

CHAPTER 22

RESEARCH METHODS

Etherington, K. et al. (2000)

.....Several years had passed since the traveller returned from his journey. He had rested for a while and had settled down in a new part of the country. He was older and wiser. But he had never forgotten his journey to the swamp. It had been an important journey and he had returned from it a changed person. He had used what he had learned well and had taught others through his writing and teaching about the horrors of that dark place. Some people turned away saying, 'We don't want to hear about such things'. Or they joked saying, 'Why don't you just write a travel book - something we might enjoy reading'. Sometimes he met men who told him they too had been in the swamp and they wanted help to try and remember the time they had spent there so that they might forget about it. The traveller listened as they told their stories, until they did not need to tell them anymore. They said they were glad to find someone who was able to listen without turning away in horror.

Two of these men who were brothers, wanted to join the traveller for a while – they knew their own route back from the swamp and they wanted others to have a map so that they too could find their way home. But they realised that there were many paths back and theirs may not be the one that others might use. They themselves had diverged from the path sometimes and taken byways not know to each other. But in the end they decided that their maps might be useful after all – if only to help people know that it was possible to find a way back. Others might later draw their own maps and eventually a whole book of maps might emerge.

So the three of them sat down together and began to talk about how they would produce a map that was clear enough to help others on their way. It needed to include; directions about many different paths and some that might appear more difficult or dangerous than others; lists of equipment they might need for the journey; and information about what might happen on their return home.....

At this point I would like to show some of the ways in which these tasks were undertaken. Moustakas (1990) writes:

'a typical way of gathering material in heuristic investigations is through extended interviews that often take the form of dialogue with oneself and one's research participants. Ordinarily, such 'interviews' are not ruled by the clock but by inner experiential time. In genuine dialogue, one is encouraged to permit ideas, thoughts, feelings, and images to unfold and be expressed naturally. The inquiry is complete only when the individual has had an opportunity to tell his or her story to a point of natural closing'. (p.46)

OBTAINING TRULY INFORMED CONSENT

The following is a transcript of the first meeting between Mike, Stephen and myself, before there was any real clarity about what would happen. We had talked about the possibility of a book and they had expressed interest in contributing to it in some way. I had a publisher tentatively interested but I was leaving the proposal outline until the first meeting had occurred. We were starting from a place of 'not knowing' and beginning the engagement phase of heuristic research. I had set up the interviews at the university – a different venue from where they saw me as counsellor/supervisor. I believed this would help separate out the differences in our roles for this task. I had sent a letter to both men with some broad suggestions for discussion and this is where we began the process of gaining their informed consent:

Kim: *I wondered if you had any ideas about what this book will look like – whom do you imagine this book will be for, for instance?*

Stephen: *Either for victims of abuse or people who are trying to help them. I wasn't sure which.*

Mike: *I'd rather imagined it would be directed at counsellors et al – but, seeing as I became a client through finding a book, it might well be for other people who do the same.*

Kim: *So if we could find a way of it being interesting and readable to both clients, counsellors, therapists, probation officers, mental health workers - whoever works with the client group and look at*

it from both sides? That's the sort of thing I had in mind – so my thinking was that it would need to be sufficiently theoretical but not to the detriment of its readability and its wider appeal. Yes?

Stephen: *There's so little about men – that why it was so surprising to spot your book on the shelf.*

Kim: *Yes, I don't think there has been a book written specifically about work with adult male survivors - so in that respect it would be really unique.*

(to Mike)Did you have sense of what the shape or content of the book might be?

