

A Conversation With Myself

DRAFT 21 - Early Engagement Version

A One Act Play by Michael Sachter



Gather images/props to use during the show:

1. Some actual writings
2. Woman in wheelchair (picture and prop for F1)
3. Family
4. Mom and kid / kids (stuffed bear/kids backpack)
5. Couple
6. Two guys or Two Girls
7. Female
8. Male

Character and Setting

GREETER is male or female youthful 50-year-old with a passionate, approachable, and kind spirit that forms trust.

M1 plays ages from 4 to 89 F1 plays ages from 4 to 89

They can be a mix of races - very open as the actors themselves must deliver the embodiment of the people who said the lines. Transgender and gender non-conforming actors can be cast in male and female roles.

Other Notes to Reader:

1. The 257 written conversations were re-transcribed and sorted into related types of shared thoughts and feelings.
2. Each number shown is linked to a specific person's written thoughts from the experience e.g.(107). Some of the actors' lines are a combination of people's shared thoughts to capture a common/related feeling.
3. < ___ > signifies any words added to combine the shared thoughts without detracting from its essence
4. Light blue copy are directions to the actors or staging comments
5. The letters **M**, **F**, **MC** and **FC** designate the gender of the actor and **C** stands for a child's words delivered in a childlike manner by the actor.

There are 3 actors, and the lines will be said by the designated actor **M1 F1 and the Greeter**

6. There will be recorded elements and projections of words or images to add variety to delivery of lines and to give emphasis to specific shared thoughts. These are things to be explored in workshops.

Opening Scene

The room is dark; the images and words are projected on a background that is in a wide semi-circle. The lights come up on the words and images against a black backdrop. There's a table, a book, and a pen facing the audience and a bench that can hold 1 or 2 people and can split into 2 separate seats behind the table.

Content Warning - Recorded or delivered by a theatre staff member after giving a land acknowledgment.

The actors will be sharing lived experiences that may surface deep emotions and anxiety.

If you feel the need to leave the theatre to catch your breath and reset, please feel free to go to the lobby. In your program and in the lobby, there are resource materials with a 1-800 number and 988, a QR Code and online support links if needed. (If available, an active listener volunteer or trained healthcare professional will be on site and announced here too.)

If you're having suicidal thoughts or need care now, please call 988 (suicide hotline), 911 or go directly to the nearest hospital.

GREETER is standing to the left of the "Installation" at the start but says nothing - the light on them comes up along with the lights for the images/words.

Spotlight on GREETER and the three images on stage and Music plays as people get seated.

GREETER is on stage as audience filters in and looks over at the first actors M1 and F1 as they come up from the audience. The actual

installation is projected behind a bench and table with book and pen.

They are debating whether to approach the installation.

ACTORS (M1 and F1)

(M1)

What's that?

(F1)

I don't know ... let get going.

Sounding rushed

(M1)

Come on, let's check it out.

They approach the GREETER.

GREETER

"Hi."

ACTORS (M1 and F1)

"Hi. What is this? "Why's it here?"

GREETER

"I made it for you... I created a safe space where you're invited to step away from your busy distracted, stress-filled life... take a moment... stop time... and think about what matters to you most."

"Inside, there's a book, a pen, and a place to sit if you like. You can read anything others have written, and you can write anything you're thinking or feeling and share it for others to read when they take their moment."

Light fades on GREETER who sits stage right of the installation and a bit forward on a higher chair).

F1 and M1 discuss if will go in then they go in together, sit together but take their turn.

For most or all of these first shares, show the image of the actual writing in the book and possibly other times too (tbd)

M1 and F1 enter together

F1 (233)

**Project the actual
writing at the same time
after she pantomimes
writing and then says:**

I wish I could hug him one more time and tell him I love him more than anything <and> make everything right with my mom < so > that I won't regret, < it > in the future. I regret not spending enough time with my dad. I will do my best not to let them down again.

M1 (60)

**M1 reads what F1 wrote
and writes and says**

I wish my <wife> believed in <herself> the way I believe in <her>. I want <our> daughter to grow up believing she can be anything she wants.

**M1 stands joining F1 to leave.
They look at each other and
hug and interact with the
GREETER**

GREETER

How was that?

**Holding hands the couple
answer**

F1

Very moving

M1

Powerful

**They leave the stage and
return as other characters one
at a time.**

**F1 returns and looks at the
installation, moves to the
bench, and sits.**

M1 arrives watching waiting his turn and looking at it all. F1 leaves

Each actor has a spotlight on them as they take their turn "going into the space."

