



Converting moral outrage to moral stamina: A co-research conversation between Julie King and David Epston

Chapter 1: Letting the rage come out

Julie questions and evaluates anorexia's trap of powerlessness, what it tried to take away from her, and what triggered the return of outrage. David is curious how Julie was able to access moral outrage, and how experiencing the outrage made claims on her identity.

JULIE: I have noticed that sense of powerlessness makes it more difficult to ask for help in re-establishing an anti-anorexic position. As I lay unable to sleep tonight I felt the stirrings of outrage.

DAVID: Julie, do you have any idea what was stirring that led to moral outrage rather than self-blame, guilt and self-recriminations?

JULIE: I had the desire to feel differently. I didn't want to feel powerless and lacking energy. It was partly the knowledge gained from experience that when I feel powerless or depressed, I'm often outraged about something- but can't always readily access it. So I have to some extent remind myself of what had angered me before, such as all the suffering Sophie had endured. Every time I started blaming myself or feeling despondent, I allowed myself to feel outrage instead.

DAVID: Julie, do you mind telling me in as much detail as you can, the steps you took to what you refer to as 'accessing' what you knew from your experience had something to do with moral outrage, even if you did not know its specifics? I think what will emerge from such a discussion will be of considerable relevance to anti-anorexic theory and practice?

JULIE: I think it's through seeing a bigger picture based on knowledge gained through a variety of sources including therapy and anti-anorexia that meant I didn't have to believe that if I felt bad, it meant I was bad. I recognized this as a very familiar trap and I could now see through it enough to find whatever I could of self-love and anti-anorexia to talk myself through this and possibly provide my own makeshift **anti-anorexic life-raft until I could strengthen it with a conversation such as this**. I was able to reason that maybe there was a good cause for me to feel outraged.

Almost immediately I felt energised and I could think differently about matters. I had been feeling overwhelmed; Sophie had returned from the Clinic and the bulimia seemed stronger than ever. I guess I felt confounded by it. And in my pain and seeming ineffectualness in the face of her suffering, I **lost touch** with my own sense of moral outrage. I'm unsure what triggered the switch in my thinking from



despondency to outrage. I was partly thinking about situations in my own life and how I had been in some abusive relationships and blamed myself rather than getting angry about the injustices I suffered. I remember my therapist commenting recently that in all the years he had known me, I had described many painful situations but I had never expressed any anger. I puzzled over that and realised that I still operate under some imperative that it is 'wrong' to be angry or outraged- that it is not 'nice', or dignified but rather ugly, unsightly and alienating of others. Why? As you have mentioned previously, 'good girls' don't say 'fuck you, anorexia!' Well, I was lying in bed saying just that- and 'fuck you' to a few other matters as well. And that is what got me up writing. I thought about the 'out' part of the word 'outrage' and felt the importance of **that rage coming 'out'**.

DAVID: Julie, that amused me, the 'out' of 'outrage'. Why did you think it was important for the rage to come 'out' as you put it? Did it usually stay 'in' and be **turned against you?**

JULIE: I refused to feel angry because I thought everyone had to be 'nice' and I had to be 'nice' regardless of how others behaved. Then one day I did feel very angry and took some plates we didn't need outside and smashed them. I don't do things like that very often but at the time it did help. It made me think of the 'out' in 'outrage'. Yes, usually rage has stayed in me and become turned against me in quite destructive ways. I have always had difficulty working out the place for anger or outrage, possibly because I have experienced its expression in dangerous ways and have such a commitment to not being destructive or disrespectful.

Chapter 2: When enraged becomes outraged

David maps the actions that Julie took in order to turn the tide of the rage from inside of her, fighting against herself, to being a force that moves the rage outside of her. Dialogue sets the scene to take a deeper look at Julie's sense of agency and emerging shifts and growth in her identity.

