

Shadows

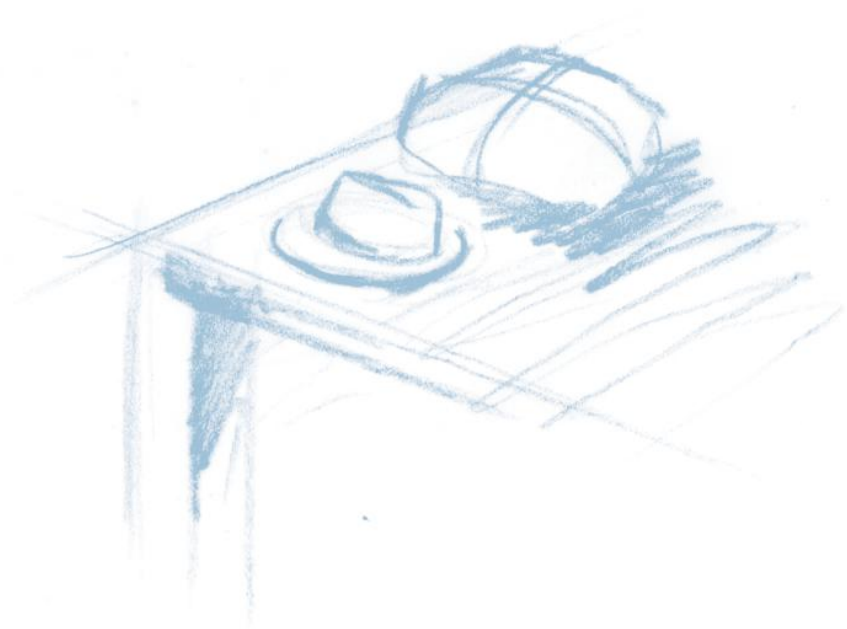
AND DEEPER SHADOWS

SEEING THE DARKNESS

+

LOOKING FOR LIGHT

Innovative
Resources





Shadows

AND DEEPER SHADOWS

SEEING THE DARKNESS
•
LOOKING FOR LIGHT

ORIGINAL CONCEPT

RUSSELL DEAL

BOOKLET

RUSSELL DEAL, FIONA GARDNER & JOHN HOLTON

WATERCOLOUR ART

CAROLYN MARRONE

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Innovative Resources acknowledges the Jaara people of Dja Dja Wurrung country, the traditional custodians of the land upon which our premises are located and where our resources are developed and published. We pay our respects to the elders—past, present and future—for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and other First Nations peoples. We must remember that underneath this earth, upon which we so firmly stand, this is, was and always will be, the traditional land of First Nations peoples.

~ C O N T E N T S ~

Foreword	2
A Reflective and Conversational Tool	4
Origins	6
Shadows, Fears and Sorrow	9
The Complete Set of Cards	12
Using <i>Shadows</i> to Explore Fears and Sorrow	15
<i>Shadows</i> and The Shadow	19
Using <i>Shadows</i> to Explore The Shadow	24
Using <i>Shadows</i> for Creative Writing	31
Further Reading	34
Innovative Resources	35
The <i>Shadows</i> Team	36
Acknowledgements	37

~ F O R E W O R D ~

In our journey through life it is important to recognise our gifts and strengths in order to develop more fully in knowing ourselves. Yet it has been consistently noted by those interested in mind, spirit and soul that the darker traumatic incidents which we experience in life can later underpin our resilience and draw out resources we were unaware of. Our problems and difficulties also stem from unconscious, renounced or partially integrated aspects of our personality such as our foolishness or stubbornness. Such suffering can also be a source of growth and understanding.

Over the years I have often used Innovative Resources' *Strength Cards* to encourage my clients to get to know themselves better. At times I have also wanted visual triggers which would allow them to connect with and move through the pain, sadness, anger and grief they are experiencing in their inner or outer worlds.

It seems to me there is always wisdom to be gained from the relationships between opposites such as light and dark, giving and receiving, good and evil, male and female.

As Jung described, 'Life, being an energetic process, needs the opposites, for without opposition there is, as we know, no energy. Good and evil are simply the moral aspects of this natural polarity. The fact that we have to feel this polarity so excruciatingly makes human existence all the more complicated. Yet the suffering that necessarily attaches to life cannot be evaded' (C.G. Jung *CW*, par. 291).

Healing does not come from increasing the amount of light in our lives, but from reaching into the shadow and drawing unreconciled elements into the light where they can be healed. (*Grace Unfolding: Psychotherapy in the Spirit of the Tao-te Ching*, Johanson and Kurtz, 1991, p.66)

Painful symptoms are frequently indicators pointing us to what needs healing in us. Jung's concept of individuation (becoming whole) is facilitated, not by rejection of those parts of us we wish to disavow because they are too painful, but by their integration and transformation.

First comes the acknowledgment of the existence of the darker aspects of ourselves rather than the rejection out of fear and distaste. Ironically, this allows us some power or influence over those shadow qualities through which we can then be healed rather than them being us. We move from *being* the issue to *having* the issue, if at least temporarily, to allow growth to occur.

These cards offer a wonderful opportunity for individuals to play with, meditate on, share, be drawn into those unreconciled aspects of self or give expression to the unsayable, shameful or hurtful experiences we have suffered in life—its downs, tragedies and painful moments—not just the ups, triumphs and joys.

These cards can provide a bridge between the conscious and unconscious or shadow worlds as well as between the pain and the joy of living. I hope they will be a stimulus for others to make connections in their journeys towards wholeness.

David Mitchell

Psychologist and Director, Resolutions Counselling, Bendigo



~ A REFLECTIVE AND CONVERSATIONAL TOOL ~

'It is enough if those people who use Shadows find their own meanings and usefulness in the cards. If they help us reflect on our own reactions, feelings and behaviour and if they lead to conversations about hope and change, they will have served their purpose.'

Russell Deal & Fiona Gardner

Shadows is a simple tool. It is a tool or resource designed to invite us to explore some of the parts of ourselves that we often struggle to talk, or even think, about. Each *Shadows* card is intended simply as a window into those parts of us that are often closed and inaccessible to others and ourselves. The window may be into fears or sadness, problems, challenges or pain, or even into positive parts of ourselves that we may find hard to accept.

