

Growing Our Strong Stories



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This is a project that supports people to grow a positive / proud story in their life.

This project was born in collaboration and consultation with the FAFT mums of 2022 who had a particular interest in brain development and noticed the positive effects on spending time focusing on positive stories.

It is founded in Narrative Practices ideas and linked with neurobiology and how our brains are wired: think of the expression: 'what fires together, wires together'.

Often the stories that take up the most amount of space in our brains are 'negative' stories. They take up highways of neural pathways in our brains. So, we need to be skilled and particular in bringing forward positive stories so that we make the positive stories have bigger pathways in our brains.

This can have really positive outcomes, as it might mean that in times of trouble / trickiness that the positive story will be more availability to be accessed.

The questions take each person on a journey of thinking of one thing they are proud of and adding details to that story – adding people, memories, hopes, values, dreams and images to the story.

I have collated the following questions in the workbook and subsequent images to show the pathway getting bigger (either footprints or little pathways to huge highways!)

Thinking about positive stories in our lives can be new and uncomfortable, so it might be good to do it in small groups or individually, and allow the time for the answers to the stories to come.

The final questions in the workbook (question 8 and 9) are collaborative with a group, and they are there to invite an audience to the story: an invitation for the proud story to be witnessed by others. This is a very powerful way of bringing the story more detail, and further enriching the experience.

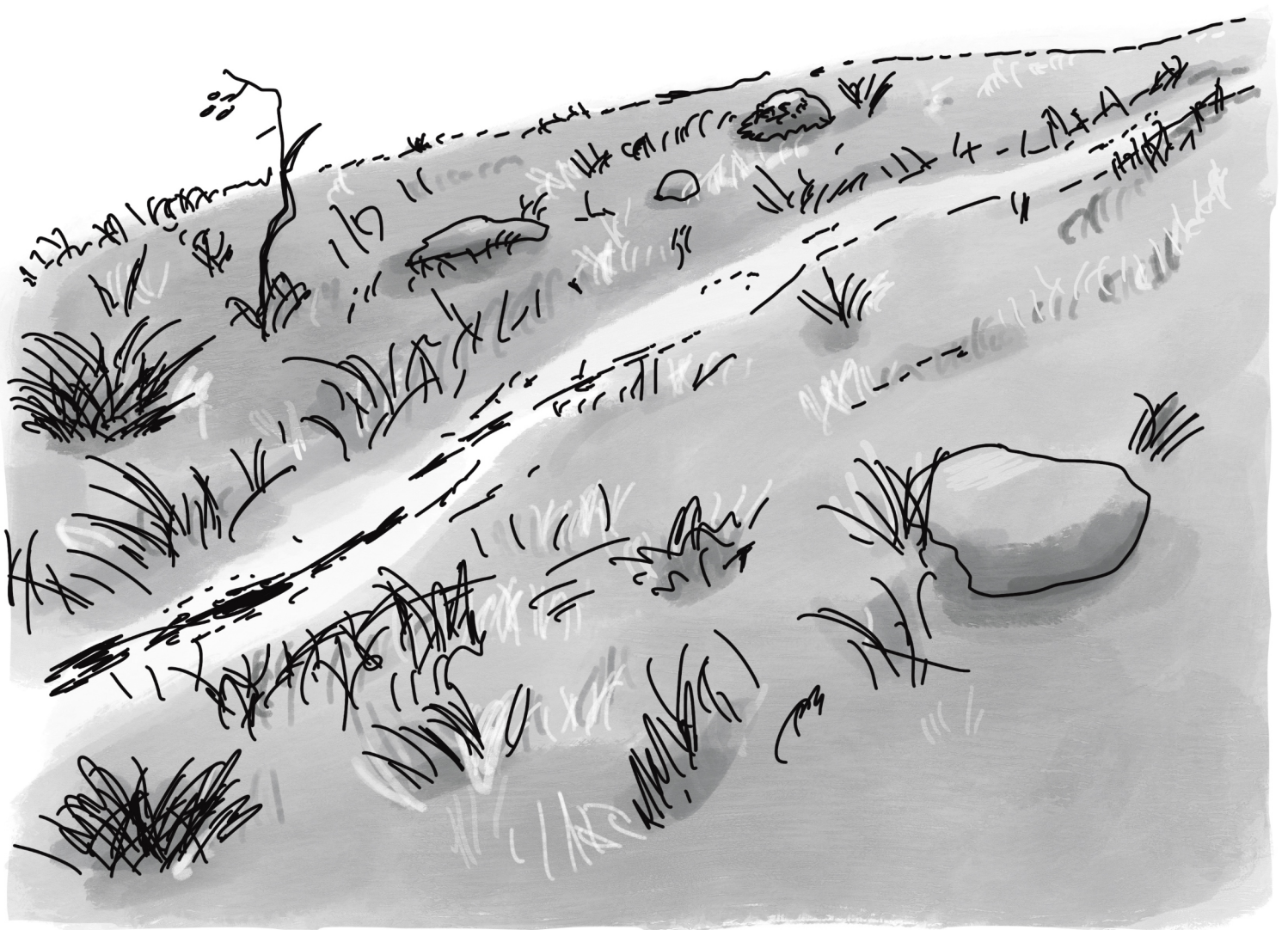
When we share stories and there are points of shared resonance or catharsis with others that takes the stories shared to a new level. It may like to be undertaken in small groups, or with others that the individual identifies as safe and/or supportive.

