

Narrative Letter Writing: Extending the Future of Therapeutic Conversations



“I am like the butterfly catcher, waiting for the metaphor to rise up so I can net it and display it to the clients, who if not gratified by the first attempt to have a concrete way to describe concerns that are plaguing them, usually satisfy themselves with some revision. What is made concrete in the session itself is made doubly concrete in a letter.”
(David Epston, Family Therapy Networker 1994)

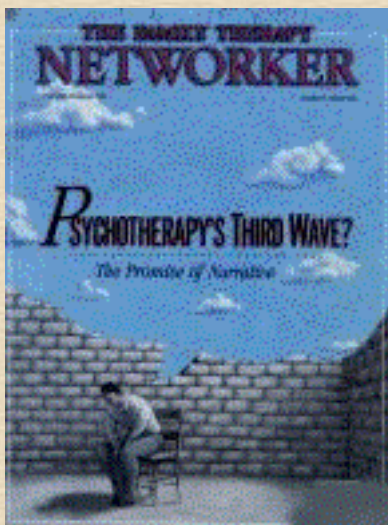
**As promised, here is uploaded version of my presentation on
May 18/2000 in PEI.**

I would like to begin by again thanking you for attending the workshop and I hope that the presentation plus this webpage will be helpful to you as you contemplate writing letters to the people who come to you for help or for that matter, as you contemplate doing dictation in a different way.

I would also like to say that the substance of what I presented was based mainly on the work of David Epston and, for even more specific help, you should "absitively" read "Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends" pictured here and co-authored by White and Epston. The picture is clickable and you can click it to go to the Norton Publishing site to order it for yourself. Press your back button to come back to this page.



Also, the article "Extending the Conversation" by Epston in "The Family Therapy Networker" November/December 1994. The magazine has an internet address. Click [here](#) to go there, press your back button to come back to this page .



The above magazine was dedicated to the Narrative Approach and was entitled "Psychotherapy's Third Wave: The Promise of Narrative."

What is Promising about Narrative?

For me, the Narrative metaphor, the "storying" of our lives seems more correct than the systems metaphor. Where the systems metaphor encouraged us to look within families for complementary circuits and for collaborative causation of problems, the Narrative metaphor, through its externalizing practices, encourages us to identify the negative influences of certain values, ideas, attitudes, habits, institutions and practices in the larger culture and to locate our own sense of Personal Agency to oppose them. Narrative, to me, is a counter-practice to the many ideologies out there which internalize pathology within people.

The counter-practices of Narrative are characterized by:

- an inherent respect for people**
- a fundamental assumption that we can constantly re-author our lives (personal agency)**
- a belief in multiple possible realities**
- the constitutive power of language**

I mentioned that my experiences at various workshops with Michael White, David Epston and Alan Jenkins gave me the impression that they were doing the work somehow, very differently. I came away from those workshops realizing that they weren't just "doing something" different, they seemed to me, genuinely different. David Epston mentioned that in engaging in Narrative practices, you will have the experience of people saying things like, "You talk different" or "I feel equal talking to you", I believe you can take these as signs you are on the right track.

I shared with you the overhead written by Freedman and Coombs entitled "The Interrelationship Between Ethics and Therapeutic Relationships" from the book, "Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities". [Click here to get the handout.](#)

I love this Freedman and Coombs handout. We should use it as a guide to choose our models of working. I mean, when we are talking with people about problems, shouldn't we be thinking, "What is the model that governs my way of doing this work today?? Really, what is the model?" I mentioned the other day that I especially love #9 - "Does the model require the person to enter the therapist's "expert" knowledge or does it require the therapist to enter the "world" of the client?" Of course, these questions are applicable, not just in how we talk with people, but in how we write about them - or should I say, how we write "with them." The truth is, and

more about this later, most of our writing in counselling work is "about clients" and only very infrequently is it "with them". If you were to substitute "my writing/dictation" as the subject of all the Freedman and Coombs questions, you'd have 10 excellent questions whose answers would provide important direction in how we write "about clients." These questions, I think, encourage us to write letters, do file dictation "with people" as opposed to "about them".

I have written a review of the book "Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities" at another part of our website. Would you like to read this review? Click [here](#) to read review, click your backbutton to come back to this page.