This resource will not work as a self-reflective window for everyone. But we already know that the simplicity and depth of the images have made them intriguing and useful to many people. For the authors and creators of *Shadows* it is important to emphasise these attempts at simplicity, not out of false modesty or self-deprecation, but because explorations of 'the shadow' have featured so profoundly in religion, literature, art, philosophy and psychology.

It would be an awesome task to attempt to do justice to all the wisdom that has created our diverse understandings of 'shadow'. This resource makes no such claim. But the authors do recognise, and attempt to draw upon, aspects of the wisdom embodied in these traditions.

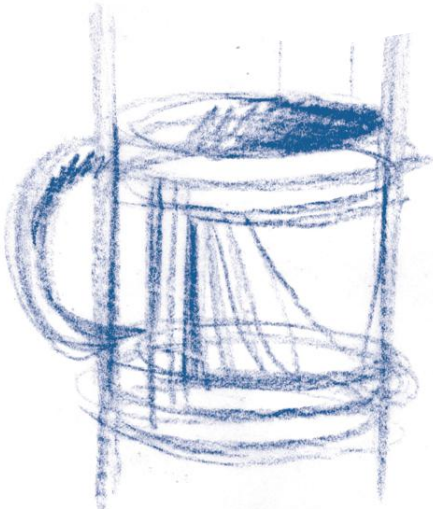
Universal metaphor

The shadow seems to be a symbol or a metaphor of universal significance. The creators of *Shadows* have tried to capture some 'fragments' or 'gold dust' from this wealth of understanding, to create a tool that can help people explore the different 'shadows' in their lives.

While *Shadows* has drawn inspiration from some traditions of mysticism and from the writings of Carl Jung, one does not need to be a mystic or a Jungian analyst to use the cards successfully. There are no hidden meanings in the cards that can only be unlocked by deep mystical or psychoanalytical insight.

For the authors, it is important that people who use *Shadows* find their own meanings and usefulness in the cards. If they help people reflect on their reactions, feelings and behaviour, and if they lead to conversations about hope and change, they will have served their purpose.

In this booklet the creators of the cards describe some of the ideas that have influenced them and suggest numerous questions that can be built around the cards to enhance their value as a reflective and conversational tool. Also included are three scenarios outlining how the cards have already been used (please see the section entitled 'Using Shadows to Explore the Shadow').



~ ORIGINS ~

*‘Sometimes pain has to be storied before
pathways to resolution can be found.’*

David Mitchell
Psychologist, Resolutions Counselling

Like many Innovative Resources’ publications, the seed for *Shadows* was planted in a seemingly chance conversation that took place between Russell Deal, one of the *Shadows* authors, and a long-standing friend and colleague, David Mitchell. David runs a psychology practice in Bendigo (Central Victoria, Australia) called 'Resolutions Counselling'. During this 'bump-into' conversation David expressed his interest in having a resource that he could use as he 'sat with the pain' of his clients.

The card sets and books published by Innovative Resources are underpinned by 'solution-focused' or 'strengths-based' ideas. There is a spirit of hope and optimism in these approaches that is reflected in the colour and quiet humour of many of our cards sets and other products. However, these approaches are sometimes perceived (we believe inaccurately) as glossing over pain and trauma, as they have a strong focus on creating change and finding solutions.

Hearing pain

It is unconscionable for any elements of these approaches to disregard or disrespect the pain and suffering of any clients. Indeed, one of our maxims is 'not to hear pain is an unjust political act'. Constructing 'solutions' before the client is ready is disrespectful and an example of using 'power-over' rather than 'power-with'.

But what David was imagining was a different sort of tool, one that allowed people to get in touch with their hurt and grief and one that encouraged them to explore it rather than suppress it. For people experiencing profound loss, grief or depression, a tool that encourages the exploration of these feelings and helps them 'express the inexpressible' could be of real help. Such a tool would not try to prescribe meaning to a person's feelings. Rather, it would invite reflection and conversation, which might then lead to possible pathways out of despair—when the client is ready.

This was a 'big ask' but the thought continued to tantalise and haunt us for several years.

Photolanguage

One of the few hands-on tools that we found came even part way to filling these aims was *Photolanguage*. This tool consists of evocative black and white photos sold around the world by Catholic Education Offices and it is well known and well loved by many human service workers. *Photolanguage* uses a diverse range of quality photographs to depict or infer aspects of the human condition. The images are not prescriptive nor are they scripted to convey any particular meaning. Their power lies in their ability to elicit and encourage viewers to construct their own interpretation and create their own meanings.

Photolanguage works as a set of metaphoric prompts that avoid the constraints of language to gently provoke analysis of feelings—both positive and negative—that may lie beneath the surface.

The task that Innovative Resources originally undertook several years ago was to create materials that could build on the usefulness of *Photolanguage*. We knew they had to confront pain and sorrow in a respectful, non-prescriptive and constructive manner.

Shadows emerged as one possible way forward.



~ SHADOWS , FEARS & SORROW ~

*'Where there is sorrow,
there is holy ground.'*

Irish dramatist and novelist, Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900.

*'Strength is born in the deep silence
of long suffering hearts;
not amid joy.'*

British poet, Felicia Hermans, 1793-1835.

There is an intrinsic optimism in solution-focused, strengths-based approaches to human service work and human relationships. The motto of Innovative Resources is 'seriously optimistic'. We believe it is important to take optimism seriously. It is not about idealising the world or looking at life through rose-coloured glasses. It is, however, about being actively sensitive to people's pain and suffering, while simultaneously supporting them to create opportunities for change and growth.

We might ask ourselves:

- When does sitting with someone in their time of sorrow become dysfunctional and get in the way of their healing?
- It is important to hear the pain, but when does empathy and understanding suggest that it is time to move on, to look to the future?

There will undoubtedly be a huge variation in how people answer these questions. There is no panacea or recipe for a 'right' response. Being strengths-based means being curious, listening to people's unique stories and encouraging them to explore ways forward that are right for them.

Strengths born out of sorrow

As the quotes at the beginning of this chapter suggest, focussing on strengths includes an intrinsic recognition that strengths do not come easily. They can be found in the midst of heartache and sadness. They emerge from our struggles with grief and loss, betrayal and hurt, embarrassment, regret, loneliness and fear, as well as from times of happiness, joy and fulfillment.

This relationship between strengths and sorrow strongly suggests that sorrow is to be embraced—and not avoided—in a strengths-based approach to relationships. Yet as we know, it is achingly difficult to embrace one's own sorrow, let alone that of others.

