

## **Walking and talking – a reverie**

So many therapeutic encounters are contained within four walls where we are protected from the changing elements. What we see of the outside world is filtered through an often small window and what we hear may be amplified by bare walls or muffled by upholstery, double glazing and the sounds of a building at work. Our other senses are subject to the forethought of the management – if we are lucky there may be the aroma of real coffee to share, soft furnishings, engaging pictures and the reassurance of privacy provided by an ‘engaged’ sign on the door.

As we talk our eyes may flit from element to element, spotting something new or settling on a particularly appealing item and yet there is something repetitive – largely unchanging.

Could this inhibit our ability to fully comprehend new possibilities?

In my view, the joy of walking and talking outdoors is the intermingling of change found both within and around oneself.

Inner emotions can be turbulent and up on the moors in the heart of Yorkshire, affect may be tangibly demonstrated by the darkening clouds, sharp gusts of wind, horizontal rain, blazing beams of sunlight and the uncertainty of what lies under one’s feet.

Animals, walkers, birds and insects all join in the interaction and each brings elements of surprise in sounds, sights, smells and stories which both distract and add to our collective experience.

Pausing to look at the view (code for a lack of fitness) can uncover long suppressed memories of times and places similar or maybe quite different. Reminders of the foolishness of youth and time passing, friends and family lost, aspirations, disappointments, triumphs and achievements can all sit in the mind simultaneously. To mingle these with the inner world of others in conversation and reflection creates a fascinating complexity. There is a busy-ness within the group which is borne of closeness and distance – energy and lethargy – joy and pain - hope and despair – initiative and receptiveness – sameness and difference.

Combine with this the ebb and flow of temperature, alternation of exertion and relaxation and a profound sense of sharing the journey – creates a powerful recipe for health.

I think if all the natural elements of tension, anticipation and resolution generated by “Room to Breathe” were to be combined into a musical composition, it would be thrilling.

Thank you to our facilitators for your inspiration!