

# The Emotional Narrative

## Synopsis

History of my family's life experiences, how they responded emotionally and how those emotions impacted relationships, opportunities, future generations, inter-generational development of emotional intelligence and success.

This book will look at development of emotional, feeling and sensory skills through generations of my family since my two sets of grand-parents grew up in Australia and married around the time of the first world war. My parents married in early 1950s, my own generation married around 1980s and now my nephews are living with partners and managing their lives with awareness which supports their correction of intergenerational inherited errors. One emotion, love has been prominent above all others in Western culture over the past 100 years, since arranged marriage ended. Love skills are encouraged and taught, learned through neuroplastic practice. Society and culture are extremely active love promoters, through music, festivals, didactic events and workshops. I propose that love breaks down racial barriers, given time and social advocacy.

What has happened in regards to emotional awareness over these 100 years? When did we first think that our emotional experience could and should be intelligent? How has emotional awareness and emotional intelligence shaped my extended family? How has emotional lack of awareness, therapeutic interventions and my 'recovery effort' shaped my life. History, intergenerational impositions, trauma have greatly shaped my life-experience, relationships, success in 'expected or imposed' measures such as marriage, children, connections? In extension, how has emotional health and awareness shaped our common ancestors and this country Australia?

My research as a Fine Art Honours student at RMIT has greatly informed The Emotional Narrative. I will draw upon these theories:

Historically Western culture believed that emotion was unrelated to cognitive functioning.

Aristotle argued that all emotions are healthy as long as they are not excessive or inappropriate to the time and place.

Western culture places great emphasis on personal control of emotional states and feeling states, hate is not considered an emotion but a personality trait. I will share personal family narratives which challenge this notion.

Cartesian versus James

Neuroplasticity tells us that: The circuitry that supports affect and the circuitry that supports cognition are completely intertwined—an anatomical arrangement consistent with the Buddhist view that these processes cannot be separated. (Ekman p59)

Buddhism: To quote Ekman, 'From a Buddhist perspective, however, some emotions are conducive to genuine and enduring happiness and others are not. A Buddhist term for such happiness is *sukha*, which may be defined in this context as a state of flourishing that arises from mental balance and insight into the nature of

## The Emotional Narrative

reality' (p59-60). Emotional states Buddhists disdain include craving, hatred and identity. Buddhist has supported my cousin to find peace.

Philosophers seek to understand the nature of our being, and what is truth. Philosophers praise agency and authenticity as being suitable objectives.

I will investigate how personal agency fits with Buddhist's disdain for identity.

The Big questions this narrative will consider are a progression in western culture's propensity to know their emotions. Knowing one's emotions promotes a deeper, inwardly focussed knowing of oneself. Robert Desaix at his recent online book launch strongly promoted the development of a rich inner life. Buddha promotes years of mental health training, supporting the development of states such as *sukha*.

This text will tell tales exploring my family's emotional lives, emotional learnings and emotional achievements. Dr Antonio Damasio, in an interview with *Scientific American MIND* explains the relationship between emotions and feelings, 'neuroscience, emotions are more or less the complex reactions the body has to certain stimuli. When we are afraid of something, our hearts begin to race, our mouths become dry, our skin turns pale and our muscles contract. This emotional reaction occurs automatically and unconsciously. Feelings occur after we become conscious in our brain of such physical changes; only then do we experience the feeling of fear'. (Para 5) Buddhists claim that a balanced and trained mind will avoid the feelings of fear, anxiety and stress. Dr Stephen Porges proposes the Polyvagal Theory as a means of supporting people whose bodies are wracked by fear, anxiety, stress, which is the response of one's Polyvagal Nervous System to triggers, flashbacks and memories of abuse, distress and trauma. (Sunshaw, 2019)

The Emotional Narrative aims to share how emotion, feelings and sensory therapies such as yoga, singing, mindfulness and other mental trainings support, emotional intelligence and/or balance?

# The Emotional Narrative

## Chapter Outlines

### Introduction: why this book

See above.

### Chapter One: Julie-Granny's childhood

Granny's family came from Nordhausen in Germany, before Granny was born. Granny was born in Rushworth around 1910, she had seven brothers and sisters at least two of whom never married, possibly due to the lack of men available after the first world war.

Whroo gold-mine site still has a well-preserved gravesite for a Nordhausen (later Northausen) ancestor.

Julie trained as a nurse.