DAVID: Can I quote Aristotle here? "Anyone can become angry- that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, and in the right way- that is not within everyone's power and is not easy". Did you waive any right to justifiable anger having witnessed other's violence to your loved ones? Did you say to yourself as that little six-year-old girl that above all else you should be kind and nice? And if so how would you say you have now worked out a place for moral outrage in your new vocabulary of emotional expression? **Have you had to coin a few new phrases to do so?**

JULIE: The main point I want to make is that a crucial part for me of the transformation of moral outrage to moral stamina is keeping the spark of outrage alive long enough in



the first place or finding a means to rekindle the embers until it builds enough heat to stay alight. It is vulnerable in the beginning because I perceive a strong force against its expression.

DAVID: Julie, what do you perceive as 'behind' what you refer to as '**a strong force**' against its expression?

JULIE: I see it as made up of social judgements or condemnations concerning the expression of outrage, especially by women, even if expressed in opposition to injustice. With a/b too; there is such a genuine desire to want to distance yourself from it. Maybe there has been a **monopoly on the expression of outrage** so that it is equated with a misuse of power or the maltreatment of people. I am thinking here of immoral outrage. Have those in power historically monopolized moral outrage and its expression?

DAVID: That is such a wonderful historical question that has me furrowing my brows. I wish Michel Foucault was still around so we could put your query to him. If there is a "regime of truth" and you have the highest office in such a metaphorical regime, then do you as you put it also have a 'monopoly' on moral outrage? I am trying to think of how moral outrage is constructed by subalterns, the dispossessed and disenfranchised. I suppose there must be some sort of '**counter-truth**' for a '**counter**' moral outrage to be vested in; otherwise, it wouldn't count as truthful but a falsehood.

JULIE: I am thinking this up as I write. Maybe outrage needs to be renamed and reclaimed as a valid response so that it can be expressed as a form of empowerment and not counted as violence. Maybe that's why you call it 'moral outrage'.

DAVID: You are quite right...that is why I have always equated this kind of outrage with the category of the 'moral'!

Chapter 3: Deconstructing the pathology of injustice

David and Julie re-establish their own working definition of moral outrage and moral stamina by questioning the censorship, injustice, and authoring rights of women to live, embody, and express moral outrage and moral stamina.

JULIE: It is hard for me to admit that I have such difficulty in both feeling and expressing outrage.

DAVID: Julie, do you suspect that after having troubled yourself over this seeming conundrum that in the future it will be a lot less trouble for you to discern 'immoral'



outrage from 'moral' outrage? By the way, while I was reading through this, I have been thinking to myself that this is one of the most interesting conversations I have been engaged in in a long time.

JULIE: To return to the metaphoric of fire-oxygen, space and fuel are necessary- as well as someone there gently blowing when it looks like it might go out. I hope I'm not being overly symbolic but it struck me tonight just how difficult it can be for those battling anorexia to connect with moral outrage because I think there is real censure against it.

DAVID: Julie, who or what in your way of thinking is 'censuring' moral outrage?

JULIE: I think this is related to the question above. Another thing that comes to mind is that the expression of moral outrage often positions one in relation to some type of **injustice**. Taking a position on issues is from what I have observed and experienced as almost impossible to do when ruled by a/b. It is similar to what we have spoken about before in relation to a/b not allowing young women to have an opinion or 'voice'; or to be ridiculed if they dare to articulate one. I imagine that in expressing moral outrage, one can feel very exposed and vulnerable to criticism- so it feels the only option it to remain silenced. The more I contemplate these questions, the more I feel their significance.

DAVID: I would certainly go along with you here regarding the matter of the **significance of this co-research**.

JULIE: I consider that underlying this censoring is, I suspect, a **power imbalance**, either imposed by a/b or another dominating force. I have even heard it said in a derogatory way that 'anorexics are angry', as if that was a strike against them- something pathological.

Chapter 4: Moral outrage to moral stamina

David and Julie discuss ways in which anti-anorexia must transform its moral outrage to moral stamina, and evaluate how this can be a powerful, painful and beautiful turning point to 'unsuffering'.

