

PSYCHOLOGY OF EMOTIONS, MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS

HOPE

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, ROLE IN RECOVERY AND IMPACT ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH

FRANCIS L. COHEN
EDITOR



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Chapter 1

**DOING HOPE ... TOGETHER,
IN EVERYDAY LIVING AND IN COUNSELING
RESEARCH**

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the practices of doing hope together in a kaleidoscope of personal and professional narratives woven into and between people's lives. Narrative therapy practices such as compassionate witnessing and narrative documents are called on to story small steps of doing reasonable hope in everyday life and in counseling research. The chapter draws on the witnessing of a farewell ritual between a grandmother and grandsons, witnessing diners at a café and excerpts of narrative documents to produce, acknowledge and richly describe practices of care that contribute to the doing of hope together. These small and ordinary, yet significant, incidents take place in the entangled spaces of discursive and material, between humans and humans, as well as between humans and matter-materiality. The chapter also weaves vignettes from everyday living and counseling-research data.

Keywords: discursive↔material, narrative documents, witnessing practices, practices of hope

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INTRODUCTION

Hope is too important — its effects on the body and the soul too significant — to be left to individuals alone. Hope must be the responsibility of the community.

(Weingarten, 2000, p. 402)

I draw on various small strands of theories and practices to investigate examples of “doing hope” that communities actively engage in. One such strand that I draw on is narrative therapy. Narrative therapy emerged through the linguistic and discursive turns (White and Epston, 1990) and was shaped by philosophical currents including the poststructural work of Foucault, especially his analysis of power/knowledge relations, and Derrida’s practices of deconstruction. A more recent influence is the work of Deleuze and Guattari (see Winslade, 2009). I weave between witnessing practices as described by Weingarten (2000, 2003, 2010) and therapeutic practices of outsider witnessing developed by White (1997, 2007) to witness myself, other human-human interactions and intra-actions, as well as human-matter “intra-actions”, as described by the quantum physicist, feminist and new materialist Barad (2007, p. 178).

Weingarten’s (2000, 2003, 2010) practices of compassionate witnessing and doing reasonable hope, and White’s (2007) outsider witnessing practices provide counselors with tools to use in counseling with the intention of richly storying hope-full actions. Weingarten (2000, 2003) describes four positions from which a person can engage in witnessing. Her two-by-two grid of witness positions is constructed around whether or not a witness is aware and empowered, or unaware and disempowered in relation to that which the person witnesses. A person is able to witness the self and others compassionately when the person moves into an aware and empowered position (Weingarten, 2003). I apply these ideas to pause and notice how I am positioned when I witness, and to turn that witnessing into small acts of doing reasonable hope. Weingarten (2010) argues that reasonable hope becomes possible when hope is relational and consists of a practice or actions. Reasonable hope “maintains that the future is open, uncertain, but influenceable, [and] seeks goals and pathways” (Weingarten, 2010, p. 7). Such a practice seeks ways to accommodate doubt, contradictions and despair: it focuses on small but significant actions, even when a person experiences despair. “Doing” reasonable hope becomes possible when hope is re-interpreted, not as a noun, but as an action we “do with others” (Weingarten, 2010).

Michael White developed a three-stage narrative therapy witnessing practice on the basis of Barbara Myerhof's "definitional ceremonies" (White, 2007, p. 165). In this approach, client and therapist negotiate the process of outsider witnessing for a particular purpose. They identify who might be invited to hear the client's story. During the session, the client tells a significant snippet of the client's life story, while the invited outsider witness listens carefully to the conversation. After the first telling of the story, the outsider witness is invited to retell the story he/she heard to the therapist, guided by questions crafted by the therapist. In this re-telling, the person whose story was witnessed listens to the conversations between the therapist and the outsider witness. In the third stage, the person whose story was told in the first stage retells the story as witnessed and retold by the outsider witness in the second stage. The therapist carefully scaffolds all conversations.

For the purposes of this chapter I position myself as a witness and draw on the intentions of the questions that a therapist might ask a witness to shape questions to myself about the event that I witnessed:

- What stood out for you as you witnessed the event?
- What in our life prepared you to hear, experience, and witness the event?
- What image/s comes to mind?
- How will this learning guide you further in your teaching/counseling practice?
- What hopes do you hold for your practice now that you have witnessed an event?