### Chapter Two: Granny's married Charles Youren

Charlie's family came to Australia from England, his father was a staunch Methodist and yelled through the pub window, at Charlie having a beer, get out of that den of iniquity, you're going to hell.

Charlie was a Light horseman during the First World War.

A Soldier Settlement was granted near Yark in Victoria.

With two young daughter Charlie and Julie walked off the soldier settlement with all their possessions in their horse and cart during the depression.

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Val, the oldest daughter became a Women's Air Force nurse, she married Arthur and had three children in Alexandra. Arthur left Val and his three boys for another woman. Women were not entitled to independent pensions at this time, approx. 1960s, so Val was dependent on Arthur for money to support the boys.

Val died at age 44, the boys went to live with their father in Melbourne. These boys have experienced trauma, particularly the younger one, who has children of his own. Emotions to these boys are challenging, since they never got a chance to discuss their father's leaving or their mother's death. More silence.

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Granny was lucky to be a member of her local Women's Country Association which provided outlets for women's chatter and connection. Granny died at at 66.

Men coming back from the war seldom shared their experiences, creating a cultural precedent for soldiers for decades to come and subsequent mental health issues. Charlie lived to 89, after Julie died he sold their Alexandra house and went to live with Eve and later Judith.

## The Emotional Narrative

### Chapter Three: Grandparents Nell and Alan 'Hick' Hickinbotham

Geelong beginnings, Grandad Rob Hickinbotham & football

Jennings family narrative, Nell's parents, siblings - brother Gerald was a primary school head master, her brother Terry was a Catholic Priest, her sister Joan married Geelong Football's treasurer, they counted the takings on their kitchen table, place called home, education, employment

Hickinbotham family narrative, Hick's parents' strong Anglican beliefs, siblings, place called home, education, employment

Marriage, vowed to raise children in no religious faith.

Longerenong College & Horsham where Ian was born

Roseworthy Agricultural College, Gawler (now part of Adelaide university). Developed the first winescience course in Australia, war time students were given research projects funded by wine industry.

Nell purchases land and sold for a profit, she began Hickinbotham Homes

Three boys, Alan, Ian and Paul. They attended prince Alfred boys School in Adelaide, boarding while their parents lived in Gawler. All three boys played football and cricket, sport and sporting prowess was very important to the family's sense of achievement.

Ian tells the story of overhearing his mother saying to Hick, here, a nice apple for you, we'll give those spotty one to the kids. Another story, one night they heard a noise on the roof, Hick grabbed his 202 and went outside and shot Ian's cat. In telling these stories, Ian never expressed any distress or emotional response, that was his learning, his neuroscience.

People were expected to 'control' their emotions during this period of 1930s. Freud argued that emotional experience was not unconscious, they were always able to know and control our emotions and feelings.

Hick doesn't suffer fools, won't answer to Grandpa, wants to be called Hick.

Ian developed osteomyelitis and spent six months in hospital. I asked if his parents visited him and he said, 'I am sure they did.' How often, I asked, 'everyday' he assured me. He really had no memory. The impact of trauma.

Paul killed a boy in a game of cricket. Trauma such as this needs full disclosure and discussion, however, the accepted 1930s practice was to stay silent, the body and mind were apparently resilient enough to contain the emotional distress, feelings of shame, blame and guilt that inevitably resulted from such a disaster. Paul's emotional life erupted a few years later when he punched his father up. Hick and Nell called the police and Paul was institutionalized in an asylum for the rest of his life, transferred to residential care when asylums were closed down... Mental Health in the 1930s-40s was considered a life-sentence and like a criminal, Paul was incarcerated against his will, heavily sedated, shocked hundreds of times with electroconvulsive 'therapy' and became institutionalized in his thinking: I'm a bad person, I deserve to be locked away, I will never return to society.

No one talked about Paul's actions or his fate, my father never discussed or mentioned his brother, and saw him only twice after his incarceration. My father's emotions were strong, so he kept away, in order to control his feelings.

## The Emotional Narrative

Alan, the oldest son, married Margaret in a registry office just two days before Ian and Judith's church wedding.

Judith tells us that when she announced she was pregnant with Stephen, Alan told Margaret to pack her bags and leave, he threw her out of the house. When I stayed there while my parents were overseas he was a total bully, loud, obnoxious, controlling and like Rupert Murdoch, he pitted one child against the other, divide and conquer, or did he think he was a Roman with some Gladiators or Cock birds.

