on language for its existence' (Epston & White, 1990).

Although initially there were times when this alternative form of thought might have brought bewilderment among some of the participant's, ultimately very quickly it has been exceeded and this externalizing way of speaking was adopted with much enthusiasm. What helped me in this case, was to carry in my mind that my directivity should lie in my attempt to 'be active in the selection of the new description' (White, 1986, p 80) in order to illuminate and enrich the aspects of people's experience, which had been subdued and sidelined by the dominant narratives. As they were taking a step away from their problems, and their lives preferred stories were being enriched, participants felt more comfortable and interested about externalization.

In conclusion, I would say that this development emerged as a result of my effort to break from the broader notions of effective action and the taken for granted privilege that are associated with the ethic of control. My aim was to establish the ethic of collaboration as that which is determined and taken in partnership with others (White, 1997). In joining collaboratively with the members of the group in the investigative reporting and in multiple actions that contribute to the foundations of possibility in their lives, I didn't had to adopt a position of expertise in relation to the problems that people were experiencing. Instead, we could explore together new ways of relating to them.

Narrative is an approach that emphasizes a bottom-up accountability that is formed in collaboration with persons who consult therapy (White, 1997). During our journey, I came to realize not only how not burdensome is this version of accountability, but it provided for me options for rendering visible the limits of my thoughts and to think past this limits, thereby extending them.

Finally, I would like to comment on one point that I found particularly interesting and concerns the last part of this project, namely when the song finds its recipients outside the group, in an attempt to help other people who share similar dilemmas. This process helped me to discern the difference between the simple expression of thoughts or feelings through music and of sharing this product with the broader social environment.

In the first case, I would say that the music activity is more like an attempt to self-definition, to autonomy in relation to the 'system', as anyone could define the dominant problematic history or



any power relationship in daily life or the broader social context. This creates an identity of an 'expressed' person, which could give people the ability to be masters of themselves, but depletes their effort in the present.

However, in the second case, we are able to talk about 'creativity' and that reflects the small 'p' political aspect of therapeutic practice (Michel Foucault, 1979). The notification of the new identities and histories which have been re-constructed and the confirmation of them, through the establishment of communication procedures, is not just giving space in solidarity but it also gives a response, personal and socialized, a position registered in a system of stances, subjective consciousness positioned in a symbolic system. This small 'p' political aspect of our work as a group is very important to me and it reflects my personal commitment, which became more visible for me, during this journey and connecting with outsider-witnesses reflections, 'to put, along with others a small stone, in the direction of changing the world'. As stated by the refrain of our song: Thousand pomegranates, myriad seeds, together we will be a huge force!

Narrative Practice gave me the opportunity to renegotiate many of the taken for granted of other approaches and to develop a more critical option in the way I see myself as a therapist and as a person in different contexts of my life. In the coming days, I would like to keep as my closest companion these realizations, and to put them into practice, in order to assist other people to enrich their personal agenda and to illuminate alternative ways of thinking and acting.

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