

Verbal Sharing

Sharing ourselves with others is a fundamental part of our need to tell our story. As we increase the wealth of our experiences in life, the urge to share ourselves and our added wisdom with others becomes more pressing.

Think of any occasion when we have heard someone tell us about something that happened to them. Have we listened intently, or are we impatient to have the opportunity to tell our own recollection of a similar event?

It is in the sharing and listening that we can really learn the secrets of experience. We are not just learning about the event, but how that impacted on the storyteller. And in the sharing, the words, we gain added insight into the personal, idiosyncratic use of grammar that makes each story unique.

How we encourage others to share their story is only part of it. How we handle, react to and ultimately deal with the information is a separate issue.

Memories as a catalyst for change

Visually representing our memories enables us to share unspoken experiences. Pictures and the written word create a medium that no longer requires verbal explanation. The words and pictures can now, if required, speak for themselves.

This process of taking memories from within and turning them inside out can re-establish self-pride. Events, time, places and moments regain importance. Seeing our stories enjoyed by others confirms our achievements. They can be a catalyst for many who are undergoing trauma, change, lack of direction, low confidence, displacement and lost identity.

- People may be at a period of their lives where they see no achievement in the passing years.
- They are uprooted, displaced, institutionalised.
- They may never have established a sense of who they are as individuals.
- Roots, parentage or a sense of connection may not be their experience.
- There is perhaps no-one to confirm their place in family and community life.
- Perhaps they are locked within their own twilight world where events long since past are difficult to recall.

People from all these types of situations can find great comfort in life story work. How you delve, the level and type of questioning you engage in, and the role you play in creating such a 'book' will be as diverse as the book itself.