

## The Importance of Thoughts, Feelings, and Words

### Attitudes towards physical disabilities

**Jaikku:** We were advised not to make fun of anyone, as this could be very dangerous. I used to watch two young people. One boy made fun of people with disabilities. He would pretend to be like them. The other pretended to walk like a person who had a physical disability.

**Aalasi:** He ended up being like that.

**Jaikku:** I used to watch the other one making fun of someone walking with a disability. He walks exactly like him now.

*My older sister who now lives in Iqaluit gets really hurt when people make fun of her.*

**Aalasi:** She has a problem walking.

*I know of two girls who used to make fun of the way others walked and their legs broke at different times.*

**Aalasi:** We are advised not to discriminate against others. We are told to treat everyone as equals and to respect them. If a person has a physical disability, you should think more about their personality and their abilities, not about their disabilities. When you are interacting with them, try and think of positive things that will keep them uplifted. If we make fun of people, the same thing can happen to us, or to our children or to our grandchildren. That is the truth.

**Jaikku:** There is a middle-aged man in Kinngait who used to make fun of a visiting minister who could not turn his head. He is exactly like him now.

**Aalasi:** Yes, he has the same disability.

**Jaikku:** He cannot turn his head without turning his whole body. He looks exactly like the person he used to imitate.

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### *Is the word *piusirlunniq* used for someone with a disability?*

**Aalasi:** Yes, it has always been used for that.

**Jaikku:** When I was less than a year old, before I started walking, my leg got infected when my mother was carrying me in her *amauti*. As well as having me in the *amauti*, she was also carrying a heavy load on her back when they were walking inland in the summer. Because my leg was positioned improperly, my hip got infected and it affected my leg. Therefore I walk with a limp. My leg was drained by an incision. My mother used to say that I was given a lot of attention when I first started walking because I appeared to walk with a limp. Even though I walked with a limp, I do not recall other children ever making fun of me. I was treated like everybody else. I am really grateful for that, when I think back on it today. I am now elderly and still nobody makes fun of me. My leg never bothered me until recently when my hip started hurting.

**Aalasi:** People who are made fun of do not say anything even though they are really hurting inside. We have heard that when they are made fun of, they think about this. For example if there was something wrong with my face and Mina made fun of it, even though I was hurt, I would not say anything to Mina. I would only think about it. Just before I died, it would affect her. This has always been known.

There was one man who didn't have any strength in half of his body. The hospital driver used to pick him up as he was unable to get to the hospital himself. He was the type of person who just loved everyone. He had a sickness where he could not hold in his tongue and was always drooling. There was this person who made fun of him. After the man died, the person who had made fun and imitated him had a son who turned out exactly like him.

There was another man who caught a raven in a trap. He tied a rock onto its claw, put it in a bag, and put it in the water. The man who did that was mentally deranged for approximately a year. All he could talk about were the claws. That is all he saw.

### *What did he do to the raven?*

**Aalasi:** He drowned the raven in the water by tying a rock to its claws. We are advised not to put animals that belong on the land into the water. We are also not supposed to put animal bones in a fire. It is forbidden to put bones in a fire.

### *Did you say it was forbidden to put animal bones into a fire?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. We were also advised never to put land animal bones into the water. God created the animals and we have to dispose of them properly. Our parents taught us to treat animals with respect as they were given to us for food. That raven sought revenge

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towards the man who had put him in the sea. All this man could talk about were the claws. He was out of his mind for a long time. We have to treat animals, and people who are physically or mentally challenged, with respect. They have very capable minds. If you make fun of them you or your children or your grandchildren could end up like them. It is very risky.

### **Hurtful words and social withdrawal**

*I would like to ask if we can become sick through the misbehaviour of others, or through using unkind words?*

**Aalasi:** I understand what you are saying.

**Jaikku:** If you have been hurt by words, yes.

**Aalasi:** That is a possibility.

**Jaikku:** Even though I walk with a limp, I have never been made fun of all my life. I do not recall my peers making fun of me even once. Even though we were quick to get into fights with other children, no child ever mentioned my disability. I have never seen anyone imitating me so I have never been hurt in that way. I would probably have been hurt and ashamed if people made fun of me, even though I would still be up and about. If people had made fun of me, I would have been hurt in my heart.

