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Robin I. Steele
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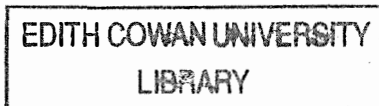
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**A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of/in Transformation:
An Embodied and Creative Exploration of Therapeutic Change,
through Psychophonetics Psychotherapy**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
(Interdisciplinary), Regional & Professional Studies, Edith Cowan University,
Bunbury, Western Australia.

June 2005

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

A review of recent literature on therapeutic change reveals a growing body of research which focuses on what works from the client's point of view in facilitating positive change. This longitudinal study addresses the need for further research into the meanings of therapeutic change itself, especially as lived from the client's perspective.

A phenomenological and hermeneutic approach is used to capture the rich complexity and holistic nature of therapeutic change through Psychophonetics psychotherapy. It centres on the individual meanings of therapeutic change, from the client's perspective, as a consequence of participating in (and out of) Psychophonetics (previously called Philophonetics) psychotherapy, over a period of about one year. In the therapy sessions, the client's experiences of change were explored within and beyond talk therapy, using a range of creative and expressive non-verbal modes of knowing, such as body awareness, gesture, movement, visualisation and sound therapy, as well as drawings, paintings, poetry, and clay-work.

Six men and women completed a total of four open-ended, semi-structured in-depth interviews during, and after completion of therapy. The general research question asked participants to describe in as much detail as possible how they perceived their experience of therapeutic change. The interview transcripts were studied, using an embodied and intuitive empathy-in-action research method. Activities and soul processes (as transformed life processes) were identified and portrayed with in-depth thick descriptions, and with creative artistic expressions, of four participants' stories of change over time.

Through hermeneutic interpretation, the research process develops as a transformatory process revealing and creating an holistic understanding of the meanings and mystery of therapeutic change. It incorporates the complex, multi-

dimensional perspectives of the human being, as body, soul and spirit. The evolving nature of the study forms into three main parts: “Discovering the way-bodying forth,” comprises four participants’ stories of change over time; “crossing a threshold” reveals the central importance of the “I am” and how we respond to experience, to make meaning from this; and the third part, “the unfolding of enfolding” shows how the “I” can awaken through thinking, feeling and willing. This comes from the participants’ stories, where three types of therapeutic issues are identified and described, as interweaving with each other and leading to a more authentic expression of the “I am” in relationship to self, others and the world.

A reflective dialogical process is engaged with, through supervisory team meetings. These conversations were tape-recorded, transcribed and extracts are included in the study, to show how we all can contribute as participants in the activity of re-searching change. In addition, reflective summaries written by the supervisors are included in the epilogue. Re-searching self, is an integral part of the study, as an ongoing embodied and ensouled parallel process, showing how attentiveness to the transformative power of the inner life, becomes a source for a “living thinking” and “living methodology,” in which the whole human being participates.

This in-depth inquiry leads to a greater understanding of the meanings of interpersonal change and intrapersonal change processes, which offers an increased integrative and holistic understanding into the essential meanings and creative possibilities of therapeutic change.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
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Date

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PROLOGUE

A good traveller has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving.
 A good artist lets his/her intuition lead him/her wherever it wants.
 A good scientist has freed himself/herself of concepts and keeps
 his/her mind open to what is.

Lao-Tzu

God help us to change. To change ourselves
 and to change our world. To know the need for it.
 To deal with the pain of it. To feel the joy of it.
 To understand the journey without understanding
 the destination. The art of gentle revolution.

(Leunig, 1993, p. 8)

We have the will to work;
 That into this our work, may flow
 Whatever from out of the spiritual worlds -
 Working in soul and spirit,
 Life and body -
 Strives to be truly human within us.

(R. Steiner, in Gladstone, 1997, p. 34)

The embracing of change is the embracing of your soul –
the beauty of your soul is the most precious gift you have.

Margaret, 2003

Shh oo ahh

I am the warm winds,
I am the shifting sands,
I grow and change, forever
The landscape expands.

I am the warm winds,
I am the river that flows,
I move and change forever,
The landscape grows.

Robin, 1993

What else should our lives be but a continual series of beginnings, of
painful settings out in the unknown, pushing off from the edge of
consciousness into the mystery of what we have not yet become.

David Malouf (1978, p. 135)

PART A

DISCOVERING THE WAY – BODYING FORTH



Figure 1. The hand - a gift of love for all beings.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING AND ORIENTING

The world is many things, and no single framework can hold it all neither science nor art, neither analysis nor intuition. We need harmony between science and the spiritual, between the subjective and the objective (Cytowic, 1993, p. 227).

Purpose of the Research

We now live in an era that is rapidly changing (Mahoney, 2000), in which we experience greater complexities, requiring us to find different ways to change within ourselves, as well as outwardly in the world. The purpose of this longitudinal, phenomenological and hermeneutic research study, is to capture the rich complexity and holistic nature of therapeutic change, through psychophonetics psychotherapy. The study centres upon the individual meaning of therapeutic change, from the client's perspective, as a consequence of participating in (and out of) psychophonetics psychotherapy over a period of about one year.

The study comprises participants who participated in and completed a number of sessions in short term therapy. Psychophonetics psychotherapy incorporates methods utilising drawings, paintings, clay work, body awareness, gesture, movement, visualisation and sound therapy. The aim was to explore the clients' experience of change beyond talk therapy, using a range of creative and expressive non-verbal modes of knowing.

The process of in-depth inquiry led to a greater understanding of the meanings of change and change processes in the therapeutic situation. The findings of the study contribute to the expanding body of knowledge reporting the client's experience of meaningful change, and how therapists and researchers can incorporate the indications arising from this into their practice.

Background

The research focus developed out of my personal experience as a mother, teacher, phonetics counsellor and psychotherapist, and as an adult educator/trainer. Being a mother of now adult children, and also working as a teacher/supervisor in early childhood for over thirty years, I not only observed how children grew and changed as part of their development but also how the influences of others can affect how they change over time. I also facilitated adults in personal development courses, in three year professional counselling and psychotherapy training courses, and have worked with many clients in personal counselling sessions over the last fifteen years. During this time I had the privilege of facilitating and witnessing people making profound changes in their lives. I also have been through many changes in my life and a brief overview of my journey is published in the book: *“The Way of Women: Challenges and Transitions Found on Our Life’s Journey”* (Steele, 2002). To give you a sense of how my background contributes to the forming of who I am, this overview is included in Appendix G. I decided to focus my interest on change and locate it in doing a PhD so as to develop my research skills and my identity as a researcher. My interest in doing this research was primarily to consolidate my knowing and understanding more clearly and to illuminate the many subtleties and dimensions in the nature of change in the human being, as body, soul and spirit.

A literature search revealed that there is very little published research on the clients' experiences of change as it is lived, through the therapy process, particularly from a phenomenological perspective (Carney, 1984; Cobb, 2002; Sherwood, 2001; Terry, 1995). Studies that do describe the client's perspective, utilize qualitative research methodology that are often retrospective of the experience being studied (Elliott, 1984; Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999; Miller & Duncan, 2000; Prochaska, 1999; Rice & Greenberg, 1984). These studies are often based on self-report type questionnaires and researchers rating responses from observation, rather than from direct in-depth descriptions of the client's experiences in face to face interviews. Extensive research on how people change, has been done in regards to the common factors approach, that is, the elements of effective therapy shared by all orientations (Hubble et al., 1999; Lambert, 1992;

Lambert & Bergin, 1994; Miller & Duncan, 2000). I found these approaches limited in their ability to capture the depth of complexity, richness and uniqueness of the client's experience.

A phenomenological and discovery-oriented approach suits this inquiry into subjective experiences, and provides a way to explore the question of how therapeutic change happens (Neimeyer & Resnikoff, 1982). This was done by asking volunteer clients to become research participants, to describe their experience of change, over time (Greenberg, 1991; Mahrer, 1988; van Manen, 1990). By undertaking research in the area of therapeutic change, I hope to discover from the client's experiences and perceptions of change, a more in-depth understanding of this phenomenon.

Significance of the Study

“Human change is a complex and dynamic process” (Mahoney, 2003, p. xi). Defining what change is needs further research, hence the relevance of this study (Carney, 1984; Gilbert, 2002; Hanna, 2002; Miller & Duncan, 2000; Prochaska, 1999). We still do not know exactly how people change and what makes psychotherapy effective (Lambert & Bergin, 1994; Orlinsky, Grawe, & Parks, 1994; Strupp, 1988), and a review of the research literature shows that the views we have on human change are changing (Gilbert, 2002; Hubble et al., 1999; Mahoney, 1991). For instance, within and outside of the context of therapy: “outcome studies have taught us relatively little ... about how people change” (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992, p. 1102). Very little in-depth exploration has been done, in how clients experience change, in and between therapy sessions, and what difference this makes in their lives (Prochaska, 1999).

Other studies in the field of therapeutic change have mainly focused on improving the therapist's interventions on the client (Greenberg, Watson, & Lietaer, 1998; Mahoney, 1991; Norcross, 2000; Prochaska, 1999; Wampold, 2001). By exploring and describing the client's experiences and perceptions of change during and after therapy, I (as the researcher), aim to maintain a close relationship with their experience, as it influences how I think, write and make meaning. This

allows a parallel emphasis on the therapeutic relationship as it might compare with my research relationship with the participants. Thus, I am making a contribution to how phenomenological research is undertaken and weave this process throughout the thesis.

The participant's experience and perceptions of therapeutic change, across a range of presenting issues, are explored and commented on in context. This thereby, may offer a greater understanding of the subtleties and depths of meanings regarding therapeutic change processes. To my knowledge, this research study is the first of its type in Australia. The only other major phenomenological research study that includes psychophonetics, is by Jutta Eggers (2003) in South Africa, who completed an object-relational study of the experience of philophonetics-counselling. Most of the research studies reviewed are drawn from the American literature as there is a dearth of phenomenological studies on this topic, thus emphasising the need for further research to be undertaken.

Research Question

A phenomenological approach provides a way of studying the question of how change happens as it: "is flexible and fluid in its approach" (Rice & Ezzy, 2001, p. 2); inquires into subjective experiences (Spinelli, 1998); is relevant for understanding how clients make meaning (Heppner, Rosenberg, & Hedgespeth, 1992) and; people create meaning, which determines and explains their behaviour (Neimeyer & Resnikoff, 1982). Phenomenology asks the question: "what is the nature or meaning of something" (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). My intention is exploratory and discovery-oriented in order to allow for new perspectives, and is done by asking a number of people about their experience of change (Garfield, 1990; Greenberg, 1991; Mahrer, 1988; van Manen, 1990), with open-ended questions (Appendix C), in a series of four semi-structured interviews with each participant, during and after therapy (Elliott, 2001). I asked each participant to describe in as much detail as possible, how they perceived their experience of change, in relation to the therapy.

The research question can be summarised in the following objectives:

- to discover the significant therapeutic changes as described by the participants in the context of their therapeutic process.
- to describe how change occurs for the participant clients in the session, between the sessions, and after the completion of therapy;
- to explore how the participants can best describe their experience verbally and non-verbally, using additional mediums of expression;
- to explore the meanings of therapeutic change; and
- to discuss any implications, based upon the research material.

I hope that therapists and researchers may gain additional insights and understanding into the differing perspectives of the ways people change during the therapeutic process, which will add richness to the body of current research, for therapeutic, educational and social benefits. The process of change for me, as the researcher was profound, as it confirmed the importance of utilising my parallel process as a source of knowing, as it informed and changed how the thesis was written. That is, the process of re-searching self, is an integral part of the study, as an ongoing embodied and ensouled parallel process, showing how attentiveness to the transformative power of the inner life, becomes a source for a “living thinking” and “living methodology,” in which the whole human being participates.

Definition of Terms

Psychophonetics holistic counselling and psychotherapy.

Psychophonetics (previously called philophonetics-counselling) is a bodily and soul oriented expressive and artistic therapy, which embraces an holistic view of the human being, as a living body, soul and spirit. It was developed in the 1980's by Yehuda Tagar, and has its theoretical and methodological roots based in the spiritual work of Rudolf Steiner in Anthroposophy and psychosophy, as well as in humanistic psychology, and the expressive arts (Birch, 1997; Crowley & Crowley, 1992; Steele, 2004; Tagar, 1993a, 1997). Psychophonetics is the development of philophonetics into a modality of counselling, psychotherapy and coaching. It is a phenomenological approach to human experience that facilitates

the client in a process of active exploration, self-discovery, and empowerment, to become more conscious in their own knowing and way of being in the world (Steele, 2004; Tagar, 2001). Each session combines a client-centred verbal approach with an action phase that incorporates more experiential, creative and expressive methods. This approach also belongs in, and has similarities with, the action therapies such as the expressive, experiential and gestalt therapies.

Psychophonetics psychotherapy has the following characteristics (Tagar, 1993b; 1999a):

- the client is viewed as competent with strengths and resources;
- the client's experience is viewed as the potential source for the knowledge, power and resources of therapeutic change;
- Empathic, encouraging, hopeful and non-judgemental approach by therapist;
- the client's *experience* of their issue is accepted;
- the formation of a therapeutic alliance as an important collaborative relationship;
- the therapist learns from the client and success is credited to the client's efforts;
- the therapist works in a phenomenological way with human experience;
- non-verbal expressions are used as a language of experience and awareness;
- therapy is creative and flexible in its approach;
- it is an holistic approach that includes the experience of the whole human being as body, soul and spirit;
- the therapy has a focus that includes the past and the present, with the emphasis towards the future; and
- the therapy is usually short-term.

Psychophonetics accepts awareness through the living body as a way of knowing, through bodily sensation, movement and gesture, visualisation of internal dynamics, and sound therapy. These modes of awareness of experience are non-verbal and pre-reflective, with the potential for understanding experience without distorting it (Tagar, 1999a). Psychophonetics can be described as a process of

experience-awareness through intentionality. It starts from the premise that experience is a real event taking place in the human psyche or soul, leaving traces, imprints and impressions that are stored in patterns of sensory dynamics. Psychophonetics believes that these imprints of experience can be accessed through sensing, gestures, visualisation and sounds. The correlation between the imprints of sound experiences and the imprints of human experience in the bodily layers, enables the method of sound-naming used in psychophonetics psychotherapy (Steele, 2004).

Another reason for choosing this modality, is that it forms a bridge between approaches which operate primarily through the verbal dimension and those which operate primarily through expression, body awareness and the experiential dimension. It combines the cognitive, experiential and behavioural aspects into one process, facilitated by the choice of the “I” or self, thereby having a transpersonal dimension (Tagar, 1999a). With a verbal, conversational component and an experiential, non-verbal, expressive component in each session, newly accessed experiential content can be integrated through consciously made choices and processes, which enables the client to be in charge of the process (Sherwood & Tagar, 2000a, 2000b; Tagar, 1999a). The conversational phase operates very much in the same way as a client-centred humanistic type of counselling procedure, with a transpersonal dimension. A common picture (and understanding) of the dynamics of the issue is developed between the therapist and client, out of which the client is invited to form a *wish*, in their own language that acts like a guide or a goal for the action phase. The action phase always starts within an exploration of the lived-experience of the conditions explored verbally during the first phase of the session. A common starting point is to choose a moment in life in which the issue central to the client's wish and experience is recalled in the present, to be explored further. From that moment, the non-verbal modes of communication are utilised creatively as ways for exploring, encountering and/or for resourcing whatever is present in the particular client's lived experience. The skills learnt in the sessions can be practiced and integrated by the client and used for self-management and self-care between sessions and after therapy is completed (Tagar, 1996c). In choosing this approach, I am not trying to prove a theory as true or not, but rather am using this approach as a

means to focus on the phenomena of change, to understand client's experience and how the application of this therapeutic approach may work or not, from the participant's perspective. The terms counselling, psychotherapy and therapy, are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, in context with the above definition and characteristics.

Therapeutic change.

In psychophonetics, the meaningfulness of therapeutic change involves the core of one's being and can only be determined from within the context of the individual's experience and life history (Tagar, 1999a). For instance, Bette Midler says in an interview with Antonella Gambotto (2005, p. 28): "There has been a lot of death in my life. A lot of tragedy. What it does is make you aware that things are constantly changing. Life is nothing but change!"

There are many different definitions of psychotherapeutic change, and the following example is a useful working definition:

A beneficial, positive alteration in thoughts, behaviours, feelings, or interpersonal interaction that leads to improved or more effective coping or functioning and greater satisfaction with one's outer and inner life. In general, it is anything that constitutes an improvement to a person's life in terms of feeling, thinking, behaving, or relating. (Hanna, 2002, p. 3)

This could lead to meaning that: "Ultimately, perhaps, therapeutic change is a process of making life more enjoyable or meaningful" (Hanna, 2002, p. 4).

Change is generally defined in psychotherapy according to its particular orientation. However, Eugene Gendlin (1986) and John Norcross & James Prochaska (1986a) both recommend not to limit the study of change to the context of therapy only. This study investigated the clients' perception of therapeutic change over time, within and outside the context of therapy, and after therapy was completed, because it is possible that these aspects cannot realistically be separated (Strupp, 1988).

Beyond particular orientations, psychotherapeutic change could generally be defined as an improvement in cognitive, affective, or behavioral function (Corey, 2001), that includes any self-reported improvement of therapeutic learning

(Strupp, 1988), or enhanced psychological well-being (Mahrer, 1998), and which results in a perceived improvement in behaviour (Strupp, 1988).

However, Richard Gilbert (2002) encourages us to first explore and reflect on how we change in our own lives, so that we can come to our own authentic and consistent position in how we live and practice in relation to change.

On the basis of exploring the above definitions, I was primarily interested in therapeutic change defined by the participants, as significant and meaningful for them. As I also changed throughout the duration of the research, my experience of change as a researcher, is also included.

Parallel Processing.

The concept of parallel processing has been widely used in the field of psychology and is defined as a way of processing information, as: “the categorizing and utilization of several incoming streams of information simultaneously” (Chaplin, 1985, p. 323). An early reference to parallel processes: “was made by Searles (1955), who labeled it the *reflection process*” (McNeill & Worthen, 1989, p. 329), and became a way to explain identification and the taking on of reciprocal roles (Mothersole, 1999).

Parallel processing is an exceptionally rich area for study:

...[L]et me emphasize that there would seem to be great value in studying exhaustively the interplay between the patient-therapist relationship and the therapist-supervisor relationship, since this total situation is without a parallel anywhere else among human relations, in that each relationship includes at least one expert in the study of intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. Thus this area offers unique possibilities for research. The results of such research might well be applicable not only to psychotherapy and to the supervision of psychotherapy, but to human relationships in general. (Searles, 1965, p. 176)

I am using the term, parallel process, to describe interpersonal and intrapsychic phenomena, in a broader sense, as a way of re-searching, and in the psychotherapeutic sense of transference, between client and therapist, and therapist and supervisor. However, the effectiveness of the supervisory research process does help to raise awareness and understanding of the forces presenting in

the parallel process, which can enhance and inform the development of my research knowledge and skills. How I use this term is generally defined by the previous definitions, but also in terms of soul processes, it means to observe and be able to clear my own soul responses so as to allow new and clearer perceptions of an experience, situation or relationship. The specific processes involved in parallel processing, are described in the context of each situation that arises throughout the research.

Gaps in the Research

There is a gap in phenomenological research focused on the client's perspective of change, due mainly to the scarcity of studies of action methods in general, (Wiener, 1999) and of psychophonetics in particular. Through action therapies, clients can describe the deeper and non-verbal aspects of experience which may be omitted in other research methods/models of therapy. I have attempted to come with a fresh and open approach to the topic of therapeutic change, to allow the complexities, meanings and possible links between the bodily, emotional, mental and spiritual dynamics to become visible. There was also a scarcity in alternate ways of generating understanding, using creative mediums that extended beyond the written form, which allowed the reader to *feel with* the human experience being researched. The decision to focus on psychophonetics as the therapeutic approach, was an attempt to encompass these complexities and links. Les Todres (2004, p. 53) makes the point that there is a gap in the research, and using an embodied approach (he was talking about the practice of Focusing): “may become a very helpful innovation for phenomenologically-oriented research,” resulting in opening up the whole experiential dimension. Taking this on board, with the recommendations mentioned in the literature review (*Read the Literature Review, Appendix A*), this study addresses the gap, by using a focused and embodied approach, to the study of participants’ experience of therapeutic change.

Using a phenomenological interpretative method through interview transcripts, helps to reveal the depth and meanings of the experience of change. Many studies were retrospective, whereas this approach identifies and describes the quality of

therapeutic change, as it was happening over time. Further intensive research of change events have been recommended (Elliott, 2000; Rice & Greenberg, 1984; Sherwood & Tagar, 2002). This longitudinal study extends previous research by exploring client change experiences, in and outside of therapy, as well as noting any implications for research, therapeutic and educational practice.

Writing as a Phenomenological Change Opportunity

A moment's pause – for reorienting.

I invite you to stop, be still and notice how you are in this present moment: in your breathing, in your physical body, in your life energy. How are you emotionally, and how present are you right now, in your body? What would this look like in a gesture, as a character, if you exaggerated this gesture, as you walked around the room or met other people while in this position?

Eugene Gendlin (1962; 1981; 1996; 2004) advocates the importance of paying attention to the “felt sense” in the body. He discovered that people who made progress in therapy were those who were able to *get out of their heads* and connect with their feelings. I am not asking you to participate in therapy now or be in touch with feeling as such, but I am using this idea as a way to prepare, for travelling through this research study. So far my writing has been in the usual and expected academic style for a thesis, but I want to prepare you, for chapter two, when I shift, move and enter into a different way of working, that invites you to actively participate, with an open mind and with your whole being. You may become changed through the process, as I have been. Peter Willis (2004, p. 7) says: “From a writer perspective to ‘communicate a mood’ needs appropriate textual vehicles to convey it.” I have done this in a number of ways. Throughout the thesis there are a number of *experiential interludes*, like the one above, that invite you to actively participate and come to your own understanding and knowing, in an embodied way, about what is being written about in each part of the study (through your own bodily awareness, movement/gesture, visualization and sound). All of the exercises are ones I have done myself, in personal development and in professional training groups. These interludes can become ways of entering into an experience that encourage you to move and be moved by or with what you are reading and experiencing, allowing for the study itself to

resonate through your body, soul and spirit. Of course, you are free to choose whether you want to participate or not, however, your decision may possibly influence how you will experience and resonate with this research study.

Perhaps it is not possible to be just as an observer in this research, to be separate from the phenomenon of change. Perhaps we are all participants, with differing perspectives. I would like to encourage you, the reader, to engage phenomenologically in a conscious, embodied participation with the phenomenon of change. Elizabeth Behnke (1994, p. 308) suggests this can be done by encouraging an embodied and expressive approach, she calls: “a ‘wild phenomenology’, that anyone can tap into by bringing the ‘how’ of immediate, ongoing, situated bodily existence to lucid awareness.”

Throughout the thesis, I have included relevant non-verbal expressions, such as paintings, drawings, clay-work, poetry and the experiential interludes. I have also written in different colours,¹ fonts and styles, to differentiate the voices of participants, supervisors and authors from other texts. I ask for your tolerance and acceptance for where I have deviated from traditional ways of presenting an academic text. I chose to write in this way in an attempt to create a more expressive way of writing, as well as to bring an *aesthetic feeling* into the work. That is, this study is also a creative endeavour.

To guide you, the participant’s words are in italics. I have not used quotation marks for them because it becomes too complicated and messy, as I am including a lot of their descriptions. In chapters two to five, it is obvious which participant is being quoted, whilst in the other chapters, I have specified which participant is being quoted. Another reason for writing in this way is to maintain the conversational mood between all of the differing voices included in the text, in an inclusive and equitable way. I have also included comments by my supervisors where relevant, with excerpts of our dialogues. Each supervisor is quoted without

¹ My original working version of the thesis was done in different colours. however, it was too expensive to print the whole thesis, or any subsequent copies, in colour print. I have still included this information. and leave it for your imagination (as long as it doesn’t distract your reading). The participants and the supervisors’ comments were in blue italics (different fonts); quotes by authors were in green; experiential interludes were in red; and the poetry was in purple type.

quotation marks, but in a specific font to distinguish them from others. The diversity of the voices of other authors from my readings, are quoted using the required APA referencing style. This is my attempt to make meaningful expression through a range of creative mediums, such as through stories, poems, painting, clay-work and colour, which can create a mood for understanding.

Another choice that I made is to write in a way that makes the content of the thesis accessible and readable for anyone, seeking ways to make a “living text” (Willis, 2004). As language and the words we use carry meaning, for myself and others, I am mindful of what words I am using and how I am phrasing what I am writing. I want this work to be as transparent as possible, thus any specialised or jargon words are defined in the context of the thesis.

A Research Study in the Process of Changing

This is a phenomenological and hermeneutic research study, using an holistic, multi-dimensional layering, picturing way of creating knowledge, rather than using an argumentative and rational format. I do not claim to prove a theory or to have found the truth. I do not attempt to refute other approaches, nor come to definite conclusions about the phenomenon of change. I explore the transcripts and my experience of research approach, practice and writing, as an ongoing process of interrelationships that evolves and creates the structure of this work. The exploration of the phenomenon of change becomes a transformative process, hopefully speaking itself as believable, as a resonating presence, and as a living possibility. Aimee Ebersold-Silva (2004) states:

Depending on the perspective that you take on knowledge, you will possibly find a number of delimitations that cause you to question the value of this piece of work. This piece was not created to produce results that could be generalised. (p. 4)

Like Aimee Ebersold-Silva, my intention is not to produce results or to generalise, rather to explore the depths of the experience of change from a relational context, from each participant’s perspective. I then explore the meaning/s that were co-created from my experience of the relationships with these people, with my supervisors, with the transcripts, and also as a researcher. I

do this by being attentive to how I am living in my own life-world, including my relationships with the wider world.

Over the four years of study my way of working changed, with the major changes reflected in how the thesis is set out. I shifted from the more traditional format and situated the literature review chapter in Appendix A. This created a more holistic approach. The information from this review was then brought into the forthcoming chapters, in context with the participants and my experience of change. The methodology and method chapter was initially written as a separate chapter, but as I have since changed my method, this chapter is now situated in an addendum. I did this because it shows how I proceeded with my research initially, and how I carried out the interviews. However, the method was then changed, re-defined and refined in the context of the work itself, as an ongoing *living practice*. It did not seem right to rewrite or delete this chapter, but rather to show the process of how my thinking and way of working changed. Thus, the research process holds an integrity, in the developmental process of this thesis. To write creatively and to enliven my hopefulness for a more holistic approach in our relationships with self, others and the world, this study demonstrates an ongoing process of change and transformation, in the constant and enduring practice of respect, freedom and love.

My Position as a Researcher

My philosophical stance is that there is a spiritual world, there is a spiritual core of the human being that is the “I” or the “I am,” which is a conscious principle that we can come to know. This means a knowing that is: “grounded in personal experience” and not: “subservient to authority” (Bignell, 2000, p. 494). This can be seen in chapter 2, in how I shifted and intensified my consciousness regarding how I was working as a researcher. By staying close to direct experience, by being attentive firstly to bodily experience, and through a journey of questioning that embraces body, soul and spiritual knowledge, I then became more active in imaginal and intuitive thinking. From this, I came to know in a real way rather than in an abstract way. I had an impulse to look for the fundamental nature of therapeutic change, not just in the act of doing it, but also in *how* this act was

being accomplished. After completing the research, I agree with Barry Bignell's (2000, p. 497) statement: “!the! awareness of our true individuality, our “I”-ness is achieved by learning to observe, as it is happening, our own contribution to knowing, our intentionality, which, for Steiner, is synonymous with spiritual activity.”

“I” is a universal idea that we all use when referring to ourself: “‘I’ as an individual am a particular example of the idea ‘I.’ In disclosing myself as ‘I’ in a manifoldness of ‘I’s’, I simultaneously disclose universal being” (Bignell, 2000, p. 497).² Merleau-Ponty also concluded that his life appeared to be both individual and universal (Kwant, 1978). Each participant and myself, can be seen as examples of uniqueness and universality. In light of what I have just written, *how* I am thinking is just as important as the phenomenon being studied, hence, the reflective nature of this study.

A Map of the Journey

Chapter two begins with the story of the first participant, Margaret. While working through her transcripts, I decided to change the organization of the text, to put the participants' stories first, to prioritise participatory and experiential knowledge, as an honorable starting place. This meant having no map for the research journey, whilst having to create a map, as I was doing it, without knowing initially, how the whole thesis would eventually be structured. Ruth Behar (1996, p. 33) wrote: “If you don't mind going places without a map, follow me.” Thus, the structure of the thesis evolved in the following way: Chapters two to five, present four perspectives, of the phenomenon of change/ing, over time, initiated by four participants in their process of meaning-making. This created a foundational whole of similarities and differences. Life is lived, observed and in this participation, seven life processes were revealed and differentiated, as guiding activities of the changing processes over time. These four stories were then held or contained as a whole, as this research unfolded and chapter six: “I Am

² For a more in-depth and rigorous study of Rudolf Steiner's epistemology, see Barry Bignell's doctoral dissertation: “*Musical Utterance as a Way of Knowing: A Contemporary Epistemology of Music.*”

Participating,” was created. The research question then became: “who is changing?” and “how are we/am I participating?” and “how am I responding to experience?” In chapter seven: “The Unfolding of Enfolding”, three common activities were differentiated in how the participants/and I were changing in their/my *thinking, feeling and willing*. These were explored from a practical therapeutic perspective.

Finally, the epilogue is a reflective summary of my journey through the whole of the research study, which also includes reflective summaries of the journey of supervision, described by my two supervisors, Dawn and Dyann. Reflecting on living text, three elements are evident - stories, expressive and arts based inquiry, and hermeneutical text making,³ that contribute to generating understanding by: “becoming attuned to the mood that is the element of every human experience” (Willis, 2004, p. 7). I hope that you, the reader, feel free to enter into the life-worlds of the participants and into my life-world as the researcher, without feeling that I am trying to impose any knowledge onto you, but rather you have the feeling that this work can illuminate your own knowing and creativity.

I have attempted to write from the inside of experience as well as from observing and beholding experience, as I find this way of perceiving has its own internal logic. I did not want to become abstract, removed or intellectual in my approach, so I hope that you can join with me in this quest of how are we changing and transforming psychologically. This body of work is alive and meaningful for me. Throughout the research process, I strive to become conscious of both inner and outer activities and events as sources of knowing, thereby encouraging a more holistic idea of the phenomenon of therapeutic change.

For me, it is travelling on a path of the heart, of being open to, and passionate about, the possibilities of how knowledge and meaning can be revealed, co-created and created out of experience, by uniting theory, practice and the arts. In travelling this precarious path of creating heart knowing, Don Juan says: “There I

³ For a further discussion of these three elements the article by Peter Willis was most informative and helpful in summarising contemporary developments in applications of phenomenology. His article encouraged me to find my own way of expressing the phenomenon of change through this thesis.

travel, and the only worthwhile challenge is to traverse its full length. And there I travel looking, looking, breathlessly” (Casteneda, 1976, p. 11). I am encouraged and inspired by Michael Leunig (1990) who put it pictorially, in one of his thought-provoking poems and cartoons:

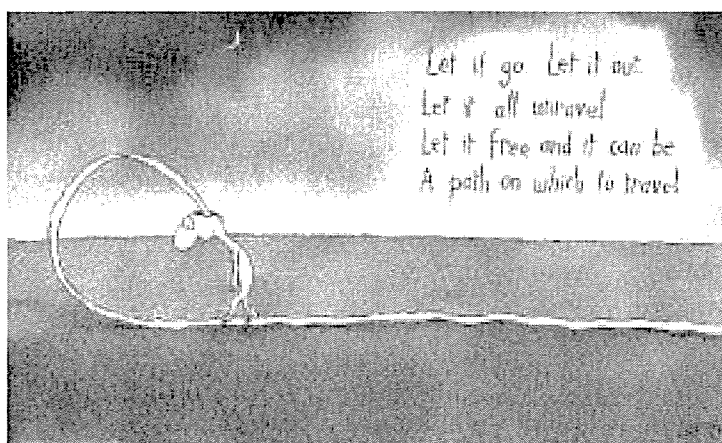


Figure 2. © A Michael Leunig poem⁴.

As you will hopefully see, as you read further, my research is increasingly driven by heart-felt intuitive hunches rather than logical linear thinking (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). With the encouragement of my supervisors,⁵ I gained trust in the usefulness of my developing intuitive knowing skills, so that methods, processes and relationships are constantly informing each other in a non-linear emergent design. I pursue the experience of meaningfulness

⁴ I have written permission from Michael to use his cartoons in my work.

⁵ I am also grateful for the encouraging words offered by Dr. Ken Robinson, who is Associate Dean, Research & Higher Degrees, Edith Cowan University, Bunbury (personal communication, 5/11/02). His review of my research proposal encouraged me towards my passion. The following is an extract from his letter: First, let me congratulate you on an excellent concept. Little is known regarding the client experience of change during and following therapeutic intervention, the phenomenological approach is clearly appropriate ... My strong feeling is that you wish to follow this approach from your own intuitive understanding of the issues involved. You should follow your heart, and embrace the rich and varied experience of clients. I believe, like you, that this experience has rich, personal and multi modal characteristics. The investigation of the varied nature of this experience must therefore be multi modal itself. You should try to capture the experience through multiple channels, and not just that of written language, and audio tape. Encouragement of your participants to use multiple modes of expression will allow you to investigate the richness of client experience, and I strongly believe that your thesis will be unconventional in that it will not be a written, but rather a multi-modal record of the essence of client experience. ECU guidelines are flexible here, and so will support your work.

in deciding which people to interview and which participant's transcripts to include; in managing and focusing the dialogues with the participants and with my supervisors; in selecting what grabbed my attention during the exploration of the transcripts; as well as in the constant creation of new procedures to enhance the unfolding process. In maintaining a close relationship between my understanding of the *lived* experience of the participants, and my relationships with them and others, as well as with myself and the world, I am striving to build my integrity as a researcher.

Change and transformation is a work in progress, and as such, the research study is ongoing and in continuous process. Carlos Castenada (1976) quotes Georg Simmel who succinctly summarises this approach:

Nothing more can be attempted than to establish the beginning and the direction of an infinitely long road. The pretension of any systematic and definite completeness would be, at least, a self-illusion. Perfection can here be obtained by the individual student only in the subjective sense that he/she communicates everything he/she has been able to see. (p. 11)

What one sees in the experience of reading this work is ultimately in the eyes of the beholder.

CHAPTER 2

A GUIDING LIGHT - MARGARET

We are living in what the Greeks called the *kairos* - the right moment - for a 'metamorphosis of the gods', of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious human within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science So much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological constitution of modern humans ... Does the individual know that she or he is the makeweight that tips the scales?

Jung⁶ (cited in Mahoney, 2000, p.10)

Preparing

It is now just past mid-winter, outwardly it is the darkest time of the year with the longest nights. It is time for the inner light to take on its brightest hue in the soul as this text is brought down onto paper, in this chapter, as a reflection of the preceding six months. As Brian Keats (2003) writes:

Thoughts are becoming clearer, preparing the forms and essences for seasons to come. The mid-winter experience is deepening. The soul is being freshly fructified and revived with the force of the word. Strengthened thinking is imbued with love, and with divine forces within we set out to shape the world with our actions and seeking to re-member nature, and ourselves. (June/July)

In my lifetime, it appears that we are in a state of changing in all areas of life, with changes appearing faster than from when I was a child, living on a farm in the western plains of Victoria. Change appears to occur through many layers of my being. Apparently we completely change our skin cells every seven years, as we develop and change from a baby into a fully grown adult. Additionally, I noticed that my energy has changed, as I no longer have the same levels of energy from when I was younger. This changed again in my fifties with changes

⁶ This reference can also be found in: Jung, C. (1970). "The Undivided Self", in H. Read et al (eds). *Collected Works of Carl Gustav Jung*, Vol. 10 (R. F.C. Hull Transl.). Princeton: Princeton University Press (para. 585-586).

happening through menopause. I also experienced my emotions and feelings moving and changing in the diversity of life experiences, through my relationships. Another aspect is my sense of self has changed, from being a dependent baby, to a two year old claiming myself as an 'I,' into adulthood, where I now stand, as hopefully an older and wiser woman in the world, making choices. An inevitable final change however will be the letting go of this life when I physically die. As Dawn comments: "Change is the very core of existence. It is resistance to change that often causes illness" (personal communication, 4/8/04).

In focusing on the phenomenon of change from a phenomenological perspective, I came to realize how much it involves me, in the doing, feeling, thinking about, and reflecting on the work, as a form of self-reflective practice, that is not just about the participants, or what other authors and researchers think. Phenomenology as applied in this research study means: "the study of human experience and the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2). I chose a phenomenological approach for the following reasons: It allows for thick descriptions of experience and acknowledges that people create meanings for their own reality, it values the participants perceptions and experiences, and accepts that a person's experience is situated in an unique context. Phenomenology is ideally suited for investigating human experience, and the many facets of an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours: "It offers accounts of experienced space, time, body, and human relation as we live them" (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). Phenomenology asks: "What is the nature or essence of the experience of change" so that I can better understand what this particular ... experience is like for the participants" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The phenomenological approach allows for different perspectives, to describe the phenomena within the context of therapy and everyday experiences, to reveal the in-depth meanings and interpretative activities or themes.

The procedure of how I gathered willing participants and collected their experiences, through a number of interviews, is described in detail in the addendum. Essentially, I approached eight practitioners to hand out letters to their clients, requesting volunteers for the research study. Eleven volunteer clients, who

were already attending therapy sessions, chose to participate in the study. The participants and practitioners came from Victoria, Western Australia and South Africa. Six participants completed all four interviews, which meant I had a total of 21 interview transcripts available. All participants said they had decided to enter a therapeutic process in order to change. They chose their own therapist and then chose to participate in the research study, so their motivation and willingness to participate was strong. I interviewed clients who were already in therapy, so as to capture their development over time. I am interested in not just what happens within the sessions, but how they experience change between sessions, as well as during the months after they had completed therapy. My interest includes how we each experience the process of changing over time within ourselves, in our daily life, in relationship to others and with the world.

Becoming Oriented

The four research interviews were conducted with a total of six participants over about a year, with interview one conducted during the actual time that participants were attending sessions. Interview two, was conducted shortly after completion of counselling, while interview three was conducted three months later, with a short follow-up interview done about four-six months after this. The participants were asked to describe if and how the learning and meaning gained from the therapy sessions, carried on beyond the actual sessions, and how the skills learnt, were integrated into their everyday lives. The reason for including four rather than six stories is discussed in chapter six, and we will come to this later.

I began with Margaret, the first participant, as her transcripts challenged me to re-think, to reflect, and to change my way of working, from a reductive method to a more holistic one. I began by asking the question: What do Margaret's four transcribed interviews tell me about change and the process of changing? To describe her story gives one aspect of change, however, what actually happened in and around her contribution tells of a bigger and more complex picture that included the universal and the particular. In this light, I include my research process, so that a common picture or understanding of the changes leading to the unfolding of this whole text, about the phenomenon of change, can become

visible. A point to note is that I move between a past, present and a future focus, throughout the thesis, in a reflective, parallel process that often occurred (occurs) as I was (am) writing. Consequently, both past and present tense are used interchangeably.

A Pause: For Methodology

I recommend that you now: **Read the Methodology Chapter** in the addendum of this thesis, to give you a better understanding of the phenomenological approach, as methodology and the initial method that I tried to use. This chapter gives the background details of how the data was collected, and is the foundational basis for later changes in approach. Reading this chapter will give you some crucial details about the participants, as well as help you to understand what is written in the forthcoming pages.

From the beginning of the research, phenomenology remains as my methodology, and initially, I planned to use Amedeo Giorgi's data analysis method, in a descriptive phenomenological approach, to explicate the transcripts. This was to be done by reducing the sentences and paragraphs into smaller units of meaning called "natural meaning units" (NMU's), to come to the essential themes of change. As I proceeded in the reductive process, I found I had a lot of difficulty in breaking Margaret's transcripts down into NMU's, as it did not feel right to do so. I found this way of working caused me to feel separated from the participant, with a sense of loss from Margaret's ongoing process, as described throughout her transcripts. I could not understand why I was having so much difficulty in following this procedure, especially as other PhD students in my research group were able to proceed with very little difficulty. I read many studies using Amedeo Giorgi's method, and practiced working through the steps with other material. This appeared to be a straightforward and logical method, so why was I having so much trouble with Margaret's transcripts in particular?

However, I persisted to immerse myself in the data and tried to work through doing this form of analysis. Eventually I felt in a state of prolonged *stuckness* and inadequacy, that I wasn't *getting* how to do it properly. This dilemma became centred on the following questions: How can I do this and still include the experiences that occurred between Margaret and myself, before, during and after the interviews, plus those experiences not verbalised in the transcripts, that include my experiences as well? Also, as this is a longitudinal study I had to ask myself: Does this method allow enough flexibility to show how change occurred over time? This study is not focussing on one event or on one specific experience in time, like many other phenomenological studies (refer to Appendix A: Background Literature Review).

I am interested in how we are changing, as an activity, as quality and intensity (Neville, 2000), that is not confined to specific events and moments in time, in which I can move through differing perspectives. I began to see that my feeling of stuckness consisted of not wanting to just see the parts, but wanting to stay with the whole as well. I wanted to respect the integrity of Margaret's experience and this reductive method was not working. Initially, I had no difficulty in the process of "bracketing" during the interviews. Bracketing is described as: "the act of suspending one's various beliefs," of *putting to one side* all preconceived understanding of the phenomenon being studied (van Manen, 1990, p. 175). However, I did not want to bracket myself entirely out of the exploration of the transcripts, by excluding my experiences, and thereby presenting what I thought would be a distorted picture of what was really happening. It was obvious to me that over the year of collecting and working through Margaret's material, which included four interviews (face-to-face and via telephone), Margaret's experience of change was influenced by and included me. I found a strong relational aspect emerge throughout the research process.

For example, when I facilitated a workshop in another city, in which Margaret was present, I talked with the group about how difficulties in life can be like opportunities for our development. Three months later, Margaret volunteered to participate in the study and during the first taped interview she told me: "*I nearly didn't even do this counselling because of the fear factor but when you did*

mention this as an opportunity to start this counselling, I found myself out of the chair saying yes." This was previously unknown to me, but it became clear that this comment by me to the group had a major impact on her willingness and capacity to change. As I worked further with her transcripts, the relational aspects became more visible.

I decided to resolve this dilemma by changing a step-by-step linear way of thinking. I have to be able to say what I think, feel and practice in relationship to the participants. Philosophically, I know that phenomenology is where I stand, in asking the question: "What is this or that kind of experience like? laiming" at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences"(van Manen, 1990, p. 9), but within this field there are many different schools of thought and ways of practice. Initially, I tried to use a Amedeo Giorgi's method as it is a human science approach, in the field of psychology. Then I tried using Paul Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis, as he does not suggest doing a reduction of the transcripts into NMU's, but into: "significant statements and phrases pertaining directly to the phenomenon are extracted" (Munhall, 1994, p. 259). In practice, when I entered the experience of using these methods, with Margaret's transcripts, I found they did not work for me. It is difficult "to be constantly on guard against the seductive illusions of technique" (van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutics

"Hermeneutic phenomenology holds that prejudgements can be used positively as part of the data of conscious experience and help establish the horizon of meaning" (Le Vasseur, 2003, p. 417). I therefore moved to a hermeneutic method, to Max van Manen's interpretative approach, as a theoretical base that allowed, as Jeanne Le Vasseur implies, more freedom for interpretation. Hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretation of experience (Gadamer, 1989), with reflection and interpretation resulting in an in-depth and rich text. The freedom to interpret is echoed by Margaret, when she made a comment on the importance of feeling free to speak, during the interview, rather than having to fit into someone else's guidelines:

I like the spontaneity that has occurred to me while talking to you, it's not in any dogma. Sometimes before I experienced things where you've got to fit into some sort of guideline of what's going to happen, but this way of talking and in the sessions, leaves me free, which suits me as a person.

This method means I am freer, like Margaret, to include more of myself into the process, it legitimises that I am engaging in an activity of interpretation. This made sense, as it is “I” who is observing, working with, and interpreting the written transcripts, so it must be “I” who is creating meaning from them. This gave me a place to breathe more freely, in a process of phenomenological reflection and interpretation that provided a closer contact with the experience, as being lived by both the participants and myself. I accept the idea Jeanne Le Vasseur (2003, p. 419) poses, in her attempt to resolve the tension of using bracketing in hermeneutic research, by expanding its definition to: “a notion of persistent curiosity ... as instrumental to phenomenological method and have described the subsequent dialectic between fresh experience and prior conceptions as an essentially hermeneutic project.”

This research process is an ongoing reflexive exercise which, as Tina Koch (1998, p. 882) suggests: “provides answers to the question: ‘What is going on in methods?’” She goes on to say that this position: “is informed by Gadamer’s (1976) philosophical hermeneutics which does not show us what to do, but asks us to question what is ‘going on’ while researching” (Koch, 1998, p. 882). Like Tina Koch, it is interesting to reflect on what is going on, and how I and the research are changing. I wish to capture how this happens, hence the unfolding nature of this text is being crafted, as Max van Manen (1990, p. 78) says, by being: “engaged in the reflective activity of textual labour.” It is not just textual but is a bodily labour as well, especially when I worked through the feelings of stuckness. I continually ask myself: how am I changing; what are the meanings of change regarding how each participant, plus their transcripts, informed and influenced me (and you, the reader) about change?

Awakening New Research Possibilities

The shift in method coincided with a major change in my supervision situation. The difference was that for the first time as a doctoral candidate, the dynamics of the meetings with my supervisor were changing. I now have an associate supervisor, a third person, who is now present in the meetings. During one supervision meeting, I realised that the feeling of *stuckness*, experienced during the explication process, was also underlying in my supervision situation.

Having a third person present in this meeting brought a new element into the situation, which gave me the opportunity to change what could not essentially have been changed before, without major detrimental consequences to my work. My associate supervisor, spoke and put into words the reality of my situation. Her presence offered an interactive space where I could imagine different possibilities.⁷ This awareness was felt: “as a spiritual potential that the soul innately knows to exist” (Schwartz-Salant, 1998, p. 66), that now needed to be incarnated into this study, facilitated through the supervisory relationship with this new supervisor.

Initially, in this meeting I experienced an awakening, where a hidden world opened up in which I could now allow myself to be in the full awareness of my situation, with the shock realisation of the cost of not finding my way through this previously. I realised how much the educational system promotes through its structure and methods of study, a sense of disempowerment, with a splitting of knowledge into categories (eg. different faculties), like a dissociation of the Self. It was a deeply personal, emotional and spiritual matter. However, it was also balanced with a sense of relief and hope for the new emerging possibilities that could be co-created, of which somewhere I had a vague sense about. The enormity of the dimensions of this experience for me, are somewhat captured firstly, in the words of Dante (the Divine Comedy):

I have been in that heaven, the most illumined, by light from Him and seen things which, to utter, he who returns hath neither skill nor knowledge. For as it nears the object of its yearning, our intellect is overwhelmed so

⁷ In giving feedback on this chapter, my new supervisor, Dawn, reminded me of the interactive field and alerted me to the work of Nathan Schwartz-Salant (1995). He describes the dynamics of this third space between two people, as co-creating: “the interactive field” with “an understanding of which actively includes both subjective and objective dimensions” (1995, p. 2).

deeply, it can never retrace the path it followed. But whatsoever of the holy kingdom was in the power of memory to treasure will be my theme until the song is ended. (Valle, 1998, p. xv)

Secondly, the change is reflected to some extent in the following experience described by Margaret, in a session between herself and her counsellor. Reflecting on her second counselling session, Margaret says:

The second session has to be the most remarkable two hours that I've ever experienced, it was beautiful, really beautiful. I was held together and I didn't feel scared of anything and to come out of the layers and speaking, I mean it will stay with me forever. It was just a profound inner completeness of mind, body & soul, with a healing presence in the room, holding this. Not only me, it held the counsellor as well. I was getting the electricity running up & down, ahh, I've got it now, it's still here. I'm feeling this presence in the interview...amazing. The counsellor couldn't speak either, so at a certain stage both of us were speechless, it was most profound, we were both locked in this amazing light.

Thirdly, other dimensions of experience emerged, such as when I entered into a parallel process, during the first interview with Margaret, in which we both had tears in our eyes, and I (interviewer) was feeling this energy happening between us at the time – it was a potent energy that held us in a field of light for a few minutes!

I'm feeling it a bit just talking about it now - mm - a particularly big hurdle, it was wonderful, very profound, I have never experienced anything like that, other than a healing like that. !Sighs" I feel good, it's still there, no matter how long I live, in this life, it will be there. so I can connect to it ...I feel very thankful and privileged, and I went home and just did a lot of thanking.

In the process of digesting and reflecting on the experience of this supervision meeting, with the support of three trusted colleagues (one for the supervision issue, one for personal emotional support and another person for spiritual counselling), I began to make sense of the situation. I then became clearer about what needed to be done, to free up the feeling of stuckness in my supervision situation.

Experience has shown me that we share the same life-world and we can be changed in our meeting with another. The way forward must include my whole being, in a different approach, with a more embodied and creative process of reflection, that allows me to see with imagination, in the uncertainty of the learning process, to seek deeper understanding and meaning. This way is

encouraging, as it opens a wider and deeper landscape of the phenomenon of change, in which I can strive to become more holistic and intuitive in my approach. This means allowing an unfolding process, so as to make explicit and embody fully the activities of speaking, writing, reflecting, discovery, and disclosure of change, as a mode of being, as becoming. Gerald Heard (cited in Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 22) captures the essence of my experience of change at this time: “If we change ourselves, changing our power of apprehension (perception/ understanding) we change the universe confronting us.”

On the basis of this reflection, with great uncertainty balanced with some pre-comprehension of what this may mean for me personally, and for my work over the next year, I decided to take a *leap* of faith. I decided to change my primary supervisor, and change, adapt or reshape my method to include myself, as the researcher. I chose to make visible my thoughts, values, feelings and experiences, as an ongoing discourse and dialogue with the transcripts, as well as with my supervisor and participants. There is a Chinese proverb that says, if we don't change our direction, we're likely to end up where we're headed.

My decision to change direction was agreed to with my new supervisor. However, there was a period of transition that followed, a time of adjustment - physically, energetically, emotionally, and spiritually. There were feelings of sadness and loss but, it was also time to change and move on. Mostly, I felt a deep healing taking place during this time. It became a process of meaning change, as old perceptions gave way to a new space, of new possibilities and meanings. Michael Polanyi (1958) puts it succinctly:

A problem ... once solved can no longer puzzle me; I cannot guess what I already know. Having made a discovery, I shall never see the world again as before. My eyes have become different; I made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently. I have crossed a gap, the heuristic gap which lies between problem and discovery. (p. 143)

Like me, and Michael Polanyi, Margaret, describes a shift in her perception that occurred during her second counselling session:

I thought let's ask for support, this unbelievable presence was there helping me, looking at the clay in front of me which was not formed, my head was going I

don't know, I don't know how to, then it was just this wonderful connection with soul, my soul made this beautiful tree trunk in clay with branches coming out to the world and that was my "I am" and it was very forming, it was wonderful, I called it: "my I am healed." It felt wonderful, it was joy, it was an elation feeling, I felt quite wow! I've been through a lot in that session, wow, you can get through anything by facing the fear...there was a different perspective completely.

I then explored other ways of including more of my voice into the process of researching Margaret's experience of therapeutic change. Re-reading Robert Valle's edited book on "*Phenomenological Inquiry in Psychology*" and Max van Manen's book, on "*Researching Lived Experience*" with its focus on the hermeneutic approach, I realised that what I was experiencing and doing by reflecting on what was happening, was how this approach operated. Through the previously described experiences, in making a decision to change, I have entered the *hermeneutic circle*! Ron Valle (1998) quotes Peter Titelman who says:

The circularity of the hermeneutic endeavour involves a passage from a vague pre-conceptual understanding of the meaning of a phenomenon to the explicit seizure of its meaning. There is no entrance to the hermeneutic circle, no beginning point. The psychological investigator must 'leap' into the circle in order to elucidate it. (p. 51)

I will now have to discover what this leap means for me and for this research. My current interest in the client's experience of change was motivated by changes in my life - personally, as a therapist, as an educator and as a researcher. Self-reflection has always been a major aspect of how I live and work. In my masters research study (Chartres, 1992), I explored the effects of encouragement processes on the development of social interest⁸ and group cohesiveness. In this research, I was the teacher/researcher using an Adlerian approach of encouragement processes and practices. This meant I was constantly reflecting upon how I was teaching, and what effect I was having in the group dynamics, as the teacher.

⁸ Alfred Adler (1938) viewed each human being in their social context, and believed that people who demonstrated cooperative and contributive behaviours with others are the ones most likely to have a "feeling of belonging," "feeling of communion," or a "feeling of community." These people were seen by Alfred Adler as showing "Gemeinschaftsgefühl" which can be translated as "social interest."

Reflection informs how to proceed to the next step even while I am doing it (reflecting in practice). Dawn Freshwater (2002) suggests that the act of interpreting and reflecting can be a transformatory process:

"This way" encourages experiential freedom, that is, the right to interpret the stimulus events in life as you choose, addressing the issues of autonomy in practice based in knowing and reflecting on self in practice is deemed to be a method of accomplishing widespread change in practice, but only if insight gained is acted upon and the practitioners involved value the change. (p. 483)

Being a mother of three adult children, working as a teacher, then as a psychotherapist, the challenge for me has always been to remain attentive to whatever life presents. Critical reflection of self, of how I relate with a child or client, before, during and after work, was/is an everyday and sometimes constant activity. Being a mother was a great concern for Margaret, and was a major influence in her decision to proceed in dealing with a difficult issue, in the counselling session:

It's always been an issue for me to understand something, if I don't understand something especially things that have gone on in my life I've just said, put a lid on it, I don't understand that, let's not go there. [laughs as naturally gestures with arms pushing down] That's so good, to understand there's a reason for you going through all that in your biography of your life. I couldn't of dealt with all that in any other way, because that was too fearful, I was fearful of going there because other people would depend on me, being a mother is very important to me. My personal growth is number one, but I didn't want to go back to that place and not be able to care for my family, so there were real issues there that were fear based.

I am most grateful for the change instigated by the inspiring presence of my new supervisor, and the feeling of stuckness dissipated. I then felt I had something to say, whereas previously, I was not able to find a way to make the situation work well enough to meet my real needs, so had searched for what I needed in other places. I am encouraged by the words of Dawn Freshwater (2002), who concludes, in her article on transformatory education, that entering into the field of inhabiting: "our mindful bodies through experiential embodied knowing" means taking a risk that can lead to:

The path of receptivity, relationship, imagination, in (tuition), and a sensitivity to the aesthetic (but also) this path brings with it the unknown, confusion, shadow, hidden depths, and complexity. Letting go of the

known and the familiar is painful as the old self is left behind and a new self is constructed. (p. 115)

I was willing to make this radical change, to take a risk and enter into this new space, to enter the path of seeing with imagination. Having a relational space that allows for a creative process is not just important for me as a researcher, but is also an important aspect within a counselling situation. What is unfolding is a need for congruency between all of the relationships involved in the study, that is, in the space between me and my supervisors, between the participants and myself, and their transcripts, as well as between each participant/client and their therapist. Margaret described how she experienced the interactive space in her counselling sessions, and I include most of her description to show something of its complexity, allowing for the possibility for this experience to resonate within you:

Well, she held the space for me to work in and we went on a journey together, that's the only way I can explain it, and we went through the processes, with some of them difficult, and we got to the other side. We got through it and we both knew that there had been something that was really special happening, there was something that was wonderful that happened during that session. The holding space was there all the way through, right to the end, there was no breaking off from that, so it was a sacred space and a sacred session. A lot of things came to light in that session but I didn't realise all the things I had lost so yeah, there was that sacred space and sacred session all the way through. She had the holding space to live within and she accompanied me but it was not something that she did on her own, it was a joint thing. In that session, in other sessions she was perhaps being facilitator and leading, with the angelic being, sometimes I felt was directing her, so there was a third party there.

I mean she might think differently. It was a safe holding space and it was honoured, very much honoured and yeah, there was empathy there but in that particular session there was light and love, this overwhelming through the heart, really beautiful. She was present, she was using her intuition, as I was, to go from one aspect to another...this is how I have to work.

I think reverence for the other person, was really beautiful. After the third session it's a lot more comfortable because you know the person, and you know how they work in that safe space, yeah. Each time you knew you were going to be held, not physically held, but held in that space energetically, and I like the fact that I had to do it myself as well, you know, that she was aiding me but I had to do it. She encouraged me and yeah, there was a real connection for us as a counsellor and a client. I even felt when the whole thing had finished, that I was going to be okay, I didn't need to really see her, but she was there in the background if I needed her desperately. But I felt no, that's okay, I've got the tools to carry on with my life.

This gives an insight into the complexity of the relationships involved and how we can influence each other in the process of changing.

Working with Margaret's Transcripts

The next step involves the exploration of Margaret's transcripts of the four interviews, based on a hermeneutic phenomenological approach that is both descriptive, interpretive, and includes artistic expressions. In the process of interpretation both you (the reader) and I cannot be separated from this text (van Manen, 1990, p. 180), as each person's experience sheds light on their understanding of the phenomenon. Max van Manen (1990) goes on to say that:

To do hermeneutic pheno-menology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the life-world, and yet to remain aware that life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. (p. 18)

On this basis, I began to work with the transcripts by re-reading the written descriptions to gain a feeling for the whole, highlighting significant statements and phrases relating to the phenomenon of change. The next step was to formulate meanings from these statements in order to cluster them into themes, so the findings could then be integrated into a phenomenological description of the phenomenon of change (Colaizzi, 1978; van Manen, 1990). This was to be based on Max van Manen's guide of the four life-world themes or existentials for reflecting on human lived experiences: corporality (as lived body), temporality (as lived time), spaciality (as lived space), and relationality (as lived human relationships) (van Manen, 1990). I had no difficulty with Max van Manen's four life-world existentials at this stage, but the idea of taking statements and clustering them into themes caused difficulties, as it was too conceptual for me at this stage of the process, and did not allow me to live with the experience of change as a whole.

To use Max van Manen's notion of corporeal reflection that we are always bodily in the world, my experience of engaging with Paul Colaizzi's method of explication caused my thinking capacity to diminish, and my imagination to

become stunted. As noted, there was very little intuitive sense of meaning, when I tried to break up the transcripts into smaller parts, to look for themes, in particular sentences or phases. I felt something was lost or died in this process. I reflected on this for quite a while and listened to what I was really thinking. There was a desire within me growing, like a small inner voice saying, what I really need to do is to follow my imagination and intuition more, for it will take me in the right direction. I did not want to reduce the participants' experiences into themes. I had to acknowledge more fully that as the author of this work, I am always present in the writing (Richardson, 2000). As I write this chapter, the direction is still unknown and may lead me into a spiralling movement in which: "our mental processes and experiences are closer to a maze than a motorway, every turning yields another turning, not symmetrical, not obvious when we enter the maze (Winterson 1985, p. xiii)" (Willis, Smith, & Collins, 2000, p. 403).

Margaret reminds me of the importance of listening to intuition:

She was using her intuition, as I was, to go from one aspect to another...this is how I have to work, I've done the head stuff, it doesn't work, I would need a counsellor who would need to use their intuition. There would be a format that she would probably follow but really and truly when it's happening you've got to go by your gut feeling about what's going to happen.

My intuition told me that the feeling of stuckness is really a bodily knowing, telling me that I should not break up the transcripts at this stage. I need to stay with the whole, especially as I am looking at the experience of change/ing as an activity over the time of four interviews. This seems important because Margaret described her bodily experiences, not just *in* the therapy session but also *in-between* sessions, and *after* sessions were completed. The therapeutic approach is holistic, phenomenological and experientially oriented, so changes experienced by the participants were happening at the bodily level, as well as on other levels of being. Margaret comments in her second interview on what she noticed, as the difference in the change:

Actually finding it (the trigger for the reaction) in the body and then gesturing it, not always finding a sound for it, just using the physical body and then using intuition, not the head like I don't think, 'should I do it this way, should I come from this angle, maybe I should try that approach', it's just 'okay what do I need',

and I knew yesterday afternoon I just needed to hug myself, to say it's okay, I love you and that was fantastic.

What is the Body? A Working Definition

The word *body* needs to be defined because in this research study, body is not seen just as a physical body, but as an “ensouled” being. One way of describing the body is to see it as the mediator between the inner and the outer dimensions of human experience. Yehuda Tagar (1993a, p. 94) defines the human body as: “a living instrument for personal experience and meaning, enabling an inner being (the psyche) to live in outer space (ie. the rest of the world).” The dimensions of the human body can be seen as comprising various layers of being: a physical body, a life body, and a sentient/soul/astral body which enables the presence of the *I Am*, the self-aware, conscious and individualised dimension of our being (Steiner, 1994). I agree with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin⁹ (cited in van den Brink, 2004, p. 1) who says: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

Human experience, according to Rudolf Steiner’s (1994) model of the human being, is imprinted or registered in the *subtle bodies* that lie somewhere in-between the physical body and the mind, in the ether/life body and the astral body (the body of emotions, desires, feelings). It is here that memories of experience live: An “invisible reality” made up of “processes, rhythms and formative forces” (Tagar, 1995c, p. 23).