F1 (18)

I wish my mom could see how beautiful I am ... and she was PROUD OF ME. I regret hurting my sister when she needed me the most and not knowing HOW to love others and myself. I want to feel grounded, feel human and LIVE! I will continue this journey of understanding self love and loving others.

Show the writing.

M1C is greeted with F1 as his Mom.

GREETER

Do you want to both go in?

M1C

No. Mom, can I go by myself?

F1

Sure.

M1C goes in alone and sits.

M1C (86)

Project the image of his writing

I will continue to work hard. Hard work pays and love will always be in my heart. I am grateful for waking up and seeing sunshine.

He jumps up from sitting in the chair and stands, full of hope and energy with hands on his hips like a super-hero during the last two sentences.

I love my mom. I love spending time with her. <I'm only 7 ½ but> I believe in her. And one day, we can be a happy family when me and her are together. We can do anything!

M1C and F1 leave the stage. The light dims on the installation, GREETER steps off his highchair and steps closer to the audience and engages them directly.

GREETER

Hi.

I don't know you, but I'm grateful you're here... and a little terrified, yet hopeful... but I'll get to that a little later.

This play is about an interactive art installation called 'A Conversation With Myself', where 8 exhibitions led to over 5000 interactions, 800 conversations and 257 writings.

I want to explain how and why this came to life.

It all started with an intense need to photograph an abandoned chair in the city. I get captivated, almost possessed sometimes by what I see.

(show original image)

To my eye, the chair was inviting anyone to sit and face an open future with the full, messy weight and beauty of the past behind it. Hopes and fears were frozen in the reflection of tree branches like a keeper of knowledge, thoughts and feelings, and an array of random debris like fragments of past experiences were all held in the shadows.

The image moved me to thinking how easy it is to be distracted by the challenges of life and lose sight of our hopes, our dreams and undermine belief in ourselves.

And there's our inner worlds, where wishes, wants, fears, self-doubt and concern for our families and friends, our communities and the planet are all churning.

Sure, some people are doing ok, or even great, often growing into stronger places for themselves.

But so many are feeling anxious, depressed, exhausted and some of us are just hanging on in a world where we've never been so connected to information, and each other, yet feel so isolated and disconnected.

This image was important. I had to share it. I titled it 'A Conversation With Myself' and it was accepted into the world's largest photo festival speaking to the theme of Isolation... but I had an epiphany before the show that moved me to create an interactive art installation with three versions of the image. It used colours of calm, rational thinking and passion paired with thought-provoking words in a safe space to inspire deeper engagement, introspection, and impact.

Show image of installation

So now you are all invited to step away from your busy, distracted and stress-filled lives to take a moment, stop time and think about what matters to you most.

This is why I am terrified. I did say I would come back to that. **(Smile)**

I need your trust and willingness to move from being an audience to becoming active participants in this performance.

GREETER

So here we go... in the next 5 minutes please reflect and write your thoughts using the card (sticky note?) and pen provided when you arrived...

Extra Pens can be available under the chairs or with the Ushers.

And, if you're willing, we will collect your thoughts at the end of each row and share many of them anonymously during tonight's performance ... and take a picture of thoughts and revisit it again in a week.

You don't have to participate, and we won't retain anything you share without your permission ... but we really hope you allow us to use them tonight and add them to our online journal.

Carried Away (Peter Katz) guitar music or Moby royalty free music

plays softly in the background and room is dimly lit with warm light.

There is a pre-printed card 4.25" x 5.5" given in line before show or with program on the seats with a pen waiting for them.

Side 1: What Matters To You Most?
(Middle in large font)

A Conversation With Myself
(Bottom in small font)

Side Two: Blank except at the top where it says:

I I Want I Wish I Regret I will

The Program will have links back to digital spaces like website and social media and mental health resources and help us stay connected to audiences as we build a mental health wellbeing community.

~5-minute PAUSE with the lights up a bit for ease of writing. (music: Carried Away Guitar part plays lightly (Peter Katz) or Moby royalty free calm soundscape

2-5 minutes to gather cards and prepare them to read many by the actors near the end of the show with edits as needed to remove any names, hateful or violent content. Lights come back on lighting the GREETER.

GREETER

Thank you all so much for having a conversation with yourself... and a special thanks for everyone who allowed us to share many of your thoughts and feelings later in the performance.

Theatre goes dark and then the Spotlight hits each of the words... I... I wish... I want... I regret... I will... as the GREETER speaks to them. These words remain lit after they are said then the bench, table and image of the installation are also lit OR the installation picture switches to just the three images themselves with the words above.