There were secrets and whisperings an outlet for emotional feelings, uncontainable

Hick died of stomach cancer in 1959

Nell lived with Alan's family and died in 1964.

Alan inherited Hickenbotham Homes, Ian got 3000 pounds, Paul got a legacy which was managed by Alan and his wife Margaret. Emotions were not considered in these issues. Culture and custom were far more influential than disappointment, resentment, jealousy or emotional pain. **(Words removed for work count)** . The oldest is expected to shelter and care for the younger siblings and parents, should they require support. There were not traditional employments, priesthood, headmaster, military, as there had been in the previous generation of Jennings siblings, associated with these three boys, Alan business entrepreneur, Ian Plonky winemaker and Paul never had a career, although he was very intelligent.

### Chapter Four: Judith and Ian Hickenbotham

Met in Coonawarra, Ian was winemaker for Wynns and Judith nursing at Mt Gambier Hospital

Fun times had by all during the courting days. For instance, Ian and his friends travelled in Wolf's ute, some sitting in the back tray, to Mt Gambier to go dancing with the nurses, picking them up from the nurses' quarters at the hospital. On the way home, the fellows were stopped by the Police. We're looking for some missing sheep, the police advised, from the back of the ute, under the tarp and blankets came the unmistakable sound of BAAAAAAA, BAAAAAAA. The fellows were waved on, without a smile.

Judith and Ian married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1953 at ST James Church in Melbourne. Ian arrived in Melbourne, where Judith's aunties ironed 23 shirts. According to Judith she paid for their honeymoon, although Ian was very romantic, phoning ahead to their accommodation and ordering a bottle of Sparkling Shiraz and two Mars Bars to be placed in their room fridge for arrival celebrations. Love was a permissible emotion in the 1950s. As opposed perhaps to earlier days when marriages were all but arranged affairs.

Barossa Valley Nuriootpa became their second home, after one year managing the Penola Pub. Judith's sister Norma visited the Pub and was elated when under the bread and butter plate of a table she waitressed she found a tip of 20pence. Norma was enticed to help out when all the staff walked out, because Ian wanted to assert his managerial position so sacked the head waiter.

Stephen was born and slept in a draw, one of a chest, Judith inherited when they moved into the huge Yalumba Tower to live, as Ian made wine.

Judith could no longer work as a nurse; legally married women were not allowed to work.

## The Emotional Narrative

They build a house in Staehr Street, Nuriootpa, three bedrooms, a black slate floored playroom, open plan lounge with polished floor boards, kitchen and laundry.

Ian took the job of Grape Grower's Co-operative Manager in 1956 and stayed until 1964.

Inventions: vacuum cleaner, washing machine, floor polisher, television.

They were very proud that they drove me to Adelaide one day, when I was about three to be in a television program.

I hated it, but they never realized. I wonder how aware of their feelings these new parents were?

Scientists supported the Three-Hour Feed, the baby was swaddled and left alone screaming in her cot until the next three-hour feed. If the mother had felt nothing before in her life, surely all that screaming touched her heart-strings?

Scientists were all men, I wonder how they thought they could know the best feeding, nurturing and caring regime for infants.

My father thought of himself as a scientist and told young mother's, 'oh please take the baby away, bring it back when it's three years old'. Was it that he was not ready to nurture and care for a baby, or that the baby was not ready for him?

The caring concept was challenged and nuanced from both parental and child ends.

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I was assaulted by a stranger in the local park. I fell apart emotionally, no one knew how to support me. I had a psychotic episode, but no psychology or interventions, possibly as a response to Paul's life-experience.

Three years passed. My parents bought a restaurant in Toorak called Gini's, we moved to Burwood opposite Wattle Park. I was grossly lonely at Wattle Park State School, which shared a fence with the Tally Ho Children's Home, something that caused me much silent emotional distress.

A series of very emotional events followed:

My father's osteomyelitis rotted his hip away, he was the second person in Australia to have a hip replacement. He went through tremendous pain and endurance for many long months waiting for the operation. He went mad with pain.

My uncle was killed by his own men in Vietnam, the Australian Army claimed it was suicide which would have robbed the family of his pension. My father and Judith's cousin sought political support from Staley and they got this decision reversed.

Auntie Jill and her three children lived in our home for six months after Trevor's death.

My mother's mother died of a hemorrhage, she had experienced a series of strokes.