**Aalasi:** For example if I said, “That *qallunaaq* from overseas has one eye that is smaller than the other,” and you heard me, you would be hurt in your heart and yet say nothing. You would wonder why I was making fun of you. You would think, “The same thing could happen to Aalasi or to her child.” That is how things work on earth.

No one with a disability should be made fun of. Rather you have to respect the person and love them. You should not even pay attention to the disability. That is the truth. That is how it should be. I mentioned a person whose mouth drooled and whose tongue hung out. When Jaikkupuusi was down south, Palluq, who now had a child like that, used to make fun of him. Palluq got a son whose tongue was so big it would stick out. The child was sent down south as his tongue kept freezing when he was playing outside. His tongue was so big he could not speak. The father of this child had been making fun of Jaikkupuusi before his child was born. This has always been considered dangerous. We are also not to injure or break a dog’s legs or hurt animals unnecessarily. That is what we were taught by our parents.

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**Jaikku:** If we are not going to use animals for food, we were advised not to kill them. We were taught not to torture them or taunt them. Animals were given to us for food.

**Aalasi:** Even if a person has a physical disability, we should not discriminate against them because of that. We should treat them equally so they can have a better life. They become very unhappy if their disability is being made fun of.

**Jaikku:** Elders should also be respected. Even though they pretend not to notice something, it doesn't go unnoticed. Even if they do not say it outright, the message is there. It is even more noticeable as you get older.

**Aalasi:** My cousin works for the housing association. They have to take a lot of wood and other garbage to the dump. My cousin called me one day to seek advice, thinking that I might know more about God's word than he did. Paulusi, the adopted son of Jiini, was the dog-catcher. My cousin said he had seen him throwing live dogs into a fire. He asked me what I thought about this. Shortly after, Paulusi was burned in a fire.

**Jaikku to Aalasi:** Did this happen after he had done that?

**Aalasi to Jaikku:** Yes, he was burned shortly after. We really have to pay attention to our actions.

**Jaikku:** We have to live our lives properly. We have to make sure that not only we, but our children and spouses are on the right track in life. We were advised never to speak badly about others. My grandmother used to tell me never to speak badly about anyone when my children were listening so they would be good towards others and they would feel comfortable in the presence of others. If my husband was listening, I was also not to speak badly of anyone, so that he would not be uncomfortable in their presence as well. If I spoke badly to him about someone, he might not be himself around that person. We women have to take charge as we are the foundation of our homes. This teaching has been around for a long time.

**Aalasi:** Is what we are saying making sense to you?

Yes.

**Jaikku:** What we are talking about not only concerns sickness, it also concerns how life should be lived.

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**Aalasi:** What we are saying needs to be said. You have to learn about more than just sickness.

**Jaikku:** What we are talking about relates to living a good life. We are passing this information on to you, and you can pass it on to others as well.

*I have heard that some words are very painful.*

**Jaikku:** Some words are so painful, they don't merely seem to be words.

**Aalasi:** They are painful. What you say is true. That is why we told you that you should not talk badly about anyone. Words can shatter lives.

*They are like ammunition.*

**Aalasi:** What you say is true. Words can come out quickly like bullets and can be very painful.

**Jaikku:** Today we hear our young people swearing in English. It is as if they are playing with language when they are angry. It is really not very nice to listen to.

*It is awful to listen to.*

**Aalasi:** Even grandmothers are spoken to like that.

**Jaikku:** Young people today even scold the way *qallunaat* do. Even though they are educated, they use bad language. Sometimes I tell young people that they do not know what they are talking about. The real scolding words are *aahaunna* and *aniqpannamiik*.

**Aalasi:** We should not be using those words either, but they slip out sometimes without thinking. If I said *aniqpannamiik* to Bernice, it would mean she deserved being punished in a mean way.

**Jaikku:** Young people do not even know the seriousness of scolding someone anymore. They do not really know the meaning of the words they are using. They do not realize how painful they are, so they go ahead and use bad words.

**Aalasi:** Well, they have learned how to swear in English from the school system. They are not learning that from us. They are learning that from the school.

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**Jaikku:** Even the serious words that were used for scolding are played around with by young people who use them without really understanding their meaning. They are very powerful and very painful. When you know the meaning behind the words, they are very painful, even though they are just words.

*Could you get sick from this?*

**Aalasi:** Yes, words can make a person sick. Words can fill the heart with pain. It is a different type of pain than shock, but it is just as painful to the heart.

