

The green bubble: Narrative, time away in the bush, and restoring personal agency after hard times

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This paper describes the use of narrative practices in conjunction with bush adventure therapy ideas in responding to potentially traumatic experience. It outlines the program journey embarked upon by Evolve with young men and families experiencing ongoing effects of the 2009 Victorian bushfires, and ways in which narrative ideas have informed this work. In particular, it takes up the metaphoric idea of alternative territories of identity and explores the ways in which working in an alternative physical environment might assist in uncovering subordinated storylines and restoring a preferred sense of self. Also highlighted is the importance of practices that seek to link uncovered, preferred identities uncovered in an alternative physical environment (the bush) with the 'real world' experience of life at home and in the community. Some creative uses of physical metaphor in the bush are presented, as are song and celebratory means of confirming stories 'outside' of the effects of challenging experiences.

Keywords: narrative therapy, trauma response, bush adventure therapy, liminal period

INTRODUCTION

*'By going somewhere different,
I can be someone different ...'*

– program participant, August 2010

In mid-2009, in the introductory stages of a program designed to respond to young men and families affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires, Evolve held a family information evening for prospective participants. Community members were invited to find out more about the work we do, and to see if it might be a fit for them. Afterwards, as people were chatting and asking questions, I spoke with Jenny, the mother of a young man who was to be involved.¹ She repeatedly commented on how hard things had been since the recent bushfires and how much her son Tim 'needed' something like this. She called Tim over and, with a wilful encouragement in her voice, asked him what he thought about it all. 'Yeah, it sounds alright ... But I'm over telling *my story* and talking about what happened to me.

I won't have to do that again, will I?!

Tim walked off, seemingly a bit agitated, and Jenny continued on to say that he just 'hadn't been himself since the fires ... but none of us have really'. I heard that he had seen a number of counsellors to help assist with grief and loss issues and the traumatic bushfires experience, but he had increasingly been left feeling distressed at having to talk about the 'hard stuff' time and again. Before she left, Jenny commented that she really hoped that he would give the program a go, as it seemed like 'something different'. When I enquired as to what she meant by this, she said that 'everything in life' seemed to be about the struggles people were facing. Helpers who Tim had met with seemed intent on 'going over it all'. So, she added, something different, something positive that wasn't 'so focused on the fires', would be really welcomed. In writing about this well over a year since their very first family evening, and having since come to know some of the many stories of Tim and his family's lives, I am still struck by the beautifully concise, honest description of hope and need Tim's mother offered in that first meeting. Her sentiments of creating 'something different', of something 'outside the effects of the bushfires', echoed others heard that evening and in the time since. In many ways,

it has acted as a guiding idea in Evolve's response to the communities involved in the program.

In this paper, I will describe the work undertaken in responding to effects of the bushfires and some narrative ideas that have underpinned our work in co-creating this 'something different'. In doing so, I wish to explore, in more detail, the fit between narrative ideas and bush adventure therapy.² More particularly, I will describe how intentional therapeutic practices, in a deliberately unknown and unfamiliar physical environment (in this case, the Australian bush) might support the restoration of the preferred sense of self of people who have experienced hard times (in this case, the potentially traumatic experiences of the bushfires). These practices occur away from the environments and social contexts that might reinforce negative identity conclusions and act as a constant visual and social reminder of hardship.

SETTING THE SCENE

Before exploring these ideas further, the following descriptions of both the event which acted as a precursor to the response, and the organisation responding, should serve to provide context for this paper's discussion of therapeutic practice.

'The fires'

The bushfires that occurred on Saturday, 7th February 2009, were the largest, deadliest, and most intense firestorms experienced in Australia's post-European history. Now widely known as 'Black Saturday', the fires burnt over 4500 square kilometres of land, claiming 177 human lives, injuring thousands more, destroying thousands of homes, and leaving a number of townships badly damaged or completely destroyed. Since 'the fires' (as they are referred to at a local level), a practical and emotional recovery of immense proportions continues. Though many have moved from these fire-affected areas, many more people who stayed have embarked upon the long journey of rebuilding of homes and aspects of community life. Shortly after the fires, a Royal Commission into the events of that day began, and the event has remained a particular focus of state and national media outlets and continues to capture the interest of people nation-wide.

I do not wish to comment extensively on the events of 'Black Saturday'. It has been presented and re-presented in the Australian media, a situation many of those in affected communities with whom I've spoken have hoped for reprieve from. This is indeed linked to the very sentiment that Jenny expressed to me in that first meeting. This brief contextualisation of the bushfires is provided for those not familiar with them, so that it may help to frame the ideas that have informed Evolve's narrative practice in this area.