People seek out counsellors and therapists because they are in pain. To be human is to be confronted by our own pain and that of others. To listen for, be attentive to, and hear the pain of others in ways that are truly respectful and not voyeuristic or self-gratifying, is a huge challenge. Some things in life are not easy. This is certainly one.

I want to ride a bike and walk and run—all at once!

Lily Brett talks about her mother's way of dealing with having been in Auschwitz during World War II:

'She was always trying to live a normal life, without ever being allowed to voice the turmoil and the mayhem that was left in her; the guilt and the grief and the shock and the horror that never went away. My mother was forever trying to keep the past at a distance but the past was always part of her present...'

This shadow of her mother's had a major impact on Lily and it was eventually making it articulate in analysis that 'has given me back my own life—the life I squashed because I felt guilty for having one. Guilt for feeling joy and excitement when there was so much death and so much suffering. I have been given this life back, slowly. It has returned to me in bits and pieces. Sometimes it has burst out of me, awkwardly, and all over the place. I want to ride a bike and run and walk all at once.'

Lily Brett, *In Full View*, Pan Macmillan, 1997, p.295 and p.346

There are a number of different things that need to be in place for us to effectively support people in distress. Empathy, genuine curiosity, understanding of the situation, sufficient time, ability to be undistracted and having a trusting relationship are just a few. Sometimes words alone are not enough. Indeed, sometimes our silently being with someone can be infinitely more powerful than any words we might speak.

Art as visual metaphor

And then there is the maxim, 'A picture is worth a thousand words' — which, if we believe it, suggests the possibility that art as visual metaphor may also open doors into sorrow and healing that cannot be penetrated by words alone. This idea of developing visual metaphors to act as pathways into and out of pain was the genesis of *Shadows*.

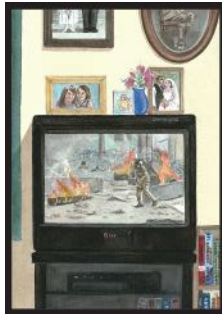
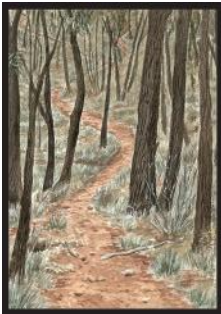
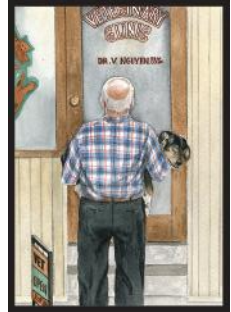
If the development of strengths requires the identification, processing and celebration of our sorrow, how might a hands-on, visual tool be constructed to help this?

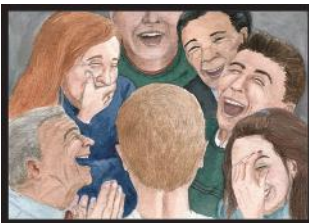
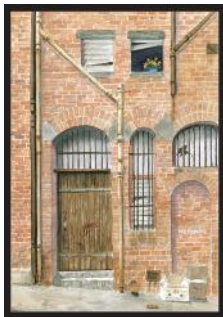
Shadows is an attempt to produce a useable resource for human service workers to help others describe and deal with their pain and sorrow. It does not come with a rulebook. It needs to be used with acute sensitivity and there will be times when it should not be used at all. If it is confusing or gets in the way of a healing conversation, it should be put away.

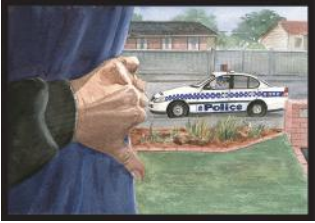
However, if you believe the *Shadows* cards could create new insights into sorrow and open up new conversational pathways, gently introduce them at the appropriate time.



~ THE COMPLETE SET OF CARDS ~







~
U S I N G S H A D O W S T O E X P L O R E
F E A R S A N D S O R R O W
~

*'Of all the liars in the world,
sometimes the worst are your own fears.'*

English poet and author, Rudyard Kipling (1865 - 1936)

*'Facing it, always facing it.
That's the way to get through.
Face it.'*

Polish born British writer, Joseph Conrad (1856 - 1924)

To be human is to struggle with fears and sorrow. By their nature many of these struggles are difficult to identify, difficult to understand and difficult to talk about.

We can develop strategies to avoid facing our fears and sorrows. But sometimes avoidance comes at a price; if they fester they can deplete our energy, diminish us and destroy hope.

Facing fears and sorrow with honesty takes courage and often the help of others. *Shadows* is one simple tool that may help us to reflect on the sources of our fears and sorrows and help us discover pathways to resolving them.



Useful questions to ask

One way to support people to explore their fears and sorrows using *Shadows* would be to begin with questions such as:

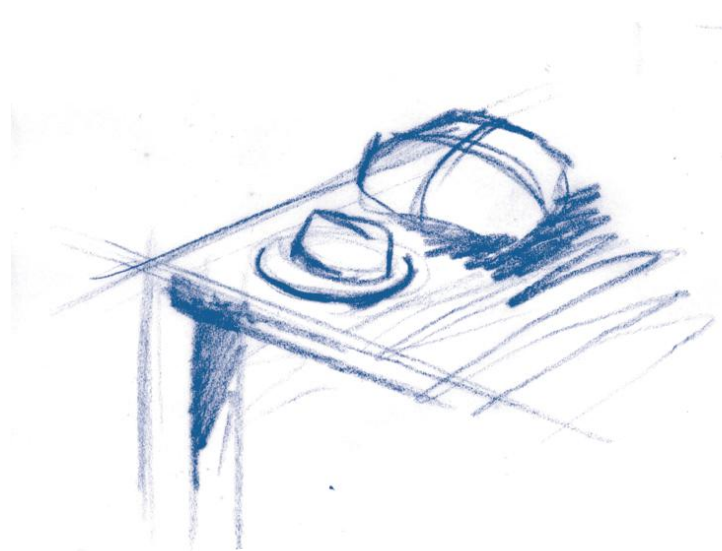
- Can you pick one card that says something about what is making you anxious or fearful?
- Can you say where this anxiety or fear comes from?
- Is the fear always there or does it come and go?
- Can you tell me about the times when the fear is not there? What is different? What are you doing differently?
- You seem to be really sad. Is there a card that describes your sadness?
- Which card comes closest to how you are feeling?
- What is it about this card that is similar to how you are feeling?
- Have you felt like this before? What have you done that has helped? What could you try this time?
- If this picture is about you, what do you imagine the next scene might look like? What will you be doing?
- Is there one small step you can take to feel less anxious or less sad?