What is meant by these dimensions of bodily life? To summarise: the physical body is the form, the skeleton – the earth element in us; the life (etheric) body is the movement, fluids and life processes – the water element in us; the sentient or astral body is the inner experience, inner life, sensing, desiring, instincts – the air element in us; and the “I am” consciousness is being awake, the self-aware and reflective level of existence, present in the blood – the warmth or fire element in us (Steiner, 1996b; Tagar, 1999a). This “I am” consciousness can connect us with

⁹ The original reference is Teilhard de Chardin, P. (1961). *The phenomenon of man*. New York: Harper & Row.

the transpersonal and transcendent aspects of spirit, and can also referred to as the “Self”, that is our unique individual essence. Our bodily layers develop as we grow into adulthood, and throughout our life we continue to work through these layers with inner forces of soul and spirit (Wilkinson, 1993). The relationship between the physical, life and astral bodies, and the “I am” is clearly described by Rudolf Steiner (1972):

Without the presence of the ether body, the physical body would decay. Without the illumination by the astral body, the ether body into unconsciousness. In like manner the astral body would have to let the past sink, would sink, again and again, into *oblivion*, were it not for the ‘ego’ [‘I am’] to carry this past over into the present. What death is for the physical body, *oblivion* is for the astral body. One might also say that *life* belongs to the ether body, *consciousness* to the astral body, and *memory* to the ego !‘I am’”. (p. 30)

As I am writing about the experience of change, of participants experiencing a body/soul based therapy, then what role does my body have in the research process? The body’s role in consciousness can be seen as simultaneously being an absorber, a carrier, a reflector, an expresser and a transformer of experience (Tagar, 1995b). In the context of this study and in my position as a researcher, it is becoming clearer through the experience of developing this work, that the body is important not only as the mediator between the inner and the outer dimensions of experience but also as a valuable source of knowledge, as embodied knowing. Robert Sardello (1990, p. 23) expands on the notion of body and states that: “knowledge of the spirit becomes psychological knowledge when the focus is on the body – not only the individual human body, but equally the body of things and the body of the world ... !the" soul of the world.” Margaret confirms the importance of the body by saying that: !It’s" *more of a physical thing, actually finding it in the body and then gesturing it...so tapping into through the physical and the intuitive to work through that.* This then becomes an educative and learning process of: “the individual body in conjunction with the body of the world as the container and reflector of soul- processes” (Sardello, 1990, p. 24).

I decide to stop using Paul Colaizzi’s reductive method in order to overcome the obstacle of not wanting to separate the significant statements and phrases, in the transcripts, into smaller parts in order to find themes. During the time of

struggling with this idea I went to a talk at the university, given by Stephan Harding. The title of the talk was “*Reweaving the Web – Holistic Science for a Fragmented World.*” In the talk Stephan Harding compared different ways of perceiving and thinking in the world. He talked about an holistic methodology, of the rhythms in the wholeness of nature, and he mentioned Goethean phenomenology. This reminded me of how I practice as a psychotherapist and what I already know, from many years of experience, working in the field of education, psychotherapy and the arts. I was inspired and became more empowered after a conversation with Stephan Harding a few days later. If he, as a respected and renowned lecturer from the highly regarded and progressive Shumacher college, is using Goethean phenomenology in his research work, then surely I can use a similar way as a basis of working with human experience. This sits well with the hermeneutic approach, as: “Goethe’s way of science is ... !really" the hermeneutics of nature” (Bortoft, 1996, p. 348).

I began to see with imagination, to listen more to my intuition, for what I really thought, instead of giving academic institutions, authors, or other researchers with published work, the power of deciding what is right for me. I am not working just with the transcripts and this text, but there is an ongoing movement of human participation. There is a relationship between myself and each participant, with their transcripts, that moves and changes. Since phenomenological work requires turning to firsthand experiential evidence, I discovered that doing phenomenological hermeneutic research is profoundly *embodying* in and of itself. However, what feels like normal embodiment for me is very much influenced by my personal history,¹⁰ which may be different for others in a similar situation.

The memory of the interviews connected with the transcripts, were not outside of me, they live in my inner life. When I read the words, I inwardly hear and see that person speaking, as their experience lives on within me. I must acknowledge and include my own abiding presence as an embodied person, developing a “bodily reflexivity” (Behnke, 2001, p. 99), so that the *how* of the ongoing inner movements of my inner life are not compromised or forgotten, but are included as a valuable source of knowing (Behnke, 1997), as imaginative awareness. I

¹⁰ I spent a large part of my earlier life studying and doing dancing and creative movement, with adults and children. Refer to the overview of my biography in Appendix G.

decided to take a risk, to become more open with what I experienced when working with the transcripts, with no preconceived steps to follow, allowing my whole being to become involved. I decided to give this approach some time and space, to discover the way. I agree with Betsy Behnke (2002, p. 12), who makes an important point, that: “phenomenological practice itself is not confined to disclosing the structures of the ready-made world; phenomenologizing can be a transformative act that can contribute to a world in-the-making.”

A Meditative Interlude

I am reflecting and writing this during winter, while looking into the process that is happening *now*, with events that happened during autumn (past), as the intense warmth and light activity of summer decreases, and a new soul mood is felt. During the depth of winter, I feel a seed is maturing, bringing new forces of life and light.

Immersing

Even though I have been immersed in Margaret’s transcripts for many months while clarifying how to continue, I now felt clear to proceed. I immersed (Latin: *merso*, to dip, to plunge) myself more deeply into the experience of Margaret’s transcripts as a whole, through observing, sensing, feeling, thinking, allowing imagination, intuition and inspiration to have a place to be, to be expressed. I want to capture the meaning and understanding of the movements, rhythms and activities of change, in its wholeness and through its parts. Henri Bortoft (1996) makes the distinction between logic as analytical, and meaning as holistic: “hence understanding cannot be reduced to logic” (p. 9). He talks about how authentic interpretation is actively receptive and: “it conveys the meaning of a written text – ‘conveys’ in the sense of ‘passes through’ or ‘goes between’...!and” the meaning of a text must have something to do with the whole text” (Bortoft. 1996, p. 7).

Henri Bortoft’s words inspire me, and I feel more alive, more active in my imagination and thinking. I need to develop the method further so that it is closer

to my experience, knowing, and ways of practice. I realised that I must not bypass my own bodily soul experience, by transcending it in favor of a task. I must not become one-sided in thinking with the intellect only. It became obvious to me, that my body announces itself to me when something is not right (egs. felt stuck, pain, tired), or when the integrity of the work needs to be addressed. If I am alert and observant to the world around me, then my thoughts and ideas are validated, with my body remaining silent and breathing well.

We understand meaning in the moment of coalescence when the whole is reflected in the parts so that together they disclose the whole. It is because meaning is encountered in this ‘circle’ of the reciprocal relationship of the whole and the parts that we call it the hermeneutic circle. (Bortoft, 1996, p. 9)

Like Henri Bortoft, I find that disclosing the whole arises when intuition is given a space, in such instances as, in the relationship of synchronicity. For example, when I had a particular experience and thought about certain ideas, such as wholes and parts, just the right book or information often appeared in my awareness. One such book is “*The Wholeness of Nature*” by Henri Bortoft. This book was/is a blessing, because he discusses in detail the notion of whole and parts, which is vital for me to understand, regarding how I am working with the participants’ transcripts and with this text as a whole. In his book, he talks about parts and whole as inseparable, being in relationship with each other, with equal importance. He (Bortoft, 1996) states that:

A part is a part only inasmuch as it serves to let the whole come forth, which is to let the meaning emerge ... At the same time the whole does not dominate, for the whole cannot emerge without the parts The recognition of a part is possible only through the ‘coming to presence’ of the whole. This fact is particularly evident in authentic writing and reading, where something is either to come to expression or come to be understood. (p. 11)

This means there is an unfolding process and a coming forth, a bodying forth into presence. My intention and hope is that as this research is being written, it will portray an unfolding and coming into presence, through engaging with imagination, illuminating and warming the holistic nature of this work. Accessing imagination brings my thinking alive. James Hillman (1977), in his book, “*Revisioning Psychology*” stresses the importance of the imaginal:

We need an imaginal ego that is at home in the imaginal realm, an ego that can undertake the major task now confronting psychology: the differentiation of the imaginal, discovering its laws, its configurations and moods of discourse, its psychological necessities. (p. 37)

The word *holistic* is a central word that needs to be defined, as it is becoming a widely used word, applied in many fields such as therapy, with probably a number of different meanings, even within this field. For me, holistic means the whole human being, as body, soul and spirit, with wholeness as another word for life or being. I discovered through *living with this research*, in participatory movement, thinking with processes, that I am developing a conscious *living thinking*, that appears to be inherently whole (Hoffmann, 1998).¹¹

This is evident in the fact that each time I try to separate, or grasp at something as an object, or gave power to some other fixed idea, the work did not flow, imagination diminished. The body reacts, until I return to be with the phenomenon itself, being with the process more consciously, thereby trusting my own modes of thinking, keeping fluidity and creativity present, and moving beyond the body to the world, through imagination and intuition. It appears that this work requires a thinking which is itself living and adequate to the human being, as a being of body, soul and spirit. I therefore have to stay alert to how I am thinking. Thinking for me is an activity, an expression of flowing movement, so that ideas arise in a process of flow when movement solidifies into a form. This means remaining flexible, balanced and alert enough in thinking so as not to become caught in a flight of ideas, in which no forms can be created, or become too determined in a fixed idea, without being able to develop further possibilities (Bittleston, 1988). It feels like being in an unsettling way of being, that is always moving, with moments of being in particular spaces. Margaret gives an example of this:

It was so amazing on Saturday night we went out to dinner, we took my parents out, and then my father just ducked off and decided to walk to the restaurant, it's only four minutes up the road, and he didn't tell mum. For part of that time while" driving my mother in there, she then used me as the go-between, which I'd

¹¹ Nigel Hoffmann defines "living thinking" as: "The thinking which works from the unity of the human being, and which is thereby able to perceive nature in its wholeness...that the wholeness of nature is nothing other than the wholeness of the human being" (1998, p. 6) !and" "Living thinking is the unity of knowing, feeling and doing (willing). realized in a new way" (p. 7).

been all my life and asking me what was the reason for my father going off on a tangent like that, just walking off without talking to her. And I turned around and said to her, well I don't know mum it's about time you really sat down with him and try to discuss all these issues with him so, it was instant then Ah! I knew I wasn't going to be the go-between.

So it was a complete change, it was just like I slipped, I said 'oh you and dad are very different people aren't you', and my mother acknowledged for the first time almost, she said: 'I should of dealt with this problem a long time ago.' I said: Yes, you should of.' By me changing, others change, it's rippling across.

Nigel Hoffmann's (1998) research study on Goethean phenomenology discusses in-depth the idea that holistic is wholeness, unity, being life itself, and he quotes L. L. Whyte who says:

The unity is there to discover, and always has been ...if either nature or man !the human being" is composed of ultimately separate parts man !the human being" cannot integrate anything. But if nature and man !the human being" are ultimately one - in some sense still to be understood – then man !the human being" can learn to recognise and make effective that fundamental unity. (p. 215)

Nigel Hoffmann proposes that holistic research then becomes a unity of knowing, feeling and doing, with a *living* form of thinking, of awareness and consciousness that is not a denial of the intellect, or a way towards just feelings and imaginings. My experience shows that when I am thinking consciously and authentically, by participating in the research in a living way, then something new arrives and a unity is present, with its own internal logic.

What I am attempting to practice and write is what Nigel Hoffmann (1998) calls, a *living methodology*, whereby there is differentiation in the whole, with the parts not fragmented. Instead, we can see what differences emerge from the unity; there is a unity and yet there are also different forms. It is like a hologram. Henri Bortoft (1996) says that much of the time we confuse unity with uniformity. A way of knowing that is more heart-felt requires a living unity that allows for diversity or differentiation, rather than sameness. As a student in a university, it is interesting to also observe that the word "university" literally means, "towards unity," towards wholeness. Margaret captures this sense of unity in a reflection of her whole process of therapy: *Inner attunement, like a radio band comes into*

tune, and is in me, it's me, and that's never happened before. I feel a sense of completion in me, a sense of completeness.

The Therapeutic Process

The integrity of the therapeutic approach that Margaret and the other participants were engaged in also relates to how this work unfolds and becomes structured. In psychophonetics, the counsellor encourages change through an in-depth conversational phase, exploring the client's content until a "common picture" is achieved between client and practitioner, regarding the client's situation. On this basis, the client is invited to form a wish statement which then leads the counsellor and client to enter into an *action phase* of the session. This always starts with an exploration of the lived experience of the conditions explored verbally before. A common starting point is to choose a moment in life in which the central issue for the client is exemplified. That moment in the client's life is restored in lived experience, with the help of the bodily memory of that experience, stimulated by pictorial memory (Tagar, 1999a).

The client and counsellor work together in an experiential and creative way, using the body to explore phenomenologically, the inner dynamics of the client's experience. The non-verbal modes of communication include body awareness, sensing, gesture, visualization and sound therapy, used in a variety of ways. Drawing, clay work, painting or other creative mediums may also be used. Peter Thorneycroft (1998) highlights the verbal and non-verbal aspects of experience:

A person's experiences are expressed, and even created, through verbal and non-verbal language, along with interpretations, meanings, commitments, actions and spiritual realities. Human beings invent and re-invent their identities in a conversational dance and coordination of action with others. (p. 50)

In the first interview, Margaret describes briefly this process in one of her therapy sessions:

The change was finding out quite a lot about the mother and daughter relationship, there was a great, great learning ...through the gestalt, doing the gesturing, I became the child and found out what a critical parent I had and how

that had impacted on me ... there was a clarity there as I realised that sometimes I am a pleaser, and to understand my mother's past.

The integrity of the therapeutic process is held by the *wish*, which stands on the premise of the freedom of the individual to make their own choices. When I reflect on how I am working, I can see that there is a challenge for me to act with the same integrity, being mindful and sensitive to the multi-layered nature of the phenomenon of change.

What does the wish mean for me as a researcher, in the context of this study? It means that I have to live up to Margaret's wish, to respect and honour that wish in how I am working with her transcripts as a researcher. The process of coming to a greater degree of freedom, confidence and authenticity in how I am working, is very challenging. It is actually reflective of Margaret's overall wish that she came with to therapy: *I want to be free, to be who I am, to find my authenticity.* I have come full circle – my experience of working with Margaret's transcripts has led me to meet this wish within myself first, as the researcher.

The wish is an "I am" statement, a choice made towards action in the future. Working with Margaret's transcripts challenges me to become more authentic within myself, in my way of working, to deal with the feelings of stuckness, to listen more attentively to bodily reactions and feelings, to speak and express my needs, to use my imagination and act from my intuition more clearly. It is obvious that there is a strong relationship between my self and these transcripts in particular, with a parallel process occurring, that is co-creating a pathway through relationships. Not only is the method being strongly informed by working with Margaret's transcripts, but the actual structure of how I am writing is becoming clearer from working with the transcripts.

Margaret's transcripts stand at the foreground of this research study, like a beacon of light, like a guardian at the threshold of how to do this work, challenging and directing me back to the phenomenon itself, to meet and be in relationship with the phenomenon with my whole being. This is a work in progress!

An Empathy-in-Action Research Method

I then moved into an action phase. My supervisor and I agreed that we would meet fortnightly for two months at least. In each meeting, I would speak about one participant, regarding how I was working with their transcripts and about my findings so far. I prepared for the first meeting by continuing to work through Margaret's transcripts.

Based on what I had already done, and being mindful that I am looking at this stage, for the movements of change over time, I put all of Margaret's transcripts up on the wall so I can see them all, at the same time. Initially, I walked along, back and forth, scanning and re-reading, seeing them all in front of me. Then I joined this reading physically through sensing, walking, and breathing with the movements of Margaret's change as I perceived it, contracting and expanding, without trying to fix on any particular idea, but taking it all in and allowing this to move me, to resonate within. I listened to these inner movements and then sounded and moved what was happening. I meditated on this process, making notes, drawing pictures and repeating this procedure over three days. I was performing a moving drama of Margaret's process of change over time.

Embodying the experience, while reading the transcripts, became an exercise of observation in action, using the non-verbal expressive tools of philophonetics. I went through a range of activities. I joined reading as a bodily experience, by moving and gesturing, contracting and expanding, joining the flow of the experience as a happening, breathing with it and sensing it happening within my soul. After doing this, I allowed an inner response to arise within, as a feeling and I reflected on what meaning that had for me. In order to gain a sense of the perspective and meaning of the experience itself, I moved out of it and beheld imaginatively what I had been doing, to move beyond the body. After doing this, I imagined becoming this experience, then entered again and became it through imagination, movement and sound. It became a moving, sounding experience of a transcript in action!

Using intuition, I then moved more intensely into parts of the experiences described by Margaret, in order to encounter the whole as it comes to presence in the parts. I was guided by Henri Bortoft's (1996) description in which he says:

If the whole presences within its parts, then a part is a place for the presencing of the whole ... a part is special and not accidental, since it must be such as to let the whole come into presence. This speciality of the part is particularly important because it shows us the way to the whole. It clearly indicates that the way to the whole is into and through the parts. It is not to be encountered by stepping back to take an overview, for it is not over and above the parts, as if it were some superior all-encompassing entity. The whole is to be encountered by stepping right into the parts. This is how we enter into the nesting of the whole, and thus move into the whole as we pass through the parts. (p.12)

In a conversation with Henri Bortoft, Carl Scharmer (1999, p. 6) reflects on wholeness and comments, that for Bortoft and Goethe: "The sensory facts are the container that give rise to encountering the real phenomenon ('theory'). I initially joined the experience through sensing and movement. Then in an activity of reflecting, beholding, and with intuition, to see inside the phenomenon, there emerged the interweaving activities or movements of life itself happening, throughout Margaret's four transcripts (over nearly a year).

I will look at these activities in detail and then as the research progresses, delve more deeply into specific areas or parts of the phenomenon of change. I ask you to be patient with me as the meaning in this study is still unfolding, moving simultaneously through the whole into parts/parts into the whole. At this stage I am writing through this part, called Margaret's transcripts, for the "presencing" of the whole. I already sense that all of Margaret's transcripts, as a whole, are becoming a part of the whole complexity, multiplicity and meaning of the phenomenon of change, when seen in the light of all the participants within this study. This is still unfolding and I will come to this later.

The Experience of Change and the Life Processes

Through the empathy-in-action method, seven main activities or life processes became visible, as soul forces in time. These processes correspond with the processes of life that flow through us and manifest in various ways. Rudolf

Steiner (1990b, pp. 81-94; 1996a, pp. 107-120) describes these life processes as breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting (sorting), maintaining, growing and reproducing. They keep us alive, maintaining bodily life, supporting the developing child into adulthood, in enlivening our sense activity, and as adults, through our own inner effort they can be transformed into soul forces.

From one perspective, the life processes can be seen as soul forces that become a pathway for conscious soul work and change over time. The first four activities were experienced as I read and moved bodily through Margaret's transcripts, using the breath, by taking in through perceiving, warming and relating in a process of digesting specific experiences. After taking the experiences right into myself, my movements became very inward in a busy activity of trying to sort out questions and answers, regarding what is true, what does it mean, and what needs to be discarded or not done anymore. This activity felt like I was making my own meaning of this experience. As this was being achieved, I felt my movements become more outward focused with a different quality or knowing, that grew stronger and more confident, more expressive and creative, as I continued to move and sound the experiences described in her transcripts. These seven processes were seen to occur successively as well as simultaneously, as each one includes some of the qualities of the other ones. Looking at Margaret's overall process, there appeared to be a polarity of breathing in (how she perceives her world) and of breathing out (how she becomes more creative in her life), with individualising as the mediator between the in-breath and out-breath. Breathing is important for Margaret, as she describes how she developed asthma at the age of 30 years, but is certain that it will disappear when she completes her healing process.

Who is Margaret? Margaret is a 43 year old Australian woman, who is married with two young children. She says in her interview that she entered therapy to find out the meaning of past hurts and triggers, to face the grief that she experienced in childhood, as well as the trauma of a breakdown with depression in her mid twenties. She wished to become a freer and more authentic person in the world. She wanted to create a closer relationship with her husband and her children. She began her process by having to overcome the fear of facing these

issues. She had to create a safe inner space, in which she could begin to express herself more truly without reacting emotionally, to be more in tune with her self, through bodily awareness, feelings, intuition, sensitivity and creativity.

I will give a short description of each process, with selected excerpts from Margaret's transcripts, to highlight the processes at work, being mindful that these excerpts will not give the full sense of Margaret's experience of change as this is just one perspective of the phenomena, in a field of other possible perspectives. The reality of the life processes are accepted as a given, as a possibility to be explored further. However, I invite you to become a participant and to embody the following descriptions, to experience consciously these life processes for yourself. It also needs to be remembered that in each of the following processes there can be a wide range of interpretations regarding how these processes are operating, depending on each individual's experience and way of being. For example, warmth is a balance between becoming too hot or too cold, so how we are, may influence how we are in the world (eg. my brother cannot be in hot places as he is a quadriplegic and cannot sweat).

The activity of breathing/perceiving/observing.

When we observe the world, and when specific experiences are consciously observed and given attention, then learning can occur. "Enlivening the sense activity is the prerequisite for the learning process to take place" (van Houten, 1995, p. 48). Coenraad van Houten describes that an essential aspect of all learning is the rhythm of breathing in and out. In learning, we breathe in and internalize something, and something new can be created when we breathe it out again. Fear and anxiety disturbs our breathing. Robert Sardello (2001c, pp. 1-2) says: "in the actual moment of fear we experience our very central nature being obliterated ... the central core of our being begins to crumble ... !and!" tears us from the fabric of our relations with the body, time, others, the world." He goes on to say that: "living in fear establishes a different sense of who we are – we become an isolated "I" rather than an authentic "I" (p. 2). This means that if we cannot breathe freely, we cannot feel warmth, we cannot learn so easily. It seems to me, that being open and interested in new things can enliven the activity of the

senses, and encourage an improved ability to perceive and observe a phenomenon.

In therapy, Margaret describes the process of working through to release her suppressed anger and how this affected her breathing:

The anger was putting on a lid, I felt like I was suppressed, I didn't have any air, I was in this chamber and I couldn't breathe. I just went into that and that was I was not allowed to express myself as an inner child. I went into the inner child (through bodily gesture and visualisation) with all those feelings about not being able to express my anger and then I sit with her and say, 'there's me here as an adult', and the counsellor showed me some tools that I could help my inner child anytime. I can cuddle myself and I said to myself, 'it's going to be okay, I will look after you and keep you safe'. I'm learning to express myself in a way I want to. So it was very powerful.

This reminds me that as a researcher, I need to be aware of how I am breathing in and out, when observing/perceiving a phenomenon.

The activity of warming/relating.

In order to engage in the therapeutic and/or process we have to join with what has been taken in, and establish a relationship to the content of what is being taken in (van Houten, 1995). Developing a warm interest in an issue needs the "I am" of a person to be present, especially when making a "wish" in a therapy session. To maintain bodily life we have to develop a certain degree of inner warmth. In the process of therapy, warmth creates a sense of safety and interest which relates to our feeling life. Fear often means we become more cold and withdrawn, the body contracts, or we exorcise (dissociate) and are less present in the situation. To overcome this coldness: "it is solely the warmth of the ego that turns an observation into a meaningful perception, overcomes emotional disorders, and provides energy for the digesting process" (van Houten, 1995, p. 142). Margaret reflects on how she relates with herself and with others:

I think I'm a lot less harder on myself and other people, less judgemental. I've noticed a softening up for myself, and being very gentle with myself, for my own inner child. I have at times been gentle, I haven't been hard on myself all my life. It is just the thrill, of the wonderful nurturing of my inner self and of other people, especially my partner, my own immediate family, and how precious it is noticing that inner child, the clarity of understanding processes, and people's projections.

Understanding people's projections has always been a big mystery for me, I could not quite relate to people who are perhaps difficult to handle, whether it be anger or violence, now I'm more aware and understanding the whole concept better as I'm able to relate to it that their projections are from their past hurts and triggers. The difference with my son for example is that it brings us closer together because the communication is gentle.

I can relate to this activity happening in the research context, as this way of working ignites my passion and interest more strongly.

The activity of assimilating/digesting.

This is where the *I am* becomes very active in wanting to know and understand something, by breaking down and digesting (or not) the content of what has been taken in, so it can serve to help, find and experience what is essential and meaningful for one's spiritual nourishment. Digesting involves our capacity for thinking, in order to understand something; our feeling, by awakening our sense of truth; and our will, by trying things out (van Houten, 1995). Since beginning therapy, Margaret was more aware and able to deal with reactionary behaviors, and describes how she digested an incident with her family:

Easter Saturday was a classic example with my husband's family. I was able to be a lot more grounded while things were going on around me, there were projections and very tense feelings and I was able to hold my own and remain in my 'I am' & not be a different person. I certainly got some reactions going on, it was pretty hard to sit there...Had I experienced that four weeks ago it would of affected me more. I would have got angry at myself and given myself a hard time, that I shouldn't say those things. It wasn't a time or place to say anything, it was Easter Saturday, I felt okay to have said something but didn't wish to because I wanted to leave anyway, it was a classic because I haven't seen those people for two years. I was quite cool, I was quite okay in my own skin.

Some of what happened was unexpected and there was that element of surprise so you can't always be prepared...My reaction didn't run the show. Before I would of got more upset about the whole situation and I think been less in charge. Perhaps I would have been a bit irritable the next day with my own children and that reaction would have gone on, this time I didn't react and get cranky.

When I got home I had to do a bit of work because I felt weird, it got to me, I had to use the 'G' sounds ...then I got a message from my intuition that said 'it's very hard to have a relationship with these people when there isn't a relationship', that was really amazing. Well of course, you can't really have a relationship with someone when there isn't one there to start with, it might be a relation but there is no relationship (laughs) you know what I mean and that came very quickly so intuition. I felt wonderful, just go of course, relax about it. So I'm much more relaxed about things, to let it go.

In using an embodied method, I had to go through the whole of Margaret's process, in all of the transcripts, before I could get a clear sense of what was going on, as the differentiating parts showing through the whole.

The activity of individualising (sorting).

This is the process of eliminating what is not relevant or needed and what is kept is individualised by our own inner forces. Coenraad van Houten (1995) says this is evident when we have a new understanding, insight, feeling, will to act, or make a decision. When we create something out of our own inner forces then this is the process of change. However, this is not necessarily easy to do and Michael Mahoney (2003, p. 178) makes a very astute observation: "It is not unusual for clients (or therapists for that matter) to be frightened by the phenomenology of transformational change." For Margaret, overcoming inner hindrances brought her to herself in a new way that was transforming. She says there has been: *profound change, it's completing, it's the link, coming together as a solid form and it's all part of me, I'd have to say it's the 'I am' again, and by understanding her emotional reactions" there's illumination, like the brilliance in the diamond is that clarity.* Margaret says there have been very, very big changes because:

Just stepping in and out through body gesture was quite amazing to me, stepping in oohh yes (gestures) I remember that, mm all those feelings and stepping out and viewing from different angles, clarity and understanding, so yes because I understand I'm not fearful, because I understand and it's known, it's known.'

The 'I am' is who I am, it's taken me a long time to find it, that I'm an unique being and that there is no one else like me in the world, that's really precious to know that. I can move forward so that's where I am.

I go by attunement and if something is not there I don't feel quite right, gut feeling, it's intuition. So speaking makes it much better when I don't mix it with my reaction, I could leave my husband with his reaction. He acknowledged what had happened and I said I actually need some time out on my own, I went away with a whole group of friends I know and we had such a good time. It was the first time I'd been away for two nights on my own in 11 years. It was needed very much to have my own space, my own individual time, it was really good, and so when the opportunity came up it was too good to miss.

Margaret wrote a poem which captures the meaning of her process of change so far, of taking in, digesting and individualising:

Sounds of Healing

The joy of life springs forth like a bright star,
 my love of self surrounds me far,
 quiet in life resounds with peace
 with the inner child now released.

Sounds of healing echo in my field,
 connecting to my precious being of shield.
 sense of well- being mind, body and soul sing,
 as it was destined to become one.

The rose bud opens,
 rich colour pours forth
 angels present hold me,
 for this unfolding to occur.

Love abounds in my heart
 for nature and mankind.
 strength in staff, rod of light,
 moves full circle and with wings takes flight.

This poem summarises the meaning embedded in the whole of Margaret's experience of change so far, as described in the transcript of the first interview.

The activity of maintaining/practising.

Engaging our motivation is crucial for maintaining insights, decisions, and new skills, by practising or repeating them to develop our new abilities (van Houten, 1995). Practicing something new is like germinating a seed with care so it will thrive; as Margaret says:

But I do have to develop my inner resources most weeks I tap into that. I just develop my turquoise colour in front of me and my guard I do with Gah, Gah before I see them sometimes (specific relatives) and I find that a lot better and they don't effect me as much. So that's what I'm saying, it's become second nature. That's great because that's what I wanted, I wanted the tools to access, to tune in. It was very foreign for me to do it at first, got to practice doing it and it's not quite part of me at that stage and then eventually it does become part of you. It's excellent.

So yeah, regularly I would use it before seeing my parents, I don't have to use it so much with my own immediate family, because I don't have to put the defences up, I can be safe. My guard is my personal protection, I'm not withdrawing, I'm actually participating but it's something I can have, actually I feel more present and connected in the situation.

When I fell over I was able to verbalise rather than have this chain reaction and then get angry at not related incidents...I'm not internalising as much, when incidents occur, I go oh yeah right, that's the trigger, let's just feel into that rather than too much of the head. I find the gesture, and then go through a process of hugging myself and being okay and talking with myself (as inner communication) then the incident was dropped, and the issue wasn't then an issue as much. Just be able to leave it, that's okay, that's the trigger, I leave it there but I can go there if I want.

The difference was that it used to come out in a different way, I would have been angry at something they had done, you've hurt me so I'm going to be angry at you yeah, it's crazy but it would of come out in a different form but it wouldn't make sense...yeah, it's the reactionary process that's completely changed.

The following description by Margaret, exemplifies the consolidation of practising to make a new skill one's own:

When I find I've got some horrible feeling/reaction I do go into the other where I actually change it with a 'sht' sound and gesture, definitely like a she-dding. It's very strong and very powerful and now they're embedded. If someone said they're not the right ones and will I change to better ones, I can't because it's working, and if it's working well that's my thing.

The activity of growing faculties.

Growth can be seen in nature as: “polarity, development and metamorphosis” (van Houten, 1995, p. 51). In terms of therapy and learning, practising is about facilitating the growth of a new ability or faculty. This may be a slow process, consisting of a gradual synthesis of practicing new skills repeatedly, which can gradually transform into new faculties or abilities. Reflecting and reviewing what is being learnt is important for learning new things. After three months, Margaret describes how she is changing and growing:

Since I last saw you three months ago I'd have to say that there would be changes in as much as an expanding of what I experienced before, it's sort of growing. It hasn't stayed still but progressed to a better level of confidence and I can tune into myself when I need to and can talk to myself and talk my way through any situations that come up, so I find I'm tuning into what I was taught so it hasn't left but I feel that it's has grown and is part of me more now.

Whereas before, three months ago, I was still learning to adapt it to my life and now I feel that it's part of me, like it's part of my inner core, it's second nature. So that's the difference. More confidence, less hesitant about things, before I would of taken quite a while to move forward, gone round a few circles and deliberate, so um if I'm sure I want to do something then I move forward with a bit more grace and wholeness.

That's the other thing that has come, is this feeling of wholeness, completeness, more self contained oh and a little bit more softer in my approach to my parenting skills and less critical again – I know I mentioned that before , it's pretty much the same and a little better.

For me, developing new faculties as a researcher, means taking a risk, by allowing the research to unfold and grow while I am doing it.

The activity of creating something new.

Creating something new means learning to transform our inner world, and to be creative in the outer world, as a result of all the other six activities, as an original achievement, not as a repetition. For example, not reacting with anger, or repeating this behaviour habitually, in a certain situation, but acting differently with consciousness and without anger. Something new is created when, as Coenraed van Houten (1995, p. 148) says: “by awakening our drive for knowledge and insight, our drive to develop and our drive to improve, we become a creative human being. This is what initiates the future.” Margaret describes how she creates a new lifestyle for herself and her family:

Moving house was a difficult wait for the five months it took to sell the house ...We had a goal to move out and buy a property and there was a mixture of excitement finding a property we always wanted, that was our long term (with fruit trees and orchard) to create a new lifestyle. For most weekends for the last 4-5 weeks we've been picking fruit and selling it, it's so wonderful as there's a real energy exchange of the nature spirits, you get a lot of energy from it, so there's been a two way thing, yes it's work but there's something that happens, a transaction that happens, when in nature. I've always had that connection with nature, we both have a very strong connection to the land...I have more gratitude for this property, that we're custodians. I went away with a whole group of friends I know...We had a great weekend, we all had such a good laugh (laughs) and it was just nice to not have the responsibility of family, of everything. So at this stage I would go away with these people again but I would also be okay to go away on my own.

Margaret's creativity developed throughout the process and is expressed in a number of different ways. She says the change is: *like a radio band come into tune, and is in me, it's me, and that's never happened before.* Three and a half months after completion of therapy, while reflecting on the difference in change over this time, Margaret wrote another poem:

The Song of Healing

The radio waves play a harmonious sound
a tune that is familiar resounds.

The frequency tuned into the inner most being
Each note remembered as a doorway for seeing.

So quick and responsive
accepting my whole person
allowing emotions to come
Embracing my sense of fun.

I run free with my children
who share my happiness
how dear is our laughter
This tune is so Blessed.

Concluding

Margaret's mandala drawing and written description, given during our final interview, shows how she creatively expressed the wholeness of her transformation. Robert Sardello (1996, pp. 53-54) supports Margaret's comments by saying: "When the life processes are balanced, an emotional well-being is felt." Change appears to become a mode of being, of becoming more *at one* with oneself and the world, through becoming more conscious, more self aware, and expressive, of self-manifesting with the life processes as a developmental pathway. For example, Margaret did not remain a pleaser towards others but became more authentic and in tune with herself, communicating openly and honestly, expressing herself creatively. She became more differentiated from others, but with a greater sense of wholeness and unity within herself, with others and with the world. A paradox of being different and feeling more whole at the same time!

The following poem captures the essence of the embodied method:

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

(Tennyson: Ulysses, 1842)



Figure 3. Margaret's mandala.

It means I'm feeling right now...it means I just realised the 'I am' presence is there, all the way through and I didn't quite realise that as much as when I've been viewing it now. And so it's got the balance there. I can see the beauty of the balance of the green, the white dove, the spirit, mother earth and the 'I am' connecting through to my centre. Art is such a beautiful medium to express with colour. The orange had to be there, the fruit, the love, the leaves, mother earth. My balance is going out to the universe and my spirit is going to the universe and my connection to earth is also going out to the world. So the mandala speaks of unconditional love, which is the pink in the middle, it speaks of creativity, it speaks of balance and enjoyment of life...I felt very good doing this so it could be a fitting end.

I will return to Margaret's transcripts to go further into other specific layers and aspects of change, but this will be done later in the study, in context with all of the participants' transcripts. As the work unfolds, I need to keep faith with this living process, for certain elements lie near the surface and are more visible, while some lie deeper and are more invisible. It is important for me that this work is approached from a variety of perspectives, allowing the different voices of each participant, my supervisors, other authors, and my own voice to be expressed. Hence the story form presented for each participant in chapters two to five. The main challenge in undertaking this work is to enter into the living experience, living forms, living ideas, living substance, living imagination, living persons, to write from the inside/outside/inside. Max van Manen (1997, p. 368) supports this by saying that the human science researcher: "is an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meanings resonate and reverberate with reflective being." As the researcher/participant and author of this study, I hope to create a mood that invites an embodied participation, is creative and affirms our own knowing.

The next step in the unfolding of this research is to move and shift perspective again and enter into the experience of change with another participant – Marilyn.

CHAPTER 3

THE WAY OF THE HEART - MARILYN

May our feeling enter
 The core of our heart
 And strive with love to unite itself
 With those human beings who have the same aim
 And with the spirit beings
 Who full of grace look downward
 On our solemn heartfelt striving
 Strengthening us from regions of light
 And illuminating our Love.

(Steiner, 1923)

Preparing - How Do We Develop an Awareness of Heart Knowledge?

Each person's experience sheds light on their understanding of the phenomenon, so I will work my way through the other three participants' experiences to unfold some of the complex dimensions of human experience and meaning. I intend doing this with feeling and with enthusiasm, and especially with the discovery that the literal translation of *human science*, derived from Wilhelm Dilthey's notion of *Geisteswissenschaften*, is the "science of the spirit" (Benz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 170). With no recipe to follow I am guided by a heartfelt striving, by imagination and intuition, that includes the following activities, offered by Max van Manen (1990):

Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; reflecting on the essential themes "I prefer the word activities" which characterize the phenomenon; describing the phenomenon through the art of writing, (reflection) and rewriting; maintaining a strong ... relation to the phenomenon; and balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

The above quote encourages my enthusiasm. My interest is in understanding the phenomena from the inside, in the study of life-worlds, in comprehending the meaning of change in everyday experiences, in particular through therapy and our social world. Doing this through writing:

Separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know ... distances us from the life-world, yet it also draws us more closely to the life-world decontextualises thought from practice and yet it returns thought to praxis (or thoughtful action). (van Manen, 1990, pp. 127-128)

Marilyn confirms the importance of writing as a way of remembering: *It was really special, to write how you're feeling right there and then because you forget after a while exactly what you're written down.* Heart knowledge is connected with personal meaning and I find the following notion of personal meaning helps to create a bridge between the heart and the mind:

The personal meaning of things does not consist exclusively of values and beliefs that are held intellectually...for the same word, a person may simultaneously have a cognitive meaning, an effective or emotional meaning, a bodily meaning, and a transcendent or spiritual meaning. Personal meaning is a fundamental dimension of personhood, and there can be no understanding of human illness or suffering without taking it into account. (Cassell, 1991, pp. 37-43)

The need for meaning in life is relevant to any person but becomes of paramount importance for Marilyn, and probably for others like her, who grieve the loss (at whatever level) of a loved one.

Words convey meaning. In choosing which words to use I have to ask myself, why do I move away from the idea of themes and prefer to use the word, *activities*? What is my sensing and intuition about this, that causes me to not go strictly in this direction? To sort this out, I imagine two directions that this work could take: one is to follow the idea of developing themes and two, is the idea of participating in the activities as they are presented, following my intuition, in a discovery and unfolding way. When I sit with the imagination of developing themes, I discover that what may be created is an approach that could become for me, more intellectually oriented, that separates experience into a number of themes *about* change, rather than staying within the process and living with the activities of changing, as a more mobile activity of unfolding, as embodied knowing. I discussed this idea with a colleague and asked him for feedback on his experience of doing a thematic analysis approach in his thesis. Even though he found the thematic approach worked for his research study, he agreed with the distinction I made between these two ways of working. He admitted that he was

not completely satisfied that themes actually showed the wholeness of the phenomenon that he had investigated. Therefore, the term “activities” is more appropriate at this stage, allowing for being in the sense of the ebb and flow of life, of feeling, of movement and rhythm, of these activities in a process of becoming. As Marilyn says: *Exploring parts of life, it's not static, so there's a moving and changing to find the pieces of who I am.*

William Braud (1998) suggests that we can know through becoming, by being immersed within the activities and transforming ourselves in the process. This allows for a more likely opportunity to tap all the dimensions of what is being studied, especially when we include the emotional, intuitive and non-verbal expressive aspects. William Braud (1998) goes on to quote Evelyn Underhill, who in 1915, makes the distinction between these two ways of knowing, by saying:

We know ... only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves Wisdom is the fruit of communion; ignorance the inevitable portion of those who ‘keep to themselves’, and stand apart, judging, analysing that which they have never truly known.
(p. 52)

In attempting to describe and interpret the relevant meanings of the research, to a: “certain degree of depth and richness...!I am making meaning” as we live them in our everyday existence, in our life-world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). In seeking meaning, Max van Manen concedes that different people may contribute a deeper understanding of life with richer descriptions than others. He argues that: “when a person shares with us a certain experience then there will always be something there for us to gather” (van Manen, 1990, p. 92). This comment is most encouraging!

I am attempting to create a sympathetic resonance within myself and within whoever reads this work. This means being able to access: “resonances across a wide range of feeling !and be receptive and open” to resonate to the unfamiliar keys or dissonant harmonics of others” (Casement, 1985, p. 95). Sympathetic resonance can be a validation procedure for the particular intuitive insights and syntheses: “It is as if speaking our personal truths – however unique and passionate that may feel – transcends our sense of separateness and brings us

suddenly, even joyfully together – at least for an instant” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 75).

Initially, I chose the selective or highlighting approach, where I read the transcripts several times and asked myself: “what statement/s or phrase/s appear particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described?” (van Manen, 1990, p. 93). I then highlighted these statements. As I did not want to extend this into a thematic approach, I proceeded with the method of engaging with and embodying the material in an intuitive way, described in chapter two, as *an empathy-in-action method*.¹²

I stuck Marilyn’s transcripts onto the wall in a very long line around my living room so that I could walk along, read and move at the same time. This involved being attentive and immersing myself bodily into the experience of her story, allowing it to echo within me. The inner responses became a spiralling, fluid and dramatic moving process through many layers, into the depths and the heights of emotions and feelings. I moved through contraction, expressing fear and pain, into expansion and joy, through to holding the tension between the two. I was moved into the depths of heartfelt grief and loss, to refined, subtle spiritual experiences. There were moments of heaviness, despair, pain, fear, resistance, sadness, love, loss, tenacity, joy and lightness. I moved, visualized, and sounded the experiences. I felt the gentle but strong nurturing of the heart, of the self. I found this activity deeply moving and revealing of the drama of her/my soul life, opening to the subtleties of her/my gentle spiritual nature. Performing this story was an intense and uplifting experience, and reminds me that it is not what happens to us, but how we choose to live with these experiences and what meaning we give them in our life, that makes a difference. I was able to draw upon my memory of being with her during the interviews, especially for the nurturing activities, as her descriptions became alive and real at the time. We were feeling, hearing and sounding some of these experiences together during the interviews. I also meditated on her paintings, as painting was the main medium she used for expressing, processing and reflecting on her feelings. As Marilyn had

¹² Refer to Margaret’s story in chapter 2. “An empathy-in-action research method” to refresh the main details of this method.

a large quantity of paintings, we went through them together, to choose which ones to include in the thesis. I am not going to describe all the details of my research action method, as words cannot really convey what movement, gesture, sounds and imagination can, as they are the non-verbal language of direct experience, understanding and meaning. I need to respect this process and leave it for you and others to participate and have your own experience and discoveries with this approach.

I think it is important that we do explore different ways of how to include bodily and artistic expressions as a way of knowing. Elizabeth Grosz (1989) urges us to find this new language of the body:

If we don't invent a language, if we don't find our body's language, it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones, and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealized. Asleep again, unsatisfied, we shall fall back upon ... words... !as knowledge". (p. 214)

The potential for creating possibilities for intensifying personal lived experience can also be found through works of art, as a way of entering: "through imagination and the emotions !feelings" they evoke, into other forms of relationships and participation" (Dewey, 1956, p. 333). This research method involves being receptive to the activities, patterns and/or connections within Marilyn's story, being mindful that a larger picture may be forming, in relationship with all of the participating people in the study. That is, what may appear as being a whole in the context of each participant's experience may also be a part, in another context. On this basis, I am aware of not pre-determining that the activities found in Margaret's transcripts would be the same for the other participants, but to allow each one to emerge in its own unique way. Marilyn's story was partly formed out of my embodied experience utilising the empathy-in-action method, as well as from the paintings she completed, as creative expressions of her experience of change.

Because this is an embodied approach that involves an experiential way of knowing, it is useful to try and make sense of some of these forms of knowledge, as they are less visible than cognitive forms of knowledge. Max van Manen talks about the four existentials, as non-cognitive forms of knowledge that are inherent

in our body, in our corporeal sense of things, in our gestures and way of being; in our actions and routine practices; in our being with the things of the world, our at homeness: and in how we relate with others (van Manen, 2000b). Marilyn describes one way that she came to knowing in an embodied way:

If I feel something is going on that I don't understand and is under the surface I'll do a painting. It's ongoing and I'm just happy to leave it flow and if I have the feeling I want to do a painting then I go and do it, because I love it, and I have lots of "non-verbal/expressive" tools and the know how to get to those places where I need to go. For me now, and even in the future, it will be just embodying that so the whole process is to embody that.

Max van Manen (1990) talks about this in relation to teaching, however, it is also applicable in this study, because of its practical and experiential way of coming to know about the phenomenon, which can be difficult to capture in words. Therefore, I am disclosing the practice of research, with my background as a teacher, therapist and human being, all consisting of the experiential quality of practical knowledge which acknowledges that much of my knowing what to do, comes from bodily knowing, actions, relationships, and from the world.

My practical knowledge is, in Eugene Gendlin's (1996) terms, my *felt* sense and *felt* understanding of the participants, which comes not just from the transcripts. It includes my memory of the interviews as conversations and human meetings; it includes my intuitive grasp of the things that I do, and the general mood or atmosphere in my home, in the schools where I do relief teaching, in the university where I study and meet with my supervisors, in the situations where the interviews took place, as well as in my office space at home, where most of the reading and writing is being done. I realize that at times there are not any words for the subtle actions and meanings of what I am trying to articulate in the doing of this work. Marilyn tries to find the words to describe one experience of change as:

A definite body feeling like someone had put a bolt in you, that entered the centre of your being, like a definite feeling, you could feel it in the body, very hard to describe, it's something you have to experience, it's not something you can say in words...it's bodily experience that I felt enter or appeared in me. In a way, it's like an awakening, being connected to god or the divine, it's what my life is really being about so that was really important for me.

I hope that in the unfolding of this process I can bring the soulful and subtle lived experiences to reflective awareness (van Manen, 1990), to reveal the holistic nature of the phenomenon of therapeutic change. For instance, in the articulation of the process, I am constantly trying to be aware of the words and phrases that I am using, by questioning why I choose certain words. For example, I choose to use the word participants' *transcripts* instead of *text*. *Transcript* seems to contain openness and fluidity that travels across and beyond what is written, allowing a sense of breathing and a space for feelings, more than the word *text*, which sounds more defined, composed, definite and completed to me. As poetry and the creative arts are a vital part of the expressions of change in this study, transcript seems the better word to use. Looking more closely at the meanings of words used in research, can also tell us about the nature of particular approaches to research (Braut & Anderson, 1998). For example, words such as analyse, results, data, questionnaires, statistical analysis are not relevant in this research, whereas words such as describe, understand, integrates, awakens are appropriate.

The following poem ("*Rising Damp*") by Ursula Fanthorpe (1982) captures the mood of the personal striving to be in touch with the world through feelings and sets the scene poetically:

It is the other rivers that lie
 Lower, that touch us only in dreams
 That never surface. We feel their tug
 As a dowser's rod bends to touch to the source below.

As I begin to enter into Marilyn's story, I feel a pull to enter deeper into my feeling life, into a world where not only the dower's rod bends below but also lifts upwards towards spiritual connections, taking in the past, present and the future, of coming to know oneself more fully. The idea that we can change by entering the moving nature of our life forces, through sensing inwardly into our bodily experience, was developed in the 1970s, by Eugene Gendlin. He called this sensing, a *felt sense*: "a bodily sense of some situation, problem or aspect of one's life" (Gendlin, 1996, p. 20). He called this activity *Focusing*, in which clients' connected with their felt sense, by identifying the feeling it presents through a word, image, or phrase. For example, a knotted feeling in the stomach may be experienced as sadness, and by asking oneself, "what makes me so sad?" a person

may receive an insight that brings a therapeutic change (Gendlin, 1996). Marilyn shows this process as:

Coming into an awareness of things I hadn't really realised before ...it's more about me and how I have changed and how I look at things. So it's just going into the feelings and seeing how I am feeling and really knowing what's going on in the body...having been shown the tools... using sound, colour and gesture, often there is a realisation of what's going on in my feelings and having to sit with it, and I would sit with it ...and get a sense of really what's going on.

Like Marilyn, this belief in the body's wisdom is at the heart of psychophonetics, in which there is a trust in the knowing and in the truth that comes through the body and soul, into conscious awareness (Sherwood & Tagar, 2002; Steele, 2004; Tagar, 1994a, 2001).

An Embodied Way of Knowing

While contemplating the shift of perspective from Margaret to focusing on Marilyn's transcripts, I became aware of the need to further articulate some of these ways of experiencing and knowing, from the perspective of how I am working in the process, and in how the participants are participating in their therapy. One way of developing the faculties of self-knowledge, is through a conscious soul relationship with experience through sensing, movement, visualisation and the sounds of human speech (Tagar, 1999a). These tools: "constitute four major modes of knowing and communication which allows for direct experience, as well as verbal communication, as a way of knowing (Tagar, 1995a, pp. 22-23). These modes of knowing are the ones used by the participants while in therapy, as well as the ones applied in the research method. Sensing, or sensory intelligence leads to the exploration of the dynamics of experience registered in the life-body, as the first step in observing and bringing into conscious awareness more about the phenomenon being explored. Expressing experience through bodily gestures and movement is a kinaesthetic mode of knowing, which accesses our intuitive intelligence. Gestures and movement can stimulate spontaneous visualizations, as a pictorial mode of knowing, that activates our imaginative intelligence, in which we form inner images that pictorially express inner experiences (Tagar, 1999a). When Marilyn entered into

the unexpressed grief, into the wound and pain in her heart, her whole body became bent and crouched over: *I feel my whole being is bleeding and torn lying at my feet...my heart grieving, shattered and torn...the grief is at times overwhelming with feelings of vulnerability.* In another session:

I had felt guilty and I realised in one of the sessions that I actually wasn't guilty, I had a realisation in the body and saw by how I was feeling that what had actually happened at that time when I felt guilty - it was like the heart was tied up in barbed wire. It was tied up like that because it had been wounded so much.

The fourth mode of knowing is sound-intelligence. It is the echo of human experience through the sounding of the consonants and vowels of human speech. This is accessed through the identification of the vibrational nature of each aspect of experience, and the ability to resonate with the inner nature of experience. Psychophonetics says these experiences that live in the form of vibrations within us, can be traced, accessed, released and enhanced by matching them with a sound or sound combinations, which has a sympathetic resonance with them (Tagar, 1999a). Sound therapy can be a major tool for directly accessing and addressing the deepest layers of human experience (Steele, 2004; Tagar, 2001). Marilyn describes a nurturing sound experience:

The sound I made was a warm high vibrating energy 'Mmmmm' sound, with a central point to it but also vibrating graduating out.....I had some wonderful sessions nurturing my heart. A warm gentle feeling sound "MMM" came with feeling.

Becoming Oriented

I now want to enter Marilyn's story from the perspective of the first part of her therapy, where she describes her story in terms of past, present and future. I invite you to join me in becoming aware of our own non-verbal ways of knowing, or felt sense, in response to this story. Once again, there is a parallel process operating while working with Marilyn's transcripts. The context is that during this time, I was reviewing and contemplating the past, present and future of how I am situated in my research studies. My supervisor was new, didn't know my history, and I was making radical changes and exploring a new direction. A panel meeting was organised, where I talked about my research journey in terms of past, present and

future. We developed an overall picture of my journey so far, with positive and encouraging feedback from the panel of colleagues. This helped me to see how my own development, knowing and changes led me into consolidating a clearer direction for my research. One of the members of the panel impressed me to the extent that I felt it was important to create a supervisory team, with a third person. I acted on this intuition and Dyann Ross agreed to become my associate supervisor. I realised that being offered a space in which I can speak freely, where I am listened to with an open mind and heart by another, I can then come to know consciously what I know. This confirmed what my supervisor, Dawn Freshwater and I had already begun, in our decision to meet every two weeks. In each meeting, I would speak and we would reflect on one participant each time, until I reached a saturation point and knew how many participants to include directly in the study. As Dyann comments: *This is research life process and a method for presenting this material* (personal communication, 27/8/2004).

This opportunity of being able to speak freely about the process of research, in dialogical spaces with my supervisory team, that offers a high degree of commitment, heartfelt care, respect and freedom, allows me to explore unknown places and bring forth insights, depth and new discoveries. These are the crucial elements in my research process, especially because this process of becoming through speaking, listening, embodying and reflecting, is enabling me to write. It has become the main pathway of discovering and unfolding the direction and form of this thesis.

Speak, O human
 And thou revealest through thee
 The coming into being of worlds.
 The coming into being of worlds reveals itself through thee,
 O human when you speak.

(Steiner, 1960, p. 1)

Speaking, is an expression of who we are and is central in each of the participant's experience of change. Speaking will be discussed in detail in a later chapter, as a major activity in change and transformation.

Marilyn's Story

Marilyn has read this completed chapter, and after our conversation about it, her feedback comments and minor changes have been incorporated into the study.

Now, imagine Marilyn, at 53 years old, deciding to go to counselling because of having to live with a difficult life situation over the last seven years. In the first session, she realises for the first time that what she was feeling in her heart is grief and loss. *My heart was so full of grief, I needed to go into it with the counsellor, and through the process of exploring these feelings she experienced immediate changes: I felt I needed to go to that place to experience it and after I had experienced it I had a week of absolute peace and the counsellor suggested if I felt like it I could write about it and maybe use watercolours.*

The following is a summary of her paintings, as expressions of how these changes were experienced by Marilyn, from the perspective of grief and loss, remembering that it is possible that she is now experiencing: "the past, the present and the future are simultaneously experienced with the present," as differences (Neville, 2000).



Figure 4. The past.

Expressing and reflecting on her experience of the past, in her life and marriage:

Full of life, joy, harmony and love. These were all the qualities experienced by me in our 26 years of marriage. There were a few down times also when he (husband) suffered occasional periods of depression, but the good times far outweighed these times. There was laughter, fun, love, times of stress, hard work. Many feelings, but I don't recall any feelings of grief.

Imagine living with changes that challenge your whole way of being, in your intimate relationship, in how you live or work day to day, and in how you relate with others in the world. How would you feel if your whole world is turned around, and it is not your conscious choice? How would you be, living with a dramatic and unexpected change that occurs over time, in which you feel very alone, having to cope and live with this changing life situation, not knowing for many years what is really happening?

How would you cope, living with someone who is gradually losing touch with reality, becoming less able to function successfully in their ordinary day-to-day social living and work? How would you feel living and watching your partner's personality disintegrate, with the occurrence of major changes in thought, mood, perception and behaviour?

How would you be if you learnt that your partner of 26 years had developed a mental illness? This is what happened in Marilyn's life:

He has a mental illness...through stress, untreated for four years and treated for about the last three years, so a lot went on in those four years when untreated.... It's difficult when you have been married to someone for about 26 years and they start developing an illness that changes their personality and changes your whole marriage. So that was the main grief and loss...that the person he was, isn't any more. That's really difficult because I didn't even know there was grief and loss...the feelings of grief came after 26 years of marriage.

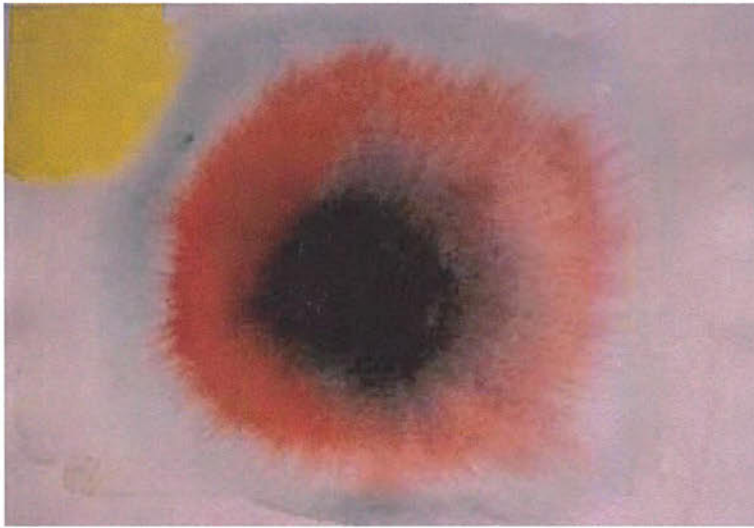


Figure 5. Being “in” grief and loss.

The experience of being: *in grief and loss was a time of anguish, fear, stress. There was no joy, laughter, fun. It was all dark, verbal anger, rage, screaming, shouting, pain in the heart, being alone in my grief. No-one thought to ask how I was or even understood that I may be suffering grief and loss, this feeling of sadness did not even occur to me to be grief. I thought grief only happened when someone died, not when they were still alive.*

The loss of my partner, who was often too busy with his voices, who could not be rational, who thought at times I was no different from his voices. There was sometimes a deep fear with the voices telling him to do negative things, including sometimes ending his own life. You were never sure if he was coming home, when he went out. I was powerless to do anything but to watch and pray deeply. Having my resources was a great comfort and saviour. He is now on medication which has stopped the shouting and screaming but is still often not present to have a conversation with. There is very little sharing of feelings, there is no joy, I am still alone in my grief.

I feel my whole being is bleeding and torn lying at my feet. My heart grieving, shattered and torn almost totally. There is so much pain in this wound, it is open and bleeding, with exposed feelings of pain, loss of love and warmth. It feels like a bleeding mess. There is the fear of life, the loss of life, the loss of identity. I had become someone, that someone else wanted and who I thought that I needed to be, in order to make and keep him happy and stable. The grief is at times overwhelming with feelings of vulnerability, it takes me out of my ‘I am.’



Figure 6. In the present.

The experience of being in the present, now (in first interview):

This picture has come about because of my inability to go from my grief and loss and into the future. After two attempts to paint the future, I realised I had to express the now. In the now I see much more joy, in the yellow at the top of the picture. The blue and green are healing colours for me but are heavy still, which is how I feel. It is still difficult to climb out of this feeling of grief. The joy in the yellow is what I hope will be passable for the future. When I am in this depth of grief and loss, sorrow, the future seems far away, almost unattainable.

When painting these expressions of my feelings I was unable to look and have before me a photo of myself as a happy, joyful three year old. The loss of this part of myself was so great, to be almost unbearable.



Figure 7. The future.

The experience of the future (as described in the first interview):

In this expression of my feelings I see all the rainbow colours emanating from a single source. This source is my self. I can accept that my future journey will be alone. There is joy and lightness in this picture plus beauty and serenity.

I can still feel sadness in my heart at not being able to share the rest of my journey with my husband, this brings tears of sadness to my eyes, but now I feel I will have the strength to move beyond the sorrow.

Now being in touch with joy in its depth, I know I can transport myself to this space in my heart, I can now bring forth this child of joy.

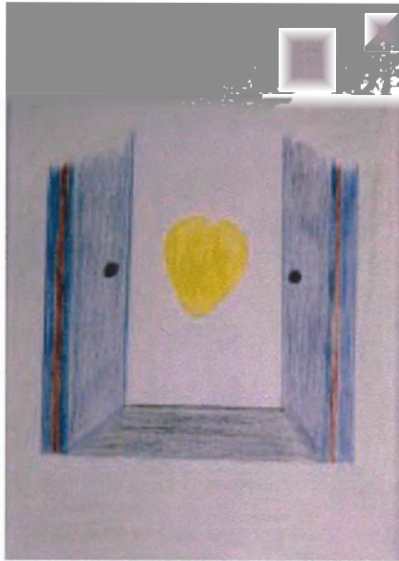


Figure 8. The path of the heart.

Marilyn's process is a path of the heart. She says:

The heart for me is very special, that needs always to be nurtured with love, gentleness and compassion. It is a special organ of the body that embodies pure love. My heart at the end of the grief and loss stands on the other side of the threshold, full of hope and radiant with joy. I feel it has moved forward, free of its confinement, open and ready for the future.

It was only by going to counseling, that Marilyn realised that her heart pain was the grief she was feeling for the loss of the relationship, of her life in the marriage with her husband, and that she had not accepted his illness. She says: *That was a big change to deal with and I really hadn't accepted that.*

I had four interviews with Marilyn. The first one was in her home, where I met her husband also. For the remaining interviews, she preferred to do them at my place, because she said it felt a bit uncomfortable talking to me about him, while he was in the house. Marilyn has three grown up children who do not live at home. During the time spent with Marilyn in the interviews, then working through the transcripts of her experiences, I felt compassion and love stir within me, not just for her but for all those partners who have to cope daily, living alone with a person who has a mental dis-ease. My hope is that you are touched by these experiences and can take them into your heart, to find your own inner and

intimate responses, and be changed through reading her story. I invite you to open your mind and your heart to enter the realm of heartfelt knowing, not just for my sake, or your sake, but also for humanity's sake (Braud & Anderson, 1998). In the therapy sessions, Marilyn's experience of grief and loss became very deep:

*I knew I had to go through into the grief and loss, it was still affecting me quite a lot. My heart was so full of grief which I needed to go into with the counsellor. It was necessary to go into the depths **to know it** because it felt if you don't go to the depths you don't get out, it just sort of simmers under the surface.*

The Experience of Resistance

Resistance is one of the major reasons that people don't or won't change. Marilyn was torn between wanting to know but not wanting to be in a space of pain, of feeling like a victim. Adam Blatner (1999, p. 137) asserts that resistance can be a common reaction when a client is about to become: "actively involved in self-expression *which* is sensed as making one feel unusually vulnerable." Jean McLendon (1999, p. 46) also agrees that: "with any action method, there is vulnerability, as we expose more of ourselves," thus motivation and feeling of safety in the counselling space, are crucial elements in overcoming resistance. The therapist can do this by warming-up the room, by being present, non-judgmental, accepting, and patient with the client.

I wonder also if resistance and fear of becoming vulnerable may be influenced by a general attitude in society that does not easily allow for the expression of grief in many communities. Compare this with those communities where expressing grief is acceptable. It seems to me that much of the advertising around us appears to portray a *denial of death* attitude, which tends to ignore concerns of the heart (Sardello, 2004). Many people are experiencing a dissociation from life: "Imagine being in that space and still having your heart beat - still having your heart perceive all the paralyzed attempts made to meet your destiny" (Bento, 2004, p. 111).



Figure 9. Resistance.

For Marilyn the process of resisting and then overcoming this hindrance was like:

I don't want to be here, I just want to get on with life. I don't want to have to feel this grief. I don't want to do these water colours, I don't like seeing my emotions running all over the paper. Why can't they stay buried, forgotten? By just saying this I am a victim. I don't want to feel like a victim complaining and feeling like I am wallowing in self pity. I can't feel any love and compassion for myself. When looking into this painting I do see the phoenix rising from the ashes which gives me hope...that maybe he will get better.

This point of no longer resisting how she felt about this change in her life, to come to know it, is important, as it was not until Marilyn was really *in* the grief and loss that she realised she actually hadn't accepted his illness:

I definitely realised I hadn't accepted his illness, so that was major, and that absolutely transformed how I thought about things, how things affected me that happened. Now with the acceptance they don't bother me, and my understanding - accepting and understanding. The acceptance was after the session...when I was home and in the grief and loss writing about it, I suddenly realised that I hadn't accepted it, so the realisation came after the session, so that's made a major change. It's changed my relationship. Instead of becoming annoyed, I know it's me, so the acceptance is just being how he is. Yes it's major, it's changed my relationship, so I don't feel like this block, I haven't this block between him and I anymore. I can be more open, so that's really good. The feeling of acceptance makes me feel more lighter and better.

