

# Continuing to Make Sense of a Narrative Conception of Hope

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*In this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I continued to make sense of a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope (LeMay, 2014). I started with a remembered story that occurred on a First Nation<sup>1</sup> shortly after I commenced working at a post-secondary institution. Following that, I shared stories that led me to wonder about a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope and then what I learned in a dissertation with two teachers as we worked with a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope. From there, I unpacked the remembered story, using the three learnings that resonated in my sensemaking with the two teachers. Lastly, I reflected on how this inquiry inspired me to continue to make sense of students' storied experiences of working with a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) in relation to their well-being.*

*Dans cette enquête narrative autobiographique, j'ai continué à donner du sens à une conception narrative de l'espoir inspirée par Dewey (LeMay, 2014). J'ai commencé par me souvenir d'une histoire qui s'est produite sur une Première Nation peu après que j'ai commencé à travailler dans un établissement postsecondaire. Ensuite, j'ai partagé les histoires qui m'ont amenée à m'interroger sur une conception narrative de l'espoir inspirée par Dewey, puis ce que j'ai appris dans le cadre d'une dissertation avec deux enseignants alors que nous travaillions avec une conception narrative de l'espoir inspirée par Dewey. Ensuite, j'ai décortiqué l'histoire dont je me souviens en utilisant les trois apprentissages qui ont résonné dans ma recherche de sens avec les deux enseignants. Enfin, j'ai réfléchi à la façon dont cette enquête m'a inspirée pour continuer à donner du sens aux expériences narratives des élèves qui travaillent avec une pédagogie narrative de l'espoir (LeMay, 2014) en relation avec leur bien-être.*

## Remembered Story

Heart thumping, I pulled open the heavy wooden door nestled in the centre of the First Nations Administration Building. Scanning the room for a place to hang the 4-foot by 3-foot image of the tree trunk rolled up under my arm, I noticed my supervisor, Dianne, motioning for me to sit in the empty chair next to her. Before sitting down, I placed leaves that I cut out the night before in the middle of the table. I felt my heart slow down ever so slightly as I slid back to the moment when I asked Dianne if we could use the cut-out leaves and hope tree to guide the conversation we were about to embark on.

I inhaled deeply and waited for Dianne to agree with my suggestion (as I had written in the instructions she had in her hands) that we make our hopes and fears visible as a way of supporting a new space and place for reluctant learners to re-engage with learning within the safety net of the First Nation. I smiled as I recalled Dianne asking me, earlier in the day, to write out the directions

for the hope tree activity<sup>2</sup> because she was concerned that I could not facilitate and participate in the discussion simultaneously. After six months of working alongside me, Dianne knew how animated I became when I was alongside others who chose to courageously imagine the possibilities when imagining as if (Sarbin, 2004) and seeing things as otherwise (Greene, 1995) when exploring new projects.

When Dianne asked the group to write a single word or phrase on each of the leaves that described what we hoped to see, hear, and feel as a result of our interactions with each other, I picked up a leaf from the pile in front of me. I detected a smile on the face of one of the participants. Her smile made me wonder if she looked forward to recording her hopes, or if she thought we were embarking on a useless endeavour. This wonder took me back to my work with another group of teachers in a series of professional development sessions. During the first session, one of the teachers leaned away from the circle with his arms crossed instead of participating in the follow-up reflection. A month later when we met, this same teacher asked to be the first to share his experiences of making hope and hoping explicit in his classroom.

I wondered how things might be different this time, given how quickly everyone started writing down their hopes and dreams on the leaves. When everyone appeared to be finished writing, we placed the leaves, one at a time on the branches on the top half of the tree. Next, we brainstormed strengths and successes of past projects. As the group shared stories around each strength and success, I scribed their ideas, one at a time, on the inside of the trunk. Following that we named and wrote the things and people that nourished past projects and initiatives on roots at the bottom of the hope tree. Finally, we named the groups' fears, worries, and previous damages to individuals or groups of people living on the Nation when new initiatives were introduced in the past. The group directed me where to place the fear, worry, or damage, in red; either outside the hope tree or on the trunk. We discussed where to place the fear, worry and/or previous damage depending on how severe or dangerous the group anticipated their potential influence in sabotaging the hopes written on the leaves at the top of the tree. As we did this, I thought back to the many times I sat in a circle with teachers and other helping professionals sharing stories about attending to the hope suckers<sup>3</sup> (LeMay, Edey, & Larsen, 2008) that drained our energy.