In her book *The Universal Heart* (Viking, Ringwood, Australia, 2000), Stephanie Dowrick writes, 'Grief, jealousy, envy, frustrated longing, feelings of rejection: these are part of all family relationships, however outwardly benign a family may appear. Yet they are often not identified and are rarely resolved through explicit understanding and acceptance.'

Fears and sorrows are often intricately tied up in our relationships with family, friends and colleagues. The *Shadows* cards can be used to prompt conversations about different aspects of these relationships, particularly aspects that may be difficult to talk about.

Questions such as the following may be useful:

- Who else in your life is part of this picture?
- Are they also fearful or sad?
- Do they know how you are feeling?
- Are there people you are missing?
- How might you go about inviting them to a discussion about this picture?
- Are there others who should know how you are feeling and about the progress you are making?



~ S H A D O W S A N D T H E S H A D O W ~

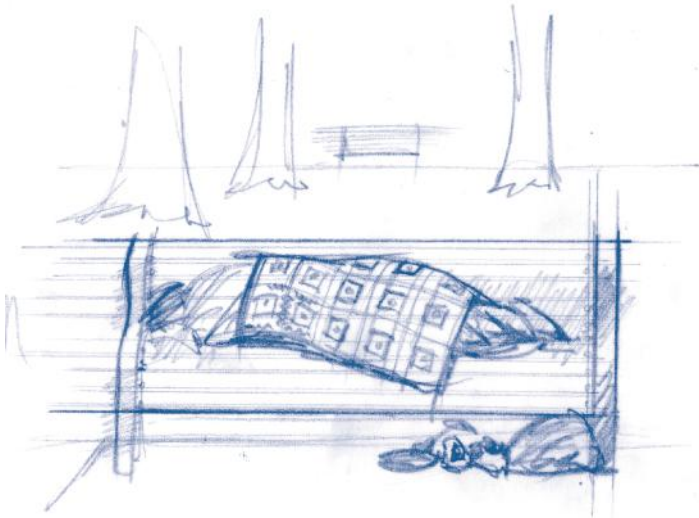
*‘To own one’s own shadow is to reach a holy place -
an inner centre - not attainable in any other way.’*

Robert Johnson

Owning Your Own Shadow, Harper San Francisco, 1971, p.17

Carl Jung was an exceedingly influential member of the early psychoanalytic movement. His ideas about the Unconscious have shaped how we think about ourselves. The ‘Shadow’ is also one of his ideas and he describes it in a particular way.

For Jung, the Conscious Self is how we prefer to present ourselves to the world and how we like the world to see us. We know about, and are readily aware of, those parts of us that are conscious. The conscious part of ourselves could be called our ‘Persona’ or mask. It describes our sense of identity and the way we relate to the world.



Part of our Unconscious

The Shadow, however, is part of our Unconscious. It is made up of the aspects of ourselves that we don't acknowledge or don't want to accept—the parts of ourselves we struggle to keep hidden from our awareness. The Shadow can be negative feelings about ourselves, behaviour we don't like or unhappy experiences we don't want to remember.

The families we grow up in and the wider society we inhabit value certain kinds of behaviour, beliefs, ways of being and personality types. As children we learn what is and what is not acceptable and we create a Conscious Self that conforms to these expectations and works for us. Unacceptable behaviour, thoughts and feelings can be pushed down into the Shadow.

Growing up and changing shape

In Jane's family, it wasn't acceptable to express anger. If she got angry, her parents would send her to her room and act in ways that she felt were very cold towards her. Because of this, she learnt to suppress feelings of anger, so that she would be acceptable.

Sam was an introverted child who liked to play quietly by himself rather than with other children. At school, he was constantly criticised for being too quiet, too shy, unsociable and he soon learnt that to be acceptable he needed to play with other children more.

It's important to remember that the Shadow is made up of all those aspects of ourselves that we find unacceptable. Although, it is important to note that some people find it harder to accept positive aspects of themselves than negative ones.

STOP



SW

In his book called *Owning Your Own Shadow* (op. cit.), Robert Johnson talks about the 'gold' in the Shadow. 'Some of the pure gold of our personality is relegated to the Shadow because it can find no place in that great leveling process that is culture (p.7)...Ignoring the gold can be as damaging as ignoring the dark side of the psyche' (p.8).

Reclaiming creativity

As a child Kate's playing with paint and cutting up paper into shapes were seen as messy and unproductive. Her family thought she should concentrate on homework rather than wasting time. As an adult she became increasingly frustrated with her work as an administrator, went to a painting class and re-discovered her creativity.

Why can it be useful to explore the Shadow? Firstly, acknowledging the Shadow can help us start to integrate it and become more whole in ourselves. If we want to develop and grow we need to recognise, accommodate and celebrate both the positive and negative parts of ourselves.

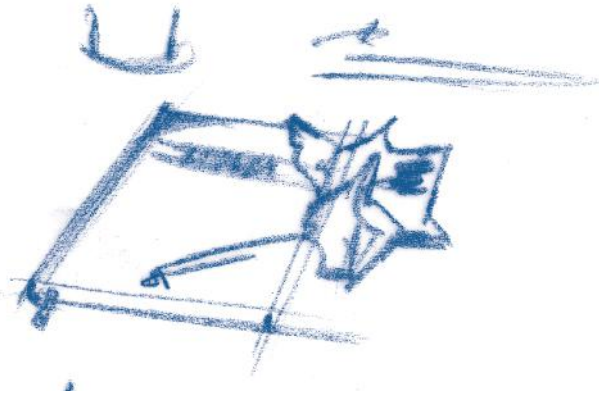
Secondly, the Shadow can both generate and absorb a lot of energy. Keeping the unacceptable out of consciousness requires a lot of effort. Imagine a boiling pot. It takes energy to keep the lid on. If we can free ourselves from the energy required to maintain vigilance and suppression of our Shadow we can use this energy in other ways.