Mike: *No, I think I purposely tried not to think about that because when you first mentioned it to me, I started to think along those lines, but then got into all those worries about whether the story might not be important enough to be told. [Laughs] Since then I think I've laid that one to rest, but I'm not surprised that I've not undertaken too much organisation – I've had other things on my mind.*

[Mike had recently separated from his wife and set up in a house nearby so that his children have easy access to him]

Kim: *Well, I've given it quite a lot of thought – I haven't come to any conclusions – but I've got a publisher who is interested – so that seems like a good starting point. I talked to Jessica Kingsley – she publishes quite a lot of books in this field.*

Stephen: *Looking in the bookshops – there's loads of books for women – some of them were very interesting.*

Kim: *....and parts are just as applicable. I thought this one should be as gender specific as possible. What makes it different to be a man recovering from this stuff?*

Mike: *I found reading the women's specific ones was very – 'yes, this is really interesting and exciting' - but then suddenly a little bomb would go off – some sort of feminist (that's probably the wrong word) thing would appear – some anti-male remark*

Stephen: *.....and then I'd say – just a minute – what about me?*

Kim: *Yes. So I think it's really important to think about this from the male perspective; and to acknowledge where they can overlap; and the whole problem of the experience of sexual abuse being seen as a woman's preserve which, in some ways, has made it a bit harder for men to acknowledge. In terms of this being done by you two and me – what were you thinking would be your input Stephen?*

Stephen: *I didn't really know – apart from being ...*

Mike: *Going back to when you first mentioned it - I was thinking 'am I going to be writing here?', then it seemed to move on as we were talking. It seemed that you had it in mind to interview us, record us – I suppose that's partly why I suspended my burrowing.*

Kim: *Would you like to write something?*

Mike: *I'm not sure about that – probably the answer is, yes.*

Kim: *What kind of things could you see yourself writing?*

Mike: *Well, I suppose the very beginning – you know – finding the book – how to get into the system. That might be worth commenting on because I suspect counsellors may see the finished product in a way, when somebody is presented in the room.*

Kim: *Yes, and we have no idea how that person has struggled to get there.*

Mike: *I worry about being able to recover objectivity about it.*

Kim: *I don't think you need to be too objective. What I want is for this to be a kind of narrative – a story about therapy, so it can be as personal as you want it to be. I certainly wanted it to start before we met, and I was thinking about including your letter [to Stephen] because that's the bit where I came in really. The other thing I wanted to pick up on is the idea that each of your journeys has been an individual journey, and yet at times they've overlapped and you've shared parts of it together. That's*

complex and interesting in itself – because it's quite unusual really for a counsellor to work with two brothers who've had virtually the same upbringing - and had the same experiences of abuse with the same abuser - and yet you are two very different people. [Laughter] I know you look very alike – but you are two very different people aren't you? I mean your work (therapy) – from my perspective - was different because you had very different needs.

[To Stephen] I did say a bit of this to Mike when we talked. But part of my anxiety is about not losing your uniqueness, your individuality and your confidentiality, because we can find ways to keep you non-identifiable as far as possible, without losing some of your really important particular features. But you two will know who is being talked about in this book, perhaps in a way that nobody else will, except me, and I was just wondering if you'd thought that. I know there have been things that you have talked about quite deeply together, but I guess there are also things that you have kept really private and separate, and I don't know what those things are and I don't want to be

Stephen: *From each other...?*

Kim: *Yes.*

Mike: *I'm not sure that I do actually [know] - which is part of the problem.*

Kim: *Right [all laugh]. There may be particular things that you've wanted kept very private and I think that's absolutely right- I guess we won't really know until we come up against those things.*

Mike: *I think I'd need to go over the material and think 'ah ha'and maybe I'd need to go and talk to Stephen, but maybe I could say 'no, we can't put that in'. [Pause] I'm not actually sure that I could write you a list of things that that would apply to and maybe there won't be.*

Kim: *No, no – but we need to ensure that your privacy is respected - from each other as well as the wider world. Just to have that awareness is really important as a starting point and to know that just because you have agreed to do this together, doesn't necessarily mean that you lose your own material – that you still have ownership of that.*

Mike: *I have been really surprised at how un-frightening it has been. I have been much less worried than I ever thought I would be about the world reading the story..... and that's really surprising*

Stephen: *I find it incredible. As you know, when I first came to see you I was terrified that anybody would find out. Whereas now, I think I'm in danger of going too far the other way – not like shouting from the rooftops – but I think I'll have to be careful. I feel safe with you.....so*

