



Storyteller: Family therapist Moshe Lang with a copy of his book, *Resilience*.
Picture: **Maurice Grant-Drew**

Stories of joy and misery

WAR, hate, deceit and wronged love have played a part in many lives; the aftermath for most are shadowy memories of pain and confusion.

Therapy, in its many shapes and forms, has helped thousands of Australians deal with these memories.

But what does the therapist think, how does the therapist deal with the misery and joy of the human condition? One way — the way renowned family therapist Moshe Lang has chosen — is to write about it.

Moshe's new book, *Resilience: Stories of a Family Therapist*, is a distillation of more than 30 years' experience helping children, couples and families try to find a happier state of mind. The 50 short stories show that deep within every family lie secrets. The way Moshe helps resolve many family problems is through listening to those secrets.

"In some ways, therapy is both complex and simple," says Moshe, the director of the Williams Road Family Therapy Centre in Windsor.

"Therapy highlights the importance of

By **DEBORAH MORRIS**

listening and the importance of human conversation. It also shows the healing power in story-telling."

For Moshe, story-telling is a way of understanding, not only for his patients but for himself.

The stories he heard across the decades played over and over in his head, until he found himself writing them down, with his physician wife Tesse as co-author. He said writing was his way of "getting the stories to leave him alone", for many of his patients are Holocaust survivors.

Therapy highlights the importance of listening and of human conversation

"I have often been asked why survivors couldn't simply forget and forgive, why they are so morbidly preoccupied? But I believe that not to forgive and certainly not to forget is a healthy and appropriate position to take," he says.

"Among other things I hope to do in this book is to tell the reader that traumas can

be passed from one generation to the next. Silence or communication is never total. Often those who haven't spoken have communicated in some other way."

Moshe believes the long shadow of Holocaust memories is not confined to Jewish survivors.

"There are numerous people in this country who lived through the experience of a Holocaust. Cambodians, Chinese, Aboriginals have all felt the terror. There are thousands of Australians who were incarcerated in POW camps or experienced the horrors of war. Many were, emotional-

ly, terribly scarred and their children and grandchildren have been affected," he says.

He pointed to the story of children who see their father as a hero, yet hear him crying at night.

"You may be a second or third generation removed, but you can take on the pain."