Another narrative practice that I draw on in this chapter is the construction of narrative documents (White 2007; White and Epston, 1990). Narrative letters are often used in therapy for particular purposes (White and Epston, 1990, pp 125–126; Freeman, Epston, and Lobovits, 1997, pp.112–142). In the second example, I select a letter I wrote to an unborn child in order to connect with the hope of the child's father-to-be for a rich and meaningful relationship with his child. In the third example, I draw on a narrative document used in counseling research to capture the hope-full words uttered by member of an aging community.

I teach the theory and practice of narrative therapy, and derive intense joy from those moments when students are enchanted by this kind of work and take up these practices because the approach and practice resonate closely with their own values and hopes for ethical counseling practices. However, in the

last few years, I have begun to reflect on the invitations to engage in new ways with our universe offered by new materialism (Barad, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2010; Bennett, 2010; Hekman, 2010; Thiele, 2014). I wonder whether the discursive approach foregrounded in narrative therapy contribute to matter-materiality's fading into the background. If and when this happens, it can strengthen an unjustifiable binary between the material/discursive or discursive/non-discursive. Barad (1998, 2012, 2014), a quantum physicist, and a philosopher of science, feminism and new material feminism questions such a dichotomy:

Language has been granted too much power. The linguist turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every "thing" – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or ... form of cultural representation ... Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters ... The only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter. (Barad, 2003, p. 801)

In response to this dichotomy, Barad (2007) developed a theory that requires us to rethink concepts such as subject, object, agency, causality and intra-action. Intra-action differs from inter-action. Inter-action assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede these interactions. By contrast, intra-action is seen as a new way of thinking (about) causality, and opens up a space for "material-discursive forms of agency" (Barad, 2003, p. 826). Agency, in Barad's view, is thus "distributed" (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 113), produced in an enactment, and not as the property of a person or a thing.

In narrative therapy, matter-materiality and intra-actions with non-human or the "more than human" (Alaimo, 2010) may go unexplored and un-storied if an embedded positioning within the linguistic and discursive turn is continually re-inscribed. If I reread narrative therapy through – or in terms of – new materialism (Barad, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2012; Bennett, 2010; Hekman, 2010) or relational materialism (see Hultman and Taguchi, 2010; Thiele 2014), narrative therapy seems to be shaped predominantly by theory and philosophy from the linguistic turn. This is the situation when in fact, the under-storied matter-materiality carry and shape the narratives of our lives and make the discursive possible through "intra-action" (Barad, 2007).

Another important aspect that I want to mention briefly, because it speaks into how we teach and engage with counseling and doing-of-hope practices, is how we come to know and become on material↔discursive terms. Barad

(2007, p. 185) explains that knowing and being are mutually interwoven and that we get to know the world from within:

[P]ractices of knowing cannot fully be claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practice but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part. Practice of knowing and being ... are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world....Onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being.

Studying practices of “knowing in being” provides an opportunity to become different from what we were through our intra-actions (with and between the human and more-than-human). In the examples that I discuss below, I call on my interpretation of this practice to become different *with* hopeful practices that become possible in inter- and intra-actions. I am interested in how becoming with hope-full practices opens up possibilities of multiplicity and inclusivity. I investigate how they affect everyone/everything involved.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work resonates with and contributes to Barad's (2007) stance of the “knowing-in-being” when they describe their view of a “becoming” in an in-between space and define “becoming” as “always in the middle” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 293). They explain:

A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle... a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination. A line of becoming has only a middle A becoming is always in the middle; one can only get it by the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between ... (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 293)

In this chapter, I use three narratives as an experiment to uncover how matter-materiality is woven into and through these stories. This tentative exploration reveals the significance of materiality in these hope-full actions and texts, suggesting that these stories embody hope-full inter- and “intra-actions” (see Barad, 2007). Drawing on very small aspects on the spectrum of “new materialism” (Barad, 2003, 2007, 2014; Hekman, 2010; Hultman and Tagushi, 2010), I see a community that does hope together becomes visible in interaction and intra-action (Barad, 2007) between humans and humans, as well as between the human and non-human or “more-than-human” (Alaimo,