*To the mind too.*

**Aalasi:** Children are learning a lot of swear words from television. Some adults do not mind if young people swear.

*If an elder's feelings were hurt, was this dangerous?*

**Aalasi:** This was very dangerous. The elder might think of something bad they wanted to happen to the person who hurt them and this could actually occur.

**Akisu:** We have always been taught to respect elders and speak to them with consideration. Something could happen to you even after the elder had died, if you had been disrespectful. If you had a young child that you worried about when you were sick, they could die before you did if you doubted that anyone would be there to care for them after you died. Either that, or their bones could break. You are not to worry about your child even if you are dying. Do you understand?

*Yes. If I knew I was dying and I worried about what would happen to my child after I died, that could happen.*

**Aalasi:** You are not supposed to do that. You have to leave this to God to deal with. You have to think positively and believe that the child will be well taken care of. You need to be thankful that your child will be in good hands. It is better to think like that.

**Akisu:** The person you were worrying about would constantly be sick after you died, and their bones could even break. In a similar vein, we are not to make fun of those who have physical or mental disabilities, for if we do, this could be revisited on our loved ones after we are gone. The mind is very powerful; especially an elder's mind. This is a saying that has been passed down to us from generation to generation.

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**Aalasi:** We were not only taught ways to deal with illness, we were also taught ways to keep the mind clean.

**Akisu:** When the mind is in turmoil, you can have difficulty sleeping and lose your appetite. When you are under stress, the mind can be very powerful. It can even prevent you from sleeping. Even if you try not to be depressed, if you think too much, your mind can become heavy, and you can completely lose your appetite. That is a known fact. Myself, I have personally experienced loss of sleep and loss of appetite. I guess you are all aware that I have lost two children to suicide.

**Aalasi:** I have heard that Ilaja Naullaq from Pangniqtuuq, who has a limp, is like that because his parents worried too much about him. The mind is very powerful. We should not worry about our children even though we know that we are dying. We have to hand them over to God so he can take care of them. You need to tell yourself that you will no longer be there for the child when you die and accept this. You have to try and have positive thoughts. Do not worry that something bad might happen to them.

*Would this be similar to not grieving too much after one of our children died?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. It should be that way no matter what. You should not grieve for anyone you lose for too long. The deceased has a soul. The soul may end up roaming the earth if we grieve for them for too long.

**Jaikku:** They say if you do this it makes them fall back to earth.

**Aalasi:** Souls start roaming because a loved one won't let the deceased go. They are constantly asking for them.

**Akisu:** The mind is so powerful that it can take over the body.

*Can our minds even exercise control over the soul?*

**Akisu:** Yes. For that reason, we are advised to listen to the advice we are given. There is nothing more that we can do. When we don't let the deceased go, we just make ourselves suffer. Even if we feel hopeless, we have to listen to the advice we are given. We have to try to overcome our grief because if we don't it can overcome our body. The elders' minds are very powerful. We are always taught never to give an elder cause for concern. Even after death, an elder's thoughts may become reality.

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## *Could they cause something bad to happen?*

**Aalasi:** Yes.

**Akisu:** For example, if you treated your mother or grandmother well throughout life, they could reward you with a good life when they die. If you mistreated them or did not listen to them, they could leave you with a bad life. That is how powerful the mind of an elder is. You are advised to treat the elderly with respect. If you take good care of them, they can leave you with a good life. Even if you felt hopeless, they would leave you with a good life, and with the motivation to continue and prosper. If on the other hand, you had given them cause for worry, your body and your mind would experience the consequences. This is an old saying that is well known.

**Aalasi:** Some of what we are saying we hear at church. We hear the words every Sunday. Some of these teachings we have learned from the Bible, some in church and some from our elders.