Mike: *But from the times you've discussed with me about disclosing to other people Stephen, you've been fairly certain of your judgement.*

Stephen: *I think I have –yes. But I think it's because it was so difficult in the beginning – incredibly difficult - it seemed impossible. It's almost immeasurable. I just can't believe it really.*

Mike: *One of the things that I've been almost looking forward to is that - whatever I do now- even if I sit with my diary in front of me and go over it – in the end what comes out will be seen through the lens of now – the therapy and the recovery. Am I making sense?it won't be the same as just reproducing it as it happened.*

Kim: *No – it's a reflection – looking back over it isn't it?*

Mike: *Yes, and I suppose one interesting thing is to compare the two – the finished product – as it were.*

Kim: *Yes - you kept a journal did you – all the way through?*

Mike: *Oh well, I wouldn't say I kept a journal –neither was it all the way through but*

Kim: *.....but you've got a kind of record.....[to Stephen] and you have as well.....?*

Stephen: *I've got everything, yes.*

Kim: *Wow – we must have known this was going to happen someday, [all laugh].*

Stephen: *Well, I was actually coming to a point when I thought, ‘what shall I do with all this’, because...*

Kim: *Have you thought of the idea of writing your own book?*

Stephen: *No, nobody would want to read it.*

Mike: *I have actually toyed with the idea.*

Kim: *Well, I suppose it doesn’t have to be an either/or – it could be an ‘and’. This one and later maybe your own.*

Stephen: *Going back to the last point – I think it would be good, from my point of view, to talk about it now, to look back and see how far I’ve come - to know how I’ve changed. I think it would be quite healthy to talk about it from a safer place.*

Mike [to Stephen]: *How hard did you find it to pick it up? Because I know where it is but I must admit I’ve thought to myself ‘I ought to read that’, but I haven’t done it.*

Stephen: *I’ve read it three or four times when I’m feeling low sometimes - to see how far I’d come – to reassure myself, but erm – I find it is a bit uncomfortable. I was saying to Kim, I realised how much pain I was in when I was writing it by the style of writing – it was a different me. It was very interesting. I read it yesterday; just reading that letter reminded me how I was panicking. [laughs] It reminded me how scared I was; what a terrible place I was in; how desperate I was feeling.*

Kim: *Mmm. That’s reminded me of the other thing that I wanted to bring into focus. The process of doing this may very well churn you up and open up things again, and I wonder what that would be like for you and what you would do then... ?*

Stephen: *I feel like I’m ready for that. I think I could cope with that now – at this distance. I could deal with that now.*

Kim: *How about you Mike?*

Mike: *[Pause] Mmm. Yes I think so. I think I’ve demonstrated by recent events that I can mobilise support if I need to [pause]. And I suppose the fact that I’m not living with Ellen now makes me feel I am able to do these things. I dare say I’m projecting, but I suppose I feel more worried about you now [to Stephen].*

Kim: *But here we are now, moving into a different relationship when I’m not your counsellor. What would that mean if anything did come up? What might be your expectations of me if you got very distressed about something that was happening as part of the research process? I suppose my concern is - that if you needed counselling – I don’t think it would now be appropriate for me to offer that.*

Stephen: *That would be OK.*

Kim: *[to Stephen] But I am also aware that you have financial limitations, that would make it hard for you to get counselling elsewhere. I just wondered if you had thought about that.*

Stephen: *(mumble)talk to Mike [laugh] – it’s exciting – just go for it.*

Kim: *So you have some contingency plans that might be possible? There are other options too that I can put you in touch with. There are other agencies where you can go for low fee or reduced fee counselling, but I think for me to get involved again with you as a counsellor - at this point in time – would be too messy if we are contracting a different kind of relationship now. That’s not to say that I don’t expect this to be therapeutic, or that I’m not going to be able to be supportive as a researcher, and I certainly wouldn’t leave you in the lurch and abandon you - either of you. But I think it’s important for you to know that this is a different kind of relationship.*

