

## **Review**

### ***Resilience: Stories of a Family Therapist***

*Moshe & Tesse Lang*

*Resilience: Stories of a Family Therapist*

*Mandarin, \$14.95pb*

*258pp. 1 86330 459 2*

'Story telling is healing'. Moshe Lang suggests at the beginning of this collection, because stories give shape and coherence to experience. Along with their therapeutic benefits, stories have an aesthetic advantage:

*The story is a form which captures the uniqueness of the encounter. To describe it as a 'case presentation' is to lose that uniqueness. As a story it is engaging and memorable.*

The collection is as good as its word: its stories of 'people and problems' from Lang's work as a therapist are indeed often engaging and memorable. Families are described vividly: a child's refusal to attend school, for example, shows up larger issues of family interaction. Focusing these tangled networks, family therapy finds its justification.

Perhaps, though, the story format also risks removing the rough edges - the work and the agony - from the situation it depicts, and turning them into neat parcels. Some stories verge on the anodyne. But others, like those concerning Holocaust survivors, powerfully resist this possibility. Such stories evoke the particular experience, without imposing the finished form of a 'case'. They show how silences live on, and what is at stake in telling of the past. The unfinished, haunting quality of these stories makes the collection memorable.

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### **Publication Reference:**

Feik, C. (1996). *Resilience: Stories of a Family Therapist*. Australian Book Review, April ed., 64.