*Before people became Christians, they believed that the soul could be made to fall back to earth. If we believe in the teachings we receive seriously, can they be used to help us have a healthier mind and body so that this could be prevented from happening?*

**Akisu:** You have all heard of souls. If my mother or my father or my spouse died, and I really, really wanted to see them, I could wait alone in the house for them to come at night. But they would not show up no matter how much I asked them to come because they are not here on earth. They are up in heaven because of their belief in Jesus. Some souls are not like that though. The soul might roam the earth. The only way it can go to heaven is through belief. Sinners are said to be roaming this earth because they are unable to go up to heaven. These souls can show up if they are requested. We do not know if they are here. Those who want to go to heaven repent and they go to heaven. Even if I wanted to see someone who was in heaven, they cannot come. I have heard about someone who begged God to see a deceased person and the deceased asked why he was being bothered. It was the person's mind that tugged at the soul to come down. There are those who have gone to heaven because they were believers. Those who are roaming the earth are a foul sight to see. They are very ugly. These are the ones that are said to be heading to hell. Even though we are here in flesh today, we have made a place with God. There is a way through belief to heaven. Even before there were ministers, our forefathers knew that if you believed in the afterlife, you would achieve it.

**Aalasi:** It is said that they are sometimes seen. You can't see their eyes.

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**Akisu:** I was told by the Anglican ministers that Catholic priests have to remain single and celibate. I was told in my studies as a lay minister that if they didn't remain celibate that they would roam the earth carrying their heads after they died.

**Aalasi:** Priests that didn't remain celibate would wander the earth after they died because they were not saved.

**Akisu:** Because they broke their vow of chastity which they had made to God, they were doomed to roam the earth. This happened to some of our forefathers who broke the *pittailiniit* too. We have the opportunity to go to heaven. When you hear about these things, you may be learning things you did not know before.

**Aalasi:** You can use what you are learning when you are advising others.

**Akisu:** We have heard that the past enables us to understand things in the present and in the future. Although there is nothing we can do about a situation, even though it is scary, you need not know about it. Even though there are scary things happening, we should not worry about them. There is a path which a person can follow to be a good person who gets along with others and loves their neighbours. This is the path that we should try and follow. We should not feel that those who are going through rough times are unfortunate, because these things are meant to happen. We have to be aware of what is happening within and around us, so we can be understanding of others. What we are saying may be just words to you now, but they might be able to help you in the future. For example, Aalasi does not want to hurt me physically because she knows that I am stronger than she is, and if I hit back, she would be no match for me. Even if she can't hurt me physically she can hurt me verbally. You can abuse a person verbally even if you are not doing it physically. We are told to live in harmony with one another.

*If we made someone worry, would it affect them physically, as well?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. A person can be affected physically if the person who made them worry didn't show remorse. If an apology was made and the problem was talked over before the person became affected physically, then nothing would happen to them.

**Akisu:** If a problem was ignored to the point where it did not seem to exist, and then it was brought up, the person could get hurt all over again. It could make things worse.

**Jaikku:** If a person is told the same painful thing over and over again, it can affect the body.

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**Akisu:** If an apology is made, then the person could start to recover.

*If we hang on to our hurts and pains from childhood can that affect our bodies physically as well?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. This is bad. If you keep what has hurt you as a child secret, and the person who has caused the pain has not apologized, you can carry this hurt into adulthood. I think this is true for a lot of adults today. Today when we enter into healing, the cause of the pain resurfaces. If the abuser apologizes, and you have a talk with that person, you can be uplifted.

*It is only recently that we started hearing about healing. Was that done long ago too?*

**Aalasi:** There was no name for it back then. It was known just as having discussions together. For healing to work you have to start talking about all the hurts and pain from your childhood. You have a wound in your mind and it is painful. You are not healed immediately after you start talking. The wound has to heal by talking and crying first. That is how healing works. Even when a person goes into healing as an adult or as a teenager, ongoing discussions are needed.

**Jaikku:** Once a person talks about something, they can let it go. Then they can deal with another issue. You can't deal with all your problems at once. It is too much to deal with everything at once. We are told to take our time and not rush through this process.

**Aalasi:** One of the reasons why some mothers mistreat their children is because the victimization they went through themselves is constantly on their minds, even though they want to treat their children well.

*Were you permitted to cry in front of children? Even though someone hasn't died, we feel like crying sometimes.*

**Aalasi:** We should try not to expose children to that if they are too young to understand.

**Jaikku:** Children should not grow up in an environment where the parents are unhappy. It is different if the mother is crying because of abuse. I grew up watching my mother grieve for her children long after they had died. It was a very unhappy situation. It was very hard to watch her because she was not eating well, and she was very unhappy. Being a child, it was very painful to watch her go through that when nobody was abusing her physically.