The remembered story demonstrated my experiences when I began working at a post-secondary institution while finishing up a dissertation to make sense of two teachers' respective experiences of working with a set of hope-focused practices (LeMay, et al., 2008). The hope-focused practices were created while I was Director of Education at the Hope Foundation of Alberta.<sup>4</sup>

## **Moving Toward a Narrative Conception of Hope**

### **Theoretical Considerations**

I formally began to make sense of hope as a theoretical concept during my graduate studies. I applied for a leave from the classroom to work with the HOPE KIDS<sup>TM5</sup> program at the Hope Foundation of Alberta. I chose to work with Hope Kids because I was curious about how Hope Kids' interactions with residents in care centres were different from how I experienced hope and hoping.

Since, like Connelly and Clandinin (2006), I believed "people shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their pasts in terms of these stories" (p. 375), I attended to and reflected on my stories to live by<sup>6</sup> (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) alongside the

stories others lived, told, retold, and relived as a way of making sense of my experiences and understanding of hope and hoping.

As I reflected on the stories we lived, told, retold, and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) alongside and with Hope Kids, I connected with Lusted's (1986) notion of pedagogy as the knowledge produced between a learner and teacher that encourages each to emerge from an interaction with new knowledge. Another piece of literature that caught my attention was a set of stories about experiences of living with chronic conditions. As I read the stories, I, like Jevne, Williamson, and Stechynsky (1999), increasingly realized that "until we hear the story, we don't really understand the hope, and if we don't understand the hope, then we try to impose our hope" (p. 11).

My ongoing experiences with Hope Kids and with two response groups<sup>7</sup> prompted my colleagues and me to create the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource (LeMay et al., 2008). *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* outlines ways of intentionally making hope visible and accessible with a set of hope-focused practices. Later, when Sheila, Carmen (the two teachers), and I began co-composing their respective narrative accounts, I put forth that attending to the hope-focused practices facilitates another way of being when considered alongside what I came to understand as three dominant conceptions of hope in education.<sup>8</sup>

The Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope (LeMay, 2014) evolved, in part, as I made sense of why the goal setting (Snyder, 1994), faith-based and/or critical conceptions of hope as I named them (LeMay, 2014), did not quite resonate with my experiences of hoping—especially when I began interacting with Hope Kids. I found myself reaching out for multidimensional constructs of hope and hoping that nurse researchers were putting forth. These nurse researchers envisioned hoping as a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating both contextually and temporally toward a personally meaningful future (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995; Stephenson, 1991).

I attribute much of my initial and albeit, implicit knowing (Polanyi, 1958) about the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope (LeMay, 2014) from my work with Hope Kids and the two response groups. Then I heard a radio interview with a scholar who felt that although Dewey never explicitly wrote about hope, his sensemaking around reflection and action, in the interviewee's opinion, spoke to Dewey's understanding of hope and hoping. Hearing this interview encouraged me to reread and ponder Dewey's (1938) theory of educative experiences in relation to what I was learning about hope and hoping with the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Not long after, I decided it was time for me to formally unpack and reflect on how and why I was working with hope and hoping in a way that was different from how I worked with hope in the classroom. This was especially meaningful since I was also curious about the fact that this other way felt more nourishing and sustaining to my being and becoming.

Looking back to this time, I was not surprised that reflection was one of the first hope-focused practices that surfaced in the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource. I remember excitedly writing that "one of the most important outcomes of ongoing reflection is the opportunity to gain a better understanding of ourselves" (LeMay et al., 2008, p. 48) since the one thing I knew for certain, back then, was that reflection "guides and gauges our actions, thoughts and feelings ... when our hopes are challenged, or diminished, reflection is critical" (p. 49).