Otherwise, it would be important to remind those who are listening that this is a respectful exercise and to only share positive responses.

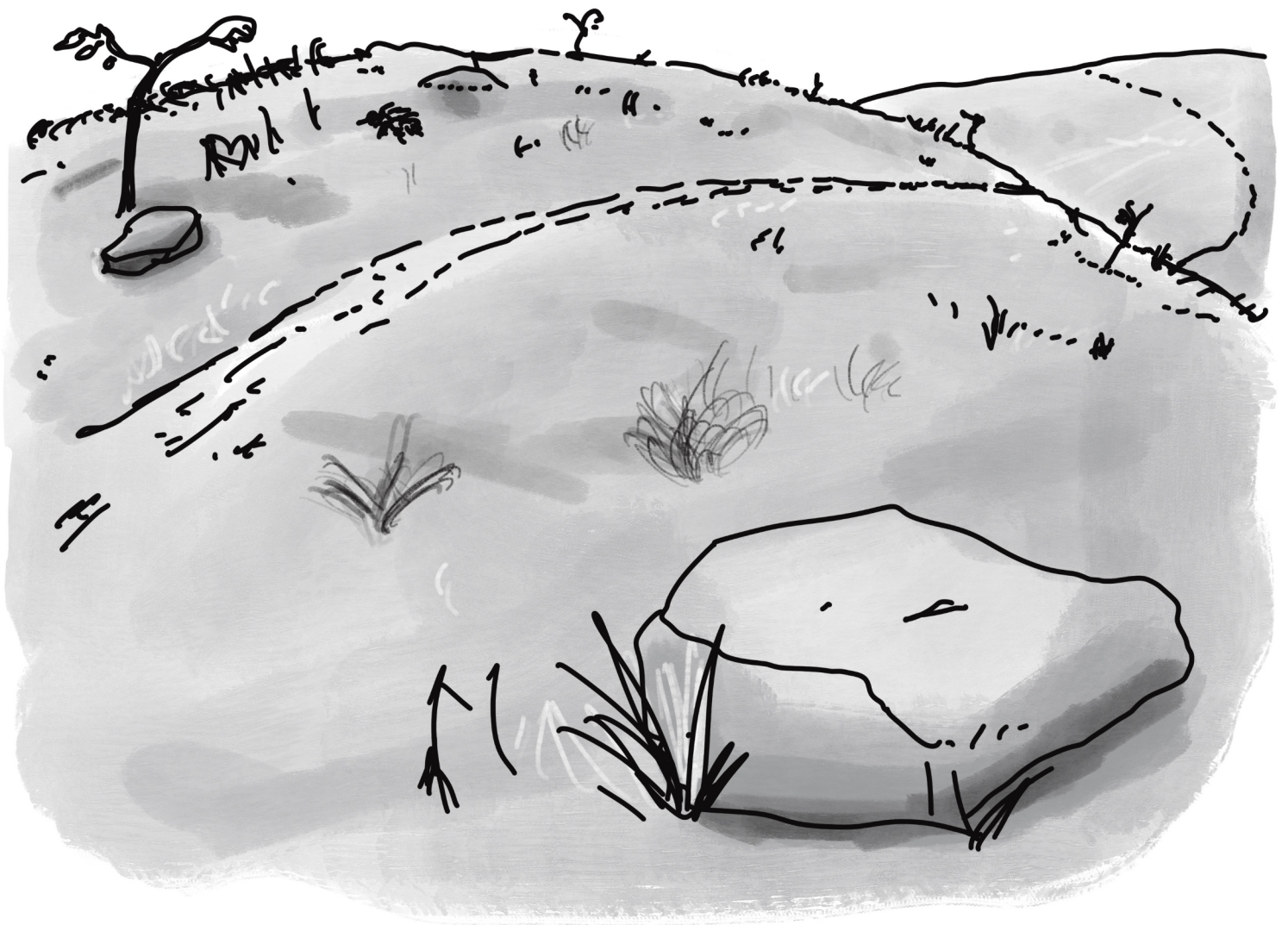
1. What is something you are proud of?