2010, p.13). In re-thinking the material aspects of the three narratives, I tentatively acknowledge materiality “as an effect or consequence of discursive practices” (Barad, 2007, p. 225). In these examples I cannot yet assert “materiality as an agentive and productive factor in its own right” (Barad, 2007, p. 225). I tentatively contemplate the movement identified by Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p. 110) as a shift from a focus “on the discursive, with Derrida and Spivak; to the discursive↔material, with Foucault and Butler; to the material↔discursive, with Deleuze and Barad”.

The purpose of drawing on these ideas is to view the enactment of human-human and human-matter intra-actions (Barad, 2007) as doing-hope-together practices. These practices are acted with and within small communities.

EXAMPLES OF COMPASSIONATE WITNESSING AND NARRATIVE DOCUMENTS

The three stories I tell below have been intertwined into my personal-professional life over several years. I first tell the three stories and then revisit and rethink the examples, emphasising selected threads relating to the theoretical ideas mentioned above. In the first example, I witness a farewell ritual between a grandmother and a teenage grandson. In the second example, I re-visit a narrative letter to an unborn child as an action of doing hope on paper. The third example relates how I experienced “being witnessed” in a particular timespacemattering (Barad, 2007) as I simulatenously witnessed diners in a café.

FAREWELL RITUAL

In the late afternoon traffic, the bus is on its way to the international terminal at the airport. It slowly pulls into a parking bay in one of the villages along the road. Sitting in the bus, I take my thoughts back from the long flight ahead. Through the window I look down to where passengers, family and friends mill around in a kind of orderly commotion, facing each other, turning away and towards the bus, looking at their luggage stacked in a row. They turn back to loved ones. A temporary entanglement/assemblage of human and non-human matter unfolds – colourful suitcases, suitcases that show signs of being handled by many hands and machines, paper tickets, tickets on mobile phones,

name tags, bodies of adults, children, young people, mingling, talking, giving last instructions, repeating the last farewell rituals – some will get on the bus, and others will be left behind.

She stands at the edge of a small cluster of people. Her arms are spread like wings to hold her grandchildren lightly, with great care and love, captured in the embrace of her arms. Two grandsons, one a teenager and the other a young boy, are tucked snugly under her arms as they lean into her body. She keeps kissing them, whispering intimately to each of them. The teenager wipes at his tears, but does not try to hide them. The grandsons's parents stack the suitcases and for a short second the boys' arms loosen their grip on their grandmother as they look at their suitcases being loaded, and then they snuggle back into her arms. The teenager puts his arm around her. His younger brother has his arm around her waist, so the tallest boy squeezes his grandmother's body. He realises that he has touched her bosom and gently moves his hand lower. I witness this moment of leaning into her body, holding onto the care and comfort he wants. In the moving hand, I see respect, taking care not to offend her familiar body, which holds their memories. The small movement captures a tenderness between a young man and his grandmother. The bus window provides me with an opportunity to become part of these delicate actions of care. I rejoice in a young boy's taking the opportunity to perform an act of recognition of this significant relationship.

The embrace, kissing, gentle whispers come to an end when the family embark. As they take the first steps onto the bus, each family member turns to look back at the figure of their mother/grandmother, who moves slightly forward. As they are taken up in the bus and find seats on the side of the bus that faces her, she slowly takes a big, bright white handkerchief from her pocket. The driver shifts into his seat and starts the engine. He closes the doors, using a hydraulic mechanism. As the bus moves off, she comes closer and gently wipes the tears from her eyes with the folded handkerchief. She shakes the handkerchief gently and it unfolds as she lifts it to wave. A light breeze assists her in unfolding the material, which moves up and down, and then left to right. A slight, frantic movement in the two rows where her family sit produces a white facial tissue. The older of the two boys clutches the tissue in his fist and pushes it through the open window. He meets her gaze and her gesture. Their eyes measure the distance, their bodies move and the handkerchief and tissue move in waves, and the movements of bodies and matter, the handkerchief-waves and the facial tissue-waves meet in the space-in-between. Within a "relational materialist understanding" (Hultman and Tagushi, 2010), the bodies and material *come into waves* – the movement of

material and the movement of the bodies “be-come” the embodying of handkerchief-tissue waves.