Marilyn said in the interview that she was used to living with him all the time, as they had their own business together for many years, so that did not make any difference. The only difference was the fact that there was no love or communication between them, as he just responds with yes, no, could be, there isn't any real conversation. Even though Marilyn changed through the counselling and in how she communicated with him, she says that: *I might as well be a fly on the wall so that made it really, really hard and there's no difference in him with me being more open.*

The Experience of Connecting with Own Resources

Once Marilyn accepted and acknowledged the change in her life, she realised that she could connect with her own resources, and begin to accept the reality that the marriage had ended:

There's nothing there, nothing happens. It's the end of the marriage because I am more the carer, I don't really have a relationship, so big changes...I'm not in a relationship, in sharing a relationship, so I guess it's accepting that there is a loss of the relationship and so I'm alone and accepting that I'm actually alone, so the joy was knowing I've got it inside myself because living with someone like that is very depressive and oppressive and you have to be very careful that you don't lose your own self underneath it, it's like somebody pushing it down all the time. Sometimes I feel that pressure but not much because I have other things and can go past it, like gardening, my art, doing study and these things, being in strong touch with my resources so that I'm not feeling it all the time but finding the joy was looking inside myself and finding it still there.

Through the therapy process Marilyn was able to connect with her inner resources, which helped in her ability to make changes, in the way she was living with this situation and for her future. Marilyn said, in one of the interviews, that she had never really had to look into herself, that she had forgotten to do this because she was married and sharing. In this situation, how easy is it for us to rely on others to meet our needs? Through therapy she was able to re-member her own inner connections and resources:

It's like a childlike joy, it's like untainted, pure joy, it's fun, and I know I can go there when I want to. I learnt in the therapy that I can just sink into it, I can just visualise and I feel it in all my body and I can remember and still see how I was when I was about eight and running around laughing and playing and so I can get into that feeling I had around then, and tap into it.

Even though there wasn't a physical death of a partner, there was a gradual death and mourning on other levels, from Marilyn's perspective. William Worden (1989) suggests there are four tasks of mourning: to recognise and accept the reality of the loss; to release the emotional pain of the grief; to adjust to the new situation of being alone; and to move on in life, emotionally and energetically. Other authors list a stages process of grieving that includes denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, 1969). The idea of phases and tasks described by others¹³ (Worden, 1989) is informative but will not be gone into specifically in this study. While most of these processes related grief and loss to death and/or dying, grief and loss is evident in many situations where a loss has been experienced (that is, loss of relationship, a child leaving home, a colleague leaves, a business fails, a physical disability, or a stroke) (Marris, 1974).

In this case, a loss of a partner through mental illness, a loss of her marriage, with all its hopes and dreams for the future changed Marilyn's life:

I didn't even realise it was grief and loss, and someone else was telling a friend about his father who had a stroke and how her mother is learning to cope with that because even though he's can look after himself physically it's effected him mentally so now he suffers from depression and things like that so it just opened up my whole mind...I realised you suffered grief and loss in like divorce or anything that people suffer grief and loss. It was quite a major thing for me to learn and understand. I was just sort of floating along where now I feel like a definite path and a real definite journey to go to, I'm not really sure of what it is yet all I know is it's pretty straight, there are quite a few possibilities.

Moving through grief and loss takes time. Throughout Marilyn's transcripts and paintings, feelings and emotions come and go in an ebbing and flowing way, in a rhythmical way, with a strong nurturing and healing process taking place. Nini Leick and Marianne Davidson-Nielsen (1991, p. 60) make an important point about this by saying that: "The natural process cannot be speeded up, even by therapy. It can take at least nine to twelve months before we are ready to approach the final farewell and begin to withdraw our energy from this person." My contact with Marilyn confirmed this view as our interviews covered a period from mid-winter to autumn, with a later meeting in the following winter.

¹³ Such as Parkes, 1972; Engel, 1961, and Bowlby, 1980.

A Personal Experience

My experience is similar in some ways to Marilyn's, in that for many years up until the mid-1980's, I also lived with a person who had a mental illness. For about 12 years, I didn't know what was wrong, as he hid this knowledge from me, covering it by being verbally and physically aggressive, by being very, very resistant to any changes in his world. Consequently I felt very alone, with no outside support, feeling a lot of grief and loss whilst still in the marriage, especially as I had no previous experience of how to be with his way of behaving. This situation did not improve or change until I left the marriage, undertook personal therapy and moved into making a new life for myself and for my children. I have always been the main provider and found working full-time to be very supportive. Allowing myself to live close to nature and the rhythms of the seasons, *being with* the dying away, re-birthing and growing processes around and within, was most helpful during this time. I feel with, and connect with Marilyn's experiences, as John O'Donohue (1998) says:

The mystery never leaves you alone. Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits. A world lives within you. No-one else can bring you news of this inner world. Through our voices, we bring out sound from the mountain beneath the soul. These sounds are words. (p. 13)

The following poem gives a sense of this inner desire to grow, change and become oneself:

Chaos...confusion...drowning
 As the world's demands of me grow,
 Chaos is mastered and becomes quiet
 In the resolving of the choice that is spoken:
 Now I see you, now I accept you,
 Shadows - Tempters who would deny me of myself.
 Shadows - Demons who would feed the fear of loss of Self,
 In the flood of the blood's falling,
 And giving itself away, to the earth...

I let go I am empty...

In the light of a choice - I change you and embrace
 This swirling darkness of dying within - we are one.
 Another cycle turns around
 And I am turned and reminded once again,
 Of the choice

Which lies buried beneath my blood's tree.
 That I - I must breathe the enduring warmth of Love
 And life-restoring forces, in and out; maintaining,
 The cycles and rhythms that turn around
 And come around and go around,
 In and around the All.

Re-newing
 The breathing of life,
 and Love.

The Experience of Healing the Pain of Grief and Loss - Separating

Marilyn lived in a chaotic situation for at least three to four years, until the illness was diagnosed and her husband received treatment. During these years, Marilyn was in a state of despair about his illness, without realising that she was grieving. Once she accepted his illness, and her feelings of loss, she could then observe this event and relate its effects to her own life, to digest the task presenting itself, by taking care to heal her heart. There appears to be: "the need both to reaffirm the enduring meaning of the relationship, and to lay it to rest, so that its reformulated meaning can be assimilated into the continuing structure of life" (Mann, 1973, p. 50).

But what does it mean that it takes time, time to heal the pain in the heart? Learning to acknowledge and accept her loss was not just a thinking activity, it was also feeling and doing activities, it was felt in the body. Reading through Marilyn's transcripts, I understand grief to be a reaction of the whole body to a loss (eg. anger, guilt). However, the experience of loss introduced Marilyn to the depth of soul through feelings, looking within for the connection with her inner resources, potential, love, and for becoming more whole. Before she was able to acknowledge and accept the loss of relationship, there were many tears of loneliness and sadness.

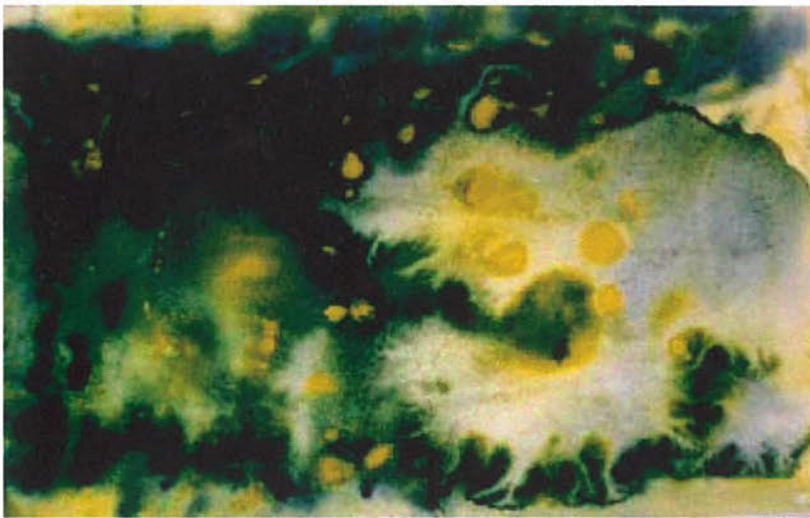


Figure 10. Relationship – a great cavern.

The great cavern or hole, it feels like a bottomless pit with no love, warmth and connectedness. The loneliness is hard to describe, it is indescribable as there is nothing there, nor can I find anything to fill this vast void, of the emptiness in my being.

As Marilyn came to accept the inner separation of their relationship, of the energetic connection that lived between them as a common life body, this enabled her to create a new skin around herself through a nurturing and healing process. This common life body is created between two people within a relationship, over a long period of time, and its death or separation takes time and effort to heal. What was shared as a common energetic connection had to be withdrawn and reclaimed back to herself. To give a pictorial sense of what this separation is like, the following drawing is included to show another perspective, of how this event is experienced by the partner who did not choose to leave the relationship. It was done by a man who was grieving deeply for the loss of his wife, who had left him. Like Marilyn, his way of healing was to draw and paint how he was feeling during this time. This is one of his drawings.

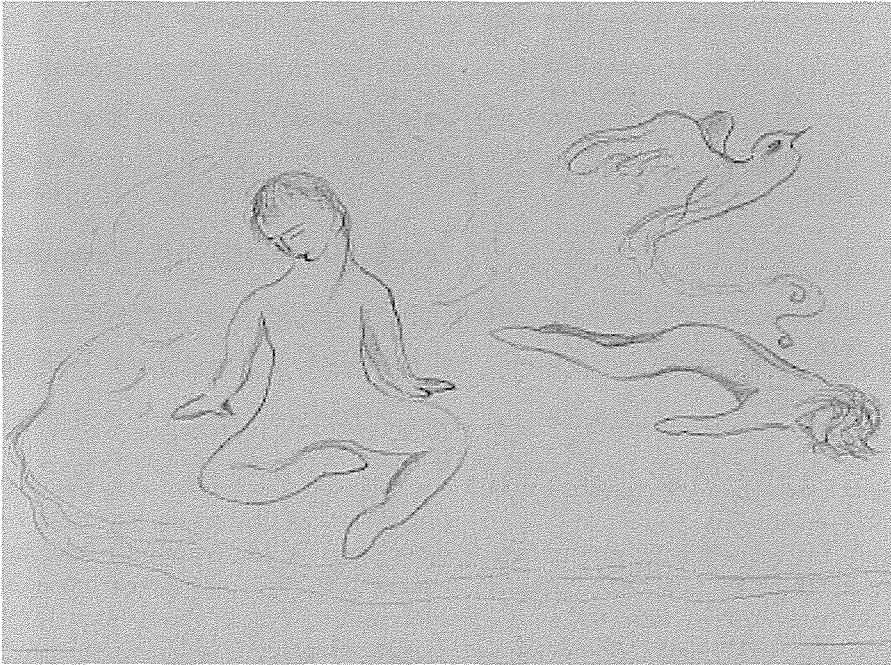


Figure 11. Separating - from relationship.

Marilyn described how she gradually had to shift her hopes away from a future with her husband, and from this she says: *Now I feel more free, more open and don't feel like putting a wall up between he and I.*

How did she learn to make this separation, to do this nurturing? What helped to make the changes in her life body? Marilyn did this through the capacities of imaginative heart feeling - through sensing, feeling, moving, visualisation and sound. The presence of the imaginal capacity of our heart is described by James Hillman (1981, p. 2), in a lecture now published as a book, *"The Thought of the Heart"* in which he says: "that the heart is the seat of imagination, that imagination is the authentic voice of the heart, so that if we speak from the heart we must speak imaginatively." He goes on to say there are three imaginings of heart expressions in our culture. In regards to Marilyn, I think she exemplifies what he calls the personal heart of Augustine: "my heart is my love. my feelings, the locus of my soul and sense of person. It is the place of intimate interiority, where sin and shame and desire, and the unfathomable divine too, inhabit" (Hillman, 1981, p. 6). Marilyn's journey of heart imagination is described

throughout her whole process. The following healing journey is one description of this. Over a six weeks period, Marilyn developed the skills learnt in therapy and continued them at home, in the process outlined in the next section, which she named in her journal as: “Nurturing of self - healing the heart.”

Nurturing of Self – Healing the Heart

The main healing came through sensing, feeling, visualisation and sound. Marilyn describes this process of changes in her journal, while also reflecting on her journal process during the interview:

I felt and drew what was happening and how it felt every day and what I saw in my heart was nurturing, giving the heart love, surrounding with joyous yellow and pink with love and it came from sound, as the vibration of the sound resonated within the heart and made it beautiful, feel good. It made me feel vibrationally really good. I've been doing the sound at home, over the last 3 days. it then progressed to actually change so that more colour came....all these colours felt caressing with the quality of peace, so very peaceful and serene.

On this particular day there was a difference in my nurturing, my heart was first covered in a woven blanket of love and warmth, which was pink and gold, and this then replaced with a pure gold blanket and it was ultra fine like fine toffee but was soft not brittle, that covered my heart and yeah, it felt, was really lovely. The sound was a warm high vibrating energy 'Mnnnn' sound, with a central point to it but also vibrating graduating out, that was very nice and then after a couple of days of nurturing my heart, this beautiful pink colour surrounded by exquisite perfumed rose petals, I could visualise and smell the petals. I had some wonderful sessions nurturing my heart, I can smell, a divine smell absolutely. A warm gentle feeling sound 'Mnnnn' came with feeling.

During the interview, when Marilyn was describing this experience, I asked her to sound the “Mnnnn” sound, so that I could feel this experience with her as well. My experience of this was: the sound filled the room and vibrated within me. I breathed deeply and felt a warm energy wafting gently through me, it was wonderful, there was a light whiff of the smell of rose. I checked with Marilyn that she wasn't wearing any perfume. She says the heart has the essence of the rose which allows us to breathe in joyous love. Breathing in the fragrance transported me to the place where there are no words. The nurturing continues:

And then I went on and this day was different because it had pink and then yellow with the joy started to come into my heart, before it had been suppressed and I

must now look within for this joy which before was a shared joy, a joy joined to another. As the joy started to come in the heart was bathed in the most divine pink feeling of the most sublime unconditional love. For me, the qualities of this love were pure and intense and of the greatest compassion. My heart felt wrapped in a gossamer fine silk scarf, so fine it was barely there and the perfume came with the scarf was exquisite.

Then there was a different feeling of love surrounding the heart, of the divine mother, of compassion, and the colour of aqua blue came with a fairly high pitch sound 'Mmmm', and the pitch had actually changed to high.

A Breathing Space: For Self-Care

I invite you to try some basic self-care now, to enter this experience – of soothing, covering, massaging with self-caring gestures and sounds to the heart. I suggest you stop reading, relax, focus on the heart and identify what inner nurturing quality you may need now.

Sensing and verbalising it for yourself; self-massage with gentle, sensitive hands touching on the heart and breathing deeply with this; then joining with your body in this movement of your hands, allowing a sound to come through with your breath and movement. Fine tune the sound until it feels just right for you, until the sound sensed has the same effect on you as the experience with your own hands.

Then listen inwards to see what else may be needed, and initiate other sounds accordingly, trying them out and continuing with what works best in this moment. Observe and feel how this changes how you are now.

Nurturing continued.

Only the last picture of Marilyn's healing heart process is included here:

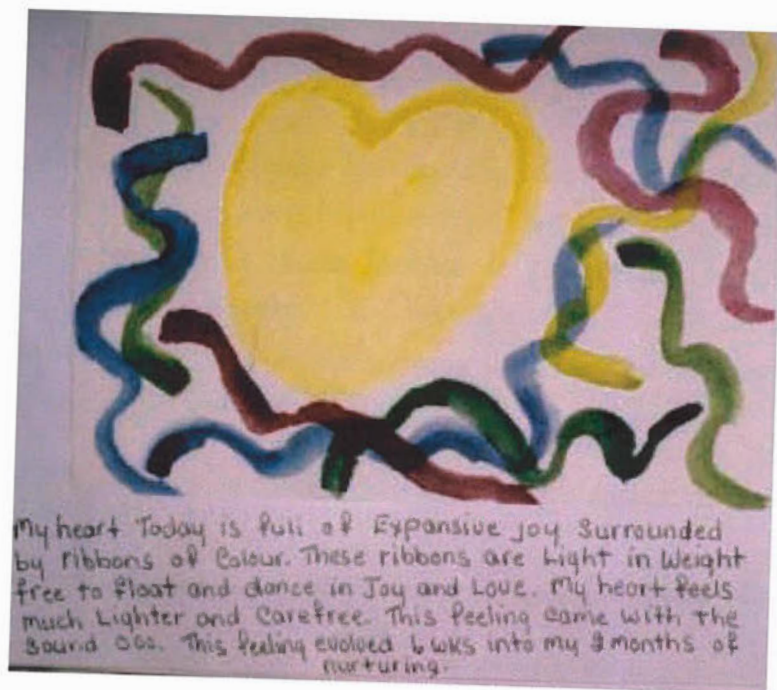


Figure 12. The heart filled with joy and love.

That is totally joy with all different coloured ribbons and then the sound changed with that one to 'ooo.' The sounds changed which was interesting because there was a difference in the changes, it felt like the heart had been healed, so with that healing the joy was able to manifest itself and be in there.

Until the heart had actually been healed and given the nurturing and the love that it required I couldn't experience joy.

A big change, this changes me because the heart expands, I can really express and it feels great, and you are more open for other people to come in, and all experiences to come in because you're feeling more open.

Roberto Assagioli (1975, p. 260) proposes that: "we trust that the magic of sound, scientifically applied, will contribute in ever greater measure to the relief of human suffering, to a higher development and a richer integration of the human personality." Once Marilyn made the choice to explore the depths of her soul, of her feeling life, and engage in a healing process, her sense of *I am* focus became stronger. This enabled her to get to the root of the grief and loss, to embrace the heart, allowing feelings to be present and cared for. As she states in her first

interview: *I feel quite open to evolve and learn different aspects about myself, to see what unfolds in the future. It feels great, wonderful, like a bird, to enjoy, observe, learn and read and to experience.* There were also tears of gratitude for being able to travel on this sacred journey, gaining the qualities of strength, courage and compassion, for herself and towards others.

This reminds me of those people who are either inwardly vulnerable in life, or who are able to grow and thrive despite their circumstances. For instance, we all know of people, such as Nelson Mandela or Victor Frankl, who suffered atrocities, but inspire and show us the resilience of the human spirit (Gilbert, 2002). Marilyn had come to an important inner threshold, which she describes as stepping through the open door:

It's just been a really good change, really big one, and excellent. Had I not gone to therapy I wouldn't have realised the depth of what was there, going to therapy opened the door. The door is open and the heart is actually in an open doorway or portal and I am stepping through the door

Marilyn's transcripts unsettle me. I am still uncertain about how this thesis will unfold as I haven't yet been able to come clearer with the fuller meaning of her process. In fact, while I am still working my way through her story, I do not feel clear in my thinking, as I developed a head cold that leaves my body aching, with a sore throat, much coughing and a blocked nose. When I reflected on this state of affairs, I became aware that being sick, brings me more in touch with my body and feelings, during this time of writing. Marilyn's doorway or portal looms in front of me as well, as a researcher, but I will expand on this perspective in a later chapter.

The following poem reminds me to respect how I am feeling at any point in time, and that having a cold can be a meaningful experience that informs and deepens the research process.

A Moment's Pause

God bless those who suffer from the common cold.
 Nature has entered into them;
 Has led them aside and gently laid them low
 To contemplate life from the wayside;
 To consider human frailty;
 To receive the deep and dreamy messages of fever.
 We give thanks for the insights of this humble perspective.
 We give thanks for blessings in disguise.
 Amen

(Leunig, 1993, p. 120)

During one of the interviews, I observed there was something very strong and determined in how Marilyn moved through and described her process. This aspect really struck me deeply and took quite a while to articulate, as it was still happening within me. At the end of the interview I discussed this with Marilyn, who commented:

I can be quite definite when I feel and when I embody something and feel it's really right for myself. I can be quite tenacious ...I can float along but when something really gets into me, that's it, there's no veering off the path. it's a focussed journey even though you never know the end of the journey, so focussed.

In the reflection and writing phase, Marilyn's tenacity became a central perspective for elucidating the depth of the changing nature and meaning of this experience. What evolved was Marilyn's strong willingness and motivation, precipitated by the husband's illness, to become more conscious of the inner dynamics of her soul life, as well as developing connections with her spiritual life. In fact, it was only after 33 years of marriage, and after nearly seven years of living with her husband's mental dis-ease, and entering therapy, that Marilyn began to look within herself. This was the first time that she took in the reality of this event, with the realisation that she was suffering grief and loss. With the intense desire that Marilyn brought into her decision to get to know her self and her inner world, an interesting shift and change emerged.

While her husband's identity, sense of self and the identity of the marriage had diminished for him, for Marilyn, the marriage had ended and she was now *finding* her identity. For 33 years, she allowed and depended upon the shared life that she and her husband had built together in their business, this had created her sense of

identity. When he became ill, this all began to die. After seven years, and a number of therapy sessions, Marilyn began to accept that this way of living together had died. But in this, with the support of the therapy sessions, she was reborn, through self-knowledge, learning to be alone, feeling empowered and connected with her inner resources, developing her spirituality, and beginning to create a new life for herself in the world, both personally and professionally. She comments on this change:

The whole thing is really about knowing myself; knowing what's going on inside my own self and an awareness of everything that happens within myself. It means that I don't expect anything from other people that I don't have to search for the things I need outside of myself! like she had done in the marriage".

Painting was the way that she expressed and processed her journey of change, and other studies have also used art in this way (McLaren, 2001; Richards, 1989; Schnetz, 2003). Martina Schnetz (2003, pp. ii-iii) found in her study of artistic expression in therapy, that: "The process of art towards healing provided an opportunity for creative energy to be channeled in a more integrated manner to restore wholeness and connectedness Healing appears to be related to the recovery of meaningful patterns." For Marilyn, painting helped her to be more in her body, to be in feeling, rather than being in her head, or intellectualising too much. In the process of painting, she changed. Painting was a dialogue, in which she *ex-pressed* and created an *ex-formation* of her experience, in which other responses arose, through insights, emotions and feelings:

I would say doing wet on wet paintings gets you out of your head and into your feelings where you know what's going on underneath in the feelings. Just seeing the water paint running all over the page is a really fascinating experience, it seems to have the ability to take me out of my head because I actually don't use the brush I use my hands, ohh yeah...Because I've been fairly much a head person, the minute I would pick up a brush I would think head stuff and I only use my hands and occasionally I used a sponge. It seems to have the ability to take me from my thoughts into the body and the feelings.

This process shows how Marilyn had to change because of a particular event, of a reality that occurred in her life, over a number of years. It came out of the blue, was not expected, and was hard to bear, as the bank took both businesses in the end. It was a reality in her life that she could not continue to escape from, and she

chose, after seven years, to make this event into a learning situation, as an opportunity to change and live more consciously with this reality, thereby transforming and re-creating her life for the future. It seems to me that her experience could be called a destiny situation. Destiny can be defined as: “Life confronts us with learning situations. These learning situations are destiny situations. We can be led to very profound self-knowledge through the way destiny unfolds” (van Houten, 2000, p. 13). Marilyn read this chapter and we had a number of conversations, in which she agreed that it was a destiny event for her. All her additions and changes are included, in order to be faithful and sensitive to the portrayal of her experience, while being mindful that the nature of her process is intimate and personal. Marilyn said to me after reading this work that it is beautiful: *I felt you showed a real heart experience, not a head experience.*

Change and the Seven Life Processes

Coenraad van Houten (2000), Yehuda Tagar and Paulo Moraes (1997) describe the varying layers of the seven life processes which correspond with Marilyn’s process of change. Reflecting on the excerpts of Marilyn’s changes included so far, there was a focussed effort by Marilyn, to take in, to become more aware, and to observe the effects of this event in her life. There appears to be three main overriding activities in Marilyn’s process that encompass the seven life processes. Initially, she discovers the power of this event in her life (observing, relating and digesting); and decides to use this experience as a way of self-knowledge (digesting, acceptance, practicing). Then Marilyn travels on this path of the heart, to develop and become more fully who she is (practicing, perceiving the web of destiny, and creating order in destiny) (van Houten, 2000). The following seven processes are just one perspective of Marilyn’s process of change, other people may discover other perspectives. In order to fully express what is emerging now, I will stay with this perspective. The first three processes relate to the earlier descriptions given of her process and these descriptions are not repeated in this section.

Observing a destiny event.

To be willing to observe it both in its outward happenings and its inward processes. "In this activity we feel" something is happening that is profoundly connected with my own being, something that tells me something about myself because the outer event combined with my inner experience is expressing something unique, the beginning of a hint of my own reality, the reality in which I am living. (van Houten, 2000, p. 73)

Through the painting process, Marilyn engaged with the life processes in a conscious way, bodying forth emotions, feelings and insights. She initially expressed her experience through painting, and this could be seen as a breathing-out of experience. When she then reflected upon each painting, this corresponds to the process of breathing-in, whereas when she described what she sees, this becomes a breathing-out. For me, the moment when I changed my supervisor, was also a destiny event. Also, much of what I wrote in Margaret's story, in terms of its affect on the research, can be seen as observing my task as a researcher, as a destiny event! Writing a thesis has become a life changing activity for me.

Relating this event to her biography.

Marilyn relates to this event by uniting with it personally through the therapy process, thereby linking it with her biography. She also does this, after completing her therapy sessions (and second interview), by joining a biography group to work through her own life story. In the third interview, Marilyn chose to include the overall changes in her life, since completing the therapy and biography work. Each person's life is unique and is a living script, so when Marilyn made the choice to explore her grief and loss further, she had to engage with her sense of warmth or enthusiasm to do this. In doing this, she moved from observing to being a participant, so that: "we have looked at destiny; now destiny comes alive, and life begins to speak our destiny" (van Houten, 2000, p. 77). Destiny is a happening in time, with the meaning of this event maybe more in the past or in the future. In the paintings, Marilyn focussed on which aspect moved her most strongly, through feeling. At this stage, Marilyn struggled to imagine a future, but this was beginning to be discovered, as she moved through the other processes, and began to digest the reality of this change in her life.

Digesting her destiny.

The ability to digest our destiny is the ability to nurture and care for oneself (Tagar & Moraes, 1997). Coenraad van Houten (2000) suggests that in order to do this we have to develop heart thinking and honesty in facing our destiny:

Our destiny nourishes us only if we digest it properly; if we do not it creates psychological hindrances Soul hygiene involves being remorselessly honest in the face of destiny. We need such honesty if we are to lead our life consciously in a way that enables us to develop. (p. 82)

Much of my struggle and reflection on developing a research method, challenges me to become more honest and conscious about what I am doing. Being guided by my intuition and heart knowing, this research becomes an authentic body of work, with embodied experiential knowing (or felt sense), and creative expression, in addition to: “persistent observation ... referential adequacy ... !participant“ checks, thick description and the reflexive journal,” to establish its trustworthiness and credibility (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 214).

Painting exercises have proved very helpful in being able to digest and find one’s learning task in life (van Houten, 2000). The previous journal excerpts of the nurturing heart processes show how Marilyn moved through the process of digesting and nourishing:

I'm being more compassionate to the other person as well as to myself, self care. Such as being aware when I need resourcing, that means going into the garden. I feel connected to the plants and I feel connected, and whole and energetic, it gives me energy. It nurtures the etheric, makes me feel more alive and energetic. I need to do this 2-3 times a week anyway, going for a walk along the beach does the same.

Accepting her destiny.

The fourth learning process involves individualising. Through the series of paintings, Marilyn made visible the essential elements and: “the individualising process can lead to both an ‘aha’ experience and/or to a painful one” (Henriksen, 2000, p. 205). But what is it that has to be accepted? In Marilyn’s case, it was when she accepted the reality of how enmeshed with each other they had been; when she took responsibility for her own self-care; stopped feeling guilty for her

husband's illness; and, when she accepted her spirituality. By accepting the shadow side of her being, Marilyn could then individualise it, and recognize it as part of herself. For example, this happened when she connected with and expressed joy, as her own inner connection, not as a shared joy, dependent upon her husband. Another example is when Marilyn wanted more understanding of her experience of wanting to *sail away* from responsibility:

I felt quite, really quite sad, and I felt it was quite deep and that was a very dramatic change because I went back to when I first had the feelings of being responsible which was when I was six or seven years when, I had to look after my brothers and sisters as well, while mum was getting tea ready. So we went right back to that and my feeling responsible to my husband related to that and so I realised that I should not have felt responsible at that age and certainly not now so that just lifted...I felt like a whole weight had been lifted off and freedom because I didn't feel responsible, I could be free to do whatever it is I wish to do, so it gave a great sense of freedom. It's a big change as before I couldn't do anything because I would feel guilty because I felt responsible. Now I don't feel responsible and I don't feel guilty.

In the following excerpts, Marilyn shows how she worked her way through illusions and gained strength, a sense of truth and developed understanding and tolerance towards herself and others. This encounter with her self highlights the individualising activity, of sorting out how she wants to continue living:

Then I went home and asked a few questions like: 'did he mind that he sat in the chair all day and I did all the work like all the gardening?' He said, no, he didn't care, he was happy sitting in the chair watching me doing all that. I just asked him how did he feel, I said, didn't it worry him that I may not like doing that and he said, 'no', he didn't care about that either.

I asked him about the relationship: 'how would you think our relationship was'. and I said: 'we really don't have a relationship do we?' And he said: 'no' and I said: 'we're more like brother and sister.' He didn't like that very much but that's really how we are. I said: 'will it be ok if I shifted and moved out of the house, if we parted?' 'Oh, don't think we need to do that,' he said. He didn't just sort of agree, he did think about it. So I said: 'Is it okay then if we just live our own lives?' and he said: 'yes.'

So that's just how it is. I'm now unmarried, I just decided to take off the wedding rings and when I'm ready and it suits me and the time is right I will leave. So it was a pretty major and dramatic insight into what had been going on. I wanted to know where he was at, because we don't have a relationship in that we're not sharing anything special, of feelings, of thinking or anything like that so I really needed to know where he was at and what he was thinking and feeling. I know how I felt but I needed to know how he was thinking and feeling...so I had to

really think, to think how to ask the questions so I could get confirmation. Yeah, he knew what he was saying.

It's freedom, definitely freedom, it's sadness because after 33 years you think, I haven't done what I felt like I want to do, I worked in the business ... I felt I needed to help. I'm not staying because of feeling responsible... I am only staying there because I'm happy to be there and I don't feel bad or anything and he's not interfering in my life and doesn't need constant care. He wouldn't accept that he had the illness and I used to get his tablets out otherwise he wouldn't take them so after that revelation with the counsellor I stopped doing that and so he has to do that himself, which he does.

Practising in daily life.

Marilyn now took on more responsibility for herself, by redeeming her experience of dependency. For Marilyn, to practise was to create a space for herself, to become aware of her inner world. In this world, she could listen, through sensing, gesturing, feeling, visualising and expressing through paintings. She found sounds to match her experience, to release and empower herself, to connect with her inner resources. Practise also meant coming to terms with resistances. This can be seen in Marilyn's descriptions where she worked towards finding the courage to face her fears. "New self-knowledge is always accompanied by uncertainty, anxiety or even fear, especially when it necessitates a new approach towards one's life" (van Houten, 2000, pp. 115-116).

I can definitely relate to this last comment. I feel on the edge of the unknown, much of the time in this work. There is great uncertainty as it is still unfolding, while I keep on practising to speak and write in this way, for new capabilities to emerge and grow stronger. As a woman in my fifties, there is a strong motivation to express myself truly, to live according to my own needs, as a priority. I think this is probably true for Marilyn as well, the difference being that we are achieving this through different life experiences. However: "Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is intentional action in the intimate presence of fear. It requires 'heart' (in Latin, cor)" (Mahoney, 2003, p. 182).

Doing the paintings, helped Marilyn to practise her new found knowledge, allowing the insights of previous steps to grow, so that new capabilities were developed. Practising this, can also be a motivating force to become more creative and forward-looking into the future (Henriksen, 2000). Through Marilyn's

transcripts, the first three activities appeared to be gradually transformed into a rhythmical and dynamic process of change, through artistic expression:

I felt like there were bits of me that I was connecting, I guess I didn't feel whole, I felt like that there were pieces of me that I had come to get to know again, because I hadn't been truthful to myself, in denying my truth, my parts, myself. I felt I was reclaiming again. My wish was I wanted to claim back parts of my self that had been denied, that was my wish. So I explored these aspects in a session...and after the session I had the feeling of being centred, and being in myself.

Martina Schnetz (2003, p. ii) confirms Marilyn's experience as being similar to other clients who participated in her study: "within the symbolic realm of the image-making process, painful, dissociated, or split-off aspects of each person's being were reintegrated and transformed."

Perceiving the web of destiny (growing).

Perceiving the web of destiny is evident in our ability to adjust in the face of change, to review experiences and to learn to incorporate these into further dimensions of oneself (Tagar & Moraes, 1997). For Marilyn, there appeared to be a growing awareness of her destiny and of the web of connected relationships that were gradually forming into a more meaningful whole. This was evident in her growing sense of responsibility, to transform her past into healing deeds:

It would be working with the partners (of people with a mental illness) because they're the ones who are alone suffering with the one with the illness, I had no help, there's no help for the caring partners....It was interesting because in the therapy when I became (in gesture) one of the aspects of myself I found what purpose I had come here for, why I was born...had to enter into it...I had to come back to finish in this life, to become whole...so it made a difference in like don't waste time, become more focussed.

Coenraad van Houten (2000) suggests that there can develop a particular force or capability that shines through, with its own particular quality. I think for me, what shines through Marilyn, is the quality of joy, tenacity and focus for self-knowledge, in going to the depths and heights of her inner life. Through the writing of this thesis, I hope that I am also developing a particular quality that can shine through the whole work, but I will leave it for you to decide what quality you think this is! Marilyn sees the essence of the change so far as coming more into her own truth and continuing to grow. She says: *I would see more changes, I*

can't believe it would be static, less grief and more looking forward and I would hope that whether it's three, six or twelve months I would still be growing ...yes, give me life, to me life is growing.

Bringing and creating order into destiny.

Understanding the whole picture of one's situation, allows for changes to occur, for a space to be opened up, in which other ways of behaving become possible (van Houten, 2000). Marilyn asked herself: How do I act now, how do I create a future for myself? What actions will bring balance and peace into my life? How do I create a life in which I can flourish? Marilyn appeared to be working towards putting her self into order, to find a balance with the world, thereby finding how she wants to live in the future:

Because I know I am shifting out, I am doing the separating now, and wont move out until the end of next year. But I have shifted out of the bedroom, it's been just a gradual process, nothing too dramatic. It's good because I'm going to get a trial run when I house sit for four weeks, and have a holiday...so that's really good. Being aware, self awareness is the key by just constantly observing, of interior chatter, of the whole thing really and telling the body it's okay.

In summary, Marilyn shows us, that through trust, love and courage, she can face her fears (of the denial, shock, guilt, anger and despair), do something to resolve the emotional reactions of grief, take care of feelings of loss, and come to an acceptance of her situation. From this, she became more anchored in her selfhood, and able to make decisions. By addressing her thoughts, feelings and actions, Marilyn was able to transform her experience, evolve spiritually and work towards creating a new reality.

A similar range of responses are confirmed in another phenomenological study, "*The Bereaved Individual's Lived Experience of Loss (Mourning)*" (Douglas, 1993). In this study, it was found that even though the loss of a loved one can permeate through body and soul, causing profound emotional and physical pain, there was also the possibility of finding of a deeper sense of spirituality and understanding of life (Douglas, 1993).

Evolving Spiritually – Crossing a Threshold

Rosemarie Anderson (in Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 75) proposes that: “We are at the same threshold: a threshold of appreciating, knowing, and acknowledging an aspect of life we all may share. In this process, it also happens that we see more clearly how we are different.” In the old mystery schools the threshold into the spiritual world was a place that only the select few, the initiates, would venture across. Over the doorway of this threshold the following words were carved: “Know Thyself.” Today, it appears that the whole of humanity is over the threshold, with our everyday life experiences offering an opportunity to change and gain self-knowledge (Sardello, 2004). Or, as Gerhard Wehr (2002) implies, the main threshold or initiation process that is still alive and being practiced consciously today in the West is through therapy.

A threshold crossing occurred in my interaction with Marilyn, during one of the interviews, while Marilyn and I were chatting about her journal. She made an incidental remark: *You know, I haven't told you the real story, this is just the surface layer, there is another layer.* Well! You can probably imagine my response to that comment! As a researcher, I thought my interview skills were okay, but then to hear that there was more not yet spoken, left me partly surprised and partly relieved that this comment had been spoken. I told Marilyn that I was interested and would like to hear the real story. Marilyn showed dedication to this path of the heart, of self-knowledge, initially, preferring to remain silent about the spiritual nature of her experiences. She told me it was of such an intimate nature, that words could not convey the fullness and depth of these experiences.

Marilyn's unfolding experience matters, as a search in which we both participate, although we may come from different perspectives. At this point, we were engaged in a possible threshold crossing. For Marilyn, it involved sharing some of her other experiences, whereas for me, it was to be present and patient enough, to allow this story to be told. Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard (1987) discuss the significance of the human story as it is experienced and told, and quote Laurens van der Post who says:

But the moment I asked him to tell me a story, he was instantly on his guard, pretending he had no idea what I was talking about. It was only

after many days, when he had come to trust us more, that he confessed to having stories and told us some of them; but even so I always had the feeling that there was deep in his heart a story of stories which needed far more time and sharing of experience to communicate. (p. 1)

As a researcher, I am searching, re-inspecting, moving around the topic of change, and looking again and again, from different perspectives, including different voices, in a disciplined way. In this moving around, the following statement made by Carl Jung is relevant: “There is no linear evolution; there is only circumambulation of the self” (cited in Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 26). In this moving around the self, I also struggle with uncertainty, of how to speak and write this work into a coherent and credible form. I have to face my insecurities, fears, doubts, anxieties, uniqueness and potential. It is obvious to me that there is a strong spiritual connection within how I am working, especially when I consciously listen and am in tune with myself. I noticed that when I have great difficulty in writing, it is usually because I had forgotten to do the following activities - To meditate and sleep on what I am working on, and to make time in the morning to listen and to handwrite thoughts, feelings and insights before I go to the computer. I have to make an inner effort to embody this work fully, before it can live and flow more easily in writing. Robert Sardello’s (2004, p. 72) words reassure me in this respect when he says: “The point of writing, of its struggles, pains, hurts, is to lose oneself in the word, to remove oneself from what one writes so that it can live.”

This was/is not an easy task and I forget at times, but when I re-member, there is an inner force that I feel is growing and becoming more present. William Braud and Rosemarie Anderson (1998, p. 24) propose that: “In the telling of our own stories of spiritual experiences and hearing those of others, they seem more vivid, imaginable and, from the view of consciousness, more likely to occur again.” They suggest that through reflecting on our life, we can become aware that there is an inner compass and direction that brings us to our own particular path in life.

Coming back to the path of Marilyn’s story, I want to present a selection of her paintings and journal writings which hint at the depth of her spiritual experience, and show something of what Jung meant (in the earlier quote), in the activity of

circumambulating of the self. This work was done when Marilyn had found a sense of balance and gratitude in her life, between the polarities of joy and sadness:

I feel it is really special, I feel gratitude towards the whole process, it is really sacred, I feel it is a really scared journey, not something to be taken lightly and being able to do it is a very special gift.

As she approached the threshold, to step through the portal, Marilyn connected with the love she felt for her dad, who had died:

I didn't realise this love went to the very depth of my being. My love for him is on a soul level...our love, for each other is united and connected forever. Our parting was an illusion our spirits are joined forever.



Figure 13. Joy and life moving and opening.

I have a feeling of his presence – mmm - very peaceful...I was able to move on with a different feeling, with finding that connection ...as an open gesture, more movement and feeling different in the world...I feel the movement of life, the life force within myself.

Joy and life, the feeling of stepping out, expansion of spirit coming from the centre of my being.

It feels like being on a threshold, the ending and the beginning, feeling of dancing and expansion, movement.

It is like the opening of a flower from the centre of my being.



Figure 14. The threshold.

Moving forward into the future, there's beauty with the roses over the arch.

In the centre is seeing the light within and the light of divinity joined.

It radiates from the centre outwards. It is beyond sound, forever still.

It just is, there are no thoughts, no why's or whatever's, there are no words.

One just arrives, at the threshold, radiating, there is no more searching.

It pierces the centre of my being, it is a physical feeling.



Figure 15. The veil.

What hides behind the veil? I am yet to find what lies below and behind the veil.

What happened with this is that I had the feeling I need to do more so I keep going, I like to get to the root of things...then the centre is revealed, there is something in the centre of this self.



Figure 16. The shadow.

Revelation/Shadow:

I am made up of two parts which make the whole being of myself.

My shadow is the negative part of myself. It was just dark. I felt it's just as much a part of myself as the other part so I need to really embrace it. After that I had to do some really big resourcing.

I could feel something rising up in the upper part of my body, it's one part of the whole, even the shadow has light in the middle.

The feeling of being crucified was really huge...I am not standing in my power, my strength. It is self sacrifice...I can feel my strength and power, it is awesome, it is the capacity of this that frightens me ... it is this that stops me from being in my power... it moves my whole being...I feel the stirring within myself ... everything is not yet clear.



Figure 17. The light.

Revelation/Light:

The answers to my problems cannot be seen, but there is a feeling of light and hope ...The revelation is being in my power, strength, courage, compassion and love. The regaining of my birthright.

The other part of the whole, is the light, the full circle. The wheel of creation.

The one who walks beside me is revealed, so close to my right side, he is the light.

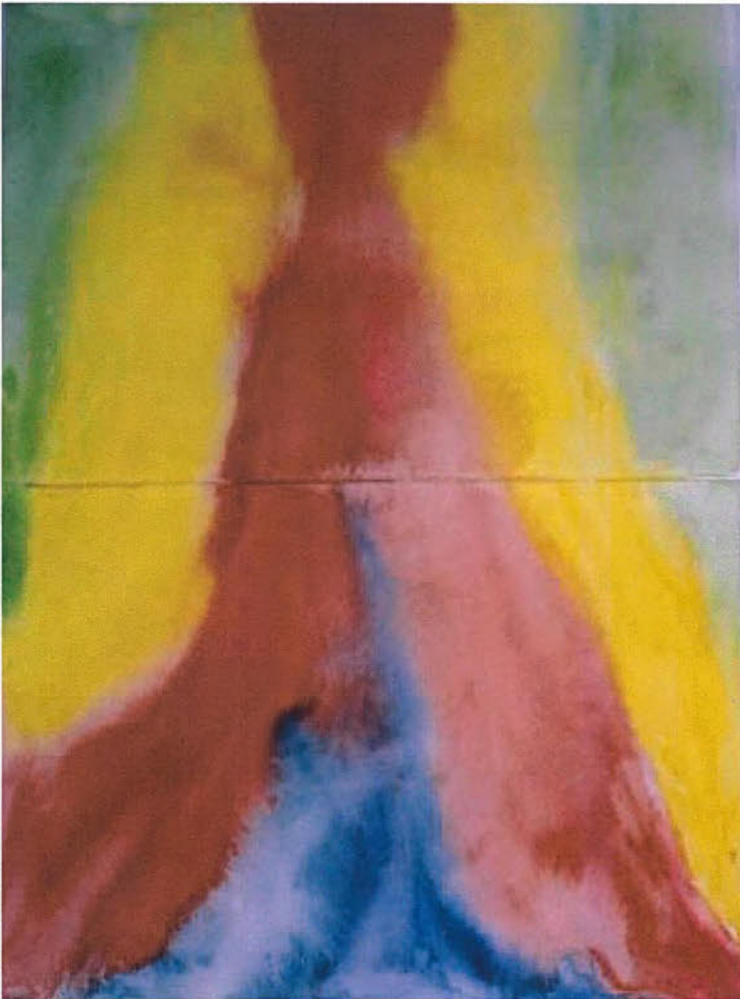


Figure 18. Power.

This is being fully in my power, being who I am. It is the power that moves me, in every cell of my body ... my body wanted to get up and say 'I am POWER'

I had to speak, it was good. That stays with me most of the time, and it was a realisation that it was actually there all the time

Marilyn goes through trying to find acceptance and forgiveness in herself, for being imperfect. As the process of painting with water colours is not perfect, this issue is highlighted for Marilyn:

Painting creates imperfections...for me to accept and love instead of throwing it away, which is what I feel like doing, or wanting to change it, fix it...this is so hard to do and may take time. I am not perfect.



Figure 19. The eternal flame.

Loving the whole of myself, with imperfections and the eternal flame burning within the centre of my being always. It radiates outward to all the corners of my being and for others...the eternal flame for me is the eternal Self that is connected to god. To be able to experience that and feel it, was a definite body feeling like someone had put a bolt in you, that entered the centre of your being, like a definite feeling, you could feel it in the body, very hard to describe, it's something you have to experience, it's not something you can say in words. So it's a bodily experience that I felt enter or appear in me.

In a way, it's like an awakening, so being connected to god or the divine, whichever word you want to use, it's what my life is really being about ... I guess I would use the word in a spiritual sense...Feeling that connection is really special as I have more faith and trust and makes life more meaningful, that's really what I wanted in my life.

Marilyn goes through many big and profound changes during this year, which affect her whole being. It is a journey of the heart, wherein the loss of human love with her husband transformed into the source of spiritual love. A few months after the final interview, Marilyn decided that she had to be true to herself and moved into her own home. She is now living alone and loves being in her own space, happy to establish a new life and direction.



Figure 20. It is "I."

It is 'I' - with openness and giving of love. It is very beautiful. It is almost angelic, as if I have seen this before or it is yet to come. The joy and sense of freedom in being on my own, alone, on the physical level and the knowing that I am never alone, the soul is never alone.

There is for me beauty in being...there is a feeling of wings fluttering and an upward soaring. There is joy and peace and happiness.

The path of self-knowledge is captured beautifully and poetically, in the following version of a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke¹⁴ (translated by Cox & Theilgaard, 1987, p. 243):

Through all beings stretches the one space: World- inner- space.
The birds silently fly right through us.
O, I who wish to grow, I look outside,
and the tree grows inside me.

Everything about the human heart pervades our lives, whether we are a friend, researcher, therapist or partner. Marilyn shows us a path of the heart, of soul movements in profound change and healing, that not only serves her and her husband but also serves others who are privileged to meet with her. It is a challenge to discover how we can change, thus I am mindful of the following guiding principles that Coenraad van Houten (2000) proposes:

Let us act in a way that enables others to untie the knots of destiny that bind them to us; let us act not only correctly but fruitfully for the future; let us act in a way that serves the aims of evolution. (p. 124)

Finally, in the light of the above principles; a further perspective to Marilyn's experience of change that includes me more directly, described in the following section, *Interweaving Threads*, explores and enlarges on some of these points.

¹⁴ The J. B. Leishman translation of this poem, called "The One Birds Plunge Through" is in Rainer Maria Rilke (1964, p. 84).

Interweaving Threads

How do we Change?

Marilyn learnt many skills, acquired tools and experienced changes during her time in therapy however, there were other factors supporting her change also. These factors included a decision made after completion of therapy, to create her own personal painting journal on change; connecting with nature as a strong resource; attending workshops; and learning to live on a daily basis, with the changes in her relationship with her husband. Much of her process of change occurred in her own time, after the therapy sessions were completed. Richard Gilbert (2002) concludes from his many years of research that:

While people can benefit substantially by being taught new skills, thinking more rationally and revising the narrative of their life, the significant and enduring changes that people make occur as a result of experiences within important, emotionally meaningful relationships. (p. 5)

I want to briefly discuss this point made by Richard Gilbert, regarding change happening within relationships, not just through the initial therapy sessions as set out for this study. There are many facets to how we change, but two incidents are worthy of mention, that happened beyond the research interviews, between Marilyn and myself.

The first event was before Marilyn was a research participant, when she attended a sound workshop that I was facilitating. One of the group activities focused on our own name, the sounds in our name, and how we are called by others. In this activity, each person had the experience of sounding the individual sounds making up their name, then sounding their whole name and speaking their own name, using their whole body in gesture and movement. The next part included being in the centre of a circle, hearing themselves being called forth by their name, by the whole group, feeling the inner re-sounding of this within themselves, until an inner urge came to speak their name in response, to the group calling their name. I have done this activity over many years and it usually created a strong response in most people, in which names were often changed or adapted or the personal connection with their name was strengthened. Marilyn participated

in this activity, consequently adapting her name, to a shorter version that she felt matched her experience (as sounded vibrationally) of who she is now.

The name we are called by, the sound of our name, is a very personal matter. It can be connected very much to our sense of identity, it says something about who we are in the world. Roberto Assagioli (1975, p. 240) once remarked: "How much more powerful than must be the impact of this force 'sounds' on the vibrating, living substances of our sensitive bodies!"

I remember in some of these workshops, a number of people who had come to Australia from other countries, had changed their name to a western one, because as one told me, to make it easier for westerners to speak their name. It was very moving to witness what happened when they joined in this activity and spoke their birth name. Their inner response was profound. The group could see a dramatic energetic change as this person sounded, spoke, moved and gestured, the reclaiming of their true name. Naming, is a profound activity. It is only "I" who can say "I" in relation to myself, but others have to call me by my name. My name is me. The sound of my name says something about who I am, it has a particular vibration and resonance in the world. Barry Bignell (2000) takes this idea further:

The sounds in my name are me, but they are me beyond the physicality, beyond my human form. The individual sounds comprising my name have been uttered for eons. ...When uttered together they express something of my essence, my humanness, which is not physical...A primal wisdom is represented in this concrete sonic experience. (p. 267)

Marilyn found this new resounding within herself, in her name, and since that workshop has continued to use this shorter version of her name.

There was an initial relationship established between Marilyn and myself, within a group context, before she became a research participant, so a change was being made already, in what name she wanted to be known. It is also important that I remain mindful of how I, as the researcher, can influence the participants' experience of change.

The Sounds of Human Speech as a Mode of Knowing

The student has but to practice himself !herself" in sensitivity for all the several sounds – there are no more than 32 or 33 altogether – and the corresponding feelings will come, if he !she" will only make up his !her" mind to become conscious of them !now probably about 35-40". (Steiner, 1960, p. 143)

I want to elaborate a little on the topic of sound as it is an important mode of knowing, used by the research participants and myself, contributing to the experience of change. The power of sound and music are celebrated in many of the great spiritual traditions as an important way of quietening the mind and opening the heart, as we saw with Marilyn in her nurturing heart process. Sound can affect us on all levels – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. There is increasing research which shows that the use of voice, resonance and music can improve physical, emotional and mental conditions (Steele, 2004).

Sound work can touch us deeply, as Yehuda Tagar (1995c) suggests, sounds may be experienced in the following way:

When all the sounds of human speech resound around a living human body, every aspect of one's inner experience, from every phase and level of one's life echoes and vibrates with them, like the strings of a piano with the sound of guitar strings nearby. Our subtle bodies, etheric and astral, are like the resonance chamber of the sounds The sounds are the hidden language of our inner life. (p. 2)

The power of sound is discussed in detail in my article: *The Theory and Application of Sound in Therapy* (Steele, 2004).¹⁵ I invite you to read it, to gain a further understanding of the use of sounds in therapy. The participants described their experience of sound as having strong and profound affects that created inner and outer changes. From the psychotherapeutic perspective, Roberto Assagioli (1975) discovered through his therapeutic work that every sound or note can have physical and psychological effects. Yehuda Tagar (1997, p. 47) says: "Sounds are the deepest, most powerful mode of operation of our body of life and its forces." He concludes from his observation and experience that:

¹⁵ See Appendix F to read this article: *The Theory and Application of Sounds in Therapy*.

The sounds of human speech, consonants and vowels, when spoken on their own, transform in the air into forms of vibrations which can echo in the whole range of human experience. Experiences live in the embodied layers of the psyche apparently exist in forms of vibrations similar to the vibrations of the sounds of speechEvery human experience, once expressed in a gesture, can find its precise counterpart in a particular combination of sounds of speech – sensed, spoken or visualized. (2003, p. 99)

The sounds can give each person a range of tools for exploration, expression and communication, for change and improvement in the inner life (Steele, 2004). Sound work, in this context, needs to be done in a phenomenological way that encourages us to begin from the position of not-knowing, to explore human experience as it presents itself in and through that moment, so that the freedom and uniqueness of each person's experience is honored and respected. In this way, through a dialogue and collaborative effort of not-knowing and willingness to learn, between therapist and client, the development of new meaning is made possible (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992).

A Counselling Session with Marilyn

Seven months after completing the interviews, Marilyn chose to see me for one counselling session. This changed the dynamics again, as we moved around the differing facets of our relationship. I felt honored to participate in this way and considered that this was another aspect of our interactions that still held an integrity and a sense of appropriate professional boundaries, as the role of researcher and counsellor are somewhat similar. As the session was also free, there was no risk of financial exploitation. Marilyn has read the description of the session and given her permission for it to be included in the study.

Marilyn was feeling uncomfortable being in public situations, where she was the centre of attention, as she didn't like to be noticed or to stand out, she just wanted to fit in. It was safer to withdraw internally or avoid being in situations of receiving compliments in a group situation. However, she now felt it was time to stand in her own individuality. Her wish was to remain present when confronted by situations in which she was the centre of attention (eg. receiving compliments). We explored the dynamics of how this operated in her inner life and how it

affected her relationships with others. She practiced connecting with the inner strength she needed to be present, by challenging this dynamic and observing the inner responses, until she could stay present and respond by speaking what she really wanted to say, or respond with an embodied feeling. I felt privileged to be part of this process, because in this exercise of learning how to receive compliments in an embodied way, with an open heart, I had the opportunity to find within myself the positive compliments that I really felt towards her, that were true for me to speak, to her. Otherwise the exercise would have been a pretence. In doing this activity, Marilyn said she realized that she had a choice within these situations to speak her truth, she did not have to stay silent. Marilyn connected with, and began to build trust in herself by creating a safe heart space, staying present, and making appropriate choices for herself.

Once again we come back to the heart. The heart that is perhaps: “the most vulnerable part of us is at the same time the source of !feeling inner" safety”(Tagar, 1996d, p. 3). For Marilyn, to be safe, to become fully herself, the heart needed to be protected and maintained: on the soul level, by remaining centred and able to digest experiences; on a spiritual level by clarity and a sense of direction. When Marilyn’s feeling heart was exposed by grief and loss, the heart became affected, was not safe. By overcoming her reluctance, by building trust in her resources, she was able to take care of her inner being. With this change, she developed an open and safe heart, and became more of herself, in encountering the once confronting situations in her daily life.

When Marilyn reflected on her whole process over the last year, she saw her process of change as shifting from: *a green and closed rose into an almost fully open rose*. In a few months, she will be moving to live near her old and close friends again, to begin a new life – and then, she says, there will be: *a blossoming of myself*. Richard Gilbert (2002, p. 8) sees the meaning of this shift in identity change as: “the degree to which the personality !Marilyn" can remain cohesive in the face of internal and external stressors,” with a fundamental and enduring shift in how she views herself, views other people, in her capacity to make independent choices and act on these (Gilbert, 2002).

Acknowledging and Honouring Three Recent Deaths

Death is one change that we can be certain that will be experienced by all of us. During the time of writing Marilyn's story, three people who were interweaving threads in this study, have died. Two of them made a major contribution in their professional fields.

Saul Rosenzweig, the 97 year old founder of the common factors, died in August, 2004. His perspective was that the common factors provided the best explanation for the equivalence of outcome among psychotherapy approaches. He said: "that one of the most common factors across therapies was the relationship between the client and clinician," still holds true today, 68 years after his classic 1936 article: "*Some Implicit Common Factors in Diverse Methods in Psychotherapy*" (Hubble et al., 1999, p. 7). Historically, we build upon those who have lived before us. This can be seen in the number of researchers who have taken up the initial indications given by Saul Rosenzweig, to develop a common factors approach across the diversity of psychotherapies.

Dr. Kubler-Ross, psychiatrist and author of the ground-breaking book: "*On Death and Dying*," died peacefully on the 24th August, 2004, of natural causes, at the age of 78 years. Her outline of the five stages of grieving, mentioned earlier, made her known to many people around the world. She was still writing another book on grief and grieving when she died. The: "1999 Time magazine named her one of the '100 most important thinkers' of the past century" (Cornish, 2004, p. 69). Death of a loved one, whether it is a physical death or the death of the relationship, the sense of loss and grief which follows is a natural and important part of life. In a West Australian newspaper article, Patrick Cornish writes about how in her later years, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross promoted the idea of a spiritual world (life after death), a more healthy approach to living, in which she insisted that the expression of emotion was essential: "People must cry when they are sad....Anger must be expressed, too" (2004, p. 69).

In the first week of Spring, while former US president Bill Clinton undergoes quadruple heart bypass surgery, Chester, my mother's husband of 20 years, who had a damaged heart beyond repair, died peacefully with family and friends around him. Many hours were spent on the phone during this week, listening and

speaking with my mother, as we lived through the final days together. There was sadness, as well as heartwarming experiences. In terms of change, this man surprised and humbled my mother the day before he died, when he expressed for the first time, a depth of spirituality and wisdom about life, that mum did not know he thought and felt. She saw who he was, in a way that she had never seen him before. She felt this was a wonderful gift that touched her deeply and will stay with her.

Being in such a deep soul mood, I have to allow some time before I can begin with the next participant, Zeus. I need to stay in my current mood, to be with my mother, with the experience of grief and loss, which is present in my life now.

Honoring

We pray for the fragile ecology of the heart and the mind.
The sense of meaning.
So finely assembled and balanced and so easily overturned.

The careful ongoing construction of love.
As painful and exhausting as the struggle for truth and as easily abandoned.
Hard fought and won are the shifting sands of this scared ground, this ecology.
Easy to desecrate and difficult to defend, this vulnerable joy, this exposed faith,
this precious order. This sanity.

We shall be careful. With others and with ourselves.

(Leunig, 1993, p. 50)

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALLENGE OF ZEUS!

Preparing and Orientation

As I prepared to focus on Zeus, I asked myself: Am I being changed in any way during this writing process? I finished the last chapter with a poem that asked us to be careful with the fragile ecology of our heart and mind. As I reflected on how I am at present, I know that I am changing. Through writing, I am becoming more confident as a researcher, in my thinking, and more at ease within myself generally. I am more open in my feeling life at present, mostly as a consequence of being with Marilyn's story, with my supervisors and with my mother in her time of loss.

This chapter shows how I came to embrace the experiences of the inner and the outer world as a meaningful unity, and how: "phenomenology allows insight into the human life-world as it is experienced and might be described, and ... allows the generating of hypotheses about the nature of human understanding" (Kirkengen, 2001, p. 24). As I bring my attention to the next participant, Zeus, I am aware that I am doing so with an open and receptive heart, with a heightened sensitivity in my feeling life. In this space of receptivity and sensitivity, I feel more aware of what is happening around me, events touch me more deeply. I feel, observe and am *in* the activities happening around and within me. But how do I practice staying open to the possibilities in and around Zeus' story? I will describe how I do this, in this chapter, as a gradual unfolding of implicit meaning, in an ongoing back and forth process between the particular and the universal (Bortoft, 1996). The hermeneutic approach gives me some guiding principles but leaves me in a sense of uncertainty at times, as: "there is no method" (van Manen, 1990, p. 29), or set procedures.

In this spirit, at the beginning of Spring, in the southern hemisphere, I began to read and meditate on Zeus's transcripts, before putting them up on the wall, or entering into the empathy-in-action method.

A seasonal contemplation: Spring

Inner winter light has transformed to will intent of growth. Can we gain strength for the world by 'seeing' with our thinking the activities of the Divine behind the scenes? New beginning in the soul year We restart our annual quest to rise from the depths of the material world to the spirit and then endeavour to bring back the spirit into a union with matter. It can gradually become conscious and alive by dint of inner effort and grace we tend to lose ourselves in the upward surging growth forces. We try to keep our feet on the ground and thoughts from scattering. We're drawn up into the light filled atmosphere. Part of the soul has expanded to the universe and finds its origins. (Keats, 2003, Sept/Nov)

During this time, my attention was drawn to the news of a terrorist attack in Breslan, Russia, then to a bombing attack in Jakarta. This disturbed me deeply as I felt more sharply the fear, hatred, suffering and untimely deaths of many people, in the world, as well as the need for more love to be available, to confront and meet these forces. I found that I could not ignore the thoughts and feelings about these events in the world. For many days I tried to focus only on Zeus's transcripts but could not maintain it. The world was intruding. Actually, it was not really intruding, it was present in my consciousness and I could not ignore the world. So I decided that I needed to include and embrace these experiences, allowing all of this to be present, as part of working with Zeus's transcripts. Awakening to human experience and the sensitivity of the body, also: "makes us more sensitive to the presence of differentiating patterns of fear that we must contend with" (Sardello, 1999a, p. 56).

I realize that this response is not something I need to "get rid of" but is a reality I need to accept, not just as my personal subjective response, but as a need to find a balanced way of living with this experience. I need to find out what this means in relationship to my research, particularly with Zeus and his process of change? I had an inkling that for this part of the research, there is a meaningful link between the outer world and the inner world. In this case, it has something to do with the development and changes happening in the male psyche. Robert Sardello (1999a, p. 62) puts this succinctly: "When we assume that a threat can be removed without inner change, we do not see the phenomenon for what it is." In this month of writing, I encountered a diverse range of events and people with strongly masculine issues. These happenings include the terrorist activities around the

world; a national crackdown on child pornography on the internet, with hundreds of men arrested; other men were arrested for a long-term history of child abuse on Pitcairn island; and, for the first time this year, and only during the last month, the number of male clients coming to me for counselling increased, some bringing their partners to witness, and to participate in their sessions.

All of this I could take in and digest, but when I was ready to begin writing this part on Zeus, I experienced my biggest challenge yet, on a personal level. A person close to me, I will call him Robert, disclosed an issue that he had kept secret and had been struggling with for ten years, but now he wanted to change and heal this particular issue. I will not disclose the details about this for confidentiality reasons, though I mention it as it affects me deeply and profoundly, giving me a more intimate insight, knowledge and feeling for the struggling male psyche, trying to find an identity in today's world. This experience is ongoing, as conversations were/are frequent, while he works through his difficulties.

