



What's up?

so what?

what is it?

It's kind of...

## **FALA AÍ! (WHAT'S UP?)**

Mapping the actions of social and psychological resistance in difficult times

## DAVID DENBOROUGH

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“Our lives and ways are not set in stone, they can be changed throughout our history. How we understand and share our life stories make all the difference. If we share only stories that talk about misery, we’ll find ourselves getting weaker. But we can share our stories in many different ways, ways that will leave us feeling stronger. We don’t know your life stories, but we know that with the right questions and the best audience, everyone’s life stories can undergo changes.”

[www.dulwichcentre.com.au](http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au)

## LÚCIA HELENA ABDALLA

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“Because we’re not able to see a way, sometimes, it does not mean that there is no way. We must build, out of our curiosity and creativity, a multitude of possibilities.”

[www.reciclandomentos.org](http://www.reciclandomentos.org)

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How to connect with good stories in tough times?

How to take care of joy and hope in these times?

How to come up with ideas in moments when anguish seems to speak louder?

Would you like to help someone by sharing your stories?

We understand that in contexts of difficult times, discovering resources and skills in our life stories can help us to gain resistance in the face of so many adversities.

Supported by this idea and inspired by the Checklist developed by David Denborough and Mohamad Safa, in Lebanon, in 2006, we elaborated this checklist to identify the actions of Brazilians' social and psychological resistance in difficult times, that we named "Fala aí!" or "What's up!".

And why "Fala aí!" or "What's up"? This is an expression often used by teenagers and young people in Brazil. In fact, it can be said that it is almost a code because, after saying a "What's up!", a straightforward conversation is born, and the other person shares what has been doing, ideas and possibilities with the utmost naturalness. It is a well-known and perhaps compelling way to invite the other into a conversation.

However, we couldn't forget to honor this conversation also using the expressions "Qual é?" or "So what?" and "Tipo assim..." or "Kind of..."

"Qual é?" or "So what?" usually brings up, almost instantly, the reflection about what is the best thing for that moment. In other words, it would be almost as if we were asking "What's good program for this moment?" or "What do we have for today?", in which in view of all that we've been through, it seems to be a magic code that connect us to something good, with something to do.

And the "Tipo Assim..." or "Kind of..."? Is there a more used expression by the youngsters than "Kind of..." when they want to explain something? Almost every time when we hear a "Kind of...", right after, there's a full explanation about an event of life. In an attempt to convey what is in mind about a particular experience, the person shares rich descriptions, examples, analogies, metaphors, which themselves already contribute to very animated stories, and even when the author shares a moment of difficulty, the person seems to be proud of being able to share the story in detail.

To facilitate all this reflective process and ensure the quality of the stories shared, although professionals from different areas of expertise may use this checklist, we strongly recommended being carried out among colleagues, friends or family members who want to explore the recognition of small practices of care that we have been developing in these hard times. Practices of resistance, dignity and hope that have helped us being well in the face of so much adversity. Practices that connect us to more ways of being in life and, consequently, keep our dreams alive.

***"It is my hope that a checklist of social and psychological resistance may assist practitioners to notice and acknowledge the initiatives, skills, knowledge and value that are implicit in the ways in which individuals, groups and communities respond to trauma and hardship.[...]. Even in the midst of devastation, children, adults and the elderly take actions, no matter how small, to resist the effects of trauma and to provide comfort and protection to others."***

(Denborough, 2008, p.142)

## **CHOOSING A GOOD FRIEND AND A NICE PLACE FOR THIS CONVERSATION TO TAKE PLACE**

The “What’s up checklist” can be used by teenagers, youngsters, adults, but regardless of your age, we consider that the most important is that you choose a friend or colleague with whom you feel comfortable to share your experiences and stories. A person that you trust and believe that can collaborate with your moment of reflection. We understand that it can often be easier for a person who is going through a difficult time and is not feeling well, to share their stories with a friend rather than a stranger, even if that person is a professional.

Choosing this location is also very important. Select a place where you feel comfortable having this conversation with your friend. It could be on a beach, under a tree, in a classroom from school or college. It can be taking an ice cream or coffee, or even an “online coffee” through a video call by Zoom or Teams.

The important thing is to be pleasant, that you reserve enough time for the conversation to happen, and that this meeting can be remembered as a special date. It is a meeting where we can support each other, honoring your experiences and stories. So, take the time for both of you to answer the questions. When you are in the role of interviewer, write on a paper the remarkable expressions used by your friend. And it can make all the difference for this meeting if you share your testimonial, the resonances that the stories that you heard had in you. And, at the end, don’t forget to make a toast! Even going through so painful losses, the mere fact that we have chosen a friend to share these meaningful stories can be reason enough to celebrate.

