Prologue 8

A simple methodology that makes great things possible 14
A cyclical dynamic of change in five phases 16
The freedom to be, without labels and medical files 18
The first steps 19

1 **Starting** 22

Breaking through patterns of habit 25
Inspired to take action 28
Dealing safely with the unpredictable 33
Tips for practice 35

2 **Growing** 36

Growing: a multi-dimensional process 38
Shared Reading as a free space for growth 40
The story as a zone of experience 42
The conversation space during the breaks in the reading 44
Mirror neurons 44

Expanding the mental-emotional space 50
In education, care & support, and therapy 52
In Shared Reading 54
The therapeutic power of Shared Reading 56
Imagination 56
Beyond the pain point 57
Flexible distance for difficult themes 59
Embracing the shadow side and unreachable experiences 61
An associative process 63
Tips for practice 65

3 **Harvesting** 68

A time to harvest: gathering what you have rightly earned 69
The harvest of Shared Reading 72
Increased possibilities 72
Seeing the universal in the personal 74
Safety 78
Transfer: the reading companion as a parent figure 80
Strength 85
Building blocks for a caring society 87
Powerful therapeutic effects without high costs 90
The necessary conditions for harvesting 91
Slowness and serenity 91
Giving the participants the freedom they need 96
Tips for practice 99

4 Learning 100

Sifting and letting go 102
Clearing the clutter from your mind 104
Letting go and keeping hold of fragments: dementia 107
Shared mental-emotional space as a learning space 111
Neuroplasticity: flexible brains 112
No obligation to learn 117
Letting go of rigidity in care organisations 121
Tips for practice 126

5 Relaxing 128

Re-energising the depths of your being 130
A society in overdrive 132
    Burnout 135
Shared Reading as a process of deepening 136
Taking people seriously 142
Tips for practice 144

Epilogue 146

The cycle of healing and integration 151
    Het Lezerscollectief 152
    Starting with Shared Reading? 153
Sources for the literary fragments 155