The bus slowly puts more and more distance between the family and the figure at the bus stop. The light breeze, the slowly moving bus provide an extra movement and two pieces, cloth and paper, meet each other, in mid-air on a mild autumn day, as the bus turns into the traffic. It becomes one with the stream of vehicles.

The grandmother and grandson do hope together in their actions, words and small gestures. Their tears carry the anticipated loss. The whispered words speak love, care and connection, and through the nods, smiles and touching of each other’s bodies, the hope, dreams and values for this relationship materialise. These actions provide hope within a respectful relationship and for the continuation of a special bond into the future. They do relationship at a time when immediate physical contact is broken off. Within and between the small but significant gestures of the waving of material, memories are captured and narratives of connection are established.

As a teacher of counseling, I often see and hear of experiences of difficulties in many relationships. Relationships between young men and their grandmothers are often ones where more distancing is acted. This small but significant entanglement of a farewell ritual produces hopeful actions that these relationships can be acted differently and in the particular timespacemattering: the intra-actions “matter”. The boy’s snuggling, leaning into his grandmother’s body, captures his desire for connection and comfort. Their actions do hope for me as a parent, as a potential grandparent and as a counselor in my witnessing practice of the discursive↔material. I saw touching, kissing, tears, moving lips, as words were spoken. The materiality of these bodies and actions were then also captured in my look. The development of these actions invited my body to respond with “affect” for them, the ritual and the material, doing hope with them, even though they are unlikely ever to know about my connection with them.

The white handkerchief and the facial tissue extend the intra-action of the material↔discursive and make visible the possibility of an alternative story (White, 2007) for grandparent-grandson relationships for all those who witnessed what happened between them. In the closeness of their bodies, small actions of doing hope, I witnessed the movements of white material. I witnessed how the distance between her body and the moving bus grew, I saw the materiality of waving arms, visible tears on cheeks and in their eyes, smiles and hand gestures meeting each other in the spaces-in-between.

The material of one body shapes the material of another body and the material of the handkerchief and the tissue shape the relationship through the enactment of their substance, in the movement and in expanding distance. In the material↔discursive space, the touching-leaning bodies, intimate whispering, kissing, tears, walking, stepping over the threshold, muscles, hands waving, intra-acted with the bus, doors closing, wheels turning, windows, seats, material meeting tears, material unfolding, a breeze lifting the material

Thinking of practices of knowing and being as mutually constituting (Barad, 2007), led me to wonder how the young man's intra-acting with the world (human and material) produced a different becoming for his grandmother, the young man himself, his brother, his parents, myself and the other passengers as witnesses. I was an active witness of the interaction and through the active witnessing became part of the ritual within a particular timespacematter (Barad, 2010). I made a decision to follow these inter- and intra-actions with a desire to connect. I am not outside of the practices of "knowing-in-being" and doing hope together that is produced in a public space. I witness and I become different from what I was before.

NARRATIVE DOCUMENTS AS PRACTICES OF DOING HOPE

Charl¹ lost his father very early in his life. His father served a life sentence for several brutal crimes. Charl made a commitment to his mother that he would focus his life on finding good work and establishing good personal relationships. He delayed becoming committed to a serious relationship, and when he married for the first time at the age of 40, he was very careful to nurture family relationships. He experienced significant uncertainty regarding his ability to achieve this goal and questioned whether he would be a "good father".

I witnessed a particular incident and decided to story the moment so that it would not get lost in the busyness of everyday living. I wrote the letter to Charl and Deborah's unborn child. Narrative documents provided me with the material to offer a small step of doing hope in a future↔present↔past weaving.