My mother had a 'breakdown', the result of emotional overload. The doctor slapped my mother's face and told her to pull herself together.

I had a second psychotic episode, although no one except my teachers seemed to recognise this.

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## The Emotional Narrative

Jenny sought other work.

2017 Ian died of kidney failure

Judith is 92 years old in 2020 living in Williamstown retirement village. Norma has been quite ill and I had to say to Judith just last week, when are you going to grow up and manage your own emotions. It has taken me decades of therapy to understand Judith's push pull on my own emotions and my psychological wellbeing.

### **Chapter Five: Stephen Hickinbotham**

Hickinbotham family, having the classic English Royalty family format, endowed Stephen as the child of choice, in particular Ian's choice, Judith was enamored of Andrew.

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Stephen developed a stutter at primary school. This may have been related to teachers tying his left hand behind his back forcing him to use his right hand. This was a common practice in the 1950s and 60s. Neuroplasticity proves this theory right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people who experience stroke and the loss of the use of muscles in one side of their body are supported to re-learn to use those limbs and muscles by trying the health limb behind their backs and forcing them to use the damaged limb.

Perhaps Stephen's stutter was related to my parent's trip overseas and their long disappearance from his life. Such a long separation is now known to cause dramatic emotional and developmental issues for children.

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Stephen and Ian leased the Mt Anakie vineyard near Geelong, behind the You Yangs. Stephen made six vintages here, very successful, he gained much media publicity through his friends Mark Shield and Philip White, as well as other journalists from around Australia.

Stephen struggled with female relationships, forming a strong bond in his late twenties with a Sydney woman. A couple of years later he asked me if he should marry Jenny O. I didn't really know what to say, how could I know if they were in love. They were compatible, but what did I know of love, of emotion of feeling? Nothing. This potential lifetime bond was compromised by the fact that we had a family business; how could I know if things would work out. So, I said, if you have to ask me, then perhaps you're not sure enough.

Stephen and his friend Jenny O were living together in Williamstown, in a big two-story house, the origins of which were built by a ship's captain. Jenny lectured at Victoria University in Business Personal Assistance and saw an advertisement for people to join a small plane trip travelling up the East coast of Australia to Cairns and from there to Birdsville in time for the races. They joined this group of eight and were killed as the plane attempted to gain

## The Emotional Narrative

altitude to get over Mount William, they were flying in fog, the plane crashed into the mountain three meters from the top. No one survived, the plane wreckage and the bodies were not found until the following day.

This was the only time I ever saw my father cry, my mother, like Lindy Chamberlin, did not shed a tear.

Judith and Ian sold the Burwood house, they were burgled while the house was on the market. They moved into Stephen and Jenny O's house. However, within months my mother moved out to live in a rented place in Newport.

My own emotions were not evident to me at the time, I devoid of emotional knowledge and awareness experience. I had no idea how to talk about an emotion, or even what it was to feel an emotion, all I knew was that to live in this world you pushed through everything that was hard, challenging or darn-impossible. Push through, resilience is good, they told me. When Stephen and Jenny O died I tried to cry, some tears did emerge, but I was more confused and confounded about my own identity, who was I now and what should I do now. What should I be feeling?

### Chapter Six: Jenny Hickenbotham

For many decades I had few memories. I only had family stories to draw upon to tell my life-experience.

Decades of therapy have supported me to find and know myself, gain confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness.

I do have strong and enduring memories of my life right back to birth, swaddling. I still don't talk because when I try I am silenced; my family do not want to know about my emotional and physical traumas began at that childhood time. My family continue to maintain their emotional status quo, to engage with me through their secret feelings, with the myths and hero stories from their travels.

Study of Fine Art, I am currently doing Honours at RMIT and applying to do Masters in 2021. My art practice and research has further informed my self-knowledge. I have read therapeutic researchers such as Bessel van der Kolk, Dr Stephen Porges and many others. Through-out my four years of study all the art I have made has related to my own lived-experience of personal, emotional and feeling challenge.

Writing this book provides a platform for me to share my research, thought development and innovative conclusions related to bodily emotions which lead to feelings. Also, importance sensory therapy has had in my life, leading to personal growth and a rich inner life.

### Chapter Seven: Andrew and Terryn Hickenbotham

Andrew is my younger brother and winemaker for Hickenbotham of Dromana which employs about six staff in managing the vineyard, making wine and beer. Terryn is Andrew's partner, she manages the restaurant which employs about ten full-time and casual staff.