The work of Evolve

Evolve is an Australian not-for-profit organisation, established in 1991, which works to respond to young men, primarily aged 14–17, who have been at risk of entering the youth justice system, mental health concerns, and educational and/or social disengagement. At Typo Station, one of Evolve's remote bush properties, located in the north-east of Victoria, groups of young men participate in programs that are built on principles of simple living, achievement-focused work in pioneer-style blacksmithing and joinery workshops, and journeying into the bush on extended 'expeditions' of eight to twelve days. In this remote environment, there is limited electricity. Heating and showers are wood-fired. There are no phones, televisions, internet, or connection to the 'outside world'. Following extended stays at the property, the young men return home and will meet over the next 12 to 24 month period with a community follow-up worker, as well as have the chance to return to the property for shorter follow-up experiences. Evolve's programs are based on narrative approaches, having come to understand the fit between narrative ideas, the practice of what has come to be known as bush adventure therapy, and the transformative journeys that might occur in the unconstrained context of the bush. This last idea reflects Turner's (1967) ideas of the liminal period of a rites of passage journey, an important and relevant concept that I will return to later in this article.

Though now also branching out and working with young women and in clinical practice, Evolve has long been interested in exploring alternative means of engaging and responding to the difficulties faced by young men – a demographic, in our experience, to be well suited to more experiential and activity based therapeutic

approaches. Indeed, many young men who have participated in our programs speak of prior experiences of counselling as 'unhelpful', and often speak of their own personal sense of failure for not having experienced a useful or 'successful' counselling outcome.

With this in mind, our program philosophy has been orientated to, among other things, exploring methods of practice that:

- remove participants from their known and familiar environmental contexts, which hold their identities, roles, and relationships
- immerse participants in new, unknown, unfamiliar environments
- provide space to think, feel, and experience oneself in a different way.

Within this novel environment, we endeavour to:

- provide a physical and relational environment that is more culturally resonant for young men
- deliver program content geared to promote a sense of achievement that is counter to the experience of personal failure
- make available conversational and creative therapeutic enquiry that doesn't privilege problem stories
- develop alternative, preferred storylines and understandings
- create a therapeutic relationship in which the therapist is a participant in the program, co-author of new storylines, and audience to events and meaning-making that are doorways to preferred storylines and roles
- support and extend this relationship beyond the bush setting, as it continues when a participant returns to their own known and familiar community setting.

Concurrent with these ideas, a number of questions underpin the practice:

- What steps can we take to ensure we are not creating a context that will fail the young people and have them (re)experience a sense of personal failure?
- How do we ensure that alternative storylines explored in the removed physical context are not bound to that physical environment?

- When the lives of individuals, families, and communities have become so consumed with a traumatic event, how can we effectively and sensitively respond without directing our immediate focus at the event and those effects?

WHY THE NEED FOR ‘SOMETHING DIFFERENT?’ – DOMINANT STORIES OF IDENTITY, PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, AND THERAPEUTIC ENGAGEMENT

The territory of identity

In the very early stages of the program, the young men expressed a number of emergent stories of identity, both personal and communal. I recall one young man, Adrian, richly describing this to me in a way that echoed many other descriptions:

‘Everything is different now, it’s hard to remember what it was like before. You know, it’s hard to imagine anything different ... you just look around, everything has changed, everything is so depressing.’

‘I’m not really sure who I am anymore, it feels like everything is gone.’

‘It’s hard to just try and get on with things when – it’s just not the same. It makes me sad.’

‘I’m not really sure about what I can do about it. Maybe nothing ...’

Michael White suggested that many people who have been subjected to trauma, experience the profound effects of losing touch with ‘a particular and valued sense of who they are – a “sense of myself”’ (White, 2004, p. 47). More particularly, White suggests that a significant outcome of the experience of trauma is people losing touch with a familiar sense of identity. A key metaphor evoked by White is identity as a territory of life (White, 2004, p. 47). In this understanding, traumatic experience may have the effect of shrinking the territory of this identity, where the things that people ordinarily give value to, believe in, and hope for are, to a greater or lesser extent, reduced in presence and significance. As a result, people may face significant difficulty in

moving forward in life and responding to the circumstances of living with personal agency, as well as potentially experiencing invalidation of one’s purposes in life (White, 2004, p. 47).