GREETER

I... I wish... I want... I regret... I will...

Relationship with Friends and Family

These Grouping Titles like Relationship with Friends and Family could be projected on the backdrop.

I used these Titles to group themes in the writings. If used, the GREETER can mention it.

Or could use an image from the original installation along with the Grouping Title at the beginning of each section and change back to the original image TBD: E.g.



M1 (59) Recorded

I wish I could go back to my family. (99) I <should not have left> my brother and sister (50) <I must find a way to> heal my family of their suffering, especially any guilt or shame over my brother's death.

M1 (85)

Takes off coat and has a T-shirt portraying a Teen.

I wish there was no poverty... and insecurity...

Pauses and looks out at the audience.

and incest.

F1 (156)

I wish I had a healthier relationship with my mom and could let go of my anger and guilt. To be happier in a general sense and focus on self-care... what others think needs to be less important to me.

Text below is projected while staring out.

M1 (175)

<Please let there be> a successful chemo treatment for my friend's dad.

F1 (2)

I wish I never got married. I'm disappointed in my choices. I < had hoped to> help others more, but I can't even help myself. When I look around it seems <like> everyone's life is perfect, but it's not what it seems.

<Why can't I> stop faking my life and <have> people accept me for who I am <and> stop using me?

F1C (174a)

Walking around installation and transforms into a child

I love it in here... I feel that when I am in here, I'm protected and nothing else matters... I wish for love and family ... I'm Ella and I'm 5 years old... and this is my sister Lauren - she's 10."

F1C takes one step sideways, turn to look at her 5-year-old sister, smiles and declares)

F1C

(174c) It's very calm,

looks around approvingly and nodding

like a normal house..

M1 (69)

I want an unconditional love... (82) to give someone the childhood I needed (182) < and > be the best husband and father I can be... (211) and raise my child to be a resilient, helpful, balanced human.

F2 (40)

I want us all to be one < with > my Mom and Dad living freely, please let them live freely. They deserve rest, true rest. Take the politics away - Take the religion away - take the race away.

M1 (20c)

I regret not being my best self, not controlling my emotions and hurting those I love... (13) and not knowing my worth. I should've been a better parent... < I'll > be the best grandparent I can be.

F1 (162)

I regret my marriage but want to stay in it for my kids.

Sitting staring out and the line is pre-recorded and played or a thought bubble projection.

M1 (19)

... I regret not telling my father I loved him before he passed.

M1 leaves

(214-209)are delivered at a faster pace.

M1 and F1 go in together

M1 (214)

... not telling people how important they are more often.

and F1 reads M1's share
and says:

F1 (45)

... Yeh, for me its not telling my best friend that I loved her before she died...

Then F1 writes it in the
book

M1 (209)

... keeping my distance from others emotionally and not being more vulnerable (213)... <and> hurting John.

Then a pause

Relationships with People/Society - how we treat each other

F1 and M1 enter as friends.

F1 (153)

I wish for peace and kindness from people and a muting of anger. < I hope for > a smile offered without fear - a nod of recognition from my neighbour - <the ability to> trust that the footfalls < I hear > behind me at night are friendly.

Actor does air quotes for
the word finish.

< And where > a flirt is just flirt without a "finish" ... And < for a > sleep full of promise.

M1 (234c)

I wish for a world free of any cruelty based on gender, religion, lifestyle, and economic position < and > (173a) for harmony between humans and the natural world.

F1 looking at M1.

<And> 56) I want to make a difference in this world with my work (27) I will empower 1000's of women to see the possibility of a financially secure future.

M1 (9)

I regret being unkind at times, and less kind to others than they are to me. I've learned so much about the power of kindness.

F1 (74a)

I <should have more> compassion for my boyfriend's struggles.

M1 (126b)

Writes then holds head in hands and projected or recording is played.

I regret I couldn't have done enough to save my people.

Economic Security

M1 (86)

I wish for affordable housing... just a place to rest my head and my family to be warm...(176) <where> life wasn't so tough <and I had> (162) enough money not to have financial difficulties; (11) <able to> live freely outside of a trapped job.

(147) <Seriously,> it's so sad that a place that was once wonderful is becoming unlivable. I wish <our leaders> would take action to allow people to find suitable housing and decent places to live within a reasonable distance of their jobs.

Loneliness and Connection

F1 (12)

I wish for a second chair to share with a future other. I want more space to fill with voices laughing, crying, feeling each moment and emotion.

Pause and exhale

< It's hard> living alone, with one fork. <This> has become my norm. I will be a family <and> find my tribe. My single chair is ready to join the table with others.