[Narrative Writing - Letters and the Like \(click here for next page\)](#)

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIPS

(See Freedman, J. And Coombs, G., 1996, Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities, WW Norton, New York, Chapter 10, pps. 264-288)

The following questions are used as guides in choosing models, theories, and practices:

- 1. How does this model/theory/practice "see" persons?**
- 2. How does it press you to conduct yourself with people who seek your help?**
- 3. How does it press them to conduct themselves with you who offer your help?**
- 4. How does it have them 'treat' themselves? 'See' themselves?**
- 5. How is this person being redescribed/redefined by such a model/theory practice?**
- 6. Does it invite people to see the therapist or themselves as experts on themselves?**

- 7. Does it divide and isolate people or give them a sense of community and collaboration?**
- 8. Do the questions asked lead in generative or normative directions, (eg. propose alternative or conserve dominant social practices)?**
- 9. Does the model require the person to enter the therapist's 'expert' knowledge or does it require the therapist to enter the 'world' of the client?**
- 10. What is its definition of 'professionalism'? Does its idea of 'professionalism' have more to do with the therapist's presentation of self to colleagues and others or with the therapist's presentation of self to the person(s) seeking their assistance?**

Conversation is by its very nature, ephemeral. After a particularly meaningful session, a client walks out aglow with some new provocative thought, but a few blocks away, the exact words that had struck home as so profound may be hard to recall...but the words in a letter don't fade and disappear the way a conversation does; they endure through time and space; bearing witness to the work of therapy and immortalizing it. (David Epston, 1994)

File Dictation

In the course of preparing for this workshop, I got to thinking about, not just letters to clients, but our recording and file dictation about clients. I started to think that much of what exists in our file dictation are "abstracted" pieces of people's lives that often seem to give impetus to problem-saturated dominating stories, often self-fulfilling stories. I wondered why I might keep writing in that way, even when I began to see that these "snippets" didn't constitute a very large percentage of what truly makes up the story of one's life.

In thinking about the answer to that on the way to PEI in the airplane, I realized that, to a large extent, we are not really trained as professionals to "privilege" our client's communications to us. This is especially true in the field of child welfare, where the social control component of that work is very strong. For the most part, people being served by the Child Protection system would not even be privy to the stories written about them.

Is the promise of Narrative being fulfilled in our day-to-day writings about people we see in this work?

I would say absolutely not. In my day-to-day work as a child protection supervisor and as a private practicing clinician, I see very little evidence that the "counter-practices" of Narrative writing are insinuating themselves into the file recordings, dictation, letters of referral or written communications between and amongst professionals doing the work. It's almost as though Narrative Practice had either not arrived or it has been swallowed by "tradition" or something more insidious.

If it's true that all of our lives are constituted in and through language (that is, language plays a central part in those activities that define and construct persons) then, as Epston has pointed out, written language makes a more than significant contribution to our stories (lives) and the stories of others. My experience in reading file recordings, letters of referral or dictation about clients, for the most part confirms for me that Narrative counter-practices do not, as yet, manifest themselves in our writing. Most of what I read now in the area of file recording could be characterized as:

- purpose driven descriptions of people rather than exploratory**

- file-speak as opposed to privileged communications
- objectifying of persons and their bodies
- explanatory schemes that eternalize experience rather than temporalize it
- impoverished, problem-saturated stories as opposed to rich and many-meaninged stories.
- retrospective stories as opposed to prospective stories

I mentioned, in the workshop, a recent referral I saw going through our child protection agency referring to an elementary school child as "suffering" from Oppositional Defiant Disorder or O.D.D. for short. In a brief way, acronym included, this young man's life was being storied -eternalized- certainly for his time in the elementary school he had just arrived at - perhaps in some way for the rest of his life. It kind of reminds me of a poem I once read by anonymous:

Brief and Bright dear children, bright and brief

Delights the lightning, the Long Thunder's Grief

That's the problem with these "explanatory economies", too often they become "the long thunder" of a person's life story. They assume a trajectory well into the future of a person's life and shape it.