## **Methodological Considerations**

I chose narrative inquiry for this autobiographical inquiry because, like Connelly and Clandinin

(2006), I believed that “story ... is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (p. 477). I say this because it was narrative inquiry that helped me to originally make sense of my hope as an educator.<sup>9</sup> Attending to the stories I lived, told, retold, and relived, personally and socially, over time in different places and spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), became for me, a way of living alongside to understand what I needed to know and how I needed to be as a researcher.

When I worked with Sheila and Carmen, we attended to the stories we lived, told, retold, and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as we interacted with other educators in a series of hope-focused professional development sessions. We also attended to our storied experiences with students in their respective classrooms on my visits to their classrooms in-between the professional development sessions. I met with Sheila and Carmen individually to co-compose narrative accounts of their respective experiences with the hope-focused practices and strategies in-between the professional development sessions and visits to their classrooms. To do that, I created and then shared, with them, the field texts I composed from the transcripts of our conversations and my field notes from our interactions in the professional development sessions and the classroom. Sheila and Carmen shaped the field texts by remembering, wondering, questioning, and/or correcting the field texts I brought to our visits; together, we composed field texts, which I later used to compose narrative accounts for each of them respectively.

Although the narrative inquiry with Sheila and Carmen was about their experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), I also reflected on my ongoing experiences, in my journal, as a way of making sense of their experiences as I learned to do early in my teaching career (LeMay, 2002). Since embarking on graduate studies as a narrative inquirer, my journal has been a place where I puzzled over my personal hopes, dreams, and fears as I made sense of the things or ways of being and doing that bumped up against and/or diminished my hopes and dreams. These bumping up moments or tensions<sup>10</sup> often felt mis-educative (Dewey, 1938), at least initially. Nonetheless, it was through sensemaking that they, as mis-educative experiences, eventually informed who I was and was becoming when I attended to the tensions personally and socially as I reflected backward, forward, inward, and outward in relation to different places and spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As I finished up my doctoral studies, I continued to journal in, around, and through new field notes, in later field texts, and in the creation of this final research text about my storied experiences. I did this because I learned, as a grad student, that although journaling was a meaningful and relevant hope-focused practice for me, it was the unpacking of my storied experiences with narrative inquiry that helped me stay connected to the stories that enabled me to feel nourished and sustained or, as Carr (1986) posited, to sustain narrative coherence in my stories. Carr explained narrative coherence as a process of “telling and retelling, to ourselves and to others the story about what we are about and what we are” (p. 97). For me, that meant, that as I made sense of the bumping up moments or tensions, I either shifted, consciously or unconsciously, my relationships, feelings, actions, and/or thinking or had to reconsider who I would become if I did not make the shifts to align with the stories I lived, told, retold and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Looking back, choosing to leave the classroom, when I did, to be with Hope Kids represented a time when I chose to maintain a sense of narrative coherence to sustain my well-being.<sup>11</sup>

As I continued to journal in, around, and through my storied experiences of being a newcomer in a post-secondary institution, I found myself, as I expected, writing more about the tensions that contributed to what felt like a mis-educative experiences (Dewey, 1938). Travelling back now, I

believe these mis-educative experiences would have eroded who I was and was becoming if I had not reflected on other personal and social stories in different places and times. In other words, reflecting with the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) prompted new learnings about who I was becoming instead of allowing me to become immobilized by the bumping up moments or tensions I experienced.

Since I was also attending to Sheila and Carmen's respective narrative accounts, I also found myself increasingly reflecting on the final field texts and research texts in relation to their experiences to help me make sense of who I needed to be and become at that time.

As I composed this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I kept the four resonant narrative threads<sup>12</sup> and the three emergent learnings<sup>13</sup> that surfaced in my sensemaking with Sheila and Carmen in my peripheral vision (Bateson, 1994). With the above in mind, I re-examined the three emergent learnings and unpacked the remembered story at the beginning of this paper in relation to each learning by attending to the field texts that grew out of journal entries.

