

**“MAKING THE
JOURNEY”**

Exploring, Experiencing and Sharing your journey
BY:
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ABOUT THE PRESENTER

- **Lori L. Yates, LICSW, RDT is an award winning clinician, including being the 2003 recipient of the prestigious Marvin Chapman, MD Memorial Award from NASHPD- Forensic Division.**
- **She has presented at numerous conferences and workshops across North America.**

MORE

- **Lori is the author of the book "BEYOND" which details her journey through mental illness and recovery. She developed this presentation and workbook to help consumers with their journey and tell their stories.**
- **Lori is a mental health consumer.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ◆ Photographs by: Charlene Allman
- ◆ Editing by: Lisa Vana
- ◆ Special thanks to: *Dr. Wassel Lewis, Hallie Branch, Kim Enos, Susan Kisner, Jean Wesley, Greg McAninch, Erin Brown and the many other Wichita Falls State Hospital Staff.*
- ◆ Special thanks to my family- *Nancy and YA Yates, Tim and Karen and Dane, Jake, Luke, and Sirena Yates. Steve and Maggie, Lucy and Will Yates. Jennifer Hagman, Cassie Smith, and the fur kids: Furguson, Maebelle, Bailey, Eagle, Tuffy, Cody, Trilaby, Tucker and Gus, Maya, Kiwi, Sugar and Foxy, Ebby.*
- ◆ Special Thanks to my friends, colleagues, teachers, supervisors, therapists and mentors and to each of my patients.



MAKING THE JOURNEY: Exploring and Experiencing

- Telling your story
- The here and now
- Getting honest
- Observing for what you want
- Letting go and reaching out
- My plan
- My spiritual journey
- Making amends and building bridges
- My life motto and management plan



Telling your story

- **Until we tell our stories and believe that our story has been completely heard, can we finally listen and hear, let go and move on, and finally allow our stories to be a source of healing.**

**START POINT 1
TELLING YOUR STORY**

- **Write all that you can remember about your life. What was it like growing up? Write every detail, every event; every thought, feeling, and memory that you can remember that was important to you.**

Additional Notes

- ✓ **Remember, this is your memory, no one else's', so there are no wrong answers.**
- ✓ **I didn't worry about how many pages I wrote, I just wrote until I had said all could say on paper.**
- ✓ **Write for yourself. Share with those you trust when you are ready to share. Don't write for others to read, you will lose your honesty with yourself. Write for you to understand yourself. Ultimately it is you who has to make sense of you and your life.**

START POINT 2
THE HERE AND NOW

- **Focus on what is happening right now, in this moment.**

- **Make the choice each moment to live this very moment and capture all that this moment has to offer, even when it offers pain and suffering.**

Additional Notes

- **Write about each day. What mood were you in when you woke up? What did you eat? What classes did you go to? Did you meet with the treatment team? Did you**
- **talk with staff? What about? What were your thoughts and feelings about it? Did anything happen in class or on the unit today? What thoughts and feelings did I have about myself today? What was I thinking about when I started having feelings?**

Continued Notes

- **What did I do right today? How do I feel about myself? What is hardest to accept about what I did today? What have I ever done right? How do I feel about that? How do I wish I could feel? What would happen if I did feel that way? I will allow myself to feel...**

Still continuing

- **I write until I finished saying all I had to say.**
- **Give yourself time to discover. This is not a race.**

**START POINT 3
GETTING HONEST**

- **This is a hard place to get to and to sit with.**
- **No blame. No excuses. No lies. No half truths.**
- **Do I want to know the truth?**
- **What Will I do differently once I know and own the truth?**

Additional Notes

- **Write honestly with the intention of learning about yourself. If you don't make yourself face this it will keep coming up at the expense of relationships, confinement, and ultimately at the ability to live with yourself.**

Continued notes

- This is a hard part of the journey to face, because this is where the realization that I had a lot of control over things, came up and hit me in the face. I could no longer blame everything on everyone else. When I began to figure this out, I began to see how I helped contribute to my current situation and that I could no longer blame my parents, or anyone else for where I was at and what I was still there.

