

THE WAY OF CONNECTION: JOURNEYS WITH THE MAP OF LOSS

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USE OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This research is a journey our destination is an increased understanding of The Map of Loss (Snyder, 1999) and the potential it offers for connection and growth. The Map of Loss is a simple, easy to remember picture that explains complex psychological processes everyone goes through during life. Creating metaphors using pictures, creative activities and everyday language, The Map is a unique approach to understanding life. The Map presents a visual guide to the importance of balance in our lives, and provides us with an opportunity to realise connections between our actions, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs and the meaning we attach to our experiences. The Map is a means of understanding the process of change it is about making life real, about bringing together, linking and embracing our humanity. In undertaking this study I have utilised a mix of method, principles and practice, with the aim of providing an interpretive portrayal of the processes and adaptations of The Map. The purpose of the study was to explore the qualities of The Map of Loss, to identify the important features, aspects and theoretical underpinnings of The Map, which have not been written about before. The focus was on understanding why and how professionals (collaborators) were using The Map in various settings with differing populations. The Map is experiential and requires us to be present in the journey our understanding is nurtured by listening to people's stories and meaning making of their experience. Through personal interviews the collaborators provided their perspective offering explanation for what is it about The Map that works? My focus has been on describing, understanding and clarifying their experience. I have preserved the narrative by adopting a holistic analysis, maintaining context, while focussing on the content, themes and messages that were common across all interviews. I have written this report in first person as the teller of my own research story, to maintain wholeness and provide a coherent, integral account of the experiential story. This has allowed the events experienced and decisions made throughout the journey to be expressed and includes the collaborators as co-actors, contributing to the unfolding research story. Findings indicate The Map is adaptable and useful across a broad range of populations, sectors, and settings. The collective stories illustrating The Map provides positive, transforming outcomes and experiences regardless of the area it has been applied in. Providing a means of working through depression, creating hope and empowerment. The Map

provides us with the opportunity to see the patterns within our lives, to see the interconnections between all that has been fragmented, and how we can rebuild with renewed understanding. The Map is a simple, visual, practical tool that is inclusive, and facilitates the integration of knowledge, skills and abilities. Offering clarity for those with mental health issues, and a real means of connection for people, by encouraging our imagination and creative dreaming. The Map offers outstanding opportunities for Community Psychology, creating effective change, by building on what has gone before and understanding the connections between what we do and say and the consequences of our decision-making and actions, recognising and appreciating the connections and consequences for ourselves, each other, our communities and humanity.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education.
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
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*At the centre of your Being you have the answer;
you know who you are and you know what you want.*

Lao-Tzu

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Life is messy our striving for perfection is driving us crazy

Naomi Wolff

Academia confuses knowledge with knowing

Most everyone applauds the memorization of the 10,000
trivia.

Beware! These schooled addiction are not just myths--
They are a form of mental illness.

Any fragment of the mind,
divorced from heart, spirit, human community,
and from the primal reality of the universe
is an abomination of the *Great Integrity*

Let us prepare for the *Great Integrity*
by cleansing ourselves of all theses cobwebs
of cluttered fragments that paralyse the mind
In this way we will function as our own holistic physicians
Lao-Tzu