



# Performing the Self: Autobiographical Performance as a Therapeutic Intervention

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Oxymoron

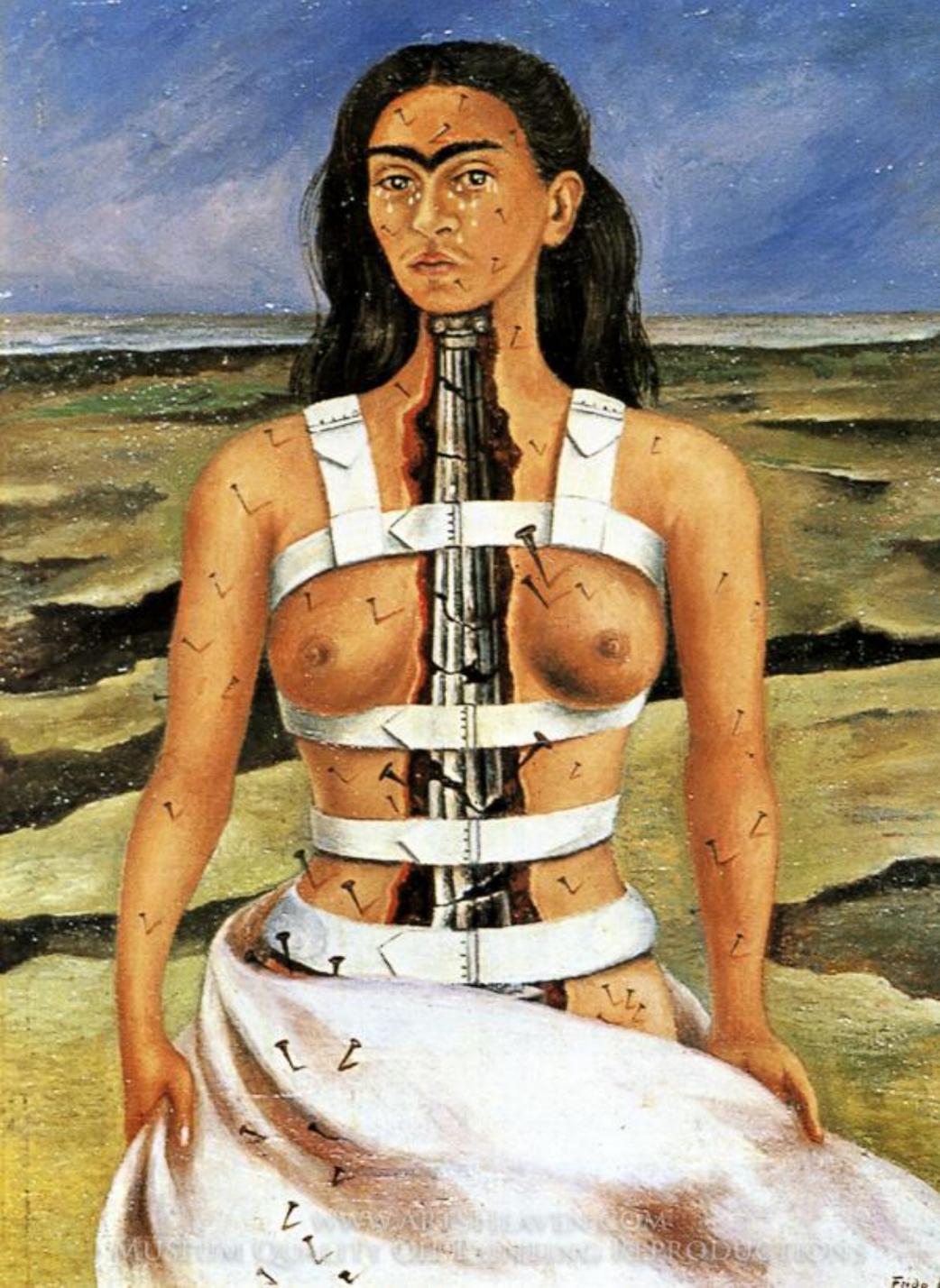


# Stage Fright

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Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)

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“In order to live my life in a free and open way, I have to have a monologue going. That’s my way into the world. That’s my transitional object. If I have a monologue going, I can relax...”