JULIE: And yet I am finding it difficult myself to 'unsuffer' myself. I have a lot of anger at the suffering I see being endured by Sophie and other women which often manifests itself in self-harm. Sophie has a cigarette burn and cuts on her arm. Why do these beautiful young women have to harm themselves? I am so angry.



DAVID: Why shouldn't you be? The question is how to turn this moral outrage in to **moral stamina**? That is a question we should be co-researching, don't you think? Perhaps even the most pertinent question anti-anorexia has to confront.

JULIE: I agree it is very pertinent and a question I have been asking myself. I can't remember ever feeling such moral outrage. And I know Sophie is outraged at the suffering she is witnessing. Just telling you about my outrage and your response, "why shouldn't you be?" helped me to convert it in some moral stamina, which I was probably quite low on. The sense that there is no one to 'tell' when I am morally outraged or when I have witnessed something painful can mean that I end up with less stamina, not more.

Chapter 5: Life or death significance

David and Julie discuss the role of witnessing in liberating or 'unsuffeign' moral claims of outrage. David inquires how story begins to trump another. Julie considers how the recruitment of a league of witnesses grow her commitments to anti-anorexia.

DAVID: I really appreciate your commentary here as this is really something that has been on my mind the last few weeks. I thank you for making such an intriguing beginning to this co-research.

JULIE: I am also intrigued by this discussion. It does seem an extremely pertinent question for anti-anorexia to confront; to me it can make the difference **between despair and empowerment**.

DAVID: Julie, do you think there could be anything more significant for anti-anorexia than what you refer to in the above as "the difference between despair and empowerment"?

JULIE: Empowerment is such a beautiful process. I used to think of myself as swinging between hope and despair- and hope always seemed such a delicate state. Empowerment brings hope to life so that it can take shape in one's life and world. It does seem very significant. I know from my experience that there is not much separating despair from death- so in that sense it has **'life or death' significance**.

DAVID: Whew! From your experiences, how would you describe how moral outrage at witnessing suffering, both your own and Sophie's and her 'sisters' in the treatment programme, becomes **'converted' in to moral stamina?**

JULIE: For me, it has something to do with believing that the energy of that outrage isn't destructive but that it can actually be empowering. Believing that such a thing is



possible is the beginning. It is about wanting another way for these women (and some men) at the Clinic, another way in which the energy that goes in to self-harm can also be converted in to something else. Experiencing the possibility of 'unsuffering' and believing that somehow the energy (and it is a powerful energy) of outrage can be converted in to passion, creativity, expression, activism... wherever it takes someone!

DAVID: Julie, what would you say that you have converted your self-blame/self-harm into over the last few years? Do you consider your writings as both forms of creativity, expression and passion and activism all rolled up in to one?

JULIE: That's a wonderful way of describing my experience of our writings. Having this avenue of expression has opened up my life so much and has made my 'unsuffering' possible. It has allowed me to endure the past years as well as imagining and achieving so much that I previously would have thought impossible.

It's also about feeling a connection with Sophie and her 'sisters' in treatment and trusting that through 'unsuffering' myself that I am growing a responsibility and commitment to believe in and to assist in the 'unsuffering' of others, seeing a bigger picture, not just me and Sophie. **Witnessing the suffering of others also reinforces the externalization process, making it easier to develop stamina, because it is no longer an individual and seemingly impossible battle.**

Chapter 6: Stand up and be counted

David and Julie explore the effects of testifying to moral outrage. Julie identifies courage as the transforming ingredient. David asks about the risks of neutrality in the face of anorexia.

DAVID: Do you find it significant to you that that has not got to do entirely with you and Sophie but young women growing up in **contemporary consumer society**?

JULIE: Of course, it is incredibly significant. A few weeks ago my ten-year-old daughter and friends were sleeping over. That day they had been to a science museum for a school excursion. The only thing they talked about was how they all had weighed themselves and were comparing weights, saying such things as 'I weigh 40 kgs...I'm too fat!'. These are ten year olds. They asked Lily how much she weighed and she sensibly said she didn't know. I felt a responsibility to them to speak about it.