F1 (8) Writing and show original

I want to have one true love in my life, but without any labels; A love so strong no marriage is needed... lasting forever without anything more holding it together.

Some people didn't want to come in and have the experience - Example #1

One Actor (M1) appears and stands on the edge of the installation staring in but is unable to enter the experience.

Can show picture(s) of this or a montage of 2 or 3. All images were taken with permission, and virtually all were from behind to add another level of privacy.

GREETER

"Hi, can I answer any questions? Feel free to go in."

M1

"No, no thank you, I heard what this is all about, I just want to stand here and look.

GREETER

"Can I ask why? You don't have to tell me, but it would help me make the experience better for everyone.

M1

Pauses to think, nervous, fidgety.

"I, ummm, I can't go in today - today is a good day - I can't face the questions... doing this today - it would trigger me - I just can't."

GREETER

"Thank you so much for sharing that with me.

Here's a picture of the installation and when you feel up to it, take a moment in a safe space... anywhere when you feel stronger and give yourself time to think about what matters to you most."

M1

In a somewhat uncommitted neutral tone, he takes a card with pictures and words and walks away.

"Thanks, maybe"

Walks off slowly staring at the card almost off stage, pauses and comes back to the GREETER

M1

I had some big losses over the last five years. My Dad died, my relationship ended and I was evicted. But somehow, I got through it all Ok or so I thought.

But two years later, I lost Interest in almost everything. I felt no joy in anything I use to enjoy and I didn't know why. My life seemed to be seeping away and everything felt like too much work... answering the phone, returning calls, making food... even chewing and swallowing felt like too much bother.

It's so hard. You know it's ridiculous to feel this way but I was gripped by depression. Most people listen to their messages and eat lunch, take a shower, and get out the front door - no big deal. But I couldn't and started doing and feeling less... and then anxiety set in.

I began thinking it's too painful to be alive... but ending it all would hurt other people. Thankfully, a friend came over and I managed to tell him, "I'm in serious trouble." He listened for a long time and then said, "You need to do something... I'll help."

Over the following months, we had to really push to see Doctors. Then it was a long struggle to find meds that actually worked and access to therapy. I mean FUCK, so many times I needed help and couldn't get it. There are resources if you can afford them, but otherwise, it's almost impossible to get consistent care and not be dismissed after a brief assessment. And COVID made it all even worse.

Every time a medication failed to work for me, I had bad reactions and lost months of hope for a better life, I had to

start all over all while fighting and begging for access to steady therapy and support... it almost crushed me.

Remarkably, I still believed there was something worth living for if I could only get well. This feeling showed up during times when life started to feel a bit more tolerable. But I still suffered the cycle of feeling better only to relapse over and over when I tried life without meds.

That reality was hard to accept I'd be on meds and in therapy forever.

There's a false morality that treatment of depression and other mental health challenge with meds is not natural... a failure. It's so misguided and harmful. Many people are diagnosed with diabetes. It's natural. But nobody is against using insulin.

I get asked "do your pills make you feel happy?" No... but I don't feel sad about eating lunch, facing my answering machine, or taking a shower. In fact, I feel more because I can feel sadness without a crushing joylessness.

I hated being depressed more than taking the meds and therapy that help me cling to any small joy and find reasons for living... at least for now but who knows? That could change. I'm just living one day at a time.

**Shoulders drop M1 gets sad
GREETER offers and hugs him**

GREETER

That took a lot to share. Thank you. You're doing so well even though it is a struggle every day. If you need more support on a super challenging day, keep telling your friends and people you trust, and you can also call this number for extra support.

**GREETER hands M1 a
card M1 nods, leaves
stage.**

Fear, Lack of Confidence and Self-love

F1 (90)

I wish to stop self-sabotaging. I wish I wasn't trapped in my body... afraid or embarrassed to dance, to talk my thoughts, < and > to sing in front of others.

(19) I have things I wish to do, but I am too afraid to try. I wish I had more confidence (22) to live a more authentic life, (66) love myself and not care about what people think. (203a) I'd make better choices <and stop saying "no" to> the opportunities presented to me because of my fear of failing.

(90) I <won't> wait for a better moment <to> honour my time on earth. (173b) I <must> find a happiness that doesn't depend on anything outside <myself>.

(19) I will will myself to try!

M2 (226)

I want courage to share what I've learned and express empathy and support to others < who are > suffering.

F1 (194)

<Hummm... Wish and Regret>, I wish for many things I cannot change. The things of the past. I wish I ended up with my first love - I wish my boyfriend didn't cheat on me < and > lie about it - I wish I was stronger <and> more sociable - I wish I believed in myself as much as people believe in me.

