

Chapter 8

**Having a yarn with
those who've passed on:**
Seeing ourselves through their eyes
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Having a yarn with those who've passed on

Having a yarn with someone who has passed on, telling them about things you are doing, what your plans are, has always been part of my family healing practices. An afternoon stroll to the cemetery was a regular part of every Saturday or Sunday afternoon. I remember the silences interrupted sometimes by tears, sometimes by laughter.

There was always a purpose in making these visits to the cemetery, sometimes it was to share stories about what was going on, other times it was about asking why things were like the way they were, sometimes it was to be close to your loved one and to be able to help work through current difficulties. As I have learned about the narrative practice of 'saying hullo again' (White, 1998) and re-membering conversations (White, 2007), I have related these back to my experiences at many gravesides.

Within re-membering conversations, there is an opportunity to think about what our loved ones offered to us during their lives, and also to think about what we might have contributed to their lives. This second part was a new idea for me. It has made me think about what my loved ones may have felt about me or in fact about my mum and other family members who had attended with me to their graves at different times. What would it mean to them that we are visiting them regularly?

It has also made me think about the times when I say, 'My mum told me that ...'. I particularly use those words when there are cultural and family concerns which need to be addressed. Close family members understand that despite my mother being no longer physically with us, she still has an influence on my life.

I can apply the two sets of re-membering inquiry to thinking about my mum. The first involves me recounting what my mum contributed to my life. The second is for me to be able to get a sense of what my mum always saw in me which I now use in my everyday life.

This whole concept of seeing yourself through someone else's eyes is inspiring.

It was always a special experience to go to the graveside, stand and remember our loved ones, and think about their hopes and goals for their futures. Re-membering conversations can assist us to understand the extent of our contributions to each other's lives.

References

- White, M. (1988). Saying hullo again: The incorporation of the lost relationship in the resolution of grief. *Dulwich Centre Newsletter*, Spring, 7–11. Reprinted in M. White (1989), *Selected papers* (pp. 29–35). Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.
- White, M. (2007). *Maps of narrative practice*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.