START POINT 4

“OBSERVING FOR WHAT YOU WANT”

- **I felt ashamed of myself and found myself withdrawing from everyone and isolating myself. I didn't take care of myself very well at all. I didn't take a shower everyday or wash or brush my hair daily either. Sometimes I stayed in the same dirty clothes for several days. The more depressed I was, the less I took care of myself, and the less I took care of myself, the worse I felt. It was like a cycle I couldn't seem to get out of, at least I wasn't doing so well by myself.**

Continued Notes

- *I started mentally imitating people that I liked.*
- *I would practice in my head having conversations like them. I would practice in my head carrying on a whole conversation that didn't involve problems, behaviors or being a patient in the hospital.*
- *This part of my journey took me quite a while to do as I had a lot of trouble just getting myself to think about doing things differently, let alone trying them out.*

START POINT 5
“LETTING GO AND REACHING OUT”

- The next part of my journey came when I began to want to have a future. I was finally thinking about having a life instead of trying to end it.
- Write about the things you need to let go of. What are you still clinging to? Why are you still holding on to all of that stuff? What does letting go mean to you? What does letting go feel like?

Continue

- *Was my acting out every time I started doing well, a way for me to insure I had to stay in the hospital so that staff would take care of me, or did I act out because I*
- *didn't want to say good-bye to the staff that I considered my friends? Maybe I just liked them caring and being involved with me and with my life. I felt important when people were focused on my problems and me.*

More

- These are hard reality check questions that cut like a knife. They are not easy to ask or to answer. I didn't like the truth I discovered within myself. I learned that as I
- demanded myself to be honest, I had to be gentle as I was fragile. I had to allow myself time and I had to be patient. I also needed to nurture myself and allow others to nurture me; such as accepting hugs, or letting a staff rub my back, or brush my hair.

One final thought

- **The process of this part of the journey is as important as the work you are doing.**
- **Practice, experience it, don't just write about it**

**START POINT 6:
"MY PLAN"**

- **The next part of my journey came outside of the hospital. Suddenly, I was faced with the reality that I had to live with and deal with myself. The hospital and the staff were no longer there and would not be my safety net. I had to decide that I was going to make it, or live with the consequences of going back to the hospital and possibly not getting out for a long time if ever. I decided that going back to the hospital would not be an option for me. I was out and I was going to stay out.**

PLANNING THOUGHTS

- **Write some plans for your life. What do you want to do with your life? What do you want to be? Where do you want to live? Where do you want to go to school? Where do you want to work? What type of job do you want? What type of a career? What do you want your life to look like?**

PLANNING THOUGHTS

- Write a plan about what you will do if and when you need help. Where will you go for help? Who will you talk to? How will you get there? How will you get medications? How will you convince yourself to take medications, and take care of yourself in the community, especially when you start feeling bad? Write plans about what you will do if and when you need help. Where will you go for help? Who will you talk to? How will you get there? How will you get medications? How will you convince yourself to take your medications, and take care of yourself in the community, especially when you start feeling bad?

HONESTY CHECK:

- Does your plan make you the person responsible for your behaviors and choices, or does your plan put the responsibility on everyone else to fix
- you or intervene on your behalf? If the plan puts the responsibility on others, you will never like what they do; you will push them away and end up feeling like a failure

Suggestion:

- Work on this part of the journey in small parts. Let this be an adventure, one that you maintain in the driver's seat. Make this journey worth your time, efforts and energy. Look for the possibilities. Allow yourself to experience the newness in your life. Live your life with no regrets.

START POINT: 7
“MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY”

- After being out of the hospital, I knew there was a major part of my life that was still hanging in limbo, my spiritual life. The next part of my journey was a spiritual part. I was so angry with God. How could a God who was supposed to be good and loving have let me go through this whole mental illness, state hospital ordeal? How could he let my brother die and my relationship with my family fall apart? How could he let my life go all to pieces and THEN let me get better, leave the hospital, provide a place for me to live out of nowhere? How could he just make things work out to get back in college when I had failed and screwed up so badly the last college said I could never return? I am so confused, who is God? A joke? A psychological head trip? Real?

STOP!

- **STOP! Stop running, arguing, fighting. Just STOP and be still. Be honest with yourself and with God about everything.**

TIME TO LET IT GO

- **It was time for me to get things right with God. I wanted forgiveness, I wanted to be restored, I wanted God’s love and acceptance. I knew I had come to the point that I had to let go of all I had been holding on to in order to accept what I wanted.**

THOUGHT

- *This part of my journey was very private for me. I didn't talk about it or share it. It was a sacred time between me and Jesus and I needed it to be private. I needed to be completely honest and I needed to completely surrender. This had to be intimate between Jesus and me.*

START POINT: 8
“MAKING AMENDS AND BUILDING BRIDGES”