### **Returning to the Three Emergent Learnings**

#### **Learning 1: Hope Matters but it Cannot be Imposed.**

As I reflected on this emergent learning once again, I remembered that Sheila and Carmen did not once make reference to the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource as a source of their hope and hoping, even though the resource was available to them. Instead, Sheila and Carmen participated in the hope-focused strategies from *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* during the ongoing professional development session and then incorporated these same strategies in ways that made more sense to the stories they lived, told, retold and relived. Sheila talked about using the hope tree to set goals for herself because her parents taught her to be aware of and to follow the expectations involved in goal setting. Carmen's reflection on her experiences, in our last conversation on July 25, 2012, demonstrated how she storied herself as being able to incorporate her ways of knowing and being when she said, "It was okay for me because I had these ideas already."

Returning to the remembered story at the beginning of this paper and what transpired when I suggested that we make hope visible and accessible with the hope tree in our planning in the first place—I wondered, again, what prompted Dianne to use the hope tree to guide our first discussions in the remembered story. I wondered if she, too, understood that hope mattered but that it could not be imposed. I wondered this as I thought back to her insisting that she had to lead the hope activity because she was afraid I would "impose my ideas" as a facilitator. Looking back now, I believe that agreeing with Dianne and letting things unfold as I did with Sheila and Carmen enabled me to contribute my stories as a participant. In so doing, I believe I was accepted, more quickly than in previous professional development sessions, as part of the group, to be able to see things as otherwise (Greene, 1995) as we imagined and told future stories of supporting youth, in turn, to become who they needed to be and become as learners. On the other hand, I also believe that since I learned from my experiences with Sheila and Carmen to worry less about imposing a way of being with hope, I might have worried less about imposing a way of being with hope had I been allowed to facilitate the hope tree activity.

#### **Learning 2: Attending with the Commonplaces of Narrative Inquiry Inspires an Understanding of a Narrative Conceptualization of Hope as an Embodied Lived Experience.**

As I worked alongside Sheila and Carmen, I kept two multidimensional theories of hope and hoping in my peripheral vision (Bateson, 1994). The first one, presented by nurse researchers Farran et al. (1995), stated that “hope constitutes an essential experience of the human condition that functions as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving and a way of relating to oneself and one’s world” (p. 6). The second definition or way of understanding hope, presented by Stephenson (1991), described hope as “a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful” (p. 1459).

When I started working with Hope Kids, I continued and expanded on activities that had been developed for the program before I arrived. I always ensured we had time to reflect on our stories as we shared hope photographs, the contents in our hope kits, and why our hope DNAs looked like they did. I employed these activities as a way of paying attention to more than what ran through our heads. I also engaged in these activities as a way of expanding what we can learn about ourselves when we create spaces to draw out deeply hidden hopes from within our being.

These and other multidimensional constructs or ways of understanding hope and hoping informed my way of being with Hope Kids and those with whom they interacted. In turn, these ways of thinking about hope and hoping informed the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) that guided my interactions with Sheila and Carmen in our co-composing of their respective narrative accounts. As a result, Sheila and Carmen’s respective stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) were replete with feelings of hopefulness and hopelessness over their lifetime. I wrote the following on April 21, 2012:

Reflecting, inquiring into and responding to each other’s stories, enables us to connect to and inspire hopeful thoughts, actions, feelings and interactions, which in turn, influences our own feelings of hopefulness ... makes it possible for us to cope with present circumstances and imagine our way forward in personally meaningful ways.

Journal entries helped me make sense of Sarbin’s (2004) notion of imagining “as if” where he puts forth:

imaginings are induced by stories read and stories told, that imaginings are instances of attenuated role-taking, that attenuated role-taking requires motoric actions that produce kinesthetic cues and other embodiments, and that embodiments become a part of the total context from which persons decide how to live their lives (p. 17).

Over time, I began to see how Sheila and Carmen imagined and embraced what felt, looked, and sounded like more focused motoric actions in moving toward meaningful and personally relevant future stories. Sheila imagined and began to make plans to take a leave of absence so that she could travel with her husband. Carmen shared stories of inspiring students to conduct a hope needs assessment to determine their next moves in their social justice project rather than planning the students’ next steps herself. I remembered wondering how consulting with others, before acting, might become part of the students’ and Carmen’s ways of being alongside and with.