F1 (59)

I regret meeting someone who I allowed to hurt me. (41) <and> not choosing myself earlier, loving myself more... trusting myself <more> (44) < and > not having enough confidence in myself. (73) <to> realize my self-worth earlier in my life... < I could have avoided so many mistakes >.

(60) to (165) said
slightly faster and
lights on all actors for
this

F1 (49)

< I regret > not speaking out and overthinking my answers.

M1 (70)

... not following my gut. (111) and taking more chances,

F1 (93)

... not following my dreams when I was younger.

M1 (103)

... not finishing my professional designation.

F1 (163)

... doubting myself <and> (69) settling.

M1 (165)

... not sleeping with my boss.

**Lights dim again except
for F1 below**

F1 (149)

I regret all the times I didn't go somewhere or didn't act because I was too scared of connecting or of what other people thought of me... **Pause**

< And > accepting all the responsibilities.

(143) <I should have put> myself first (126a) Why do I take more time to help others than helping myself? Is it an avoidance or a selfless act?

M1 (183)

Ahh regrets!!! How many things I regret - most are not what I did... but what I didn't do... (229) <I am too> passive, and if I am being honest with myself, the thing I want most is to dive in and take charge and start taking risks again!

M1 (215)

I < don't like > being so hard on myself. <But>(208) I feel like an imposter. I regret not having more lessons from my dependence. I need to do something else to get different results. I promise to listen more to my needs... and take more actions each day to follow this path.

F1 (7)

I will love myself always and approach each challenge with courage and commitment. I will (8) work on myself every day and stop pleasing everyone. I am alone, and I am scared ... but I will learn to accept that soon ...

(1) I'll take time to be in the moment, to reflect, to appreciate, < and > work to protect my energy, including being more choiceful where I spend it... <and> finding more ways to say 'no'. (6) I will, I will, I will do what is right for me.

Stands up

(10) I will survive.

M1 (23)

< I'm going > to take time to appreciate how far < I've > come <and tell myself> "You're doing great."

(45) I will be kinder to myself, (69) love me first (70), and > let go of perfectionism.

(134) I'll carry forward the inspiration I feel in this moment and make a promise to myself to take 5 minutes, every day, to tune out all distractions and to come back to myself - to meditate - to breathe - to be - because I deserve it!

F1 (235)

I wished it but failed - however, I want to go again... I WILL TAKE IT! <and> (157) one day, I'll believe in my journey - I will be strong; I will be confident. I will be healthy. I will be me. (216) < ... and > not be afraid to move through life with my talent, with grace, humility, and open-mindedness. (56) I will do it!

M1 could walk in and read and write, with (154) words projected the screen and walk out.

F1 (154) a young kid - t-shirt/big energy

I love myself. I love myself. I'm beautiful.
I love myself. I love myself. **Projected while writing**

(209) Accepting me isn't a weakness (154) I'm grateful for my amazing life full of incredible opportunities. **Spoken**

Health and Addiction

M1 (93)

I wish I discovered that I am more concerned with others and less about myself. This is a way to keep distance and control. **Pause** I wish I wasn't an addict.

(59) I want my life back, (61) to find peace < and for > (46a) my mental health to be as recognized as my physical health.

(90) <I don't want> a co-dependant addictive partner - even if they are a temporary relief. Maybe they helped me make it through the day/the week/the year. ... but now it's hindering me.

I regret using marijuana weed, cigarettes, sometimes alcohol, family, school, career, religion, sex - just about anything "Bad and Good" to escape from my pain and from myself... only to have to go back to myself with more and more addictions.

Shaking his head as he comes out.

GREETER

How was that? Are you ok?

M1 visibly upset. No answer, starts to tear up

GREETER

~~Do you need a hug?~~

~~**M1 nods yes, hugs and sobs for a bit, collects himself and says**~~

M1

Thanks for this. I'm going through a lot.

Some people didn't want to come into the installation and have the experience. Example #2

Lights off and M1 and F1 (a couple) go to Stage Right then

the lights go on them as they walk by rather fast they look at the installation then stop and stand in the middle, in front of the installation staring. They see the GREETER

GREETER

"Hi, I see you read what this installation's all about... do you want to come in and take a moment to yourselves?"

Couple is holding each other and sweetly and awkwardly/ hesitatingly say:

F1

"Thank you. We can't stop now. We're just grabbing some food and going back to the hospital to be with our son. We recently lost our eldest to suicide... and his brother is now struggling with thoughts of suicide too. We are desperately trying to save him."

