

PREFACE

“Books are your friends,” my mother told me as she read to me from the Bible storybook and the Childcraft books. They held stories that, as an only child, I embraced and cherished as my friends. Such has been my fascination with stories. I love listening to and telling stories. I love reading stories. So, imagine my joy when I discovered narrative therapy that honored stories to enrich personal identity.

I knew that just honoring stories of any variety, however, was not enough. I delight now in my journey to tell stories of life along with stories of faith, to extend the storytelling to ministers, students, and scholars.

This book strives to offer a theologically integrated narrative methodology to enrich believers’ stories for those who story with them—pastors, chaplains, community leaders, theological educators, and seminarians.

Stories are populated with people, and so I extend my thanks to many people.

I am thankful to the creators of stories that formed my training as a certified pastoral counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, spiritual director, pastor, theological educator, and counseling center administrator. The first story was my theological education at Princeton Theological Seminary with thanks to the late Seward Hiltner who, until his retirement, was my doctoral advisor, a role then taken by James Lapsley and Don Capps. The second story is my narrative therapy training with thanks to Jill Freedman and Gene Combs at the Evanston Family Therapy Center and the teaching faculty of the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, South Australia—Sekneh Beckett-Hammoud, David Denborough, Chris Dolman, David Epston, Jill Freedman, Stephen Madigan, Carolyn Markey, David Newman, and Cheryl White—where I received a Postgraduate Diploma in Narrative Therapy and Community Work.

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And, finally, thanks to my late parents and grandmother, Mama, Daddy, and Grandma whose voices and stories I carry with me.