

A Therapist's Journey is Unknown, and yet it Flows

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It was after reading the last DTAA quarterly that I decided to share my dance/movement therapy journey, in the hope it might encourage students and any practitioners who may feel uncertain about their future in the profession.

My dance/movement therapy (DMT) journey took me from my birthplace in Singapore to Australia, a long way from home.

I came to study not out of interest, but after a traumatic life experience led me to explore DMT as a means of treatment and healing. As my body

recovered from the trauma, I decided to begin the DMT journey. I had no idea at that time where the Graduate Diploma in Dance Therapy would lead me.

The journey began smoothly, flowing along without incident. That is, until I met a rock – an unexpected failure for my Major Work.

I was overwhelmed and felt as if there was water rushing within me. I didn't know what to do. Overseas students face stringent guidelines regarding course completion and I could be sent back to Singapore. At that moment, I did not want to be a therapist. My journey seemed to be at an end. I felt lost... yet there was still a light shining out of the mist.

Persisting in my original endeavour, I picked myself up from the broken pieces to face the world once again. This meant completing another major work, and remaining in Australia, I had to enroll in another course at the same time. It was not an easy journey but one that turned out to be a blessing. I passed my second major work and completed my Master of Education.

Then an opportunity came for me to work full-time with Jewish Holocaust survivors as a Dance/Movement Therapist in a 400-bed aged care home. This was when the healing began, ten years after I had studied the Hebrew language.

I found this part of my journey to be very challenging, as I interacted with a diverse group of survivors from around the world. It was uplifting to see myself as a therapist.

What keeps me going is not just the quest to be a good therapist but also seeing the effectiveness of the therapeutic interventions and the joy in the hearts of the residents.

The Jewish culture is rich in dance and music, in creative thinking and self-expression, and the life stories of the residents are fascinating and inspirational. There is so much material for me to

explore through body improvisation that it seems a never-ending process – my work in Dance/Movement Therapy with this special group of people.

For the past four years, working intensively, my journey has continued to flow smoothly once again. What keeps me going is not just the quest to be a good therapist but seeing the effectiveness of the therapeutic interventions and the joy in the hearts of the residents. And given this, I am certain there is enormous potential for Dance/Movement Therapists in Australia.

As therapists, we have to go with the flow. We may like a therapy session to flow smoothly and we may prefer that our own lives flow without interruptions.

But from the uncertainty of my situation came a life-changing opportunity. The flow led me to find myself as a therapist.

At present, I am waiting to see where the flow is leading me from here ... into something new once again?

To all the students out there, take heart as you embark on your journey. Each day, our experience is different. We do not know what tomorrow holds. But we do know that the journey is unknown, and yet it flows!

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