¹ Identifiable information has been changed

Dear little one

You may not yet know me. My name is Elmarie and I am your grandmother's friend. I can write about many precious incidents that your parents keep speaking you into this world but I have chosen to write about a very particular incident that caught my attention when I visit the apartment where your parents, Charl and Deborah, live. Your mother, Deborah, wanted to show us the special place they have prepared for your arrival. I went with your mother, Deborah, and Dorene, my friend and your grandmother, to have a look at the small room. Walking into the room I had a feeling the room was waiting for a small body to claim it.

When we returned to the kitchen/living room your father Charl and his friend Bill were watching something on TV. I thought it was a sport programme but then realised they were mesmerised by a DVD of you in your mother's uterus. I watched them watching this precious DVD. I had never seen two men so intrigued by every movement – the movements that you made – and captivated by the wonder of your life inside your mother's womb. I was moved by this and wanted to tell you a little about this special incident. As they were watching, your father Charl explained and commented on every move and every new development of your little body. He indicated your arms and tiny hands. They both became very excited when you moved your arms and legs and it looked like you were kicking very strongly. Charl drew Bill's attention to every minute detail of the movement. His voice carried a warmth and tenderness and spoke to me of wonderment, admiration, amazement and love as his eyes followed your every movement. What a very special experience to have witnessed this! Watching him made me wonder about connections that people build, for example your relationship with your father even before you have felt his hands or heard his voice in person. A warm voice followed you on the screen. He pointed out your heartbeats and his voice sounded what I would call really "velvety". It had a very special quality. I am not able to capture in words the tone of his voice and the emotions his voice carried at that moment. It hung in the air and touched and moved me to think about writing to you regarding this very special incident.

My guess would be that it had to do with the wonder of your existence in the womb, the excitement to get to know you and seeing your heart working to help you grow and become a person who is ready to meet him and us here in the outside world. At that moment he looked connected to you in an extraordinary way. His eyes were soft when he followed your heartbeat. He had a very special smile that touched his face as the fascination of your existence captured him. I was privileged to have witnessed this and thought I wanted to share this with you.

Your parents may decide to read this letter to you when you are still in the womb or they may wait and read this to you in a couple of years. By the

time you can read this yourself, you may already have experienced their love and care for you. If later in life, you experience a very special bond with your father, I hope this letter will be a reminder of how this bond started long before you were born.

My wish for you is that you may experience the love in his voice, his admiration for you, and that the two of you will have many hours of growing this very special bond.

Your parents are looking forward to your arrival. May you all be blessed with good health, humour, commitment and stamina to grow an extraordinary relationship.

Best wishes
Elmarie

Narrative documents are familiar practices in narrative therapy (White and Epston 1990; White, 2007). They have been used for many purposes (Kotzé et al. 2010, Kotzé, Van Duuren and Small, 2011; Kotzé, Hulme, Geldenhuys, and Weingarten, 2012). I wrote the letter above as a narrative document with the intention of richly storying alternative practices that I witnessed. In the letter I call forward an alternative or preferred story (White, 2007) with possibilities of Carl's envisaging himself as a caring father in the life of the couple's unborn offspring. The letter serves the purpose of what in narrative therapy is called a "taking-it-back practice" (White, 2007). In the small episode I witnessed, the opportunity to engage in a taking-it-back practice (White, 2007) with a man who was to become a father, while his own history spoke of an absent father. I captured the witnessing in words on paper and offered this letter to the couple.

In typing the letters in this letter, I called on another technology-matter as materiality as I intra-acted with the computer. The computer keyboard captured the letters of the words I typed as my fingers touched, pressed and at times caressed the small squares. The computer encoded and stored the words. I read the words back as they spoke the hope I was doing in the words chosen, in the spaces between words, in sentences on and off the page. They reflected back to me the meaning that I made of my witnessing of an incident. In this intra-action with the discursive↔material the letter took shape through my fingers on the keyboard and the narrative practice of letter writing storied the entanglement of people, technology, and an unborn offspring. The letter captured my witnessing of an experience that two men engaged in and with technology and many disursive practices in a living room in a house, in a particular timespacemattering. In printed format, the paper, words, spaces,

punctuation, meanings off and on the page intra-acted with technology and the user of that technology.

