

Transcription Podcast 00001 01/05/2022



This is not an exact transcription but as it tries to replicate the speech as closely as possible, the written grammar is not always correct.

Yaama maliyan-galgaa, Jedison Wells here, host of TracyLeonie, a podcast where we use today's voice to let yesterday talk and really unpack those stories that we've been holding on to for years. Now first up let's acknowledge the traditional guardians of the land on which we stand and for me, right now, that is the Thurawal People which is near Robertson NSW in Australia. Now second up, let's make sure that you are in a safe place and that you will be able to access someone trusted after this podcast, either in person or by phone just in case our conversation you know brings up some present or some old wounds. And thirdly but just as importantly, I use the F word quite often. The F word and the C Word so if you are uncomfortable with swearing, I mean I don't use it in every sentence but it's going to come out and I'll probably do it without warning so if you're uncomfortable with swearing probably not the best podcast for you or be prepared for it. Probably not great to have the kiddies around either.

Alright so today I'm going to take you back to 1977 or 1978 anyway I was in Grade four at Wynnum Central State School. A typical suburban Australian primary school where most kids had been in the same class of kids since grade one, me included, and where the community had dads working, mums at home and all of us trying our very very best to be part of whatever the hell normal was for suburban Australia. So on this particular day, the teacher had us all very very excited because she was involving us in a cooking activity which was pretty cool for a group of ten year olds right, now better than cool for me because I didn't always get to eat breakfast that often and I didn't always turn up with lunch. So you know the idea of cooking right, had me salivating.

Now when I say the Teacher had all of us involved, I have to give credit here where credit's due, she really tried hard to ensure that all of us, I'll guess, I don't know what say 23 kids, 20 to 23 kids, would participate in some way in the enterprise and she even went outside of the usual suspects right so it wasn't chocolate crackles or cornflake honey joys that we were putting together. We were going to cook Russian Caramels. Now there were people who gathered the utensils, there were people who mixed the ingredients. There were special people who got to help the Teacher with you know the boiling etc etc. Now here I am, little Tracy Leonie desperately wanting to be the person who licks the spoon. Now again, credit where credit's due, the teacher didn't actually allow anyone to do that. Although, I am dobbing David Ransome in, because the Teacher might not know, and you know what, for the life of me I can't remember what her name was but I think it started with a H, but when she put the spoon in with the utensils, for someone to wash, David

Ransome did try to go back in when she had her back turned. Anyway so sorry Dave, ok 45 years later, I'm dobbling you in.

Now I was not the popular kid alright, I was the absolute opposite of whatever the fuck popular meant at the time. OK, we'll get to the why and how of that in future podcasts with my stories but suffice to say that I was afflicted with a bowel complaint. Now in the 1970s if you had accidents, it was apparently related to your moral character, ha ha, not some biological thing that was not quite right in your body. So all the kids called me Johnston Germs, lovely kids that they were. Anyway so the Teacher wasn't going to put me in a group activity, because no-one wanted to work with me so I am given the job of the second transportation of the tray with the cut up pieces of Russian Caramel to the fridge in the Teacher's Lounge. Ok, so we would have taken it to the fridge the first time to you know when you are making up those slices and you've got to harden them up a bit before you cut them. So that's the first trip, second trip is taking them back to the fridge all cut up and of course the third trip would be when it all comes back and we all get to eat it. Anyway so that's what my job ended up being.

Now she didn't tell everyone at the start, what all of our jobs would be. We just hung on, waiting to hear our name being called. And as the minutes progressed and after the mixing, I was getting a little bit anxious because I don't want to hear my name called out now. So at the start I wanted to be the one that licked the spoon, once we got passed that and no-one was allowed too, I wanted to be the one that had the shitty job of washing the bowl because the thing is, if I got that job that meant that I got to lick the bowl. Remember people, I'm 10 and I'm hungry. So the Caramel is brought back from the fridge, cut into pieces, blah blah blah, we're almost at the end and I'm thinking yeah yeah I'm going to be the one who gets to do the dishes. Anyway, I hear my name called and it's like ugggh. So begrudgingly I start to do this delivery. Now to put this in perspective, if you've gone to primary school in Australia, public primary school, they all look exactly the same, the main building looks exactly the same OK. Now I only had to go three classrooms to get from our classroom to the Teacher's lounge. So very short, very short distance. So begrudgingly, tray in hand, I set out down the hallway for the tray's next journey. Now I am walking slowly and thinking of the gooey caramel that was in the bowl and how it's dripping down off the spoon

And then, I looked down at the tray and the pile of pieces and how they weren't really placed in any sort of pattern, so if I took one, no-one would really notice. So I picked up one and I put it in my mouth, and it was beautiful. Can I just say, even today, my most favourite lolly in the whole world is Russian Caramel. Anyway, back to the story. I took another one and then I took another one and then I took another one. Not in any hunger induced rage but slowly, methodically, hypnotically. When I arrived at the Teacher's Lounge, three classrooms away, the tray was empty. Three classrooms in and the tray was empty.