In the spirit of being open and receptive, I take in these experiences and ask the question: "What does this mean at this time, and how does it relate to the research?" During this time, I make copious notes and wonder how I will bring all of this into a balanced perspective, in order to write this chapter. By not "shutting off" these feelings and experiences, a wider picture is developing, with a concern for humanity deepening, even though at times it feels too much to contain or hold within. At some level, the idea of studying personal therapy appears as a pointless exercise, in the face of so much fear, terror, and need in the world. When put in perspective, only a very small percentage of the world's population actually ever attend counselling sessions. For those people who do attend counselling, research has shown that the main elements accounting for change are related to the client/extra-therapeutic factors, such as strengths, resources, persistence, faith, community support networks, job etc. (40%), plus relationship factors (caring, warmth, acceptance, encouragement) are 30% of outcome variance, while hope and expectancy (15%); and modality/techniques account for a smaller percentage of effective therapeutic change (15%) (Hubble et al., 1999). This is one of the reasons why I want to explore change over a period of time, beyond the therapy

sessions, to include the wider context and range of influences. I am interested in Zeus's experience of change, not just in the therapy sessions, but also how this relates to his relationships and living in the world.

Each participant confirmed that the therapy sessions were useful for their experience of change. However, to experience change is one aspect, whereas another perspective is, to experience *how* this change occurs and is integrated into everyday life, over a period of time. Don Ihde (1977, p. 43) makes the comment that: "If I experience at all, I experience something and in some way." Zeus comments that the therapy sessions helped him: *So when something happens I know I can deal with it later on and re-establish the boundaries with the sound or words I come to generate !and going to therapy provided" more or less a stepping stone for me to move on and sort out for myself what I want to do.*

I was aware that the transcripts and events that I noticed happening in the world around me during this time, required different qualities from me, and demanded a different perspective. One aspect I noticed was that I had to engage my will much more in order to explore and write Zeus's chapter. Through writing Margaret story, my thinking processes were clarified, creating a solid foundation for this work. Through writing Marilyn's story, I was more in touch with my feelings, in a more fluid thinking way. With Zeus's story, I had more questions and sorting out to do. It appeared that I had to engage my thinking with more firmness of will, to actually write this part. My sense of this process so far, is that through these forms of thinking, each perspective also prepares me for the next one, as can be seen in my description from *Marilyn* to *Zeus*.

I wonder then, if when we don't allow ourselves to be affected by what is happening in the world, are we not denying and hiding the depth of our love, fear, pain and concern, not only from others, but also from ourselves? My sense in this is that being alert to our direct experiences, can open our sense of embodying and inter-connecting with the world, to the different perspectives that can shape us. Shierry Nichol森 (2002) suggests that to maintain this openness *is* the phenomenological task. She associates this phenomenal space with D.W.

Winnicott's concept of a *holding environment* in which we can be open to fear, hatred, mourning and joy, however, if we are going to face these emotions then:

It means not only suffering the pain of them; it also means reflecting on their meaning so that we can learn from experience, and allowing this reflection to give rise to experimental action!In this way, holding environments" are places where experiments to meet adaptive challenges are generated. (Nicholsen, 2002, p. 196)

One example of this is, the holding place and space that my two supervisors provided for me, in which to reflect on this work in progress, and from which I can take action through the writing.

In my study of Zeus, I initially became interested in his name, as an archetypal image. All the participants chose their own code name. Zeus said in the interview, that he chose his code name because it represented power for him, that it was an appropriate name, as his process of change at that time, was about becoming more empowered in his life. I then wanted to know more about the god Zeus. I had a sense that the world events and Zeus's (the participant) process were possibly reflections of the activities of the multi-faceted nature of the god Zeus, as an archetypal imagination. I explored the meaning of the name, *Zeus*, which stems from *djeu*, meaning the moment or event of lighting up, in the sense of insight and illumination. The ancients thought of Zeus as a weather god, the sky god, who controlled storms and lightning. From my readings about the mythology of Zeus, it appears that he also governs our internal weather conditions and may manifest his powers in psychic storms (psychological disruptions) (Hill, 1992; Pirani, 1988; Shinoda Bolen, 1990; Tarnas, 1991). He swallowed the heart of the world, wisdom/intuition (Metis), and these inner spiritual resources lie deep within us. Zeus can become the image of wholeness, presented in the masculine version. It seems that he was considered a figure of power and authority, closely embodying the archetype of the self, with a love of freedom and independence, not just for himself but also instilled this in his children (Pirani, 1988).

When speaking about the archetype of Zeus, we need to remember the historical context of these gods in the Greek culture, as Richard Tarnas (1991, p. 4) remarks: "Speaking in these broad terms, and mindful of the inexactness of such

generalities, we may say that the Greek universe was ordered by a plurality of timeless essences which underlay concrete reality, giving it form and meaning.” That is, these enduring essences become personified in such figures as Zeus, or Persephone, or as a whole range of other gods.

What does this mean now for us in today’s world, in the 21st century? Ginette Paris (1995) in her book, *“Pagan Grace,”* points out that, instead of using the word Zeus, we now have seminars on organizational power, but what the gods do show, she says, is the appearance of various aspects of the unconscious: “both complete and incomplete, divine and demonic, both crazy and wise” (p. 2). How do we access these archetypal forces and realities that can reconnect the individual with the world? It appears that: “the connection between the inner and outer worlds isn’t a recognized part of our political, religious or scientific systems but is re-emerging from the underworld of the psyche” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 432). The Taoist book of change, the *“I-Ching,”* puts it another way, what is above is below, and visa versa. This idea can be seen in the big social changes happening in China, as people experience the consequences of capitalism, with competitiveness and increased stress levels. Ralph Frammolino (2004), a journalist with the Los Angeles Times, reported recently that China is gradually turning to therapy for the first time. He quotes Zhang Kan, president of the Chinese Psychological Society, who says:

Everything is changing, including people’s behavior, customs and beliefs ... Some people want to keep the traditions !of venerating the ancestors or of saving face and bearing with the problem within”, but it is not possible. Maybe you can keep what's essential, but you have to change to fit in the world. (2004, para. 3)

In Australia, people are seeking counselling or therapy much more than they used to, especially since the 1960s (Kerbaj, 2004). Individualisation, and the breaking down of old social norms creates more instability and disruption in society, encouraging the search for more meaning in life. Attending therapy became a popular option, that tended to take the place of turning to family and friends for direction and guidance. For example, Robert did turn to his close friends for direction and guidance, but as this issue was too complex to be contained just

within this sphere, he also accessed the appropriate professional services, in order to take action, to make changes in his life. In today's world, many people are striving towards human freedom and individuation from a group consciousness, but the issue here, as exemplified by Zeus's transcripts, seems to be more about how do we reconnect as an individual, with the world, without becoming isolated, or losing our individuality within a group? Zeus makes the comment that: *I think the biggest thing is just being an individual, and take responsibility for yourself, and still be able to help, but still have my individuality.* He also makes an astute observation while participating in a massage course:

That was an interesting time because I realised that the synchronicity of all the people that were there was all similar. There were seven women and I was the only man there, we all had the same problems. A couple of them were having relationship problems and I could see myself as the husband and I said, 'shit! that's what I was doing'- it just dawned on me, just clarity, just seeing it from somebody else's conception, point of view, yeah and the husband was doing the same more or less what I was doing, and the wife was doing what my ex-wife was doing.

Who is this man called Zeus? He is a man in his mid-forties, recently separated after 25 years of marriage, has two teenage children, with the younger child still living with him in the family home. The separation was a mutual decision. He came to therapy with the wish to have more power in his life, so that he could express who he is. This meant he wanted to express his feelings, and to be on equal terms with another person, rather than remaining closed, holding his feelings in, not expressing them:

When I sense people starting to encroach, I realised now I started to close down, to close up but now I'm able to set up a boundary type thing with sound....and if the person or whoever it is starts to encroach I know I can empower myself. I can talk, I don't close down, I can stand up and talk and I feel myself grow in stature whereas before I close down and I would even feel I am getting smaller, losing my own control and power ...I always felt the other person had control of me because I would do whatever they wanted me to do, I'd submit, do the right thing, and do what they asked, but I really didn't want to do that, I was giving away my power I suppose. And through all the sessions I've been just able to stand up to that and say what I wanted to say, or say how I felt, or just say no.

While sorting through all of these presenting aspects, and discussing them with my supervisors, we experienced the archetypal forces that were beginning to

influence how I was thinking, not just in a helpful way, but also in a destructive way. I realised that we have to be careful when becoming immersed with the material being studied, as there is a danger of being taken over, inflated or flooded, by the forces that are generated when participating in this type of activity. With so much instability in the world, this current situation alerts me to what Robert Sardello (2004, p. 221) says: “Facing the world with soul does require the development of the soul capacity to work toward individual soul experience held in conjunction with world soul.” When thoughts are allowed to become too expansive or to circulate around and around within oneself too much, as in Zeus’s process, they influence his timing of taking the next step, to express himself:

It leaves me nowhere. I’m in a void. I can cope with it but it’s a waste of time. I want to change, I think my soul seems to be telling me to make that move but I’m not acting on it, my mind is taking over with all the problems. It will work out, but it’s that step to take (laughs) yeah, it’s just that step.

What I learnt from the ongoing task of inner work, is that, by taking in and holding in, the tension of all that is visible and invisible in the world, I am allowing for the possibility of: “other, unknown, and surprising factors” (Sardello, 2004, p. 17), to come and bring about change. While I am engaged in a parallel process of coming to my researcher voice in the supervision meetings, Zeus was learning to express himself equally with others, and said that the whole process enabled him to feel free, grounded and able to balance the masculine and feminine aspects of himself. He showed me this wooden carving that represents this integration for him.



Figure 21. Love of the self.

Love of the Self: Coming to terms with the male/female side of myself. Female side – softness, emotional side. Male – is grounded side, survival. I can be balanced between the emotional, spiritual female side and still be grounded in the male.

A Conversation with Dawn, Dyann and other Voices

The following dialogue shows how I engaged in a process of working through some of the issues in relation to Zeus. This conversation is situated in a supervision meeting with myself, Dawn and Dyann. Later, as I transcribed and reflected on this conversation, some of the comments were expanded upon, with the inclusion of other voices (from books and poetry), that I thought were relevant. Both Dyann and Dawn have read and edited this transcript.

Dawn - It's interesting in regard to your study, and Zeus and Robert and the world, talking about the masculine energy, is that the capacity for transformation in men is interesting from the gender perspective, because what happens when a man doesn't have the capacity for transformation, and maybe we're seeing some of that in the world, in our leaders in the world. And how do transformational processes differ across gender. I'm just being really aware that this is a transformational process that feels different to the previous ones you have talked about, and there's something about ...what happens when some men can't, maybe that's simply because of the way we socialise them.

Robert Bly (1992) makes an astute comment about gender:

Our obligation - and I include in 'our' all the women and men writing about gender - is to describe masculine in such a way that it does not exclude the masculine in women, and yet hits a resonant string in the man's heart. No one says there aren't resonant strings in a women's heart too - but in the man's heart there is a low string that makes his whole chest tremble when the qualities of the masculine are spoken of in the right way !and visa versa" ... At the same time, we all know that there are in reality besides these two states, "feminine' and 'masculine,' all sorts of degrees, intermediate states, unions, combinations, special cases ... exceptions, and so on. (pp. 235-236)

Robin - An example of this happened with one of my clients who is probably not going to come back. He has had two sessions, is on medications and said in one of the sessions, that he was hoping that the medications would resolve his depression and stress levels, so he was waiting for it to kick in. He realised that he should do something, but there is very little room for inner movement with him. The only thing that he will go for in the sessions is an indication for practical things, and he goes home to do those, but comes back next week and he hasn't done them. He cannot give himself priority for his own needs, and feels he cannot confront another person's opinion, yet when he has a space accidentally to do what he likes, he feels great. So he's pulling out, he says that he doesn't really want to take his own initiative in making personal changes, but is relying on the medication to make a difference.

The following poem reminds me to be mindful that not only young men, but also young adolescents may find change very difficult to cope with, and may not allow others to help them during often turbulent times of change.

THE WOUNDING - of a young man at
14 years (as experienced by his
mother)

The heart bleeds,
An open wound is gaping,
Tearing, as the red blood flows
Like a waterfall
Into the dark, soft earth.

On the edge of a threshold, balancing
Between childhood and adolescence,
Remembering what it was like;
The warmth, the closeness, the safety
Of mother, family - security:
somewhere within,
Longing still, to stay
In the world of childhood dreams.

Now, facing the future -
Of becoming oneself,
Being responsible
Independent: Facing life as it is.

Feeling - finding no words
To express the confusion,
Of overwhelming desires raging
within
Sexuality emerging:
Feeling loss and sadness
Silence, lethargy,
Aloneness, boredom!

Waiting -
Between two worlds
Feeling the agony of separation -
Of the wounding.

February, 1995

*FROM A MOTHER TO HER 14 YEAR
OLD SON*

I see you -
I feel your wounding,
The bleeding in your soul,
Tearing
Separating
From me
From childhood.

I see you looking
And waiting;
Struggling
To find in the depths
Your own heart
Forming.

I carry you in my heart
With a love that never ceases,
Seeing and feeling the depths of your
being
Being with you

I stand before you
As a mother and friend
Warming your life,
Encouraging
Trusting
Your journey -

Discovering who you are

March 1995

Like in the poem, it is my experience, that for those people who are not ready to seek help, often the best that can be done is to wait, to witness, listen, encourage and be available for when that person decides that the time is right for them, to take their own step, to open up. Zeus exemplifies this timing, of waiting until the right time to express his feelings. This poem also hints at what Dawn says: I feel that the enabling factor in transformation in masculine energy, as embodied in the male, is the relationship they have to the feminine internally.

Robin – Robert is writing a personal journal. Journal writing can bring forth the feminine aspect, as he is in touch with his feelings and sensitivity, which can be a difficulty for men generally.

Dawn – That enables him to go through the transformatory process and maybe it's something for men, like Robert and Zeus, for those who are able to engage in transformation, speaks to their relationship to the inner feminine which is always a representative of the external isn't it? So there's something about those men who can't change which tells me something about their relationship with women.

Robin - Yes, and it fits with the clients I have at present, because two of the clients have come with their partners, to witness each other's sessions, and it's making a difference in how they relate and communicate with each other. A young man, who came about his anger, brought his girlfriend with him, to witness his session. So that's also a difference I have noticed. I've done plenty of couple sessions with the partner witnessing, but not a single person bringing their partner to witness, in the first session. So at the end of the session there can be a linking of whatever has been done back into the relationship, so there's a feminine sort of flow in there.

Dawn - There's something very alchemical about that in terms of the conjunctio, in the marriage of the opposites, there's something alchemical about the whole process that we are talking about, and it seems like that when there's an imbalance in somebody of being too masculine or too feminine the transformational processes disrupt this.

Robin – One of my clients told me that he doesn't communicate how he thinks and feels to his wife at all, and they have been married for 34 years. He is a good example of someone possibly not able, at the age of fifty-four years, to take that initiative to look within for internal and external change. So he is left to reflect on the following questions: do you feel empowered or disempowered in your life; does your personal authority spring from internal or external sources? And what are the consequences of living in this way?

Zeus, Robert and the other clients however, acknowledge what's going on within themselves, which allowed them to be in touch with their feminine aspects, potentially enabling a process of personal change, to integrate both their feminine and masculine qualities. Margarete van den Brink (2004) describes the different soul movements (or energies) in men and women:

If you really wish to understand "the differences between men and women" ... a centrifugal force is predominant in a woman's soul and a centripetal one in a man's In a woman, this means that by nature she moves away from herself "from soul" and seeks connection to the people around her and the greater whole. Through this, she easily loses sight of herself. In contrast, a man, through the centripetal force, tends to turn inwards and thus away from the greater whole, the surroundings and other people He tends to be more focused on himself" and his physical body and not so much on his soul and with the help of his will-power concentrates his thinking awareness. Thus he does not easily lose himself. (pp. 50-51)

Dawn comments: I'm aware that all of this is saying something to me about transformatory energies.

Robin - Yes, it's the potential within the world isn't it and even though I can observe and talk about the world, what's coming in when I'm thinking of Zeus is a lot of the negative stuff, like the terrorism and all that. There's something in me that knows that we've got that, but there must be something else that can meet and balance those negative energies. So potentially the world has the capacity to meet these darker forces more consciously now, that is why we are becoming more aware of them, so we can change and transform. It is a bit like the underground of the male psyche is coming into consciousness, because traditionally men have had power for so long, been in positions of power and maybe didn't have to question deeply how they behaved or thought or felt, until disrupting influences arrived, like the feminist movement and other current issues of our time. Now it's all bubbling up, just like Zeus's picture of his process, as a bubbling volcano, as a falling into soul, into a sea of emotions and feelings.

In terms of the research, I am female experiencing all this male *stuff*, and the picture I have as a female is like being in all this diffuse energy around but I've got to stand in it. I suppose that's the containing of the world around.

Dawn - So the way of containing is from the inside-out not from the outside-in, you see yourself as containing from inside do you?

Robin - It's like I'm looking around, it feels like I'm in the middle and all these things are around me, and it's like - "woah" - what's going on around is also inside. It's not a separation ... "ooh" this is different, as containing is usually like embracing something in front of me...but now I'm inside it, yes, it's like being in the centre.

Dawn - Are you saying something about being contained and containing at the same time?

Robin - Yes, being in the heart of the matter – mmm - there is a sadness I think, as the events over the last week are bringing me into the heart a lot more, and it is difficult to contain it all. Initially when I started with Zeus I was already open ...but this feels different to how I was when I first started ...because the heart aches more. I know it's related to Robert as well but it's more than just him, because I've been doing quite a bit of meditating about the world and Robert, which is making a difference by doing that.

Dyann - Is there something in all of that about owning the masculine in yourself? You know how you are saying stuff is all around you, is it a matter of reclaiming it?

Robin - Just being able to stand in it, is the masculine sort of stance for me, standing in it. So it's owning the selfhood in the middle of all of that, but still feeling it all at the same time. I have to hold the masculine and feminine energies within me, it feels like, if I keep going like this it could get a bit much, because it feels like I'm in the centre of the world, feeling the whole world.

Dawn - There's a sense for me, in which you are a bit inflated with an archetype at the moment, in that I don't know if you will take that on board, in the sense that when complexes come through, as archetypes come through, they often do come through at our most vulnerable times. It's easy for us to take responsibility for whatever the archetype is bringing as if it's our own personal responsibility rather than the collective, because you know there's a collective grief and sadness and loss going on at the moment as well as the collective despair and only certain people will own that so that it comes through them, and other people won't be able to tap into it for all sorts of reasons, let alone their own vulnerability and ability, but also because they won't take responsibility. It does feel a bit like you're a bit inflated with an archetype at the moment and that somehow it's worth going through some grounding exercises, which is why I think writing is a useful exercise. As well, I'm interested that you are drawn to the garden and practical activities because I think that's where you're grounded, and the archetype loses its power. I've been in those environments where I feel I've got the weight of the world coming through me.

Robin - It's not on me and I'm not taking it on board, but yesterday and today I feel it, I can imagine what you are saying is a possibility.

Dawn - It never feels to me like it's on me or I'm carrying it, it feels like it's coming through me and that's why I think you are doing the right thing with the grounding but the writing can be very grounding.

Dyann - And keeps you moving too, because you don't want to dig yourself into the ground, you want to keep moving on the ground (laughter).

An Interlude: A Balancing Image Exercise.

“Fear dulls this imagination. Here is an exercise to do in the group that helps keep this vital imaginative capacity central to the life of the soul” (Sardello, 2001c, p. 12). Look carefully as you observe a plant. Close your eyes and make an inner image of the plant, trying to make an inner image of the complete plant by building it up by each stem and leaf. Open your eyes and observe the plant again. Then close your eyes and add the next leaf to the stem of the plant. Continue doing this until you have built up a complete image. As you do this, try to exclude any other intruding images or thoughts. When you have built up this image:

Hold the image stable for a few moments. Do not let it fade or take on other qualities or shift into anything else. Then, in your imagination, start removing the plant-image by removing each leaf that has been built up, one by one, starting with the leaf that was added last ... When all the leaves have been removed, then remove the stalk. At this point there is an empty void. Hold this void for a few moments, listening into the emptiness.

This kind of exercise strengthens the soul's capacity of receiving the archetypal, creating powers of the plant world Imagination is a real force, not just a subjective, inner state. As we begin to operate more from the conscious capacity of imagination that is connected with the life world, fear also diminishes in the world of life forms because we now take up the responsibility of returning to them what has been taken away. We can tell this addition is indeed taking place because our level of fear and anxiety gradually diminishes. (Sardello, 2001c, p. 12)

This exercise needs to be practiced regularly, until: “this aspect of imagination appears awake and capable” (2001c, p. 13).

The conversation continues.

Dawn - It just struck me when you said you opened yourself that, that's what happens, when we open to the soul or to the transpersonal or to the beloved, you get everything coming through, you can't say let's have this but not that!

Robin - Yes, because I opened up with Marilyn and then with my mother and her husband's process of dying, but then suddenly, the terrorism in Russia was there. That started me being in touch with the other energies in the world more so, and

with Zeus, which was appropriate. But then with my friend Robert, it has taken it to another level, I noticed in the last few days, that if I kept going like this it would take me “down the chute” in a way that I don’t want to go.

Dawn - And we don’t want you to go there either, one thing that we’re not addressing in all of this is the shadow, and your shadow, but when you own and reclaim the masculine energy it is also that reclaiming the terrorist within, and our own potential, and so there’s something also about acknowledging your own destructive tendencies and not turning it in - of not sabotaging - yes, at the moment I get the hint of the archetype around, that it’s almost like you have invited it in by doing the work - I guess I have - but then it’s a way of managing it and then using the way that it’s effecting you to talk about how it effects in the therapeutic process in transformation, rather than allowing it to destroy you, or sabotage your work, cause at the moment you’re terrorising yourself in my view and maybe there’s something Dyann and I can do about being mindful of that here with you, keeping some sort of big container as well.

Zeus - One of the archetypes, the hermit, I related to. It was interesting when we brought out the light side and the dark side, and how people think they are the doctor, nurse, or the healer, but there is a shadow side that isn’t healing. I related to the hermit in that he was an individual who was more prepared to be by himself.

Robin - I could take notes, pointers to watch out for: *terrorist alert* (laughter) - I’m meaning it seriously, from your own observations of me, what do you recommend that I look out for?

Dyann - To keep the process with some boundaries to it, you don’t have to become boundaryless in both with your healing with Robert but also in your writing, you can say ‘that’s enough of that energy for me to have an understanding of it’, ‘I don’t have to be overwhelmed in my life at this time, to get a hold of that’.

Dawn - There’s something about standing in it is one thing, being consumed by it is another, so can you allow yourself to almost use your therapeutic skills and have an empathic relationship to the terrorist aspect, be there, watch it, stand with one foot in and one foot out ... witness it ... I like what Dyann has just said about boundaries because in a way what Robert has indicated to you is that he wasn’t able to keep boundaries for whatever reason, it’s a boundary issue isn’t it, you know like where’s the line ... and his boundaries are more expansive than probably the norm would be for others. I guess what Dyann is saying is, don’t be tempted by the expansiveness of the boundary. In other words try to keep a tight boundary around what is going on for you and your input to him, because I think I’m going to go back to what I said earlier on, I couldn’t give you advice, I wouldn’t even pretend that I could (in your situation), but what I can say is that we are not

as powerful as we think, and we are more powerful than we think when we step back, that's my experience.

Robin - Yes, I agree that has been my experience also ...I have to watch it, because Robert is a very close friend. I do take on more than I realise energetically, so I'm watching that and being aware of that as well.

Dawn - yes, you are telling yourself what you need to do.

Robin - and doing that with Robert because it's the thoughts, he says, he notices when his thoughts start to stray in a habitual way, and we talked about how to actually stop that and re-divert the energy.

Dawn - This is my image. This is the archetype that's inflated, and every time your thought goes towards it you're going 'whoo', every time your thought goes there you're blowing air, you're giving it another life, every time your thought goes towards the sort of sabotaging, getting in a circular motion about this, and about the sort of terrorist thoughts, where you are getting into this grief around the world and the despair around the world in a way that it can render you impotent really. Every time you do that you are breathing life into this inflated archetype. So if you could find an image for yourself, so that you can pull back when you get those distracted thoughts, so that you can say, what Dyann was saying, like I'm going to give it ten minutes or I'm going to give it however long, and then I'm moving on.

I found this discussion useful in observing and reflecting on the process of thinking itself. The following comments by Christof Lindenau (1985), helped me to clarify the relationship of thinking with the seven life processes:

The thought organization has its actual center in that part of the etheric body through which interest manifests itself as a universal psychological force, and within the cognising life of the soul we have to do especially with a particular form of this force: questioning. (p. 212)

TABLE 1

The Seven Life Processes and Thought organization

<i>Life organization</i>	<i>Thought organization</i>
Taking in	Perception
Adjusting	Memory
Digestion	Distinguishing
Secretion	Questioning
Maintaining	Grasping totalities
Growing	Becoming an organ/developing new faculties
Reproduction	Formation

(Lindenau, 1985, p. 12)

Dyann - The other strategy that I use, I picked up when you were saying that the lowest expression of that masculine energy in terrorism and all of that, but you were hoping that there was a counterforce energetically on the planet, so having a language for the counterforce - it's love - yeah, so just reinvesting in that idea - that's in the meditation I have been doing - excellent, so to hold that tension.

The power of love invites change, as Robert Sardello (2002) says:

Love comes and invites us to change, to enter into our potential, to feel intensely the process of coming-to-be, even though we do not know where our unfolding will go. This same love invites the person or the event we are involved with to change too. The other person enters potential. And so does the world when approached in this manner. We simply have to suspend judgement concerning what is happening and allow the experience of this between realm ... !to resonate" between ourselves and others !sensing this soul activity through the heart" opens us to the soul of the world. (pp. 202-203)

Dawn - You know exactly what you need to do. *Dyann - The process is perfect for you, it's just amazing.* Dawn - Everything is just how it is meant to be, I was looking at a note on the door this morning, and it says 'all is unfolding in the most perfect of ways.'

Zeus - I believe in what's unfolding is meant to be, is meant to happen and I've always participated in knowing things are changing, I think spiritually that's what's has been happening, and I've been a participant willingly knowingly and I think I never realised it for a long time but in the last few years I've come to accept that knowledge, yeah...

Robin - Okay, there's one way to get the boundary back, because I could feel as we were talking that sort of archetypal energy when we started naming it, I could feel it expanding around me now in the room.

Dawn - That's one way to get the boundary back, to name it, as soon as you name it, the spell is gone!

In this meeting with my supervisors, I stand up, sensing how I am, with this inflated energy around me, then, I do a contracting body gesture. I hold it for a moment, then release it by shaking my body with a vibrating sounding - "wooo" - followed by blowing away any residues with a definite compact sounding - "whoo" - and that's it!

Dawn - Yes, only give it so much energy and you said it exactly right, naming it. The profundity of naming is described poetically, by Rumi (version by Robert Bly, 1992, p. 236):

It's important to pay attention to the name the Holy One has for things.
 We name everything according to the number of legs it has
 But the Holy One names it according to what is inside.
 Moses had a rod. He thought its name was 'staff';
 But inside its name was 'dragonish snake'.
 We thought the name 'Omar' meant agitator against priests,
 But in eternity his name was 'The One Who Believes'.
 No one knows our name until our last breath goes out.

Reflecting on this conversation, and my action process, of coming into and out of the archetypal energy, I discovered how much I had been living *in* the experience of Zeus. As a researcher, I was doing what Rosemarie Anderson (1998) describes as, looking around from inside the experience and noting what is there. She goes on to say that: "The researcher then searches from inside the experience until the essential qualities of the experience come to life as the researcher's own experience. Gradually, the entire panorama of the experience comes into view" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 81). In utilising my intuitive research skills, the following aspects were possible: the inter-subjectivity of myself, participants and others, influenced the gradual unfolding of the work; these skills helped me to explore specific experiences, such as grief and loss or in this case, Zeus's separation, empowerment and "birthing" as an individual; and I was able to write creatively, thereby showing: "the character of the experience without diminishing

it in the telling” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 83). These are important points for how I proceed with the research.

I was really encouraged, when I read what Rosemarie Anderson (2000; 1998) had to say about incubating the research material, to allow time, rest and relaxation as an essential part of the research activity. I was doing this already, allowing time for dwelling with/in the material, as an essential way of how I come to know and to write. It is part of the whole digesting process, for whatever I am working with, to invite: “the creative process to do its work” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 91). For me, it is important to allow time for sleeping on things, and taking time out, to do other activities, that help to *ground* the thinking processes.

With Zeus especially, because of the many aspects that were influencing my thinking during this time, it took longer to write this chapter than the other chapters, on Margaret and Marilyn. My thoughts gradually did become more focused and had more clarity, largely due to the other grounding activities, that kept me in touch with my physical senses, in touch with my body and with nature. It is spring-time, the garden is flourishing and the wildflowers in the bush are superb. In this mood of spring, of appreciating the beauty of nature around me I find a perspective, and a focus for writing: “Don’t open the door to the study and begin reading...let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground” (Rumi, 1995, p. 36).

Zeus’s Story

This is the story of a man and how he experienced change through therapy and through other activities. Zeus shows: “the capacity to experience his body as a living activity rather than as a static entity or as an assemblage of it as physiological operations” (Sardello, 1999a, p. 67). Through therapy sessions and accessing other resources, Zeus became aware of the presence of anger and fear. In the past, he said that he lived his life feeling small and closed, but through therapy he learnt how to release anger. He struggled with overcoming the fear and blockage of taking the next step, to gradually become more open and expressive.

He learnt to listen and develop his intuition and individuality, by embracing the masculine and feminine aspects of the self, thus making changes in his life.

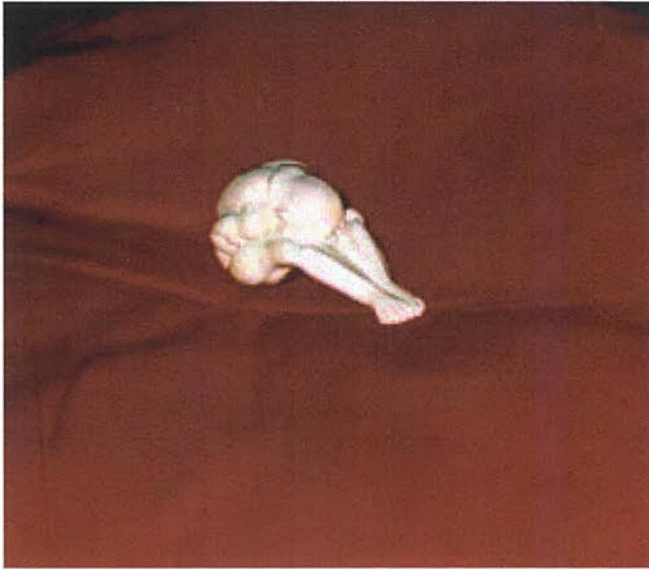


Figure 22. The hurt, the pain of the male.

Closed, hiding the emotions, shut, in a shell, with his head bowed into the groin. Zeus shows this physically in a body gesture - head down to my knees, in a ball, into a foetal position.

In contemplating Zeus's transcripts, I am reminded that the word hermeneutics is also related to the gods, as the word is derived from Hermes, the messenger. Robert Sardello (2004) defines the meaning of hermeneutics as, *carrying across*, that Hermes carries *between* the gods and the mortals. He encourages us to read between the words, to listen in the pauses, and to enter into the silences around the writing. This is particularly applicable with Zeus's process, as he spends a long time waiting, waiting for the right time, by living with, sorting out inner hindrances first, to overcome the fear of confrontation. By doing this he learns to express his decision and feelings to his ex-wife, to feel equal in the interaction, and to birth his own individuality. Zeus is guided by his intuition and knowing which he said, just arrives! The word *intuition*, according to the Collins dictionary, comes from the latin *intueri*, meaning to gaze upon. "When we are in

an intuitive state, we look carefully at what is going on and gain the kind of knowledge that doesn't arise from logic" (Moore, 1996, pp. 359-360).

After reading and contemplating Zeus's transcripts, I put them on the wall to enter the empathy-in-action method. As I re-read and moved through the experience of his process, it became clearer as a picture that I then drew, adding notes onto this drawing. I showed this to Zeus and he confirmed that it was an accurate portrayal of his process. This picture is in Appendix B.

In Zeus's process, the emphasis on taking time and following his own rhythm for sorting and individualizing, is a very significant part of the whole process, as it emerges as the heart of the seven life processes.¹⁶ His process captures the activity of life in its wholeness, as a moment in the interrelationships, that mutually create, what Johann von Goethe (cited by Schad, 1985, p. 176) calls: "an inner consistency throughout the whole." Wolfgang Schad (1985, p. 194) concludes from this that: "the phenomena of life 'are themselves the theory.'" This idea is the core of my work, that knowledge is based in experience and requires being present in life, in each moment, being in the shoes of each participant, allowing for the creation of theory in life. I hope that you will see this, as you read and reflect on the metamorphosis of change and transformation, which is occurring through the process of writing, and through the stories of all the participants.

"Life flows through us and differentiates itself within us and manifests in the seven life processes" (Steiner, 1990b, p. 87). Reflecting on the life processes as they manifest as learning processes, I can see that this frees our soul life, in the activities of thinking, feeling and action. In the following descriptions, the three more outward processes of maintenance/exercising, growth/developing faculties and creativity, are closely connected with the more inward processes of taking in/observing, warming/relating and digesting. The mediating activity between these two groups is secretion/sorting/individualizing. The sorting/individualising activity questions what needs to be let go of and what needs to be assimilated. In Zeus's process especially, it can be seen that this mediating activity is a unique

¹⁶ This is also shown in chapter 6, called "*I Am Participating*." This part of the research is where I go through the same sorting and individualizing process, in regards to how I digested all of the participant's stories, and how I decided what direction to take in the rest of the thesis.

process that transcends all others in its significance. However, I wish to make it clear again, that in Zeus's process, I am not concerned with a number of separate processes, but with a dynamic whole, characterized by the seven-foldness of the life processes, as: "an organism of self-sustained movements of thought, an organism which as such is capable of being *observed* in thinking" (Lindenau, 1985, p. 207). Even though I used headings to differentiate the different activities, there are many overlaps, as this is a dynamic moving whole that requires heart and soul thinking, in which we may catch a glimpse of the individuality shining through/between the words.

The experience of observing, relating and digesting.

During the time Zeus attended the therapy sessions, he learnt more about himself, by observing, making connections and digesting past experiences. In this he shows that he has the courage to change and to find his own way and meaning in the world. An example of this is when he confronted new learning with past experiences, and found concrete examples in his life:

I can recognise that there is anger there in me that I always have suppressed...The anger I've come to realise has been passed on to me as a child, things happened to me and I didn't realise there was still anger there so it changed when I started to release it through therapy, things seemed to quieten down...I released it through the clay – with the clay, I can picture it, then get the clay and squeeze the living daylight out of it and that in itself is showing that there is anger there and I can express it, but the greatest one was to get that clay and throw it like billyo on the floor and it just splatters everywhere and I focused on that situation when I was a child.

It is one thing to recognise suppressed anger and another to express it, which can be very releasing, but how did Zeus actually make a change so that anger was no longer suppressed or exploded out?

I entered into the memory and...became the situation where people were taking away my power or encroaching into my space and where I got a bit sick of it. I became the victim physically...we concentrated on what I felt like, it just came in like lightning, like people throwing barbs at me.

He then exited this position and entered into the position of the barbs, gesturing this activity physically onto a cushion:

I had to make what that barb sound would be affecting me, like barbs hitting me on my side, against my head and my whole body and the sound was 'whoosh whoosh' and I expressed that sound. I related it to like lightning bolts being thrown at me, just the sound as I imagined it as it came to me.

Then he entered back into the position of suffering and receiving these barbs:

I visualised how the barbs are coming to me and then I put my hands up to stop the barbs (gestures this with head turned away & hands up) and I turn away, I cringe and hear this noise to recognise these barbs coming towards me and then [the counsellor makes the sound]. I wanted to bring my arms down and just face it, and I was able to speak up again, and do the release sound 'GAH', like when you hit a tennis ball and then I set up a boundary with the sound 'D' stop! [gestures with hand forward like a stop sign]. Once I've set up the boundary I find I come back within myself.

As he practiced this skill of making an energetic boundary, Zeus noticed a change happening:

When different people start to encroach or come into my space I just breathe through ... and it makes me calmer and that anger isn't there and that anger doesn't go in and I just walk off and forget it. What I am saying is I recognise that there is still anger but what I'm doing is saying yes, there is anger but I still have enough space and I don't get carried away by it. I'm surprised the change didn't take very long. I suppose I'm just open to it. The change is just evolving and recognising all the situations where that can occur, that I can take control....and have a strategy to do to lessen the effect. Now I turn towards things and talk about them whereas before I would turn away.

Zeus said in the interview, that through the therapy and the separation, he was gaining more control in his life:

I'm going back to who I want to be, to my own person. It's really great now...I decide to solve my own problems. Yeah, I had the tendency to fit in with other people, situations with whatever they wore, whatever they talked about or drank, I would fit in with them. Whereas now I realise I can do whatever I like, I'm my own individual it's fine to participate or not, I'm still an individual. It means I think other people can have their point of view and I can have mine but I can tell them my point of view. Whereas before, I wouldn't discuss my point of view. It means in myself I'm a lot happier, I feel a lot calmer and now I can just move on and not get upset about, geez I've upset Jack or Jill or said the wrong thing, it's their problem and they can sort it out, I've just expressed what I felt or shown how I feel or whatever. Basically it's coming from the heart and not just saying things to say things just to make conversation, just speak the truth, or try to.

Originally when I went in to therapy I wanted to change and express myself, I think I've done that...and it's a process of understanding that a lot of things have happened to me, I was part of it and goes way back to my parents when I was

born it's evolved through that. I now recognise what happened, I have now been able to talk about it, and I suppose I see myself as someone who can stand up and be themselves, as someone tall and upright, standing pretty tall.

It can be seen from these extracts, how Zeus was digesting experience through soul thinking, by learning to understand his experience; through feeling, by becoming aware of his sense of truth; and in action, by trying things out in his daily life (van Houten, 1995).

The experience of individualising.

What was striking in Zeus's process was the activity of sorting and individualizing that occurred not in one layer, but through a range of layers – in body, soul and spirit. He took his time, and found his own rhythm to sort things out, through these various layers, before moving into taking action on his decision. Initially, even though he wanted to move on, he made a conscious choice and decision that at a certain stage, he was not ready, to confront taking action about his marriage:

With the separation, I don't think we've really confronted what we're going to do, I want to get it sorted so I can move on, divorced and move on to do separate things...I just want to get it sorted and over and done with. I think it's going to happen, I want it to happen, whether I'm going to initiate it I'm not sure yet. I just want the finality. I'm at this point where I'm making this decision to move on and what I've done is just going to be a closed a chapter of my life and going on to something else. I'm not too sure what (smiles).

There was a threshold for Zeus to cross and fear brought resistance. We must be careful not to judge and assume that this resistance is negative. This opposition to taking action yet, does in fact, stir his imagination and energy, and: “Bachelard observes, (that opposition) evokes the will to penetrate and understand, it arouses courage and prevents stagnation” (Hoffmann, 1998, p. 94). The will to overcome resistance can also bring us into a more intimate connection with ourselves and the world.

Zeus was confident in his own decision. For the first time he consciously owned and talked about how he listened to his intuition, made spiritual connections, and was coming to terms with the depth of the change for him:

Within myself I know it's coming out, in the heart and in the mind, in the intuition, fulfilling. I think the separation has proven that agenda I've known, has always been there. This means there's more to life around us, I've become aware there's more to what's happening in life than people are lead to believe. Just the recognition that we are not alone, on the physical plane, and on the spiritual plane there's heaps happening around me (laughs) it's around me now, I experience it as comfort, as a knowingness, as a support.

In the following quote, Thomas Moore (1996) captures the mood of Zeus's decision-making process:

My innate distaste for logical, quick decision making has led me to take careful note of my intuitions and to trust them, and I have found that this kind of guidance feels more interior, brings up a wealth of imagination and memory, and keeps me closer to the area of life where the choice lies. At the same time, the decision-making process is slower, and its particulars are difficult to spell out. (p. 359)

Zeus stood on the edge of a threshold, contemplating changes he wanted to make, preparing to move into a new phase of life, that required him to act with heart-felt will forces:

Yep, it's definitely to finish what I have here and start afresh...It's still evolving, my life's purpose is panning out, it's working out. I'm being assisted, I just know as there are spirits assisting all the time (laughs). I feel them, the feeling is your heart knows, in my heart, it's a feeling, a knowing, a glowing sensation, there is an expansion of the body or the heart with lots of colours changing red to yellow to blues.

Coenraad van Houten (1995) suggests that taking this step in a conscious way, does bring us to the experience of a threshold, of an inner abyss. Zeus says: *It's a big step, because I'm comfortable, I could stay here because I have a job, I have a comfortable house and to leave that behind and go into the unknown is a scary feeling.* I asked Zeus in one of the interviews: Is there anything that will stop you from going into the unknown? He replied:

It's being unsure of what will happen, it's just the unknown of meeting new people and taking that step, it's just taking that step so I know from before when I've moved or left a job, once you've done the step, like finished or resigned or whatever, there's a relief and you know you can move on. I'm a bit unsure, but once you get past that and I have made the decision there's no turning back (laughs) so I just go on and accept that. I've made a decision but haven't done it yet, it's not out yet.

What is this sorting out, individualising process like? What does he mean by sorting out? What does he mean that he was in turmoil? Zeus describes this process in relation to the separation:

Just confronting people, not doing it at the moment because that's where I'm still in the process of sorting it out...I haven't yet been able to sit down and discuss what I feel but I think what the therapy has done now is made me realise that I have the boundaries that I can keep, I don't have to close down, I can say what I want to say and just say it because she doesn't have to come into my space, she can come into my space if I am open. I think it will be easier to talk...!but what is causing the delay in this is" ... again I'm waiting for somebody else to make the move and not doing it myself...I'm just waiting and taking a back seat to let other people sort themselves out...if I bide my time things don't get done.

Changing from past or old ways to new ways creates an in-between, a void that requires us to take a leap of faith: "The disappearance of something old and the birth of something new is always experienced as a void many people wish to avoid this" (van Houten, 1995, pp. 143-144).

If I don't think about it, it's okay, if I go to work it's the same old treadmill, never get out of it, if I don't make that push, I feel as though I'm on that treadmill because I'm constantly unhappy. I know inside I've got to change it, yeah I think there has to be set a date if this is going to happen. But I also think too that if!my wife" said to me okay let's do it, I'd be in turmoil again, to do the real estate, settle the furniture and to start something else off, splitting up the furniture of who has this, who has that, who has the cars and all that...that's what's happening inside me, holding me in the turmoil. But again, once it's started it will happen. It's in my mind waiting to happen, but nothing will happen unless I start to make it happen.

I'm in a void. I can cope with it but it's a waste of time. I want to change, I think my soul seems to be telling me to make that move but I'm not acting on it, my mind is taking over with all the problems. But it will work out, it's that step to take (laughs) yeah, it's just that step.

Coenraad van Houten (1995) and Yehuda Tagar (1993b) talk about a number of aspects that can create blockages in the process of individualising. Two of these aspects relate to Zeus specifically: Fear of the abyss (threshold), and a tendency to avoid self confrontation in action, as the next step in the process of change:

Yeah, I have the choice, I have that choice (laughs) yeah, and that's basically what it is, and everybody's waiting for me to make that choice. With the choices you make it effects other people, I suppose everybody waits for you to make the choice and then they can do something about it.

I asked Zeus to tell me more about the experience of this inner threshold:

Fear of confrontation, the fear that I will go back within myself because I don't want to hurt that other person or other people, confrontation of anger and all those sort of things well up but I know it won't happen, cause I know we are both waiting for us to make that decision. It's me, me who has to make that decision to verbalise what I feel and what I think should happen, and that's why I haven't been doing...I need the inner strength...the turmoil in my mind is overriding what I feel, because of the fear, the fear of making that step.

Zeus describes the image of this fear, of the turmoil as:

Bubbling, gooey water, just bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, bubbling yeah. just bubbling...it's a bit like a volcano it bubbles and bubbles and bubbles and once it's out it calms down, it's released ... !and he feels that he is" up near the top. because I know what needs to be done, it's not far away, it's a matter of doing it, and it's just waiting for the right time. when the two of us are by ourselves and it could be anytime.

Michael Mahoney (2003, p. 178) suggests another way of describing this time of turmoil: "Sometimes change processes are initiated by what Baumeister calls 'the crystallization of discontent'; that is, the person endures a prolonged period of 'disquiet.'" It was interesting to see that as Zeus sorted out things within himself, in his relationships and in practical things (at work, selling house, dividing up the household things), he was now in transition and changes were occurring on the levels of body, soul and spirit:

I suppose it is a big chasm, once I stepped over it I'll be whoo...it will be freedom, it will be my choice, my decision, of how I live, where I live and what I do. It's a bit scary after working in a system for over 30 years. It's scary but it's revitalising too, it's like a new life.

To understand the context for his new life, Zeus joined the army at 17 years old, met his wife at 20 years old, and was married for 25 years. He had always worked in government jobs, so this was a very big change for him. It was the first time he was expressing himself, owning his own choices and planning to do what he wanted to do in his life. One of the steps, says Zeus:

Is expressing myself and letting people know what I want to do, then once I have done that. the step is for me to do it...Once I do it and take control of it. that's where I will have my freedom and I know that's when the release will be.

The struggle for Zeus was to look into the abyss and confront the truth of his situation, to face fear, without getting stuck in the abyss. Coenraad van Houten (1995, p. 144) suggests that one way to do this is, if he can experience: “a new inner security ... created by their very own, fiery ego will – an activity that dissolves all fears and insecurities” – then a secure ground is laid for further learning and growth. Zeus was strengthening a new internal self-image of himself and building a description of this image was encouraged through the interviews, and was expressed through gesture and in a wooden carving (figure 21):

I think the spiritual part of it plays a big part, cause I think that's in one way, what keeps me going, that's where it plays on my spiritual side and mental and thinking and makes me think. My spiritual side says just go and do it because it will work out, but the mental thinking side of it is saying no, no, you got to have income, you've got to think of what other people are going to do...If I don't go into the old ways, then I think there will be a certain amount of joy in that I know that I have found what I want to do ...I already know that's in me.

The incentive for Zeus was that he did not want to feel small and closed anymore, but wanted to express his true self, in thinking, feeling and action. During this time, as Zeus was building up his self-confidence and inner strength to speak, he found that talking with his counsellor, and with me, during our interviews, helped to confirm he was okay and on the right path. He says: *It is reassuring to be heard.*

An Interlude - A Reflective Exercise

What are the resistances that you encounter when learning? Which are the strongest and which are the weakest impediments in your mental processes: in your feeling life; in your will activity? Are these strengths and weaknesses a natural disposition, conditioned into you, or have they emerged as specific responses to life experiences? (van Houten, 1995, p. 25)

Over the threshold – Exercising, developing faculties and creating.

It took Zeus six weeks to find the right timing to talk with his wife, to tell her how he felt, without feeling closed:

It was pretty easy (laughs) yeah, no problems at all, it was just the way I thought cause we both feel the same. It was a relief and I realised the pressure was only on myself and nobody else, and just saying something it fell into place and it felt good to get it out, yeah. It was a lot of clearing the air and understanding between us, yeah it was fine ...I think the big thing for both of us was just accepting it and not getting our back up and carry on or shut down, or not say anything. There is a more open space between us but I think now I feel as though we're not out to heal each other or solve all these problems, there's more openness because there's a finality in between our relationship between each other. I'm a lot calmer with myself and a feel happier with what's happening, a bit apprehensive just realising that we're going to separate and find a new place and settle in but that's just the next step - we still have to sell the house and separate things, and from there to start afresh.

It can be seen from these transcripts, that when Zeus took one step, there was then another step to take. In this, we can see a picture of a person who made a choice and found the drive to learn and understand, to change and develop, by overcoming the fear of confrontation with courage, accepting each step as it arrived. Zeus continued to exercise and develop his new skills. Three months after completing therapy, he summarises the main changes:

The biggest thing is I get to be an individual and do whatever I want and there's that freedom that I can do what I want, yeah. I think work-wise, there's a strong feeling for me to move on. It's free in that I don't have responsibility to pay for the house, bills and carry other people, I can move on if I want to. I thinking about travel, I'm waiting for things to settle down, I realise it might take me two years just to calm down and settle down and work things out. Now I am no longer in the cave, I'm outside the cave, the release has happened and I'm breathing easy and am okay watching, listening and waiting, it's as though the ties have been broken or cut and it feels good, I mean it's just freedom.

He was now much more empowered in his daily situations, and in his relationships with others:

It is an empowering thing because there's not that interaction that in some ways took away a lot of my power...feel lighter and am smiling more. I feel easier. I think the biggest thing is just being an individual, and take responsibility for yourself, and still be able to help, but still have my individuality.

Zeus continued with his personal development and participated creatively in the world. He was evolving spiritually and worked towards initiating and creating a new life for himself. Spiritual growth was very important for Zeus, in particular, the relationship of the inner feminine and inner masculine aspects of the self. An example of this was described by Zeus. He had been doing a massage practitioner's course for two years, and his ability for intimacy had improved greatly. He says:

I'm doing it just for myself, just to be with all these different people, most of the people I would never meet. It's been good, I realise there is a softness as you can become in touch with a person through the body that helps nurture, the massage helps. Massage is one of the best things, there are people from age 18 right up to 60 years. When massaging all it is, is trust. I found in the last few weeks I connected with the women and cried a bit and expressed myself. Most guys don't. It's rugby, pubs, men things, you don't cry, whereas a girl is nurtured. Crying is just natural now, I don't think about it, which has changed as dad used to say shut up you sissy', but it's natural.

The birthing of Zeus.

Zeus describes beautifully how he came into an intimate connection with the feminine aspects of himself, through his body and sexuality:

In the massage, my body reacts in different ways. One of them is when I overheat, I perspire, and when one lady was massaging me I just had to get up and go to the toilet and I did that and I had a massive release going to the toilet.

I was just sitting on the toilet and I had no control over my bladder so it felt like I had a hose and it just emptied and emptied and I just had no control over it, just kept on going. When I went back out on the table to complete the massage I had calmed down, it was amazing, my skin had dried out.

I felt different ...It was sort of like an empty feeling, actually when it happened I was on my stomach, I was getting hot everywhere and I relaxed my legs and it felt like I was giving birth. I felt wide open and empty, and it felt like this energy was coming right out of me and it felt as though I was giving birth. I was just amazed and my body felt alive and now I'm a lot happier, more receptive and alive. The big thing on the weekend with the massage was I realised how good it was with the caring, loving and nurturing ...all our barriers fell down and it was just a loving experience. And I realised that is how we are ...I could relate to the women and felt comfortable being there with them. I could sit there and talk, just talk about anything, which was great, it was really good. I didn't try and fix anyone, it was just an awareness of seeing different people.

Zeus's process of change is represented/expressed in the three pictures he contributed during the interviews: The first one he names: *The hurt, the pain of*

the male - closed, hiding the emotions, shut, in a shell, with his head bowed into the groin (he also shows this physically in a body gesture: head down to my knees, in a ball, into a foetal position). When reflecting over the whole process, Zeus describes the image that expressed who he is, in the second picture, as: A tender buddha, no shell, no nothing, just sitting, the buddha is myself. I birthed myself. I realised from the drawing that you can get so much. It is that tender buddha. He did this drawing soon after the experience on the massage table. The third picture in his process of change he calls: Love of the Self: Coming to terms with the male/female side of myself. Female side – softness, emotional side. Male – is grounded side/survival. I can be balanced between the emotional, spiritual female side and still be grounded on the male side...this is still evolving.

Steve Biddulph (1994, p. 14) describes seven steps to manhood and one of these relates to Zeus. He says men need to: “free their wild spirit the god of men does not dwell in the suburbs or the office towers. Inner steadiness does not come from achievements or possessions.” This confirms Zeus’s experience, and Steve Biddulph goes on to speak specifically to men:

You need to find a spiritual basis for your inner life that is specifically masculine and based in nature, which connects you to the earth (and) ...as you get older this will be your source of strength and harmony, freeing you from fear and dependency on others. (1994, p. 14)

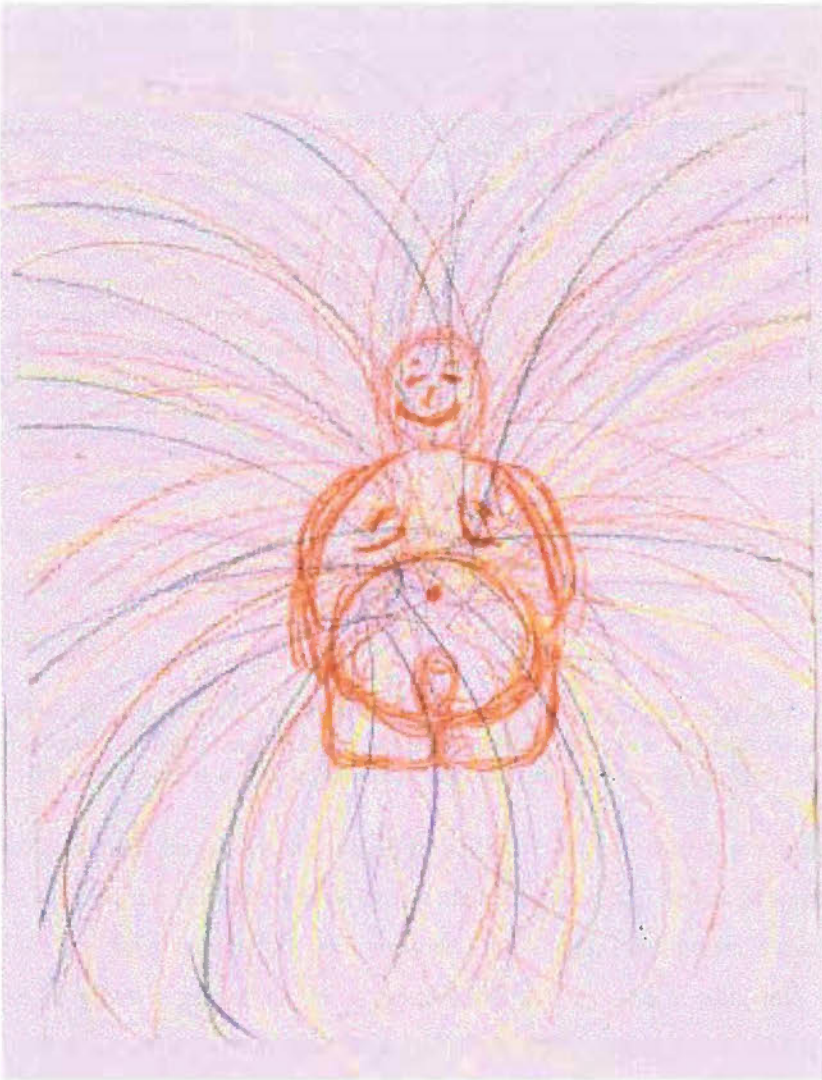


Figure 23. Zeus: A tender buddha.

A year passes and Zeus says everything is done now:

We've sold the house and split everything up and I'm renting a unit at the moment...It all went really well, there were no problems, we decided what each of us would have and it just worked out well. I was lucky, we were both happy, there was no animosity between us with what was what and what we were doing, it was just a closure and more or less when we moved out ...[and as a ritual completion] ...we both closed the door of the front of the house and we realised that we were moving on to another chapter type of thing.

In the reality of living alone, Zeus says he is happy:

Just happy to settle at the moment, I think at the time while going through the separation or whatever, you know, it was I'm going to move on and do my thing but when it's over, you sort of settle down and try and plan what to do, things change. At the moment I just want to settle down and just work out a plan for later on, not be hasty about it. Yeah, I realise now it will take a bit longer than what I thought...it takes a while to get used to being by yourself, in the evenings, with cooking meals and going shopping and doing the washing and then it's quiet. But I'm happy with where I am and I'm happy with the situation and yeah, I'm happy to move on. It's the first time I've been by myself for quite awhile and I think when you have got time for yourself, time for meditation or yoga, there's a lot more time to explore those avenues, which I have been doing. I've done vipassana, the Buddhist silent meditation 10 day retreat, I've done three of them now and I did the last one a couple of weeks ago. And I just get that time now to do it and so I can develop myself more.

We leave Zeus, as he learns to live on his own, feeling free but mindful of his responsibilities as a father, with a positive outlook for the future. His final words to me are:

It's time to be totally in my own space. That's the way I feel and there are no angry words or bitterness because we both realise that we were both responsible for what happened, not one or the other, and we are just getting on with it.

Slowly, perhaps he is now beginning to be aware of, and trust his intuition and knowledge of the spiritual dimensions, which according to Thomas Moore (1996, p. 350), is: "fully compatible with grounded, up-to-date intelligence, expands our sense of what it means to be a spirit with" a body and a soul, and in that expansion ...we may discover how to live a deeply human life and even to flourish."

I feel really privileged to have met Zeus (in face-to-face and telephone interviews) and to be part of his journey, to travel alongside with him and to observe how he worked through his process toward individuality, just as I am also trying to do. I found this to be an amazing experience. It reminds me very strongly of how important it is, for transformation to occur, that the full freedom of individuality must be respected and developed.

Zeus's story is one man's journey of learning about power and nurturing; dealing with suppressed anger, but not by acting it out and creating more fear in the world. Through the therapy process, he became more aware of this anger, and the fear within this anger. Through the healing process he became empowered and resourceful, thereby becoming able to express himself openly to meet with others on equal terms. What really impressed me with Zeus, is that he allowed himself the time to digest what was happening. He made the duration of time a conscious activity – he waited, and listened to his heart feelings. He listened and acted on his intuition, he was not hurried or hassled. He practiced meditation. He took in the events, contemplated them slowly, until digested and turned them into his own experiences, then he could develop further and express himself more truly in the world. I will discuss more specific aspects of change discerned from working with Zeus, in a later chapter, when all the participants' transcripts are reflected upon as a whole.

Zeus and the World

I want to reconnect Zeus to the life of the world soul, not as a god, but as a man grounded in the world, connected with his spiritual resources. However, there *is* something archetypal going on, in the challenge to change and transform in our ever-changing world, with all the bubbling activity and disruptions happening in the world and within individuals, around power in its various forms. Maybe it has something to do with what is evident in this research – that there are two worlds: an inner and outer world – and there is perhaps a challenge to learn to live consciously in both.

As I said earlier in this chapter, life itself can bring us into connection with the archetypal nature of our issues, and therapy is one way of learning to change and participate on a path of transformation. One other example of a man willing to transform, is Charles Perkins. He was an Indigenous man, taken by the welfare authorities as a young child. Steve Biddulph (1994) quotes something of Charles Perkins transformation and learning process, of living in two worlds - in becoming formally initiated as an aboriginal and entering on the path of an Arunta elder:

I could never tell anyone what it means; it's just too much It just boggles the mind ... There are two worlds ... When I went through the ceremonies, the world changed. The trees were different, the leaves were different, the grass was different, the hills were different, the air was different. I am looking at a tree and one day it is a tree and the next day it was my friend. I saw somebody else there. I was at home. (p. 184)

Initiation, or in other words, change and transformation: “is really a matter of exploring the *outer* reaches of *inner* space” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 156). I deliberately did not try to *explain* Zeus’s process specifically in terms of an archetype, but rather patterns were allowed to emerge and be created through the process of working with Zeus’s transcripts. For instance, the life processes can be seen as an underlying activity, of life itself, with the power of choice in that. Through Zeus, we can glimpse the archetype in this process. Thomas Moore (1996, p. 195) suggests that the purpose of this is: “to be guided by them towards our own instinctive way of life, to feel the roots of our identity, and so to be able to live in intimate relation to our own soul.”

Concluding and Imagining

I want to conclude this chapter with the following comments, to challenge and promote further discussions, beyond the study itself. Richard Tarnas (1991) proposes that:

The driving impulse of the West’s masculine consciousness has been its dialectical quest not only to realise itself, to forge its own autonomy, but also, finally, to recover its connection with the whole, to come to terms with the great feminine principle in life: to differentiate itself from but then rediscover and reunite with the feminine, with the mystery of life, of nature, of soul. (p. 143)

However, to do this there is a challenge, a threshold must be crossed, that requires courage, faith, imagination, trust and self-discernment. He goes further and says that, we must not deny, control or exploit the feminine, but rather we must acknowledge, respect, and respond to the feminine (Tarnas, 1991).

I hope the untitled painting on the next page may inspire your imagination further in regards to the following questions: What will happen when the diverse range of

perspectives of the feminine and masculine are recognised, integrated and transcended as being part of a larger whole?

Can you imagine that: “their synthesis leads to something beyond itself ... opening to a larger reality that cannot be grasped before it arrives, because this new reality is itself a creative act?” (Tamas, 1991, p. 20).

