

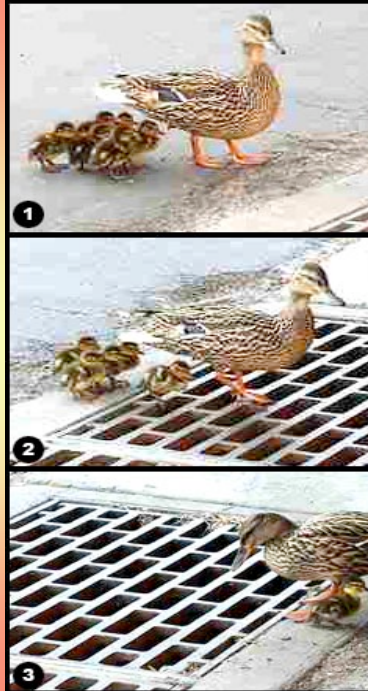
Take a sad song and make
it better. John Lennon.

**An introduction to Narrative
Therapy.**

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Bad Parenting



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Hopefully I will talk about:

- Background and foundation for NT
- To “live” through told stories.
- “Thin” and “Wide” stories.
- Exceptional stories
- To take a position to the “problem”
- Externalisation
- The untold but important stories
- Re-writing the history
- Scaffolding
- Structure in Narrative Practice
- Honouring ceremonies
- Outsider Witness Group
- Re-membering
- Transparency
- Therapist positions

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NT can be understood as :

a: a special way of understanding peoples identity

b: a special way of understanding people’s problems and the effect these problems have in people’s lives

c: it can also be a special way of talking with people’s about their lives and their experience with problems, how to understand therapeutic relations, etics and the purpose of therapy.

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NT Belong to the social – constructivism way of understanding the world, and thinks the language is very important in all relations and the understanding of life.

Identity is something that is created within social institutions and within communities of people.

Identity is shaped by historical and cultural forces.

The meanings people give their experiences in life constitutes their knowledge and practice of their “self” and the relations with these meanings.

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**Meaning making is derived through;
narrative structures, plotting of events in
sequences unfold through time, in
plots/themes.**

**This develops contemporary identity
description linked to these events and plots.**

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This way of looking at identity making contributes to NT with;

- a deconstruction of people's negative assumptions
- help people break from "thin" conclusions about their lives and identity
- support people in conversations to find "thick" and "rich" descriptions on their lives and identity
- engaged with people in an exploration of life associated with rich and thick descriptions which includes knowledge, skills of living relevant to addressing the negative assumptions of their identity.
- Introduce other options for people to become who they want to become.

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In the foundation of NT it is an important goal to:

- Give respect to clients/families and every member of the families
- Be non-condemnable in the meeting with other people.
- Have little focus on validating people's lives
- Have little focus on our own hypotheses about their lives.
- To have a strong focus to the idea that people/families are experts on their lives.
- Separate problems from people. "The problem is the problem!!!"
- Believe people have skills, competence, belief, hope, values that can help them to reduce the problems influence in their lives
- Have curiosity as an important part of the therapy
- Always ask questions we don't have the answers to.

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We humans try to make meaning and to understand our lives.

People's lives in NT, can be understood as:

- **Actions, knitted together in**
- **Sequences over**
- **Time in a**
- **Plot, intrigue or theme.**

The history of Lars, - the boy who couldn't sing.

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Exercise:

Find one other person and use 3 minutes to describe yourself as a positive professional to him/her, the other one listens. Then change position.

Find the 3 most significant words that can describe you as a positive professional. Write the words down for yourself. (1 min.)

After you have told the stories and found the words, write down what words you would write about the other person who told you his story. Write them down and give this paper to the other. (1 min)

What did you experience?

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3. **“Thin” and “Wide” stories.**

Thin stories give little room for complexity and diversified explanations. EX: TF and LRL

They often exclude other possibilities for meaning and understanding.

This can lead to locked patterns and that a person becomes the “problem”, they are added to be “like this or that”. In thin stories we think we have the “truth”.

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In wide stories we try to keep up our curiosity and try not to make conclusions, assumptions or hypothesis. This is hard work!!!

We quickly try to find a new way of be curious.

Example: “He does this to get attention?”

“She has anxiety because her parents was violent”

Example : I became the boy who couldn’t sing.

People are locked in the story. They find

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4. Exceptional stories –

The dominant stories families and people comes to us with have a great influence in their lives. “they don’t sing any more!”
“theyhaslve made a sad song out of their lives”.

The terापists listen carefully and focus on exceptions from the dominant stories. This is what we call ; finding the gold seed.

We come back to this under unique outcome.

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5. To take a position to the”problem”. Statement of position.

When people come to us they already have some kind of ideas about what they want to change.

Four areas for questions:

Take position (To make up one’s mind about the problem.)

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Four areas of questioning:

1. **Negotiations about an experience near, specific definition of the problem/worries.**
2. **Make a survey of the effect the problem have on different areas in life, like home, work, school, friends, how people relate towards themselves, friendship, attitude, dreams, hops, values, prosperities etc.**
3. **Evaluate the effect/influence the problem has on these different areas.**
4. **Give reasons for the evaluation.**

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6. Externalisation

Externalisation is a central point in NT.