2. Who taught you about this story in our life?



3. What is a memory of this story you could share?



4. What does this story tell us about what is important to you in life?
About what you hold dear and precious in life?
About what your values are in life?



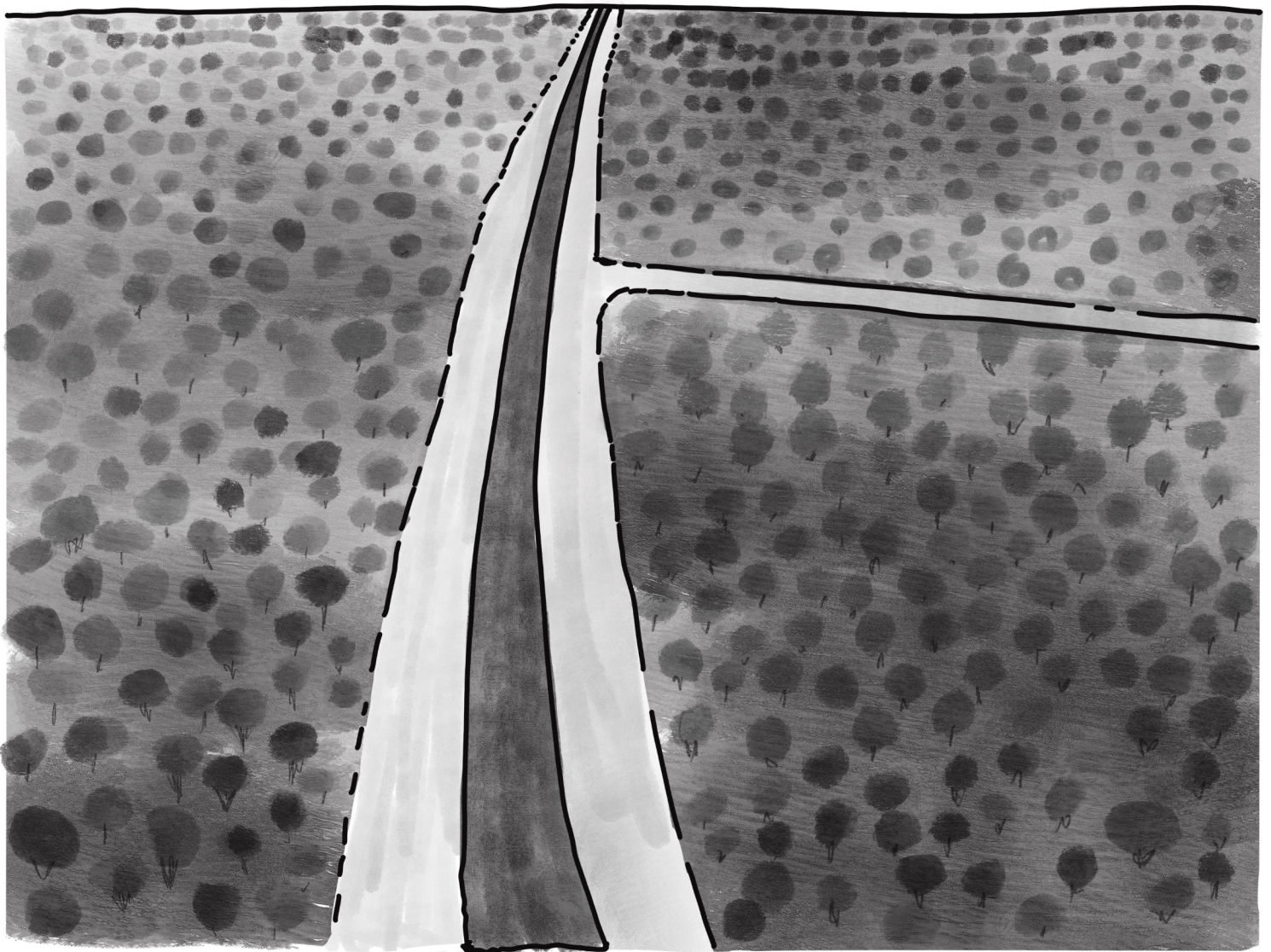
5. How does this story connect you to hopes/dreams/wishes for the future?