If we don't acknowledge the Shadow it will make its presence felt anyway. It will antagonise, manipulate and trip us up. We may think, say and act out feelings that we wish we hadn't. We might act out of character or feel out of control. Robert Johnson talks about personality being like a see saw. If we put all our effort into maintaining the Conscious Self, the Shadow will erupt to balance things out. One of Johnson's examples is how he coped with hard-to-please guests who came for a weekend and stayed longer than he hoped. He managed to stay hospitable throughout his ordeal. When his guests left he then went to a nursery to buy a plant to reward himself only to find that he picked an argument with the manager.

Shadow behaviour

Sometimes the presence of 'Shadow behaviour' works as a warning sign that we are emotionally overstretched, tired, stressed or burnt out. Our normal coping mechanisms may be depleted, our resilience is down and what happens? The Shadow begins to gain the ascendancy.

Accepting the Shadow side of ourselves can prevent getting our feelings tangled up and confused with those of others. When we blame other people for feelings that come from us we experience the Shadow working via projection. That is, what we don't want to recognise in ourselves we attribute to someone else. This works at an individual level but stereotyping, scapegoating, and creating categories of 'us and them' can be seen in community and international relationships as well.



~ USING SHADOWS TO EXPLORE THE SHADOW ~

Shadows is a tool that can help people identify and name elements of the Shadow that aren't conscious or are just becoming conscious.

- Can you choose a card that has a message for you?
- Is there a card that 'speaks' to you in some way?
- Is there a card that makes you feel emotional?
- Is there a card that creates a particular feeling or reminds you of something from your childhood?

Asking such questions as someone scans the array of cards (or studies them one by one) invites the person to get in touch with thoughts or feelings that they may not have been conscious of previously.

It is important that the person makes their own choices, does their own sorting and articulates their own meaning. It may be useful to sit in silence for a while, giving valuable time for the person to reflect on the significance of the picture before they speak. Be aware of when the person is ready to start.

Some questions that might open up conversation are:

- Can you tell me a little about the picture you selected?
- What does it mean for you?
- So why this picture now?
- Is there anything happening in your life that makes this picture particularly relevant?
- Does this picture bring to mind an image of your own that is meaningful to you?
- Is there anything in the picture that scares you or makes you uneasy?
- Does this picture describe or suggest events from your past? Are these events clear or hazy? Are they painful to talk about?

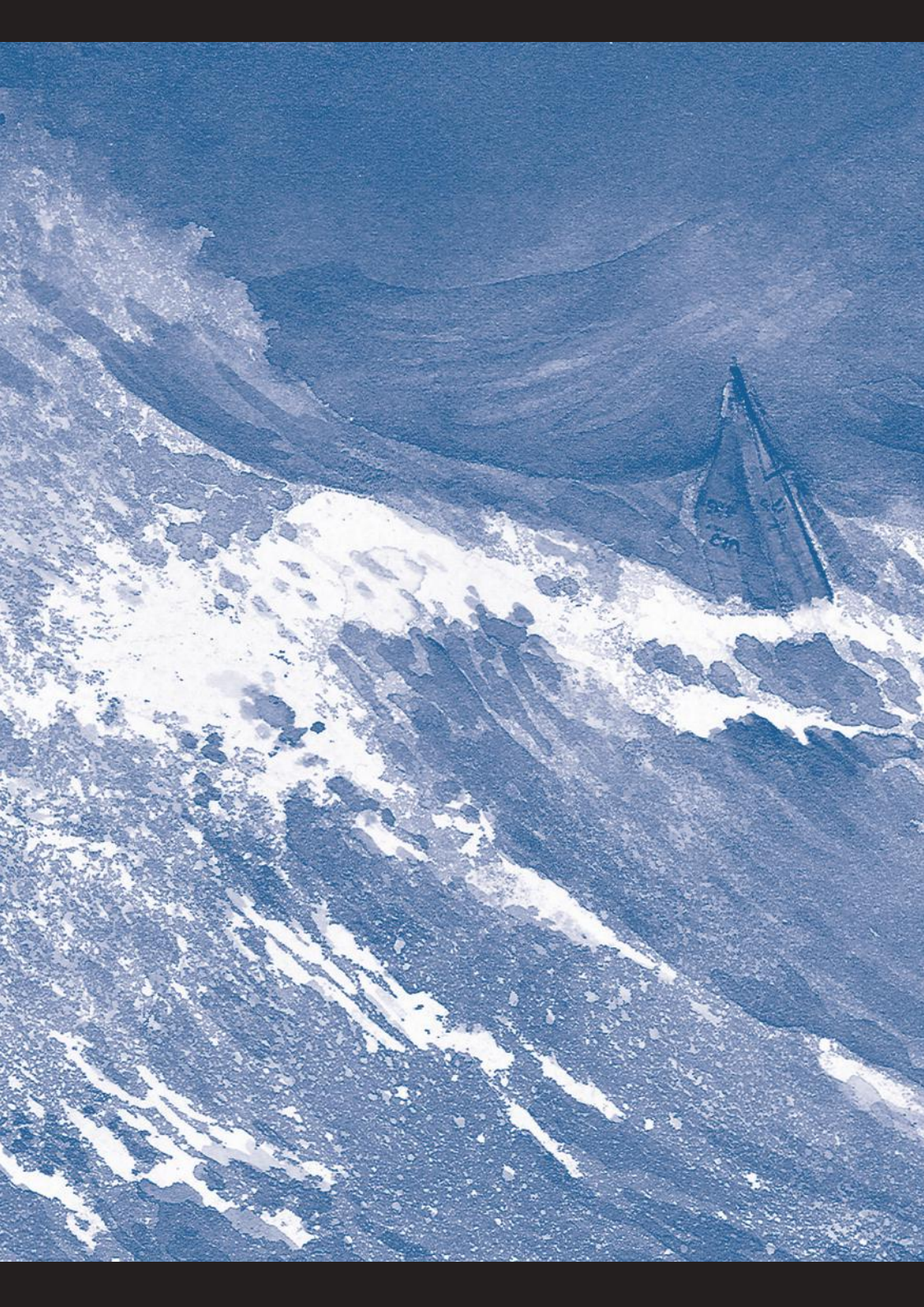
The pictures may also suggest relationships where Shadow issues have arisen and these might be explored by asking such questions as:

- Tell me a story about you and this picture.
- Are there other people who are in the story who should be in the picture?
- Does the picture remind you of other people and situations you would rather forget?
- How did these other people change the direction of your life?
- How are they like you? How are they different?