BTW, Epston makes the point that modern documents not only story the lives of the subjects they write about - they story the life of the writer also. For a great description of how our documents affect us, read Chapter 4 Counter Documents. He talks about our files as playing a central role in "rituals of exclusion" with people who seek our help. Inevitably, and I think in a very complicated way, we are messing with our own community. The old Pogo cartoon character may have said it best, many years ago and it still seems to hold true;

["We have met the enemy and they are Us" \(Pogo\)](#)

In my attempts to write with clients, either in the form of letters or in file dictation, I mentioned to you that I keep in mind the questionnaire provided to me by Victoria Dickerson, Jeff Zimmerman, Bill Lax and Stephen Madigan when they did their Narrative On Tour workshop for our child protection agency. By the way, these 4 Narrative Practitioners are very willing to do workshops and share their expertise. Click here to go to their website ["Narrative on Tour."](#)

Back to the questionnaire, I find that by focusing my attention on the flow of the Narrative Interview, I can transpose that same flow to the writing of letters. [Here](#) is a copy of the Narrative on Tour group's hand-out called "The Flow of the

Narrative Interview."

Now, this hand-out provides a framework for thinking about a Narrative interview or provides ideas for letter writing. A second hand-out called [Project for Exposing Problems and Re-Authoring Alternative Stories](#) provides some specifics on the first hand-out and gives illustrative narrative questions for each section in the flow of the narrative interview. Along with various Narrative practitioners I have added quite a few of my own questions to this hand-out as a way to make the particular section even clearer. This hand-out provides a lot of questions - it's a great exercise to work at developing many of your own. Click [here](#) to get this hand-out.

We talked about an exercise that you could do to develop your skill at "externalizing conversations". This exercise was described by Sally Ann Roth and David Epston in the Journal of Systemic Therapies Vol.15, #1, Spring 1996. The article was entitled, "Developing Externalizing Conversations: An Exercise". Would you like to order this article. Go to Uncover Web, do a search for Journal of Systemic Therapies, go to spring 1996. You can do this search without actually logging in.

Here is WWW for [Uncover Web](#) address:

<http://uncweb.carl.org/>

By the way, ordering any article you please is a cinch through Uncover Web.

I have created a page outlining what I believe to be some of the significant advantages of Narrative Letter Writing. To get this handout, click [here](#). I can't imagine that I have listed all the advantages, so if you can think of more do email me your suggestion and I will add it.

Finally, Here is a list of My favorite Narrative Sites on the WWW:

[Narrative Books from the Dulwich Centre](#) - a collection of the very latest books on Narrative

[Planet Therapy.Com](#) - this is an absolutely great site with audio interviews of practitioners & more

[Narrative Approaches.Com](#) - Includes Narrative Approaches with Children and their Families

[Silencing Critical Voices](#) - An Online Journal sharing stories for a Community of Support

[The Virtual Faculty](#) - Hypertext Links to all sorts of People and a video library

[Yaletown Family Therapy](#) - A Canadian Site, under construction

[Possibility Land](#) - Bill O'Hanlon's Brief Therapy Site

Narrative Space - Greg Nooney

New Horizons

Once again, I would like to thank you for attending the workshop and I would especially like to thank those people who had questions or who wrote letters to "Ken". All the best in your battles against problems.

George MacDonald

NARRATIVE ON TOUR

**Victoria Dickerson, William Lax, Stephen Madigan,
And Jeffrey Zimmerman**

THE FLOW OF A NARRATIVE/DECONSTRUCTIVE INTERVIEW AND THERAPY

1. Exposing Dominant Discourses (Deconstruction)

A. Problem naming

B. Externalizing problems

C. Deconstruction

1.

1. Examining justification and explanation

2. History/Recruitment

3. Exposing influence and supports (e.g., personal, interpersonal, and cultural)

4. Special qualities, strategies, techniques of problems

5. Questions regarding effects of problem and intentions

6. Future plans

D. Questions about personal preferences

II. Alternative Discourse(s) (Re-authoring)

A. Unique outcomes, exceptions, sparkling moments or "where the problem fails"

B. Examination of fit with values (attention to issues of intentions, purpose, hopes, explanations, motives, desires)

C. Thickening descriptions (rich description vs thin conclusion)

1.
 1. Re-remembering and re-claiming knowledges
 2. Tracing histories of the present
 3. Examining the interplay between action and identity
 4. Reflexivity: telling and re-telling
 5. Identifying and examining supports

D. Naming alternative story

III. Developing Communities of Concern

- A. Bearing witness (reflecting teams)
- B. Leagues
- C. Letter writing campaigns
- D. Remembering practices

Project for Exposing Problems and Re-Authoring Alternative Stories

The questions that follow are an amalgam of questions posed by the Narrative on Tour group, Sally Roth/David Epston or have been made up from my own head. These headings refer back to the Narrative on Tour Groups "Flow of the Narrative Interview" hand-out. Within each sub-heading, I have sectioned off the questions as they are posed to either the client or to the Problem (a la "If Problems Talked" style). With respect to speaking directly to the problem, I have found it seems relatively easy for people to "imagine" what the problem would say in answer to a particular question, since they "know" the problem better than anyone and have a relationship with it. I have also framed these questions as if directed at many different people with many different problems. These questions work very well in writing letters to people and are a very small example of some typical questions. Well, really the sky's the limit for questions.