These are ideas that seem to fit with Adrian’s expressions above. What began to emerge in his words, which he later went on to describe in more detail, was how his desire to ‘move on’ was significantly impacted by the physical reminders of his hard times which appeared all around him.

The media and social constructions of identity – ‘the bushfires kids’

The idea of subjected positioning is taken up in narrative literature (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997) and draws attention to the possible effects of the decreasing of personal agency to understand and act from a position other than that to which one is subjected. A growing sense among some in these bushfire-affected communities was that the constant presence and attention of the media was contributing to difficulties in moving on and returning to normalcy. While some articles and depictions highlighted stories of resilience and some of the many individual and community responses, so much also seemed to focus on documenting stories of ‘what happened to people’ and the associated suffering and hardship. For many adults in the community who I met with, there was an anxious sense that this spotlight was shaping how young people saw themselves; that is, that more of them had begun to identify with the media-moniker, ‘bushfire kids’.

The effect of this media presence and influence was often overt, and sometimes more insidious. This was evident during the early stages of our program work, when Evolve was approached by a state newspaper that sought to run a ‘good news’ story on the program. Their story was conditional, however, on coming to our property to ‘interview some kids about their loss and experiences’, talking to their families ‘about their struggles’, then in what seemed almost a post-script, a brief section on our program and how it hoped to ‘turn things around’ for these ‘victims’. After a very short deliberation, and with Jenny’s words of wanting ‘something different’ at the forefront of my mind, Evolve declined the opportunity.

The therapeutic context – obstacles to engagement

'I'm sick of just talking about it! Everyone says I have to but I don't like the feeling of talking about what happened. It doesn't feel like it helps me.' – Shaun, program participant

Shaun's comments echoed that of many participants in the program, most of whom, before the fires, had never experienced any professional 'help'. I came to understand after meeting the young men that much of what had been asked of them was experienced-focused, privileging retellings of 'what happened to you'. Reflective of some conventional approaches, the 'helpers', media, and other culturally-prevalent discourses of healing which promote a need to 'talk it out' contributed to a sense of fragility and an apprehension to engage in a therapeutically-orientated program.

These re-presentations of experience evoke the understanding of single-storied accounts as half memories, omitting people's responses to hard times and exploration of their broader sense of self (White, 2005). These expressions also point to practices that may have contributed to identity conclusions that reflect 'damage' and 'personal fragility'. Denborough (2006; 2008) has highlighted in these instances the responsibility of the therapists working with these people to find other ways of responding that do not risk the further confirmation of these identity conclusions. Early in our work, I came to understand something more of these occupied territories of identity, the effects of subjected positioning in public, cultural, and professional discourses on these young men, and how such situations were not preferred. These concepts contributed significantly to both the way we thought about our program design, and narrative practice in trying to offer 'something different'.

SPACE FOR ALTERNATIVE STORIES – 'SOMETHING DIFFERENT'

Practice that removes people from their known and familiar environmental contexts (which hold their identities, roles, and relationships) and deliberately immerses them in new, unknown, unfamiliar environments, can promote and accelerate alternative storyline development, and support a participatory therapeutic relationship.

The next part of this paper explores how we might respond to potentially traumatic experience in this way, and highlights the program development and practice ideas that have informed Evolve's program.

The 'green bubble' – an alternative environment for storyline development and to speak of effects of hard times

In exploring the notion of subordinate storyline development, White (2005) highlighted the importance of alternative territories for people to stand in to give voice to the hard times they've experienced, in ways that won't harm them further and may restore personal agency. These ideas are highly relevant when working in the bush context. As regularly evident in this practice, the bush is a place where subordinate storylines are often readily available to people and can be accessed.

I recall a conversation with Adrian, who had described a personal, emotional sense of feeling trapped as being a 'blue bubble', which was stressful and 'suffocating' him. He had begun to explain that his sense of the bush was very different.

Andy: ... and what is it like up here? Are you still in the 'blue bubble'?

Adrian: Nah ... it's completely different [looks around], it's like a giant green bubble! Can't you see it?!

Andy: Yeah, I think I can see the one you mean! What do you do in the green bubble that's so different?

Adrian: I can just relax, you just feel good. I can see it all so differently from here. It's like you can remember what life used to be like. It reminds me of ...