Andrew's early story will be told from my point of view, with the understanding that this is my story of Andrew's life, not Andrew's story.

Andrew and Terryn's life will be told through interview format.

### Chapter Eight: Jake and Cal Hickenbotham

## The Emotional Narrative

Gen Z boys, born in the 1990s. This generation makes it their business to know their feelings. Not only do this Gen Z mob feel they can know and take control of intergenerational events and teachings, but they feel they can improve greatly upon their parent's attempts at quality parenting.

I am interested to interview Jake and Cal and to ask what they think of 'self-control' of emotional life and feelings, as opposed to sensory engagement, authenticity and self-knowing.

Also interested to ask these guys about agency, what significance they place on their own agency. How do they come to a sense that they have full control over their own empowerment?

Authenticity, resilience, reason for life are all questions I want to explore with this generation of younger people.

### **Epilogue: Future Generations: Birthed by my Imagination**

Will the West draw more upon Eastern religions and philosophies to impact our psychology?

What will the future hold for people in regards to sensory life, emotions and feelings?

Who will we love?

Who will we parent?

How will we parent and nurture?

Will our love and/or compassion save our lived experience in this world?

Save the world?

## The Emotional Narrative

### Sample Chapter

#### Introduction: body/emotions and functions, Mind/feelings and conscious, soul/unconscious

#### The Search Begins

At the age of 27 I started hearing and engaging with voices 'between my ears' or as Charles Fernyhough professor in the Department of Psychology at Durham University calls it, 'inner speech, a formal scientific term that involves the word-based conversations we have with ourselves inside our heads'. (MacKenzie, 2020, para 3) A common description is Hearing Voices or a diagnostic label may be applied as Schizophrenia, a terrifying label with much cruel medical treatment history and social stigma attached.

I left my family vineyard and winery where I had been sharing a house with my older brother Stephen before moving briefly to Williamstown and living alone. I pack everything I wanted to take with me to Adelaide, my childhood dresses, books, dolls, some clothes for current days. I drove off and promptly got lost around Portland for eight days. Andrew, my younger brother hired a plane to try to find my car. On the eighth day I parked my car near the train line in Warrnambool I was sitting dreaming in the driver's seat, wondering where to now, when a policeman knocked on the car window, he asked if I was Jenny Hickinbotham, I answered yes. The man said my family were looking for me, I had no thought of them, why??? He asked me if there was someone or somewhere I could go in Warrnambool to be safe, I answered that a great aunt and uncle, Gerald and Ada lived here at 5 Shirley Street. The man asked me to follow him to Gerald and Ada's house, as I had no idea how to get there.

After a few weeks bunking at Andrew and Terryn's place I packed the car again, I headed off to Adelaide, this time I told the voices I was not listening to them, I drove straight to Adelaide. I was so lonely and so confused, what was I doing. I had no connections here, or if I did I had conveniently forgotten them, because I didn't want to connect with anyone. I wanted to find out what had happened to me as a child, I felt that something bad had happened but I had no memory, only a feeling.

I term this experience, a feeling, however, in reality it was potentially the culmination of intergenerational memory, of contemporary family shared memory, of my own unconscious. I am not a big fan of Freud, so don't believe in the id, the ego and the superego and all his fantasy sexual desires and attachment theories. Freud's work did lead to more open thinking about humanity's mental health and mental functioning. Neurologist Antonio Damasio was interviewed in *Scientific American MIND* in 2005 and said about our minds, 'An organism can possess feelings only when it can create a representation of the body's functions and the related changes that occur in the brain. In this way, the organism can perceive them. Without this mechanism there would be no consciousness' (Lenzen, 2005, Para 16). I think this means that my sense of unease, that I wasn't functioning 'normally' in my community, these feelings about my childhood were not associated in my conscious mind with locatable bodily emotions, my perception of the past was corrupted/lost.

## The Emotional Narrative

*The Emotional Narrative* explores my body's dissociation from my mind, during traumatic childhood events and later as a response to challenging life events which I experienced through feelings of fear, anxiety, distrust. This book is a journey of discovery and research, a search for my bodily emotions and sensations which connect back to the feelings stored in my mind. It's a search for the events which originated those bodily emotions.