However, if you prefer to establish this conversation as a self-reflection, we also recommend that you choose a place where you feel safe, comfortable and at ease, where the connection with yourself can happen without interruption. You can sit outdoors, choose a playlist

to accompany you at this moment, or find that sofa that looks so comfortable it feels like it was tailor-made for you. Respect your own pace and timing. Reflect on the experiences of this period in whatever way is most convenient for you.

Regardless, whether you are going to have this conversation with a good friend or with yourself, when you start this conversation, be aware of thinking through each question carefully and share your story no matter how silly it may seem to you. Sometimes, the most interesting stories come from unexpected situations and reflections. For example, since I’ve heard the sentence “This is the Life that we have for today!”, when I remember it, I always connect myself with what is possible despite the many difficulties.

Following the sequence of questions offered by the checklist, you also may feel the need to include a question that is not in the checklist. If it’s so, we’d like you to feel completely free to add any question that you consider relevant, at any moment.

At the end of this meeting, if you want to share your best stories and ideas, it might be very meaningful! We understand that your story can be very helpful to another person. In this sense, we suggest organizing a library of life stories on your school, and/or community, and/or group. You can also elaborate a campaign with interesting sentences from these stories on Instagram.

And just one more request! If you enjoyed this experience, please share this activity and these ideas with as many people as possible. We believe that by enlightening and sharing these practices of resistance and hope, many people can benefit from this wisdom and knowledge, and a wave of confidence and possibilities can be created in the face of so much difficulty.

It was a pleasure to be in contact with you!

Wishing a lot of health, hope and good energies,

*Guardians of Dignity*

# MAPPING SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE ACTIONS OF BRAZILIANS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

“What’s up!” “What is it?” “Kind of...”

## PART I

Thinking about what has sustained us in difficult times...

1. Have you tried to protect yourself in any way, physically and/or emotionally?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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2. Have you shown care, affection, concern, and/or tried to promote comfort to others?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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3. Have you received any support, care, affection or comfort from others?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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4. Have you demonstrated care for yourself?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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5. Have you observed acts of dignity, pride, or solidarity?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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6. Have you performed (done) acts of dignity, pride, or solidarity?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

          

Sharing a story...

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**7.** Did you find ways to stay well or be well?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**8.** Have you found ways to stay in touch with what is precious to you during this time?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**9.** Have you found ways to maintain hope or dreams alive?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**10.** Did you experience something that made you feel brave and satisfied?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**11.** Have you tried to stay connected with others?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**12.** Have you tried to collaborate so that the other could feel better or more strengthened?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**13.** Does any movie, serie or book have helped you during this period?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**14.** Have you developed or improved any hobbies? Ex. cooking, playing the guitar, a sport, etc...

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**15.** Thinking of life as a soccer game, did you need to dribble some kind of injustice?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**16.** Do you believe you scored a goal during this game? Was it an individual or collective game?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**17.** Did you find joy in little things?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**18.** Was the humor present?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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## PART II

### Reflecting on how we have been dealing with losses...

#### Honouring and Remembering those who we have lost

**1.** At a moment of loss, did you develop any practice or ritual that was particularly important to you? Listen to a song, pray, meditate, etc...

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**2.** If you lost a loved one or know a person who lost someone, was it developed own ways to deal with this situation?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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**3.** Have you honoured the lives of those who have been lost: through rituals, ceremonies, memorials, song, art...?

many times	more than once	once	not once	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

Sharing a story...

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4. Have you been joining with others in this remembrance?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...

5. Have you honoured the lives of those who left by taking actions that are in accordance with their values and wishes?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

*Ex: sharing stories about them, doing something that was important to them, etc.*

Sharing a story...

6. Was it sought ways to recognize their contribution in the life of others?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...

7. Have you found ways to continue their legacy?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...

### PART III

#### Searching ways to go ahead

1. Have you performed actions that seek to protect, recover or promote your dignity or others'?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...

2. Have you been making plans to rebuild what was affected or to make room for new paths, new possibilities in your life?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...

3. You, individually and/or collectively sought to help others reconnect with their hopes and dreams in life?

many times    more than once    once    not once    I don't know

Sharing a story...





Hey you!

What's up?



reciclando mentes

Dulwich Centre

A gateway to narrative therapy & community work