

# Living not Acting

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In the second session of a group I was running with Aboriginal men who had acted violently, we did a Psychodrama with one man who had been in a previous group and was very familiar with Psychodrama. He had recently returned to my group and had a big yearning to explore why he kept doing the same thing again and again. He did his drama and it was very full and satisfying for him. However, as it turned out, it was a little overwhelming for the other men in the group. The next day, session three, they rocked up, the leader of group (an Elder) stating very clearly and strongly "We are not acting today, we do not want to act, I just want to tell my story." I showed him my appreciation of his strong advocacy for himself and others and then I put a chair on the stage and asked him if he would like to sit there on the stage to tell his story to the group. He agreed. As he told his story, about where he was from, who he was related to and how his life unfolded, I began to put little toys to represent him in different parts of his story. As I was doing this, I would turn to him and say: "How does that look — is that right?" He smirked and grew a little bigger in the chair, becoming more animated. He then said, "I am so angry inside." At this moment I picked up a chair and put it next to him and said, "This is the 'angry you'." He nodded, he smiled and said very loudly, "Yes." I asked him, "Come sit in this chair, the angry you, and keep telling your story. Is that ok to do that?" I was trying my best to stand by the original contract of "not acting." He nodded and got up and sat in the 'angry you' chair which was next to him. As soon as he sat down, he shouted to the group "I am invisible." I moved behind his chair and doubled him saying "Nobody cares about me, nobody sees." At that point I was feeling very encouraged that he was able to fully express himself in front of the group. However, at the same moment I was wondering where in the room was the 'hope' in this story. Like a flash I remembered that in the warm up he had chosen a picture that showed a mountain climber stuck half-way up the mountain and he had said he felt "very stuck" and "couldn't move." I got a chair, put it to the side on the stage and said, "Hey, it's me, I'm at the top of the mountain." and I reached out my hand and he immediately shouted up at me "I'm coming. I'm coming."



I'm a psychodrama trainee who loves to sing, I play in a band called the "bad babysitters", I am most curious about how change emerges in life, in nature and the universe.