Now, I had no idea what to do, I was ten. I had no idea what to do so I did nothing. I just stood there with this tray in my hand, progressively panicking about what would happen when the bell went and who would come in and all those sorts of things. Now it must have been awhile because after what seemed to me like only a few minutes, the Teacher came in through the door and I stood fast in preparation for yelling or for worse because back then they still occasionally wacked you on the bum but they weren't supposed to. But the funny thing is that she didn't say a word. She gently took the tray from me, now I'm not sure where it went and I felt her fingers and handkerchief wiping the caramel from my cheek. I couldn't face her, so I was like turned away, that's just what I felt. And then she said, "Back to class now" and she never mentioned the incident again.

Now, the next day, I wasn't sure what to expect as we were all supposed to enjoy the tray of sweets for morning tea. I figured out that the Teacher mustn't have mentioned the incident to anyone, as my parents never said anything when I got home and my classmates would have still been bullying me if they got wind of it. At around 10.30 I became a little more anxious as I watched the student with the final job of delivering the sweets, walk in through the door. Now I don't know if the teacher bought them or made them herself the night before, but there they were, pieces piled atop each other and placed on her desk at the front of the room. Everyone ran to grab their piece of sugar heaven, hoping for seconds. Everyone that is except me. I just looked straight at the teacher collecting her accolades for a job well done. At the age of ten, I didn't know what I was feeling but I knew it couldn't be calmed with melted butter and condensed milk



Without too much thinking, based on typical assumptions, if we were to pick out the most significant part of that tale, I reckon we would say hey, a teacher forgave their student. How lucky for that poor girl and what a great teacher, going and making another batch on her own. That would be the typical assumption. The actual influence was quite different.

That encounter supported all the other stories, that I was a poor, stinky, hungry kid who could never become anything of value. That Teacher in about three seconds, assumed that I ate all of the sweets on my own. That was the only fact she got right. I wasn't granted an opportunity to explain if I had help, if I accidentally dropped them somewhere, why I was hungry and of course, how the hell a skinny underweight ten year old could possibly eat that much food. She took for granted, certain assumptions and those assumptions, in place of my own voice, were used to come to a conclusion. Yet another decision supporting the story of who I supposedly was. For a very long time, and I'm talking years, my opinion was that I was so pitiful that adults couldn't even be bothered rousing on me anymore.

I was so far gone, that I was just not capable of taking responsibility for my own actions. Now realities are organised and maintained through stories, good, bad or ugly. What we tell ourselves and what we tell our children hits hard the most. This story was just one more stone, one more weight, one more conclusion that was building up an ever growing pile that eventually I would not be able to see over.

Now I've got a different conclusion for you, and for any professionals out there, it's based on the process of Reauthoring. I was a ten year old child trying to survive and I was hungry, One of the most basic needs of human beings. It wouldn't have mattered if that tray was bread, fruit or pasta sauce, I would have eaten it. Conclusion .. child hungry, child eats. To believe that I lacked moral character or composure or basic intelligence was unhelpful and inaccurate. I was hungry and I ate food and if someone, anyone would have questioned why, maybe just maybe, my trajectory may have changed. But instead, that Teacher chose the easy route, and just went along with the same story. My survival strengths didn't end there, they turned up a notch the next day as well. It took an incredible amount of discipline not to eat the caramels when they arrived for Morning Tea. It took me a few years to piece this one together, but as an adult if I feel that you are disrespecting me, I will not eat your food. The amount of parties and BBQs and family gatherings I have gone to where I've gone hungry is ridiculous and of course not healthy. But that first time it happened, for a ten year old child, that was courage. That was me recognising contempt and I was having none of it.

The stories we tell ourselves matter. Regardless of how insignificant we might view a certain event or a person or the words that we heard. We didn't become the adults that we are through experiencing one major event, it was through thousands of seemingly small actions and persuasions that influenced us along the way. And you know what, it is never too late to revisit those stories. What beliefs have you carried into adulthood that aren't really serving you that well. What are your motives for sustaining them? Where and who did they come from? Let me tell you, be very wary of everyday, typical assumptions.

For me, I had to let go of notion that other people knew what was best for me, i.e. I wasn't capable of taking responsibility for my own actions. I let husband, parent, child, friend etc etc make the call and then complained because I didn't like the outcome. Don't get me wrong, the journey to this knowledge wasn't an easy road but realising it changed my life. The stories we tell ourselves matter.

Well that's it for today. Today's episode, number one, was brought to you by Hobajing Narrative Practice, my counselling, coaching and healing platform where you can talk to me face to face in Robertson NSW or by zoom and phone anywhere else in the world. All services are discounted for mob. The transcript for this podcast is available at hobajing.com.au/podcasts. Yaluu Maliyaa-Galgaa. I'm glad you walked with me today