M1

"But Thank you so much for doing this. It's so important."

GREETER

"Thank you both for stopping and sharing what you're facing at such a tough time for you and your family. I hope you and your son find healing together."

M1 and F1

They smile and walk away arm in arm

"Thank you"

Gratitude (feeling pretty good) and Give Back(hopeful)

M1 (181)

I'm at the crossroads of my life - who I want to be and who I am. I don't really know who I am right now. I hope to figure it out soon (177) <and> achieve a level of happiness I dream about, (215) doing my best to grow every day (222) < and> be successful... I'm excited for myself and the future.

F1 (212)

I wish to make a difference. To find time with family and friends to make special moments, quiet loving times, and enduring warm, impactful memories. (95) I'll take time out to speak with my loved ones today.

F1 (238)

I wish to leave my regrets behind and <have more > play and joy in every day going forward.

M1 (5)

I want for nothing.(184a) It saddens me to read about the struggles of others. Mine are so minor < in comparison>. I'm grateful for all I have to support a good life. May I find ways to give others from my abundance (105 supporting people who are struggling in the city <to> make it a better and fairer place... a city with no homelessness where people feel like they truly belong.

<I hope to> find the courage to act on my convictions and make my time here <count>.

F1 (30)

<I think a lot about my Mom,> I want to pay it forward with the love she gave me and look < for > ways to help others with what she taught me.

M1 (140)

< I have > so much gratitude to be in a space of peace and the country where artists can express themselves.(41)
<I'm going to> act with courage and love, (200) make the best of each day and take lessons from the bad days and(44) create more moments like this in my life. (61) I will remember this space forever.

F1 (193)

I will continue to enjoy walking my puppy each morning and connecting with nature.

M1 (158)

We are often told to think in a particular way; to act a particular way ... but I am unique to my own experiences so I will feel things the way they are felt to me! I am my own light!

F1 (162)

I'll practice more mindfulness and being in the moment, (179) have fun for the rest of today (211) <and > use my life to help others - which helps me.

F3 gestures a heart emoji towards the audience using hands.

Stress, Anxiety

M1 (35) **Projected or recorded.**

I wish more people understood today's youth challenges.

M1 (98a)

I wish I could learn to have fun. (149) I did fun things as a teen and in my 20's <but> I've become too serious over the years.

F1 (143)

Text below is projected and spoken TBD

I wish I had less fear. (168) and my life wasn't so tough.

Actor stands up and steps towards the audience.

I get it that if we don't—experience hardships, loneliness < and > nature's curveballs, we <won't> know how to appreciate the blessings that come our way. But sometimes, life's curveballs are just too much to take... but through these difficulties and hardships, <it> brings out your true and inner personality.

It's < in > these times <you learn> who is really your friend and who will stand by you through good and bad.

It's easy to find friends and family when life is good - especially financially - but when times are hard, you stand alone to power through it... if you are lucky enough to survive.

Actor sits down/walks off
and M1 arrives and sits

Deal with how they come
in and out of moments

M1 (189) (203A)

I wish I had more time and (156) and more peace in my thoughts... that my mind stops racing <and have the> capacity to live in the moment, (99) clean up my life and house, and let go of anxiety.

M1 and F1 - a Couple (207)

They stand outside,
hesitate, and go in.

**F1 - M1 is holding/
comforting her.**

I am uncertain, I wish ...

Pause, says downtrodden

<But> I am not allowed to wish... I need to be happy with what I have.

F1 (82)

I wish I had known how long it would take and how much each failed attempt would drain me - well us (**looking at her husband**) - emotionally, mentally < and > physically. <We shouldn't have> waited so long to start trying for a baby.

Leave holding each other.

F1 (3)

Sits, thinking and starts
writing

Text is recorded

I want to be happy more... I'm sad more than I'm happy.

F1 (157)

head down writing and
this is all recorded

My life's been so scattered. I often keep moving and doing so that I'm not left with my own thoughts. My thoughts and memories can be scary at times as I remember the past. The past hurts, and when it creeps into the future, it draws me down where I don't wanna be.

I've worked so hard, for so long, to change the hard-wired messages... I'm stupid. I'll never amount to anything. You failed everything. You're not worthy. No one will ever love you. < This > pain is hard to sit with.

(159) I feel so isolated in the midst of a busy city. Maybe the isolation is a welcome respite after a busy day. <But for me>, it's the pain of isolation when all around me seem connected and happy.

M1 (237) Homeless and living rough.
Blanket over shoulder,
street clothes, beat up
shoes he comes to the
installation

GREETER

Do you want to take a moment for yourself.