Barad's (2007, pp. 216-222) nuanced analysis of the material↔discursive intra-action of the sonogram and the process of capturing images of a fetus highlights the entanglement of the technological/scientific apparatus being used, the medical gaze-practice and the political positioning that accentuates the autonomy, subjectivity and identity of a fetus. Barad argues that the political discourse of the fetus is autonomous, making it possible to "see" the unborn offspring as "free floating" on the screen, while the technological/scientific practice of focusing on the fetus makes its political autonomous identity possible (see Hekman, 2010, p. 78). The decisions or "cuts" that Barad (2014) describes, the specific focus or emphasis on capturing particular information, have far reaching consequences; for example, such technologies are only available in well resourced communities. In other communities, such technology and particular ethno-cultural and socio-political practices may be used in different ways, sometimes even culminating in termination of the pregnancy when the sex of the baby becomes known, if a particular sex is undesirable for particular reasons at a particular time.

Another effect of the distinction I made in addressing the unborn child as a person is that I ignored the body of the woman carrying the baby. On a bigger scale, such an action may have political consequences for the debate on when termination of a pregnancy is deemed (in)appropriate. The letter I wrote not only gave a specific form to the discursive practices of parenting and parent-offspring relationships, but also to the materiality of the fetus's existence somewhat "outside" of the materiality of the body of the mother. In Baradian terms, such cuts introduce differences, and such differences "matter".

AGING

I wait at the cash register to order my food. A moment to pause and look at the lake outside the café. After a few minutes I bring my gaze back into the café. Without actively looking, I notice the significant presence of grey-haired diners. I hear the agitation in a voice before I see the owner of the voice: "Oh mum, why do you always have to ruin something special that I try to do for you?" They sit within hearing distance of the queue of people patiently waiting to be served. I slowly shift my gaze in time to witness the disappointment, pain, and agitation on the speaker's face, and slowly turn my gaze away. The words come to rest in my body and I wonder about the plates of food between

them on the table. I wonder about the hopes the speaker had entertained of enjoying time with her mother. The pain finds a place in my body.

As I slowly shift my gaze, my eyes catch an (un)familiar shape – dentures on the table. To my left ... dentures, discolored through time, smile back at me. They are uncovered, placed upside down on the small side-plate. I look away and a few seconds later I move my eyes to check that this really is what I saw... yes! I turn my head and look again. I feel the urge to gently cover the dentures with a serviette. My body is frozen in not knowing what to do. Then I look up and my eyes catch the small warm smile of a younger woman (a daughter perhaps?) sitting opposite him at the table. She witnesses my witnessing him and the dentures. I do not want to hold her gaze, but her smile holds me in the moment, and I breathe slowly. A calmness settles in my body and I slowly make a small nod, up and down, lift my eyes and look up into her eyes, and feel a faint movement of the corner of my mouth ... moving up. She witnessed my witnessing the dentures. In that moment I viscerally experience a movement towards be-coming, a be-coming other than I was before this intra-action in the space between the eye-contact, the smile of the dentures and our faint smiles meeting each other, in the space between us, across the dentures.

In that moment of her witnessing my witnessing, I meet my own aging with compassion. My own aging body comes into being, and the possibility of a failing body, a failing memory, calls on others to witness me with compassion. I turn compassionately witnessing self into the act of compassionately witnessing the diners at the table.

I order my food and leave the café, slowly looking back, and nod again to the table with the dentures. Walking in the shade of the aging oak trees, I remind myself of a renowned academic who published the book *Staring at the park* (Speedy, 2015) after she had a debilitating stroke. She resists taken-for-granted ideas about “recovery” from a stroke; she explains that she wrote the book

... against the grain of the more triumphalist ... survivor narratives that I was given to read. I wanted to privilege confusion and incoherence and old age and to express a resistance to the pioneering, more youthful myths that made coherent and linear sense of it all. (Speedy, 2015, p. 15)

The memories of the two incidents in the café, words spoken from a place of pain and irritation, dentures on the table, smiles and eyes meeting in the spaces in-between, silences, nods, and a becoming different than I was, take up

a space in my body. The visceral experience evokes the practice of “caring solidarity”, a term Sevenhuijsen (1998, p. 147) uses to ascribe political meaning to “care”. Such caring solidarity does not rely on a “privatization and moralization of care”, but reminds us that “everyone in different ways and to different degrees needs care at some point in their lives” (1998, p. 147). Resistance and caring become the hope-full practices people do, together ... with dentures, plates of food, words, smiles, silences ... in the spaces in-between.