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**Aalasi:** Very young children should not be exposed to bad role models. This should never happen. We have said before that we women were not to expose our flesh in front of the children. If we really felt like crying, we should temporarily remove ourselves from our children and go cry somewhere else where we feel comfortable.

**Jaikku:** We were advised never to cry alone outside.

*Do you think we need to learn this information in order to have a strong mind and a resilient body?*

**Aalasi:** You have to learn about this even though it does not concern physical illness. What we are talking about can also destroy our bodies.

*What was done for those who were constantly sighing? I have heard that a person is worrying too much when they sigh a lot.*

**Aalasi:** A person who is constantly sighing has a lot on their mind.

*What was done to help them?*

**Jaikku:** They could help themselves by starting to talk about their problem if they had a heavy heart. They might be sighing because they were not talking about what was on their mind. If they started opening up, even if this was just a tiny bit at first, it could lead to full disclosure. The sighing would eventually stop as the sadness left. This is how I understand it.

**Aalasi:** I used to be mistreated by my in-laws all the time because I could not really make anything, and I could not clean meat or skins. Those were the reasons why my in-laws did not like me. Your grandmother's father Arnaquq visited our place as we lived in the same camp. He said that I seemed to be sighing a lot. Later, he asked your mother to visit me. Your mother came shortly after and told me that her father had said I was sighing a lot and that he wanted her to visit to see what was bothering me. We used to be very fearful back then, and I did not want to tell her why I was sighing, but she was very helpful.

**Akisu:** Aalasi was worried about her in-laws and her inability to do things. She would listen to them talking about her. She would worry about this and it hurt her. She went through this experience herself so she knows what it is like.

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**Aalasi:** Your great-grandfather was very understanding. He always tried to help people in need.

**Akisu:** What she is saying is the truth. She was very worried that her in-laws had no confidence in her. Having a negative attitude can limit your ability. For example if I kept saying you couldn't do something, even though it did not bother you at first, eventually you would stop trying to do it. That is the way it happens. You can become discouraged by the negative things you hear.

*Is that the reason why we have to constantly praise our children?*

**Aalasi:** What a child hears is going to lead him through life.

**Akisu:** You really have to make an effort to be positive around children, especially mothers. Even if what they are doing is not perfect, you should still be proud of them. It makes them really happy. If I keep saying you can't do something, you start worrying about it and it will affect your goals in life. You will stop trying. We can only keep on trying if we receive praise. Even if someone is not perfect, they can get better. Even if we have negative thoughts about our ability to do something, our minds can overcome those thoughts with praise.

*Sometimes it is hard and scary to ask elders questions. They say, "I do not understand what you are saying because you are not speaking proper Inuktitut." That is quite painful. I guess even elders have experienced this.*

**Jaikku:** Yes, we have had those feelings too.

**Aalasi:** There are a lot of people who have felt pain from elders' words.

**Akisu:** People are put down because they cannot say things properly, or they are told that they cannot speak Inuktitut. They should not be spoken to in that manner.

**Aalasi:** Her great-grandfather told me something that was very useful. He often visited our place. I had just given birth to a son for the first time although prior to that I had given birth to a baby that had died. He came and talked to me. What he told me still has an impact on me today. He advised me to show my children a good stable home from the time they started doing things on their own, to the time they could play outside, to the time they were teenagers, to the time that they had spouses. If I did this, they would like going home to me and they would respect me. But if they came home at night and I wasn't home, they would hide their pain in their heart. Children are part of your flesh

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so you have to respect them. You should try and be home for them all the time unless you have an emergency to attend to. That is what he told me. This advice is still useful today. There was an evangelist who came to Iqaluit. He said the same thing. It is good that you are willing to learn how to discriminate the good from the bad.

*You are teaching us a lot.*

**Akisu:** You in turn are teaching us a lot.

**Aalasi:** Yes, we are learning a lot of things from you too. You are not the only ones learning.

**Jaikku:** You are helping us to remember.

**Aalasi:** We have a better idea about what we should teach. It makes us realize what young people today want to learn.

**Jaikku:** We are talking to you about things that we would not ordinarily speak of, things we just think about in our hearts, both good and bad. It makes us feel a lot better. This is how we are supposed to help one another.

*I understand now that words mean a lot to Inuit.*

**Aalasi:** Words have always been cleansing. Words are what has made us Inuit. Words are very important.

**Jaikku:** We are grateful when we are approached by people who need information. It is very rewarding when what we are saying is obviously appreciated.