Professor Damasio explains that 'for neuroscience, emotions are more or less the complex reactions the body has to certain stimuli. When we are afraid of something, our hearts begin to race, our mouths become dry, our skin turns pale and our muscles contract. This emotional reaction occurs automatically and unconsciously. Feelings occur after we become aware in our brain of such physical changes; only then do we experience the feeling of fear' (Lenzen, 2005, Para 5).

Both Buddhist teachings and Dr Stephen Porges who developed the Polyvagal Theory have something to say about fear. Dr Porges has researched the body's neurological behaviour when challenged by a perpetrator of violence, of a car hurtling at us or even when experiencing intense stress. The heart starts to race, the breathing rate increases, the body may start to sweat, we might feel the impulse to fight or flight, these are called the Sympathetic body responses of the vagus nervous system. The other side of the vagus nervous system initiates the Parasympathetic body responses which all happen below the diaphragm, stomach get irritated, autonomic system is agitated, one may need to go to the toilet, genitals are impacted. In extreme cases we dissociate, where mind leaves the body, or disconnects the neuronal pathways between body and brain. The extreme state is catatonia where the body shuts down totally. (Sunshaw, 2019)

Paul Ekman et al writing in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 'Buddhist and Psychological Perspectives on Emotions and Well-Being', writes under 'The Buddhist View: Craving is said to be afflictive, for it disrupts the balance of the mind, easily giving rise to anxiety, misery, fear, and anger; and it is unrealistic in the sense that it falsely displaces the source of one's wellbeing from one's own mind to objects' (Ekman et al, ND, p61). He is talking about craving chocolate, or craving Nike runners, not craving awareness and understanding. However, it's interesting that Buddhism teaches that intensity of ungrounded desire can de-rail the conscious mind. Craving is potentially a response to Western cultural history and intergenerational effect. Aristotle, who lived only a few hundred years after Jesus, argued that all emotions are healthy as long as they are not excessive or inappropriate to the time and place.

Each of Jesus' disciples wrote their interpretation of Jesus' teachings, four Gospels form the New Testament of The Bible. There is only one interpretation of Buddhist teachings which can take a life-time to master and culminates in a highly trained mind focusses on compassion and a positive outlook. Taking responsibility may be the first step to Buddhist practise. (Gilsinan, 2015).

## The Emotional Narrative

My recovery experience shows that Western cultural psychological supports are leaning into mental responsibility and training through borrowed Eastern practices such as Mindfulness, Yoga, Butoh. Since receiving an NDIS package in May 2020 I have engaged in Trauma Yoga, Singing lessons, Equine Therapy and now Butoh Dance each of these practices supports my emotional body experience in a positive gesture. Associated feelings are not always huge or impactful, they seem to be unconscious, unmeasurable, however, they are experienced in a sense of wellbeing, oneness, which is what Buddhists are aiming toward. Connection skills have definitely improved, which means that trust and sense of safety has developed in a positive way.

Dr Zoran Josipovic adjunct Professor at New York University is studying the neuroscience of monk's brains, he has found under Magnetic Image Resonances that 'When one relaxes into a state of oneness, the neural networks in experienced practitioners change as they lower the psychological wall between themselves and their environments, Dr Josipovic says' (Danzico, M., 2011, Para 9). Further evidence that the people offering me therapeutic supports, training my body and mind, are creating positive change in me. The MRI's of Buddhist brains showed them as being capable of mental change.

My cousin is a Buddhist, his practise has helped him to deal with the trauma of his mother's abuse, which I witnessed as a child. My cousin's experience and mental development will be explored further through these chapters.

The Emotional Narrative will focus on my extended family narrative in response to emotional, feeling and sensory experience as lived and shared by my family members, starting with both sets of grandparents. The narrative I will draw upon will begin with research facts reflecting the times, for instance both sets of my grandparents were married about the end of the First World War and into the Depression years of the 1930s. I will consider social and cultural practises and how conditioning impacted people's understanding and engagement with their emotional and feeling selves.

My grandparent's children, my parents, married during the 1950s, when household 'gadgets' changed home-life forever, the washing machine, the vacuum cleaner, television. Married women were not allowed to work, they were expected to do 100% of the household works, until the 1960s. My generation, my two brothers and I, could have married around 1970s, a little older and possibly wiser than previous generations, but emotionally wiser? Where does that term Emotionally intelligent come from, I will investigate? My nephews are living with partners, not yet tied the knot, but Gen Z seems to be self-aware, purposeful, identity focussed. The future, what does it hold for people's emotional peace and awareness, will we all develop Buddhist leanings? How will we change and thereby change the world? I will propose my assessment for consideration.