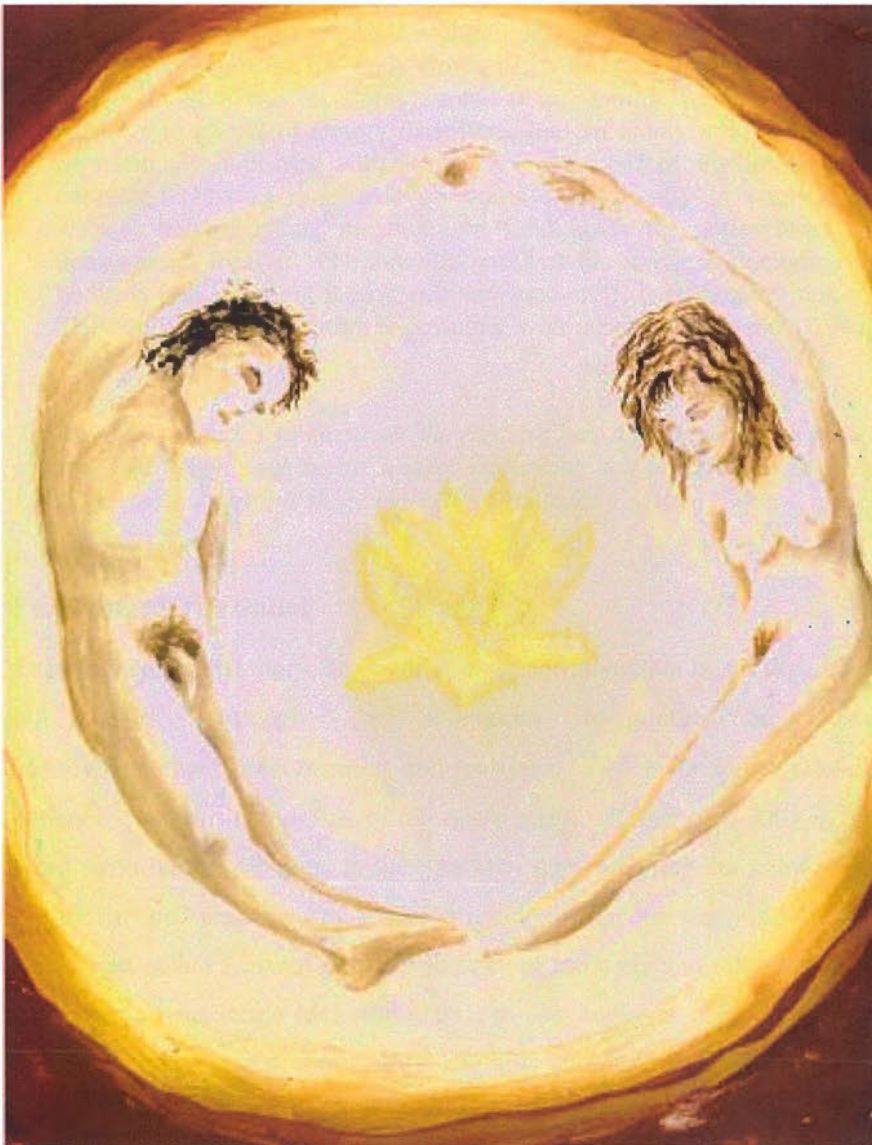


Figure 24. Untitled.

CHAPTER 5

RE-MEMBERING THE BODY - AMANDLA

To transform the patterns of the past you must know what they are made of. Your body appears to be composed of solid matter that can be broken down into molecules and atoms, but quantum physics tells us that every atom is more than 99, 999 percent empty space and the sub-atomic particles moving at lightening speed through this space are actually bundles of vibrating energy ... they carry information ... Chasing the physical structure of the body down to its ultimate source dead-ends as molecules give way to atoms, atoms to sub-atomic particles, and these particles to ghosts of energy dissolving into an empty void. This void is mysteriously imprinted with information even before any information is expressed. Just as thousands of words exist silently in your memory without being spoken, the quantum field holds the entire universe in unexpressed form ... The essential stuff of the universe, including your body, is non-stuff, but it isn't ordinary non-stuff. It is thinking non-stuff. The void inside every atom is pulsating with unseen intelligence. (Chopra, 1993, p. 14)

The process for me is to know all the parts of me, the negative, the positive, the shadow, the light, and being honest with your self with clear eyes and just knowing who I am at this stage in my life (Amandla's wish).

Preparing and Orienting

Each of us has a life story, an ongoing inner narrative, that is our life, maintaining our identity through: “a continuous integration of experiences, acknowledgements, recollections and revisions, that” is obviously related to and dependent upon it being able to tell one's *story*” (Kirkengen, 2001, p. 60). The word narrative has its roots in the Sanskrit “gna” meaning “to know” and in the Latin “narrare” meaning “to relate.” In this chapter, the story is focused on the participant called Amandla, on her journey of knowing and relationship with her body in dis-ease. Rosie McLaren (2001, p. 58) suggests: “We are both story as body and body as story, continuously crossing boundaries, re-shaping, re-forming, re-desiring and re-mapping our personal, social and political environments.” But who is unfolding this story with its own particular meanings? In this telling then: “it is the meaning which I ascribe to my life which is me” (Bullington, 1999, p. 237), so it is both Amandla's story and mine. Candice Pert (1997, p. 259) makes a

thought-provoking observation: “Consider that the body may be a metaphor, just a way of referring to an experience we all have in common. Maybe it’s that we don’t have consciousness, but consciousness has us.”

Amandla’s Story

At the age of 38 years, Amandla contracted a life threatening disease which left her unable to work and living on a disability pension. Previously she had worked as a veterinary nurse. She was married twice, had no children, and for the last five years has been single. After three years of suffering and nearly dying, this motivated Amandla to go to a body-based therapy, because she decided that she did not want to be a victim anymore. She wanted to heal the experience of fear and abuse that she claimed were connected with her physical dis-ease, and to find out: *how to know the whole of me.*

I was supposed to be gone !to die" by Christmas, so when I made it through Christmas I decided that I would become whole this year and integrate my inner child ...heal the abuse that I went through as a child, and then as a wife, and then as a wife again ...and these counselling sessions were to get in touch with the inner child that had been locked in a box for a long time.

Why didn’t Amandla die? What difference did it make for her, to change her life direction, to make a different choice, to heal and to live: “We are always free to orient ourselves towards it !life" in terms of possibilities” (Bullington, 1999, p. 238). Amandla thought she had dealt with everything, in previous talking therapy sessions, but then she realised that: *I needed to know more about myself, I needed to know why I had spent the last 37 years being abused physically, emotionally and mentally, and sexually.* It was only in the last few years that Amandla realised it was not okay to be abused, that the way she was brought up as a child was not right, that the way she was treated in her marriages, was not normal. Like Jennifer Bullington, she realised that there were other possibilities, as is conveyed in the following poem.

To Be a Child

I cry alone in the darkness of the night
 Do you hear me? Do you hear me?
 The pain burns so deep. Is there any way out
 Of the world you jailed me in?
 You had no right to take the innocence away!
 You never gave me a chance
 To be a child.
 To be a child.

You took more from me than I ever knew.
 You overstepped the mark.
 Didn't you know that there are boundaries
 That you kept crossing over?
 Every time you took me further
 Away from the child that I was.
 Away from the child I wanted to be.

Didn't you realize I was only a child
 And not the adult you made me be?
 All I wanted was to laugh, play and sing
 But you took that from me, and made me go
 Into a world where I didn't belong.
 Why did you take the child away?
 Why did you take the child away?

And the nightmares are there
 Taking away the sleep from me.
 You have taken the dreams I once dreamed
 And now I wonder did you ever know?
 Did you ever know
 All that you were doing back then
 When you treated the child so...?

But now a change has come, I am no longer alone

No longer am I all alone.
 Now I am taking care of my inner child.
 Now I can laugh, play and sing.
 To be the child I never was
 To be the child I never was
 Now I can grow
 And become the adult I am meant to be.

Anon, Adapted version (McClelland, 1995, p. 24)

Before Amandla started counselling, she said she knew that emotion was manifest in the physical:

That was my knowing, so I knew if I looked at some of the reasons I have behaved in the past and were carrying on into the future, had to do with this disease and I knew that if I knew more of myself and healed these places of abuse that it would very definitely be a positive influence on the dis-ease, but I didn't particularly go to counselling to get rid of the disease, it's all been part of the picture happening.

I met with Amandla for four in-depth interviews, and for one long follow-up meeting, in which we went through this chapter together, for feedback and to make any changes. Amandla said that this chapter is an accurate portrayal of her process and she would like to have a copy to keep when this thesis is completed. Over the year that we were meeting, she moved a number of times, from living with various friends to finally, living by herself in her own place. Also, about five months after the completion of the interviews, she had a counselling session with me, and since this counselling session, Amandla has been free of pain for the first time in many years (I checked with her six months later and she was/is still pain free).

Jennifer Bullington (1999) in her book, *The Mysterious Life of the Body: A New Look at Psychosomatics*, developed a phenomenological theory of psychosomatics, that reminds us when describing a lived phenomenon, that the focus is the lived body and the world, as constituted by the participant, and in this part of the study, it is Amandla. How do I tell this story of pain and suffering? Pain in this context, is often considered as a subjective/psychological experience, but as yet there is not any equipment that I know of, that can measure degrees of pain, because it is different for each person, according to their own experience and perception of how painful the pain is for them. The most common means used for understanding a person's experience of pain, is to use a phenomenological approach, by asking the person to describe the pain and maybe to also self-rate the pain experience, on a scale of 1-10.

From past experience, as a therapist, and from this experience with Amandla, there is a beneficial and therapeutic effect on the experience of pain itself, when expressed through full bodily gesture. Firstly as an exploration and release, that

shifts the energy, and then through nurturing and taking care of whatever needs arise, in this particular experience. Ian Gawler (2001, p. 81) says we need to appreciate that pain is a warning that: “the ‘something wrong’ can be of a physical, psychological or even spiritual nature,” and understanding the difference between these aspects is fundamental in dealing with pain appropriately.

In one comparative research study on the experience of pain, through verbal only or non-verbal gesture, Yehuda Tagar (1991) found, that the group of people who physically expressed their pain, resulted in nearly three times as much change in the experience of pain than did the verbal expression group. In terms of change, it is evident both from this research and from Amandla’s experience, that non-verbal ways of expressing experience can create a significant pathway for change, in this instance, in pain relief and pain management. Another study demonstrated that body therapy can heal physical pain (Monsen & Monsen, 2000) and this appears to confirm the view that physical pain is somatized psychic pain.

A Meditation

The pain we endure in life is not ours.
 It belongs to our highest striving,
 To another being in us
 To an impulse that demands from us
 To listen, turn, become and receive like children.
 Pain and suffering are tools which gods use
 To shape that chalice in human souls which
 Ultimately must contain them.

Beni Kleinhans (A South African Steiner teacher who passed away in Australia after a long battle with AIDS, 1992).

The Experience of the Body through Dis-ease

As the above meditation implies, pain may be a messenger of meaning. There were meanings in Amandla's world that were *stuck* and *hardened* in her body, preventing her from developing herself and her life. When Amandla began to think and feel differently about her life situation, her body symptoms started to change. The following excerpt describes the extent of Amandla's change, in what the disease was like, or more aptly put by Amandla as dis-ease, before going to counselling, with some of the main physical changes that occurred:

I can walk, I can get off the chair without having to get support, I can eat now, my stomach didn't have any peristalsis and I was also rejecting lots of food and stuff like that too, and I was getting pains throughout my body 24 hours a day anywhere, it didn't have a particular site. They were sharp pains like somebody was stabbing me all day long and I would just be flinching 'ah-oo' you know, and my muscles would cramp. I just felt like one piece of walking painful meat, or hardly walking and everything was totally consuming me so that I really just wanted to stay in bed all the time. I wanted to die. I just wished it would go away. I was a victim of it. When it first came, I ignored it then it hit me with a vengeance and I became a victim of it and then I was sick of being a victim and I started searching and then I went to the counselling.

I first came across the word disease written as dis-ease in 1991, when I was researching meditation for a Masters unit, on complementary therapies. Ian Gawler (2001, p. 193) defines dis-ease as: "lack of ease, lack of balance, lack of harmony. Health is harmony and the purpose of life is to seek harmony on all levels of our being – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual." As words carry meaning and different interpretations, I will not use the medical term to name Amandla's dis-ease, but will include descriptions of how it was manifested in her body. This was done primarily, to protect the confidentiality of Amandla's process, but it also helps us to not think of this dis-ease in a "fixed" or "diseased" way, thereby allowing for more freedom and openness within us, to understand this experience, in a more holistic way. Jennifer Bullington (1999) highlights the importance of clarifying our perspective in regards to the mind-body relationship, in that we are essentially concerned with the transformation of the being-in-the-world of that person, thus: "it is best to suspend traditional thinking in order to take in the phenomenological perspective" (Bullington, 1999, p. 224).

Amandla's Body

This participant chose the word Amandla for her code name. It is a South African Zulu cry used when someone wants, or calls-in power and strength. Amandla chose it for this reason. What does this power and strength mean in the context of Amandla's process of change? Her process was very much connected with her body, or to be more accurate, it was a process of healing the dis-ease by healing her emotional issues, and learning to stay consciously *in* her body. Consequently, she was able to be more present, more empowered in fearful situations, to feel the pain and nurture herself, rather than stay hard/numb and turn the pain off. Her tendency to be fearful of her own feelings, of her inner self, created a sense of being fragmented, between different parts of the self, as an inner battle between body and soul, between how she felt and what she thought. Amandla's process through therapy, can be seen as a journey of self discovery and healing, emotionally and energetically, that appeared to require the "calling in" of great power and strength, especially as such dramatic and embodied changes occurred, particularly in her physical body.

The impressive part of her process was the difference she made to the dis-ease that was affecting her immune system and her physical body. She did not die. She defied the doctors' predictions and is still very much alive, astounding them with how much she changed, and how she insisted on doing it her way. She did not allow the medical system to take over and decide what was right for her. If she had, then a part of her body would have been amputated. She negotiated extra time to do what she wanted, with results that completely surprised the doctors, who called her, "the miracle girl." Details of this process are included later on in this chapter. Amandla is a wonderful example of a person who has a knowing and, with the help of the therapeutic process, the means, of creating new connections with the emotions and her body:

I know that the disease I have had for the last few years, is emotion manifest in turning myself to stone so that I could protect myself and not feel physically or emotionally anymore, and that if I kept the negative energy in my body I would still remain sick ...Energy flows through your body and to keep it in there is detrimental to the body.

Jennifer Bullington (1999, p. 244) confirms the experience described by Amandla, when she comments on the process of one of her psychosomatic clients in therapy, by stating: “her psychosomatic symptoms were clearly a way for her to retreat from the (at the time) overwhelming task of becoming herself.”

As a researcher, I am very interested in the interrelationship between our mental thoughts and emotional issues, and how we can influence and create changes in the various layers of our being, right into our physical body. In this context, I am orienting myself mostly to the literature of the body-mind connections (psychosomatics) and to the phenomenology of the body (Anderson, 2001; Behnke, 1994, 2001; Borysenko, 1988; Bullington, 1999; Chopra, 1991; Gendlin, 2004; Kirkengen, 2001; Pert, 1997; Sardello, 1999a, 2001b; Steiner, 1996a; Yehuda Tagar, 1991; Tagar, 1999b; Treichler, 1989). Elizabeth Behnke (1994) established a research and networking organisation called “*The Study Project in the Phenomenology of the Body*” and has compiled an extensive list of readings in this area.

However, my particular area of interest is with those phenomenological research practitioners who ask themselves and others, how the body is experienced in unique and different situations or conditions. For example, Elizabeth Behnke (1994, p. 311) mentions an article written in 1992 by Kay Toombs, a phenomenologist with M.S: “*The Body in Multiple Sclerosis: A Patient’s Perspective.*” In the context of therapy, embodiment has been known for a long time, and research has shown that effective psychotherapy happens when talking is connected with direct sensing and felt experiencing (Halling & Goldfarb, 1991). My question then becomes: How is Amanda experiencing the changes through therapy and in her life, in relationship with her body in dis-ease?

This does not mean that the body is the only focus, but it is more that, the body is an integral part of who we are, it has something to tell us about our human condition, in our sense of well-being and who we are in the world. The body has wisdom, as Jennifer Bullington (1999, p. 202) says: “human existence, embodiment and the world are thus bound up in an indissoluble unity,” that contributes to the wholeness of the experience of knowing.

A personal experience.

I have many years of experiencing how we can use our capacities to create a range of bodily changes, both personally and professionally. On a personal level, about ten years ago, I also refused medical treatment to heal and cure a dis-ease, over a nine month period, that had manifested in my body as cervical cancer. Professionally, as a psychotherapist, I worked for many years in a complementary medical clinic, with a number of doctors and health practitioners, addressing physical and psychosomatic conditions. For example, positive results were experienced and expressed to me by clients with the following conditions: candida, cancer, MS; panic attacks, pain relief/management, headaches and migraines, skin conditions, menstrual conditions, endometriosis, breathing and circulatory problems, stress and other general psychosomatic conditions.

I would like to make it clear at this stage, that any of these conditions or other problems such as childhood abuse, are not considered to be linked in a cause and effect way with difficulties experienced as adults. Christiane Northrup (1995, pp. 39-40) in her book, *Women's Bodies, Woman's Wisdom* says that: "the effect of trauma on our physical, mental and emotional bodies is determined largely by *how we interpret the event and give it meaning.*" This means healing lies, not in searching for the cause and effect, but in our power to change what an experience means to us. Understanding causality, in the holistic mode of consciousness, is a complex matter which Henri Bortoft (1996) discusses in his book, but is beyond the scope of this study. Briefly, he says: "It is also worth noticing that the perception of motion and change in the holistic mode of consciousness leads to a new understanding of causality ... [as] dynamic simultaneity" (1996, p. 339). He goes on to quote Johann von Goethe, who confirms this idea of dynamic simultaneity and the holistic mode of consciousness, by stating: "who strives after cause and effect makes a great mistake. They !cause and effect! are together the indivisible phenomenon" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 339).

The following rhyme puts it simply:

Rhyme and Reason

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
 She had so many children she didn't know what to do.
 But try as she would she could never detect
 Which is the cause and which is the effect.

Piet Hein¹⁷

The body and emotions.

Being mindful to not think in a causal way, I asked the question: What could Amandla mean by this connection with emotions and body? To know more we have to look at the body itself. Jennifer Bullington (1999, p. 211) notes that there are two words for body in the German language: "The term *Leib*, emphasizes the lived, person quality of being a body, while *Korper* refers to the thing aspects of the body." In English, there is just one word for body which comes from the old English *bodig*, and present day German *bottich* meaning barrel (container to be filled). It appears from this that the term body has become disconnected from its original connection to life and the person (Bullington, 1999). By using the terms lived body and embodiment, are we trying to re-invoke this connection with body and life? (Anderson, 2001; Bullington, 1999)

The embodied, holistic connection of body, soul, mind and spirit is becoming more accepted in the growing field of body-soul-spirit, and in the related field of psychoneuroimmunology (Borysenko, 1988; Pert, 1997). Michael Murphy (1992) asserts that this field is revealing our transformative capacity for creative change, through:

(1) the highly interactive, feedback-laced nature of psychophysical functioning; (2) multiple ways in which particular alterations of consciousness, behavior, bodily structure and process are mediated; and (3) the immense specificity with which significant changes are happening, moment by moment, throughout the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. (p. 23)

¹⁷ Accessed on the World Wide Web: <http://chat.carleton.ca/~tcstewar/grooks/grooks.html>

Basically, as Joan Borysenko (1988, p. 23) says: “Life is filled with changes,” our capacity to grow and have hope with a situation is determined by how well we cope with those changes or not.

How is her body relating to experience?

Yehuda Tagar (1993a) describes the body as a map for the landscape of our experience. Careful observation of the research participant’s descriptions of their experience of change, confirms Yehuda Tagar’s (1993a; 1994a; 1995b) observation that the body is experienced as having a number of roles in relation to experience: as an absorber, a carrier, a reflector, an expresser, and as a transformer of experience. With this body map, specific experiences can be felt in the corresponding parts of the physical body, although there is no physical cause for this. Yehuda Tagar (1993a, p. 100) goes on to state and confirm Amandla’s, and my experience, that an inherent connection does exist in the dynamics of emotion and motion: “For every emotion - is a motion in reserve; every motion - an externalised emotion.” This idea is also elaborated on in various other body-oriented and artistic therapies, such as bioenergetics, gestalt, art and movement therapies. When motion is held back, meaning and/or memory is held in the body, in bodily tensions, postures, and gestures, until they are released (Wiener, 1999).

Amandla embodied physically, numerous symptoms of her dis-ease, while: “sensory memory is central to understanding how the memory of traumatic events is laid down ... how ... ‘The Body Keeps the Score’” (Rothchild, 2000, p. 44). In terms of modes of body awareness, I like the term, *lucidly lived* body (or bodily reflexivity). This term for me, captures the imagination, offering a wider landscape that is more inclusive of the body, and expanding consciousness through more layers of our being (Behnke, 2001). As the quote made at the beginning of this chapter, by Deepak Chopra suggests, there is intelligence in the innermost aspects of our being, and maybe this is the transformational potential waiting to become expressed, re-formed and created anew, rather than for Amandla, remaining in an experience of being a statue of stone.

The Experience of Body, Self and the Life Processes

Throughout Amandla's process, the influence of the life processes on the bodily and soul layers, play an important function in her process. In the first three activities of the life processes, there is breathing/taking in of experience, then relating, through warmth and digesting of experience, firstly through the bodily senses (Steiner, 1990b; 1996a; 1999; Tagar, 1997; Tagar & Moraes, 1997; van Houten, 1995, 2000). But what happens if the life forces and the senses are disturbed, and how would this affect Amandla, if she did not decide to make the inner changes through the therapy? *The consequence of the dis-ease without this shift is either death or wheelchair and the loss of the ability to swallow, I would have to be hooked up to something to be able to be fed.*

Even back in the early part of the twentieth century, Rudolf Steiner (1999, English translation) and more recently Rudolf Treichler (1989), claimed that physical problems originate in the psychological, and psychological problems have their origin in the physical body. Rudolf Treichler (1989, p. 134) elaborates on this and says that, the soul doesn't grow ill: "in its essential nature but in its ...life substance." It is the vibrating resonating life body in which the memory of all our life experiences, good and bad, are stored. Life experiences of a similar nature can trigger these memories and affect the resonance of the life body, impacting the soul life. That is, the activity of the life body, as well as the stored experiences, influence the soul functions of thinking, feeling and willing (action) (Treichler, 1989). This means that the soul activities of thinking, feeling and willing, especially as evident throughout Amandla's process of change, were affected, as they were closely related to the body. According to Rudolf Treichler (1989, p. 134), physical illness arises when soul forces are too deeply embedded into the body while in contrast, for example: "insanity arises when the spirit itself withdraws completely."

In the context of Amandla's process, a further important point in the healing process was highlighted, that the healthy sense of self, the spirit or "I am" of the person must be addressed, to clear the way for more of oneself to penetrate with more consciousness, into the soul and body:

I tend to ignore the fact that I'm avoiding and that I live with my spirit more often than not, in the 'I am' as the higher self you know, and this process has brought me back into my body and realising one big thing was, that probably I can't carry on as a spirit on earth without the body so I best start to take notice of it. I believe that's the reason I got the dis-ease because it was probably the only way I would have started to focus on the body...I think there was something in me that was sick and tired of being a victim.

At first, Amandla was fighting the dis-ease and hating it, until she decided to see a counsellor who worked with spirituality, which changed everything. She realized that the dis-ease was also a gift, in that it brought her attention to her body - it allowed her to experience pain, to experience suffering in the body, to meet people and be exposed to different things. It allowed her to learn things about herself that she would never have known otherwise. She says: *that in itself, was the beginning of being able to heal.* This idea manifested with the dramatic changes that were made. Through the therapy, the life processes, especially breathing, warming and nourishing, combined with the bodily senses and her choices, had an important influence on the development of the dis-ease. This process changed her energetically and physically. For instance, in relation to Amandla's condition, there was a tendency towards contraction, stillness and coldness which manifested as hardening (scleroderma), formation of calcium deposits around the skin and body and a resulting tightening and stiffness inside and outside of the body. Through the therapeutic process, Amandla learnt to bring in more breathing, movement and warmth, to create more rhythm in her life, so that softness began to replace hardness:

My hands are like arthritic hands, my fingers don't straighten up, my wrists don't move, my skin is tight and hard as if the bone were just there. I do have faecal incontinence, I'm still working on that one. Being on my own has given me that chance to heal without compromising, it has been my most important thing to do. And the fire is now stoked and keeping the warmth in my body and the love circulating through it which will in turn diffuse the dis-ease.

Accessing resources.

Ian Gawler (2001), a well-known advocate of a more holistic approach to health, had his leg amputated in 1975, as a result of osteogenic sarcoma. However, he survived, defying the doctors' predictions that he had only a few weeks to live. He changed his whole lifestyle, to a greater emphasis on healthy diet, meditation and relaxation, accessing the power of the mind, family and social supports, and

connecting to a spiritual dimension in life. His book, “*You Can Conquer Cancer*” is one of the most widely-read books on cancer prevention and management. Making the necessary changes in one’s life allows the body’s natural healing urge to do its work. Ian Gawler (2001, p. 6) asserts, from his experience of working with thousands of people, in his residential cancer programs, for over twenty years that: “A body with properly functioning defences cannot have cancer.” He goes on to say that:

Of my inner resources, I feel the most significant was an ability to see the disease as a process ... I accepted responsibility for my condition and therefore felt in control of it ... it then became a matter of making the appropriate changes in my life and finding the techniques to effect those changes. (2001, p. 7)

In Amandla’s process, it was also important to not just gain perspective and understanding, but also to create and include the necessary supportive and healing resources around the therapy process. When the body is in dis-ease, then a more holistic approach contributes to the experience of change:

I had a physician of the body, my friend taught me about being able to just love my body. Sue is a masseur, and she does homeopathic and naturopathy and aromatherapy. I hadn’t used these before...for example, having a bath, putting smelly stuff in the bath, candles on, beautiful music has brought me back in to my body...I think probably the catalysts for change would be the counselling and the things that my friend has taught me, about the nurturing I learnt after that, because I wouldn’t have considered doing what she taught me without the counselling. To me, before that, it was girly egotistical type of stuff and now I’ve learnt it’s not about that, it’s about loving the body. I’ve been helped all along the way by just the right people at just the right time...to hold a hand out and to take a hand of somebody is itself actually connecting to another part of yourself that can help you.

Research shows that the resources clients bring to therapy and what influences their lives outside the therapy room, are crucial aspects for effective change, accounting for “40%” of improvement during therapy (Duncan & Miller, 2000a, p. 57).

The experience of excarnating (leaving the body).

The body can become an instrument of awareness and meaning, but we may experience avoiding feelings of pain, by leaving the body, excarnating or

dissociating. In the literature on dissociation, the process is seen primarily as experiences which are not integrated into the whole, but are stored in the memory, as separate fragments of sensory perceptions or affective states, that can keep happening in daily life when there is too much stress, anxiety or confronting situations (Kirkengen, 2001). Anna Kirkengen goes on to define this term as consisting of the following phenomena: “The sensory and emotional fragmentation of experience; derealisation and depersonalization at the moment of trauma; ‘spacing out’...and, containing the trauma memories ...as separate personalities” (2001, p. 114). Babette Rothchild (2000) refers to dissociation as implying a splitting of awareness, in various forms. Some examples of this are cutting off feelings, feeling disembodied, amnesia, and the extreme forms are when the whole personality becomes separated from consciousness.

Amandla used the word dissociation, but defined this experience as leaving the body. In psychophonetics, the term used for this is *excarinating* which also means, leaving the body (Sherwood, 2000; Tagar, 2001). For Amandla, her physical body became an instrument of awareness, knowing and meaning, in addressing her experiences of past abuse, to change her way of coping in difficult situations by leaving the body, dissociating or excarnating:

I could maybe even surmise that I'd been dissociating from the body ever since I was a little girl and have been able to still be in this world but not in my body...I can turn off pain if I want to. at the blink of an eye and it's not there. When I'm disassociated I can notice what's in the body but I can't feel, when I come back to the body I can feel. I learnt to leave my body when it was being beaten, so that I didn't feel the pain and I'm very good at leaving my body, so I don't feel pain.

“Children apparently leave their bodies when threatened with a soul-destroying invasion which takes place during sexual abuse” (Tagar, 2003, pp. 91-118), or from any traumatic experience, and consequently, they are still not fully present in the body as an adult. Amandla came to know when she was excarnating, when she was not fully present, and when she was avoiding feeling pain.

In a psychophonetics therapy session, the therapist works with this experience by accepting the experienté of leaving the body as that person's reality. When the person is asked where they are, they usually perceive themselves as being away

from where the physical body is (their consciousness has left). When they are invited by the therapist to move physically to be in this disembodied position, they can describe very clearly what they see from this point of view, regarding the experience of the body that is left in the previous position. It is in this position, being out of the body, that the experience of what happened to them can be seen, but not felt. From there, a different choice can be made to start the process of returning consciously home to the body (Tagar, 2003).

So through this healing process I've learnt to love myself and to not want to stone and to learn how to protect myself from negative situations that perpetuate the feeling of needing the dis-ease. It's stoked the fire that I used to have as a teenager, [which had] sort of died out as I got older and when I was abused by my husbands.

This *retreat from self* (leaving the body), that was affecting the flow of her life forces, prompted Amandla to find new ways to (re)discover the self (Bullington, 1999). In the therapy session, Amandla wanted to take care of her *inner child*¹⁸ that she had previously avoided. When she entered this process and physically embodied the position of the self that had left the body, she became more oriented, present, clear and able to describe her experience:

I wanted to integrate my inner child and the counsellor asked me where the inner child was and I said that I felt she was inside a box that was secure and she couldn't get out ... she is very scared' and the counsellor said 'what's stopping you from getting her out of the box?' and it just clicked, I thought absolutely damn well nothing, so I jumped off the chair and took her out of the box and held on to her and felt something of me join me at the time that it happened ... actually being able to hold the idea of my inner child in my own hands and not having her feel so far away, feeling she was so abused and frightened that she never wanted to come out in this world again.

I realised during this session I had been treating my inner child like my mother would treat me, like: 'will you hurry up', 'get out of the box', 'what are you still sitting in there for'. I had realised that it was another form of abuse and what I needed to do, like I would do for any little child that was caught somewhere, was to go in and hold her hand and pull her out.

So when that realisation came to me so much changed. I felt a complete shift in my body. It felt relief, and it felt like I was bigger and like I had control of all of me now, that if I or she was frightened I would be, we would be, a whole unit.

¹⁸ The concept of the inner child can be found in the mythology of many cultures and became popular in the 1980's and 1990's through the work of John Bradshaw (1990) and others.

It was a big shift, as I wouldn't need to 'leave the body' anymore when a frightening situation came, I could actually reach her and talk to her (instead of) where I lost me and was running around in the dark trying to look after the situation. We are actually using the situation as a whole rather than slipping off here and there and out of consciousness, and stuff like that, so yeah it felt like me.

The importance of listening and being present to the sensations in the body is highlighted by Babette Rothchild (2000, p. 107), in her work with traumatised clients: "Awareness of current body sensations can anchor one in the present, here and now, facilitating separation of past and present. One is less likely to stay lost or stuck in the past while aware of body sensations." Even though, by intentionally sensing the body, Amandla was able to connect with her inner child, this experience also meant that she was confident to be with the suffering and to face the fear that was affecting her life. She describes this difference as gaining an understanding, and a knowing of herself that wasn't there before: *It's definitely an integration, and a closeness of the inner child's emotions that has almost put a stop to leaving the body*, as she could now recognise when she was doing it and was more able to re-call herself back.

What is this experience of *leaving the body* like? How do we know if we are doing this? For Amandla, she described this experience as a feeling of emptiness in the head, she can be talking but does not feel present: *It just seems to be on some sort of automatic pilot... and I am slipping off out of consciousness.*

Amandla became much more aware of when she "left the body" and practised what she had learnt, thus changing this way of coping when faced with confronting situations. This was making *heaps of difference*. For example, Amandla describes how she practised to maintain this change in her life:

The first maybe five minutes of a conversation I can notice that emptiness coming and then once I start nurturing the inner child the emptiness goes away and I can flow with my speech and be listened to by others... and I feel my self stay present. It takes that little bit more concentration and actually more 'I' contact with other people.

As Amandla integrated and learnt to trust her inner child, she was able to better understand how past experiences of abuse were affecting her life. This became a much more tangible experience as she was able to physically embody the changes, by moving the body and drawing how she felt. With the bodily-based

methods, she could track down the unease inside of her, instead of having a lot of internal chatter going on in her head. A mandla points out the importance of this:

The body doesn't lie, nor trick you, nor condition you or anything, so it hits you like a revelation. This means I can trust me more, I can trust that I am aware of what's going on all the time, I can trust that I'm participating in a conversation or situation wholly, I can trust that I know what's going on in me and not the abuse that I've gone through. So it means I'm more confident and more sure of myself.

Experiencing a time of transition.

A big shift occurred during the time that Amandla was assimilating her past experiences, when she discovered there was a period of transition, where a safe inner space was being developed, for an *inner dialogue*, between herself as a compassionate adult and her inner child:

*There's a transition between having the inner child so far away then so close and that the inner chatter was all her fears that she had off loaded into me...That's gone now only because I understood it ... **I've reached an important phase.** I want to recognise it because if you don't you could, if you go to the same place as I did, start thinking you are mad, because I thought I was a little bit mad at that time as well, as that situation was getting worse, but then I realised that if I were to look at a situation where my inner child also had a body, it was like a worried child that was off loading. When I did come to that realisation I just listened and went with it, it's a big shift.*

Individualising.

Amandla became more in charge of her process, made clearer choices and practiced her new learning and skills, such as, when she described how she overcame the inner chatter that used to control how she thought, felt and acted in the world for much of her life. Amandla was becoming more of her adult self, by integrating the suffering, frightened inner child, changing this imprint of an early experience of herself, through a process of self-parenting. Self-parenting can lead to improved inner safety, nurturing, expression and choices (Tagar, 2003):

*I actually overcame that inner chatter **by myself** – I sat down with nature and talked to god and asked just for patience, I have an innate belief, or knowing that everything is as it should be and so there had to be a positive reason for why this was happening, whether it was negative at the time or not, it had to be a positive reason. I deducted with all the releasing of this little girl out of the box and out of the cage, with the counsellor, that if you have been in a locked up place for a long time that the first thing you would want to do is talk, so **I decided** that I would just*

listen and console. Once I stopped being frightened of this chatter, it only took a couple of weeks and I haven't heard it for a long time now... and she lives in all of me now.

Through this attitude of inner openness and listening to herself, there was an honesty developing, which meant more trust and kindness was developing, and a growing awareness of who she is. However, as she practiced listening more deeply, Amandla discovered that there was a lot of unexpressed anger towards her family. With the therapist's help, she came to understand that expressing negative energy was not the same as being negative. On this basis, she could then express these emotions, release inner negativity and learn to transform this energy in a more constructive way. For example: *My husband's dad abused me and to express the anger was to release any negative energy that had been gathered inside of me from those experiences and the counsellor enabled me to be able to release the anger, the negative energy.*

This was an important realisation for Amandla: *Energy flows through your body and to keep it in is detrimental to the body.* Experiencing negative energy in the body, can often be avoided as it may be difficult to digest. This was one of the reasons that Amandla had not yet been able to fully return to her body, as an adult. Carl Jung says: "Human nature is not compounded wholly of light, but also abounds in shadows" (cited in Miller & C' de Baca, 2001, p. 144). From my experience, and from what is evident throughout all of the participants' experiences, real healing is only possible when this presence (shadows, negative energies, etc) is acknowledged and met openly. Amandla recognised this in herself and her desire was to know herself, the whole of herself, every part of herself, the negatives and the positives. In her reflection after completing the counselling, she says: *The highlight of the whole time in counselling would be that it's been like opening at the beginning of Pandora's Box and finding really that it is a treasure.* As Amandla became more conscious of herself and could imagine a world of new possibilities and choices, her ability to think and reflect developed further and new actions were exercised.

In the interview, Amandla reported that she initially began expressing anger with bits of clay. Clay is an ideal medium for expressing strong emotions and for

facilitating the re-forming, consolidation and re-integration of the emotions in the body. In clay work, both destruction and creation can occur (Richards, 1989):

I threw them on the ground Bang! Bang! Bang! and went 'RRah. RRah RRah' (with deep guttural sounds) and I could do that, whereas before I couldn't do that because I felt like I was hurting my mother, but if I kept the negative energy in my body I would still remain sick and to know that has been great because it has enabled me to go and throw clay or bend a bit of metal or scream or swear or do whatever I wanted to do.

When Amandla eventually felt confident enough to step into doing this in gesture, from the inner child position, she found it much easier: *Actually I felt relief at being able to swear black and blue, screaming out things to my mother into the air and then sobbing and it felt much more appropriate and I could more understand the pain.* In the experience of expressing the anger of the inner child, Amanda felt empowered and overjoyed to get it out, to release:

It was like it was vomiting something out, and how much pain and anger and hurt I had no idea you know ... the whole thing is about me making sure I love me ...It was the child but now it's me! I'm a person who has learnt how to love herself and now is going to experience what that means. The change unfolding is a knowing, I'm not stagnant and that's an adventure in itself. It's being able to have everything that life offers you out there on the smorgasbord and honesty to your self is paramount in this journey.

In the process of becoming more empowered Amandla describes how important the sounds were in really feeling an energetic shift and change in her body:

Each time I make a sound and gesture I give myself more space and I was able to break down the vibrations of the negative energy with a counteracting sound and it feels like I have involved the whole of me, to heal the whole of me, and not just the mind. As the counsellor is working with me, as she sounds the sound of the force, which I have found, I actually have a bodily reaction, and then I find a spontaneous counter sound to change the vibrations within and around me.

The change that she experienced in doing this is:

I don't feel in a box anymore. I don't feel that I'm tight, I feel there's space around me. I feel I can breathe through more parts of my body, I feel like I could spread my arms and legs out and just whirl around just like children do in a wizzy in all my space of freedom.

After doing this, Amandla then used sounds for nurturing her own needs, which was a new experience for her to develop: *I found the sound 'hummm' like a lullaby, that nurtures and gives me a feeling of fulfilment and love. 'mm - mm - mm' it's a sound that moves up and down, it's a beautiful sound, a mother's lullaby.* By actively participating in her process and practising the skills learnt in therapy, Amandla was able to feel more empowered and able to embrace and integrate her inner child, to become more of an advocate for the frightened and suffering aspects of herself: *The part of me that I didn't know, the part of me that was hiding from me or I was hiding from, is now all of me that is present which allows all of me to evolve and grow.* This desire to become whole, to integrate the parts of her self meant returning to the body and being present in her body, in order to express her true being.

Taking stock while still in the therapy process.

The changes so far, occurred over a five month period. Through the activities of taking-in/breathing, relating, digesting, and individualising, Amandla was beginning to transform these experiences by maintaining/exercising these changes and new skills, so that her new faculties of body awareness were growing stronger. There was a new sense of wholeness unfolding and evolving. This is succinctly described in a picture by Amandla who says:

If I had to draw how I feel who I am, it would be the sun, the sun depicts a wholeness, an energy, a light, a warmth, a knowing, it exudes growth so if I shut my eyes and looked to where I am now I am in the centre of the sun.

I then asked Amandla if she was willing to paint this picture during the interview, and it is included here as Figure 25: "I am in the centre of the sun." After completing this painting, Amandla comments:

I like the painting because it's not rigid, it flows like the person who doesn't have beginnings or ends, it just keeps reaching out with the water colours, I feel that my feeling can evolve on the page with the watercolours.

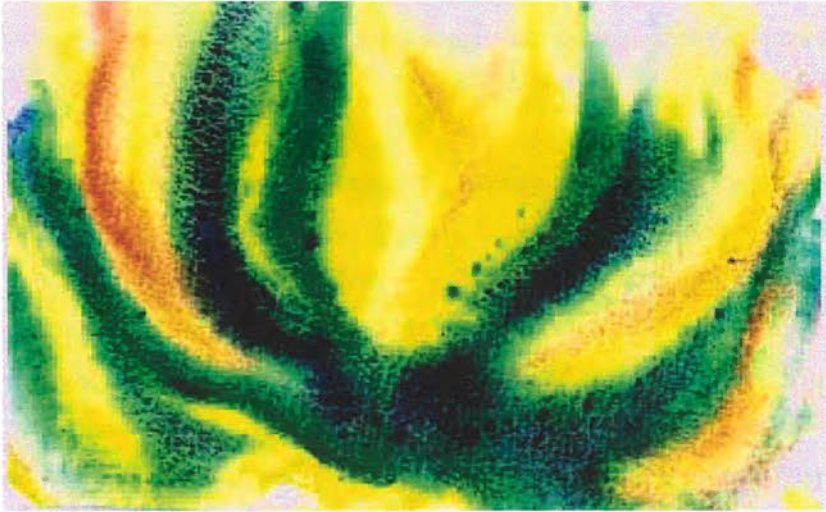


Figure 25. I am in the centre of the sun.

That's the sun behind all of these colours and through all of these colours which is the wholeness that I feel. The Red is the strength that I feel that I have, the blue the calmness within me and the green feels like something that is flowing through me and the purple is a knowing, it feels like a fire, the pink has the look of flames. That's what I feel like - alive, vibrant and reaching out, not for help but reaching to see everything there is to see and to know everything there is to know, to be everything I can be.

Allowing ourselves to be in a space of transition, can be like what Les Todres (2004, p. 8) suggests, creating a soulful space, as a path of spiritual development, in which we live with our multidimensional capacities and qualities, co-created in a life of interaction: “as one meets the specifics of life and situations.”

A Reflective Pause – The Body of Self as Self-observed

Amandla describes a readiness and self-focused attention that shows the complexity and richness of her process. However, there was such a wealth of material in her transcripts, with such an extensive amount of descriptions and detail, that it was too much to include all of the various aspects in this study (over 26,000 words). Therefore, I am focusing on her experience of the body, by trusting, being open and attentive to whatever shows itself in this light. This meant I was attempting to join with Amandla's experience, by allowing what

Eugene Gendlin calls, the “life forward” direction, that acknowledges we are always somehow unfinished, that the body knows and senses what is needed, and knows what the next step is, before it comes into our conscious awareness (Les Todres, 2004).

As I worked with Amandla’s transcripts, initially through the empathy-in-action process, I found my movements were very heavy, slow and awkward at first, as well as feeling an urge to stop doing it, to leave. It was very interesting for me to move and sound Amandla’s process. It was like being cold and hard like stone, then being slowly warmed in a fire that awakened the imagination, with more flowing movements and a deeper breathing, to become more present, and into a more upright and expressive stance. Movements became more organic and softened, flowing, and feeling more grounded. This is a very brief account of what I experienced, as I found what happened during the actual days of contemplating and writing of her story, became much more interesting and relevant. That is, my ability to write became much slower than with the other participants, and I had to engage my will to persevere more strongly, in order to write Amandla’s story. However, once I settled into writing my energy became quiet, solid and consistent. Maybe this type of thinking is related to the earth and will forces, rather than being, for instance, more in the flowing watery thinking that occurred with writing Marilyn’s story (Hoffmann, 1998).

As I wrote about her physical changes, I became more aware of observing my own body. It was interesting to reflect on this briefly, because during the past few years of study, I had experienced many bodily changes, through completing menopause and learning to heal bowel disturbances, which had been present for a number of years. I had changed in many ways through these experiences. In relation to the research, one of the changes I noticed recently is that, instead of having menstrual cycles I now go through regular monthly writing cycles. That is, I read and re-read the transcripts and prepared, by living with their story and developing my approach with each participant over a few weeks, until my writing time naturally occurred, which was usually during the week around every new moon. I was not fully aware of this rhythm, until I recently reflected on how I was

progressing with my writing, so now I can become more conscious of this rhythm and way of working. William Bento (2003) says:

New Moons are times of darkness ... It is often an excellent time to exercise a meditative moment and attempt to identify the new elements streaming through one's own unconscious, as well as to consciously affirm new intentions for the future. (para. 5)

Reflecting upon this further, it was now clear that I needed a certain time to take in and digest the participant's material, before I could own it and reproduce what I thought in writing. In the process of working phenomenologically and being aware of my own bodily experience, also brings a shift in the phenomenon itself. This meant that I became more attentive to what was happening, and I noticed changes occurred in response to this increased awareness. This applied also to the interactions in the interviews and an example of this is given later. Attentiveness to the body keeps me in the hermeneutic circle or spiral, with the boundary between the philosophical approach and method becoming blurred. Maybe eventually, they also cannot be separated, in this holistic experiential endeavour.

It was interesting that, for the first time since I had started writing this chapter, my bowel disturbances had disappeared. Maybe this had to do with a time of renewal of the whole body after menopause, of feeling like it is time to start afresh as an older and hopefully wiser woman, even though my future after thesis completion is still unknown. Maybe there is an improved capacity to digest what I am doing, and maybe at last, I am becoming more confident in expressing my knowing, with a developing capacity to be more creative as a researcher!!! Maybe, as according to Adrienne Rich (1980, p. 49): "The awakening of consciousness is not like the crossing of a frontier – one step and you are in another country...we must continue to question everything so as to understand how we have been led to imagine ourselves."

Being aware of good physical self-care is one important aspect of being a researcher. A period of incubation (Latin: *cubile*, a place of rest) was often necessary, in which I took a break from intense study. This allows for rest as well as a time for letting go, out of which new meaning or knowledge can arise. For example, my body lets me know if I don't take regular breaks from working on

the computer, as my eyes react by becoming dry and sore, so that they start to twitch a lot. At first I was not fully aware of how bad this was, until other people noticed and asked me what was happening. This reminded me to take notice, to observe my self more consciously, and to change my work habits at the computer. This is what Max van Manen (1998) refers to as, the body of self as observed by the *glance of the other*, and also as *self-observed*. By taking better care of my body, it can then function in a way that I don't have to be conscious of it all the time. But as Max van Manen so rightly points out: "The body is never completely out of our field of awareness. The body is experienced as passed-over-in-silence" (1998, p. 13). I am grateful for those times when I can *forget* the body, as I need to focus my attention and awareness towards completing this work, not being preoccupied with disturbances in my health. All of this makes for fascinating and fulfilling research!

The experience of growing new faculties.

Amandla still needed the support of the therapist during her time of growth, as she knew that there would be a period of chaos between the rearrangement of past and future ways of being:

We !Amandla and a friend" had been going through these argumentative times a lot, each time I was experiencing a different reaction or projection, but there was a growing feeling that I was working through each of them which I now know to be true ...And they were growing more intense and our living together was injuring our friendship ...All my bodies felt like they were rocking themselves into balance.

It can be a rough ride. I felt doubtful of my sanity a few times so I just remembered to be brave, cause I knew what was in my past, I knew I was taking steps to heal it and I was hungry to move forward into healed places of wholeness and love for myself...knowing myself with honesty is a very courageous place to go for me, and has been very confronting, but most of all it has left me in awe of the pure beauty of myself as a human being, and all the miracles that knowing brings.

What does it mean when Amandla says: *All my bodies felt like they were rocking themselves into balance*? I asked her to tell me what she meant and she basically described these bodies as the physical, etheric, emotional and spiritual dynamics. This woke me up to re-remembering how these bodies are connected with the seven

life processes. Yehuda Tagar and Paulo Moraes (1997) have done a lot of work in this area and Table 2, gives a brief summary of the seven life processes in relation to the human being.¹⁹

As I reflect more on this idea of the bodies rocking into balance, an image became clear, that, as Amandla was becoming clearer in her thinking, more connected within her feeling life and more empowered in her actions, then these aspects were also coming into a more harmonious balance. This was evident in how she was becoming more fully herself, with a new capacity to speak and express herself more truly and peacefully. Could this be what it means to become more whole? I will elaborate on this emerging idea in more detail later, when I reflect on all of the participants together.

This idea of the whole and parts happening simultaneously is very evident in Amandla's experience of change, with the counselling sessions being especially important for her healing, as they provided a safe space for her:

To bring out the fragmented pieces of myself so that I can look at them separately rather than everything all being mixed in together and from the purity of who you are, from the 'I am' situation. For me, the healing was about seeing where the behaviour came from in my childhood, first of all, recognising, second, understanding and third of all, loving that particular behaviour for what use it was for me when I was a child, and seeing that it wasn't useful now as an adult. To heal it by loving myself, by understanding it and by being very patient with what is for me, what is presenting itself and giving it space to enact itself so I could witness it.

As Amandla became more conscious, oriented and aware, she encountered more conflict, because she was not avoiding others as much, but facing situations in her life and speaking what she really felt and thought. Before this, she would avoid, leave or hide from others and the fear would be like: *I can't breathe, I need to hide.*

¹⁹ The main sources for further study and information on the life processes are: Steiner, R. (1990). *The Riddle of Humanity: The Spiritual Background of Human History*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press; and Steiner, R. (1996). *Anthroposophy (A Fragment): A New Foundation for the Study of Human Nature*. NY: Anthroposophic Press.

TABLE 2

The Seven Life Processes in Relation to the Human Being

PHYSICAL PROCESSES	LIFE PROCESSES	EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS	CONSCIOUS & SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS
Physical body	Etheric body	Astral body	Spirit – “I am”
respiratory system. sleep, oxygenation, lungs, brain & nerve system.	BREATHING	peace/anxiety, connectedness/cut-off, relating/not relating, safety/mistrust	accessing & mobilisation of mental, emotional & spiritual resources
liver, muscular system. circulation, blood. immune system, detoxication, clearing of the whole system	I WARMING M M U N E	interpersonal warmth, present or past; levels of incarnation/exarnation: being present; being centred; being relaxed or tension; ability to give & receive love.	I am in the body or not; ability to be present. ability to concentrate, to absorb concepts and to access them; availability of high mental capacities, empathic capacity; parenting issues, awakening & wisdom
digestion. metabolism. break-down of substances, gall bladder. pancreas, energy creation	NOURISHING	traces of emotional mal-nourishment from up-bringing/traces of being supported; emotional, sensual, interpersonal deprivation/abundance issues with money	ability to nurture/care for oneself; ability to parent effectively; trust in the universe; ability to create a home.
endocrinological hormonal & glandular systs. intestines, bladder, heart, distribution.	SECRETING (sorting)	ability to let go; to give and to receive; ability to be in flow of energy with other, spontaneity; control issues.	ability to forget; to forgive; to receive gifts; to delegate;
kidneys, skin, lining of organs, immune system, excretion, repair & maintenance.	MAINTAINING	ability to take care of oneself; boundary issues; the will to live; positivity; depression issues	ability to take responsibility for oneself & others; dependency; ability to redeem experiences; ability to mend relationships.
child development, regeneration of tissues, healing processes, aging process	S Y S T E M GROWING	ability to develop; to embrace new content; to complete development phases & move on; to recover from trauma, crisis & grief; to open to new relationships, groups, vocations.	flexibility to adjust in the face of change; to review experiences & to learn from them; to incorporate into this life further dimensions of oneself.
sexual functioning, sexual hormones, libido, female & male genital organs, renewal of the whole body, skin.	REPRODUCING	ability for intimacy with oneself & others; hope; sensuality; relationship issues; inner availability for creativity; to start afresh, be renewed, to love, to be in love.	ability to be creative & to create; to evolve spiritually; to transform from lower states to higher ones; to encourage growth; Men: inner child; Women: anchoring selfhood. The ability to initiate & to create a new reality.

(Tagar & Moraes, 1997)

Having the counsellor with her was important, as she then had somebody whom she felt was on the same team, who was genuinely caring about her well-being, and genuinely caring about where she wanted to go in her process. It was like having a friend, being with her on a scary journey, giving her the courage to be in places where she may not have been able to go alone. Amandla says: *But always under my will and decision*. Research shows that the client's perceptions of their relationship with the counsellor or therapist are one of the most important factors in creating effective change in therapy and can account for: "30% of improvement during therapy" (Duncan & Miller, 2000a, p. 57). However, beyond these research findings, in relation to this study, I am more concerned with unique experience, and having a counsellor who respects the client's wishes, is mindful and utilises the body in the process of change, as: "human well-being and creativity depend on sensitivity to the life of the body" (Halling & Goldfarb, 1991, p. 318).

The experience of hiding or disappearing into the body.

What does Amandla mean when she uses the word "hide?" This is a different activity than, leaving the body. It appeared like she was leaving by retreating *into* the body. She comments that: *I found out something about myself which has completely added to my liberation*. In one counselling session, Amandla had the experience of disappearing or hiding inside her body, of hiding behind her heart, but she had never actually caught the moment of doing this. She wondered about how she would recognise when it happens and how she would bring herself back, to be more consciously present.

Amandla got to practice the act of disappearing, in her daily life, when someone triggered a reaction in her, which used to happen when she was a child at school:

I felt a sinking feeling and then I felt all different. It was like I just sunk into this deep hole and just stayed there and from then on everything that person said to me, I just wanted to get up and walk out of that room, I was so triggered and I really felt vulnerable and fought the impulse of getting up and going outside and crying or doing something like that. I had no idea why I felt like this. Then later I said to myself 'I'm hiding' and I heard it just as a tiny little whisper and I thought, 'there's something wrong here, there's something different here', and then there was a little light went on but it didn't completely illuminate the whole situation.

Amandla then decided to observe herself, to see what was going on. When she was at home, she told the story to a friend, and there was one key sentence that gave her the whole picture:

I said to my friend, with the body gesture of my hand coming in towards my heart, I said, ‘all I did was sink inside and hide’. And something went ‘dddit’ in my head and it wasn’t quite big enough so then I was off to bed. I was lying in my bed and I was thinking what did I say then. ‘I went off and hid, all I did was sink and go into... ‘oh my god, I disappeared’, and the room lit up and I knew exactly what I had done and where I had gone.

Amandla says: *This is an epiphany!* A moment of a big awareness activity, a big realisation and liberation: “This experience is so strong or striking that it may stir us at the core of our being” (van Manen, 1997, p. 364), so that it becomes a *phenomenological reverberation* (Bachelard, 1969). The realisation of disappearing, in behind her heart, showed her how she allowed her heart to be exposed and vulnerable to everything someone else said, thereby hurting her. In Amandla’s sense of wholeness, her *I am* wasn’t there, she was like a child being attacked by whatever that person said, until she realised, this was no longer a safe way for her to live her life. The paradox is, she found that by staying more present in a situation, rather than reacting in the way of disappearing, kept her more safe and able to function, in an adult, mature and enlightened way.

The experience of staying present.

Staying present means being able to consciously remain present in a situation, and Amandla describes an observation of how she experiences a coming into presence:

If I’m listening to a person, and they trigger something, and I feel that sinking feeling of going into myself I say, ‘no no no, there’s no need for that, I’m safe, it’s okay’, and it’s like a bubble coming up to the surface of still water and just going ‘plop’. and its presence is there and I’m here, and it feels like I’ve suddenly woken up and I’m ready to listen to what that person’s saying crisply, clearly and without any connotations of negativity towards myself. So I feel like I’ve woken, all of a sudden again. Yeah, it’s like a bubble coming to the surface and going ‘plop, here I am, I’m alive, and I’m clear’.

Once again, her capacity to make a choice made a difference: *It just makes you feel so in control of who you are and so knowledgeable of what you are made up*

of, of who I am, yeah. It became clear that Amandla was becoming more in charge of her life and exercising more freedom to choose her direction:

I think my whole wish is to not keep experiencing fear and reacting to everything that is triggering things off... and the driving force that made me want to heal these things, even though it was rough and it was full on, is that I didn't want to go back and repeat and repeat and repeat the things that made my life hard.

The experience of becoming empowered.

How does the experience of empowerment help Amandla to stop repeating her reactionary behaviours? And how does this affect or change her body?

First of all, the release is releasing it from the physical body, releasing the imprints that are in my energy field, I remove them with sounds and remove them with gestures. The sounds break down the vibration of that old imprint that is sitting around my energy fields and disintegrates it, to not be a place of not breathing in my body, to not be a place where things are stuck and twisted and contracted. To make particular sounds, like HUD (with the D sound blocked) and releasing sounds like Garrhh and pushing away gestures and removing these imprints from my energy field. The actual feeling after doing this type of work feels like I've taken old clothes off, it feels like that I have literally removed something from my body, it feels freer, it makes me be able to stretch and makes my breath not as contracted and not in that 'oh' feeling all the time, in that gesture of fear... From there I felt that physical change which is immediate, then it's as if you've put on a new dress and go and have a look in the mirror and see how it suits and how it feels, with new colours on, a new style on, there's a clearer, more pure me, one that is in touch with feelings ...I felt new, my face, even to look in the mirror my face was more relaxed, my movement is more relaxed, I've had many comments from people saying that my flow in my walk is not so stiff and contracted, my nature is more gentle in the fact that I'm not walking in fear, I'm now walking in a more relaxed state, I don't fear confrontation so much anymore.

What happens for me now, is that I can feel a little bit of that 'oh no, somebody's going to yell at me or be mad at me' but then because of the counselling sessions that I have had I know that I can still stand in my own position and I don't have to contract, I can still breathe. So straight away as soon as I breathe I know, that I'm okay, I know that this situation is not about me in the fact that I'm not in any threat, of being hit or not being able to speak. If I breathe I can say what I need to say, I can stand strong.

So if a confrontation comes up, I have first of all, that little fear, then I take a breath, and then in my mind, in my own visualisation I imagine the crystal dome that I have around me, that I created during our empowerment sessions, as visualising a beautiful crystal rainbow dome, with unicorns and butterflies and waterfalls and all sorts of things inside this dome of protection, so when I feel I'm in a situation that could be threatening for me I immediately create this dome around me and it gives me strength and it gives me protection.

This reminds me of the powerful forces that can structure our perceptions of reality, such as in human communication and interaction: “the essence of which was the *unmaking and making of meaning*” (Kirkengen, 2001, p. 395). In her research, Anna Kirkengen became aware that the core of the destructive power is silencing, but the core of constructive power is speaking.

The experience of relating and speaking with others.

Amandla felt silenced in the past, but if, as Anna Kirkengen says, the core of constructive power is speaking, then how did it affect Amandla’s ability to speak and act in the world? I was interested to know, how Amandla translated what she had learnt and changed, through the counselling sessions, into real life situations. I wanted to know whether this process made her feel more separate or closer with others, as she interacted with them, and I asked her this question during one of our interviews. Amandla replies:

I have compassion for that person so I would say yes, it brings me closer to a person rather than keeping me separate from them. One lady who was being angry with me said ‘why aren’t you arguing with me’, which made me laugh of course and I said ‘well, I’m allowing you to express how you feel’. And that completely changed that person in themselves, she realised that all she really wanted to do was express herself and sometimes we’re not able to do that, and by just having the space to do that and me allowing her to do that brought her to a place where she could breathe and relax...

When we don’t argue it sort of stops people in their tracks and they sort of land in a soft place and sort of go, ‘oohh hang on, this is different, I’m not used to having no fire, hang on. who are you, what are you about, why aren’t you arguing with me’, so it puts me in a place that I have never visited before, and all of a sudden we’re finding common ground together. That’s great...so that does make it much better.

The biggest area of change for Amandla was with confrontation and the reaction of blocked speaking. I will discuss speaking in more detail later in the study, but for Amandla it briefly means:

I was not able to say what I want to say like ‘no’, or ‘I don’t want to’ or ‘please stop’ or any of those things, now I am able to express myself. Before I couldn’t even try and speak, I was just scared so it’s made a big difference for me there. When I am in a difficult situation now, or fear is stopping me somehow, I stop and think about it and realise that it isn’t functional for me and I will breathe and start to feel a relaxation in that breathing and then I visualise my crystal dome of protection going around me ... and then I can speak calmly.

When language is embodied, expressed through the whole body, speaking deepens and completes the experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Amandla was growing and developing skills learnt in counselling, and was adding to these by creating her own new ones:

*It's like having a little **handbag of skills**, they're not just in the counselling room anymore, they are day to day. I actually feel like I have an emergency kit for things I never had an emergency kit for before and I'm feeling that they're becoming more part of me as was the reactions and projections and the fear.*

These are becoming an automatic part of me and kick in anyway, they're like a first thought now rather than before it would have been to react. So there's been an osmosis of the skills coming into my body and I can actually function better for myself, and for all those that are around me as well.

While still attending the counselling sessions, Amandla wondered how much of this learning had changed her physical body. She wished she could get a video of herself, to look at herself, to see how she was actually moving now, to have the experience, as Max van Manen (1998) would probably say, to observe her own body as if it is the other's body, as it comes into being, on a video. As it happened, her counsellor had a video tape and had an intuition to ask Amandla if she would like to have a session videotaped. Amandla responds:

Wow! What an exquisite gift this is! I was absolutely ecstatic and I brought the video home, and I had the amazing experience of watching myself on video in a counselling session and I was moved to tears of love for myself, after coming from a place where I couldn't even get out of a chair. The way I was working in this video, and the gracefulness of my body which I felt was like a cardboard cut out and it wasn't.

*Funnily, a couple of days after I watched this, a couple of friends said to me, 'have you noticed how beautifully you flow now, how your body is graceful' and of course I was in tears of amazement that they had noticed and said 'yes, I could see this on the video now' and it had to be from the growth since the beginning of the year. From the point of when I asked for the video I suspected, and hoped that there had been a change, **I felt it within me but I needed to see it.***

Seeing her self on the video, made the changes more real for Amandla. Thus, speaking and relating to others can precipitate transformational shifts (Holroyd, 2003).

The experience of breathing.

When I asked Amandla in one of the interviews, to describe the difference that these changes had made in her life, the essence of it was in the *breathing*:

'Haahh' ...If that breath could just be said what that change is, that's what the change is. Now I feel much more relaxed, much more confident, I like me more and I trust myself more and befriend myself more and I feel more whole, Mmmm, there's absolutely, an enormous difference. 'Haahh'... it's been joy to me because I feel strength in myself that I am, who I am. It's a feeling of peace within myself, I feel very relaxed and even the way I walk is different, more free, not so tight and I accept myself the way I am now too. It's relief that I don't have to be acting to make people like me.

Breathing is one of the life processes, but in writing this chapter, I have not made such clear distinctions between the life processes as I did with the other participants. This is because the mobile, dynamic, flowing and pulsating interactions of these life processes moved through Amandla's sensory awareness and throughout her whole process in a much more diffuse way. However, as Amandla said, breathing was a major aspect in her change. For instance, in the past, Amandla lived in a lot of fear and anxiety, which meant that her breathing was more contracted, affecting her ability to observe clearly or to take in new experiences, with a consequence that if she didn't breathe properly, her ability to express feelings was affected (Sardello, 1999a; Steiner, 1990b; Steiner, 1996a; van Houten, 1995). Robert Sardello (1999a, p. 235) emphasises that fear can hinder our growth, while artistic living can deepen our relationship with sensing and the life processes: "As more life enters the senses, the life processes also undergo a change." Breathing, warming and nourishing can become a soul quality of intense, warm interest in the world, while the life processes of secretion, maintenance, growth and reproduction can: "imbue the body with a felt sense of depth, a feeling of our body as dynamic, changing, fertile, even seething with desire" (Sardello, 1999a, p. 236). Amandla summarises this succinctly: *When you know something is true there's something in the body that breathes, there's something in the body that goes Aha.*

Amandla highlights the importance of breathing in her process of changing:

It helps to watch my breathing, to make my breathing come from my belly, to make sure that it's not just being tightly in my chest and I bring it all the way into my belly, up to my head and then I allow it out and I follow it, my consciousness

follows so that I'm actually in tune with that. Then I check my body gesture and make sure that it's relaxed and not tight and crunched over like it used to be like. I look at myself and I test it out. If I think that my shoulders are hunched up a bit I actually straighten them a bit and see how much they are hunched up and have a look, while I'm breathing and moving around. I guess there is an alertness to doing these things and I concentrate on listening very carefully to what the person says more, so I can see even if they are being negative now I can decide that I don't need to take it on board or I can take it as constructive advice.