DAVID: Does testifying to your moral outrage to someone, here to Lily and her friends or even if it is merely me, who will listen and 'hear' your suffering and refuse to take up a position of 'neutrality' foster this conversion of moral outrage to moral stamina?



JULIE: **Testifying** definitely fostered the conversion for me; as I said previously, it is difficult for me to even hold a sense of outrage without someone who will listen and ‘allow’ or even encourage its existence. It is difficult to foster this conversation when it is most needed. The outrage has to be allowed a ‘life’, has to be given breath and ‘voice’ it likely hasn’t previously known, in order to be converted. That you refused to take up a position of neutrality was important to me because I was tentative- and your response strengthened me- and gave me courage.

DAVID: When you say my **‘refusal to take up a position of neutrality’ gave you ‘courage’**, do you mean by that something of what I am meaning by the term ‘moral stamina’? Would you be willing to go through this document so far and identify and places you considered refusing to take up a position of neutrality, leading to your encouragement? I would appreciate this for my own learning.

JULIE: Another example is when I described how Sophie was very outraged when John Howard (former Prime Minister of Australia) refused to apologize to the Indigenous peoples and you responded: “Do you blame her?” Then there is the risk if one does tell someone, they may dismiss any expression of outrage and even use it to justify some dismissive accusation e.g. ‘over-reactive’, overemotional’, ‘hypersensitive’, etc. I have experienced all of these. That can lead to even greater loss of stamina.

DAVID: You are referring in the above to dismissive responses and I can understand how they can lead to abjection. What would you say would be the effect of a **‘neutral response’**, where one stands back from your suffering and responds by a detached curiosity?

JULIE: I’m not sure. If the curiosity and neutrality were genuine, I imagine the outrage could be converted to stamina. But sometimes there is a fine line between a ‘neutral’ response and a ‘dismissive’ response. Recently when Sophie’s psychologist was asking me some questions and I was expressing something of my outrage in relation to some of the contradictions I perceive young women grappling with in relation to sexuality and desire, feeling ‘greedy’, not being allowed to have anything, etc., he did say he hadn’t seen things in that way and would reflect on what I had said. At the same time, he suggested that I was ‘over-psychologising’ on the grounds that a/b was a brain/genetic problem. So it appeared he gave me a neutral response but he had the effect of shutting me up and I was therefore being dismissed.

If the curiosity is genuine and there is some thought and feedback provided; if one feels genuinely ‘heard’ and has made a difference or even challenged someone to consider matters differently, I imagine it could foster the conversation to stamina. But I would have to be convinced of my convictions to testify in the beginning to someone who was neutral.



- DAVID: Julie, do you think an anti-anorexic therapist at times has to 'stand up and be counted' in terms of where s/he stands? That s/he can't take a risk of being regarded as neutral or dismissive?
- JULIE: I know in speaking to Sophie she becomes uncomfortable expressing any kind of outrage.
- DAVID: Julie, is that why you saw such anti-anorexic significance in her outrage ("Fuck you, Anorexia!") at witnessing the suffering of her 'sisters' and her realization that anorexia was either justifying their suffering or immuring them from any knowing of it until they lose their very lives? Was it the first time to your knowledge Sophie **experienced moral outrage**? Prior to that, did she believe she was required to suffer for her 'sins'? To pay a deadly kind of penance?
- JULIE: It was the first time I have heard her express moral outrage in relation to anorexia. I have heard her express it in relation to other matters, even as a young child. With anorexia though, I think she blamed herself for anorexia's intrusion in to her life in the first place. And therefore she believed she had to suffer as well as feeling responsible for the suffering of others. She would say she was meant to feel bad; she didn't deserve to feel any better. Expressing the outrage and **externalizing anorexia** seemed to relieve her of some of that responsibility. Since coming home, I think she has lost some connection with that outrage. It is something for me to think about. Maybe if I express my own outrage more, it will help her do the same.