To begin to give voice to some of these preferred descriptions of his life, Adrian evokes the counter-plot metaphor of the green bubble, populated with intentionality of relaxing and feeling good, and immediately linked to a history of experience. To begin to offer this description, Adrian's location is both a different *territory of identity* (metaphoric – 'the green bubble') and *physical environment* (literal – the bush). That is, his location is both metaphoric and literal, and the literal supports – and is conducive to – the development of the metaphoric

(for more on the relationship of place and identity in narrative practice, see Trudinger, 2006). This isn't to suggest that the bush environment is necessarily, in and of itself, supportive and conducive to connecting with a preferred sense of self. While many people would agree that the therapeutic benefits of time in the bush are many and varied, to suggest this immersion alone purely as a therapeutic paradigm is thin and leaves too much to chance. The experience of this new and novel environment, in a constructed therapeutic program, is one that is shaped by both what people do when immersed in that environment and the therapeutic relationship that develops there.

The alternative environment (the bush) as a landscape of action

In speaking with David Epston, his immediate response was that work in a bush setting seemed like a rich ground for story development because people are actually doing things, then and there, that are intentional, and meaning can be made in the present moment. In the context of our bushfire response program, we can consider the link between this idea of performance and White's suggestion that a key approach in responding to traumatic experience is re-authoring conversations (White, 2007), which explore the related landscapes of action and identity in someone's life. These ideas resonate strongly with Evolve's program philosophy, in that much of what occurs in the alternative environment is 'doing': practical (hands-on joinery and blacksmithing workshops at the property), or physical (hiking, abseiling, rafting in the bush). All of it is challenging, stretching of one's capacities, but managed and achievable, providing fertile ground for exploration of one's skills and knowledges in the doing.

Challenge, or real and symbolic stress, is a key concept in this mode of practice, particularly in extended bush expeditions. It is possible to draw some comparison between the undertaking of an extended bush trip with Turner's (1967) notion of the liminality, a period which he described as 'the fruitful darkness' (1967, p. 110), away from what is known and a period of both real and symbolic stress. In this context, the utilisation of the wilds of the bush as a stressor provides this element, as do the physical stresses of hiking, weather, and the

idea of not turning back once begun (some participants would add powdered milk and dehydrated vegetables to that list of less-than-comfortable conditions!).

In the bush, an event that might populate the landscape of action – that of a preferred, alternative storyline – can occur readily. These events can then be linked to personal realisations and expressions of intentional states in conversation with the therapist (see Cheshire & Lewis, 1996/1998). In this setting, unencumbered by time limits, this can happen in a variety of places – while walking on track in the bush, sharing a task like cooking dinner, taking a bit of downtime to chat by a river ... anywhere it happens, really!

In this constructed therapeutic setting that promotes activity and achievement, what seems to be particularly available to people are alternative storylines that are far removed from those of personal failure or hopelessness. I refer to a later conversation I shared with Adrian, which reflected on what he had been doing. This chat took place on the evening of the last night of an eight day hike, just to the side of the group who were sitting round a campfire after dinner. It was a cool but clear night and we sat looking through the treetops to the stars as we spoke.

Adrian: ... I can't believe that I'm gonna finish this hike – you know I almost didn't come because I didn't think I could get through it?!

Andy: What's it like to think you're gonna get through it?

Adrian: Oh, it's the best feeling, I feel on top of the world!

Andy: Oh, yeah? What's the view like from up there?

Adrian: It's bloody brilliant!

Andy: What can you see about yourself from there?

Adrian: Well ... I see myself a bit differently, that's for sure ... makes me think I can really do some things if I put my mind to it ... you know, like face the hard stuff ...

Andy: How is it that you've been able to get through such a challenge?

- Adrian: I dunno ... I suppose you just have to put your head down and keep on going. You can't give up, you know?
- Andy: What do you reckon it might say about you, Adrian, that you keep your head down and keep going, that you don't give up?
- Adrian: Um ... I suppose that I don't quit, and that I can face things and keep pushing on. You gotta try, you know ...
- Andy: Have you been able to face other things in your life too?
- Adrian: Yeah [laughs], heaps of things ...

Our practice in the bush setting, one of both real and symbolic stress, not only promotes rich alternative storyline development, but can be a site of action for skills and knowledges for responding to stress. In the case of the bushfire recovery response, this symbolic stress has elicited many voluntary stories of skills and knowledges used in responding to stress. The following is a later extract from the same conversation with Adrian:

- Andy: So ... keeping on going and not giving up. What else have you done to get through?
- Adrian: It helps to look out for your mates, and they look out for you too. You couldn't do it without them. It's about getting each other through ...
- Andy: These skills of getting each other through – have you used those before?
- Adrian: Yeah ... definitely during the fires. And after the fires, too ...
- Andy: I'd be interested to hear some more stories about where these skills have come from and how you used them. Could I ask you a little bit more about these?
- Adrian: Yeah, sure can ...