----- AHHAIAAAAAAAAAAAAA -----

Amandla's reflections.

Amandla kept a personal journal of her counselling sessions and changes happening between sessions. She continued doing this after the counselling sessions had finished, and during our third interview she reflects on her journey so far:

As I reflect over the experiences in this moment I am amazed at the incredible performances of ego imprints in a child, dark forces and anything else that is not the 'I am'. It's like a stage play with one actress doing all the parts, as opposed to Being, with a capital B, all of those parts as a whole. As a whole, they would all be healed. This is where I know I am heading, it is my desire to be whole and the clarity and skills I have gained with my new knowledge in counselling has given me the gift of more insight and love into who I am ...

To heal oneself through the body is so fast, it is so much more undeniable, it cannot be played around with words, it cannot be hidden, and it cannot be disguised in any way shape or form, it's there and I had to look at it. And I had to look at it with compassion for myself and through doing that it has given me a lot more compassion for other people and acceptance of myself and everyone else, in a very big way. It just made life exhilarissent, exhilarissful. This is a word that came to me as a cross between exhilarating and blissful. It's a good word. It has a fizziness about it.

LIFE

Life is more than any
words we have.

If you joined all the
Happy words together

There is still not enough
to describe the
Feeling of life.

Amandla (18/11/03)

Amandla's difficulty in describing an experience, is expressed in the above poem, and by creatively making up new words (exhilarissant, exhilarissful) in an attempt to do this more fully, is considered by Michael Crotty, in a paper presented at a conference in 1996, called "*Doing Phenomenology*:"

When we attempt to describe what we have never had to describe before, language fails us. We find our descriptions incoherent, fragmentary, and not a little 'mysterious.' We find ourselves lost for words, forced to invent words and bend existing words to bear the meaning we need them to carry for us. This has always been characteristic of phenomenological description. We may have to be quite inventive and creative in this respect. (cited in McLaren, 2001, p. 64)

Amandla felt there was another important aspect of her growth that needed to be addressed. She had not seen her family for three years and comments: *Finally, I think that to visit my family would be an important finale with my growth, because I really don't feel I have seen the potential of all of me until I visit home and see how I am with my family.* Probably the key change that Amandla was practicing in her daily life was her ability to make *choices*. For example, she no longer felt that she had to endure negative situations, but could now choose to physically take herself away, to leave as a choice, not as a reaction. Amandla told me in a later interview, that she had a very beneficial visit with her family, and was able to speak up and stay present in situations where the rest of the family members were in reaction, to her mother's controlling behaviours. In the past Amandla behaved as a victim, would leave the body, split off, disappear, run away and generally not be functional. In the final interview, she describes in detail how she saw this family situation happening again, but how this time she was able to stay calm, say what she needed to say and not be reactive. By developing these new capacities of inner strength and acceptance of herself and her own needs, to speak her truth calmly, she then discovered that a new and more equal relationship, of being friends with her parents, could be established. She describes how she was able to see and to feel their love towards her, as well as between each other, with a feeling of relief that the past dynamic was no longer between them: "*I have grown up.*" Amandla said to me that this was the best gift in her journey of becoming more whole.

The experience of becoming creative and healing.

Human well-being and creativity depend on sensitivity to the life of the body ... and it is doubtful that anyone can be creative unless he (she) prizes and honors the cues, sensations, and half-formed feelings that are the precursors of new ideas. He (she) has to value the inward-thinking and inward-searching game. (Halling & Goldfarb, 1991, p. 318)

As the above quote suggests, well-being depends on developing sensitivity to the inner dynamics of the bodily life. Amandla was developing this skill during the period of counselling, so that her physical condition improved, not from working on the body directly, but as part of the whole process of transformation, of what Amandla called, the *victim* consciousness. In this transformative process, Amandla does not *get rid of* the suffering one (the victim), as Elisabeth Behnke (1997, p. 198) points out, that even in our corporeality: "I am not necessarily a mere 'victim' swept along by it...I can choose to reactivate the sediment rather than letting it play itself out anonymously within me." Amandla comments on her experience of a healthy victim:

*For me a healthy victim that is integrated is the part of me which is emotion, that part of me that helps me to remain in touch with feelings, if perhaps someone does say something hurtful then I can experience that and if I feel love and sympathy I can experience that in a healthy way that connects another human with me with a love of the suffering and the pleasure that we have in life, in a functional way. **It is a real transformation.** I'm glad you asked me about that because I wasn't quite sure about what I had done with that victim part. The negative forces are transformed into understanding and awareness, it's bringing light to those places, bringing information and awareness and embracing that.*

The following poem was written by Yehuda Tagar (1996a, p. 28) in response to a request by a client, who asked him to summarise what she had done during the session. It captures the essence of Amandla's inner work and transformation. The term *parent* refers to the world of adults in general, not only to our biological parents.

The Motto of Self-Parenting

My child was once in the hands of others
 Adults who were my parents.
 My child needed father and mother
 As God in heaven promised me.
 The adults around me did not qualify.
 They were the best I could find.

Now I am an adult too.
 I might be better qualified for the job:
 For the job of being, for my inner child
 The Father and the mother whom God had promised me.

But between me as the loving adult
 And me as the child in needs
 There are the traces of the un-qualified adults
 Who were my parents once.

They, incapable of the love and the protection
 Which I was and I still am in need of,
 They are present there now as traces of un-safety,
 As traces of rejection and of fear.

These traces are mine now.
 These things of darkness I must acknowledge as mine.
 Then I can confront them, tell them off, dissolve them,
 And put in their place the best of my adulthood:
 My Inner Mother and my Inner Father,
 The best of the universe in me.

With them I am now qualified
 To care for my inner child.
 The people out there who were once my parents
 I could then meet on equal terms.

Like in the previous poem, Amandla had to confront and release the negative energies that had kept her body in stiffness, in a place of unrest, pain and suffering, in order to take care and be able to meet her parents on equal terms. She comments on how she released the negative energies:

I think the gesturing is very important because in many of my drawings I've drawn me as a black stick, just a straight line, and because of the terror and the – haaah - the physical restraint of being in that fear of that force and holding myself so tightly and still. By reversing that during the counselling sessions and pushing that force away, each time I'm doing that I'm actually freeing the disease from my body, I'm freeing that emotion that I've held in my body, that memory of trauma is being released. So that every time I do this type of work I'm feeling more flexible in my body, my skin is much softer and I feel my breathing is better.

Using body sensations, breathing, movement and other experiential, expressive and creative approaches, have been recommended as helpful ways for facilitating therapeutic change and transformation (Wiener, 1999).

The Experience of Healing Her Body

Amandla still had an ulcer in one finger and she worked through this health challenge by herself, during the months following the therapy sessions. She said the total integration hadn't happened yet. Those people: "who have something to 'say' with their bodies have psychosomatic conditions" (Bullington, 1999, p. 224), and this is evident in how Amandla was living in her body, with the ulcer, and the way her world was transformed because of this experience. She had to go to hospital to have this ulcer cut out of the knuckle, on one of her fingers, and the skin was removed down to the bone. The doctors told her that in four days, after this operation, she would need to have another operation, to do a skin graft, or they would have to sew that finger to her other hand, to try and grow the flesh over the bone. "The great error of our day in the treatment of the human body, !is" that physicians separate the soul from the body" (Plato, Chamides). Amandla was aware of this connection and told the doctors that she was not going to have another operation and that she would heal it through visualisation:

During the four days, I spent time meditating on colour, and visualising the skin actually growing and the cells actually jumping up and down with happiness with colour and vibrating and making the sound of mmmmmmm so that the skin would heal. When the doctors came back four days later to take the bandage off, they found a scab had grown over her knuckle: *They were completely surprised. I didn't have to have an operation and I was dubbed "miracle woman."* "Levinas (1947/1987) writes that the hero never misses the last chance to take advantage of some possibility, rather than accepting death (the end of all possibilities)" (Bullington, 1999, p. 238). Like Levinas, Amandla may have felt heroic, but she was still feeling pain. When she finished the antibiotics, a week later, the pus came back into her finger, in the same area of bone and knuckle, so she had to go back into hospital. This time the doctors said that amputation was the only option, but once again, Amandla decided to do something to prevent this from happening:

I decided that amputation wasn't something I wanted to do because in my way of thinking in which I see emotion manifest in the physical, for the attention that it needs. But if I cut my finger off, I would still not be addressing the problem that presented in the first place. So 'I would be cutting my finger off to spite my face' and I would be remaining in ignorance about my emotions. I decided to take some time, I was quite frightened about this amputation and I really needed to look at it, so I decided I needed to go very deep.

Amandla found a space in the hospital late at night, and because she did not have a long period of time to do this process, she took a book to help her, called “*The Body is the Barometer of the Soul*” by Annette Noontil (2002). The following is a summary description of how she worked creatively through this process of healing.

BONE - She read in the book that bones are about resentment, of not living in a positive way. Her positive concept was about her mother and father loving her and she had to face the fact that she still held some resentment, in the belief that they didn't love her. Amandla entered into an “inner dialogue” with her finger:

I spoke to my finger and asked it for the proof of my parents not loving me, and it was silent. So then I asked myself for the proof, do they love me, and I was able to go to that place at the airport where they were letting me go, and I turned around and I saw that love, and there were no words, there was the feeling and the energy beamed at me. So therefore I could do nothing but nul and void the feeling of resentment, and I felt my body latch on to that feeling of love from my parents and I felt the resentment dissolve. And so, in physically feeling the resentment dissolve and the love fill that space. I knew that these were the things that my body was asking me to address, and that was the proof.

TENDON – Amandla brought her attention to the damaged tendon. Annette Noontil suggests tendons are about inflexibility:

Well, I realised that I had been inflexible in not seeing my parent's love for me, it doesn't have to look like how I perceive love to look like, it just is their love. And so I talked to my finger and pointed out to it the inflexibility in not seeing my parents love for me and I felt the inflexibility fall away, and I felt the love once again replace this space.

NERVES - are about unbalanced communication (Noontil, 2002):

I felt this belonged in the place of not communicating to myself, to my inner child, to my 'I am,' to my whole self, that my parents loved me, that I wont close my ears and not listen, and not close my eyes and not see, any communications, so that I could keep my story about being unloved by my parents. To continue being inside the victim that I have been for so many years, because it's comfortable, I know it, and I didn't know who I would be without this. So, I did have to address these things so I could drop the story and heal my finger.

SKIN – relates to inadequacy or unworthiness (Noontil, 2002):

I definitely felt that mum and dad think I'm inadequate as a daughter, and I found a place where I think I'm unworthy of love and being adequate. So, I decided that the things that I had addressed before showed me that I am adequate as a

daughter for mum and dad, especially after they accepted me and said that they were proud of me, and I could see the things at the airport that truly, truly were glad I was their daughter. So that null and voided that. Then came the bit about my thinking of being unworthy and unlovable. So I decided the unlovable was probably the most prevalent for me and so I said to the finger, 'prove to me that I am unlovable' and it was silent. So I said: 'I can prove to you that I am lovable' and I allowed myself to visualise my parents at the airport, my sister, my friends, the people I study with, and visualised the times they have looked at me and I have felt the love from them without question. I could not question it with my intellect. When I visualised this, my heart, my soul and my eyes filled with tears, and I knew then that this story had to be dropped, because the story was invalid. I was making myself inadequate and unworthy by keeping the story.

She then allowed all of that love from her friends to pour into her, confirming and feeling that she was adequate, that she could achieve the things that she set out to do, that she was worthy of love. The realisation that the insights and the nurturing gained from the attention that her finger needed, were not only healing for the finger but healing of her whole self:

If I had amputated that finger, and gotten rid of all the messages that it was trying to tell me, I would still need to deal with this. The passage to dealing with this would probably have been a lot longer, because I would have lost the key thing – the pain in the finger.

Since then she has not felt as much pain. The doctors did not amputate the finger but further surgery was still necessary. They had to remove the joint, and scrape the bones of the finger. Amandla said that they then told her: "If you don't want amputation we now have to fuse the finger." She said to them that she would do that herself with the same sort of visualisation. She said one doctor commented: "Don't underestimate this woman." Max van Manen (1998, p. 24) makes the point that: "The clinical path of any particular disease may have varying consequences and significance for different individuals." It was encouraging to know that the doctors respected and were involved in the unique way in which Amandla experienced and lived with her condition. This implies that fundamentally, the doctors acknowledged a medical approach that recognizes the individuality of each person. Maybe this shows a step towards a more human-centred therapeutic approach in which many disciplines, mainstream, complementary and artistic, are needed (Scharff & Leviton, 1994).

Amandla's healing power is shown in her description of how she fuses the bones:

I began the fusion when I came out of the operating theatre and I actually put a bindi on my third eye, so I could concentrate on that laser coming from my third eye to fuse the finger so that the doctors don't have to. Anyway, so then I was visualising constantly the fusing of those two bones now that the joint wasn't there to stop the flopping around.

Amandla continued doing this at home, over the next few weeks, and with her attentive focus and determination, the finger had begun to fuse, and as: “we ourselves - are implicitly involved in the humble ‘beam’ of attention” (Gendlin, 2004, p. 19), this resulted in no further surgery at this stage. It is very interesting how the dynamics of leaving or withdrawing, can affect our lives in so many ways, and on so many levels. Amandla showed the subtlety of her powers of attention to her felt sense, of how this dynamic was having a rippling effect throughout her whole being.

Five months after the completion of the interviews, Amandla contacted me to say that she felt that she had somehow fallen from this goal of healing, as she felt a little bit of fear: *It was a distancing that was really hard for me to catch so that I felt that I needed help in bringing it forward.* She had noticed a tendency in herself to go three quarters of the way with things and not complete things, but tended to self sabotage. This attention to the next felt sense of something, is what Eugene Gendlin (2004) calls, *carrying forward*.

Amandla decided that she wanted to come to me for a counselling session, because she found that just giving attention through visualisation had not completed the healing, she felt something was still unfinished, and she knew I was experienced in working with psychosomatic issues, such as pain. As stated earlier, in regards to the counselling session with Marilyn, this was for one free session that was treated as another aspect of a professional interaction that was considered appropriate in this instance. Amandla had an input into the writing up of this session and her descriptions are included. She has read and approved what has been written. In the session, Amandla said that she realised her life was/is an ongoing process and as such, she would not become *finished*, but would always be on the way. Her growing ability to focus her attention not only on becoming more aware, but also using it as a healing power, is described by Eugene Gendlin (2004) as an attentional beam that:

Emerges from an intricate mesh of knowing, bodily feeling, and doing which are not separate departments. When this mesh changes, what attention can possibly bring, changes as well. We can enter this mesh at any time and carry forward some of what ‘was’ functioning in it. (p. 18)

The sense of something still unresolved, unfinished, is a creative step that means a forward step, or a whole series of changes, may come: “if we ‘just’ keep our attention on it” (Gendlin, 2004, p. 19). He goes on to say that if we enter what is happening at the time, it involves making bodily changes, and we can join with this moment, from its own perspective, holding our attention there and also being: “very delicate and permissive to allow whatever comes to come, so long as it comes from ‘it’” (2004, p. 19).

Who Am I?

In this journey of healing, the question that is scary for Amandla now is: *If I am not a person with an illness, then who am I?* Is it as James Hillman (1992) says, that: “wounds and scars are the stuff of character,” and Amandla is at a point in her life, where she really had to decide to complete the unfinished healing of her finger? When I ponder on Amandla’s story, I am reminded of Michael Ventura’s statement:

We are not trying to discover and treat a disease, we are trying to invent and speak a language. That is the treatment, to speak and to listen to the life; and the goal isn’t that the life heal, or become normal, or even cease its suffering, but that the life become more itself, have more integrity with itself, be more true to its daimon (soul). (Hillman & Ventura, 1992, p. 75)

Like Michael Ventura, Amandla was telling her story of dis-ease, and her question - who am I? - is a very relevant question for someone at the age of 42 years. In many cases the forties can be a time for a fresh start, with new horizons opening up, but it can also be a time of difficulty as we move into middle age. From a developmental perspective, the forties can become:

A time to take a frank and honest look at who and what we are. What can we still give to life? What do we need for fulfilment? What adjustments should we make? ... Middle age challenges us to disperse the shadow of our psychological past ... it is a time for change ... to stop fooling ourselves. (Bryant, 1993, pp. 82-83)

It can be a time in our development when we feel we have to change, in order to fulfill our potential. However, when a person begins to let go of their body symptoms he/she will often experience anxiety, but this eventually subsides, as reflection and meaning is created in its place (Bullington, 1999). Amandla decided that she had, had enough of feeling scared, of not being able to achieve her goals, of sabotaging herself, so she made a choice to explore and heal what was still happening in the body.

A Counselling Session with Amandla

The following is a composite description of the action phase of Amandla's therapy session. Her wish was to heal her finger. Amandla sensed into her body to see which part of the body was calling for attention the most, it was the arm, hand and the damaged finger. Through a process of choice, and focussed attention into this area, she was able through visualisation to enter into being inside the arm: *Through my third eye ...I could see it was the finger that was sore, but I couldn't see what was happening clearly...I was a bit nervous and fearful to continue and find out if I am healing well or not.* I asked her what she needed to continue, and she connected with her healing resources, with imagination, movement and the breath, with the qualities of faith, love and compassion. Then through imagination and movement, she walked into her finger, which she said looked like a construction site: *I discovered two elves in there with laser guns working with colour and sound on the joint area to fuse it.*

Amandla then joined with these elves and began using the energy emanating from the palms of her hands, moving her hands back and forth over this area with a light soft breathy sounding - "www" - *I can see the fine line of laser light joining the bones together and the whole area is filled with pink and white light. After doing this I went into the tissue cells to do some healing.* (This is done physically usually with eyes closed, moving with the whole body and imagining being, really in that place, inside the body). *I crawled in between the layers of skin and began using my hands to soften and bring tenderness and love to the cells.* Amandla moved diligently with deep concentration all through this area of her arm, and then moved through her whole body, using the physical gestures and

sounds needed to do this, until she felt present in all areas, filling her body with the pink light, emanating it through her body, until it was streaming out through the surface of the skin. To me, this was like watching a graceful ballet.

In this experience, Amandla found a sense of feeling blocked in the heart. When she sensed into the heart, she discovered that she needed to provide more trust, tenderness and love for herself, in order to complete her goals. Trust in oneself, is a crucial precondition for creating heart safety, for being able to speak one's truth in a heart-felt way, in a variety of situations, such as, in confrontation with others. She imagined these qualities available and moving with her whole body, she joined the breath, breathing these qualities into her heart with a warm sounding - "haaa" - until she felt whole and content, filling the heart with pink light, letting it flow out of her into the space around her, radiating it out through her skin cells.

After three days the feeling of distant fright had left me and the pain in my finger has all gone, I'm not even conscious of my finger anymore. I cannot believe that I have lived through so many months of pain and I didn't realise until it was gone, how much pain it was.

One month later: *The skin on my arm is softer and more supple. I also feel what we addressed with the ¾ of the way of reaching any of my goals is part of the integration that I mentioned before, still coming to land within me, yeah! So I am very observant now, of finishing my work, and how I complete things and whether I'm going about it in a blasé way or whether I'm going about it in a direct way.*

Amandla concludes: *This is the most amazing journey I have taken. It's been very challenging and difficult but my determination and faith in the process has been my foundation to being able to get through it and I am so glad that I persevered with it.* Hope and expectancy are crucial aspects for effective change and account for: "15% of effective outcome in therapy" (Duncan & Miller, 2000a, p. 58). My hope is that in the practice of health care, medicine and therapy, a greater awareness of the body will be developed, so that practitioners and patients/clients can:

Be reflectively engaged in questioning how to live in contextually appropriate relations with the body and how to acknowledge the ultimately mysterious nature of our embodied being such that a possible inspired body relation may be brought into view. (van Manen, 1998, p. 14)

A recent study called, “*What is the experience of illness as a change agent: A phenomenological and hermeneutic study*” by Gretchen Hegeman (2004), confirms Amandla’s experience, with similar multidimensional perspectives and meanings from four participants’ narratives. The main compatible themes found included: “addressing concerns about the future and physical changes; attending to relationships; dealing with stress and its associated emotions; heeding intuitive knowing ... and living in the present” (abstract). Interest in the healing potential of the whole person is gradually becoming more evident, but still has a long way to go, for the medical field to fully accept other healing perspectives. The following poem (Leunig, 1993, p. 8) offers a possible way forward:

God help us to change. To change ourselves
And to change the world. To know the need for it.
To deal with the pain of it. To feel the joy of it.
To undertake the journey without understanding the destination.
The art of gentle revolution.

Carrying Forward

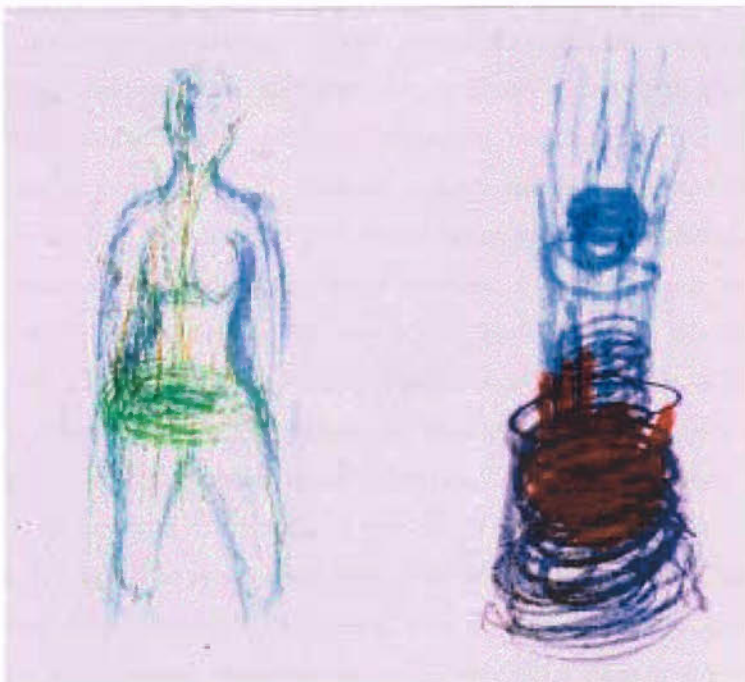


Figure 26. Flowing energy, life.

Figure 26 shows the energy of life flowing, moving within and through the body, and I would like to conclude this chapter, with an experience that happened between Amandla and myself, as we were about to finish our final interview, that helped to shape, and carry forward, the next step in the structure of writing this thesis. I see the nature of this emergence as a co-creation, best characterised in the words of Henri Bortoft (1996, p. 11), as: “The ‘unfolding of enfolding’...where the parts are the place of the whole where it bodies forth into presence. The whole imparts itself; it is accomplished through the parts it fulfils.” The following excerpt describes this activity of bodying forth into presence:

Amandla - At the moment there is a situation of whether I complete some work or not and I am aware that there is a part in me that is going ‘oh well, we’ll do it later’ and I’m allowing it to have that space but I’m now talking to that part of me, in allowing it to know the costs and benefits and making a grown up decision.

Robin - I am wondering about how you are still talking about parts of you, is that how it is or is it just you having thoughts like ‘I’m thinking I could leave it to later’?

Amandla - No, the part of me is like having its last throws of death (laughs), chucking a little tantrum to see what happens.

Robin - Is it an emotional thing? – Yeah – Is that the astral, emotional stuff ... that is becoming clear, the different bodies, are you observing how they are?

Amandla - That’s exactly what I’m observing and to put in a little bit of immediacy in there right now, something funny has just happened in my body which is like ...right now, right this minute, when you said the astral and I was saying that it was having it’s last bit of tantrums. I feel as if it has just grabbed hold of my ‘I am,’ something has just gone ‘ffoof’ within me, it’s the different bodies. it’s sort of like we are walking together side by side after all the healing, whereas before I had no idea. Right this minute, right now, it feels like we’ve reached for each other’s hands. I feel different all of a sudden. (laughs).

Robin - Just stay with it. Amandla - I feel I could cry or laugh at this very second, I’m just feeling it a bit more, I feel more of me has joined together, I feel that part of me that wasn’t known to the I am is now not only known but also willingly become a participant in the wholeness of me. I’ve never been in this place that I am now in my whole life and I can only look forward to unveiling the rest of me.

PART B
CROSSING A THRESHOLD



Figure 27. Arriving at the threshold, meeting Self.

CHAPTER 6

'I AM' PARTICIPATING

The waiting of the feminine is there and always there, born with the feminine, always alive in the feminine. It was the waiting of creation itself, the waiting which is at the heart of time where out of a longing the stars are made and a child is formed and born. How could one not have known that all the living and growing and all the light and shining things coming out of the darkness at the beginning were made out of this waiting? (van der Post, 1991, p. 249)

It is now the beginning of summer, and after writing each participant's story I can observe them together, as a whole. What a rich source of stories and experiences! Since getting ethics clearance, it has taken eighteen months to gather volunteers, do the interviews, transcribe them, and collect their creative expressions, all the time not knowing how this research study was really going to evolve. The decision to focus on four participants in detail emerged during autumn, from four supervision meetings, before I began writing. In each meeting I spoke of one participant, until a time, after speaking of four participants, when I came to a point of saturation. I had to speak them first before being able to write. The order of writing of each participant, from Margaret, Marilyn, Zeus to Amandla, is the same order that I spoke them as well. This order appeared important at the time and I decided at the beginning, to trust this process.

The Experience of Speaking Leading to Writing

The intensity of the speaking process grew over a number of weeks and reached a peak in the supervision meeting, in which I spoke about the fourth participant, Amandla. There were a few other influences playing into this, but as I was *Speaking* Amandla's story, I became *warmed* up, and as I began to *feel all* the participants living more within me, I got a *glimpse* of what *was/is* being created. I also felt energetically squeezed because we had run out of time. At the end of this meeting I was quite surprised to feel exhausted, as if I had completed some sort of marathon, that something was completed and expressed. Later that day I realised

fully that I wasn't going to include the other two participants in detail, my body had said *it's enough*. At last, all the transcripts for the study are/were there in front of me for the first time in just over three years. I was very tired and slept for most of the next weekend, as I was going through something, and not anything that I had experienced before, this was new! I felt quite empty, in a bit of a void, of being in a time of *waiting*, waiting for an inner response/motivation for the next step, in the creation of this work.

As I discussed in the preceding chapters, I had to be aware not only of the meanings and experiences described by the participants, but also aware of experiences within myself, in relationship with others, and with what was happening in the world. In addition to these aspects, being in touch with my imagination and intuition, informs me of the next step, of how to create this thesis. The glimpse that came during this meeting, was an image of how change includes the whole human being, as body, soul and spirit. In reflecting on this supervision meeting, I agree with Dyann's observation: *The speaking that you did at the end, I think in some ways it's the main theoretical framework for your thesis.*

This image that arrived through speaking, that is living within me was/is: I am being in a middle realm of soul, of experience, and from here I can move up towards the spirit or dive down into the bodily layers, the subtle bodies (physical, etheric and astral). The wholeness or integration is felt when the "I" creates an equilibrium within these layers of our being. In the development of the soul life everything is continually moving and changing and metamorphosing where:

On the one side there is the force of desiring, through which the soul is embedded into the processes and functions of the organs of the living body; on the other side is the force of cognition, as the highest soul-function, unfolding where the spirit penetrates the soul. (van Emmichoven, 1982, p. 94)

Dyann comments: *In doing that you do a whole lot of questioning and unsettling of that, as oh, it could be that, or it could be something else, but it was certainly where you came to at the end of that potent story.* In terms of the spirit or the "I," this consciousness can travel through the layers of our being, consciously and unconsciously, and if the astral gets too far down into the etheric and penetrates

into the physical like with Amandla, dis-ease may manifest, through an imbalance in the system. Or if people get too *up in the air* or out of their body, they can become more ungrounded and less present (Treichler, 1989). Another way of looking at this idea is in relation to the different emphases in some modalities of psychotherapy. For example, it appears to me that the somatic therapies focus primarily on working with the body, while other therapies focus more on the mind, like psychoanalysis, and the experiential therapies focus on soul/experience, such as Gestalt, Jungian and experiential therapy. Perhaps there is a growing challenge across all approaches today and in the future, to become more integrated and inclusive of the body, soul and spirit of the human being.²⁰

The therapeutic approach experienced by the participants, is inclusive of the human being as body, soul and spirit, with four non-verbal modes utilised as the language of experience: bodily sensation/awareness, gesture, visualisation and the sounds. This has also become my method of research, to engage in a Goethean, anthroposophical, psychophonetics practice, not just with each participant but with them all, as a whole. I had observed and digested the experience of four participants and then, after the supervision meeting, wherein I spoke of the fourth participant, I entered an experience of saturation. After this was a time of emptiness, of breathing deeply, of waiting for an inner response, for something new, for the next step. In a conversation with my supervisor I said, it feels like I am living the methodology, and Dyann responds by saying: *That's it, that's a great way of looking at it, you are living the methodology, you have the language for it, you have the capacity emotionally, physically and at a soul level to live that – that is the potency that I saw in your speaking and that is very exciting.*

I want to spend some time reflecting on what happened, in and after this experience of saturation, as the next step of the structure and writing evolved from this attentiveness to experience. During the time of emptiness that followed, I became more aware of this being a transformative process for me, that Amandla

²⁰ William Bento (1997) has expanded on this theme in his article “From Psychology to Psychosophy” and shows another perspective on the evolution of consciousness, through the development of psychology, that ranges from a knowledge of soul logic to soul wisdom. This article can be accessed on the internet at: <http://www.vermontel.com/~vtsophia/TABLE12.htm>

was not the only one coming into feeling more whole. I felt a stronger sense of becoming more fully engaged with this work through speaking, and I want to explore and digest this experience more fully. I met with Dyann to do this (Dawn was overseas at the time) and some key extracts of our conversation are included, as they provoked further clarification.

Exploratory Dialogue with *Dyann* - A Time of Reflecting (As Winter Approaches)

To engage in conversation with others can be seen: “as a process of inviting truth exactly as they would invite a human guest, and make the atmosphere receptive to it” (Spock, 1983a, p. 30).

Robin - I have a sense that something is coming, because I'm not writing yet, but I sense that something is coming and I'm not quite there, but it's going to come through me, it's like (a bodily response happens as spoke this) that got me.

Dyann - Do you want to talk about what's happening now?

Robin - My heart just went 'boom' and 'pfff' like that, *and your face kind of shifted like that*, like a recognition, Oh, that's what it is, it's what I've just said, but my mind hadn't got it consciously enough, but the body already knows it, so the body is always ahead of my consciousness, it awakens the mind. I trust that it will come that way, *so you're incubating it at the moment?* Yeah, it's gone into that place of rest, you know there are the polarities of movement and rest. There's been a lot of movement going on, and very intense, *outward too towards the other material*, and if you look at the experience I had in our last meeting where at the end I was really exhausted and hot and it felt like a lot of squeezing going on, that's like an alchemical process. There wasn't an instant 'aha', but I've come to a rest time. an empty time. *Empty but full*, not in the same way as the other full, *no*, that was like FULL of all these participants but now it's like there's a 'pheww', *yeah it's empty of content but full of potential*, oh, that's what hermetic consciousness is, exactly those two words, it's not about the content, it's about moving into another level where there is potential. If you focus on the content, then that's not it, it's like a particular layer, you have to go further, so I feel there

will be time, I have faith in the process, and it will have its own timing. Things are happening and I trust that, I'm sitting with it, and being, that is the way.

Dyann - What is interesting in addition to all of that is you know when my first original questions were about Self in the process, what is kind of curious to me now is that you're so in the process, to an extent that I've never seen another student do it ...and you are doing something far more than reflection. I was asking where you saw you might write in some of your experiences, well look, what's happened now, it's much more than that, much more and you are really openly looking at this in quite a radical way.

The participants' stories were being created in a more holistic way, by sensing and by being willing to enter through an empathy-in-action process, into their stories, and sharing the intimacy of this encounter, so that these stories could come back out through me, as a shared interpretation of the phenomenon, as a co-creation. However, even in this, Norman Denzin (1989) reminds me to remain mindful:

A story that is told is never the same story that is heard. Each teller speaks from a biographical position that is unique, and, in a sense, unshareable. Each hearer of a story hears from a similarly unshareable position. But these two versions of the story merge and run together into a collective, group version of the story that was told. Because there are always stories embedded within stories, including the told story and the heard story, there are only multiple versions of shareable and unshareable personal experience. (p. 72)

Dyann calls me back to a potential other story embedded within our conversation: *Can we just go back, a bit to where that last bodily thing happened and try and catch what that was, it was quite intense talking and we didn't stop to name it, where the client speaks through me and there's no separation, that's it and you kind of became quite intense, a real aha, that's one of those precious gems of this isn't it? ...Whenever you go close to naming it, it just comes. Yeah, the body knows that it is alive, and the knowing takes over, as opposed to intellectual knowledge. That's pretty exciting isn't it? Yeah, I can trust my body to confirm whether something is true or not. It's very heart-based actually, it's an actual heart-felt knowing that is responding, and it comes straight up into your face, doesn't it? Well*

I can't see that, I don't know that. *Your eyes become very moist and something goes over your face.* It's when I am feeling moved, I've got no control over it. *Don't try, it's part of the alchemy.* It probably has to do with when I really stand in my own truth more fully and speak. *What we are realising is a typical way of working with that as part of the art of moving forward, that is going to be the real strength of this creation you are doing.* That's what became clear around that question about do I include in detail the other two participants, and I don't want to go there, it's like the effort would be 'ooohhh no'. I'm curious though because there are some drawings and extracts from a number of the other participants that I would love to include and I think maybe I can include them where it is relevant. The transcripts of the other two are quite similar to some of these four, and there would be a repetition at some level, though some of their drawings would add something to the work. Their paintings are the main thing that draws me to the other two participants' transcripts. *That's a point of progress that you've got to, that you can rationally name why you are not going to go with those ones.*

In phenomenological research, it is stated that you keep going until you feel like it is starting to be repetitive, or as I said before, you have "reached saturation" (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 179). In hindsight I felt strongly that these four must be in the study, and because I ended up doing four interviews with each one, that is a lot of material. After our last supervision meeting, I felt completely saturated. This is also called redundancy, which refers to when there is no new information coming from the other participants, which means I had enough material, therefore, no more interviews were needed (Patton, 1990; Rice & Ezzy, 2001). However, I didn't want to forget the other participants as they had given of their time and energy to contribute in varying degrees. Now that I was reflecting on all four participants, I was also mindful of being inclusive of the other participants as well, thereby using any of their descriptions or drawings where relevant.²¹

²¹ I would like to acknowledge the other participants who were interviewed for at least one interview, and two of them completed the research process with three-four interviews. Their code names are: Vive, Isobel, Kate, Chef, Philip, Pat and Sam.

So what I'm just exploring here with you now is you've had a very strong bodily experience of the participants you have now, and you have thought about the material you're not going to go to or what it's value is or isn't, you've got that kind of level of checking for is it enough, and you've got a way of linking back to literature and you kept going until you reached saturation point. Yes, and you and Dawn have both witnessed this experience of becoming saturated. So if we look at that experience of that point in the research process, we've led from your bodily experience and knowledge around that and can legitimate it through the layers of argument, so you actually can just keep going like you are.

A later reflection: I thought more about this process of saturation and it appeared to happen in different layers, of the subtle bodies. That is, physically, I became very hot etc; etherically or energetically, I was exhausted; and I was feeling an inner emptiness of soul. In the experience of feeling inwardly *aligned* and more fully present, speaking became heightened (I noticed there was a shift in my consciousness at the time) in which a *glimpse* of a whole picture of change, of the human being, became visible. Physically and energetically, I had to first debrief (straight after the meeting), then rest and sleep, and then *be* with the waiting, listening and emptiness of soul-feeling, while also keeping my connection with the world through speaking with others. Speaking was my way of digesting and coming through the experience of saturation, guided by what I had glimpsed, as this revealed the next step. As these differentiating layers were involved in this process of becoming saturated, these layers also became the *lens*, through which I had come through this experience, to gain a new perspective. What I learnt from this experience, is that becoming saturated and coming through saturation, can occur as a whole body and soul experience, with a transpersonal dimension.²²

²² The term “transpersonal” denotes beyond the personal self or personal identity. Transpersonal experiences can be defined as those: “*in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche, and cosmos*” (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 3). And one general definition of transpersonal psychology is that it: “*is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness*” (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, p. 91)

Returning to the dialogue with Dyann, she commented that when I was working energetically with information there was a difference in me. I said: Yes, this is evident in the example of when I contemplated Margaret's story (using her code name), wherein a particular image emerged. But when I focused with her real name, it was a different experience. There was a different image that resounded more deeply, and this appeared to me, to be a more true perception of her experience. This led me to the question: What does this mean for those researchers who meditate on their participants using the pseudonyms as the focus? It's a bit mind blowing. *That's very interesting, for the integrity of the knowledge that is being created I think has immense implications ...* because what is happening out of this is that I have got the transcripts, but my question now has become: "Who is this?" rather than "What is happening?" It is a human being experiencing, even though I am working from their now written transcripts, I still think, who is this? When I think of change, I think of what is happening, how are we/they changing and who is changing? What concerns me, is that by giving voice to other peoples' lives through the writing of their stories as an expressive and creative endeavour, I need to be respectful, caring and honest (integrity) in how I am working, to maintain a level of quality that is worthy of me, of the participants and of the phenomenon of change.

Dyann alerts me to the work of Noreen Garman (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, pp. 147-153; Smyth, Hattam, & Shacklock, 1997, p. 31), who in the 1999 publication, outlines seven criteria of quality in good qualitative research. These criteria include verity, integrity, rigor, utility, vitality, aesthetics and ethics. With verity for instance, the question to ask is: Does it ring true? Is it intellectually honest and authentic? In this interpretative study, I am striving: "to create portrayals that will yield deeper understanding and insight through a coherent interpretation of the phenomenon" (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, p. 149).

Vitality, is another important criteria, for when as I asked myself: Is the research meaningful, does it has a sense of vibrancy and intensity, and do the images and pictures fully express the experiences? These criteria are useful for me as an ongoing point of reference for the worthiness of this research, and I include them as questions to be mindful of during this research. The other criteria are:

Integrity – Is the work structurally sound? Does it hang together? Is the research rationale, logical, appropriate and identifiable within an inquiry tradition? Is the proper voice used for the author and participants.

Rigor – Is there sufficient depth of intellect, rather than superficial or simplistic reasoning? Are the conclusions carefully crafted from sufficiently thick and rich data? Has the interpretation of the portrayals been thorough and sound?

Utility – Is the inquiry useful and professionally relevant? Does it make a contribution to the field? Is it educative?

Aesthetics – is it enriching, and pleasing to anticipate and experience? Does it give me insight into some universal part of my educational self? Does the work challenge, disturb or unsettle? Does it touch my spirit in some way?

Ethics – is there evidence that privacy and dignity have been afforded all participants? Has the inquiry been conducted in a careful and honest way? Has every effort been made to represent the views of others accurately and in the spirit with which they were shared/intended? Does the inquiry have an ethical sensibility? (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, p. 148)

Reflecting on these criteria, it came into my awareness that the idea of *resonance*, that is, *does the work resonate with you, the reader*, was not included in the above list of criteria. Dawn raised this issue in a conversation and says: What's missing for me in Garman's work ... is that she doesn't talk about the issue of resonance, of how when someone reads your work whether it resonates ... It leads to verity, because it leads to ringing true, like when a bell rings it gives resonance and that's the way I like to use it. I think that's missing and it is really important. Verity doesn't capture it really, resonance is much more cellular. Resonance is obviously important in a body-based study and makes perfect sense to me, as this is an experiential research study, and hopefully, many aspects of this work do resonate with your experiences. Also, one of my primary reasons for including the *experiential interludes* is to offer an opportunity for you to participate in a first hand experience, so that it can possibly resonate with what you are reading.

Returning back to the dialogue with Dyann, she comments: *So when you are in this process of transcribing their stories from spoken voice, which is their voice, to written words, that then becomes your words, because you have written them.* When I talk the story to you in the meetings, or when I'm talking them in my mind, I notice that there is a very clear picture of the person there, *back when they originally spoke it ... Is that what you go back to?* I'm not going back to it, it's present in me, it's in

the speaking and I'm using their words and I'm quoting their words, I'm speaking out of their words, *not the written word, the text?* I begin with the text and an image emerges, then I hear it, I hear the inner being of the person speaking. *I think part of what it means is that the way you are relating to those people and what you have shared together is like a hologram and that the way you are now proceeding in the research process will reflect that, the integrity of those connections and relationships because I think it means you will grab hold of and work with whatever it is you are working with, the content of it.*

So, one idea is to tell their stories, as their story, and allow them to stand there in their own right, that would be one way as well, *and with you in and around that. I guess I'm suggesting today is that whatever it looks like in the process is fine, I have the feeling that you just need to take the lead for awhile and let those stories just be there, but not live with the stories per se.* Yeah, it's probably good to keep me awake on that because my tendency could be to go with a book, go with the client, so that tendency would be a little secure one, so that is probably the challenge to stay in myself and speak/write, *and that's what is happening because this is your story, this is your thesis.* It's probably only this year that I've started to say that, shifting to a position of bringing myself into the work. Before that, I wasn't "in" it, and the past method described in the addendum, reflected that.

This work was/is becoming such a full experience, it's not just an intellectual activity, but it engages my whole being. I realised that this living methodology has to be congruent across all levels: with the participants' experiences, how I am doing the research, and even in my interactions with supervisors, it all has to have its own congruency and movement within it, otherwise if it gets fixed in one area the whole thing becomes stuck and doesn't work. *No, that's right, it's a real organic dynamic kind of model.* In terms of Goethean phenomenology, it is called "living thinking." *There it is, a thesis that mirrors this living thinking process that you're doing.*

Robert Sardello talks and writes from the position of soul, and I am attempting to do this research in a soulful way, learning how to develop my speaking and

writing skills from this position, being in the life of soul. *I think, this is one of the potentials you have that you could claim. I think, Dawn and myself would be able to usher that with you.* Yes, I feel really confident about that. *You are now the container with it all in you, whereas the container before was here on the outside, it's now in and you've grown.* So that's why I don't know where I am? I'm in no-place at the moment, everywhere and nowhere.

Do you know what a hologram is, how each part of the hologram has the essence of all the other parts, it's like a clear honeycomb kind of thing. Yes, I have been reading a book by Henri Bortoft (1996) on Goethean phenomenology and he talks about holograms, in terms of wholes and parts, I've gone into the hologram. *Yes you've gone into the hologram of all this that you are trying to understand or you have internalised it into yourself, on all levels of self.* So, in terms of the seven life processes transformed as soul forces, I'm in that sorting period now, it's like I've taken all the participants fully "in" - *yeah and from wherever you are, there's a window into all of it, so it actually doesn't matter where you start, it's how you perceive.* Yes, every time I speak I am standing in a particular position and coming from a particular perspective, *yeah, it doesn't matter where you start, if you are willing to honour your process.*

In a dialogical space we have an opportunity and the potential: "invite the spirit by becoming spiritually active, and then hold yourself open to its visitation" (Spock, 1983b, p. 7). *I think, what's exciting about this style of meeting is the dialogical space, because my understanding of dialogical space is that there is no separation, there is a connectedness between you and I in the minute that is equal and open, to the best of our capacity, that is a highly creative space that is different to what on your own you can do.* Yes, I really love to work with ideas in that space of two or more, where you pool everything in and then out of that something new can be created, it's like 'aha' that's it, and I love that sort of working, it's so worthwhile. *I think, there is potential for you, Dawn and I to create that, if we allow the room for that to happen,* yes, allowing the Other to be present, yeah, yeah, I am just sensing something already, something is around now, it's beyond and it is

present, I am just feeling that is the one who can speak through but we have to create the connection, *it's like we have to birth it*, how do you write how I feel this presence here now, mmm, and the bodily response, it's almost tangible. *What did you see?* Oh it's an energetic presence, *I felt it as well*, oh good!

This reminds me of the first participant, Margaret, when we were just chatting in the interview about something that she wanted to read to me and I had a particular thought come into me, and “pshoo” this electricity starting zooming around in a circular motion through and between us and we're going wow! and it was like “tsch tsch,” it was really zipping around. And then she started talking to me in a very knowing way that felt like her speaking was coming through her (the content of this is confidential). She described a similar experience while in therapy with the counsellor as well. I also experienced energetic soul connections with Marilyn and Amandla, and times when there was a presence around us during the interviews. How do we describe this *Other*? *I think, it's the universal, I think, it's the connection through to the universal, from the specific, and there's just a presence isn't there and a charge of some sort ... it can't be named and contained, it is a very potent energy that we're all very familiar with because we draw some around us to keep alive every day.* Yes, it is life energy and a spiritual activity.

Unsettling – Differing Perspectives – The Turning

And over, above and through !the physical, etheric and astral/soul" dimensions of the human being there exists ... the I Am, the Self, the thinking, feeling and willing self-aware human consciousness. These four levels, as well as all the interactions which take place between them comprise the whole constitution of the human being. None of them can be fully understood without its relationship to the others. It is a whole, intricately interconnected system. (Tagar, 1995b, pp. 65-66)

This whole interweaving system was also described by Amandla, at the end of the final interview. She was talking about the parts of herself and bodily experiences, but then she suddenly felt a coming together, a *pfoof* of her *bodies* (the physical, etheric, astral/soul body and I am), as they came into some sort of balance, integration or alignment. During the same time of describing Amandla's story and seeing a next step emerging, I came into my speaking more strongly. There was a

sense of an alchemical process happening at that time, in which I had become heated, had incubated something (from speaking the four participant's stories), in a hermetic vessel (my body), which then escaped as a new substance (through speaking). This is described as the fourth of the seven operations of alchemy – *conjunctio* – (Fabricius, 1989) and I had noticed that through this research, I was becoming more empowered and discerning, about what was needed for my own direction, with a more intuitive consciousness, and with synchronicity confirming that I was/am on the right track.

This correlated with where I was now (after having written the four stories), in participating and sorting through all of the four participant's stories, which have now been digested and written. I had to decide how to proceed and express the phenomenon of change, as it was speaking to/through me, at this time. Michael Mahoney (2003) talks about first-order and second-order change, and in second-order change, there is a major transformation. I can relate to this, as it feels like this is what is happening in me. He says: "It involves a shift in overall organization and functioning. Such dramatic change is stressful" (Mahoney, 2003, p. 177).

From another perspective, when I reflect on the work so far, as a whole, and imagine what still has to be written, I can see that this experience of a hermetic vessel, also suggests there are aspects of the seven hermetic principles of transformation, named after Hermes Trismegistus (Fabricius, 1989; von Ward, 2004). These are operating in a mode of reciprocation, throughout this work. Briefly, these aspects include: the basic force in the universe is mental, the correspondence of experience, both personal and universal (as above, so below), life is in continual motion or vibratory patterns, opposites are polarities of different vibrations moving along the same continuum, manifesting as patterns of rhythm and spiralling shapes, synchronicity, and the feminine (receptive/nurturer) and masculine (expressive/creator) principle (von Ward, 2004).

I mention these aspects to unsettle and remind myself that there are many interesting perspectives that can be explored in this work. It is important not to become too fixed in one way of thinking, but to remember, that change is always

in motion, that this work is not conclusive, but ongoing and always in a state of becoming. In chapter two, I commented on entering a hermeneutic circle, however, I now realise that this work is not a process in a closed hermeneutic circle, but is more of an evolving hermeneutic spiral that is moving: “in a continual process towards deeper and richer understanding” (Benz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 170).

During the period between speaking and writing the participants’ stories, I wanted to know more about alchemy. When I explored my bookshelf, I found Thomas Moore’s book, *“The Planets Within.”* In this book, he talks about body, soul and spirit, with one of the tasks of alchemy being: “to keep soul in the middle” (1990, p. 65), and not let it disappear in the mind or in the body. “When soul is lost in either of these extremes, gone too !says Thomas Moore" are the benefits it brings to experience. When soul is absent, gone are internal values, a sense of significance and a sense of self” (1990, p. 65). This is exemplified by Margaret, who described the pain of feeling how much she had lost in her life, and her joy of reclaiming soul in its rightful place, in her life: *To be my authentic self.*

Amandla described vividly her experience of moving from not being present in her body, with no room for soul, with her body so hardened, that it manifested as dis-ease, to creating a place for soul to be present in her life. Without soul, relationships and connectedness with people suffer (Moore, 1990). For instance, Margaret and Amandla, both described how they could be physically and intellectually present in their life, but also how they had been psychologically cut-off, distant, uninvolved and unmoved.

This emerging picture of the human being as body, soul and spirit, became clearer in that, the process of change could be seen as spiritualising what is dense and literal, as well as grounding that which is overly intellectual or spiritual. In the middle psychological realm, spirit and matter meet, and this is potentially a therapeutic space, where through soul and experience, changes can be made (Moore, 1990). Marilyn is a good example of participating in this soul process, using watercolours to work through grief and loss, exploring a whole range of emotions, feelings and spiritual connections. For Marilyn and others, there was a

longing for the spiritual heights and a birthing from the depths of the heart, as they searched for the middle. For change to happen, they had to know the heights and depths first. This also happened in their everyday ordinary experiences, not just in the counselling sessions. The participants showed that the counselling supported their changes in relationship to self, with others and in their community.

Marilyn faced the depths of sadness, and the loss of her marriage, to become more in touch with her spiritual resources, through imagination, and created a new life for herself; Margaret explored the depths of fear, to become more in touch with spirit, through intuition, and built closer relationships with herself and her family; Zeus suffered from feeling closed and unexpressed, he chose to become more open in expressing himself, and explored a new way of living; while Amandla faced death, and chose to breathe and cooperate with the life forces, to make a difference in her health, through healing her body, thus making a difference in the field of participatory medicine and health. Thomas Moore (1990) states that the process of reflection itself creates a middle region of soul, where mind and body can meet. As the alchemical process continues, experience becomes “cooked” with thought and reflection, not only in this research process but also in the therapy process. Zeus vividly demonstrated this in his description of how he contained and incubated his thoughts and feelings, allowing it all to bubble, bubble and bubble, until the time was right for him, to speak. Setting up the research supervision meetings for every two weeks, as a space for me to speak of each participant, created a situation of heating up over this time, which brought it all to “the boil” in the meeting, when I spoke of Amandla’s process. Following this experience, there was a cooling down time, in which I could reflect on what was happening, and what it meant for the next step in the research.

The number four (four participants) is considered important in alchemy, astrology, and in spiritual development (Moore, 1990). In this light, I continued to explore Thomas Moore’s (1990) ideas of the inner life of soul, based on the astrological psychology of Marcilio Ficino. He suggests that awakening the soul to its psychological potential may bring some instability, and I can imagine that some of the realities experienced by the participants may be considered a “little

mad” by some people. To take this idea of madness a little further, as it is elaborated on in Marsilio Ficino’s psychology, he includes four images that personify non-rational modes of consciousness, as four psychological activities for the awakening of the soul (Moore, 1990). I could see how aspects of each of the four participants were reflected in these images: as poet (Margaret), priest (Marilyn), prophet (Amandla) and lover (Zeus). I spent some time contemplating these perspectives, reading books by Sardello (2001a; 2004), Moore (1990; 1996), Sussman (1995) and others, and writing copious notes.

During the time of mid-winter, I discovered that these ideas were more relevant to be pursued as my inner work, as a deepening of soul, of my own thoughts and feelings, in a personal transformational process. I decided that I would keep this perspective of the process in my journal, bringing the wisdom gained, back into re-searching the participants’ experiences, to make meaning from these. This became an exercise in attention to what I will! This does not mean that I can will knowledge into being, but rather it means focusing on what I see is relevant to the next step in the research. Paul Gordon (1999, p. 93) summarises this point: “If you want to know something, in the sense of artistic or creative truth, you cannot just set out to find it One must wait. It is *only* by waiting that one can allow something new and surprising to emerge.” This waiting means being patient, allowing, attentive and surrendering to the here and now.

I wanted to stay with the reality of the participant’s experiences, and with a practical perspective. The mid-winter exploration unsettled me at first, as I temporarily moved too much towards ideas written by others and at some level, was trying to fit the participants into set categories. The decision to come back to myself and to the participants’ was based on the fact that I am a practitioner, and I want this study to stay connected with the reality of everyday practice of changing, so that it can become a resource for others. I want this work to go beyond just the reading. My hope is that these stories encourage and inspire you and others to participate in your own process of change. This work is a deed, not just for myself, but for others as well, as optional pathways of learning for personal and spiritual development. This is one of the reasons why I have included practical exercises as interludes or breathing spaces. Therefore, I am

reminded from my readings on alchemy, that it is important to wait, and to be aware of how our attention can become focused on many interesting and compelling ideas in books and in the world, that may divert us from our own knowing.

Being attentive to my own development as a researcher so far, I could see aspects of learning, initiated from working with each of the participants, that were influencing how I am working now: Margaret, challenged me to become more true and active in my own learning, and to become more enthusiastic about taking the initiative as a researcher; through Marilyn, I gained more insight into the depth of this work, and was reminded of my destiny; with Zeus, I became more confident in expressing what was emerging and began to take a more active approach, such as drawing a picture of his process of change over time; and with Amandla, the whole work began to crystallise in my thinking, so that the actual body of work became more visible and whole.

A foundation had been created, by engaging my enthusiasm for this way of working, by allowing for new insights and by taking action. From this, the developmental research process has become more formed, with a resulting picture of change and metamorphosis forthcoming. The picture that is emerging shows that the nature of the human being in the process of change and metamorphosis is complex, multi-dimensional and cannot be fixed as *this* or *that*. However, tendencies and aspects of experience can be indicated, based on the life processes, and how the “I” is becoming more conscious, in the middle realm of soul (van Emmichoven, 1982).

The research process keeps me alert and awake regarding how I want to proceed, to see what is evolving, and to be more sensitive to what is being created. Dyann (my postmodernist associate supervisor) pointed out to me (personal communication, 3/6/04), that I need to be mindful that it is not possible or desirable to name it all: “But a postmodernist position does allow us to know ‘something’ without claiming to know everything [and] recognizes the situational limitations of the knower” (Richardson, 2000, p. 928). Taking this into account and acknowledging that learning is an ongoing process, and that I have my

limitations, the following mantra for this week, from *The Calendar of the Soul*, is relevant:

Surrendered to the Spirit revelation,
I gain the light of cosmic essence.
The strength of thinking grows
And clarifying, grants me to myself:
And waking, frees itself
From force of thinking, self-awareness.

(Steiner, 1974, No. 39)

All Participants and the Phenomenon of Change

Summer - Strong life forces of summer flood our senses sending the more subtle aspects of our soul forces into a kind of sleep ... In this surrendered 'sleep' state an aspect of our soul nature has been expanded out into the wider cosmos. Here it reconnects with its spirit origins and prepares itself to be a future vessel for a new development of our higher selves. (Keats, 2003, Dec/Jan.)

Are these participants possibly: “representatives of the soul qualities necessary for transforming the self, for realising that true individuality lies in coming to know ourselves as human spiritual beings?” (Sardello in Sussman, 1995, p. xv).

All the participants demonstrated a receptive attitude to an inner world and to the world around them, with an intelligence that showed in each one's way of working and right timing, in finding an intimate relationship with their heart. The health and well-being sensed by the participants, through a sense of life or well-being, was described by them in the following words - as a feeling of completeness, wholeness, integration, a coming together, being more present, balanced, attuned, flowing - that created an equilibrium, unique in each participant, between the physical, etheric/life body, astral/psychological/soul body and the “I.” “Emotional experience is usually felt as a disturbance in one or more of the life processes” (Sardello, in Steiner, 1996a, p. 53), and the difficulties that each participant was working through, can be seen as a process of addressing the disturbance of this balance. For instance, breathing, warming and nourishment, can manifest in a sense of well-being, while a disturbance in breathing, can be felt as anxiety; a disturbance in warmth, can be felt as coldness; and a disturbance in

nourishment, can be perceived as an emotional deprivation of needs (in the various layers of the human being).²³ Amandla in particular, describes a sense of wholeness or well-being, when she felt all her bodies come together, which confirms what Robert Sardello (in Steiner, 1996a, pp. 53-54) says: “when the life processes are balanced, an emotional well-being is felt.”

By participating in a body-based therapeutic approach each participant was able to address their issues on all these bodily levels using the range of non-verbal skills as needed. Using these skills enabled them to become more consciously aware of their experience, to become more oriented in thinking, more empowered in action, and more connected with their feeling life. Consequently, the life forces were stimulated, to harmonise any disturbed emotional/astral/psychological activities, and to strengthen the integration of the “I am.” The uniqueness of each person’s process was observed while discussing the four participants, in one of my research meetings. Dawn commented that each presentation had been done very differently, and I agreed that each one was showing different perspectives of the changing human being.

But the human way of knowing is not such that the nature of things can be imparted all at once; it is more like painting or photographing a tree from a particular side. The picture gives the full truth of what the tree looks like from a certain point of view, but, if we select a different point of view, the picture becomes quite different. Only the combined effect of a series of pictures from various points of view can give an overall idea of the tree. (Steiner, 1996a, pp. 73-74)

Like the above quote says, I had to meditate on the four participants as a whole, allowing for the different perspectives to be present. In the meditation, an image reveals itself in the form of a moving square block that turned around and around, with each participant having its own side, emphasising the four elements of fire, earth, air, and water, moving and changing with other qualities as well. It is too difficult to describe this fully in words, but basically Margaret’s process shows a more airy quality that demanded me to think in a more alert and mobile way; Marilyn’s process of grief and loss shows a more feeling, watery and etheric emphasis (especially with her watercolour paintings adding to this); Amandla’s process shows a more grounded, detailed and firmness of determination, focused

²³ To contemplate these ideas further, refer to Table 2.

more in the physical element; while Zeus shows a more fiery quality, in the spirit of sorting through, that brought me to own what I thought was happening (Hoffmann, 1998; Sardello, 2004). Robert Sardello suggests that this: “hermetic, imaginal thinking is characterised by its constant and prevalent interiority of motion, action, and movement” (2004, p. 233).

I accepted this image of the participants and allowed it to live in me for awhile. I then realised that the four participants (four elements) formed the body of the thesis (of the human being), as the building blocks for the thesis as a whole (as body, soul and spirit). This image reconfirms an initial picture of change that included body, soul and spirit, and reconfirms that this study was/is evolving in an holistic way, guided by its own wisdom – as long as I stay present, alert and attentive to the process of deepening. Synchronicity was/is happening. For instance, not long after coming to the previous image, I was astounded to find the following statement, where Johannes Fabricius (1989, p. 198) quotes a motto of the transformational process of alchemy: “Make a circle out of a man and woman, derive from it a square, and from the square a triangle: make a circle and you have the philosophers’ stone.” The triangle, being the unity without separation, of body, soul and spirit. The thesis was/is developing into this same form.

In allowing myself to be in a process of living thinking, with a living methodology, a degree of trust was developing as necessary for creating conditions, for the next step to arrive. This way of working also requires me to further develop the qualities of perseverance, patience, faithfulness, and honesty with myself. “Within the cognizing life of the soul we have to do ... with ... questioning” (Lindenau, 1985, p. 212), which corresponds to one of the seven life processes, individualizing or secretion (van Houten, 1995). In Zeus’s story, I mentioned how Christof Lindenau described the metamorphosis of thinking in relation to the seven life processes, and I could see that I had to, not only grasp the totality of each participant’s story, but all of the stories as a whole.

One key aspect of the participants’ experience of change was, they were all self-motivated to come to counselling and wanted to change, even though for some the initial catalyst for change was not necessarily of their own choosing. For example, Marilyn was faced with the obvious changes happening in her husband’s mental

health and way of being; Zeus's wife precipitated a change by leaving their marriage; and Amandla had to face a life-threatening disease. Initially, a dramatic change occurred for the three of them, but what was important, was how they chose to live with these changes, and initiated the means, to change and develop themselves, to give new meaning to their lives. Antonella Gambotto (2005) highlighted this point in an interview with Bette Midler, and he quotes her comments on how she experienced change in her life:

There has been a lot of death in my life. A lot of tragedy. What it does is make you aware that things are constantly changing. Life is nothing but change! And you have to start appreciating what you have because you never know when it is going to disappear. Death wakes you up. Everything is put into perspective. You realise that you are not in charge. It's not up to you. You learn acceptance. There is no choice! And that can be very, very hard. To lose someone you love is so hard. It makes you question everything – you question God, you question love, you question being. (p. 28)

All the participants, including myself, demonstrated a willingness to become more conscious, to understand experience and to change or transform ourselves. By exploring change over time, a four-foldness emerged within each participant's process and also in the structure of the thesis with the four participants. Throughout this process, life is present, differentiated as the seven life processes, flowing as impulses through our senses. Additionally, we experience a changing relationship with the world through our senses as we become more conscious of how the organisation of our soul life can be mediated by our own Self or "I" (Steiner, 1979b, 1981). This was/is visible in how we learn to become more attentive to our living experience, to transform our sensory perceptions through our own "I." In this context, the "I" can be pictured as an activity, as the individualiser, and the perceiver, between soul and the world. Robert Sardello (1995) elaborates on Rudolf Steiner's description of the "I am":

The rose adorns herself in order to adorn the garden Individuality acts in a similar manner; that is, individuality is not something one has or even something one is ... Individuality is an act – the act of inner, conscious awareness shaping, forming, and interiorizing the essence of each moment of experience, endowing experience with reverence and love, thereby individualising what presents itself to consciousness. We could say that individuality is a concentration of the whole world at the site of every person – potentially. (pp. 23-24)

In the “I” activity of our own speaking, of change, each one of us showed how we had served a relationship of intimacy between the rose and the garden, between ourselves and the garden, and as we come to our own true self-knowledge and practice this, we also come to know the world. This can be expressed in the following imagination as: “The involuted world soul shows itself in the inner life of *the human being*; the human soul turned outwards reveals itself in the essential qualities of the universe” (van Emmichoven, 1982, p. 93). However, we must remember that even though: “the beauty of the rose occurs naturally ... we must create our own individuality” (Sardello, 1995, p. 24), with change caused by inner forces, the force of the “I” in the soul.