Chapter 7: A context for outrage

Julie shares how the influence of moral outrage is being handed on to Sophie's battles with anorexia and bulimia. David evinces his enthusiasm for Julie's hard won voice of outrage and asks about the sequence of its development. Julie considers how outrage becomes 'legitimate' through contextual understanding of the injustice it protests.

- DAVID: Julie, have you given this any further thought? Have you taken any action on this? Was this what you were referring to in the above about sharing your experience of bulimia with her?
- JULIE: Since I wrote this, she has changed her position and seems to have accepted that bulimia will sometimes be there but she says it is getting less frequent; she seems more committed to 'unsuffering' and fun. It is the first time I've seen her going out without a hint of any belief that she has to suffer.



DAVID: Julie, would you consider this something of a **'miracle'** if you and I didn't know how much you have done over the last few years to have perhaps made this possible for her to 'unsuffer' herself by first 'unsuffering' yourself? And instead of a 'miracle', read it as 'hard won'?

JULIE: It has been hard won. I know Sophie and I- and her brothers and sisters too- have worked hard and stuck together through this.

DAVID: HAVE YOU EVER!!!!

JULIE: I think it incredibly significant for her to express moral outrage, partly because it did allow her to witness/connect with the suffering of her 'sisters'. She just couldn't justify their suffering and so it worked to reverse the immuring process- as if she was standing on a broader platform allowing her a different and new vision allowing her to see what a/b was up to. And it is often accompanied by judgements about the 'wrongness' of anger.

DAVID: Julie, has she told you in conversation what she saw when she had a 'broader platform' to stand upon "allowing her to see what a/b was up to?" If you were to ask her regarding the 'wrongness' of anger: "Who says so, anorexia or you?" **Can you guess her reply?**

JULIE: If I asked her in relation to one of her friends, she would probably say 'anorexia' but if I asked her in relation to herself, I think she would still struggle to say 'anorexia'. It also would depend when I asked her. So the anger collapses or seems to be directed at oneself. I always try and encourage her to express anger. During the past month or so when I have been physically unwell, it has been important for me to be around people who don't dismiss me but support me. Support, therefore, seems important in turning outrage into stamina. It is difficult on your own. I can think of a few things that would help me to turn moral outrage to moral stamina. Most important is having a context for my outrage so it does not seem it is occurring in a vacuum or a way of understanding and legitimating the outrage.

DAVID: Julie, can you explain in as much detail as you have the time/energy for what you consider a 'context for outrage'? Could you spell that out for me?

JULIE: I find this question challenging. I think it means identifying or recognising and then voicing a perceived injustice. This provides a context for the outrage.,

DAVID: Julie, are you suggesting a sequence here...firstly, an injustice has to be perceived and secondly, it has to be given 'voice', somehow or somewhere or other?



JULIE: I think so. The sequence only appeared to me as I was writing, thinking and realized how the process of converting moral outrage to moral stamina could be sabotaged if the initial outrage was dismissed or disqualified as not being worthy of expressing, or even feeling in the first place. Telling someone who takes you seriously or adds some weight to the perceived injustice helps to give it a 'voice' somehow, somewhere. It is a big step for someone who does not have any recollection of ever expressing moral outrage.

Without the acknowledgement of injustice, outrage could be interpreted and experienced by a person battling a/b as something 'wrong' with themselves. Anti-anorexia can provide such a context for outrage as it speaks about a/b in terms of injustice. Such reframing definitely provided a context for me to feel that I had the freedom to feel and express outrage and connect with others. **This fosters moral stamina.** I imagine there are many contexts such as feminism, civil rights movements, gay rights, law reform, education around domestic violence, etc. that provide people with the appropriate context to be heard and feel that they have some power to make changes in their lives. A community, network or league is required to be really heard and taken seriously that one has experienced injustice and then be provided with the means of articulating that outrage. My answer seems inadequate as my understanding of such matters is basic.