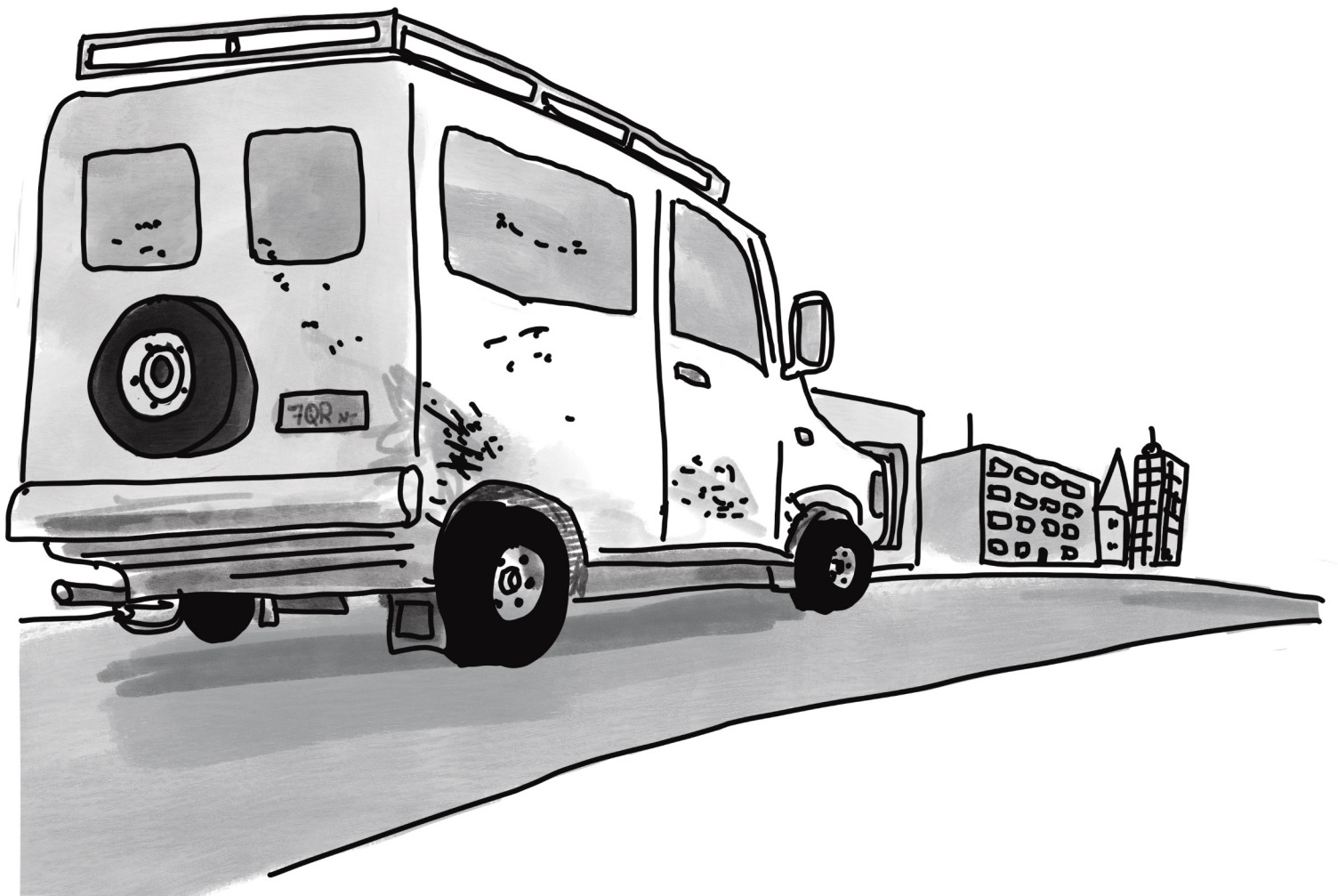
6. Is there anything else you would like to add to this story?