**Aalasi:** They say that those who are hurt, let out a sob when they die. You should remember this when you deal with someone who has just died.

**Akisu:** They are said to be *manijjugaqtuq*, sobbing.

**Jaikku:** They do this when they are taking their last breath. Because these people were hurt emotionally, they were affected physically to the point where they ended up dying.

**Akisu:** For example if I was constantly berating you, this would cause you pain. That pain could cause you to *manijjugaq*. As you are dying you could be sobbing, and people would know that you had been deeply hurt.

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**Jaikku:** Sometimes I find myself sighing even though no one has done or said anything to me, and I ask myself why I am sighing. You can sigh without any obvious trigger as you get more elderly. As you get older you are more sensitive to things, even to just casual words.

*After children have been crying for a long time, they have trouble catching their breath. Is that what you mean by manijjugaqtuq?*

**All:** Yes.

**Jaikku:** A child starts doing this after they start calming down after crying a lot. It has always been like that and will continue to be. There are some things that are not going to change.

*What is the meaning of the word avvutisimajuq?*

**Aalasi:** A person who is *avvutisimajuq* is a person who used to have friends, but who no longer does. They no longer participate in things. They might have gone to school but they no longer do. It is someone who people used to talk to but no longer do. The cause of this withdrawal could be rooted in their childhood.

*Should those with disabilities be treated with the same care as elders and children?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. Everybody should be concerned about them. They need to be well taken care of. Those with physical disabilities should not be made to worry.

**Jaikku:** Those who are mentally challenged are more aware of the true nature of a person than we are.

**Aalasi:** They seem to remember certain things better than we do.

**Jaikku:** They are more aware of people around them than we are.

**Aalasi:** They can even read our body language. They know if someone is genuinely friendly. I am sure you see the homeless people hanging around in the store all day. They start hanging around outside the store on warmer days. These are the people who you really need to care about.

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**Jaikku:** The ones who hang out outside the store do not really have a home. They seem to be *avvutisimajut*.

**Aalasi:** They watch people. They have a lot on their minds. I have never had a lot of money myself. Even though I have lived here a long time, and I am always running out of money, I have always make an effort to give these people money for coffee. I try and give them money so they can put some food in their stomachs. I know that God will reward me in his own way. What I hand over to them may seem small, but to them it is very big and it brings joy to their hearts. They start feeling less isolated because they are so grateful.

**Akisu:** Even if you just look their way and smile, they know you care.

**Jaikku:** When someone speaks to you, or looks at you face to face, this is always uplifting. It is good for the mind and the body. A person feels better if they are given unexpected attention. Even one kind word, can make a big difference. When young children say, "*Jaikkuungai*, Hi Jaikku," I am most grateful to them.

**Aalasi:** You really need to understand that you have to lead a good life. I used to spend the nights at the hospital with a man who was an adult, although not a young man anymore. This happened four or five years ago. He made me realize that we have to be more aware of how we live our life. *Miaji Piita* and I used to stay with him because there was no one else to sit with him even though he was from here. He had been sick for a long time. After spending time with him, I really wanted to live a better life.

Shortly before he died he became delirious. He started talking about the things he had done but which he had no power to remove. Death was imminent. He was delirious and was going through a very hard time. He was making axing motions at his wife who was not there. He kept shouting at her to go and get some money. He was acting as though his breathing tube was a bottle of alcohol. He kept taking invisible money out from under his pillow. He kept asking for someone to go and pick up something for him.

During his life he was constantly hitting others, gambling all night, looking for bingo money, calling around looking for his wife and leaving his wife outside. He had done all these terrible things but there was nothing he could do about them. He was strapped onto his bed. He was all bones because he had lost so much weight. He was still very strong though, even though he was in that condition. He received his strength from Satan. He needed to talk about all these things he had done before he became delirious but he did not. Once he became delirious, he started reliving the things he had done. Everything he had done here on earth became visible in his delirium. He finally lost his strength and died. As he was dying, he was rambling on about where he was

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headed. He said three ladders had fallen down that he could have used if he had repented. He kept ranting against the ministers and the church. He was saying that Jesus didn't exist and asking why the ministers lied about this. He was totally devastated and destroyed in the end because he hadn't repented. This made me want to give my life to God. This man was always out in the evenings. He was never home. He was just concerned with stealing.