DAVID: Julie, this is the best possible answer anyone I know in the world could have given. I feel my understanding of such matters has doubled over the course of this co-researching conversation. One query, and I apologize for going over what might seem the same ground, how significant do you consider a community, network or league is in the conversion of moral outrage to moral stamina?

JULIE: Very significant. As I've mentioned it is just too hard to do it alone. A context, support and encouragement is needed, especially given the nature of battling something such as a/b which obscures moral outrage and encourages despair to seep in. Also a/b can question what moral stamina actually means and try to have you think of it as a heroic feat of endurance.

DAVID: Julie, I think you are making an important distinction here! Do you consider moral stamina as having to do with moral outrage rather than 'heroic feats of endurance'?

JULIE: I think so.



Chapter 8: The difficult to define qualities of co-leagueship

Julie makes important distinctions between endurance, heroic feats, and the role of will power in taking an anti-anorexia stance. David links Julie's theorizing with the politics of Perfection. Julie begins to define the qualities of an anti-anorexia co-league that can foster moral stamina.

DAVID: If so, what distinctions do you make between these two species- if I can call them that- of moral endurance and heroic feats of endurance?

JULIE: Your earlier statement about anti-anorexic life-rafts seems important. I am quoting you here: "As I know there are always anti-anorexic positions available. Such positions are life-rafts until you clamber back on higher ground where you are safe and sound and can come and go when the anorexic tide is out. And I can assure you it will recede!" Endurance requires such life-rafts to clamber back on to higher ground. A heroic feat of endurance would mean having to keep trying ALONE without the life-raft. This is not to say that heroic acts of endurance do not happen; I'm sure they happen often because I have witnessed great courage in those battling a/b. But to me, heroic acts of endurance suggest willpower, which I know does not convert to moral stamina. Endurance can be a quiet experience, can happen in small, seemingly insignificant moments as well as big, courageous and obvious ones. I have heard willpower stressed a lot in relation to anorexia and seen women torture themselves concerning their lack of willpower but from what I know, willpower does not convert to stamina because it is not sustainable.

DAVID: Julie, isn't that why a/b requires woman/man alone? Do you know many women have told me that if they sought the assistance from others or collaborated with others, that would mean they were useless? Or that anything that would come from of such collaborations was insignificant or lame? Only heroic feats pave the way to Perfection, nothing but that?

JULIE: I agree with that.

Whereas I sense that real stamina requires times when one can **'fall apart' for a while** and have the support of others, such as I have experienced recently. When I found it difficult to 'unsuffer' myself, I realized I had a couple of valuable friends who 'held' me and were able to give me love and affirmation of my worth, 'unsuffering' me when I was struggling to do so myself. As I ponder this question, I think of the way I have reframed many concepts in my 'unsuffering' of myself and Sophie's and my learning about anti-anorexia. To me moral stamina needs to be regarded, not as a linear, solitary, will-power driven, heroic do or die attitude but a multi-dimensional, rounded, community-nurtured quality.



DAVID: Julie, I cannot agree with you more. Would you consider that moral stamina **requires co-leagues** in the broadest sense of those words? That is to be in league with others who have suffered and who are 'unsuffering' themselves and others? Is this what you are referring to in the above by your terms "multi-dimensional, rounded, community-nurtured **quality**"?

JULIE: Moral stamina does require co-leagues in the broadest sense. I know it is what helped Sophie. It is the care, love and support she has received from those who have suffered and are 'unsuffering' themselves that has made the difference. It doesn't seem to have much to do with the program in the Clinic but more to do with the connections that are made between the programs- the friendships she is forming and support she is receiving. The hardest part was in accepting and allowing that to continue once she left the Clinic and being prepared herself to take a step towards others. I have experienced that support, love and co-leagueship can come from a number of sources and that's why I call it multi-dimensional and rounded. It's like a beautiful work of art coming to life.

DAVID: Julie, are there any words, ideas that you would like to attach to such a 'quality'?