It means to move the “problem” out of persons to something persons/families have that bothers them.

Naming the “problem”

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The effect of this can be:

- Less shame and guilt for the individuals
- It can unite the family
- It can give the family a goal for their actions on reducing the “problems” influence in their lives
- It can make it more clear what they need to work against in changing their lives.

Remember to always consider that sometimes putting too many words on the difficulties and the hurting things may make things worse!

I always use the families own words in naming the “problem”

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7. The unique outcome stories.

This is when we try to find the gold seeds in the stories people tells.

We provide a “ scaffold” that contributes for people to see and recognise their potential and problem solving skills.

Unique outcome presentation.

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We use the same 4 steps:

1. **Find a unique outcome situation of problem solving skills**
2. **Mapping the effects of this situation/the problem solving skill**
3. **What do you think of these effects? How do you feel about this? What is your point of view on this? Is this positive or negative effect?**
4. **Justification of the evaluation. Why is this ok for you? Why do you feel this way about it? Why do you take a stand to this position? Could you tell me a story that would help me understand why you could take this position on this?**

We look in on this by using a new word; scaffolding.

Example: Fou-Akar. Presentation on UO

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8. **Re -writing the history**

How can we speak about things in a way that gives people hope, courage and the ability to act towards a better life.

Tree of life:

Example – a method from Africa – Mayse Camp Zimbabwe

Painting a tree. A method as a part of conversations with children.

Part 1.

Draw and present a tree.

Roots: Where do you come from?

Who has thought you the important things in life?

What is your favourite place at home?

Some important song,dance, name etc.

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Soil:

How are things around you now?

Who is there?

What are you doing?

How does the days look like?

Tree:

What skills do you have?

Whitch of them do you use every day?

What can a good friend say about you?

Branches:

What is your dreames for the future?

Which direction do you want your life to take?

Waht are you hoping will happen?

Leaves:

This is the important people in your life.

These can be dead of living perosns – just as imporant.

Fruits:

These are the gift you are given.

Things you have.

Support, care and love

At this part the counsellor can help the pupils, walk around and helping them by asking etc.

When all are finished everybody are put on the wall, and every child will present the paintings and are asked questions like:

How did you develop this skills? Who taught you this?

How long have you had these dreams and hope?

What kept you keeping this dreams in spite of the things you have been through?

We can also invite the other children to write down on the tree what skills they thing the others have.

Second part: The trees becomes a forest.

First we gives the childre a re- telling of what we have seen.

You have all strong roots. You belong to someone. There are important peoples in your life that also in the future will help you.

We can read the hopes written on the trees.

After this part about what all trees have in common. We ask the same questions to the children. What are the common parts we share?

How can we support each other like the trees in the forrest.

Write the answers on sheets.

Now we have prepared the ground to next part.

Third part: When the storm comes.

The realities of life, difficulties for trees and people start with the trees – what challenges can they see for trees?

What can be seen for children?

Is it for children like the trees, - there are dangers?

What do we do when the different dangers appear?

Is there anything we can do, not to do?

We ask the children to think about how they can keep the dreams and hope through the storms.

Are there times without storms?

What do we do after the storms?

We write down on sheets what they tells, ideas stc.

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Forth part: Sertificate.

The children gets individual sertifictes based on what they have drawn and written about their dreams, hopes and skills.

Supportive, important persons can also be written down, and the chidlren are recognise this persons by writing letters to them, or telling them.

You can have more information on this by contacting Dulvic Centre

Or look at: www.reppi.org

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9. **Structure in Narrative Practice**

Stairs of questions

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Outsider Witness group

Resonance – Re-presenting – re-tellings

Transport: Where we has been taken as a result of history

Four categories of questions:

- 1. Identifying the expression. (Where where you drawn towards, what words/expressions cougth interest)**
- 2. Describing the image. Important values or benefits intentions – what is significant.**
- 3. Resonsnace – linking. (What connections to your own life and expeirences - memories to your own life)**
- 4. Acknowledging transport. (Where did this take you – what difference did it make in your life)**

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1. Re-membering

Invite people to be members of the “club”

Populate their lives with important people, dead people can be invited in. Important teacher, supportive persons, people that in different ways have contributed.

But! It can also be remembered people that have been contributing in negative ways. Abusive, neglectfully persons can in this ways be excluded from their life

Example: DA and ES

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10. Honouring ceremonies

In NT we difference between applause and honoring

Often we applause: this is some kind of evaluating and valuing way of giving response.

Honouring: This honours the persons own thoughts about the changes he has brought in his life. Re-telling what he has said etc.

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13. **Transparency**

I personally find this more and more important.

No hidden agenda.

To build a good relation we need to be honest about what we are doing.

In reflections we can say everything.

No hypotheses are discussed in the “back room”.

If we discuss something about the therapy we share it with the families.

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14. **Therapeutic posture**

Four positions

	Decentred	Centred
Influential	Focus is on the clients life	Can be to much focus on the therapist (burden)
Non-influential	Potentially invalidating of thereapist	Potentially exhausting of therapist

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Whats the end of the story about me?

**Ends as the man that
is asked to sing!**