- **Exposing Dominant Discourses (Deconstruction)**
- **Problem naming**
- **Identifying with the client a "candidate" problem, one that they agree is the problem and not your idea of their problem. Is there an imagistically rich way of describing this problem? Examples: "the noose of expectation", "giveupitis", the "black dog of depression", "the burglar of low self-esteem", Michael White's now famous "sneaky-poo".**
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- **Externalizing problems**
- **Establish that when this problem has a hold it is not a preferred way of being, therefore is not a good representation of who they are. Speak of this problem as a separate entity unto itself. Personify it.**
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- **Deconstruction**

● **Examining justification and explanation**

- -How does this problem explain its existence to you?
- -In what way does it justify occupying your life?
- -What reasonable sounding arguments would it use to take over your life?
- -Does the problem present itself to you as a negative entity or does it soft-pedal itself to you as your friend?
- -What forms the underpinning of this problem? Is it a family mythology? A philosophy? An idea your uncle had? --What are its supporting beams? How is it constructed??
- -Why is this a problem for you?
- -What is it about this problem that worries you?
- -In what ways has this problem had a negative influence in your life? Map the negative influences of this problem.
- **History/Recruitment**
- -When did the problem first introduce itself to you?
- -How did this problem get you to trust it and not trust your better judgement?
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- -Under what circumstances did you manage to commandeer the client's life?
- -Do you feature in other aspects of the clients life, besides work?
- -Did you have other important allies in managing to get into the clients life? Were there people who you would consider fundamental in establishing yourself?
- -Were there other ideas, attitudes, habits that enabled you to get a firm hold in the client's life?
- **Exposing influence and supports (e.g., personal, interpersonal, and cultural)**
- -What rationales might this problem have tricked you into believing that would support its continued existence?
- -Would there be any professional ideas, beliefs that support this problem??
- -In child welfare for example, are there any fears that the social worker has that may contribute to your anxiety problem?
- -Do you think that this problem affects men or women more than the other?
- -How does this problem affect others in your family? Is there anyone else it affects as badly as yourself, or are you alone with this problem?
- -Are there "common sense" ideas that have allowed this problem to camouflage itself and thereby insert itself into your life??
- -Are there cultural norms that say this problem is ok for men or women to have?

- **Special qualities, strategies, techniques of problems**
- -Do you try to hide yourself from Jimmy's family and "sneak up" on them when they are

vulnerable??

- -Do you make promises to Jimmy while somehow, minimizing the disastrous consequences you have in his life?
- -In what ways are you able to convince the client that you are less to worry about than that other problem?
- -Are you a "silver tongued orator" when you try to talk Jimmy and his family into trouble? Would your goal be to have his parents on a full-time or part-time fear watch?
- -How have you convinced Mary that her cure would be worse than your "dis-ease?"

- **Questions regarding effects of problem and intentions**
- -Are there areas of Jimmy's life that he cannot see are being affected?
- -What areas of his life are being affected?
- -Does your being in the Fred's life affect his relationships with others? Are you making it impossible for him to have friends?
- -Have you completely taken over his mind? Is there anyone else in the family whose mind you could take over or have already?
- -What are your intentions, as a problem, for this couple?

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● **Future plans**

- -If you could maintain your hold on Jimmy for five more years, what would his life look like at that time?
- -How would that impact Jimmy's family life?
- -Are there nasty things you could do to the client that, to date, they haven't even thought about?
- -Would you like it, if in the future, depression completely had everyone under its spell?
- -If you could enlarge yourself even more, would that shrink the family's capacity to survive?
- -Do you hope to be able to establish yourself as a "generational" problem that could be handed down through this family's generations? Would you like to eternalize yourself in that way?
- -If the problem had the chance, what might it do differently in the future that could worsen things?

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● **Questions about personal preferences**

● **II. Alternative Discourse(s) (Re-authoring)**

● **Unique outcomes, exceptions, sparkling moments or "where the problem fails"**

- -Are there times Jimmy, when the problem does not have a hold on you?
- -Are there times when you feel you have the upper hand? What parts of your life do you feel you have control over the problem?