Spalding Gray (1941-2004)

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# Therapeutic Aspects of ATP

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Narrating lived experience

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Shaping the material into aesthetic forms

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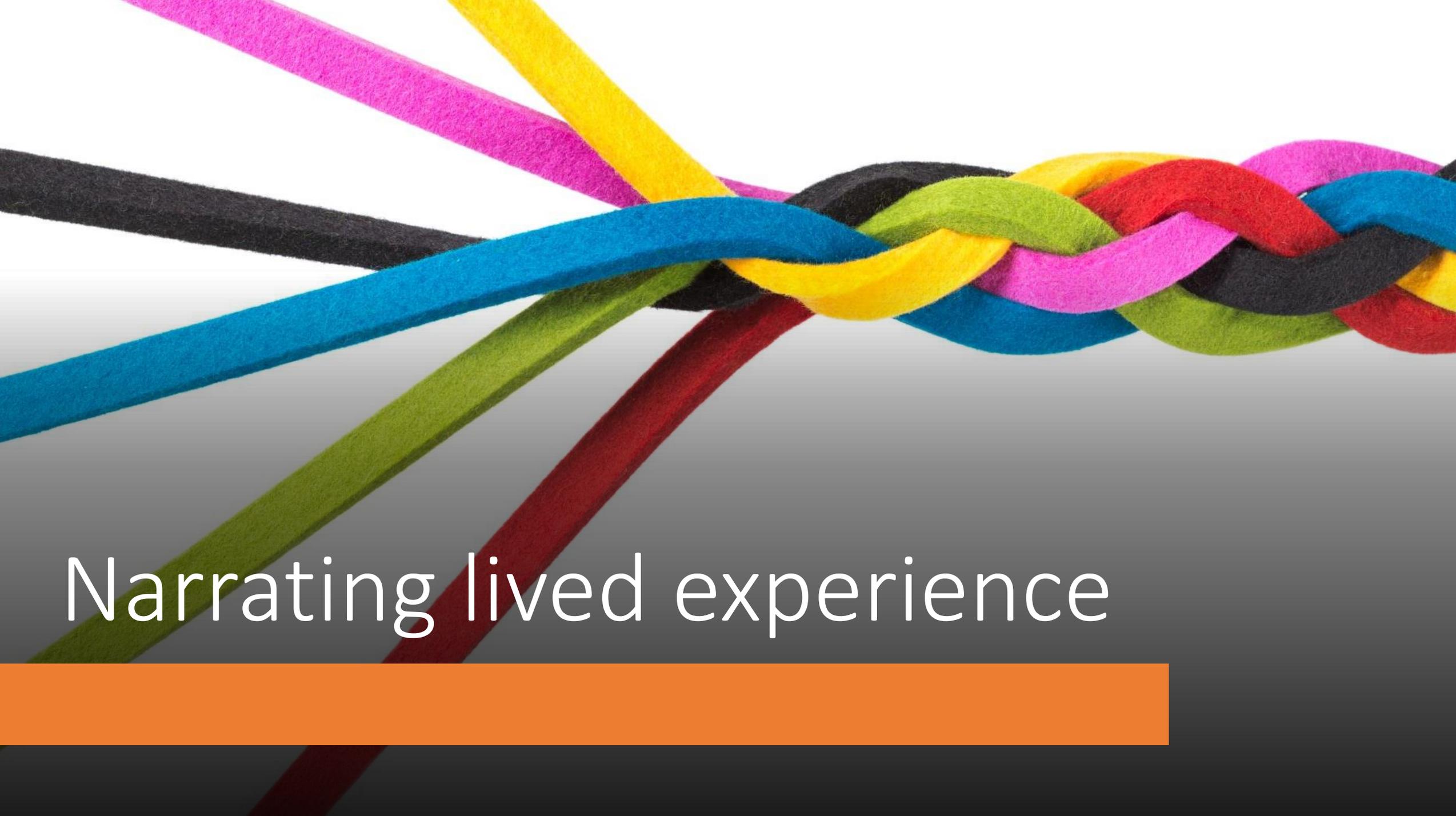
Embodying and rehearsing personal stories that have been processed

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Performing in front of an audience

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Integrating new insights in the post-performance reflection



Narrating lived experience



“In this process, my cognition seemed to lag miles behind my intuition, and I could not even explain exactly what and why a movement or a scene were important to me. The contents I was dealing with found their place in the artistic form in mysterious ways... (...) I felt like a putting together a puzzle, finding a piece here and a piece there. At the beginning the pieces didn't make sense; but little by little, an interesting picture emerged [that became] my piece.”