## The Emotional Narrative

### Identity, Agency and Consciousness

Greeks were fascinated with bodies, they created the Olympic Games so people could show their bodies, compete with their bodies, celebrate with their bodies. And yet, Greeks also believed that the body was a trap, a prison. Paul's lecture for EcoTopia called Socrates and the Rise of Rational Self-consciousness in Ancient Greece claims that before the Pre-Socratic philosophers were the Seven Wise Men, their favourite saying was, 'It would be better never to have been born. But having been born, let us die as soon as possible'. Paul tells his students that this melancholy arose from a belief that men were once stars, and having fallen to earth stardust got trapped in human bodies and now humanity's perpetual aim is to return to the stars. (EcoTopia, 2009, para 6)

Philosophy is the study of being, do we or do we not have a purpose on this earth? I would say not, but we have designed one, and at the moment it does look like we are returning ourselves to the stars in the not too distant future considering the unquestionable demise of our planet.

Paul argues that John took the opening phrase of his Gospel from Plato's (or Socratic) Dialogues. Paul argues that in both respects it's as if the *logos* was made flesh, "In the beginning was the *logos* and the *logos* was with God and the *logos* was God. And the *logos* was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." Using John's English 'word' seems to strip the 'magic, mystical understanding of the significance and power of words that was characteristic of the Greeks'. Could words ever be flesh? Western contemporary culture considers words are signifiers, arbitrary markers of meaning. Words are abstract, flesh is not, flesh is real. Flesh is body. Words are manipulative, controlling and form traps for the body and the mind. Words might be stars, since, stars are unattainable, are stars real? They are magical and mystical, entrapping our minds in their dust and illusion.

Contemporary philosophers consider human agency to be an illusion, however, Markus Gabriel German philosopher disagrees, pointing out that if you deny someone's sensory experience, they lose confidence in their own agency, their own way of seeing and sensing the world. Gen Zers place a big stock in knowing themselves, their identity, their likes and dislikes, their emotions and feelings, their sensory engagements with their environment, their connections.

Paul Ekman in his article *Buddhist and a Psychological Perspectives on Emotional Well-being* reports the Buddhist View of identity:

The third, most fundamental affliction of the mind is the delusion of grasping onto one's own and others' reified personal identities as real and concrete. According to Buddhism, the self is constantly in a state of dynamic flux, arises in different ways, and is profoundly interdependent with other people and the environment. However, people habitually obscure the actual nature of the self by superimposing on reality the concepts of permanence, singularity, and autonomy. As a result of misapprehending the self as independent, there arises a strong sense of the absolute separation of self and other. Then, craving naturally arises for the

## The Emotional Narrative

“I” and for what is mine, and repulsion arises toward the other. The erroneous belief in the absolute distinction of self and other thus acts as the basis for the derivative mental afflictions of craving, hatred, jealousy, and arrogance. Such toxins of the mind are regarded, in Buddhism, as the sources of all mental suffering. (ND, p61)

This is a confusing Western notion. I think those Seven Wise Greek Men began this Western illusion that an individual can ultimately know themselves. Goethe said, Have you noticed how “being” everything is? Does he mean what the Buddhists mean, that being a bit of star dust is enough, is everything? (EcoTopia, 2009, para 12) Yet, the rise of self-consciousness refers to the rise of individuality, and thereby the focus in Western culture on identity as a safe-harbour, a place of meaning and making sense of our lives and our world.

Parmenides was the Pre-Socratic philosopher who rode off in his horse and chariot to find the meaning of life. He rode to the Gates of Night and Day where he faced the goddess *Aletheia*, who took off her veils and revealed Truth. As Goethe says, “It Is”, is all. Socrates death was like Jesus, Socrates was accused of misleading the youth of his day and with impiety or not believing in the gods of the state, he was executed for his belief.

Paul’s lecture on EcoTopia website says Socrates, ‘called philosophy therapy and [taught that] we ought to make ourselves as healthy as possible in both body and mind. So, there was a therapeutic implication to what Socrates was after in speaking about the harmony that he thought could come from studying philosophy and becoming a philosopher, grasped by the Logos, the rational structure of reality’ (2009, Para 23). Socrates is most famous for teaching people to believe and find themselves, to think for themselves, he teaches how to form and follow one’s own beliefs. Paul’s lecture mentions Homer, suggesting that his writings and poetry are like mesmeric songs, which negate individual thought. I wonder if Buddhist teachings could be compared to Homer’s entrancing poetry?