Adrian went on to tell a series of stories that privileged these skills and others he had used, both for himself and with others in the community. At the end of the conversation, I asked him how it had been to chat about these skills, to which he responded that he hadn't spoken much of the fires

and had been afraid to, but this had left him 'feeling ok' about it. He also said that these skills of his were ones that he had never acknowledged before and that it made him feel 'stronger to talk about them'. When I asked what had made it possible to do talk in this way, he spoke again of being in the 'green bubble': 'I feel good about myself, I feel strong for the first time in ages. It's so much easier to talk about that stuff when you're in the green bubble too! When you're away from it all. It feels good to do.'

A safer ground

Barbara Wingard beautifully described the narrative ideal of telling stories that make people stronger (Wingard & Lester, 2001). These final sentiments from Adrian evoke the importance of privileging ways of understanding and speaking of experience that do not hurt or re-traumatise, but may have the capacity to heal, and implicate his physical environment in that process of finding safer ground. As explored earlier in this paper, the bush setting is highly conducive to rich alternative storyline development, which we have found provides a safer ground from which people can give expression to their experiences of hardships if they wish to. We also suggest and observe that the bush hike, an extended, highly challenging journey, often reflects a personal migration from a non-preferred way of being to something that fits better.

Our practice has told us that this sense of 'safe distance' is highly supportive of people choosing to speak of hardship in a way that, while not always easy, is a step towards healing and feeling stronger. I recall one example of a young man, Tom, who in a conversation at Typo Station had begun to tell me about how he felt like 'we're finally getting through it'. He was speaking of his family and their many challenges since the fires. In speaking about his family, Tom, a very keen and talented sportsman, evoked a team metaphor and the ongoing contest against what he termed the 'Big Barbeque'. The conversation, at times lively and light, at others emotive and solemn, wove through many aspects of his experiences of the 'Big Barbeque', the immediate and ongoing 'heat' (stress) for him and his family, and how they had responded to this over the time since. In conversation, he stepped forward as the 'captain' of his team. When I asked him

towards the end of your chat what talking in this way had been like, Tom answered: 'It doesn't feel so close ... it feels ok. Yeah, it's been good ...' Importantly, we were able to return to this metaphor regularly in our community-based follow-up, which meant the conversations we shared, and identity conclusions reached, were bridged between the bush and home.

The therapeutic relationship in the bush – implications of a de-centred posture

'They don't just tell you what to do ... they actually do it all with ya.' – Scott, program participant

The idea of 'therapist as participant' on a program in an unknown and unfamiliar environment, be it in the day-to-day workings of a station, or in the bush, also evokes Turner's ideas of reducing the power imbalances between people:

*Only in darkness ... people can be one.
There is a mystical solidarity between them.
For every normal action is involved in the
rights and obligations of a structure that
defines status and establishes social
distance between men [sic].*
(Turner, 1967, p. 110)

The bush can be considered the 'darkness' within which this mystical solidarity is created, away from the norms of everyday life. As such, therapist positioning and considerations of power are highly relevant. It is, as much as any other practice context, an environment that the de-centred and influential posture (White, 2005; 2007) is highly important in, but in unique ways. The therapist, while holding some relative level of expertise in bush experience, takes a non-expert role in the group of co-participant. The physical, mental, and emotional challenges are those in which the participant must respond himself/herself. This practice is guided by a principle that in every moment, we as therapists might either inhibit or enable the personal agency of those we work with, which upon being interpreted, may have lasting effects. This is described by Bush Adventure and Narrative Therapist, Paul Stolz:

It is highly important that the therapist does not 'get in the way' of the work unfolding.

There are risks taken when a therapist imposes diagnosis or solution, the latter which can take from the agency of a young person to find their own means. If we are not careful, we can not only deny them of a chance to do things on their own terms, but also hold over them a power and authority that might further marginalise his or her story (personal communication, Stolz, 2011)

With these ideas in mind, reflecting back to Adrian's responses, the implications of this de-centred position are apparent. I would suggest it would have been a very different set of realisations for Adrian, particularly with regard to his personal agency, if either the landscape of action or landscape of identity had been influenced by more centred, 'rescuing', and meaning-giving therapeutic responses.