As I looked back to my experiences of creating the hope tree in the remembered story at the beginning of this paper, I recalled the shared stories that were told as strengths were listed inside the trunk. I also remembered thinking about the damages the group named alongside possible

damages that they placed on and around the tree in relation to the perceived severity of the damage or fear. As I reflected on the stories the participants shared as they listed their fears, I remembered wondering if their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) would shift as they did for Sheila and Carmen.

As I reflected on my experiences and wonders from that day, I recalled the comment, “We cannot walk away from this project because we are too busy with other commitments,” made by one of the managers at the table that day. I thought about his comment in relation to the fact that the individuals sitting around that table continued to guide the steering committee’s work six years later.

I remembered the stories we lived, told, retold, and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as a steering committee about changing existing college policies regarding absences. I remembered how long it took to shift the semesters to align better with the students’ needs to make sense of the curriculum in ways that sustained the students’ ongoing learning from one level to the next. Although we were past those early days, we continued to meet as a team with the students and instructors throughout the school year to ensure that we were attending to new hopes and fears that arose. It seemed that our motoric attunements (Sarbin, 2004) of ensuring that we stayed intact as a team continued as a strong thread. I say this because even though I left the post-secondary institution, I remained a part of the steering committee team, six years later.

### **Learning 3: The Deweyan-inspired Narrative Conception of Hope Makes it Possible to Live Alongside the Dominant Conceptions of Hope in Education.**

Perhaps one of the most surprising of the three emergent learnings from working alongside Sheila and Carmen was this last one that evolved as I looked across their narrative accounts. As I stepped into the post-secondary institution, I wrote:

Sheila has much to teach me about the relationship between goals and hope. ... I awakened to another way of connecting hopes and goals as Sheila storied herself using goals to inform her students’ hope. ... I began to imagine myself wondering what I might learn about myself if I were more open to the possibilities of “living with” as opposed to “alongside” or in “opposition” to the dominant conceptions of hope in education. (LeMay, 2014, p. 201)

I also wrote:

Like Carmen, I imagine myself finding ways to be supported by my colleagues as a newcomer on a new educational landscape in the ways that Carmen storied herself alongside her Grade 6 colleagues. ... I now know that I need to embrace a way of being with hope and hoping that is not reductionist and formalistic but open to the possibilities of being awake to what is possible when I am challenged to consider other ways of being with hope. (LeMay, 2014, p. 202).

I believe, as I look back to that time, that Sheila and Carmen reconnected to their early stories and ways of being hopeful as they made sense of how their ways of making hope visible and accessible sometimes aligned with and sometimes clashed with the dominant conceptions of hope and hoping in education (LeMay, 2014).

Although we never mentioned goals as we created the hope tree, goal completion as a strong plotline was and continued to hover in, around, and through the steering committee’s stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) like a belligerent guest who, when asked, refused to move

from his/her perceived spot at the head of the table. Fortunately for me, my sensemaking with Sheila and Carmen enabled me to briefly acknowledge goal setting as one of many threads sustaining the steering committee supporting learners to imagine things as otherwise (Greene, 1995) and as if (Sarbin 2004) in educative ways (Dewey, 1938). More importantly, I believe my sensemaking with Sheila and Carmen made it possible for me to engage in conversations without imposing my way of being and knowing with hope and hoping.

Looking back, narrative inquiry, as a phenomenon and methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), piqued my curiosity about my hope as an educator (LeMay, 2002) and sharpened a way of being and becoming a practitioner and scholar who courageously created spaces for living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) while making hope visible and accessible so that I was able to inspire others to be and become who they needed to be while living alongside and with other conceptions of hope that may or may not have felt nourishing and sustaining. With that in mind, I turned my attention to the notion of a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014).