Stephen: *Of course.*

Mike: *I suppose that was what I thought would be so.*

Kim: *That might be easier for you Mike - because we already have a different professional relationship in supervision – than it would be for Stephen who hasn't worked with me since I was his counsellor. So I suppose I just need to talk about that whole thing - being very conscious of the power that the counsellor has in the client/counsellor relationship. I know the client has a lot of power too – but from my memory of being the client, I certainly perceived the counsellor to have quite a lot of power, and I'm not sure what that's like for you now, seeing me again, after all this time in this different role. In this relationship we need to have a sense of more equality – you need to be able to say to me 'no, I don't want you say that'.*

[Laughter]

Stephen: *Right.*

Kim: *And I need to be able to say that to you too, without worrying about my 'clients' [laughter]. Does that make sense?*

Stephen: *Yes – balance it out.*

Kim: *.....and you know the nature of the relationship we have with our counsellor is often child/parent at least some of the time...*

Stephen: *That was certainly where I was coming from.*

Kim: *It might be quite difficult at times. So I am aware of that – are you? Did this occur to you?*

Stephen: *I hadn't really thought about it until you mentioned it. I know what you mean.*

Mike: *Shall I push you a bit then?*

Kim: *Yes.*

Mike: *Can I ask you how much you see this being three people working together, and how much you see us two helping you to write a book.*

Kim: *Yes. That's what the publisher asked me and I said that I would have to talk to you about this. I was thinking that it was me writing a book, and you giving whatever you wanted to give as part of that process. If you wanted your name in there, then we would have to talk about that – my understanding was that you probably wouldn't. (Pause) It feels peculiar in a way – because I think what we are trying to capture is your work, your process, my work, my process but I want to put that into the context of the wider work that I do with men and I will be drawing on other material as well and I think I will be doing most of the work so.....*

Mike: *I have a picture in my mind then - of we three together being a source.....*

Kim: *Yes...but there is another source that I bring to this, which is my other research, client work, my own therapy. When I spoke to the publisher I said 'I'm not quite sure whether this is going to be just these two men or whether it would be more 'proper' to include others'. I was wondering 'what if there isn't enough material?'. But I don't actually believe that because there's a huge amount of material; and maybe it would be easier to anonymise you if there were more of you – but I also want to hold onto that.*

Mike: *It's just going to be harder to hide our identity...*

Kim: *That's right. So when I asked you if you had any sense of 'how' - I was really wanting to know if you had any ideas of how to manage that tricky process.*

Stephen: *.....of anonymity?*

Kim: *No – of keeping your two stories as the core and maybe also bringing in other material - other sources – we'll come to the anonymity business in a minute. So I'm playing round with that idea and I haven't got any answers yet.*

Mike: I came to asking the question from the co-worker business – I suppose if in the end it is your book to which we are contributing a source – then the power relationship is going to be unequal..... and that has to be faced up to in that sense..

Kim: Yes, in so far as that is true. But what I want is for everything that happens - as far as it is possible and practicable – to be up front and agreed. So what I was hoping is, that I would interview each of you separately; I would then transcribe those tapes - I remember how that took at least six hours for each tape when I did it before - then I would send it back to you and you would go through it, and ensure that it was saying what you had intended it to say. And if there was anything in there that you did not want said, then you would have a chance to remove it – or to anonymise it. In that sense, the material would be given back to you to take ownership of and for you decide how and whether you wanted it used. If there were pieces that you said ‘no I don’t want that used’, then you have the power to say ‘no’. So in that sense the power would beYes, we have to face up to the fact that it would be my book and it would be my name on it and – although I would be prepared to talk about it if you wanted your name on it as well.

Mike: So it’s not just sitting down and writing a book.

Kim: No. I’ve been imagining different ways of approaching it and I would really like to be creative about it. I’m very taken up with the whole idea of narrative as a methodology at the moment. A sort of story telling and actually something you said Mike has triggered me off. [To Stephen] Mike has talked about this elephant that sits in the middle of your living room

Stephen: I’ve met him, yes.