JULIE: Words that come to mind are heart-felt acceptance, love, respect, lack of judgement and support between those who are similarly suffering but who have found ways to nurture one another; the hospital discourages such connections. Or between mothers and daughters when such connections can be seen as enmeshment etc. Also I would add patience, a non-censorious approach to emotions such as outrage that arise, acceptance of both vulnerability and strength...the list could probably go on as it is a difficult quality to define.

Chapter 9: A growing legacy of anti-anorexia

Julie furthers the investigation of moral stamina. David asks about the history of Sophie's 'unsuffering'. Julie shares about an interesting development at the clinic.

JULIE: It was interesting looking up the meaning of 'stamina' in the dictionary and learning it is related to the stamen of a flower and has its origins in Latin. It means the 'threads of life spun by the Fates'.

DAVID: I had no idea. Its provenance enriches the word stamina for me. Did it enrich it for you?

JULIE: Yes, it did enrich it for me. I was surprised by its origins in such a concept of threads of life and its connections with flowers. I wanted to return to earlier comments. I am feeling a lot more supported by a couple of friends that I ever have before much like



- Sophie. I am discovering what it is like to be genuinely valued and loved as I am. I have always felt valued by you but not so much by people around me. This has advanced me exponentially in my 'unsuffering'. It seems that Sophie has also leapt forward.
- DAVID: What are your guesses or wild speculations as at what inspired Sophie to leap forward? I think I can assure you it wasn't just an accident or out of the blue! I can assure you it has a history. What is the **history** of Sophie's leap forwards?
- JULIE: I think the trust between us has helped. Her knowing that I will never blame her; her growing capacity and courage to express what is happening for her, along with her new friendships and burgeoning of her own 'unsuffering' and ability to say 'fuck you, anorexia'! I must say she has displayed much courage and endurance herself.
- DAVID: Julie, hasn't she witnessed great courage and endurance on **your/her mother's part?**
- JULIE: She has thanked me for my endurance. Something else that helped Sophie leap forward was forming friendships with other women, something she had missed out on. She says that was the best part of being in the Clinic. I think she realized there that she had a lot of insight that could assist others. She said in the Clinic they didn't externalize anorexia- and this was something she used to support others. So maybe she introduced some anti-anorexia in there.

Chapter 10: More to give

As the conversation comes to an end, David and Julie reflect on Julie's commitment to 'unsuffering' and the ways her life has transformed.

- DAVID: Do you want to know my speculations? Well here goes in brief. I suspect she witnessed you 'unsuffering' yourself in the company of your friends who genuinely love and value you when in the past she would have witnessed your suffering. And of course anorexia would have blamed her for that and given her exquisite sensitivity to you and others, she would then deserve any and all punishments, tortures or deprivations anorexia applied to her mind, body or spirit. And you in response would have succumbed to 'echoes' of anorexia that would have deemed you culpable for her suffering. Let me know what you think of such a wild speculation.
- JULIE: I don't think them wild at all but very accurate and beautifully expressed. I think she has experienced the possibility that shame can be disempowered. As Sophie has witnessed my own 'unsuffering', I hope she has seen how shame has gradually



disappeared from my life. When I went away by myself to the beach last weekend, I had to cancel my previously planned weekend away. It was the first weekend I had had to myself in years. She sent me a lovely text telling me to have a lovely relaxing time and that I deserved it.

Because I understand about bulimia which seems to be usually accompanied by a lot of shame. I have been very mindful of disempowering it and tried to create an environment where Sophie didn't need to be secretive about it. There was no blame or judgement and gradually Sophie became quite open about it.

DAVID: Looking back and you are admittedly not looking that far back as clock time goes but a long way back as far as anti-anorexia/bulimia goes, how much do you estimate it disempowered a/b by the atmosphere of open disclosure and shamelessness you created in your home?

JULIE: I suppose I am committed to disempowering shame in my own life and my family's life. I suspect it is important in the process of disempowering.