Any other details that you think are important to share about this story in your life?

Is there an image that you think of when you think of this story?



7. Draw, paint or find an image of this story and what it looks like in your life.
Why did you choose that particular image?



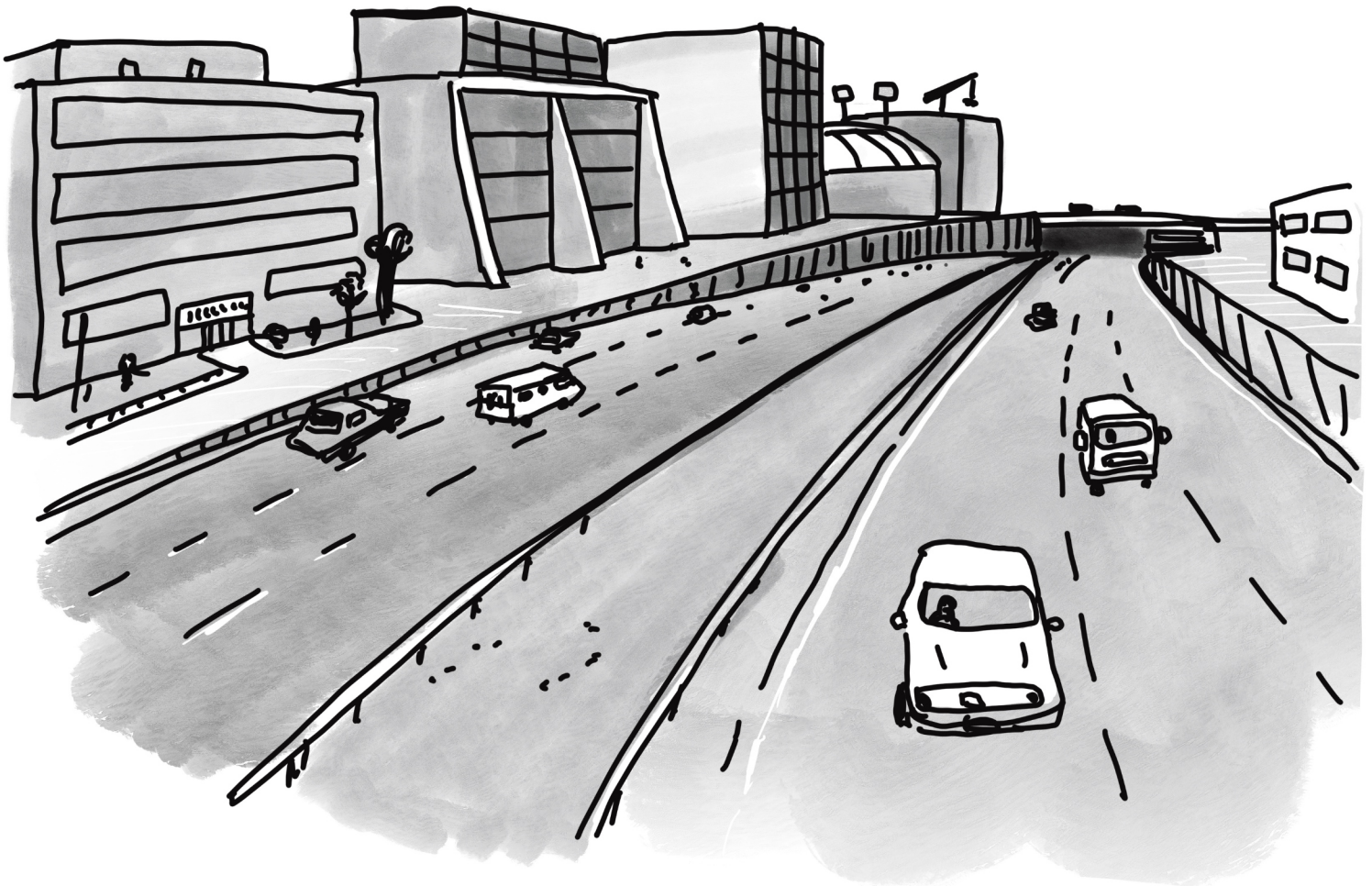
8. QUESTION TO OTHERS IN GROUP:

As you listened to the story what did you hear that stood out for you, or that you were drawn to?

Were there particular words or expressions that caught your interest?

What did the story suggest to you about what might be important values, or beliefs, or hopes to them)?