- **This part of my journey came years later. I needed to deal with my family. I needed to be honest with them, confront them, let them confront me, and then figure out if there was any chance of a relationship left. If so, how would the relationship be now? If not, how could we part on terms that weren't hateful?**

LETTERS

- **Write your thoughts about your family. Write about what your family has meant to you. Write about what you have done to your family.**
- **Write as many letters as necessary to get all of your thoughts and feelings about what all has happened, out of your head and on paper, so you can see what is going on. DO NOT MAIL THESE LETTERS!**

Thoughts:

- I always thought that this whole ordeal was not my fault. The truth of the matter was that in part it was. I certainly contributed to making the situation worse. I did make it my business to hurt my family. I contributed to the family mess. I feel awful about what I have done. I will spend the rest of my life making sure that I do things differently when I interact with my family. I will be honest with them, treat them with love and respect and allow them to be human and quit blaming them for not being perfect. When I look back from this moment on, I don't want more regrets. It does not matter what they do, it matters what I do. Ultimately, I have to live with me.

LIFE IS TOO SHORT

- Life is too short to keep fighting battles that get you nowhere. Let go, let go, and let go. If you are going to heal, then it will take courage and honesty to face what you must face, change what must be changed, and let go of all that keeps you bound to the pain and misery.

**START POINT 9:
"MY LIFE MOTTO AND MANAGEMENT
PLAN"**

- This is the here and the now part of the journey. The past is behind you, the future is yours to create, but is not here yet. Today is the day that you must live each moment and make it count the way you want it to.
- You are at a place in your life that you can make or break your life. My personal philosophy is to "live my life with no regrets". The other part of that philosophy is to live life and enjoy this second chance I have been given in life and not look back and ask "why".

MOTTO

- Write a declaration of you, a motto or philosophy of life that you want to live by.
- Write an affirmation of you and your life. Write an affirmation of those that are important in your life. Write about the blessings in your life as well as the challenges. Write about the adventures of your life. Think and dream big. Take risks. Love. Play. Reach out and take, reach out and give.

NO SECRETS

- Sharing with others allows them to be a part of your healing and gives them an opportunity to grow. Sharing with others helps to keep things in perspective and can be a great incentive for you to work hard so that you can get back to enjoying life and enjoying the people that matter to you.

TELLING YOUR STORY FOR PERSONAL HEALING

- This is about exploring with your mental health professional.
- This is about gaining insight.
- This is about healing.

Continued

- **This process is not about sharing with others as you are in the middle of your process.**
- **Take this time to fully stay in the moment with your work and process.**

Final Note

- **You must first heal and stay committed to your recovery process.**
- **When you do share your story, it needs to be distant enough that you do not re-traumatize yourself.**

**TELLING YOUR STORY TO
HELP OTHERS HEAL**

- **Telling your story is about 4 things.**
- **1. Hope**
- **2. Encouragement**
- **3. Lessons learned**
- **4. Inspire**

HOPE

- **Sharing your story is about giving hope to others who may feel hopeless in the moment.**
- **Hope acknowledges pain and struggle and it acknowledges that one must cling to something larger than self or the problem/situation.**

Encouragement

- **Encouragement comes from a place of being fully present with someone in their darkest moments.**
- **Encouragement is not about the platitudes, or do good/nice phrases.**
- **Encouragement comes from the deepest part of your heart and soul that reaches from your experience in pain and comes through your heart belief of hope and your knowledge of truth from coming through your own hurt and pain.**

LESSONS LEARNED

- **As you reflect back on your story, what lessons did you learn about:**
- **1. Yourself**
- **2. Others**
- **3. The situation**
- **4. Mistakes made**
- **5. Things you did right**

Inspire

- Your story is an inspiration to others.
- Your story is not about competing with others, it simply is your story, no more or no less.
- Listen to others and allow them to inspire you with their courage, hope, tragedy, and resilience.

CLOSING

- You are on a journey for a purpose much greater than you know.
- Take in each moment.
- Give and take with humility.
- Honor the journey and those who gave freely to you as you took each step.

Finally

- You have a purpose for being here, in this place, and at this moment in time.
- The greatest gift we have to offer, is that of our willingness to share our lives, mistakes, successes, hopes, dreams, and to listen fully to others as they do the same.

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LOR'S BOOKS

- **Books can be purchased through:**
 - **TAKE-2 ACTION! THERAPY**
 - **8311 32nd Ave S Lakewood, WA 98499**
-
- **"BEYOND"**
 - **"MAKING THE JOURNEY JOURNALING"**
 - **DRAMA THERAPY WORKBOOKS 1-4**
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