Kim: You know the one?

Stephen: Yes – he was there for most of our lives.

Mike: I must say this is not original – I’m sure I saw it in a film - I can’t remember who said it, [laughter].

Stephen: We could call the book ‘The elephant in the living room’!

Kim: We could couldn’t we. I’ve been thinking about titles actually – and the trouble is – you’ve got to have something with key words, so that if people logged into ‘sexual abuse’, ‘men’, they would be able to find it in the title. ‘An elephant in the living room’ - maybe we could have a sub-title.

Stephen: Yes.

Kim: I really like the idea of having it begin with something like ‘once upon a time there was a daddy and a mummy and they lived in a littleI’d like you two to create that story – a fairy story that your lives would have been seen as by the outside world – do you know what I mean? Its going to be about how you healed from what happened to you. But we will have to say what happened to you - but what I’m hoping is that –if that fairy story was the prologue we would start the beginning of the book with something quite real. ‘That’s the fantasy, the illusion; that’s what the outside world saw – but this is what actually happened’. Not to put too much of that – I’m not saying we should pussy-foot around it – but not to go into too many details. At some point in the book – I’m not quite sure how to do it – I will need to go into the theory - but maybe that will be separate from your story in a way.

Mike: It’s how to fit that into the narrative part of it.

Kim: Yes, yes and maybe they don’t actually go together.

Stephen: Fantasy and reality - like at the funeral with everybody saying what a wonderful chap he was – in the Church.

Mike: Yes, I don’t remember all this.

Kim: That was before Mike said anything?

Stephen: Yes,(too quiet)

Mike: – I'm quite fascinated with this narrative thing 'cos that's how it seems to be. I tend to look back and see it as a new product –that's not strictly true and yet it was a narrative - it was a journey that took time to unfold.

Stephen: Erm - I want to look after my own [anonymity] which would also mean Mike's – but I trust you to use your judgement. I don't think I would be very easily identified but that might not be so for Mike being a professional man.

[Laughter from all] It's an old habit for the two brothers to always present the needs of the other and ignore their own.

Kim: So you think if a book was written about a [height and appearance] man who was a [his job] in a [place of work] who had [x] no of childrenyou wouldn't be recognisable?

Stephen: Yes, well that would be going a bit too far. I wouldn't want that for the sake of my children.

Kim: No – right.

Stephen: That's one extreme - the other extreme is missing what happened – but we need somewhere in the middle.

Kim: Did you have any thoughts about that Mike?

Mike: Yes I did and isn't it funny [mockingly] that I was more worried about Stephen than I was about me [laughter], because I was thinking: 'well, who's likely to read this that I know' or 'who would work out who I was?' I suppose I was thinking: 'well if they've gone to the trouble to read this book (if the book is how I imagine it will be), then I probably don't mind them working out that it's me'. But that might seem very 'gung-ho'. I think you [to Stephen] have an over-inflated idea about the reading matter of GP's and the sort of ones who might read it

Kim: I think what we mustn't lose sight of – is that you are very important in this - and the people who you care about are important.

Stephen: Yes.

Mike: Right – and then there's their confidentiality.

Kim: Yes.

Stephen: Needs a lot of thinking about

[Long pause] I think it's the first time they have really thought about other members of their family being in the public domain.

Kim: It's important to raise these issues you see - for you to really know what it means. One of the things that happened after the last book was published.....

I tell the story about how people's life stories can be recognised by people who know them (even when written about anonymously), because of the uniqueness of the narrative; and how that can cause distress to others who may be included in that story but who have had no part in the decision making process - not having given **their** informed consent.

.....so those two incidents have made me very cautious and I'm sharing that with you because I want you to know that we don't always know until it happens – even when we take as much care as we can at the time. And when you open that book and see your words and your story out of your control, in the public eye – it's potentially a very disturbing experience - and I think you really need to think about that.