### **From a Narrative Conception of Hope to a Narrative Pedagogy of Hope**

As I thought more about how we co-composed Sheila's and Carmen's experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) by staying awake to the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and to their experiences of hoping, I reflected on how I was beginning to understand a narrative conception of hope at that time. To do that I pulled forth Jevne's (1994) assertion that "it is possible to know hope in the eyes of people, to hear it in their stories. It is as if each of us has our own Rubik's cube of hope embedded in the story of our lives" (p. 9). With my experiences of being alongside and with Sheila and Carmen, in mind, I wrote, "I believe that reflecting on how we work with hope and attending to our stories may contribute to our ability to compose a coherent life plan" (LeMay, 2014, p. 35).

I wrote this because I felt that while we were inquiring into Sheila and Carmen's experiences of making sense of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), their attenuated motoric actions (Sarbin, 2004) of hoping appeared to become more intentional. For Sheila, it was choosing when to close and open her classroom door to protect her students and herself from the hope suckers (LeMay et al., 2008) on the other side of the door. Sheila saying, "Maybe the hope stuff gave me more confidence to close the door," suggested to me that perhaps she saw herself as re-establishing boundaries as an educator to protect herself and her students in the same way that she storied herself doing as a new wife juggling additional extended family expectations in her earlier stories.

As I attended to the word images<sup>14</sup> I created with Carmen, on the other hand, I felt her strengthening who she was and was becoming in relation to how she had to be alongside her colleagues and students. She storied her teaching style changing as a result of our sensemaking when she said, "I think it was good for the kids to hear my story but it is the communicating with each other so my students and I, student to student and just that trust building with one another ... with your colleagues or with students" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013).

Looking further back, I learned to use the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in my daily interactions and in my research as a new graduate student (LeMay, 2002). I used the commonplaces of narrative inquiry as a way of making sense of my everyday experiences with Hope Kids and those with whom they interacted by attending to my living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in the same way that I did

in the ongoing sessions with Sheila and Carmen.

As Sheila, Carmen, and I reflected on our unfolding stories and the stories that lived on the edges, I wrote the following in my journal:

I walk a line between honouring the teachers' personal practical knowledge<sup>15</sup> (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and being the facilitator with some kind of "different knowing". ... My own tensions—finding ways for teachers to create spaces for storytelling, goes back to my masters. (Journal Entry, February 19, 2012)

Returning to this autobiographical narrative inquiry, I found myself continuing to make sense of how thinking narratively (Downey & Clandinin, 2009) meant reflecting on stories that lived on the edges of the telling and retellings. Since I did this by making hope visible and accessible in our interactions, as a way of facilitating new understandings about who we were and were becoming with our hopes and ways of hoping intact, I reflected, once again, on the notion of a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) when I wrote Sheila and Carmen "attended to their experiences with hope and hoping in educative ways (Dewey, 1938) or in ways that encouraged them to continue to grow in ways that appeared to me to be life sustaining" (LeMay, 2014, p. 206).

I believe the hope tree experience, in the remembered story, set the groundwork for the steering committee to continue to attend to our hopes and fears as we continued to support each other and, in turn, students to connect to and make visible their hopes and hoping while creating narrative coherence (Carr, 1986). Huber, Caine, Huber, and Steeves (2013) put forth "that thinking narratively about pedagogy is a complex undertaking" which requires the "asking of hard questions about what is educative (Dewey, 1938) in the composing of lives" (p. 227). Similarly, I recalled the stories of mis-educative experiences that we shared on the day we created the hope tree that continued to guide our ways of being with each other some six years later. Those ways of being and knowing with each other helped me to imagine myself continuing to attend more closely to a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) in my forward-looking stories to enhance my own and others' well-being.

### **Concluding Thoughts and Wonders**

This autobiographical narrative inquiry reiterated how important it is to for me to attend to my experiences of making hope visible and accessible in my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in relation to our relationships, feelings, actions, and thoughts (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Farran et al., 1995; Stephenson, 1991). Secondly, this autobiographical narrative inquiry reminded me that it is important for me to continue to see things as otherwise (Greene, 1995) and to live as if (Sarbin, 2004) to ensure a sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) that, in turn, enhances and sustains the unfolding of educative experiences (Dewey, 1938).