Is there an image that comes to mind about what you sense is important to them?

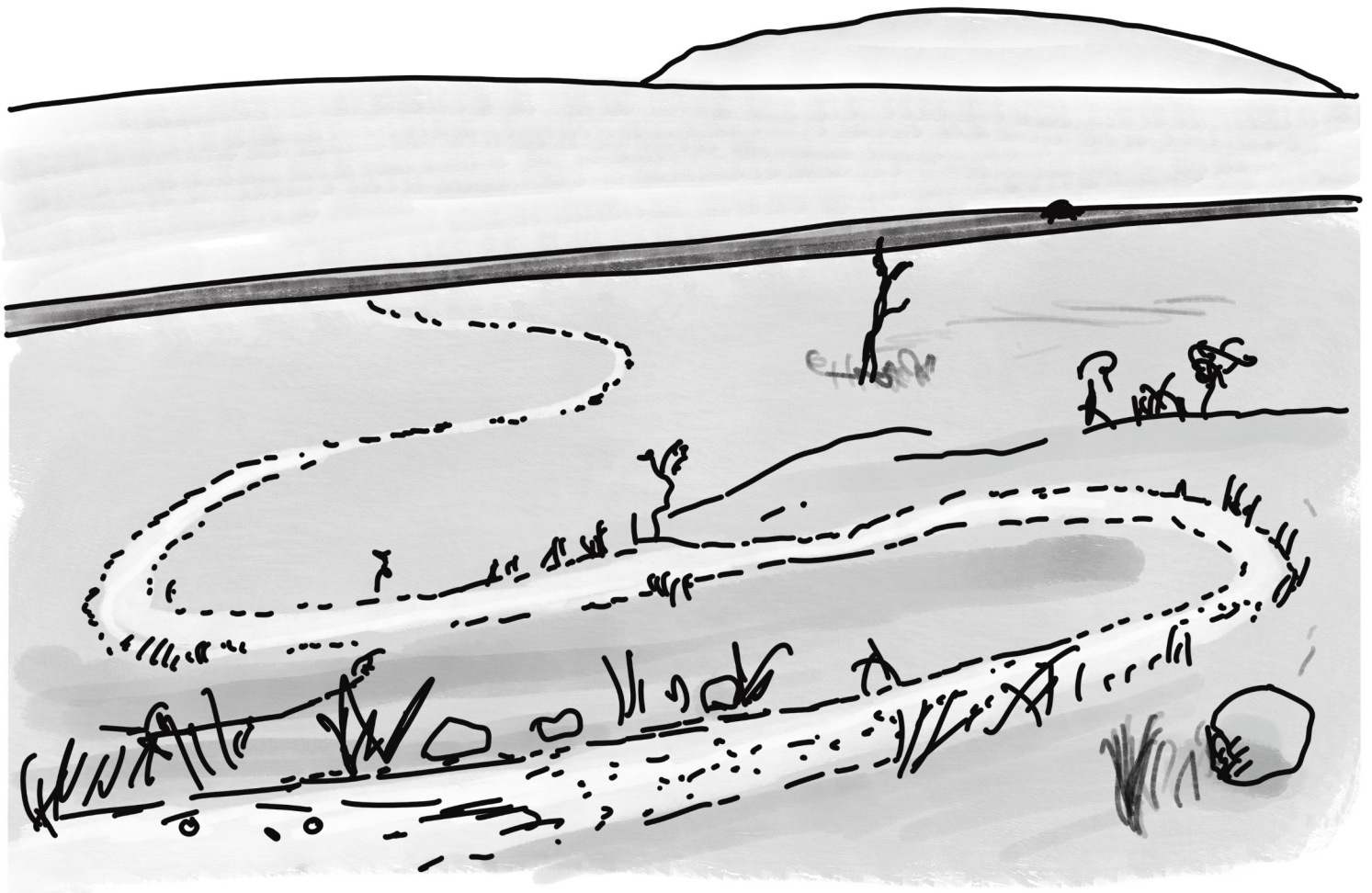


9. QUESTION back to original story teller:

What was it like to say your story out loud?

And to hear what other people had to say?

What are at least two words to describe how that made you feel and why?



Thank you to Justine Gawinygawiny in Ramingining for her expert translation support and ideas. Thanks to Marcey Garrawurra and to the FAFT class of 2022 for their support in developing this project.

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Illustrated and designed by Joshua Santospirito in 2023 (joshuasantospirito.com)

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