- -Can you think of times you have re-claimed your life from this problem? How did you do it?
- -What things do you do that can strike fear into the heart of the problem?
- -What behaviours does the child welfare worker show that weaken anxiety's influence in your life? What could you do that you think would influence the child welfare worker more in that direction?
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- -What have the people in Fred's life kept free from your influence?
- -Do you think Jimmy has purposes of his own for his life? Is his purpose for himself in accordance with your purpose for his life?
- -What do you think will happen to you as a problem if Jimmy realizes that "a goal is just a wish without a plan?"

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● **Examination of fit with one's values (attention to issues of intentions, purpose, hopes, explanations, motives, desires)**

- -What is your preferred way of being and why is it better?
- -How do you think this preferred way of being, being free of the problem, would impact on your family? Your work life? Your career choice?
- -would defeating the problem give courage to go against other problems?
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- -If Jimmy continued to outwit you, what values would this inspire in him?
- -What other problems might be frightened if Jimmy were able to defeat you?

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● **Thickening descriptions (rich description vs. thin conclusion)**

- (Check out Greg Nooney's website with definitions of "Thickening Descriptions <http://www.narrativespace.com/>)

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● **Re-remembering and re-claiming knowledges**

- -Does the problem achieve success by sometimes giving you amnesia to your successes?
- -What or who helps you to remember?
- -What successes has the problem tricked you into forgetting? Who would have noticed your successes the most in the past?
- -Which of your grandparents knew that you could defeat problems? Were brave? Courageous? Had stamina? If not grandparents then who?
- -Are there others in your life now who would not be surprised by these developments in your life?
- -Are there any theories/philosophies in the professional world that would support this direction in your life

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- **Tracing histories of the present**
 - -Can you tell me the whole sequence of action that led up to you defeating the problem on that particular day?
 - -What actions on your part, done systematically guarantee the defeat of this problem?
 - -How excited are you about your new successes and what do these successes say about you?
 - -Have there been other times when you have acted/felt this way?
 - -Would the problem want you to make a big deal out of your successes?
 - -If you kept a running tab of even your small successes would this make the problem nervous?
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- **Examining the interplay between action and identity**
 - -If you could continue in this preferred way of being, what other heretofore untapped potential might you discover in yourself?
 - -When you are acting from this preferred identity, what actions will it lead you to do more of?
 - -Having these kinds of successes how do you think it will affect your teacher's view of you?
 - -who would have always believed in this ability of yours? -How does remembering their belief in you affect your own view of yourself?
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- **Reflexivity: telling and re-telling**
 - -If modesty creeps in at this point, how likely would you be to tell the story of your success to other people?
 - -If you "blow your own horn" about your successes will the problem become even more frightened?
 - -Does paying close attention to your successes help you outwit the problem, which would like you to forget them?
 - -Would the problem want you to tell a group of friends about your success in defeating it?
 - -What effect might it have on the problem, if you told the story of your successes to a group of friends?
 - -Are there others in your life who would not be surprised by these developments?
 - -As you continue to move in this direction what other opportunities might open up for you?
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- **Identifying and examining supports**
 - -Who in your life space right now will be most supportive of your gains against the problem? Whose voice do you hear from the past cheering you on?
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 - -Can you imagine people in the future who will benefit from your defeat of the problem

now? How might your success be a win for your children also?

- - **Naming alternative story**
 - Just as you externalized problems, you can also give a name to your undertaking to defeat problems. For example, in a plan to overcome "depression" you could name your work "Project Joy." In a recent involvement with a person who had come to see me and who had metaphorically said lethargy and lack of initiative had taken over his life like "Mustard Gas", named his plan "Operation Westerly Wind."
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III. Developing Communities of Concern

A. Bearing witness (reflecting teams)

For some ideas on bearing witness and reflecting teams, check out these WWWebpages:

<http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/chrisbehan.html>

<http://www.renfrew.org/pro/Grobman.htm>

And here is a great article on Family Therapy as it has evolved to the Post-Modern with special talk about Reflecting Teams. Family Therapy: A Braided Challah by Lynn Hoffman

<http://www.txmft.org/news/archives/journal/journal.html>

B. Leagues

For information on the Anti-Anorexic League, check out this article by Stephen Madigan and David Epston