Finally, as I pondered my experiences alongside the first group of learners living on a First Nation, who achieved, and in many cases, exceeded their expectations, as a result of the ongoing support they received from the steering committee, I found my attention turning toward unpacking what a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) might look, sound, and feel like in a classroom.

My narrative reflections on living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Downey & Clandinin, 2009) my stories with the Deweyan-inspired conception of hope (LeMay, 2014) led me to wonder how a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) might enable a more courageous and fulfilled living

with or alongside the three other dominant conceptions of hope for learners. This autobiographical narrative inquiry demonstrated to me, at least, that a narrative conception of hope could inspire growth-inducing, educative experiences (Dewey, 1938) and, as a result, individual and collective well-being. With this in mind, I plan to continue to attend more closely to the experiences of learners in classrooms who work with a narrative pedagogy of hope (LeMay, 2014) as they are encouraged to see things as otherwise (Greene, 1995) and to imagine “as if” (Sarbin, 2004) as they make hope and hoping visible in their interactions.

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## Notes

- 1 In Canada, First Nations are tracks of land for designated groups of Indigenous people, living alongside other municipalities.
- 2 I first learned about working with hope trees from Sandi Hiemer, a colleague who used the hope tree in her interactions with students.
- 3 Grade 8 students named the events that diminish and eliminate our hopes and the people who crush our hopes and dreams with their expectations, comments and/or body language that says, “You are dreaming the impossible.”
- 4 The Hope Foundation of Alberta was a not-for-profit applied research centre, affiliated with the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta that enabled researchers to study how intentionally using hope enhanced quality of life.
- 5 While I worked with Hope Kids, we trademarked the program. Hope Kids worked to make hope visible (i.e. created hope collages, hope kits, and went on scavenger hunts) with others. The HOPE KIDS trademark expired November 2019.
- 6 Connelly and Clandinin (1999) used *stories to live by* as a term for a narrative understanding of identities. In so doing, stories to live by describe how knowledge, context, and identity are linked and can be understood narratively.
- 7 The first response group was made up of colleagues around the Hope Foundation and the second group was made up of colleagues at the Centre for Teacher Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED) at the University of Alberta.
- 8 Before my interactions with Sheila and Carmen I used Eisner and Vallence's (1974) orientations of curriculum as my guide to uncover what felt like three dominant ways of understanding hope and hoping as a product and process in education given my experiences. In my dissertation (2014) I named these three dominant conceptions: (a) the faith-based, (b) critical, and the (c) goal setting theories of hope in education. I then put forth a possible fourth conception, which I named the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope.
- 9 In 2002, I completed a master's thesis titled: *An autobiographical narrative inquiry: My hope as an educator*.
- 10 Connelly and Clandinin (1999) described tensions as the disturbances we feel in our interactions. The tensions represent epistemological or moral dilemmas in who we are and are becoming. Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, and Murray Orr (2009) said that “understand tensions in a more relational way, that is,

... between people, events, or things, ... a between space” (p. 2), a space that enables inquiring into as a way of making sense.

11 Seeing and reflecting with the principles of narrative inquiry on a photograph of myself standing in front of the classroom that I titled ‘Despair’ in my 2008 thesis, told me I needed to make a shift in the stories I was living and telling.

12 The resonant threads that surfaced as I looked across the accounts were (a) learning to live with hope in early childhood, (b) being in the midst of living with hope, (c) sharpening an embodied way of being with hope, and (d) the courage to be (Tillich, 1952).

13 The three emergent learnings were that: (a) hope matters but it cannot be imposed, (b) attending to the commonplaces of narrative inquiry inspires an understanding of a narrative conceptualization of hope as an embodied lived experience, and (c) the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope makes it possible to live alongside the dominant conceptions of hope in education.

14 I pulled out actual phrases that resembled Clandinin’s (1986) notion of images that lived within and contributed to Carmen’s life stories. Huber and Clandinin (2005) named these phrases fragments of stories or word images.

15 Connelly and Clandinin (1988) put forth that personal practical knowledge “is a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions for the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation” (p. 25).

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