*I have heard that some mothers who are married and raising children have secrets that they are ashamed to talk about. They end up getting physically sick even though the doctors cannot find anything wrong with them.*

**Aalasi:** Yes, I have been through that many times. What she said earlier about persons keeping secrets from their childhood because they are ashamed or embarrassed and not talking about them is true. If the perpetrator has also never apologized or talked about this, it is only when he recognizes where the burden he carries comes from, that he can start to get better. What you have just said is really true. Some people repeatedly go to the hospital and yet no one can find anything wrong with them. They are given all types of medication which apparently are of no use. It is best if the person talks out their problems.

**Jaikku:** It is very heavy when you have a lot on your mind and you are not sure how to talk about it.

*If a woman tried to hold in what was bothering her, could something happen to her children?*

**Aalasi:** Yes, that could happen. She could pass the problem on to her children.

*Were there two or three people identified in a camp that were available if a person needed to speak to someone?*

**Aalasi:** Even now there are people who can be approached. If a person finds someone easy to talk to, they go back to see them because the person helps them feel better. There are some people that are requested even in the middle of the night. A person who is trustworthy is often requested. It is as if a person feels physically better after talking to someone they trust.

**Jaikku:** My mother was a person that people would approach with their problems. She was unable to walk. I knew that she was often visited by people who needed someone

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to talk to. They would seek her advice. She would be fetched by boat at times from other camps. Even in the winter, people would come and get her. I used to travel with my mother when she was requested.

*Did people pray for those who offered advice and support? When I tried to help at the court, my father prayed for me so that I would not be affected by anything that was said to me.*

**Jaikku:** Yes, of course. There were people that would seek advice from my mother and she would provide it. There were some people who had lived a bad life, and changed for the better. Once they had found a better way to live, it is as if they left their bad life behind. I do not think one can totally leave a bad life behind, but a person could live a better life afterwards. There are not too many people that you can seek advice from. The ones that were approached knew how to keep a confidence. Even though I was a child, when people told things to my mother, I kept the stories to myself. My mother died after we moved here so she did not help many people in this area.

*Perhaps because your mother was unable to walk she used helping others as a way to keep herself meaningfully occupied; or maybe people came to talk to her because they knew she was able to keep a confidence.*

**Jaikku:** Yes. Back then there weren't many Bibles, but my mother used to read the one she had access to. My mother used to read it from cover to cover as she could not walk and didn't have much else to do. People that are often approached by others do not talk about what they hear.

*We can sense when people are welcoming. Has it always been like that?*

**Jaikku:** It has always been like that. There are people who are very welcoming. It is easy to listen to them when they speak as well. Some people think they are different from others but they are not. You think to yourself, "They are like me. They have gone through what I have gone through."

*Although it wasn't part of my job I sometimes gave advice to those I worked with. Although I wanted to take training in this area, since it was not part of my job description I wasn't allowed to do so.*

**Aalasi:** Yes. It is as if we have rules about everything now. We did not live by following rules. It seems as if the rules today are just in the way.

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*Do the unikkaaqtuat, the old stories, contain information about leading a good life too?*

**Jaikku:** They are very useful, even though they just seem to be stories.

**Aalasi:** We did not listen to *unikkaaqtuat* growing up. It was only when I moved here that I started hearing them. My parents advised me against listening to stories so I do not know very much about them.

**Jaikku:** There are two kinds of *unikkaaqtuat*; ones that are just fictional tales and stories, and ones that are based on real events. The first type is just made up, the other is based on real life and ways of doing things. Some of the fictional stories have some truth mixed in them.

**Aalasi:** Right now we are telling you stories about things that have really happened that are pertinent to living a good life. We are telling you these things so that they can be developed into teaching materials.

**Jaikku:** Some *unikkaaqtuat* are used for entertainment. We learned them from each other when we were young, as well as from our parents. We would teach each other the key phrases from the stories.

*Uqaujjiyarutiit, advice on living a good life*

*Do you think it is true or just a saying that if a family member is sick we are not supposed to pretend to cry?*

**Aalasi:** We used to be advised not to pretend to cry if someone was sick or they might die.

**Jaikku:** I believe that is the truth. I know that personally. Children are not supposed to pretend to cry. If they did so, someone would die soon. They were not supposed to do that.