Stephen: Yes. You've really made me think about it in a wider way now – thanks.

Mike: So I think that needle is moving further to the left now.

Kim: What's at the left?

[Laughter]

Mike: Towards changing things – identities I mean. I guess its not just me in the end that I have to think about...

Kim: When you actually see that in print - it's a powerful medium for something that has been for so long very private for you, even secret and shameful - suddenly 'aaahhh!' And you've been through abuse and over-exposure and I didn't want to be a party to that happening to you again.

[Long silence]

Kim: So in a way I hope I'm answering some of your question about the power

Mike: I suppose now I'm trying to ask myself 'how important are some of these identifying characteristics to the story?'

Kim: Absolutely. But it's a fine balancing act.

Stephen: You don't want to be misrepresenting or lose the power of what you were saying.

Kim: One of the ways of disguising somebody is not so much what you change about them or take away from them – its what you give them. For instance if I said you had five children, or if I said you lived in a large house in the country – or I don't know – we could imagine all sorts of additional things which are actually not true.

Stephen: Rich –living in a mansion.

[Laughter]

We talk about some of the particular ways we might change their identity- what would be important to leave in so as not to lose the power of their stories

Kim: So we don't have to decide today – these are just things I wanted to flag up - to begin that process of awareness of what this might mean. For instance - does Stella know about this book [to Stephen].

Stephen: Yes.

Kim: So Stella will want to read it?

Stephen: Presumably – yes.

Kim: So what would Stella feel when she read some things that....

Stephen: Mmm. Perhaps I'll need to talk to her.

Kim: Yes, that's one way, but maybe there are things we might not be able to put in the book – you don't have to bare all.

Mike: I had thought of Stella as being a person who would know who **I** was.

Kim: Yes of course. What about Ellen – what about your kids?

Mike: Well – they would want to read it if they knew of its existence I suppose. I hadn't thought that I would tell them – having said that they could find out...

Kim: The other thing I was a bit worried about – a possible dilemma – was the idea of secrets – the need to keep a secret.

Mike: Meaning that it would be healthier for me to tell them?

Kim: Not necessarily, but I don't want to re-create a situation in which you are forced to keep a secret again that might feel in some way not comfortable or ...

Stephen: *I think I have to bear in mind that it would not be appropriate for my children to read it now, but that in the future it might be. I'll have to bear that in mind.*

Kim: *Right – so when we are writing or reading this, you'll have to be doing it with lots of different eyes.*

[Pause]

Mike: *Yes, what you've done for me now, is to show me how complicated the anonymity side of it is going to be.*

Stephen: *Yes – I was looking at it in a too narrow way.*

Mike: *Yes, it's about other people as well as us*

[Long pause] -in which I am wondering if I should offer them an explicit opportunity to withdraw at this stage]

Kim: *You might change your mind altogether.*

Stephen: *No. I've been thinking about the reasons for doing it and maybe the reasons for not doing it. What I said already is; I think that to re-look at it again from this perspective will help me; the other thing is I want to help other people in the same situation, people who are victims. People like yourself are doing so much to help. I really want to give some of that back - I want to help. This is my chance. It was chance that you lived near enough for me to have counselling – even if it was quite a journey. I felt very fortunate and I don't think I've put anything back and I want to....*

Kim: *You don't have to put anything back.*

Stephen: *No, but I want to.*

Kim: *You want to.*

Stephen: *I feel - as I say - that it will be a 'safe help' for me - doing it.*

Mike: *[to Stephen] I don't know if you know, but that is something I have more or less said to Kim too. I sometimes have these guilt feelings that I should be starting a campaign but maybe this is a real, practical way – something I can do (too quiet)....There is another – can I change the subject?*

Kim: *Can we just finish this bit because I wanted to capture what you said Stephen – you said 'these are the reasons why I do want to do it' and then you said something about the reasons you don't ...*

Stephen: *[Laughing] Yes – erm I think I can remember.....*

The tape was too quiet here, but when asked to fill in the gap Stephen said he was thinking of not wanting to return to the pain of the past – that was the reason he might not want to do it

Mike then raised his concern about our different perceptions of each others 'academic ability' – he was aware that Stephen had always deferred to him as the 'academic' member of the family and he wondered if that would be an issue for him as we discussed the book together. Stephen said he felt much more confident about his academic ability since his counselling and his return to studying.