From "Spy-chiatric Gaze" to Communities of Concern: From Professional Monologue to Dialogue

http://www.yaletownfamilytherapy.com/publications/art_spy.html

C. Letter writing campaigns

Check out NarrativeApproaches.com for leagues and letter writing campaigns

A WWW designed by Jennifer Freeman, Dean Lobovits and David Epston

<http://www.narrativeapproaches.com/welcome.htm>

D. Remembering practices

For remembering practices, I like Greg Nooney's account of Telling and Re-Telling at his website. He says,

"Tellings and re-tellings -- In the narrative perspective, our identities are constantly being formed and re-formed through our experiences in the world. We are multi-storied. As we interact with others, one or more of those stories are strengthened. Whenever someone in our life listens to our story (the telling) and is affected in some way by it, and then shares with us the effect on him or her of hearing this story (a re-telling), we will be affected. That story will be strengthened. The plot of that story will be thickened. This happens all the time with stories that we do not like or prefer. It is usually not difficult to find people in our lives to contribute to a thickening of the plot of a story we do not like. Let's say for example that I have had some experiences with others that have contributed to me developing a strong belief that no one is to be trusted. I will not have much difficulty in finding people in my life who will help thicken this plot.

In narrative work, there is a conscious effort to find people who might be interested in helping us to thicken the plot of those stories that we prefer. It is then possible to participate in tellings and re-tellings, and possibly re-tellings of the re-tellings, and on and on until these preferred plots get thickened enough to where these preferred stories will take a dominant place in our lives."

[\(http://www.narrativespace.com/\)](http://www.narrativespace.com/)

In its best sense, telling and re-telling is RE-MEMBERING.

The Advantages of Letter Writing

Writing letters to people provides, to my mind, a huge number of benefits to the enterprise of re-storying. These advantages show up in three distinct ways. They are beneficial to the people who seek your help, they help you as a helper and they assist the story of counselling as it pertains to a particular person. I have identified these advantages as they relate to each category, although it could be said that they're can be considerable overlap into each category.

Advantages to your Client/Consumer:

A letter helps the client render their "lived experience" into a narrative or story, thereby enabling them to see the underpinnings of their problems and to identify potential resources to counter problems.

The receipt of a letter can be, for many people, a validating experience in and of itself. A letter says on paper "I see you and I affirm you." I acknowledge who you are and your story.

Letters can be a powerful tool in the service of re-authoring a "problem-saturated" life story. They can capture on paper the lushness of a person's story while bringing to the fore heretofore "forgotten" sparkling events.

Letters can provide a record of problems confronted and strategies ("other stories") that have existed or were developed to go against them.

Letters allow the therapeutic conversation to be called into question itself. They help people to see that "Problems" can be made and broken by conversation, context and writing.

Letters extend the future of therapeutic conversations, not just beyond the single counselling session but for posterity, days, months, and years after the session. They provide a tangible "aide memoire" to the client of a "problem-defeating" conversation/story.

Letters can situate the person/family in the flow of time thereby fostering an evolutionary view of one's life. Such a view exists in direct opposition to the "explanatory economies" utilized so prevalently in the mental health field - views which take a piece of life and establish it as a dominant story and eternalize it in the shape of a psychiatric label.

Letters provide an important way to both include and privilege the client's viewpoint in the official record.

When clients agree with the contents of a letter it helps them to establish a contract with themselves and their preferred way of being to go against the problem. A letter can be the essence of the promise they made to themselves.

Advantages to the Counsellor/Therapist/Helper:

They provide a reference point for each therapy session, a place where both you and the family can get a clear sense of where you have been and where you want to go.

They slow the counselling process down. They allow time to reiterate significant issues in a problem story, they enable you and the client to externalize the problem and the very act of **WRITING THEM DOWN** on paper allows the client to see them for what they are.

Letters can allow you to salvage a bad session, enabling you to rethink them and to clarify or correct a matter.

Letters can allow you a forum to say things to clients that you may find difficult to say to them in person.

Letters can provide you with a summary of therapeutic sessions and can actually serve as your file recording.

Advantages to the Process of Therapy:

Letters, as a co-constructed reality, more accurately display the work (art) (story) of therapy than other professional accounting methods.

Letters, as part of a therapeutic process, show therapy to be a collaborative, co-evolving part of both the therapists and clients life flow as opposed to a mystical, esoteric act performed by somebody on somebody. They capture a dialogue, rather than a monologue on paper.