Because exploring the Shadow can touch on buried thoughts and feelings that are very sensitive and painful, such conversations should be entered into carefully. The person themselves should always be able to determine what they want to discuss and when is the most appropriate time. Being respectful means we are always cautious about making assumptions and inferences, being provocative or drawing conclusions.

All the above suggestions are made with the understanding that such questions would only ever be used within relationships of trust between the people involved in the conversation.





Here are some examples of how the *Shadows* cards have been used.

Sitting with the Image

The images in the *Shadows* cards evoke different feelings for each person, often painful feelings – sadness, anger, loss, desolation as well as happier feelings of joy or wonder. Sometimes what is important is staying with these feelings in spite of the discomfort they bring – and some people can feel as uncomfortable with the happy feelings as others with the painful ones. You can think about this as ‘sitting with the image’ or ‘being with’ the pain and difficulty of those feelings.

Sometimes, these feelings have been so firmly blocked out of consciousness, that it takes a long time for them to be recognised and acknowledged; at other times recognition can come quickly. The feelings have usually come from a particular period of time or event, but one where it was not safe or acceptable to express them. As such, when using the cards, it's important to create a safe place where such feelings are allowed to be fully expressed and can then be validated. Validation might mean simply accepting the feelings expressed, accepting them as reasonable given what was happening at the time and/or acknowledging the feelings came from a particular perspective. While the feelings must be accepted as real and valid, at the same time it can be valuable to start to explore what other feelings and perspectives might be possible.

One of the issues clients and workers often wrestle with is: what is enough ‘sitting with the feelings’ and when does this become too much. Intuition is important here – trying to sense what is happening. Body language often gives clues about this. If the person appears to be internally focused, it is likely that they need or want to explore the feelings for longer. It can be useful to gently raise this question: what else needs to be explored or acknowledged?

Example – Jo

When Jo first used the *Shadows* cards he chose the card showing a ship on stormy seas. This card for him expressed a sense of guilt that he found it hard to explain. His counsellor encouraged him to stay with the feeling and the card. Initially, he linked his feelings to a loss of satisfaction in his work, he had loved his job when he first started, but was starting to feel quite bored with it and guilty about not being more positive. This explanation satisfied Jo at one level,

but when his counsellor asked him if there was anything more about the feeling he wanted to say, he felt quite tearful and couldn't speak. This reinforced for him that there was more to explore, but nothing he could put into words.

For the next three sessions, he and his counsellor would visit the image of the ship. Jo saw it as the ship sailing away, abandoning the shore. They would sit companionably with the picture for some time. Each time, Jo experienced the same feelings of guilt. While it was painful to do this, Jo also sensed that it was important to recognise and not avoid this feeling. His counsellor asked some gentle, open questions:

- Are there times when you have had similar feelings before?
- What experiences might this connect to?
- Tell me more about how you see this picture? What is happening here?
- Is there more to be said?
- How are you feeling about it now? Where are you now?

Gradually Jo recognised that this sense of guilt was one he had experienced many times before; it was such a painful feeling that he had buried it deeply and turned it into being responsible. His father had left when he was six and he remembered his mother frequently telling him that it was no wonder his father had left, he was such a hopeless child. At the time he accepted what she said as 'the truth'; now he could see how he had become overly responsible as a result – trying to make sure he always did everything right. Rather than being bored at work, he was exhausted. Part of him wanted to be like his father and abandon everything; to allow himself to be on the stormy sea, responding to life, rather than having to be responsible. Part of him could see that his mother's comments came from her own loss and anger, so he was able to start letting go of his feelings of guilt. Over time, this freed him from having to feel as responsible and opened the way for he and his partner to share responsibilities differently, including changing roles so that both of them could have more flexible time.

Example—Sue and Tim reflecting on practice.

Sue and Tim meet monthly to reflect on their practice. Tim works as a community health nurse running groups on health issues. Sue is a counsellor for families. When they meet they each bring something from their practice they want to think about more deeply – a question, an incident, a concern. The idea is to help each other tease out what this means for them. For this session, Sue has suggested they use *Shadows* to see whether using the cards allows them to explore issues in a different way.

They take it in turns to explore, asking each other questions like:

- Why is this important for you?
- What made this card stand out?
- What is it about the picture that meant you chose this one?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have about it?
- What does this say about the assumptions and values that are important to you?
- How does this connect to how you see yourself as a worker?
- What might this mean for your current practice in this organisation?

Tim goes first. He selects the card picturing tree trunks in a forest with some new growth at the bottom of one of the trees. For Tim, the picture symbolises the isolation of the different programs he works in. He is feeling that the funding of his programs and the organisation generally means that his work often feels disjointed—not connected to other work in the organisation. Like the trees, the programs seem to grow separately and he feels isolated from the other workers. Although his programs are going well (they, like the trees, are sturdy) this doesn't fit with how he thought his work should be.

Sue asks him about what this means in terms of his expectations and assumptions about work. Tim struggles to answer this; at one level, he likes the programs he runs and enjoys the contact with clients. As he talks he becomes clearer that he assumed the organisation would have formal ways for workers to connect with each other and make connections across programs. He realises that he had expected this to be done for him rather than to see that as part of his role as a worker.

When Sue asked what connections he could make, he acknowledged that there were potentially many links with other workers and that he could initiate these himself. When he went back to the card he realised that symbolically the image also reminded him that all the trees were growing from the same soil, in the same environment, connected by sunlight and shadows. He felt energised to start looking for more connections in his workplace and to be active about generating them himself.

Sue chose the image of the bed that only one person had slept in. She had been increasingly conscious and concerned that in her work with families, fathers seemed to be absent, even when they were still living with the family. Having a double bed with two pillows symbolically reinforced for her the expectation that both parents should be present. Sue had a sense of discomfort about the absence of fathers in her practice. She wondered whether there was something she was doing that gave them or the family generally a message that they weren't needed.

When Tim asked her where this might come from she acknowledged that in her own family of origin, her parents operated very separately – with her mother making all the decisions about home and family. She had worked hard in her own relationship not to repeat this pattern on the assumption that having both parents involved was important. Tim encouraged her to tease this out more; in the process Sue linked both her own experience and her training in family therapy to her values and assumptions. For example, these included the assumption that everyone in the family affected each other and the belief that both parents should participate in caring for their children, so that both needed to be involved in family counselling. Having clarified why this was important, Sue decided she needed to be more active in promoting this in her practice. She decided to offer three early evening appointments on Thursday evenings to encourage working partners to come to counselling sessions (while still allowing choice); to be more assertive in intake sessions about the need for both parents to be involved; and to explore whether there were issues about this for families. She decided she would use the image of the card to remind herself.