Mike: *But this is a peculiar situation isn't it? I don't mean just sitting in this room talking, but the project we're talking about involves disclosing things about one another to the outside world.*

Kim: *Yes, Yes. There's also my need to disclose things as well – have you thought about that. I had thoughts and feelings when I was doing some of this work with you.*

Stephen (to me): *I used to worry about you.*

Kim: *Did you?*

Stephen: Yes – you used to say to me about it at the time. Most days when I was with you I used to worry about what it would do to you, having to listen to all that stuff (too quiet).

Kim: Oh, yes. I think I knew you used to worry about me on that level. I used to worry about me too (laughter).....

.....I'm thinking more about revealing my own process – what I was thinking, what I was feeling, what I was wanting to say that I didn't say sometimes because it wasn't appropriate.

Mike:or the things you did say that you wished you hadn't?

Kim: Yes, yes, you can tell me what they were.

[Laughter]

Mike: I'm not sure that I can. I remember noticing sometimes: 'I think she wishes she hadn't said that'

Kim: Yes. I will probably say what made me feel anxious - if I can remember. I probably won't remember it all – it will be very interesting to be reminded and for me to look back

Stephen: I wrote up every session.

Kim: I'm so glad you did.

Stephen: I think you asked me to – you suggested it – once I got started I couldn't stop.

Kim: That's great. I wonder if we could actually use that? [Very tentatively]

Stephen: And I thought well...I'm paying all this money – I'd better get my moneys worth.

[Laughter]

Kim: Well you did use that – it was very much part of your process at the time.

Stephen: Yes

Mike: I think, yes, I haven't looked at it recently but I suspect I probably I did on occasion think: 'so many things happened in that hour I must write them down, otherwise I'll forget them'.

Stephen: It's such a good learning. I keep it on top of the wardrobe. (too quiet).

[Pause]

Kim: Yes. So maybe we've said enough for tonight because we have covered an awful lot and you're going to need to go away and think about it aren't you? And let it sink in and chew over some these things and maybe have some ideas about the answers to some of those potential problems?

Stephen: You asked us what we thought the book would be for, but I wondered what you thought.

Kim: Well, I thought virtually the same as you really. I want it to be a message of hope. I want people to know that terrible things can happen to people over a long period of time – the worst things –the most extreme abuse, and still they can regain their wholeness. And you know - it's a very peculiar thing isn't it – when people talk about 'going and getting some counselling' – they don't know what its really like behind the closed doors of the counselling room.

Stephen: I was reading my stuff yesterday. I actually rang Childline when I was desperate and was told 'you are too old for us to help'....and yet that was the first thing that came to mind.

Kim: I thought I would try and write something. I feel as if I've shared a lot of my thinking with you and

[pause]

.....maybe you'd like to write a fairy story to start with - between you or one of you – the fairy story of the happy family – it doesn't have to be long ...

Stephen: *Can I write this down?*

Kim: *Yes. Do you want some paper? If you feel as if I'm asking you to do much then please say so. I want you to get something out of this.*

Stephen: *If it just helps one person.*

At this point we talk about money and I tell them about the amount I have received in royalties from my previous book. They are surprised how little that is and we go on to talk of the myth about making money out of writing. I do not expect there to be any profit from this book – as I am writing it in my freelance time, having no paid time to write or do research in my university post; indeed I would not expect to cover costs. Some discussion of their anonymity being preserved (if their names were on the contract they would be known to the publishing company). However, this is an issue we will return to later but at this stage I clarify that their motive for writing excludes an expectation of receiving payment. I go on to say what I will get out of it:

Kim: *I suppose I will get the kudos that would come with that. I'm too old for it to be a boost for my career - but it will be very nice if people recognise something worthwhile in it. I think more than anything I will gain a sense of passing onto the next generation something worthwhile. I'm also very interested in the process of research and I feel as if this (what we are doing now, as we talk) is an interesting research process too. What I'd like to do, at the end of the book, is to reflect on the process of writing the book – so things like this meeting will be part of that. The way we've talked about confidentiality; anonymity; the ethical principles that underlie what we're doing; and this whole thing about 'not doing harm'; and 'how does the good outweigh the harm'; and what kind of freedom of choice do you have as collaborators in this – autonomy, power, ownership. Those things are what I teach MSc students and I would like this book to be a demonstration of that.*

I think I also want to give you two something. I suppose I really do believe that this will also be a part of that continuing process of healing – that you might be doing some of the unfinished business. I also I think your story is really worth telling and unique. So I think that's where I'm coming from.

Mike: *I wonder if it's as unique as you say. Yes, I know everybody's story is unique. I mean unique in being members of the same family.*

Kim: *Quite. That what makes it important isn't it – it's not unique in that respect. There must be brothers and sisters and families all over the place going through something similar to what you experienced; but I think one of the great things is that you two have gained so much from each other and strengthened each other and yourselves in sharing that process.*

I think of the differences now - in your relationships with your father and mother – between the two of you. Then there's all that stuff about the family – all those skeletons that fell out of the cupboard – in a heap, all at once it seemed.

[Laughter]

Mike: *I've never heard that expression before 'all the skeletons falling out of the cupboard' – that's absolutely spot on - you're very good with words.*

Kim: *There's a hell of a lot in there. So what do you feel about using additional material? I mean there will be additional material because I will have to relate this to counselling theory in some way - but maybe in terms of other men's stories.*

[Long pause] I am aware of Josselson's (1996) warning about 'narcissistic injury'. I have made them 'special' by suggesting their story is important enough to be told and here I am now suggesting that others might also be important: '...our participants are left to deal alone withtheir injured or over stimulated grandiosity and with their recognition that they are not in control of us. And being so close to the narcissistic core of personality organization, none of this can be easily discussed'. (p.65). I want to find a way of discussing it so that they will not be left with it.

Mike: *Yes, I suppose if I'm honest I feel slightly jealous of it.....*

Kim: *You don't want other men's stories?*

Mike:..... but that's being

[pause]

Kim:(to Stephen) how do you feel?

Stephen: *I got the impression it was only about our story; so if it is, it is and if it isn't, it isn't.*

Kim: *I wanted it to be about your story.*

Stephen: *It's fine with me – I feel protective.*

Kim: *You'd feel better if it was just your story?*

[pause]

.....I think what I can do is, when it comes to the more theoretical part, I could introduce some little vignettes.....

Stephen: *Of course.*

I talk about why I might need to include other material – because of the issues that are different from their experiences; for instance 'false memory', childlessness, becoming an abuser, drug abuse, alcoholism etc. I may not go into these kind of issues in this book as I covered them in my previous book (Etherington1995) but just in case, I want to raise it as a possibility.

Mike: *But in the end if you make us too central to it then it doesn't become useful...it just becomes a therapeutic process for us*

Kim: *Yes, yes. So I don't want it to be less useful but I want to find a way of not taking away the centrality of your story. Neither of you have ever been in prison, for instance.*

Mike: *Drugs, prison, prostitution – unless there are secrets I don't know about.*

[Laughter]

Kim: (to Stephen): *Are you going to tell him about your rent boy activities or do I have to tell him?*

[More laughter]

Kim: *That's the sort of thing I'm talking about. I'm just not quite sure how. Have you had enough now?*

Mike: *I haven't eaten yet.*

Kim: *Nor me. All right. Thanks for coming – I hope you've found it useful and interesting.*

Mike and Stephen: *Yes, yes.*

Kim: *You might feel quite churned up after this. [Tape ends]*