Aspects of Experience-Awareness (At/In-tentionality Awareness)

Perceive the secrets of thy soul
 In the countenance
 The wide world turns towards thee.
 Perceive the living essence of the World
 In the countenance
 Imprinted by it on thine inmost soul.

R. Steiner.

With all the four stories now written, I ask myself the following questions: How do we create our own individuality? And more specifically, what are the participants doing in the activity of responding to their experience? What am I doing in the activity of responding to a specific experience? What is happening in this activity of experience awareness?

Being attentive, through perception, and staying close to the nature of experience, by joining with its activity, allowing this to live within, we can discover, and become conscious of various aspects of experience and ways of knowing. What I mean is, if we look closely at each of the participant’s descriptions of their experiences, we can see that, on the basis of the variety of input they had taken in from the world, from their own body, and from their own soul content, they respond to different perceptions in different ways. There appears to be two sources of experience, either from the soul into the “I” or from the “I” into the

soul. This is more clearly evident in how a particular bodily gesture reveals how I (as the source of my awareness), have encountered a specific experience. The range of responses to experience include, the “I” in the activity of sensing, reacting, feeling, beholding and speaking (Tagar, 1994b). This differentiation is important for knowing how present, or not, I am in my life. For example, reactions can be sympathetic or antipathetic and can mask beholding or can look like speaking. In my experience and interpretation of psychophonetics methodology, it is not until we choose to know for ourselves, as well as gesturing the experience through the body, that we can clearly distinguish how a specific experience affects us. It appears that going through the layers of experience is a way for the “I” to manifest more of itself.

An experiential interlude: Experience-awareness.

Ask someone to help you with this exercise. You will need a big handheld fan. Lie or sit in an open and receptive manner to what you are about to experience and close your eyes. Ask the other person to make a wind towards your face using the fan. It can be done in a variety of ways – gently/strongly, fast/slow, suddenly, close/farther away, up/down/sideways etc. Notice your immediate response. Gesture this response with your hands and hold the gesture. Open your eyes and observe your gesture. What sort of response is it? Repeat and experience your response, to the different ways that the wind blows over your face. After each time ask yourself: Am I **sensing** the experience of the wind as an external event; or am I **resounding** in a **feeling** response to the echo of the perceived wind; or am I **reacting**, by contracting, withdrawing or defending myself against a perceived threat represented by this wind; or am I **beholding**, after sensing the wind, by creating an image that correlates with my perception of the wind; or am I **speaking** the wind, that is, I have I become the wind and am expressing myself consciously, communicating outward to the world? Then try staying longer with the experience and observe how you are shifting in this experience, for example, from ‘I am sensing’ to ‘I am feeling’, or ‘I am sensing’ to ‘I am reacting’ to ‘I am beholding an image of it’, and practice becoming aware of the subtle differences and combinations of these aspects in your expressed responses.

Try doing this in your daily life – stop and ask yourself how am I responding to a specific experience right now? Gesturing your response will clarify the type of response with more clarity.

Becoming aware of how *I am* breathing with and responding to an experience, is a major factor in the process of change, because then, there is an opportunity for me to not only be aware, but also to make a choice, to make a different choice about how to respond. This attentiveness to experience is similar to Eugene Gendlin's (1996) focusing process, but differentiates it further in how we are actually responding to a particular experience. These five aspects were developed by Yehuda Tagar as a philophonetics²⁴ methodology, as a phenomenological and at/in-tentional approach, to experience-awareness (Tagar, 1994b).

I am Sensing.

Sensing is the first, and one of the major activities, that we do in the process of becoming more consciously aware through the body. Sensing is when, outer or inner phenomena reaches my consciousness and is registered as a sense impression, and becomes an inner experience. That is, I perceive an event, I sense the impact of this event, and I can identify the relationship, boundaries and impact between "ME" and "IT" in the experience (Tagar, 1994b). Our ability to sense consists of more than just five senses, we are multi-sensory beings, and in the early 1900's, Rudolf Steiner wrote that we experience and become conscious through twelve senses (English translations 1979b; 1981; 1990b; 1996a; 1996b; 1999). These twelve senses are like doorways through which we can come, to know ourself as an "I," to become oriented on the physical level; to be able to feel and develop relationships with the world, as soul; and to come to an inner understanding of other individuals. These senses include: the sense of touch, life (well-being), self-movement and balance are inner senses that give us awareness of ourselves as physical beings and provide a boundary condition between the soul life and the external world; smell, taste, sight and warmth are soul/feeling senses; and four spiritual senses are also included: the sense of hearing, sense of sound/word (meaning intonation), sense of concept (the grasping of), and the sense of the "I" of another (Steiner, 1981). When the participants described their experience of wholeness or completeness, Robert Sardello (in Steiner, 1999, p. xxxiii) says that this is: "the life sense (that) gives the particular experience of the

²⁴ Philophonetics developed primarily from indications and research, based on Rudolf Steiner's psychosophy and drama, into a methodology of experience-awareness and training for performance. Psychophonetics is the application of philophonetics into psychotherapy.

wholeness of the body,” and our sense of inner balance contributes towards a sense of equilibrium.

Some examples of sensing include: I can sense tension in my shoulders, I can sense warmth in my heart, I can sense a presence of someone else in the room, and can smell the fragrance of lavender, and I can taste the vegemite I ate earlier. The following examples show some of the different aspects of sensing that were described by the participants. Marilyn describes a *sensing* activity as:

Coming into an awareness of things I hadn't really realised before ... it's a learning thing and an awareness thing, just being aware of what I am doing, yeah. Being aware, self awareness is the key... I used to be fairly sensitive in picking up other people's vibrations and I've realised that I'd put it on the backburner, shoved it away in the closet or something, I don't know what I did with my sensitivity. But that's come back now, it's being able to be sensitive to others, yeah and I'm observing myself ...It's been like really quite a major adjusting and awareness, of what's happening and of the feelings, of the depth of feelings and mental processes...the realisation of things I hadn't noticed for quite a number of years but now the personal awareness is changed, mm, I need to be in that awareness, I'm observing and being aware in myself.

Zeus comments on his ability to sense the impact of an experience:

I recognise that there is still anger there but what I'm doing is saying yes, there is anger but I still have enough space and I don't get carried away by it. I'm surprised the change didn't take very long, I suppose I'm just open to it.

Amandla describes sensing inwardly as:

I check my body gesture and make sure that it's relaxed and not tight and crunched over like it used to be...If I sense that my shoulders are hunched up a bit I actually straighten them while I'm breathing and moving around...there is an alertness to doing these things and I concentrate on listening to what the person says more rather than how I was before I started this stuff...I found that because you could focus inside your body and look at the realms beyond the mind, you had confirmation of that, that you weren't aware of, which revealed to you places that you wouldn't normally travel with just the mind.

One of the other participants (Isobel) completed all the interviews, but her story was not included in the study, for the reasons elaborated on earlier in this chapter, in the exploratory dialogue with Dyann. Isobel is a 49 year old graphic designer and artist, who went to therapy to sort through her issues of whether to stay in a relationship with her husband, or with her lover, or whether it was time to move

on from both men, to express herself differently. Isobel summarises how sensing helped her to become more aware: *The main tool is sensing how I feel, how my body feels, like when my heart beats more quickly, that feeling of anxiety where you feel pressure in the chest, and it hurts a bit, an unpleasant feeling, nerves tingling.*

A deeper study of the twelve senses would give us a greater imagination of the body in its dynamic, interactive relationship with the world, and with how we experience the world. All body-based approaches would include sensing to different degrees in how they work²⁵ (Some examples are, focusing, Gestalt, experiential and somatic therapies). Sensing experience, is an essential research skill used to develop my capacity of perception, and requires, becoming open to the wholeness of the body, awakening the heart through feeling, with love for the doing of this work, and thereby deepening relationships with others and the world.

Experiential interlude: Sensing.

Guiding the Blind or Walking Blind – I have used this activity many times when facilitating groups for a variety of purposes,²⁶ and I am proposing it here as an opportunity to focus on becoming more aware of our 12 senses. This needs to be done with a partner. One person chooses to be a guide and another person to be the one guided. The guided person closes their eyes and the guide then turns them around a few times to disorient them.

²⁵ For a further study of the senses I suggest reading Steiner's books in this area, especially "*Anthroposophy (A Fragment)*," and other more recent resources such as Albert Soesman's book, published in 1998, "*Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul*." These resources can be a valuable resource for encouraging our own exploration and understanding in how our perspective can change depending on how we perceive experience through each of the twelve senses. The twelve senses are in close relation to the seven life processes and play a vital role in the process of change but I do not have the space to explore this relationship in depth in this study, however, Cheryl Sanders does in her forthcoming PhD thesis. *The Spiritual Psychology of the Senses* (2004-2005).

²⁶ This activity can be used as an exercise in developing trust and safety, of making explicit how we are as a leader and follower, and it can also be used as a warm-up activity. A description of this as a warm-up activity is given by Carol Picard, in her doctoral dissertation: "*Uncovering Pattern of Expanding Consciousness in Mid-Life Women: Creative Movement and the Narrative as Modes of Expression*" (Picard, 1998, p. 53).

Then he/she takes them on walk around the immediate environment, inside and outside, for about a ten minutes. This is done mostly in silence and any talking is in relation to physical safety or if one person needs to stop. The guide offers as many sensory experiences as possible along the way for the guided person to experience. The guided one focuses on and becomes aware of what is happening in and around their body during these experiences, for which senses are observed, and how they are in this experience of walking blind.

When this is completed, swap positions and repeat the exercise. After both partners have had a turn in both positions, sit for a moment and reflect on the experience, then have a conversation about it with your partner, and express in a gesture what it was like being in each position, then writing or drawing something about it. What did you learn about sensing? Was this experience meaningful for you? How?

I am Feeling.

The Dictionary and Encyclopaedia Britannica defines feelings as showing emotions, passions, sympathies, sensitivities, affections. However, this term is commonly used for a whole range of experiences that are not feelings. For example, I feel cold, is a sensing of coldness, not a feeling; or I feel scared of you, is a reaction. The word *feel*, had its origins in the Latin “palpo” (I caress) and the Greek “pselaphao” (I touch), and “in psychological terms ...feeling means to touch inwardly,” of inner experience (van Emmichoven, 1982, p. 33). In psychophonetics, feeling is described as, when I feel an inner resonance of an event within my feeling capacity, I become aware of the feeling that this event stirs up in me, I am inside the experience and feelings well up and radiate from me. Feeling is a more dreamy awareness, less clearly defined, more flowing in its forms, more fluid and rich in colours, sounds and personal meaning, than in external sense perception and reflection of thinking (Tagar, 1994b).

Marilyn’s story especially, describes the depths of how we can become more aware and transform through feeling and even though words cannot fully convey feelings, she offers the following reflections:

The feeling of stepping out, expansion of spirit coming from the centre of my being...feeling of dancing and expansion, movement...It is like the opening of a flower from the centre of my being...Surrounding my heart were very beautiful

delicate rose petals with an exquisite perfume...It was a wonderful warm gentle feeling with the sound 'mmm'

Feeling can be regarded as the breathing and healing activity of the soul, such as in Amandla's story, where she describes how breathing is a major component of her healing process:

It helps to watch my breathing, to make my breathing come from my belly, to make sure that it's not just being tightly in my chest and I bring it all the way into my belly, up to my head and then I allow it out and I follow it, my consciousness follows that so that I'm actually in tune with that.

Medically, the rhythmic system provides the organic basis for the activity of feeling, where breathing is also connected. At the centre of the rhythmic system is the heart, and the heart is the centre of the feeling life. We could say that true feeling - is breathing - is healing. Breathing into deeper layers of our being allows for the "I am" to be more present, as difficult experiences are often held within us as contractions of held breath, and by breathing into these layers the life forces can move again, to release and enhance our true feelings. Yehuda Tagar (1994b, p. 5) says: "Feeling is the name for the most inward, intimate and personal response people have to a phenomena, perceived from inside or from outside." Isobel, one of the other participants mentioned in the previous section on *Sensing*, describes her experience of feeling as:

Following my heart means going with the feelings in my body. If I follow my heart then my body gets back to feeling okay ...The heart experience is a combination of the physical heart expression plus this tune that radiates from my heart...that feeling that radiates from the heart and with my lover there's a very strong feeling, a feeling this is just where I want to be, and in my heart I feel relief and peace.

Feeling is very connected with the heart and has a central place in our soul life: "feeling attunes us to a unique presence and its qualities of being; emotion is our state of fulfilled or frustrated need that correlates with that felt connection" (Heron, 1992, p. 119). This leads into the next aspect, reacting, while changing through feeling will be explored further in the next chapter.

I am Reacting.

Reactions or re-action, is an: “action in response to perceived action, action not initiated and governed by the one who acts, but rather triggered by him/her” (Tagar, 1994b, p. 6). Reactions consist of desire, and the type of reaction relates to the type of desire most active in the soul life. Reactions have the nature of sympathy (attraction) or antipathy (of defence or offence) (Tagar, 1994b). These desires are ever-changing and moving forms, living in our soul life. Some examples of reactions are cravings, cutting-off, aggression, numbness, intellectualisation of emotions, resentment, plus many others. “Reactions are by definition projections of inner content into an outer perception” (Tagar, 1994b, p. 7), and the nature of a reaction mostly involves automatic, instinctive and repetitive coping behaviours, in which I am reacting (defending) to a perceived threat that a specific event reminds me of, or that I am attracted to (eg. craving). That is, in both types of reactions, I have been triggered and I am not fully in charge of my response. “Our blood circulation, our breathing system and our etheric body” (Steiner, 1990a, p. 108), are all affected by the fluctuating range of sympathies and antipathies within our inner soul life. For example, it is one thing to react to a situation by avoiding conflict by telling a lie, but if the consequence is not to change, but to feel really satisfied in doing this, then this will have an impact on our circulation, effect how we breathe and impair the forces of the etheric body (Steiner, 1990a).

Zeus describes his awareness of how he copes by sensing and then reacting: *When I see people coming towards me I sense they were starting to encroach, and I started to close down, to close up.* Marilyn describes how she reacted when she expressed her experience in a painting: *I absolutely lurched just seeing all the paint running all over the paper, it was awful, I didn't want to see it and I just wanted to go away.* Margaret describes how she learnt to express her reaction and transform it into a feeling response, in a process of self-parenting:

When I fell over I was able to verbalise rather than have this chain reaction and then get angry at not related incidents ...I'm not internalising as much, when incidents occur, I go oh yeah right, that's the trigger, let's just feel into that rather than too much of thinking in the head. I find the gesture and then go through a process of hugging myself and being OK and talking with myself (as inner communication) then the incident was dropped, and the issue wasn't then an issue as much.

Finally, Amandla shows how she reflected on her experience of reacting by withdrawing, but she did not know why it was happening and in this description she is caught in reacting with feeling underlying the reaction:

I felt a sinking feeling and then I felt all different. It was like I just sunk into this deep hole and just stayed there and from then on everything that person said to me, I just wanted to get up and walk out of that room, I was so triggered and I really felt vulnerable and fought the impulse of getting up and going outside and crying or doing something like that. I had no idea why I felt like this.

In psychophonetics, feelings and reactions can be easily distinguished through gesture or movement in the body. For example, the mixture of reactions and feelings can show in the following ways: a reaction of anger may be covering feelings of sadness or hurt; a feeling of loss may be covered by a reaction of grief; a feeling of conscience may be confused with a reaction of guilt; a feeling of compassion may be mixed with a reaction of wanting to rescue. When a moment of a specific experience is gestured, it reveals whether it is a feeling or a reaction response through the way the breath expands or contracts in the gesture (Tagar, 1999a). By gesturing and then moving out of this position, we can behold imaginatively the shape of this gesture in front of us, to see to and become aware of what is happening.

I am Beholding.

Beholding involves: “being in a position of holding inwardly the expression of the being of another person, or of a part of myself pictorially” (Tagar, 1994b, p. 9). That is, I create a perspective in regards to the impact of an event, and I visualise the emerging images/mental pictures (through imagination) that correspond to the inner dynamics of this perceived and sensed event.

As mentioned earlier, in the exploratory dialogue with Dyann, descriptions from the other participants who were interviewed are included to highlight some of the key activities. Vive was a thirty-five year single woman who had her own textile business. Through the therapy sessions, she described how she was becoming more confident and expressive, to deal with the ongoing effects of a past negative workplace situation and with family relationship issues. In regards to *Beholding*,

Vive described beholding an aspect of herself during a therapy session, after having exited from the position of exploring experientially in gesture, a specific event in her experience. Bringing her attention to the inner dynamics of the specific experience being explored, she gestured this with her body and then let it go, she stepped back away from the position (*exit*), and then she could *behold* that place in front of her, through her capacities of imagination, her inner experience was now externalised imaginatively or pictorially:

I could very much visualise this little creature that was like really scared and really broken and really upset and I thought oh my god it's also me neglecting that. But I have the power to help this child and to stand back and look at the child in a visual manner helped me want to do that and to see the way that I could. The image I could see there really helped me stand back from all the turmoil that I was dealing with and talking about. I was actually setting myself apart from that child and looking at, I mean I could see the neglected child, I could subjectively look at that and see how I'd actually sort of neglected her, and be with that neglected child there and that if I could see that, well then I could do something to nurture her and not have expectations that other people should do that. That was actually quite powerful, visually and really helped me have a really strong view and meeting from a different perspective. It was just by stepping back and looking at that image in the chair, and my response was then to hold, nurture and comfort, it definitely helped me to sit with myself.

Amandla described a different type of beholding, while exploring the inside of her finger, that is very powerful, and maybe, is more like actually seeing into the elemental world (she later confirms in her feedback on this chapter that she does have the capacity of seeing this world):

Through my third eye I could see it was the finger that was sore ...I discovered two elves in there with laser guns working with colour and sound on the joint area to fuse it. I can see the fine line of laser light joining the bones together and the whole area is filled with pink and white light.

During the interviews, the participants told me that in their therapy sessions, they could choose to enter into an active process of inner exploration, through sensing and gesture, and when they moved out (*exit*) from being in a specific experience, they were then able to stand back and behold what happened. The following snapshots are some examples of *beholding*:

Margaret: *I was suppressed. I didn't have any air, I was in this chamber and I couldn't breathe.*

Zeus: *It just came in like lightning, like people throwing barbs at me*

Isobel: *I'm in the boiling soup at the moment*

Zeus: *A tender buddha, no shell, no nothing, just sitting, the buddha is myself.*

Margaret comments on an experience of the beholding of another person: *I actually saw the imprint in their energy field and where it was in their body...its come in the heart and gone down to the stomach.*

I am Speaking.

In psychophonetics, *speaking* is different to the other aspects as it is regarded as coming from within oneself, and going into the outer or inner world, as a direct expression of the "I." That is, the "I" is the source of the experience, and as such, speaking is: "the creative act of the human "I" expressing itself" (Tagar, 1994b, p. 10). This means that I express the event myself, as my own conscious and creative act of expression, communicating to the world, or as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 225) says, speaking is each person's act of: "taking up of a position in the world of his/her" meanings." Speaking, in this sense, may not necessarily be verbal. For example, speaking can also be communicated through silence, a gesture, clay, a touch, the way I move and breathe, a painting, poetry, or any other medium of human expression. I am speaking and expressing means that I am participating in a chosen act.

In the methodology of experience-awareness, Yehuda Tagar (1994b) describes *speaking* with three underlying activities: *Intending* – an individual's inner mental thinking activity in the act of speaking, "leading one's intention into one's Speaking" (p. 2) or expression; *emoting* – the emotional preparation for speaking: "leading one's feelings and emotions into one's Speaking" (p. 2) or expression; and *urging* – the motivation, will, desire for speaking: "leading one's will power and determination into one's Speaking" (p. 2) or expression. Speaking is a complex activity, wherein we may not be able to know if someone is really speaking, just by observing them, in the fact that: "the spoken word is a gesture and its meaning, a world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 214). This means I am in the act of speaking, when I know that I have digested an experience and am able to express my chosen response to the world, and to the experience. In the therapy sessions, participants were encouraged to speak, as a basic condition for creating a wish towards action. This was viewed as an active and freely chosen expression

of their “I.” Speaking in this context is regarded as being permeated by *I am* activity (Tagar, 1994b).

This *I am* activity, following the wish, is often arrived at after reactions have been exposed, explored or exploded. Feelings may then arise such as hurt, joy, sadness, safety, peace, compassion, empathy, tenderness, relaxed etc. By coming into a deeper non-reactive connection with our feeling life and aligning feelings with our own values, actions and responsibilities, with an outward orientation, then an awareness of this can also be speaking. From my experience, speaking can be experienced as radiant with presence, situated in the present moment, as an act of creating self and enhancing conditions for being present. Speaking in this sense furthers the incarnation of the “I am,” with a deeper and fuller breathing in and out, thereby enabling more conscious and intimate relationships with others and with the world.

In another phenomenological study, Carl Holroyd (2003, p. 100) found the experience of speaking to be: “a physically compelling calling, a threshold experience, and a transformational event.” These three aspects correspond to the participant’s experience of speaking in this study. Speaking as an activity of being, could also be called *I-aming*, and because it is generative, speaking keeps us connected with the world, and prevents us from becoming *too* self-reflective or too introspective in the therapeutic process (Sardello, 1995).

The following descriptions show various aspects of speaking. Marilyn speaks about her experience after doing one of her paintings: *I am POWER. I had to speak, it was good. That feeling stays with me most of the time... and I realised that it was actually there all the time.* Amandla describes how she moves from blocked speaking through reaction, feeling, beholding and sensing, in her process to become more present in her speaking with others:

The biggest area of change is with confrontation and the reaction of blocked speaking, meaning not able to say what I want to say like ‘no’, or ‘I don’t want to’, or ‘please stop,’ or any of those things, now I am able to express myself. Before I couldn’t even try and speak, I was just scared so it’s made a big difference for me. When I am in a difficult situation now, or fear is stopping me somehow, I stop and think about it and realise that it isn’t functional for me and I

will breathe and start to feel a relaxation in that breathing and then I visualise my crystal dome of protection going around me...with unicorns and butterflies and waterfalls and all sorts of things inside this dome of protection, so when I feel I'm in a situation that could be threatening for me I immediately create this dome around me and it gives me strength and it gives me protection and then I can speak calmly.

Releasing her voice, allowed Amandla to experience a new sense of freedom and wholeness:

I always wondered about what people would think of me and whether I acted properly and you know, if I'd been in a situation I'd spend most of the after situation wondering if I had done the right thing, said the right thing, were they talking about me when I left, what did they think of me and now sometimes I couldn't even answer that because I had disappeared or gone somewhere that I wasn't even in the situation so a lot of situations were missing from me, they weren't clear. Now I'm confident of knowing what the whole situation is that I've just been to because I'm fully present mm...Yes, when I speak I feel like Rocky, how he just ran down the steps and won that big fight, I feel that I've fought for the last -10 odd years to get to this place of wholeness and I feel like I'm my own best friend now and I know myself better than ever before...It's like an achievement that one might have with one's best friend, it's like I've been on a tour with myself and found out all of who I am and not only have I seen the pyramids but I've seen the universe.

Margaret speaks about an incident when she spoke her truth to her mother:

And I turned around and said to her, well I don't know mum it's about time you really sat down with him and try to discuss all these issues with him so, it was instant then Ah! I knew I wasn't going to be the go-between. So it was a complete change. it was just like I slipped, I said 'oh you and dad are very different people aren't you', and my mother acknowledged for the first time almost, she said, 'I should of dealt with this problem a long time ago'. I said 'yes, you should of'. By me changing and speaking my truth, others change, it's rippling across.

All the artwork and poetry are expressions of speaking, and Margaret completes her whole therapeutic process of change as a mandala. She also worked on blocked speaking and found that releasing her voice through gesture and clay was very powerful. All the participants, including myself, demonstrate the activity of speaking and expressing, of being present in the soul-life through the body, whereby creating meaning, is the activity of changing. But the specific content is our own responsibility (Tagar, 1994b). As Zeylmans van Emmichoven (1982, p. 88) states: "We are always in the process of change and metamorphosis The only part having a continuous existence through all these phases, is the kernel of

the spiritual and moral personality, the 'I.'" He then goes on to say that we can find: "In the 'I'... the dynamic principle wherein the whole development of the soul is rooted" (1982, p. 91).

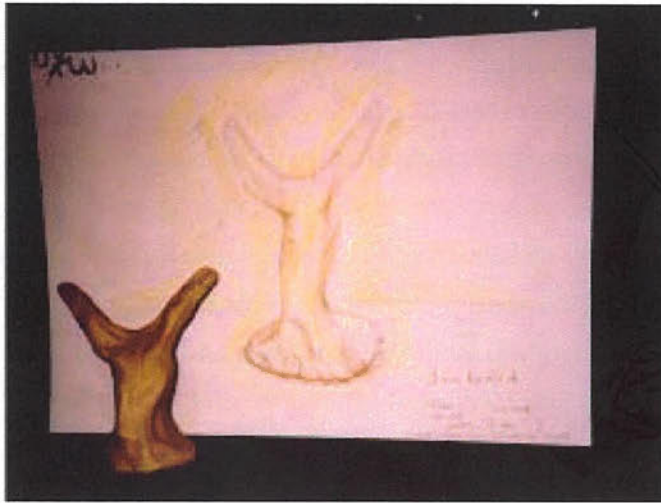


Figure 28. Margaret: "I am healed: I speak."

Each participant showed through their descriptions, that they were able to overcome past hindrances and respond in-the-world in new, creative and unique ways. Coming into our own speaking, of expressing oneself more fully, is captured beautifully in the following poem by Judith Wright (1994, p. 121):

Silence

Silence is the rock where I shall stand.
 The silence between this and the next breath,
 that might be - is not yet - death;
 the silence between lover and lover
 that neither flesh nor mind bridge over;
 the silence between word and word,
 in which the truth waits to be heard;
 the silence between world and world
 in which the promise first was sealed;
 the heart's silence between beat and beat,
 in which myself and silence meet.
 Silence is the rock where I shall stand.
 Oh, when I strike it with my hand
 may the artesian waters spring
 from that dark source I long to find.

To see the five aspects of experience awareness occurring in the context of this research, in the participant's and my experience, confirms this way of working, and shows the trustworthiness of this methodology, as a way of understanding the aspects of experience-awareness. Steiner (1996a, p. 74) supports this when he says: "Every view can be a true view, if it faithfully reproduces what is observed." These aspects were developed as a methodology of experience-awareness during the 1980's, by Yehuda Tagar, through years of experiential, phenomenological and practical research work, with the sounds of human speech, which then also became a way of understanding human experience (Hoffmann, 1997).

Change means not only becoming aware of how I am in a particular moment, or how I am living with specific situations, but also it means asking the question: Do I wish to stay in this position, or do I wish to shift or change how I am responding to a specific event, at this time in my life? In terms of soul and healing, another way of asking this question could be: What ails thee? This is speaking and a move towards healing. How can I help? This speaks of the action of love. However, we may not change if we think that we are only at the mercy of outside circumstances, but if we realise that we have a choice of how to respond to given situations, then we have a greater opportunity to be in touch with our creative power and to be more in charge of our life (Allen, n. d.) .

In the following chapter I will explore three activities of consciousness that were observed to be occurring in the phenomenon of change: Thinking, Feeling and Willing (doing) - as potential pathways for the "I" to awaken, and become more conscious in expressing itself in the world.

Epilogue: The Power of Water – A Changing World

I want to take a moment to acknowledge a catastrophic change that recently happened in the region where I live, bordering the Indian Ocean. An earthquake and subsequent tsunami waves devastated a number of countries bordering this ocean, ranging from Somalia, Maldives, Sri-Lanka, India, Thailand Malaysia, Sumatra and Indonesia, to many other smaller countries in this region. Over two hundred thousand people died, with millions more who have lost everything, and are now trying to re-build their lives and homes, with help coming from people

from all over the world. This was a change on a massive scale that affected people of all ages in many countries, and I have to say it is difficult to continue with writing a thesis, when I feel a strong impulse to go and help where it is most needed.

However, as I contemplate this happening, I am reminded that this event contrasts starkly with the situation in Iraq, where over one hundred thousand civilians have also died, mostly from US air strikes, with many more homeless. How differently we respond to these two events, when one is a natural disaster and the other is a chosen act. Hugh Mackay (2005), posed a number of questions in his article, published in *The West Australian Newspaper* (15/1/05, p. 20): “Why no wave of sympathy for comparable civilian death toll in Iraq?” (and) “Were we concerned about civilian casualties when we learnt coalition forces were about to destroy Fallujah?” Phillip Adams (2005, p. 58) concluded his article on the same issue by saying: “Yet in our response to the tsunami (though not yet in our response to the vastly greater tragedy of the AIDS pandemic), we see that it is human nature to care for each other.” This reminds me that we don’t always (want to) see the full picture of what is happening, and that becoming more aware and conscious, demands an alertness to the less obvious and maybe more hidden aspects of experience. While I continue working, my thoughts and love are with these people, and I have adapted the following prayer, by Rudolf Steiner (1979a, p. 89), as an offering at this time:

A PRAYER

Spirits’ Ever watchful
 Guardians of our Souls.
 May your pinions carry
 My petitioning love
 To the human beings on earth,
 And to the souls in the spheres,
 committed to your care.

That guided by your power,
 My love may radiate in help
 To those souls & human beings
 affected by the war in Iraq & by the tsunami,
 And whom my love is seeking.

PART C
THE "UNFOLDING OF ENFOLDING"



Figure 29. In my own power.

CHAPTER 7

THE “I” AWAKENING THROUGH THINKING, FEELING AND WILLING

Intuition is a higher cognising activity
that unites feeling and willing (through thinking)
in a single deed of love.

(Bamford, 1984, p. 15)

Gathering

Through our body's senses we comprehend the world around us; through our soul, we develop impressions of this world, experienced in a whole range of emotions such as desires, aversion, pleasure, and the world becomes meaningful; whereas knowledge of the world is gained through the spirit.²⁷

So far, I have shown how the life processes and related patterns and processes function as metaphors for the astral, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions, as a way of understanding change over time, in the therapeutic context. In this process, it was important for the participants and myself, to become more consciously aware and able to make choices, in the direction of our own development and in the development of this research. Change in the whole human being consists of differentiated processes and activities as well as the interweaving relationships between them. Reflecting on, and in gathering the processes of change described so far, a form was evolving - of the physical, life and astral body, and the “I” as the soul's core, in a process of integrating body, spirit and soul. The participant's stories exemplify how change occurred for them, in an ongoing activity of increasing awareness, transforming this into a more imaginative, inspired and intuitive consciousness. Thus, I am interpreting the three-foldness of body, soul and spirit as working in an educative, therapeutic and

²⁷ In the 1994 edition of the book, “*Theosophy*” published by Anthroposophic Press (first translated into English in 1910), Rudolf Steiner was, in the early 1900's, describing the essential nature of the human being as embracing the three aspects of body, soul and spirit, with other differentiating layers within these. See chapter 1, for a detailed description.

creative way. The soul is in the middle, bridging between the body and the spirit, and connecting body with spirit.²⁸

Although each person is unique, bodily development is predictable. The pattern of soul development is less predictable ...!and" spiritual development is the most individual of all ... !and for adults" is largely dependent upon the principle of self-development. (Mazzone, 1999, p. 55)

Like Alduino Mazzone says, self-development is individual, and my process of re-searching the participant's stories developed into taking the perspective of a three-foldness. That is, how the participants' experienced change, as the "I" awakening through the faculties of *thinking, feeling* and *willing*.²⁹ The idea of the threefold nature of soul is not new, as early philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle described soul in this way. More recently,³⁰ in the field of counselling, Gerald Corey (2001) for instance, groups a range of therapeutic approaches into a number of categories, and says:

Practitioners need to pay attention to what their clients are thinking, feeling and doing. Thus a complete therapy system must address all three facets. Some of the therapies ... highlight the role that cognitive factors play in counselling. Others place emphasis on the experiential aspects of counselling and the role of feelings. !While others focus more on our behaviours". Combining all these dimensions provides the basis for a powerful and comprehensive therapy. If any of these dimensions is excluded, the therapy approach is incomplete. (p. 10)

Rebecca Terry (1995, p. ii), extends Gerald Corey's idea further in her research study, by proposing that it must also incorporate the: "development of a relationship with the innate, centred, authentic core of one's Self." Through the participant's stories, these three functions of soul interpenetrated each other. The difficulty that became obvious to me, is pointed out by Rudolf Steiner (1996b, pp. 99-100): "Just as you cannot easily separate thinking and willing within the

²⁸ To help us to understand this better, a comparison is made for this differentiation in the soul life with how light is seen when it passes through a prism and shows the seven colours of the rainbow. See *Theosophy*, 1994, pp. 61-62.

²⁹ I will refer to thinking, feeling and willing, to emphasise the importance of addressing these three functions within our soul life and to point towards a deeper soul-spiritual nature of these facets as described by Rudolf Steiner, but which I will not be going fully into them in this research. See Rudolf Steiner (1996), *The Foundations of Human Experience*, and (1999) *A Psychology of Body. Soul and Spirit*.

³⁰ Also in the education field, for example, Bloom (1994) describes a way of classifying according to cognitive, affective and behavioural domains.

human soul, you can even less easily separate the aspects of thinking in feeling. The aspects of thinking and willing are very closely interconnected with feeling.”

This idea can be shown in an example whereby, when I want to get up to do (willing to activity) some activity, I usually need to gather some feeling, such as enthusiasm, in order to actually make an effort to take action. Thus, the capacities of the soul cannot be separated because one activity always involves others (Lievegoed, 1985; Mazzone, 1999; Moore, 1990; Sardello, 1999b; 2001a). This holistic view is prevalent throughout the research process and in the writing of this thesis, in the differentiating activities of the life processes, and in the working idea of parts and wholes. Even though I could see these differentiating patterns and had a sense of wholeness in this process, there was still a sense of something unfinished and imperfect, which I allowed to be present also, and accepted that this state of being was/is okay.

Gathering the four stories together, illuminated a whole range of changes and influences, through a variety of life contexts. In these stories, it appeared that when a specific inner change was created by an individual, it had the possibility of not only rippling energetically through the whole human being, but also out into the world, affecting others. This rippling effect occurs naturally in nature, such as, with the recent earthquake in the Indian Ocean. The shaking and movement in the earth, changed the ocean currents and a tsunami developed, with the consequence that millions of people, in a number of countries nearby and thousands of kilometres away, were affected, and in this case with devastating results. When I change, others may experience me in a different way and thus, respond differently. In this act, I have a choice and a responsibility for the consequences of my actions, to remember that I am in a relationship, with myself, with others, and with the world.

Remembering Relationships

In the last twenty years, psychotherapy has developed in theory and practice in complex ways. And yet through all this tangled complexity and sometimes confusion it is impossible, in the words of Pasternak, 'not to fall ultimately as into heresy, into unheard of simplicity'... The irreducible elements of a psychotherapy are a therapist, a patient and a regular time and place. But given these, it is not so easy for two people to meet. (Laing, 1972, p. 39)

One aspect contributing to the participant's experience of change that comes into this area of responsibility is the counsellor-client relationship, and as R. D. Laing suggests, participating in meeting with each other may not be so easy. During the interviews with each participant I asked leading questions about their experience of change (see Appendix C), but did not ask specifically about the counsellor's role in their process. I did this purposefully, as I wanted to see how they perceived their change process with minimal influence from me, in directing their thoughts. If the participant brought it up organically then that was fine, but only one specifically described in detail her relationship with the counsellor. Reflecting on the research process and outcome, it appears that our own resources and support systems are a strong influence in the integration of change. Another influence is our ability to develop the creative use of the non-verbal ways of expression in conjunction with other supportive work, into our everyday lives (for example, massage, reading books, talking with friends, biography work, gardening, naturopathy, medical, going to seminars).

The research interviews were conducted over about a year, but interview one, was the only one conducted during the actual time that participants were attending sessions. Interview two, was conducted shortly after completion of counselling, while interview three was conducted three months later, with a short follow-up interview done about four-six months after this. The participants described how the learning and meaning gained from the therapy sessions, carried on beyond the actual sessions, and how the skills learnt were integrated into their everyday lives. As three interviews occurred after therapy was completed, this could be one reason why the counsellor-client relationship does not play a major role in the participant's descriptions of their ongoing experience of change. However, each participant did acknowledge that the counsellor provided a supportive space for

them to engage in their process, and stated that the counselling sessions were a vital part in creating conditions, and of developing a range of skills to enable them to make different choices, and to change. As well as this, a safe listening space created between each participant and myself in the research interviews, in which a dialogue took place, also contributed something to the participant's experience of change.

I mention this contextual aspect, as it is important to remember that we do not change in isolation, but through our relationships, not just within ourselves but in relationship with others as well, through our interpersonal interactions. Martin Buber³¹ (1958) succinctly stated the importance of social relationships when he says: "‘In the beginning is the relation’ (p. 69) and ‘the relation is the cradle of life’" (p. 60). We are a (human) being living in the world with other beings. This connects with phenomenology, as I was attempting to understand the lived experience of therapeutic change, with all the participants (including myself) who were actually living their/my unique experience, as being-in-the-world. Martin Heidegger (1962) emphasizes the ontology of Being, and as a research procedure, Max van Manen (2000, para. 4) states that thematic reflection has: "hermeneutic or interpretive power when it allows us to proceed with phenomenological descriptions." How we relate as being-in-the-world, can be interpreted differently, depending on the context for relationships, and can become complex in the diversity of relationships, such as exemplified in this study (that is, therapist-client, participant-researcher, participant/client-researcher/therapist, supervisor/s-student/researcher, therapist/s-researcher, and friends and colleagues).

One such relationship, that highlights the importance of the interpersonal is the counsellor-client, and researcher-participant relationships, and in the context of this phenomenological study, are best described by the participants themselves.

In one of the interviews, Margaret says: *counselling is opening the door to freedom for me*, and the counsellor was central in holding the space for her therapeutic process:

³¹ Thankyou to Dyann for this reminding me of this reference, with her comment: "Buber's idea of reality as 'the in-between', not people per se."

I felt that it was like going on a train journey and she was accompanying me alongside, she was not driving the train. And that partnership was there, I didn't feel abandoned or alone, I would of if no-one had been there, but she was going on the journey with me. I felt it was a journey for her as well and so there was a partnership to see and work through issues.

Robin - You went through quite a profound experience in one of the sessions.

Margaret - *Yes, there was a very, very strong angelic presence and I think we both brought that together, I think we both brought that energy in and I think that it was like the love was there, and the light, right there beside us, guiding us and she was guided too, as well as myself. It meant a great deal to me because I couldn't have done what I did without that.*

Robin - Can you describe something more about your experience that included the counsellor?

It was a safe holding space and it was honoured, very much honoured and yeah, there was empathy there ...She was present, she was using her intuition, as I was, going from one aspect to another. I think reverence for the other person, was really beautiful. After the third session it's a lot more comfortable because you know the person, and you know how they work in that safe space, yeah ...I like the fact that I had to do it myself as well, you know, that she was aiding me but I had to do it. She encouraged me and yeah, there was a real connection for us as a counsellor and a client. I even felt when the whole thing had finished, that I was going to be okay ...I've got the tools to carry on with my life.³²

For Amandla, she was very thankful for the interactions with the counsellor in reaching a healing space:

I have the trust and knowing that a journey through all of the things that you go through in the counselling, and the work that you do with honesty and without fear, that you can reach a healing space. So when I go to a counselling session, I hand myself over to my intuition, and the intuition of the counselling.

This intuitive capacity between counsellor and client shows itself with a consequent beneficial impact, when Amandla wondered how much this learning had changed in the physical body:

I said to myself I wish I could get a video of myself, I wish I could have a look at myself and see how I move now and things like that. Lo and behold my counsellor had a video tape and asked me would I like to have a session videoed. That was 3-4 days after I wished I had one. So I was absolutely ecstatic and I brought it home

³² This is a short version. see chapter 2. for Margaret's full description.

...and it brought me to tears and I thought how amazing, coming from a place where I couldn't even get out of a chair.

For Marilyn, her whole journey of self-discovery was opened up through the relationship with her counsellor: *If I hadn't of gone to therapy I wouldn't have realised that I was suffering grief and loss, yeah, definitely would not have realised that.* While for Zeus, the relationship was important for having a space to talk and have his ideas validated, as well as learning and acquiring skills for expressing himself:

It's more or less a stepping stone for me to move on and sort out for myself what I want to do. It's just confirmation of what was discussed with the counsellor, it's what I always thought but I needed to discuss it, yeah, it's confirmation of what I think is okay. I think it's just reassuring to have someone to hear and talk with you, with the understanding that it's okay...If I hadn't done the therapy and got my space I think there would have been a lot of anger and resentment. The counsellor helped mainly because I could express myself in some way and I had that space where I could allow people in and I prepared myself for confrontation.

Vive describes how the relationship with her counsellor was effective for her:

I feel a bit stronger as a person, from the sessions I've done with the counsellor have been quite intense, and very good in that manner because there seems to be sort of like a build up, and we've sort of like really moved into the crux of what we are discussing and she manages to implement a way of moving the consultation to sort of like really help me go much further than where I'm sitting or stuck with the problems I'm talking to her about. So I tend to walk out of the sessions feeling light and with a new perspective that I find is very effective, in the way I'm starting to look at myself and look at the relationships that I have with other people.

The researcher-participant relationship in the interviews was another place where a safe listening space was created, that gave each participant a space for reflecting on their life, from the perspective of how they were changing. These sessions also contributed to enhancing and furthering personal change and development, in the moment, and over time. Margaret comments on her experience of our relationship during the interviews:

It means I'm feeling right now...it means I just realised the 'I am' presence is there...I didn't quite realise that as much as when I've been viewing it now...I have been able to see it better in the steps and bring it all together, that's been good...and connecting with that resource during the interview was good...to open up like that, that quickly, was good for me....so I like the spontaneity that has

occurred to me while talking to you...this way of talking... leaves me free which suits me as a person...the interview is just another way of expressing how I feel...love finding out the secrets of who we are.

One study of clients' experience from a variety of modalities, including philophonetics/psychophonetics, shows that: "Essentially the findings of this phenomenological investigation reveal a complex pattern of interconnecting aspects and relationships in the client experience of psychotherapy" (Sherwood & Silver, 1999, p. 11). Another article from the same study, highlights holding a clear space during therapy, and having a range of self-management skills, as important basic aspects for a healing therapeutic relationship (Sherwood, 2001).

How do we create conditions for inner change? From the interviews, I understood that the participants regarded counselling as a place that can provide a safe and caring space, with the necessary conditions for the exploration of their issues, and for making changes. Because we are born into a relationship from birth, and are always living in relationship to something or somebody, issues of change must have their origins in relationships. It is therefore reasonable that when we are having difficulties, we find a relationship situation in which to explore the changes we wish to make. This reminded me of a poem by Rudolf Steiner (1985, pp. 116-117), adapted slightly, that goes to the heart of this thought:

*The healthy social life is only found when
In the human soul is mirrored
The image of the whole community,
And when in the community there lives
The virtue of each individual soul.*

In relating with the world, we are involved in an ongoing re-search into ourselves and into the world. This can be a liberating experience. For me, a major change occurred when I changed my supervisory relationship, as described in chapter two. Tessa Muncey (2005, p. 9) confirms the importance of finding the right relationship/s, that can liberate and allow for different expressions or multiperspective views: "For the first time, I found people allowing me to express a view without telling me I was wrong or misguided." This point was very important for me, in my ability to write the thesis, in this way. The re-search

study was/is also a study of self – the self of the researcher. As I re-searched the participants' experiences, I also came to know and re-search myself in new ways. As Laurel Richardson (1997, p. 137) writes: "Surely as we write 'social worlds' into being, we write ourselves into being." How do we skillfully re-search the self, without becoming too preoccupied with self? This is where relationships are vital, for instance, the conversational dialogues with my supervisors gave me a space in which to reflect and to explore my use of self, with others. The importance of relationship/s is expressed in the following quote: "We express our understanding of the world by our interventions in it through the use of self. The way we use self varies from situation to situation and person to person ... !occurring as" part of a process of interaction !with others"" (O'Connor, Wilson, & Setterlund, 1996, p. 58).

How to be aware as a researcher is an ongoing and complex matter that requires imagination and intuition, to recognize connections and inner motivations for: "knowing and doing,' 'values and facts,' 'art and science,' 'theory and practice,' 'subjectivity and objectivity'" (Fook, 1996, p. 5). For me, knowing comes from doing and theory is implicit in my practice. When I was a practicing teacher, if you asked me to talk about my thinking regarding what and how I was teaching, I could do this very well whilst in the practice situation. But if you asked me to do this in another context, outside of practice, then I had difficulty talking about it. It was somewhat similar with this research, as I was/am writing the process of the research itself, while doing it. I recognized that my re-searching of self had become a transformatory act, that was being mirrored in the "transformation of the phenomenon" (Amrine, 1998, p. 37). A *multi-faceted* approach that integrates other perspectives is important (Lees, 2003), and reminds me of my situation, where I had engaged in reflective dialogues with my supervisors, and with my participants, in which we brought our differing perspectives. One supervisor comes from a social work/lecturer background, while the other one comes from a nursing, psychotherapy and research background. In addition to this, I contributed with an education, psychotherapy and arts-based background. This mix of perspectives created stimulating, thought-provoking, exciting, and sometimes challenging issues to work through, thus contributing to the transformatory nature of this work. As John Lees (2003, p. 152) says: "It opens up the possibility of

progressively expanding our perspective to include other perspectives one can take the research further by constantly discovering new facets.” It is an ongoing living process.

Another crucial factor in re-searching self was the dialogue with myself and within myself, in the writing of this thesis which, Elizabeth Atkinson (2000, p. 160) suggests: “drives my knowledge forward.” Writing is the practice of the reflective process itself, and in the act of making my reflective dialogues explicit: “this reflective process has become research” (Atkinson, 2000, p. 160).

One challenge I faced, at various times in re-searching self, was the anxiety of thinking that I had to gather more *academically acceptable knowledge*. At times I let this voice of self-doubt intervene, temporarily letting my own experiences and knowing appear less important. This anxiety mostly hovered in the background of my mind, and gradually dissolved as I gained more confidence as a researcher, and received positive feedback from others. Dawn Freshwater and Mark Avis (2004, p. 11) summarise this dilemma:

Rather than accumulating more evidence, the researcher and practitioner need to explore new and innovative ways of treating the evidence. It is not always the quantity or quality of the evidence, it is what you do with it that counts.

Additionally, it is *how* we deal with the material, as a researcher, that also counts. Perhaps it all works together as a dis/unity of relationships, in its multiplicity, and in the mirroring of inner and outer worlds. However, becoming attentive to oneself, and to soul, is perhaps no easy matter, as Robert Sardello (2001a) observes, consciousness soul is a new development:

Attention to soul in a conscious way is a truly new development in the world. For people who lived in times past, care of the soul was natural and instinctual. It was carried out through ritual, ceremony, mystery centres, oral traditions of story, myth, and art. But, while natural, it was not necessarily conscious in an individual way; it was most often a participation in an instinctual group or tribal consciousness. As consciousness has evolved in the direction of individuality, forms of care of the soul have needed to become more conscious and more individual.
(p. 7)

The Activity of the “I” in Relation to Thinking, Feeling and Willing (Doing)

In the process of therapeutic change, the activity of the “I” makes a difference. How I am in relation to thinking, how I am in relation to feeling, and how I am in relation to willing/doing, in every given moment, makes a difference. “I” can penetrate experience and become more present through body and soul.³³ My understanding is that change comes from this inner force of the “I” in the soul, and there is a sense of balance/ing when the “I am” is not swayed by the forces of thinking, feeling and willing. We can see this in situations where we have achieved something new, after first struggling with an old way of being. In this tension between past issues holding us back in our lives, and the wish for a better future, the “I” can enter through the centre of our being and become more visible, by remaining attentive in the present, to our own inner life. “Becoming conscious of the inter-relationship between these three levels of soul experience, one can experience how each illuminates and gives reality and meaning to the other” (Tagar, 1986, p. 152). From the individual participant’s descriptions and my experience of writing this thesis, it appears that our sense of well-being and wholeness is found when the three aspects, of thinking, feeling and willing, become more balanced and harmonious, with more “I am” presence. The challenge now was to show this differentiation of soul, between thinking, feeling and willing, and their expressions in the body, without losing its unity.³⁴ From this perspective, with the soul dynamics of perception and intuiting, we are participating in three worlds.

These aspects are also connected with our three major bodily systems. Victor Bott (1984) says these three systems involve the head/nerve, metabolic and rhythmic systems. Between the head/nerve-sense system and the metabolic system is the rhythmic system, with heart and lungs actively involved in breathing and the circulation of the blood. This rhythm of breathing in/out connects us with feeling, in a more dreamy-like consciousness (Bott, 1984).

³³ I base this idea on my interpretation of the participant’s experiences and on my own experience and a knowing that I am a spiritual being striving to incarnate more of me and I am in the activity of becoming. The lectures on *Psychosophy* are a theoretical basis for this idea.

³⁴ *Psychosophy*, an Anthroposophical psychology, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the layers through which the soul develops, and Psychophonetics psychotherapy is based on the indications given in *Psychosophy*.

It is interesting to observe: “that Steiner also saw human consciousness as having a three-fold quality – mainly *waking, dreaming and sleeping*” (Mazzone, 1999, p. 61). For example, it is different for an elderly person, like my eighty-one year-old mother, when the forces of youth and life are withdrawing, though there is more experience and wisdom present. I find that even though she is less active and needs less sleep, she is more awake in her consciousness. For other people like Marilyn, her process had a dreamy quality, in which she focused on deepening her feeling life that gradually became clearer with a heightened capacity of an inspired imagination, expressed through her paintings. For Amanda, there was no dreamy consciousness, she was very alert and articulate and was (she said) more “in her head,” and it was only through experiencing a dis-ease that she became in touch with her emotional life, and more dreamy feeling life, supported by learning to breathe more deeply. For Amanda, breathing and feeling *is* healing.

What are these three activities of soul and how can we come to know them through our *living* experience? From my understanding of these activities they could be summarized briefly as follows: In thinking, I am making sense of the world and giving it meaning, after first perceiving and sensing, and feeling the world within myself. Then when I become conscious of, and can name this experience, I am *thinking*. In my *feeling* soul, all the sensory impressions that activate my inner experience and awareness, also stimulate my personal feelings, such as when I feel elated, joyful, loving, lonely or sad. In all of this activity, we act and react in the world through *willing* (doing, action) unconsciously, as instinct, drive and desire, or consciously, as motivation, wish, intention and decision (Steiner, 1996b). But how do these relate to the process of change? How do these aspects practically bring about change? What skills were acquired by the participants during their counselling sessions, that gave them a “*bag of tools*” to apply in their everyday lives?

Figure 29 (see page 235), shows how the three aspects of thinking, feeling and willing can be perceived, not as separate things but as embracing of the parts and the whole. Reflecting on all participants’ transcripts and on my research process, it appears that through *thinking*, we can come to know ourselves and become *oriented*; through *willing*, we encounter and confront situations and can become

empowered to take action; and through *feeling*, we can connect with our inner/outer *resources* to meet our needs and this enables us to feel connected with and to radiate our feeling life.³⁵ The culmination of each of these three activities is:

to come to one's own genuine, authentic Speaking (and expression). True speaking comes from one's core of being ...speaking which is not reactive, nor avoiding or compensating or coming to please. True speaking is the breathing of one's soul (and) ...that expression is the Speaking of the "I am." (Tagar, 1994a, p. 91)

This means that our intention, feelings and the urge or drive to speak, are embraced inwardly in a harmonious way, by the "I" in the act of speaking and expressing. These three activities are overlapping and interweaving. For example, the participants and myself, went through a phase of coming to know something about ourselves, to gain perspective on the dynamics of our inner/outer life, and of the research process. We all indicated issues with power, or anger, of being blocked and of something to release, to become empowered, to free ourselves from some hindrance, to overcome fear, to gain courage. And we all described how we either nurtured, accessed inner and/or outer resources, made spiritual connections, and met inner needs. All these aspects are within the process of change, as ways to become more conscious, to come into our own true speaking and expressing, in our different ways. One of the ways we can see the direction of change for the future, with the participants, is from all of their specific wish statements: The following wish statements are examples drawn from all the interviews: To know myself; to be my authentic self; to release blocked speaking; to express myself on equal terms with another; to know where the anger comes from; to go to the depth of feeling; to have more confidence; to heal my finger; to heal the hurt.

³⁵ The theoretical foundation for this interpretation has come from the work of Yehuda Tagar who further developed *thinking, willing and feeling*, in the early 1990's, into three types of counselling issues: orientation, empowerment and resourcefulness. A description of the three types of issues was first published in 1994, in a paper given by Yehuda Tagar, called "Awakening to the Resounding of Human Experience", at the Transpersonal Studies National Conference. "*Australian Consciousness and Action*", in Perth, WA.

Creating the ability to make a *wish* is an important aspect of psychophonetics therapy³⁶ and it could be defined as: “a positive picturing in imagination” (May, 1969, p. 215). To make a wish is a creative act, as I understand it, and implies a striving for health and wholeness in which I have to awaken the “I” in the realm of the soul. Thomas Moore (1990) elaborates on this point and says that if we are to make connections between our experience and a deeper soul life, then we need to develop our imagination. Making a wish statement is a step in being able to imagine the possibility of changing and creating a difference. For me as a researcher, and for the participants, conditions had to be created, as a basis for taking action on a wish, for it to move towards becoming an intentional and decisive act. Abraham Maslow (1971, p. 54) describes this process as helping the client: “to unfold, to break through the defences against his own self-knowledge, to recover himself and get to know himself. The best way for him to lead a full life is to be more fully himself.” This means helping a client is more about creating a space for meeting, and creating conditions for change, wherein each person’s wish is respected.

A Therapeutic Perspective

How do we awaken to the differentiated activities in our soul life and how, in the therapeutic context of psychophonetics, how does the “I” awaken through *thinking, feeling and willing*? In addressing this question, I decided to describe these activities as main themes, as experiential structures of soul experience, using thick descriptions of specific examples of the participant’s therapeutic processes. In this sense, these: “phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*” (van Manen, 1990, p. 79). However, as stated throughout this work, differentiating soul activities, does not mean they are separate and isolated categories. In the following section, I have changed the order of these activities to now be presented as thinking (orientation), willing (empowerment) and feeling (resourcefulness). These themes are more akin to a process of insight, discovery and meaning-making, and a way of giving shape to the shapeless (van Manen, 1990). They allow me to describe the content as a way of trying to understand the

³⁶ I also discussed the wish in the context of psychophonetics therapy in Chapter I, in Margaret’s story.

conditions for the process of change, but I must be mindful that, as Max van Manen says: “No thematic formulation can completely unlock the deep meaning, the full mystery, the enigmatic aspects of the experiential meaning of a notion” (1990, p. 88). On this basis I will proceed to illuminate and maybe untangle a few more of: “the knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and are thus lived through as meaningful wholes” (van Manen, 1990, p. 90).

Processes of Exploration Leading to the Experience of Orientation (in Thinking)

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First-Chill-then-Stupor-then the letting go –

(Johnson, 1975, p. 341)

Orientation means being able to create a perspective within our own field of experience, to find out or know something, to have a realisation, to gain an insight, to see the picture.³⁷ Amandla says: *My motivation to go to counselling was more to find out how to know the whole of me.* Marilyn is more specific and says:

I guess I didn't feel whole, I felt like that there were pieces of me that I had come to get to know again because I hadn't been truthful to myself in denying my truth...it was just that feeling of being fractured. I wanted to claim back parts of my self that had been denied.

Denial and self-doubt can be a major hindrance to self-awareness and truth, but for Margaret, being able to sense and gesture her experience and then observe and reflect on this, brought a greater clarity and perspective in her thinking:

As I never quite understood what had happened to me in the past and what impact it had on me and why I was affected so much...It was amazing to find out and to have a greater clarity and understanding about past hurts and triggers...I mean first I had to gesture the situation, feel it, find a colour and sound and then at the

³⁷ Seeing the picture means thinking, as pictorial imaginative thinking, thinking in images, as picturing.

end was the clay. I looked at the clay that was there and ...to accumulate all this in front of me and bring it together in one clay model, was quite difficult...I had been very fearful of revisiting and I revisited it, I felt great cause I actually did it myself, it was a really wonderful feeling to go through the gesturing and to do it myself through the clay.

It really was the clay work for me that was how it all happened ...and the clarity of seeing it, seeing it in clay was quite profound for me...there was a different perspective completely.

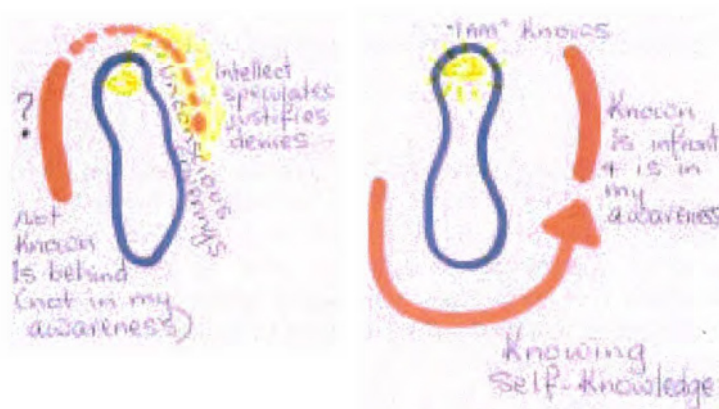


Figure 30. Orientation.

If we look at Figure 30, we can see that when something not known it is usually behind our conscious awareness. When we face an issue of concern it then becomes in front of our consciousness, and we can see what is going on. Amandla comments on how important it is to know what is happening: *How precious it is noticing that inner child, the clarity of understanding processes, and understanding projections has always been a big mystery for me...now I'm more aware and understanding the whole concept better.*

Yehuda Tagar (1996b) describes becoming oriented as liberating:

Whenever I stop in my tracks ... and turn around to look at myself, at my direct experience of the present moment, taking an interest in my experience as it is ... I have started to move, to liberate myself from being locked in unconscious identification with a part of me, into the healing dynamics of the whole of me; I have made a shift from being a passive receiver of the affect of my life, into being the active co-creator of its meaning for me. Then the real healing can start. (p. 19)

Becoming oriented in thinking can be not only liberating, but as Amandla found, focusing within through sensory awareness, it can become very revealing:

I found that because you could go and look at the realms beyond the mind, you had confirmation of that that you weren't aware of which revealed to you places that you wouldn't normally travel with just the mind. And with the drawings and gestures they revealed to me visually something that in the past that I could maybe only have been able to guess and think around and hypothesise about. But these were concrete. When you know something is true there's something in the body that breathes, there's something in the body that goes aha.

The first step in the healing process for Amandla was to come to know the details of the situation, through exploration, observation and understanding, of the inner situation:

First of all, recognising, second, understanding and third of all loving that particular behaviour for what use it was for me when I was a child, and seeing that it wasn't useful now as an adult. To heal it by loving myself, by understanding it and by being very patient with what it is for me, what is presenting itself, and giving it space to enact itself so I could witness it. It probably allowed me to look at everything to do with that under a microscope and healing it with that patience and love, knowing that I had to use these behaviours because I wasn't fed or I was abused or in some way trying to protect myself and now knowing I don't have to do that protection, that I can drop that.

Enter - exit - behold.

In the exploration through body awareness, gesture and visualisation, the major action that the participants described was how they *enter* bodily into an experience and then *exit* from it, to see (*behold*) what is happening.³⁸ In this activity, the focus could be what is happening right now in the body, or it could be to recall a moment that exemplifies the pattern being focused on, to bring this memory into a bodily sensation. Through *sensing* this moment in the body, we can move and gesture its resonance pattern. The inner character/s that are flowing through our soul life can be brought into a visible form, through movement and gesture. After doing this, we can shake off the gesture, *exit* (by moving out of this position physically) and observe the dynamics of the gesture in the empty space left behind. It's my experience, and the participant's also, that when we form a gesture with our whole-body, then let it go and exit, a picture emerges in our

³⁸ "Enter-Exit-Behold" is one of the main tools of psychophonetics, for exploration and orientation (Sherwood, 2000; Sherwood & Tagar, 2002; Tagar, 1994a, 1999b).

visual memory, as if an imprint was left behind in space, created by the gesture. We can then observe or behold imaginatively that pattern or character as an objective observer. Once observed, we can explore this pattern from any point of view, aspect and angle (Tagar, 1999a). By externalizing³⁹ the internal dynamic energetically, this separates the issue from our personal identity, and frees us to enact, and express our inner drama of which there are many characters and roles we can play. We can do this by *entering in* again through visualization, sensation, gesture and sound, into every aspect of an inner pattern, bringing up other aspects for exploration. Once we are oriented we can identify the next step.

“The orientation grows as the exploration deepens, through the perspective created in this process” (Tagar, 1994a, p. 90). The next step could include anything from further exploration, to nurturing, confrontation or overcoming a reaction, and most likely would include using the sounds of human speech to sound-name various aspects in the process. All the processes described in this chapter are unique to the particular person and where I have described some specific processes, these are viewed as guiding principles, not set procedures, for exploring experience phenomenologically, through the body using the non-verbal tools as modes of knowing.

Amandla describes how through using the body in the way stated above, what orientation means for her:

With the orientation first of all, it brought memory back into particular situations where I had been yelled at or belted and I couldn't, as a child, be able to say what I wanted to say, 'it wasn't me,' or 'stop hurting me,' or any of those things where I was able to say no and I could recognise those places. During the orientation where I find out why it is I did something, the change was that I got to be able to see, everything was in front of me so I was able to tangibly, visually see who I was. all the colours and flavours of myself right there for me to look at and to choose from and to taste and to become familiar with. That means I have a clearer picture of who I am. That means there is nothing in me, whilst I do this work, that is hidden from me, there is full awareness of all the aspects of me that all have the potential to make a whole of me, without me not knowing what is going on in my body and in my psyche, in my head and my mind. I'm actually able

³⁹ The idea of externalization is also defined from the narrative perspective, by Bill O'Hanlon (1994, p.21): “Externalization basically entails a linguistic separation of the problem from the personal identity of the patient.” In psychophonetics, externalization is the energetic separation created by squeezing the body in a gesture, and then physically shaking it off and moving out of that position, to *behold* it.

to go 'okay, this is how I react when I'm in this situation', 'this is how I project if I am in this situation', in other words, if somebody starts confronting me, I have found that I become closed and I take it on board that I have done something wrong, and I will react in that fashion.