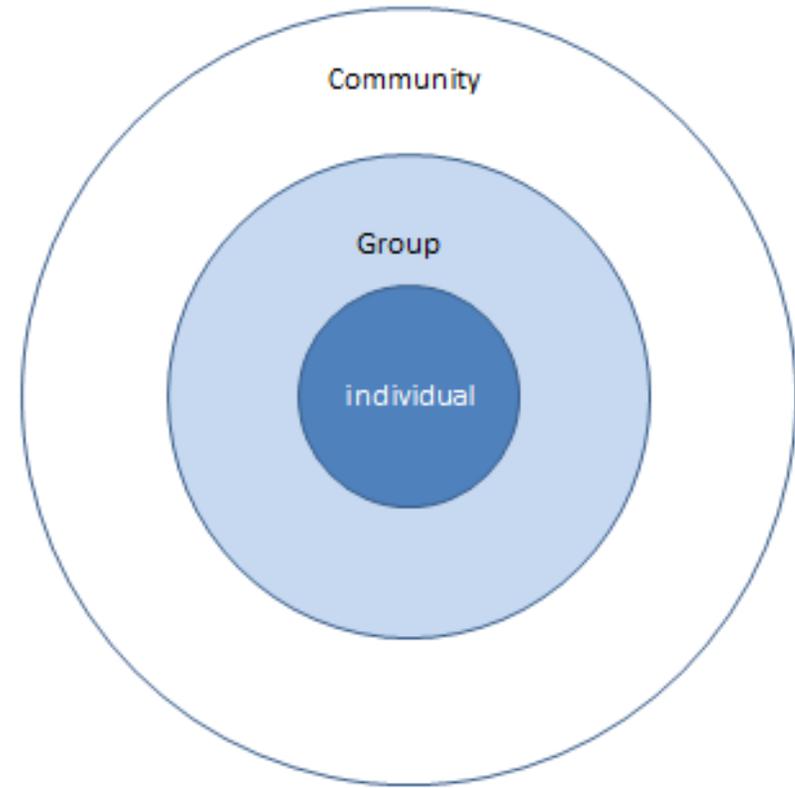


Embodying  
and rehearsing  
personal  
stories

Performing  
in front of  
an audience



Performing  
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audience



## Integrating new insights in the post-performance reflection

“The theatrical performance is a climatic event, bringing forth a tremendous sense of release, exhilaration, and fulfillment. But treading on the heels of this intense rush of excitement is a feeling of emptiness; when a performance ends, the product ceases to exist, etherealizing the actor’s sense of accomplishment. Moreover, the collaborative process inherent in the theatre, fostering intimacy and emotional bonding with one’s fellow actors, makes the loss at the conclusion of the performance all the more potentially formidable” (Emunah, R. (2020). *Acting for real*, p.301).



Ray, P. and Pendzik, S. (2021). Autobiographical therapeutic performance as a means of improving executive functioning in traumatized adults

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<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.599914>



SHADOWS  
&  
LIGHT WITHIN:  
UNTOLD  
STORIES







- *“[It] gave me a distance from myself. I was connected to it but not triggered by it emotionally, like I have been. Lightened the charge of that situation. I was involved in the actors’ doing their parts and applauding the fact it was woven together.”*
- *“Beautiful – it showed me we’re human, and go through things, and [are] able to grow empathy for others. I felt less alone. It’s like birds chirping – a group chirping together – sounds like music.”*
- *“Amazing, very cool, neat. No words to describe. I’m watching and felt exposed in a good way, for the first time, in a positive way. Like a unique feeling, finally, I closed that book. Resolved, without shame, crying, no secrets anymore.”*

# Questions about the therapeutic applications of ATP

- What
- When
- How
- Why
- To whom