The following chapters will showcase, compare and contrast the notions of illusion, agency, authenticity and consciousness. My psychiatrist, for at least ten years has proposed regularly to me that I have developed authenticity. I looked the word up so I was confident I knew what she meant by that, Tchiki Davis in Psychology Today writes, ‘Being authentic means that you act in ways that show your true self and how you feel. Rather than showing people only a particular side of yourself, you express your whole self genuinely. That means to succeed in being authentic, you first have to know who your true self actually is (2019, Para 2). These ten years later I would argue that what Carolyn claimed as authentic, would no longer pass. Only in the last year or two have I stopped engaging ‘between my ears’ with my mother and similarly she has stopped talking in my head. When I first experienced that peace, quiet and self-hood I was ecstatic, excited, joyous, finally mental peace. However, it has taken practise to maintain those boundaries and my mental independence. Neuropathically I re-write the neural brain maps that support my mental activity, the more often I get it right the easier it is next time, I’m deepening those map routes and practise makes perfect, we know from hundreds of years ago.

## The Emotional Narrative

Emotionally I have shifted greatly. Five years ago, I could not talk or connect with my mother in any way, or in any company without feeling angry, frustrated, shut-down and silenced. Slowly Carolyn helped me to listen to my own thinking, rather than letting anger de-rail my thinking, my being conscious supported better emotional control. Probably my Polyvagal Sympathetic nervous system was being better managed, which led to clearer and less emotional neurons running off to my feelings to tell them to arc up and get mad!!!

Conscious mental responsibility will help all people to manage them self and their behaviors.

### **The Family: The Chapters**

For decades I have suffered my mother's anxieties, demands, neuroses. My mother has more friends than I will ever have, everyone loves my mother. For me, it raises the question, what is love? So why do she and I have this fraught relationship which has impacted my whole life, who I connected with, what education I achieved, what work I was able to engage with? However, it did not stop me seeking the answer to the riddle and in seeking that answer, it didn't stop me seeking support from psychiatry and psychology practitioners?

In Lenzen's interview with Antonio Damasio, Antonio says, 'Without question. Emotional disorders form the core of most psychological illnesses...'. (2005, Para 18) Decades of working in the Mental Health Peer Work space, both authentically and inauthentically or in a dissociated state, I have come to know that all mental health is emotionally grounded. Trauma specialists Bessel van der Kolk, (2015) Stephen Porges and others have shown how emotion is the basis of all trauma, whether originating from childhood, war experience as soldier or victim, family or personal loss and/or grief, school or workplace bullying, poverty and its many guises and causes, discrimination in its many guises and causes, trauma plays out in the body. Bessel's book the *Body Keeps the Score* effectively tells this narrative story and as the title suggests, the body will hold the experience, the pain, the memory until the mind is ready to process, digest and accept. Often emotions which shut down or block the recovery process are shame, blame and guilt. Practitioners have named the Shame Theory, demonstrating that children blame themselves for wanting the love of their guardian, the very guardian who is abusing and hurting their children. One of the most difficult questions to answer, as a victim of abuse is why, why did another human being, another person, someone just like me, why did they choose to hurt me? This is a multi-part question and can never, almost never be answered.

*The Emotional Narrative* will look deep into the Hickinbotham, the Youren and Northausen families. There will be a search for emotion, healthy emotion and emotion as an expression of distress, potentially leading to mental health difference or challenge.

## The Emotional Narrative

Four generations of family have experienced various social and cultural influences, these will be considered and will create a context for each generation. Life has thrown up various emotional challenges, wars, depression, death, disability, miscarriage, illness, adultery, separation, isolation, and much more to challenge these family members. *The Emotional Narrative* will consider emotional impacts on individuals, couples, their children, their siblings, their cousins, their friends. It will consider how connection blooms or is compromised. It will consider love, how it grows, thrives, survives and dies.

The search for awareness, identity, will be wide and various being initially informed by Socratic theory. All research and family related discoveries will be considered within the cultural system impositions of institutions such as religion, education, the state, marriage, ritual and myth, contemporaneity, place, ancestry. Theoretical frameworks of Psychology, Buddhism and Philosophy have informed the books beginning and will thread throughout the family narrative.

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