Connection back to community

In this model of practice, there are three thoroughly-planned week-long trips away from home, interspersed with, and connected by, community-based follow-up. Importantly, this follow-up is provided by the therapist who has co-participated in the trips away and the bush journey with the participants. In this way, the therapist, who was both an audience to, and co-author of, alternative, preferred storylines in the bush setting, acts as a bridge between both contexts. Follow-up in the community has consisted of individual and small group therapeutic work; sharing of collective documents (Denborough, 2008); variations of definitional ceremony structures with families, school, and community members that share the stories of the bush (White, 2007); as well as bush-based day trips from the community to provide the opportunity to connect back into preferred storylines. Significantly, the participants return to Typo Station twice, which acts as a space to re-visit and confirm alternative storylines, which may reduce in potency over time once participants return to their known and familiar community contexts.

Metaphor is a feature of this linking of storylines from the bush back to the community. For example, ongoing work with Adrian in his local community context has centred on his understandings of the 'blue and green bubbles' that he came to realise in

the bush setting. In particular, Adrian has been able to continue to speak of his own ideas in 'staying inside and inviting others inside the green bubble', 'defending against the blue bubble', the relative sizes and strengths of the bubbles in his life, and his hope of finding and sharing other 'green bubble' environments.

The therapeutic relationship in the bush – implications of a de-centred posture

'Ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory.' (Turner, 1967, p. 95)

At the end of this program, we held a 'Celebration Day' at Typo Station, where parents, supporters, and community members came to the property and the young men showed off their achievements in the program. The young men gave speeches about each other, and what they had seen in each other throughout the program, and had a photo put on a wall with all other groups to have passed through Typo Station. A sense of membership and aggregation accompanied this completion.

This day was marked by the absence of public conversation about the bushfires, something that was noticed by visiting parents. In conversation with Jenny, who had hoped for 'something different' for Tim a year before, I heard about the initial effects of this: 'It's one of the first things since the fires that haven't been about the fires. It's probably no surprise that he loves it up here. You can see it in him – he feels good about what he has done here and it's like he's been able to forget the rest of that other stuff. All of them have been able to do that. It's a bit like it's a step back towards things being more normal.' Jenny's words point to the restoration of a preferred sense of self, that of a 'normal' sense of self after hard times. There are implications for how we can support this and how we can work narratively in environments outside of the local to respond to effects of hard times.

REFLECTIONS

This program has continued into a second year and has just recently been made available to a number of other Victorian schools experiencing bushfire effects. As we continually re-think our model and practices, we do so with this question in

mind – when the lives of individuals, families, and communities have become so touched and moved by the effects of a traumatic event, how might we be useful in providing 'something different'?

I have a vivid memory of a meeting with Jason, a participant who had initially expressed his reluctance to participate in many aspects of the program, particularly the extended bush hike. He had gone on to complete the program and we were celebrating this over a milkshake at the local bakery. He had drawn a cartoon picture of himself as a big and strong character as he told me about how 'the fires stuff' (his experience-near name for the effects of the fires on him) wasn't taking over his life as it had previously, and how he was extremely relieved by this.

Andy: If 'the fires stuff' had had its way with you, what's your guess about how much of you it would be taking up now?
[Jason looks at the page for a minute, then with fast and sharp strokes shades in all of the character he has drawn. He looks up and smiles.]

Andy: How much is it taking up for you at the moment?
[Jason draws another man next to the first one and colours in a very small section at the back of his head.]

Jason: It's still in there, but it's right up the back. I'm in control of it now.

Andy: What might you do when you are in control of it?

Jason: [looks up and replies] I can do anything I want to!

Andy: Any ideas about what you might do?!

Jason: [smiles broadly] I never thought I'd say this, but I reckon I might go on another hike!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the people and stories that this paper is built upon. It has been a pleasure and deep learning experience to be involved in the work that is described here. Thank you.

The Evolve Bushfire Recovery Program is jointly funded by the Victorian Department of Education

and Early Childhood Development (Hume Region) and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. We look forward to further collaborative and fruitful partnership in the continuation of the program.

I'd like to thank Paul Stolz and Desiree Pettit for their thoughtful reviews of earlier drafts of this paper, and Evolve staff for their contribution to the program development and ongoing exploration and improvement of these practices.

NOTES

1. All names in this paper are pseudonyms.
2. For more information on the Australian Association of Bush Adventure Therapy, visit www.aabat.org.au. For more on adventure therapy in narrative contexts, see Cheshire & Lewis (1996/1998).

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