I remember a research project by Swanepoel (2003) that I supervised. This Master’s student experienced herself being moved by the narratives of elderly people in a care facility in South Africa that she interviewed. In our supervision sessions, we talked about the identity claims the residents in the care facility had taken up. We reflected on the positions they were invited into by care-givers, their families and medical staff and how they responded to these invitations. Together we discussed the many practices that opened up and/or closed down agentic input from the residents of this facility. In the supervision, we listened to the spoken-unspoken, visible-invisible data as hopeful practice that she generated with the residents. In her research report, she held on to the participants’ desires for connection and appeal to their loved ones. After a supervision discussion she drafted the following narrative document from the data generated with research participants:

Many of our children out there believe that we are too old to change. Attempts to address longstanding issues are thus viewed as inevitably fruitless. It is true that sometimes we do not want to change or make changes as easily as you young people. However, a few of us are frequently more ready to talk about the realities of our life experiences than you might realise.

We can sometimes make amazing realistic evaluations of our lives. We can even experience it as a welcome relief to be able to talk to you freely and honestly about feelings. We may even be more ready to change than you are prepared to accept. Avoiding problems and the silence surrounding the issue may make us feel isolated and unloved. Even if it is painful to face reality, talking about problems dissolves the distance between us. Afterwards we may be able to build a closer and more meaningful relationship.

Please try to talk to us in a non-judgemental way. Try to care for us without feeling guilty. Please give us the gift of your time, attention and presence instead of physical gifts. Although we are old we still know the difference between being ignored and being cared for. As people facing mortality, please ask us how we want to be remembered and assure us that our legacy will be kept alive after we are gone; our story is not wholly our own but lives on, woven into your lives.

Please view us as unique individuals rather than as reflections of your own perceptions. As humans, we too have problems. We sometimes need affirmation and may seek it from you in inappropriate ways, expecting more than you have the resources to give. We apologise for sad misjudgements but please respect the wisdom that we have gathered in our lifetime and, if possible, pay attention to our opinions.

Please play the 'do-you-remember-game' with us sometimes. Remind us of the times that our actions meant a lot to you and the nice things you will always remember about us – and if you remember please thank us for these when you have the chance to do so, before the time comes when you will say: 'I wish I could have told them, in the living years...' (song from the group Mike and the Mechanics).

(Swanepoel, 2003, pp. 93-94)

Thinking with the theoretical strand (Barad, 2007, pp. 3-25) of the science and ethics of "mattering", I wonder about the becoming differently than they/we were, people-material and matter-material. I wonder about the intra-action of tables, chairs, food, the different smells of food, dentures, a queue of people, the sounds of cutlery, plates, glasses, eating, drinking, laughing, talking, faint smiles, eyes meeting, words spoken and unspoken, acting together and the small and seemingly insignificant acts of "doing hope, together" between human and human and between human and non-human that "matter".

CODA

I wonder what brought about the entanglement of bodies, text, relationships, language in a new configuration. Was it the desire for connection, for transformation, for doing hope ... together? The woman at the table witnessed my witnessing them, and her witnessing me while witnessing "my-self" made a spectrum of identity claims available to me. In writing this chapter I witness myself witnessing self and others doing small acts of hope, together.

Barad's (2007, p. 3) introduction to her book *Meeting the universe halfway* starts with a discussion of Frayn's play *Copenhagen*, which represents Heisenberg's visit to Niels Bohr in Copenhagen in September 1941. She considers Frayn's point that "we are prohibited, in principle, from knowing our own thoughts, motives and intentions. The only possibility we have of catching a glimpse of ourselves is through the eyes of another" (p.11). These

words are heavily marked in my book. I revisit them often. Their implication invites me – forces me – to explore micro-socio-political actions that we engage in when we are doing hope with others in the many moral and ethical questions our world faces in trying to make meaning and act in ways that matters.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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