~ USING SHADOWS FOR CREATIVE WRITING ~

‘My great obsession is storywriting — particularly that strange and blurry line between our ‘real life’ stories and what we commonly think of as fiction. This is what I explore in my books Snowdropping and The Affairs of Men.’

John Holton

As writers, and aspiring writers, we face the same challenges as all artists; two of the toughest being motivation and inspiration. Not to mention frustration, despair and the gut-wrenching fear of facing a blank page or computer screen. We all aim for the same result; the joy of getting the words down, creating sentences and paragraphs, verses and stanzas, that express what we feel and resonate with those who read them.

But sometimes we need a prompt, and visual prompts in particular can be powerful stimulants for writing. They can dredge our deepest memories, help us pick the thread of a story, and provide us with characters and situations to explore what we might not have considered otherwise.

Trying on someone else’s shoes

In many ways writing is like acting. To write well, you need to be able to immerse yourself in another person’s situation. You need to feel what your character is feeling. Of course, we all bring pieces of ourselves to everything we write.

- Choose a *Shadows* card that has a person in it, and write from that character’s perspective. Put yourself in their shoes. What are they thinking, feeling, dreaming? If you have trouble starting, pretend you are that person writing in their journal.

Emotions

Good writing is all about emotions. We tend to do our best writing when we focus on the things that we are passionate about. If you are totally wrapped up in the emotion when you write then there’s a good chance the reader or listener will feel it too.

- Choose a *Shadows* card that evokes a certain emotion, then write about it without naming it. Try to convey the emotion you or your character is feeling through action and image. Poetry might be easier than prose. In a group situation you might read out your pieces and see if others can guess the emotion you were trying to portray.

Some suggestions: boredom, frustration, pain, happiness, emptiness, dread, anxiety, terror, confusion, shock, anger, fear, grief, rage, regret, uncertainty, hesitation, jealousy, embarrassment, humiliation, sadness, disappointment, joy, loneliness, loss, hope, resignation, disbelief, paranoia ...

Window to the world

One of the easiest ways to start writing is to simply look around you. Sitting in cafes, railway stations, shopping centres, or anywhere that people congregate can be a great way to get inspired. Simply looking out of the window can be a creative act for the observant writer. Using the *Shadows* cards is a lot like peering through a window, or being a fly on the wall.

- Choose a card at random. What does the image remind you of? Write down the words ‘I remember’ then continue writing whatever comes into your head. If you get stuck, write the words ‘I remember’ again to get you back on track. Forget spelling – forget punctuation – forget having to make sense – just write!
- The *Shadows* cards provide people, situations and moods, but are essentially a two-dimensional resource. Try and bring your other senses to the pictures. What are the sounds, the smells, the textures, that permeate the pictures? Choose a card and write a piece where you put yourself in the picture. Feel the breeze in your hair, smell the wet footpath, hear the screaming kids in the car!

What if?

One of the most evocative questions any writer can ask is ‘What if?’. The ‘What if’ question allows us to advance the plot of a story but can also take our writing into new and unexpected territory.

- Choose a *Shadows* card and start to question the situation in the picture. For example, look at the card with the old man carrying the dog. What if the dog is his only friend in the world? What if he has accidentally run over his neighbour’s dog while they are at work? What if this is the first pet the man has had in his life? What if the man himself is dying and has no one to look after his beloved dog?

Shadows in dialogue

A conversation between two or more people is rarely just a simple exchange of information. There are often underlying messages behind the words, lurking in the shadows of our conversations. Here are just a few of those hidden messages:

- ~ I’m more important than you.
- ~ I’m less important than you.
- ~ I want something from you.
- ~ I like you.

- ~ I want to conceal something from you.
- ~ I want to flatter you.
- ~ I'm going to put you in your place.
- ~ I want you to do something for me.
- ~ I wish you would stop doing that.
- ~ I respect and value you.

- Choose a character from one of the *Shadows* cards and create a dialogue between that person and someone else. It could be a character from another card or an entirely made-up character. Perhaps it's a dialogue inside the character's own head? Maybe it's a conversation the character is overhearing?

Linking stories/building plot

Every *Shadows* card has a story – or several stories – to tell. But can you see links between any of the card's; pictures that pick-up the thread of another card's story?

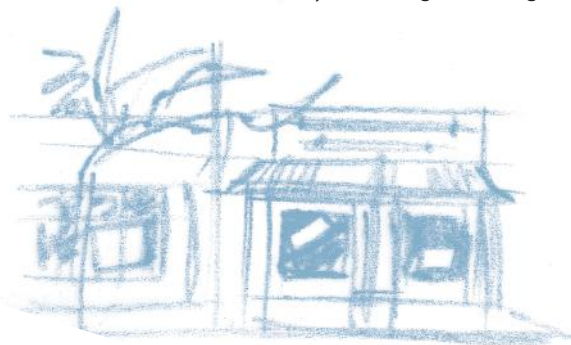
- Select a *Shadows* card – now try and find other cards that add something to the card. You could use several cards to build a storyboard and create a plot for a larger story.
- For larger writing workshops: break into small groups and ask each group to choose six cards that form a story. Have each group report back at the end of the exercise – marvel at the scope and diversity of ideas in the room!

Cure for writer's block

A well-known writer once said that writer's block is the dread that you are going to write something awful. A good way forward is to trick your brain by writing something small – like titles. Here's a little exercise that can spark some big ideas.

- Select *Shadows* cards at random and make up titles for them. The Long Climb, Merry Christmas Mr Nobody, The Empty Bed, Retrenched ... You might write a title for every card. You might write ten different titles for one card. But you're doing something creative ... and who knows?