M1 (237)
A sigh and long pause -
he's dressed rough,
agitated - yells waves
his arm off

No, that's not for me!

GREETER

This must be a tough time for you and maybe a terrible day. But I created this for everyone... including you. Please feel free to sit... even if it's just to take a break.

M1 (237)
Thinks, calms down nods,
walks in and sits down
and writes.
- Projected behind him

Homeless - sick - tired - hungry - missing my parents.
chokes back tears a bit
and comes out)

GREETER

You ok? Did that help?

M1

I don't know... maybe. I'm pretty hungry.

GREETER

That's rough. There's a shelter nearby that offers a hot meal and a place to get warm. It doesn't fix everything... but it's something for today. Here's the address.

M1

Gets a card and nods.

Thanks.

Clinical Mental Health Struggles

F1 (121)

I wish more people had compassion for mental illness <and that> (226) everyone could experience this <installation>. (189) <I'm going to> stay <here> for a little longer, (214) be present, and make more time to pause and breathe.

M1 (101)

I regret giving energy to my anger. (101) I will <work on> giving myself permission to be happy with a life that doesn't live up to expectations.

F1 (65)

Pacing and standing

I love the sound that this space creates with the children wandering outside. I'm 52. I'm at peace right now and I feel the strongest I have ever been. This space, and particularly the photographs, remind me of each of the seasons, going round and round with a safe roof over my head.

Steps towards the audience

<You know,> right now, my brother who is schizophrenic, is being asked to leave his home because the landlord doesn't understand him. Where does he go? 7 to 10 years wait for social housing. Can he live here in this space? Sleep on the chair in the photograph facing out into the world?

I'm writing this down here in City Hall hoping someone reads this. Can my brother, live here in this <installation >? Or in a warm safe space with others in a community, not < in > isolation, so < his > mind and body can be at peace ... < just > like mine?

Smiles at the GREETER and leaves

F1

Thank you.

F1C (4) Walks in, looks around and Writes, speaks and original is projected.

I'm Ara and I'm 10 years old. I want to be free from ADHD.

M1 (102)

I took a step-by-step approach to change the directions of my life, but I felt overwhelmed in the process. I want to live a simple life with meaningful moments.

My relapses of mental health due to life changes and extremes have <really> discouraged me, and I lost my direction and life purpose. I want to be alive and make a difference just by liking me.

M1 leaves and comes back with a friend F1. They sit and she writes / talks to M1

(164)I want people to be free from being told they are "ill and disordered." (194) I'm still figuring out a bunch of stuff, but I know I will rise; LIKE A FUCKING PHEONIX IN HARRY POTTER!!!

M1 and F1 leave and F1 arrives and someone new

F1 (64)

I sit here trying to be calm, my son is using weed - a curse with someone like himself being a person with Schitzo Affectation Disorder (sic). Our mental health system has failed him. As parents, we try to pitch in, but we don't know how much to help and how much to draw the line so he can take some responsibility. <It's> a struggle at the best of times.

**Stands, steps forward and
says forcefully at the
audience**

I look to keep my good health, deep breathing, positive thoughts, not to be manipulated while still being kind, taking charge of my life and not being dragged down, < all while > getting my son the help he needs!

<How should I cope? How can anyone cope?>

**F1 Steps out and
addresses the GREETER**

F1 (64)

Thank you for the space to <think and write out> my thoughts and take this time to say a few prayers for my son... and for our family.

F1 (122b)

This is such a joy to come across. (123a) Sitting here gave me a sense of security. Too many stressed people today. I have struggled with mental health and survived brain cancer.

(215) I'll try to let things go, be free <and> (191) continue on my journey of therapy... connecting to spirit <and> continuing to seek kindness, love and joy.

My mission is to become a life coach and serve others.

Humorous Conversations

**The next 4 lines are
projected and book
and bench are lit.**

(173) I wish for endless coffee...

(200) I wish for a nap.

(214) I wish I could travel <more>

(234a) I wish to go around the world and follow my love.

M1C enters and sits.

M1C (100)

I love my Sis and I love my mom. I like my toy (91) trains and PJ Mask and Paw Patrol. (100) < And > I miss my sis - <I'm 10>.

F1C (187)

Walks in, looks
around and Stands
before sitting.
Project the Writing

I wish I will not be naughty for Christmas. I regret that I will steal candy. I will be a very good girl - I'm Madelaine and I'm 7.

Other Conversations**F1** (14)

The difference between I Want, and I Will are interesting to me, I want to say "I will" ... but usually I < just say > "I want" < and don't take steps forward >.