**Aalasi:** If children were doing that, you had to slap them in order to make them stop.

**Jaikku:** You had to make them have a reason to cry.

*Is it true that you were advised against carrying rock babies?*

**Aalasi:** I used to scrape my back from carrying rocks as babies.

**Jaikku:** I would hit the back of my head trying to remove rock babies.

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**Aalasi:** I used to scrape my back because there was nothing to wrap the rock in. When we were traveling by dogteam I hid my rock doll and brought it along. It broke when my mother put it down suddenly. She scolded me for carrying it. We used to use rocks for dolls.

*Were you told not to use rocks for dolls or you would get a baby that was really heavy?*

**Jaikku:** We weren't advised not to do this.

**Aalasi:** I do not remember if we were advised against doing this or not. I remember that babies were not allowed to hold the *tasiqqut*, the stretching tool, or else they might grow up to be liars. I do not remember being advised against playing with rock dolls though. It is different from one community to the other.

**Jaikku:** We all used rocks as babies.

**Aalasi:** We even used puppies for babies. We used to carry them in our *amauti* as we had no other dolls.

*You didn't have any real babies to carry around?*

**Aalasi:** Parents were reluctant to let us carry what few babies there were, although we were occasionally allowed to carry them on our backs. There was always a scarcity of babies.

**Jaikku:** Sometimes during the spring, a number of people in the camp would go out, and we girls would go around visiting and ask to carry babies. We would act as messengers for our friends and ask if they could carry the baby. It used to be a lot of fun carrying babies.

**Aalasi:** Today, it seems you can only get help if you pay for it, even if you are related. This stops people from helping each other. It used to be a lot of fun helping people. We did not think of getting paid back then.

**Jaikku:** There was a scarcity of people to help.

**Aalasi:** Back then we were really willing to help with anything: softening skins, fetching ice, fueling the lamp. Today, people only help if they are going to get paid. This has destroyed people's willingness to help.

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**Jaikku:** All people think about today is money.

**Aalasi:** Yes, the only help we get today is help you have to pay for. It is very difficult when you need help.

*Were you advised not to sleep over at another place or your father's big toe would follow you?*

**Aalasi:** Our father's toe would get restless. I really believe this saying. We were also told not to fall asleep with our clothing on in case an unseen being would play with our insides.

*Were you told not to wash your face before going to bed or someone might kiss you while you slept?*

**Jaikku:** I haven't heard that.

**Aalasi:** Naujuk's family keeps the traditions alive. Because she is from that family, she has a lot of knowledge. Akpalialuk and Naujuk, who used to live across the bay, were very knowledgeable.

*We used to be advised not to wash our face before going to bed or a tuurngaq, a shaman's spiritual helper, might come and kiss us while we slept.*

**Jaikku:** Back then, we used to use puppies for our dolls. We would make the dogs pee as if they were our babies. We would touch their penises and the dogs would end up peeing. We would not even wash up after and yet we never got sick.

*Did you learn anything from playing dolls with puppies and rocks?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. It was a way to learn parenting skills. We would practice making clothing and *kamik* for *inuujait*, little dolls. That was how we learned, playing with dolls and playing house.

*Were you advised to watch what you ate to make sure you didn't eat maggots, to ensure that you didn't gain weight?*

**Aalasi:** I have heard that you can gain weight from eating maggots. There is no way I can eat them. I ended up in the hospital once because I was afraid of a maggot. I fainted when I saw a maggot, while I was eating *mattaaq*. Maggots are like ghosts for me. I really fear them.

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*Didn't you see it moving?*

**Aalasi:** I wasn't paying attention and my mother was out. My father was blind. We had a visitor, and my father asked if there was any meat. There was some *mattaaq* on the floor so we ate with the visitor. Someone saw a maggot on me and I fainted. I only regained consciousness in the hospital.

*I have heard that you can gain weight from eating them.*

**Aalasi:** They used to say that you could gain weight from eating them. I have heard of maggots in aged cached meat being so numerous that you could hear them swarming. People scooped them up and ate them.

*Where did they come from?*

**Jaikku:** They are everywhere.

**Aalasi:** I heard about some people who survived by eating maggots from old meat caches. I heard that story on television. They just ate them raw.

*Did they eat them because they were hungry?*

**Aalasi:** Yes. They ate them because they didn't have any food.