John Holton



~ FURTHER READING ~

To read more about 'The Shadow', Jung's ideas about the unconscious and how hidden parts of ourselves can be explored, the authors suggest the following books:

Campbell, Joseph (ED). *The Portable Jung*. Penguin, 1976

Dwyer, Margaret. *Wake up the Sun*. Desbooks, 1988

Faraday, Ann. *The Dream Game*. Harper and Rowe, 1974

Hannah, Barbara. *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination*. Sigo, 1981

Johnson, Robert. *Inner Work*. Harper and Rowe, 1986

Johnson, Robert. *Owning Your Own Shadow*. Harper, 1971

Jung, C.G. *Man and His Symbols*. Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1964

Jung, C.G. *Memories, Dreams & Reflections*. Pantheon Books, New York, 1963

Jung, C.G. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Princeton University Press, 1972

O'Connor, Peter. *Understanding Jung*. Methuen, 1985

O'Connor, Peter. *Dreams and the Search for Meaning*. Methuen, 1986

Quenk, Naomi L. *Beside Ourselves: Our Hidden Personality in Everyday Life*. CPP Books, 1993

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology*. Open Court, 1985

Zweig, Connie and Abrams, Jeremiah. *Meeting the Shadow*. Putnam, 1991

~ INNOVATIVE RESOURCES ~

The Innovative Resources team is made up of curious and passionate people. We are curious about ideas that people can use to change their lives. We are curious about how people work with the shadow experiences in their lives and the skills and strengths they employ to do this. We are curious too, about fairness and social justice and finding ways to overcome discrimination and disadvantage.

Our passions revolve around sharing our serious optimism about the possibilities of using resources in therapeutic practice. We are trainers and publishers who enjoy seeing ideas grow out of multi-disciplinary conversations and facilitating their translation into useful hands-on tools that promote change.

Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, a community service organisation providing social work services to communities throughout Victoria and New South Wales, Australia. Innovative Resources is a unique publishing enterprise located in Bendigo and designed to value-add to service delivery roles. We do this through:

- **Publishing:** Under the Innovative Resources name, we publish materials used by thousands of teachers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors and other human service workers throughout Australia and overseas.
- **Online Retailing:** We sell our own original materials including over 60 card sets, various sets of stickers, picture books and texts—all profits are used to fund Anglicare Victoria programs that support children, young people and families
- **Training:** Our trainers regularly deliver a variety of practice training and 'tools' workshops. Please contact us to discuss your training needs.

Innovative Resources produces a free online newsletter. One of the main purposes of our newsletter is to provide forums for sharing ideas about using the resources. Stories about creative ways of using *Shadows* or any of our other strengths-based materials are very much appreciated by readers of the newsletter.

So let us know your stories!

Author

FIONA GARDNER

Fiona worked as a social worker mainly in rural Victoria, Australia for around 20 years. She coordinates social work at La Trobe University in Bendigo. Fiona's interest in Jungian psychology in general and the Shadow in particular began 15 years ago at a workshop on personality types. This was so useful in creating understanding and acceptance of difference both at home and work that exploring Jungian ideas became a lasting passion.

Author

RUSSELL DEAL

Russell has qualifications in psychology, social work and education. He is the founder and former creative director of Innovative Resources. One of Russell's passions (apart from drystone walling) is his belief that social work and other human service professions need to rediscover and redefine creativity. For Russell this means relearning the roles that art, music and metaphor can play in human service work.

Illustrator

CAROLYN MARRONE

Carolyn's career as an artist began with endless doodles in geography and history textbooks while at school in the regional city of Bendigo in Central Victoria, Australia. She began exhibiting in pastel and then watercolour about 30 years ago and has received many awards for her painting. Carolyn's love of multicultural Australia and her natural compassion for all people as they experience life's light and shadow, shine in her work.

~ A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S ~

‘Working on Shadows was a dream come true for me because I have always liked painting pictures that tell a story. But that is not what most people want on their lounge room walls. People often simply want pretty things. But these cards invite you to delve a little deeper and give an opportunity to tell a story.’

Carolyn Marrone, Artist for *Shadows*

The authors would like to thank all of those people whose ideas have contributed to *Shadows*. We have mentors, teachers and colleagues too numerous to name individually who have helped us deal with our own shadows and lent inspiration to our musings.

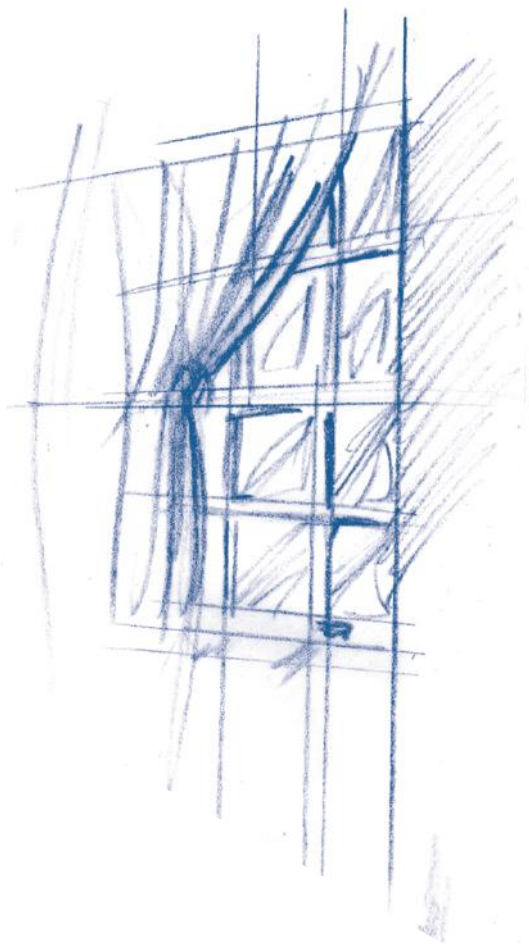
Special thanks to David Mitchell, a valued colleague, whose perception produced the initial spark. And similar thanks to Jennifer Lehmann and Jennifer Hocking who joined David to produce a focus group to test our ideas.

The 48 evocative watercolour images for *Shadows* were created by award-winning portrait artist, Carolyn Marrone. Carolyn is a special person and a very gifted artist. She specialises in painting people in everyday situations with great compassion and sensitivity. Her enthusiasm and joy make every conversation a delight and her ability to capture poignant moments in her paintings leaves us spellbound.

Many thanks to John Holton for providing the inspiring chapter on using *Shadows* for Creative Writing. And thanks to gifted designers, Tim Lane and Mat Jones for their design work on the cards, booklet and box. Thank you also to the Innovative Resources editorial and production team, led by Karen Bedford, Managing Editor.

Fiona Gardner and Russell Deal





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