I'm getting better at meeting new people and learning about their life experiences. I'm sad to read some of the things written here. I hope people who are sad, find happiness.

M1 (25)

TANSI < that's hello > (in Cree) from Treaty 6 Territory. This is good - **Miyosin** - finding time to reflect on both good and bad is so important on my healing journey.

NISAKIHITIN - I love this - thank you - **Aye Aye EKOSIMAKA** (that's it - goodbye)

F1 (29)

I am "blown away".< This helped > bring me down from a very high <stress> energy because of my type of work. (39)< I'm feeling > many emotions stir as I sit <here> and absorb <even though> my instincts tell me to bottle it up.

I was meant to come in here -(24/25a) < with this > amazing tranquility, inner reflection, and solace... so peaceful. Thank you for <this> moment ... It was needed!!! (39) I'll take this vulnerability home to reflect further.

M1 (62)

I moved here a month ago and I remember how I used to spend "me time." My life has been so busy since I moved here... and there's so much happening. I miss listening to the sound of my breath and heartbeat. Thank you <for this so> I could experience those again, < because > right now, I have so much going on in my head.

F1 (88)

I am so moved by the words written in this booklet.

Points to the table and booklet.

Familiar feelings and thoughts I can relate to. I am grateful that this space has been made available to us to just sit and reflect and relate to our "humanness." Today, I found out I'm having a boy - I think I will call him Jake.

F1 (136)

I felt relaxed; I am a producer. My house burned down - been feeling sad. This was a few good minutes.

M1 (220)

The blue makes me hopeful. The black-and-white makes me solemn. The red makes me energized! (118b) <This has been> a small welcome isolation from what doesn't move me

Pause

I < was > moved.

F1 (117)

I guess what strikes me as I sit alone with myself <is> I imagine <being> in the chair <with the> beauty of all <that's> behind me <and> the future is an open book.

F1 (149) F1 Stands and become a different person.

I'm tougher and braver than I think.

Sits. writes and speaks.

Some days I wake up and just wanna pull the covers over my head, but then I hear my mother moving and I paste a smile on my face and help her to greet the day.

Pet peeve: people not doing what they say they are going to do when they say < they will >... so unreliable. I don't understand why I'm alive. What is the purpose? So far, it

seems that it's me doing for others. It's one thing to volunteer and another when others just expect it to be done for them.

I find a lot < of > people <are> self-centred or self-absorbed these days. I am a good listener and can just hold your hand. I wish others <would> do the same.

Pause - then shakes her head and says:

I should've been an only child.

F1 (196)

Project the written words

In our busy world, it's nice to take a moment and be given permission to stop, think, focus, turn off (204) and not feel guilty. Signed, a tired mom.

Actors now read out many of the shared thoughts. Light goes onto the actors, and each reads 2 or 3 in a row before moving on to the next actor until done OR

lights are on all actors now for 10-15 minutes (30 shares x ~20 seconds). They could sit on stage edge or bring bench forward closer to audience

The Last Scene

All actors in a semi-circle seated but when each speaks stay standing until the last line (8) when they all step forward. Actors get spotlight one at a time when they speak then dims to half. Then all are lit, step forward to say final line and house lights are up.

GREETER

Greeter tells the audience I

After each experience I asked everyone about their experience and several common answers and universal feelings were revealed.

GREETER

Said to the actors.

"So how was that? How do you feel?"

This captures the feelings visitors shared with the GREETER (as they left the installation).

All Actors seated.

M1 - F1 (M1 with F1)

Spotlight goes on each as they answer)

F1

In a very upbeat tone

"That was great... I do yoga... and I've started meditating and I'm really trying to be mindful."

M1 and F1

"We were sad and surprized to see so many people suffering; I wish I could do more to make things better"

F1

Sounding a bit surprized and appreciative

"I didn't expect to experience this today. "I'm really struggling with anxiety and depression... this moment helped."

M1

"That was peaceful. I needed that today."

F1

"This is so important." I'm really struggling with grief... "it's been so hard."

M1

"I never knew there were so many other people struggling... I'm Bi-polar, trying meds, starting therapy and doing my best to cope... "I thought is was just me."

F1

"I thought is was just me."

Pause and said in a tone of realization - F1 says looking to M1 while saying this next line

"but I see I'm not alone."

Spotlight goes on all actors; they step forward and say the next line looking at each other.

All Actors and GREETER

"We're not alone."

Now looking at the audience, all actors pause and say in unison:

"You're not alone."

House lights up as the last line is said ... then music comes up gently "Carried Away".