Whereas now, from the orientation, I understand that that was behaviour that was a defence mechanism when I was a child, and now as an adult with the orientation and the counselling and the empowerment I was able to learn new skills to face these situations in a way that wasn't jumping up to attention or doing something that was not involving the whole of me, but I was able to integrate all the aspects and make a decision and act upon the decision from a viewpoint that took in all of me, rather than just a section of myself.

Participating in an *enter-exit-behold* process, was not always an easy experience for the participants. Often they experienced an initial resistance, fear or self-doubt that had to be creatively overcome. One of the ways in which we may cope with fear is by *leaving the body* or *excarinating*. This process is described in detail in chapter five, in Amandla's story: "*The experience of excarnating (leaving the body)*" and won't be elaborated on further here. To become fully oriented, it is important that we become aware of when we are feeling consciously present or not present, as being *in* or *out* of our body, in order to really know what is happening within us, and in the world around us. Leaving the body, or excarnation, can happen at any point, whenever fear is triggered, whether it is during a process of orientation, empowerment or when connecting with our inner resources. The task is to become aware of how this fear and habitual coping action is triggered and how to learn other more constructive ways of meeting these situations.

The experience of resistance.

In resistance, Marilyn struggled between wanting to know what was happening and not wanting to face and feel the pain she knew was there. An example of working through resistance is described in chapter three, in Marilyn's story: "*The experience of resistance,*" so won't be repeated in this section. However, a similar situation of resistance is described from a therapist's perspective:

Resistance ... That in her which is so scared of the feelings which might be there desperately trying to escape from facing something inescapable in the deep. Once brought into gesture, she could let go, move out of that position and look back into the vacant space she left behind, where that remarkable gesture still echoed for both of us in its intense reality. She

could 'see' that fear for what it was. It had nothing to do with the holiday, the partner, the plans, the practicalities of life's struggles which were blamed before for her confusion. In the empty space where she has just been, she now beheld the little frightened girl having no tangible support which she once was, who, for some reason was triggered in that holiday, was again triggered as threatening and surfacing into her feeling life and flooding the consciousness of the mature woman with her fears. Once made conscious, embraced with awareness, this little girl can be taken care of by her owner. (Tagar, 1996b, p. 17)

By accepting and becoming interested in resistance and working with this experience phenomenologically, it can then become included in the process as something to come to know in itself, rather than something to overcome or fight against. On the path of self-knowledge, as the participants become aware of how the activity of their thinking is actually working, they discover how they may speculate, justify or deny experience. The following excerpt shows how the mind can potentially trick us and how Amandla overcame this through some creative thinking:

I began the counselling thinking that I didn't have a lot to heal. I'd read a lot of books, I'd worked on myself, thought I had it fairly sorted in my mind (Laughs)... and then I did this body-based counselling...and found it very hard to accept that there was still more stuff there to look at ...and I reached times where I almost wanted to say 'I give up, I don't want to know any more, I don't want to look at any more. I'm sick of this,' and then I thought to myself, 'this is just going to keep on coming up anyway throughout my life and this will still be something that isn't going to serve my self well. I would be much better off to know all of me and be aware of every part of me, do this job, even though it's hard at times because in the end the rewards are going to be paramount - the reward of wholeness, the reward of being able to know who I am. It has to be possible for me, because in my way of thinking, the more you know something, both sides of the coin, then in the end you know the whole of it. You can't just concentrate on the one side of the coin, the other side keeps sneaking up behind you and if you don't know what it is, it has the element of surprise, and you're not in control then.

Margaret summarises her process of exploration leading to orientation as:

Wow, you can get through anything by facing the fear ... In this work, I was able to go there, but not stay in it, just stepping in and out was quite amazing to me, the stepping in oohh yes (gestures) I remember that, mm all those feelings and stepping out and viewing from different angles, clarity and understanding...because I understand I'm not fearful, because I understand and it's known, it's known.

Compassion – choosing attitude.

A first step in any process of change is facing the unknown and making it known. However, at times this is not so easy, as there are situations in which I/we can become confused in my/our thinking. In this situation, there may be a number of conflicting inner voices that keep me/us feeling confused and disoriented, and I/we may have a need to find a way of becoming clearer about this.

This issue was addressed by Marilyn in a therapy session. On the way to caring and healing her heart she described feeling confused and wounded, as well as not liking that feeling and trying to deny its presence, while at the same time knowing that she needed to take care and heal her heart: *I didn't like it at first, it was very confronting...there were so many things happening, I couldn't feel compassion or find compassion for myself.* With the diversity of these internal voices within her, Marilyn went to a therapy session to gain a clearer perspective, to become oriented, and to open the way to become more self-accepting and compassionate. Three internal voices or perspectives appeared in this experience and can be named as: the one in need or wounded one; the self hater or judging one; and the compassionate one. The therapeutic process that Marilyn participated in, is called the "Compassion Triangle" (Tagar, 1995a, 1996d). By entering a process of *enter-exit-behold* and *staging*,⁴⁰ she moved from one position to another, exploring the three positions, from the inside, and from the outside, through the activity of *beholding*, until she gained a perspective regarding all three positions. By externalising the inner dynamics, Marilyn was able to distinguish between her feelings of vulnerability that needed to be cared for; her reaction that was judging and denying the one in need; and her compassionate self who could observe both the one in need and the one that judged: *Trying to find my truth...because I wanted something that wasn't going to stop the love and compassion and at the same time wanting something to protect myself.*

From the compassionate position, Marilyn could see the full picture and was now oriented in regards to this internal dynamic: *Connected with this, I realised I had strength and courage.* From this position Marilyn chose her next step. She

⁴⁰ 'Staging' is a term used in psychophonetics for deepening *beholding*, by looking into the different layers of the specific experience being beheld, to clarify imaginatively, to decide and create conditions for the next step, or as a way of integrating the revealed inner content (Tagar, 1993b).

decided that she needed to invoke an inner source of love and compassion, which she then provided to the one in need, in gesture, visualisation and with the sound “MMMM.” Marilyn describes this experience as a special gift:

All of that is being able to accept and to feel that it's quite okay to feel sad. I feel gratitude towards the whole process, it is really special, I feel it is a really sacred journey, not something to be taken lightly and being able to do it is a very special gift.

Through this process Marilyn became oriented, and created conditions for feeling a sense of heart safety. Compassion is usually felt towards others, but as in Marilyn's case, we can also feel and direct compassion towards ourselves, for our own self-care, nurturing and healing, as an act of intimacy (*in-to-me-see*). Yehuda Tagar (Tagar, 1995a) says:

Intimacy is being in the inside of things, knowing them from their own point of view. The future of humanity is intimacy, or else death. Compassion is leading the way to that future. We can practice it on ourselves. (p. 28)

An essential characteristic of change that emerged in this study was the activity of *coming to know* oneself, by becoming oriented, as Marilyn says: *Yeah that would be the heart of it. The whole thing is really about knowing myself, knowing what's going on inside my own self and an awareness of everything that happens within myself*, of which *thinking*, with compassion and love, is one of the key activities in this experience of knowing.

In summary, the exploration of an issue, through the process of body awareness and expression, can lead to an orientation in our thinking. This means, being able to perceive the activity of our own emotional and feeling life; to perceive our own responses to this activity of the inner soul life; to perceive the effects of these inner patterns on our thinking, feeling and willing, and on our well-being; as well as being able to become clearer in our perception of others. Becoming oriented in our thinking may be all that is needed, or perhaps being oriented leaves the following questions: What is the next step in my self development? Is knowing enough, or, do I have to overcome some hindrance, or, is there something missing, do I need more of something?

**Processes of Encounter Leading to the Experience of Becoming Empowered
(in Willing)**

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the shadow
Life is very long

T.S. Eliot.

The process of encounter leading to empowerment means developing the capacity to confront, within our own inner experience, any pattern of limitation, fear and traces of invasions or pressures, which may compromise our potential or expression, and to reclaim our personal power and assert our presence within our own inner space (Tagar, 1997, 1999b).

The experience of becoming empowered.

In the participant's stories, we can see that they had been struggling, with being defensive in their interactions with others, or were affected by negative influences, and were experiencing a range of emotions such as feeling disempowered, defeated, oppressed, weakened, overpowered, compromised, abused, violated, stressed by critical internal voices, unable to confront others or to speak clearly and assertively. These are all issues of power. In the therapeutic context, the assumption that psychophonetics makes, is that this tendency is embedded within us as a repetitive habit or reaction, which reoccurs or is projected into new situations (Tagar, 1999b, 2003). Amandla describes how through orientation she discovered what empowerment means for her:

It involved looking at the situations that I had learnt in orientation that caused the reactions and my defence mechanisms to come up, I was able to look at them and ahh...to bring them in under the light, bring them in so I could see them and then through osmosis of bringing that into myself from the understanding of it ...and then re-teach myself some new skills. The empowerment was a release, I could release those ways of behaving.

Through the exploration and orientation process an issue of power may emerge as the source of this pattern. In my experience, I have observed that before a change in this pattern can be created, the energetic inner force of the exposed dynamic

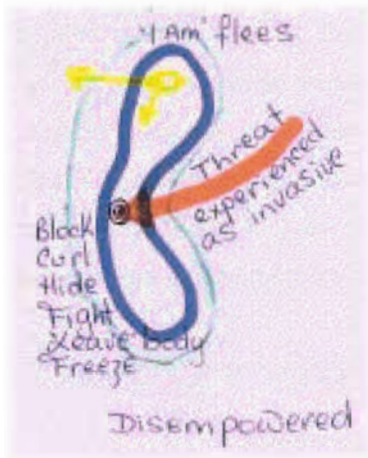


Figure 31. Disempowerment.

has to be owned as our own inner dynamic (that is, not blaming external sources of power). In order to change the pattern and to create a more empowered “I am” way of being, resources need to be available and accessed, in readiness for a strong “I am” presence to be available, to confront, reclaim, recycle and transform the inner dynamic into an outer capacity.

Zeus describes his change as:

Becoming empowered and also setting up boundaries to stop people getting into my space and triggering different things within me, it's just mainly getting control of myself. I always felt the other person had control of me because I do whatever they wanted me to do, I'd submit, do the right thing, and do what they asked, but I really didn't want to do that as I was giving away my power I suppose. And through all the sessions I've been just able to stand up to that and say what I wanted to say, or say how I felt, or just say no.

The main process for overcoming these reactionary behaviours described by participants is called *unblocking*.⁴¹ Through an action exploration process of *enter-exit-behold*, leading to an *unblocking* process, Yehuda Tagar (1999b) describes the following elements that have to become visible:

A clear picture of the internal dynamic resulting in the disempowerment experience; [Identify and distinguish offensive from defensive components of the experience]; the character, gesture, shape and sound of the invading/ pressuring power; and the internal posture of the receiving end of that invasion, one's own vulnerable part. (p. 260)

⁴¹ The process of “unblocking,” for example, of an emotional knot in the stomach, was first described by Yehuda Tagar (1991), in the article: “*Philophonetics – Language for the Whole Being*” published in “The Whole Person Magazine,” Aug/Sept. 1991. This article includes a series of photos that gives a visual picture of the guiding principles in this process.

Guided by the above activity, the act of *unblocking* can be done by entering into the experience of suffering, for a moment, and re-playing the dynamics of invasion in sound and gesture, which leads to stirring an internal natural reaction against it. This organic response is expressed and practiced, in gesture, movements and sounds, and the new inner strength is tested and practiced until the person remains present without reacting, in a clear personal inner soul space, as a preparation and a new basis for meeting everyday life situations (Tagar, 1999b). To complete the process, there are a variety of creative ways that can be used to maintain and to grow this personal space and to consolidate personal boundaries, through being connected with one's inner and outer resources.

The experience of overcoming fear.

It was only for a moment, catching sight of myself
before I had time to prepare myself
as I always prepare myself for the sight of myself,
that I quailed.

(Woolfe, 1931)

Before *unblocking* could be done, the participants described how fear was a major obstacle in stopping them from becoming more self-aware (as expressed in the above poem), from confronting their issues, and from speaking their truth, regarding what they really felt and knew. Zeus says: *Yeah, fear of confrontation, the fear that I will go back within myself because I don't want to hurt that other person or other people.* It appears that certain soul capacities need to be developed in the process of becoming empowered. For instance, Zeus developed *inner strength* which gave him the *courage* to overcome the fear of speaking what he thought and felt, about his relationship with his wife.

Amandla comments: *Before, in confrontation, I was very frightened, I wanted to hide, I avoided people that I thought would be like that* (threatening) and where she felt: *'I can't breathe, I need to hide', I need to run, you know.* By accessing her courage she faced the fear and was then able to say: *I can breathe, I can say what I need to say. I can stand strong.* Margaret however, describes how through *determination* and *interest* she was able to overcome the fear of facing her issues, in order to reclaim her power and to become her authentic self:

I felt great cause I actually did it myself , it was a really wonderful feeling to go back to the past trauma through the gesturing and to do it myself through the clay, reclaiming, as it was an issue that I had been fearful of ever going to that place ever again and it had inhibited my growth. I knew I had to get past that fear. revisit it, look at it, look at the issues and look at what was lost.

Thus, each person showed that the process of changing involved not just having a wish or intention, but they needed to activate their *will* and *courage* to take action, on this wish or thought. Amandla describes her relationship with fear:

Now the fear doesn't control me, the fear doesn't engulf me and take over me, it doesn't put me in a black hole anymore, now what it does is just put a caution sign up for me. It's my choice, I think my whole wish was to not keep experiencing fear and a reaction to everything that was triggering things off where I wasn't consciously controlling myself and the driving force that made me want to heal these things, even though it was rough and it was full on, was that I didn't want to go back and repeat and repeat and repeat the things that made my life hard.

Robert Sardello (1999a) has written a thought-provoking book called "*Freeing the Soul from Fear*," in which he talks about how our task is not to get rid of fear, but it is an opportunity for us to develop our capacities of inner strength. Rather than re-arranging our lives to avoid fear, and isolate ourselves from the world, soul work begins from the inside and works out into the world. Fears exist not just within us but exist around us in the world, and there appears to be a being of fear, that is beyond the personal issue of it being just my own fear. Thus, as Robert Sardello proposes, there is a need for balancing the images of fear with images that strengthen the soul life.⁴² Amandla points out the importance of creating a different image, or perspective, of fear:

The little tiny bit of fear serves me now by being aware, by being alert...fear is very healthy thing for me, fear is something that is a challenge and it is also an instinctual way of protecting yourself...I don't believe fear is healthy if it is driving you, if you're driving it, then you become friends with it, it becomes a part of you, and that is very necessary for your growth.

My understanding is that there are two primal reactions (fear and anger) arising initially from the survival instinct, warning us against and attempting to prevent hurt or ultimately death. Fear may also have the tendency to create anger as is evident in Margaret and Zeus's processes particularly. Once they faced the fear,

⁴² After the terrorist attack in America, Robert Sardello wrote a practical study guide to accompany his book: "*Freeing the Soul from Fear*," and some of these exercises are included in this research study.

there was a release of anger that arose initially, in the urge to speak that which hadn't or couldn't be spoken in the past, which then cleared the way for taking care of any hurt feelings. Margaret describes this process:

The anger was putting on a lid, I felt like I was suppressed, I didn't have any air, I was in this chamber and I couldn't breathe. I just went into that, and so that was I was not allowed to express myself as a child. I went into the inner child with all those feelings about not being able to express my anger and then I sit with her and say there's me here as an adult and...I can cuddle myself and I said to myself, it's going to be okay, I will look after you, and keep you safe. I'm learning to express myself in a way I want to. So it was very powerful.

When Zeus released anger through using clay, he found anger that he had been carrying around for a long time, but didn't know he had it. Since releasing that anger, he says: *I've been able to stand up and say what I wanted to say, or say how I felt, or just say no. After releasing the anger in me, I was calmer.* When fear infects our soul life, it becomes very difficult to change and we may feel isolated, with a different sense of who we are, that may also affect our relationships with others and the world (Sardello, 1999a). It appears to me that one of the reasons participants chose to go to counselling was because it offered a safe space whereby, any self-doubts, fears or self-hatreds could be faced, not alone, but with the counsellor as a supportive presence. By doing this they had the potential of learning new ways of creating a safe *inner space*, by becoming more self-aware, empowered and nurtured, learning how to live and express themselves differently in the face of these hindrances in the world. Amandla describes in detail how she cleared and transformed the negative forces that were affecting her life:

I had gotten to a negative place about myself. Being able to push those negative forces away with sound and gesture actually made me feel that I had taken a piece of baggage off my back...and the negative forces are transformed into light ... into understanding and awareness.

In the interview I asked her if this meant that she was getting rid of something and she says:

No, it's bringing light to those places, bringing information and awareness and embracing that. That's a big change. First of all, the release is releasing it from the physical body, the imprints that are in your energy field, they stay there until you physically remove them and you remove them with sounds and you remove

them with gestures, the sounds break down the vibration of that old imprint that is sitting around your energy fields and disintegrates it, to not be a place of not breathing in your body, not be a place where things are stuck and twisted and contracted. So to be able to make particular sounds, like HUD and releasing sounds like Garrhh and gestures that are pushing away gestures and removing these imprints from your energy field. The actual feeling after doing this type of work feels like I've taken old clothes off, it feels like that I have literally removed something from my body, it feels freer, it makes me able to stretch and makes my breathing not as contracted and I'm not in that 'oh!' feeling all the time, that gesture of fear...I felt a physical change which is immediate, a new me with new colours on, a new style on, there's a clearer, more pure me, one that is in touch with feelings...

Since that session, I felt new, my face, even to look in the mirror, my face was more relaxed, my movement is more relaxed. I've had many comments from people saying that my flow in my walk is not so stiff and contracted, my nature is more gentle in the fact that I'm not walking in fear, I'm now walking in a more relaxed state, I don't fear confrontation so much anymore.

Conversational interlude: Living with fear.

Have the following discussion with some of your friends:

Describe in detail a situation in your life in which you experienced fear. Focus on the following: What was the setting? What was your perception of the world at that moment of fear and how did it change from the time prior to the experience? How did time change? What did your body feel like? How did the experience run its course? What did you experience when the fear was resolved?

The purpose of this question is to begin developing the capacity to stay with and observe your experience in an engaged but objective way and finding language to express it without theorising, explaining, or psychologising about it. Description is a way of coming to the phenomenon itself (Sardello, 2001c, p. 2).⁴³

Empowerment means coming into one's own power (Tagar, 1995b) and it was interesting to follow this idea further, to see how it manifested over the time of the interviews. For instance, Zeus began by working through his issues of power, regarding his ability to stand up and express his feelings on an equal basis with his wife and with other people. Over the time of my communications with him I

⁴³ For further reading: Sardello, R. (1999). *Freeing the Soul from Fear*.

can see that this issue of power affected other aspects in his life. In particular, his ability to come to a sense of wholeness and integration in his sexuality (of his masculine and feminine aspects), as “a tender buddha”, is a real claiming of, and being in his own power. See chapter four: “The birthing of Zeus,” for descriptions of this aspect of Zeus’s process.⁴⁴

Releasing “blocked speaking.”

Blocked speaking was a common issue experienced by the participants, and Amandla says, for her it means: *Not being able to say what I want to say like ‘no’ or ‘I don’t want to’ or ‘please stop’ or any of those things, to express myself. Before I couldn’t speak, I was just scared* (As shown in Figure 32). The ability to speak how we really feel or think is held back, usually by fear, and needs to be discovered, recovered, released and practiced. Apparently, fear of public speaking is one of the most commonly experienced fears, and the following example gives a sense of how this fear may be experienced:

If the request, for instance, was to overcome the paralyzing fear of public speaking, and during the Action-Exploration phase one discovers that in occasions of speaking in front of people a black cloud is descending upon one’s chest, preventing it from being able to breathe - then that black cloud has to be confronted, dissolved, digested or ‘re-cycled’ (Tagar, 1994a, p. 90).⁴⁵

Blocked speaking may also manifest in someone who is a good listener but rarely speaks up, or in people who are pleasers and don’t like fighting, or in those people who keep secrets, for whatever reason.

⁴⁴ Further detailed descriptions of the empowerment process can be found in a case study format (Sherwood & Tagar, 2000b; Tagar, 1996c).

⁴⁵ A full description of this process is described in the article: “*Awakening to the Inner Resounding of Human Experience*” (Tagar, 1994a).



Figure 32. Vive: Blocked speaking.

One way of working through an issue of *blocked speaking* was shown by Margaret, in the *bodying forth* of herself in the shapes of clay. The clay gives a firsthand experience of the shapes, sounds and inner meanings of her world: *“I speak”* came out, using clay. I had a lot of issues to do with my voice, suppression, and finding my voice. Just being present in that place and seeing what was happening. To do this, Margaret had to gather her courage to overcome this blockage, and to release her voice: “Taking an active interest in the direct experience of now is an act of simple courage” (Tagar, 1996b, p. 20). She says:

We had to work through it, sort of like a puzzle and then the pieces of that puzzle came together and it all felt like the truth...it was a releasing and felt very strong, releasing my voice to just express myself generally was great, that clarity there too, cause that felt the truth.

When we feel the energy and sense of balancing in the present moment, it becomes an experience in the soul, and: “when we are on center, we experience reality in depth rather than in partition” (Richards, 1989, p. 53). As a consequence of the counselling work, Margaret said she was able to be a lot more grounded in

situations where there was a lot of tension around her, and she was able to stay present, not triggered, and not be a different person. *I was quite okay in my own skin. So speaking makes it much better when I don't mix it with my reaction.* This last sentence seems to be a key point in how we can change. When “I” am able to make choices and not just be caught in reacting to situations, then I understand that this process of becoming more of my true and non-reactive self *is* a transformation. Perhaps, this is what matters.

Artistic expression through such mediums as clay, painting and drawing are also powerful ways of entering into a phenomenon and of knowing intuitively, moving beyond sensory experience. In my experience and understanding from working with the arts over a long time, when my imagination is encouraged and I bring this into something created with my own hands, then deeper connections and knowing can be made visible. M. C. Richards (1980), quotes Irwin Kremen⁴⁶ an artist, who confirms the transformatory power of expressing creatively, saying it comes out of his living:

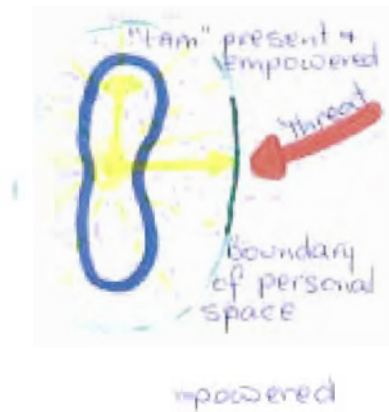
It is not a translation, direct or otherwise, but a distillate of that living the distillate, swings free of me, derives its significance from itself alone, is independent, new. Yet its making makes me. I experience its creation and that is my living also. Through it I become, and in this way, spiral outward upon myself like a chambered nautilus. (p. 191)

The above quote says that creating through clay or drawing *makes* me, and *through it I become*, which means that releasing expression/speaking is a powerful “I am” gesture. For some people however, there may be a sense of vulnerability in doing this, and the consolidation of a personal inner space, with the creation of a personal inner boundary may also be needed.

⁴⁶ The original reference is from Collages (Kremen, 1978).

The experience of re-creating personal boundaries.

Personal space can be described as an energetic dynamic and the following description gives a sense of this:



These are real bodily dynamics on the subtle, energetic level, invisible to the eye and only visible through their externally expressed symptoms. The boundary of personal space is a sort of a second skin which energetically protects us from the invasion of other people's energies as our first skin protects us from the elements of the physical surrounding. (Tagar, 1999b, p. 261)

Figure 33. Empowerment.

The participants described how in the experience of creating a clearer inner soul space for the "I" presence, they also then created personal inner boundaries. This is illustrated in the second drawing (Figure 33) of empowerment. I see personal space existing on four overlapping layers: the physical – in our physical surroundings, my home is a space in which I can relax, work and live how I want to; in our life energy, breathing and warming, I can expand my energy and warmth space around me; the astral/soul – in my feelings, emotions and power relations, I can feel on an equal standing with another person or I may feel disempowered in the presence of a particular person; and spiritually – in my inner sense of "I", and sense of freedom, I can feel at home spiritually, with an open heart and with an inner strength. For example, a sense of "home" can overlap in all of these areas.

In my experience, we seem to have within us a prototype or an inner knowing of how our personal space can be, as an ideal, as a sense of wholeness, or as a sense of well-being. The participants appeared to have this knowing, in that they described feeling that their space had been compromised, breached or intruded upon in various layers. Margaret and Zeus described clearly how they did this and what it meant for them. In the therapy process, Margaret creates an invisible

boundary around her and learns how to maintain this space with a protective guarding gesture:

Using the sound 'G' came naturally from my gesture and that worked much better, that was my choice...and the colour turquoise. While it was all going on I was able by visualising to put that boundary up around me, above me, underneath me and feel protected in my own space.....I was present, to guard my space.... It took some time to find the warrior presence that is within me, it's just been suppressed over the years ... that was really fantastic to get in touch with that.

The process of therapy has changed how I interact with my mother, having that guard and being still able to be in relationship with my mother and not react.....the change is that I was affected energetically more before, and now I'm not and am just retaining who I am. I am able to express more what I believe in and not worry about what my mother does and am more confident.

The *guarding* gesture is a psychophonetics ritual for maintaining our "I" presence and personal space. This ritual involves two faculties and performs two complementary functions: To holding a vulnerable inner part with one hand, in a protective gesture, while guarding against an external threat to this vulnerability, with the other arm stretched outward, in a guarding gesture (Tagar, 1993b). This is usually done initially, in a personal session, using movement, sound and visualization. It can then be practiced anytime as a way of protecting and guarding our personal soul space, enabling us to become more resilient when faced with a confronting situation in everyday life (Sherwood & Tagar, 2002; Tagar, 1999b). Zeus described situations in which he felt people were encroaching into his personal space and where he felt disempowered in expressing himself. He describes his process leading to *unblocking* and to creating a personal inner boundary:

I became the victim physically and initially the counsellor said sounds like D, G, Grr, Ah, and it was up to myself to pick out the release sound 'GAH', like when you hit a tennis ball and the barrier sound was 'D' stop! (gestures with hand forward like a stop sign). The system is you set up a shield in the therapy and after you finish you just continue practising this sound, just physically go through doing 'D-D' around in the space. Once I've set up the boundary I do find I come back within myself...What it is, is that I've established my boundaries when it comes to interactions with other people, that maybe triggered something within me where I close down or get angry or decide not to talk. Those boundaries are getting set up that I can access or whatever, take control of my own feelings, and take control of the situation.

So when something happens I know I can deal with it later on and re-establish the boundaries, with the sound or words I come to generate. It means that I am building up my self confidence, the strength within me and I know I have that yeah.

By becoming more aware of how our soul space can become compromised, we can strive to reclaim and maintain our personal space, by creating healthy inner boundaries. For instance, we may have allowed past experiences to restrict possibilities in the present, thereby compromising how we want to live. We may become compromised from the inside by what we do to ourselves, by negative self-talk, fears and doubts. Or, we may feel compromised from our interactions with others, and by how well we are able to maintain our sense of self, in the presence of the other. This was evident in the participant's descriptions of how they acted with reactionary behaviours and projections onto others, which meant they lost their sense of "I," through these habitual patterns of behaviour with other people. Some examples of these ways of acting are - by meeting another's need at all costs; pleasing others; seeking approval from others; avoiding conflict; making oneself smaller; or not expressing one's own feelings.

Our personal space can also be compromised through an external event or circumstance that relates to our basic needs for food, shelter, physical safety (Maslow, 1968) Amandla mentioned how when she was young, she was not fed properly and was often hungry and not safe, and she hid under her bed to try and avoid being beaten by her mother. But now as an adult, she was able to take care of herself, to develop an inner sense of safety that was enriched by her imagination. For example, in chapter four, in *"The experience of becoming empowered,"* Amandla vividly describes the creation of a "dome of protection." Dawn Freshwater (2005, p. 186) makes an astute observation that is relevant to the experience of empowerment and of creating a personal space: "Therapeutic spaces intentionally and unintentionally demand that practitioners and clients challenge oppression through expanding the space that is consciousness."

Reflecting on this, I asked myself the following questions: Once we create our personal space, what type of space does it then become? Is creating this space an ongoing process of becoming? How do "I" inhabit this space? How do "I" relate

with others and how do we create spaces between us? And how do we allow the “Other” (the universal) to be present in this space? I don’t intend to answer these questions in this study but leave them as a source of further contemplation, meditation, imagination, dreaming and action. As Rainer Marie Rilke says: “Through every human being, unique space, intimate space, opens up to the world” (cited in Bachelard, 1969, p. 202). I leave this space open.

The experience of distinguishing between guilt and conscience.

The feeling of conscience can often be confused with guilt, and become mixed together, as the language can be the same for both. Marilyn found that she experienced a major shift that was empowering, by working through a reaction of guilt in one of her counselling sessions, to distinguish it from her conscience, and through this she came more into her own power and strength. Through gesturing and finding how this dynamic lives and is reflected in the soul, we can then distinguish guilt from conscience. The process with Marilyn included recalling the situation of feeling guilty and entering into this experience, using body awareness, gesture and visualisation. When Marilyn did this, she had a realisation in the body and saw what had actually happened at that precise time of feeling guilty:

It was like the heart tied up in barbed wire. It was tied up like that because it had been wounded so much. My husband had accused me of causing all his problems and his unhappiness and everything and when that happened that’s what I did to my heart and that was the feeling that came with it, the feeling of guilt. Then I had a realisation that I hadn’t created his unhappiness.

Coming to know and accept the moral basis for what was compounding the destructive nature of the guilt was liberating for Marilyn, and then she was free to feel how she really felt. The issue, for Marilyn, was more concerned with conscience, and consequently, there was a release of feeling energy, with a sense of relief:

Bodily, it was a release really, a major release and now that this has happened I’m not confined, I don’t feel obligated you know, and I feel that I can move on and I don’t feel guilty, and I don’t feel this isn’t working for me and that’s fine...it’s just in my body, it’s my own feeling of just being able to stand up (laughs) ...I can stand up in my ‘I Am’, yeah, and just say I don’t need this, and it’s been pretty major shift.

Marilyn's guilt or reluctance to express her true feelings had been a hindrance in her healing process of the heart, and of her whole being. We have only one heart, and to open our heart to others and to close it to ourself, is damaging to the heart and to our whole being. The heart, says Walter Holtzapfel (1993, p. 81): "is the basis of inner stability." The "pangs of conscience," our inner voice, when strongly felt, can be "felt ... bodily in the heart region." (Holtzapfel, 1993, p. 78). It appears that, as we gain more inner certainty of our conscience, we develop the necessary strength to overcome further obstacles and accept the consequences of our actions. Guilt is a reaction and when not resolved can bring out the worst in us, whereas conscience is a feeling for the truth, and can potentially bring out the best in us.

The experience of "disappearing" as empowering.

Finally, becoming empowered is not just being able to confront situations, but can also be an action of hiding, of finding a safe inner space, inside the body, when faced with a threat. This is often done unconsciously, until we learn to stay present in a confronting situation, or until we have done something to change the inner dynamics that dis-empowers us. If we are not ready to confront the inner dynamics, then maybe the safest action is found in hiding (disappearing) and protecting ourself from having to confront. This can be both empowering, and can also connect us with our inner resources, until we feel ready to become more present in confronting situations, or until the external threat lessens. A detailed description of the experience of *disappearance* can be found in chapter five, in Amandla's story: "*The experience of hiding or disappearing into the body,*" and is better read in its entirety, so I won't repeat it here. Zeus summarises personal change through the process of empowerment:

If I hadn't of done the therapy and got my space I think there would have been a lot of anger and resentment, it was mainly because I could express myself in some way and I had that space where I could allow people in and I prepared myself for confrontation.

Soul empowerment enables us to awaken to old defence mechanisms which compromised our spirit, to enable us to digest and to take charge of our emotional life, to clear an inner space, so that the "I" can arrive and find a home in body and soul, with a stronger sense of inner authority.

Experiencing the power of the sounds of human speech.

One of the major tools for change experienced by the participants, in the empowerment processes, as well as in orientation and resourcefulness, was the use of the sounds. Sounds were used by the participants to match and to resonate exactly with the vibration of particular inner dynamics of experience, such as in the process of *unblocking* and *creating an inner boundary*, as well as a way of meeting inner needs and for healing. In my article (Steele, 2004), I described how the sounds can be a powerful resonating and therapeutic tool:

The capacity of sounds to resonate with specific imprints of experience makes them a powerful therapeutic tool as they can ... !echo" the experience of invasion, of inner and outer pressures, impositions, abuse, criticism as well as the experience of protection, pain, release, nurturing and all aspects of desired inner strength. (p. 69)

How important was the sound-work in the participants' experience of change? The descriptions showed that sound-work was an integral part of the participants' experience of change,⁴⁷ and was summarized in an interview with Amandla, who describes what it means for her:

I think the sound is imperative because it feels like I've broken down a black box that I've been inside. Each time I make a sound and gesture I give myself more space and just being able to do that with whatever force is coming at me and being able to push it away, the sound seems to break that thickness up, it seems to get it off, I had sticky yukky stuff to get off. I had negative thought patterns hanging around me and I would be able to crack with sound the vibrations of those down, and with body gesture. Old patterns of behaviour can be removed by sound and gesture. I was able to break down the vibrations of these things with a counteracting sound and it seems like I've involved the whole of me to heal the whole of me, and not just the mind. So the whole of me heals because of that.

As the counsellor is working with me, as she brings to me the sound of the force which I have found, I actually have a bodily reaction, a reaction within the body. I first find the sound and they use that sound and then I find a counter sound to break the vibrations of that sound down.

In the interview, I asked Amandla to describe how the sounds changed her:

The only way I could describe it is that I don't feel in a box anymore, I don't feel that I'm tight, I feel there's space around me, I feel I can breathe through more

⁴⁷ Further details on sound-work in psychophonetics can be found in my article: "The Theory and Application of Sounds in Therapy", published in the November 2004 edition of "Psychotherapy in Australia." See Appendix F.

parts of my body. I feel like I could spread my arms and legs out and just whirl around just like children do in a whizzy and that is all my space of freedom.

I also used sounds for resourcing which I never knew before, although it's so appropriate. In the resourcing process which is where I was feeling a lacking in a quality of some sort, I found the sound that perhaps you could liken it to a 'hummm' that a mother would hum to her baby, like a lullaby type of thing, that nurtured me to a love space and the holding myself in a gesture of embrace with that same sound gives me a feeling of fulfilment and love for myself and it's been able to teach me how to allow myself to feel nurtured and loved without having to go to another person. I can do it for myself. 'Mm- m -mm' it's a sound that moves up and down, it can also be a 'lah de dah de dahh', it's a beautiful sound, a mother's lullaby.

The power of the sounds can also be seen in many of the other descriptions included throughout this study. Resourcefulness, or accessing resources, is usually part of each therapeutic issue, and nearly always some element of resourcefulness and soundwork, is included to complete a therapeutic process. Whether it is an orientation, empowerment or resourcefulness type of issue, these three types of issues are inter-related. Being in our own power and overcoming obstacles along the way, takes courage and inner strength. The following story shows one possible perspective on the importance of developing these soul capacities:

A moment to reflect on the struggles in our lives.

A young girl found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, she sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had got as far as it could and could go no farther.

Then the young girl decided to help the butterfly, so she took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small shrivelled wings. The girl continued to watch the butterfly because she expected that, at any moment, the wings would emerge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the little butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings. It never was able to fly. What

the young girl in her kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening was the way of forcing the fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Freedom and flight would only come after this struggle. By depriving the butterfly of this struggle, she deprived it of being able to fly. If we went through life without (or avoiding) any hindrances or obstacles, we may not find the inner strength to be as strong as what we could have been, and we may never fly.⁴⁸
(Adapted version, author unknown)

Another perspective on how we can come into our own power is in the example of when a client describes to his counsellor, his dream of a “tiger” which he initially interpreted as his mother. Through the counselling process he was able to realise that, “the tiger is in *him*” and thus, was able to: “give up fighting it and assimilate it, take it in as part of his own strength, and, as a result, become more affirmative as a person” (May, 1969, p. 285).

A reflective pause.

I am reminded of how I am striving to come into my own power, and of how I am striving to manifest the force of will that flows into and works within my soul and spirit, life and body. In working on this chapter, there was a period leading up to the writing of this section on orientation, empowerment and resourcefulness, where I could not write or even think clearly. I experienced a very strong force that I felt was pushing towards me, is the only way I can describe it (neither positive nor negative), an energy, that in the face of, I couldn't find the inner effort to think or write anything. This felt very strange, as I knew what I wanted to write, and when I checked my inner life I could find no areas of resistance in my will, such as in my drive, motivation, wish, intent, decision or commitment to do the work. During this time, I didn't write or even try to gather my thoughts, and just did what I could do.

This went on for nearly two weeks and then one day it was gone, and I continued in an easy flow of writing this chapter. In hindsight, I was facing a threshold of

⁴⁸ After reading the first version of this story, Dyann expressed a concern that the way this story was written could be used politically to justify oppression of vulnerable social groups. This is not my interpretation and I appreciate her comment, so I have revised this story, by changing some of the sentences and words to be more relevant to what I am trying to portray.

the will (not willpower in the ordinary sense), because something was missing. I eventually decided to just stay with this experience instead of trying to push my way through - I surrendered to it and caught those small moments in which I found some effortlessness in thinking and writing. I had to embody my thinking and will with feeling and I wasn't doing that initially. I discovered once again, that I had to *be* what I was writing. By surrendering, I found that I could embrace my thoughts and actions with feelings of acceptance and presence, and own this writing with a greater sense of warmth and peace. By doing this, an easier flow came into my writing and into my thinking. In my situation, I could now see how inter-related these three activities were and how they can lead into *speaking*, in my case, as speaking expressed through writing. I had to embrace the *intention* in my thinking and the determination or *urge* to write these thoughts, *with* how I *felt* about what I thought and wanted to write (Tagar, 1992; 1994b).

Once again, I am reminded of the power of realising a wholeness that comes through a “living thinking” by owning, embodying and participating in the parts, as I am doing it, that my lived experience *is* my research method – it is a “living thinking” and “living methodology” that comes from the whole of me – as phenomenology in practice.⁴⁹

Processes of Resourcefulness leading to Nurturing, Providing for Inner Needs or to the Invocation of Inner Resources (in Feeling)

How do we embrace our thinking and will with feeling? In the previous section, Amandla described connecting to inner resources using sounds, after completing an empowerment process. My understanding is that the resonance dynamics of the sounds live in her life body and can resound with the quality that she needs, at that time. In psychophonetics, these qualities can be expressed through the breath, in sensing, imagining, visualising, moving and sounding. Resourcefulness in this context means connection to, and the enhancing the inner qualities, of feelings,

⁴⁹ I would like to acknowledge the feedback given by my supervisors on the first draft of this chapter that encouraged and inspired me to include this reflective part. to make this more visible in my writing. I hope that I achieved this.

through nurturing and providing self-care, or through the invocation of an inner source of strength. As Yehuda Tagar (1999b) says:

In the depth of needing something real, beyond all avoidance, addictive substances, fear and defences – there lies the beginning of the connection to the internal resource of that which is not available externally. (p. 262)



Figure 34. © Michael Leunig I.⁵⁰

As I mentioned previously, accessing resources may be relevant as part of the completion of an orientation and/or empowerment process, but some of these processes themselves can also be relevant for becoming more resourceful. For example, hiding or disappearing from facing a fearful encounter, may be the only way of finding a safe place in which to connect to inner resources; while the process of moving from an unconscious reaction to speaking openly, is also a way of re-creating connections with inner resources, that enables speaking truly. As a researcher, I often had to spend time during the writing of this work, to take care of my own needs, to connect with spiritual resources that I strongly feel are guiding me in this work, and as long as I didn't lose this connection, I found this presence supportive, and consequently the work flowed.

In the therapeutic context, the participants described resourcefulness, as: taking care of their own needs, manifesting and connecting with some quality they need, such as joy, peace or calmness; of accessing an inner source, such as a "god presence," nature spirits, or a knowing; caring for their inner being, nurturing (for example, of an inner child) and protecting self (for example, by creating an imaginary dome around oneself), with self-care gestures and sounds to any part of the body that needed it. Resourcefulness connects us in our feeling and soul life as

⁵⁰ I have written permission from Michael Leunig (5/3/02) to use his cartoon pictures in my work.

feelings of presence and beingness, with our sensitivity, compassion, and our love.

Initially, all participants felt a sense of disconnection from their inner resources, and through the therapeutic process, each one described how they had to confront the depth of their need and the missing of it.

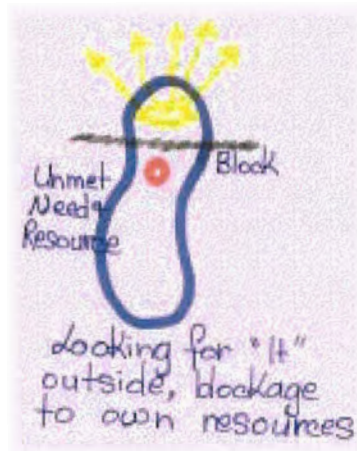


Figure 35. Disconnection.

Invoking, is another aspect of resourcefulness. Invoking was done through visualisation, by activating the imagination, and creating an invocation of a quality that was felt to be missing, in the soul. Each participant described how they met an inner need, in their own unique and creative way, and could make a connection to the fulfilment of meeting this need.

Providing and nurturing.

Providing and nurturing are common activities of resourcefulness described throughout all of the stories. One example of this is described in chapter three, in Marilyn's story, which she named as *Nurturing of Self – Healing the Heart*.⁵¹ Marilyn experienced loss and went through a profound experience of deepening in her feeling life, from feeling emptiness in the core of her being, feeling a void

⁵¹ See chapter 3, for the full description of Marilyn's "Nurturing of Self" process.

in her life, to finding joy and heart warmth and the spiritual resources to create a new life for herself:

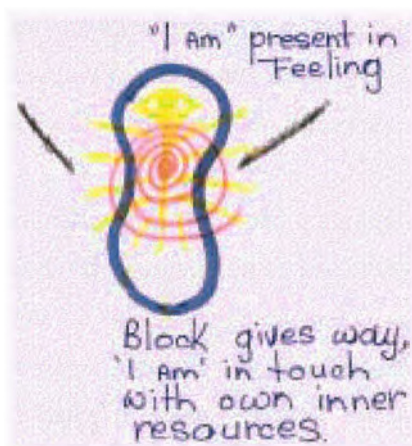
On this particular day there was a difference in my nurturing, (imagined and visualised) my heart was first covered in a woven blanket of love and warmth, which was pink and gold, and this then replaced with a pure gold blanket and it was ultra fine like fine toffee but was soft not brittle, that covered my heart and yeah, it felt, was really lovely. The sound (I sounded) was a warm high vibrating energy 'MMMMMM' sound, with a central point to it but also vibrating graduating out, that was very nice and then after a couple of days of nurturing my heart, this beautiful pink colour surrounded by exquisite perfumed rose petals, I could visualise and smell the petals. I had some wonderful sessions nurturing my heart, I can smell, a divine smell absolutely. A warm gentle feeling sound "MM" came with feeling. I could see the colour yellow with that sound and it's dancing, so the sounds changed which was interesting because there was a difference in the changes, it felt like the heart had been healed, so with that healing the joy was able to manifest itself and be in there. Until the heart had actually been healed and been given these nurturing sounds and the love that it required it couldn't experience joy. The sounds made a big change for me.

Marilyn painted her experiences and believed that this was the best way for her to connect with and to express her feelings: *I would say doing wet on wet paintings...gets me out of my head and into my feelings where I know what's going on underneath in the feelings.* By working at such a deep level, Marilyn found that: *It means that I'm being more compassionate to the other person as well as to myself, self care, such as being aware when I need resourcing.* Marilyn's process shows how the heart can come to hold a special place in our lives and can be regarded as the centre of the life processes and of the feeling life. Figure 36, also gives a sense of this process. Walter Hotzapfel (1993, p. 81) confirms this and says that inner peace, balance and stability of soul corresponds with the organic function of the heart.



Figure 36. © Michael Leunig 2.

Margaret described a very strong connection that helped her to overcome her fears, and she makes the point that when our whole being is involved in a process, there is a resounding in the soul that is always available:



You know all through this there's been a greater connection to the god source so that's entwined within that, as a connectedness, it's all in the I Am for me, the rod of light. It's that connectedness to spirit so it's the 'I Am', the rod of light, connected the universe and to mother earth, that's within me. When I did the clay work it still resounds within me, as I am speaking, is very strong in me from the first few sessions, it will never leave because it was set on such a deep level, a soul level that that sort of thing doesn't leave.

Figure 37. Inner connection.

In transformative personal work, when we look only outside for our needs to be met and ignore the possibility of making a direct connection within ourselves, we may then become dependent upon others to give us what we need. In my experience, this is where co-dependency in relationships and addictive behaviours can potentially develop. As Figure 37 indicates, when we look inward to experience a missing quality, to see what is happening, then we have the opportunity to re-connect with an inner need (Tagar, 1996a). In doing this, we may experience an inner blockage that stops us from connecting with this quality we need, which means an empowerment process is relevant, as a way to restore the health of our breathing by clearing the emotional blocking of it. Then we can honour our whole self, as the following passage suggests:

Unless we awaken to the consciousness process, the vast majority of us are run by the energy patterns with which we are identified or by those which we have disowned We must learn to honour all our selves. The selves we do not honour grow inside of us in unconscious ways, gaining power and authority. (Stone & Winkelman, 1989, pp. 22, 25)

In owning their inner patterns, the participant's were awakening to their experience and changing, by developing a sensitivity and communication with

their inner needs, and by developing ways of meeting those needs. Finding resources, means also being able to find those outer resources that resonate within, to enrich our feeling life, like being in the garden or going for a walk along the beach, or connecting with nature as a resource. If needed, we can also recall the echo of these experiences in our imagination, to re-connect with feeling these qualities again (if a garden is not available). As Margaret says: *I feel connected to the plants and I feel connected, whole and energetic, it gives me energy. It nurtures the etheric, makes me feel more alive and energetic.*

The participants described a variety of resources that were supportive for taking action. For Margaret, there had always been a supportive connection with nature: *There's a real energy exchange of the nature spirits, you get a lot of energy from it, so there's been a two way thing, there's something that happens, a transaction that happens, when in nature.* For Zeus, he just knows there are spirits helping him all the time:

I feel them, the feeling is your heart knows, in my heart, it's a feeling, a knowing, a glowing sensation, there is an expansion of the body or the heart with lots of colours changing red to yellow to blues !and he realised that" there is a softness you can become in touch with through the body that helps nurture ... !and this is shown in his drawing": as a tender buddha, no shell, no nothing, just sitting, the buddha is myself.

The meditative verses from the "Calendar of the Soul" as well as the seasonal contemplations, are a great personal resource enabling this work to evolve and be manifested and written in this form. Not always do we have to *do* something to be connected with our feelings, *being* aware and present in our feelings, can keep us in touch with our soul life and our lived experience. Margaret discovered the importance of just *being in* how she is feeling:

Sometimes there is a certain amount of sadness there as well as the healing, it's like you can't do anything about it, it's just like a healing in itself, just to be present with it (instead of) I always had to do something about it, to fix it up...just to be present with it, I don't have to do anything about it.

An experiential interlude: Feeling and beauty.

“To be able to live in beauty is one of the strongest, most forceful ways of feeling and of living in a conscious soul life ... Beauty cannot co-exist with fear ... If we make our lives beautiful, fear has been conquered” (Sardello, 2001c, p. 16). How do we go about being present in our senses in a soulful way so that we begin to live beauty? The following exercise helps to develop our capacity for feeling beauty. Collect a rose and put it in a vase.

Observe the rose carefully. Then close your eyes and make an inner image of the rose. Do not remember the rose, but make an inner image, one that exactly mirrors the rose you observed. Stabilize and hold the image steady. Try now to be aware of the qualities of the rose image. After a while, try to "step" into the image. Be aware of the qualities now experienced. Then extinguish the rose image and remain as long as possible in the void of silence, and listen into the silence. Then, open your eyes ... be aware of the qualities you now feel. (2001c, p. 16)

Move and breathe (and with sound if you wish) this feeling with your whole body. Write a description of what occurred during this experience, including how you experienced it. How did you experience the qualities of the rose, beyond what you sense and know of it (Sardello, 2001c).

The experience of self-parenting.

Another common aspect of resourcing, experienced particularly by Margaret and Amandla, was the experience of “self-parenting.” This means self-parenting of an *inner child* in need of attention and care. The dynamics of the *inner child* can determine our behaviour, responses, how well we connect or are cut off from our inner resources, energy, relationships, well-being, creativity, purpose and depth of meaning in our life (Chartres, 1996).⁵² The participants described how they established self-care skills to heal. This was shown particularly in the changes that occurred in Margaret’s relationship with her two children, where she was able to verbalise her feelings to them and as a consequence, conversations became more gentle. For Amandla, she was able to visit and be with her parents and siblings, without engaging in old reactions or projections, and was able to speak her truth

⁵² Robin Chartres was my name at that time, since then I have changed back to my birth name: Robin Steele.

calmly. The ability to self-parent, or to take care of our inner needs, has implications in the world for how we are as parents, of our own children, in being able to meet their needs, as the following example shows:

A man is despairing to make a real connection to his nine year old son. He feels blocked and cut off from him, unavailable as the loving close father he wishes to be to him. It breaks his heart, it is not in his control. A non-verbal conversation evolves between the mature man and his inner-child, the one who at nine years old was completely cut off from his father who was not there in his life, and with the pain, hurt, anger and resentment still alive as they were then. The man finds a way to take care, to father his inner-child. Soon after, his relationship to his son picks up, and they can start to relate to each other, closing the gap with love and warmth. The bridge is created inside first, then the bridging to the outside is made possible. (Tagar, 1996a, p. 25)



Figure 38. Untitled

The hope and resilience we need for ourselves as adults involves taking care, by listening to/with what is happening within the body, and accepting these experiences as a source of truth for ourselves. Hope (that she had actually changed) was an important factor for Amandla, in her decision to visit her parents again after many years:

I'm hoping that I will have peace and have common ground with my family which was only there before fractionally. I'm hoping that I can find a flow of myself within that dynamic with family, allowing my family to be who they are as well and accepting who they are, with all their dysfunctions and functions and not wanting to fix them or change them or feel that I need to fix or change myself to fit in. So I'm hoping for some flow, some peace and probably something that I would really, really like to do but if it doesn't happen I'm also okay with that is to be able to have a cup of coffee with my mother and talk as friends. That is something that I would really like to do.

She's not a well woman, and I would say doesn't have very much longer on this earth and I would just like us to be friends. So I would like to find common ground with her and let her know I love her and allow her to show me love, which I'm sure she wants to do. We've just never been able to find that place. So that would be the grand gift of becoming whole. But I'm also aware that she may not be ready for that and that's okay too. So a lot of acceptance has come this way for me.

Amandla's story showed there was a change in how she related with her parents, and this did open a space for a better relationship with them. As she says: *I have grown up*. By taking care of her hurt feelings, and expressing herself more truly, she was able to meet them on more equal terms. Amandla said in our final interview, that this visit consolidated the reality of her change, brought a sense of wholeness, with an ability to listen, speak and express her feelings and thoughts, which offered an opportunity for further developing her resources and strengths.

It is as though we listened and such listening as ours enfolds us
in a silence in which at last we begin to hear
what we are meant to be.

Lao Tzu.

The above poem reminds me that perhaps we all have an opportunity to make a contribution to humanity by creating new forms of relationships, where we not only listen but also hear through our feeling heart, to what is happening, not just within ourselves and with our own children, but for future generations. In chapter five, in the section: *"The experience of becoming creative and healing,"* there is a motto of self-parenting. It captures for me, the essence of self-parenting, in the invocation of higher aspects of oneself, of restoring an open and direct communication between our consciousness and our higher being, and of the possibilities for creating a different relationship with self and others.

Barry Duncan, a therapist, author, co-founder and co-director of the "Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change," offers the following perspective on his experience and research on therapeutic change:

What can encourage change are extra-therapeutic factors and a 'good enough' relationship that allows for those factors to become known and implemented per the client's wishes Technique accounts for a small

piece of the outcome pie. But technique as an instance of the alliance in action, that is, it fits the client's ideas of what could help, addresses his or her goals, and occurs in a relationship perceived to be a good fit, is part of an overall process that engages the client to make the change. Technique is like a magnifying glass on a sunny day. It brings together, focuses, and concentrates the client's strengths, resources, and ideas, narrows them to a point in space and time, and causes them to ignite into action. The technique isn't the action - it provides a ritual (a la Frank) for the action. (personal communication, 10/2/05)

This last point, that the technique isn't the action, is an important one to remember in terms of how we are changing. The specific therapy processes that I have named in this chapter are not meant to be taken as set steps that must be followed, as they would then become an imposition on the client by the therapist, and the person's unique experience would be diminished. They are meant as guiding principles to encourage our imaginative, intuitive and creative capacities for exploring our inner life, that hopefully lead us to a true speaking, meeting and communion with self, others and the world.

I would like to mention that Barry Duncan, Scott Miller and others have been working diligently for change in the field of counselling and psychotherapy for many years, writing books, doing research and by developing practical feedback forms that gives each client a stronger voice *in* the counselling session, that encourages more therapists to work with the client's resources and the client's theory of change.⁵³ I often feel challenged by the pervading question of, how do we meet the changing nature and needs of not only our personal experience but also of the wider community, especially in these times when, as Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) once remarked that the dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.

⁵³ Client directed outcome informed work has recently been officially accepted into the mainstream, with a chapter by Barry Duncan and colleagues describing this work, plus being referenced throughout the volume and its research recognized and validated, in the new second edition of the "*Handbook of Psychotherapy Integration*" (personal communication from Barry Duncan 23/2/05).

Other Processes and Thresholds

There are other processes described by the participants that are not included in this chapter, as they are described in detail elsewhere and I do not need to repeat them here. However, I am mentioning the main ones for you to refer to, as they show how the three aspects of orientation, empowerment and resourcefulness, are interweaving parts of the whole process. There were a number of inner thresholds that participants had to cross and Marilyn's process called "Evolving Spiritually – Crossing a Threshold," describes a profound threshold experience expressed through paintings. She had to cross a gap between who she was at that time and who she potentially was becoming. She had to overcome a fear of her higher being. With courage, wisdom and a wish to know, she took the next step and integrated this experience into her life.

In chapter five, Amandla described very clearly the process of exarnating (leaving the body), and disappearing, which can occur at anytime during a person's process, if there is a tendency to exarnate or disappear when confronted with a real or imagined confronting situation.

An "I am" centering exercise was described in detail, in: "*A counselling session with Marilyn*," and in the workshop on sounding her name, in the second part of chapter three, called "Interweaving Threads."

Amandla's process of healing her body showed a profound process of imagination and intuition to inspire healing, not just emotionally, but also making visible physical changes through the healing of her physical body. These processes are detailed in chapter five, "Re-membering the Body – Amandla," in the following sections: "The experience of healing the body" and "A counselling session with Amandla." The counselling session is a good example of a physical psychophonetics process.

Thinking, Feeling and Willing leading into Speaking

Awakening and transforming through these three types of issues, and integrating thinking, feeling and willing within ourselves, allows for the possibility of creating a space for the “I” to penetrate the layers of our being and become more present in body and soul. The extent to which we can become more self-aware and oriented, more connected with our inner strength and feeling life, more able to confront difficult situations, to stay present and able to take action to express how we really feel and think – then a more genuine and authentic speaking (and expressing of oneself, not necessarily verbally) appears to shine through, coming from the core of our being, as a creative activity. As Zeus says: *I birthed myself*. Sustainable change and transformation happens in our everyday lives and interactions, with the next person we meet, as opportunities for learning, such as, in becoming less reactive, and not avoiding or trying to please others: “True Speaking is the breathing of one’s soul, a step in fulfilling what one has come down to earth to fulfil” (Tagar, 1994a, p. 91).

When the “I” deepens itself in feeling, thinking can become inspired and is freed from its dependence on bodily sense perception (Steiner, 2004). When we face and dissolve our fears, expose and take care of self-hatred and doubts, then “I” can potentially speak truly, express feelings honestly and become a more creative human being. It appears that change is happening, whether we call it a process of change, alchemy, metamorphosis or transformation, there are new capacities being developed; not just as “I” am speaking, but through a growing richness in our imagination and a more secure confidence in our intuition and knowing. Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. xxxiv) expresses this idea when he proposes, in his book *“The Poetics of Space”* to consider: “the imagination as a major power of human nature.” For instance, when I see a beautiful sunset a feeling may arise within that is enhanced with sounding ‘aaaahhh’. This may inspire me: “to paint the scene or to write a poem or to imagine a future holiday or to realise intuitively that it is time to go and live by the sea” (Steele, 2004, p. 69), as the sunsets over the ocean in Western Australia are particularly beautiful. Perhaps it is only by being able to imagine a possible future that we can change, and this was shown in the participant’s act of making a *wish* to change. This tells me that they/we can

imagine their/our becoming and that it is their/our responsibility to create the conditions for this to happen.

The importance of including body, soul and spirit can be seen from three perspectives: in the body, we find the world as a given fact; in the soul, we make the world our own personal concern, and in the spirit, we strive for knowledge of the world (Sardello, 1995). What stands out for me, throughout this whole study on change, is the power of love, as a guiding force for the “I” to arrive. Robert Sardello (1995) echoes these thoughts about the journey of the soul and summarises three qualities of soul that he thinks must be developed if we are to be able to meet successfully the demands of the world, with the power of love. These are: a deep and strong interest in what we can be in the future; a strong “I am” making responsible choices as a co-creator; and, the soul needs to free itself from just feeling from its own perspective, to: “develop the capacity to feel itself in everything in the outer world – soul as world soul” (Sardello, 1995, p. xviii). Perhaps we can move in this direction by taking responsibility for overcoming our everyday reactions and owning our projections, by developing an awareness of what resounds within us, by listening to our inner resounding, and creating a more intimate relationship and meeting within ourselves, with others and in our meeting with the world.

Our human experience is an experience in movement and thought and form ... The most we can do is comment on the movement, the thought and the form, but those comments are of great value if they can help people to learn to move gracefully, to think clearly, to form – like artists – the matter of their lives. (Zukav, 1990, p. 14)

Like Gary Zukav says in the above quote, we can only really comment on the moving nature of change. This means, by deepening our love, compassion and enthusiasm as healing forces of light, then we can also create and form it for our lives together in the future. The opposite would see hatred of the spirit gaining a stronger hold, which would leave us feeling empty and hollow. It is a challenge to change and transform, as this means we have to learn to work more creatively in our thinking, so as not to let doubt in spiritual things take over, which would lead us into fantasy and illusionary thinking. Fear is probably the most obvious challenge for most people to face today, as there is so much fighting, terrorism

and uncertainty in the world, which makes us feel vulnerable to feeling attacked by negative forces, and can limit the creative spirit. Facing fear does demand a greater courage from us. To overcome any negative influences, on the astral, etheric and physical body, it appears that we need more faith, love and hope not just within ourselves, but also in our relationships with others and in our actions in the world (Sardello, 1999a).

Perhaps the heading of this section needs to be expanded, as change may not just be the coming into our speaking. Maybe, it would be more accurate to say, that thinking, feeling and willing leads into speaking, but also enables the potential for a true meeting with others (that includes listening as well as speaking/expressing), and for communion with spirit. Margaret did this by creating more intimate meetings with her husband and children and by attunement within herself and with nature; while Marilyn connected more deeply in her heart feelings and with her spiritual source. Zeus expressed himself more openly with his wife and with members of a group, becoming more in tune with his spiritual resources (as the tender buddha experience).

In this time of change, maybe we are voices calling in the wilderness, striving to make a way straight within the whole human being, for the “I am” (Tagar, 1994a) or said another way, “ubuntu” which means, “I am because we are; we are because I am.” Ubuntu is a Zulu word that really means I am because you are. Our humanity is bound up with one another, and as Nelson Mandela once commented, the spirit of ubuntu is the profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings. There is a challenge for us to be mindful of an illusion that therapy may, unconsciously or consciously, engender an isolated “I,” but with the spirit of ubuntu, we can strive together for a better world.

The following prayer encompasses the essence, depth and spirit of the human striving described throughout this thesis - of body, soul and spirit, including the life/soul processes.⁵⁴ It was written by Yehuda Tagar, as a prayer for the

⁵⁴ This prayer is based on the Lords prayer, the seven practical conditions for personal & spiritual development, and associated counsellor qualities, adapted from chapter five, “How to know Higher Worlds” by Rudolf Steiner. For example: May our bodies be nurtured and healed –give us this day our daily bread - commitment to health and well-being, on all levels equates with self-care and well-being:

manifestation of the true potential of human meeting, and expresses poetically, the holistic nature of change, as expressed in this thesis:

May the creation of all beings be remembered
 May it be truly named,
 Its essence - further manifest,
 And may its will prevail
 As it does within the Heart of things
 So also in their outer manifestations.
 May our Bodies be nurtured and healed;
 May our wounds transform in us into compassion
 So that the pains we have inflicted ourselves might be forgiven,
 And may the Pressures to be more or to be less than Human
 Give way in us to the human being that we are,
 So that from the Lie we may awaken
 To our true Light
 Our true Life
 And our Love.

breathing/observing. Or, May its will prevail, as it does in the heart of things, so also in their outer manifestations ... Thy Will be done – Implementing the connection between resolution into action equates with self-responsibility: maintaining/practicing.

EPILOGUE

“Who are *you*?” said the Caterpillar.
 Alice replied, rather shyly,
 “I – I hardly know, sir, just at present –
 at least I knew who I *was* when I got up this morning,
 but I must have been changed several times since then”.
 “What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar sternly.
 “Explain yourself!”

Lewis Carroll (1960, p. 36)

Dreaming

After writing chapter seven, and receiving feedback about it, in a meeting with my supervisors, I was feeling very full of all that I still had to do, and was wondering not only how I was going to write the Epilogue, but what was I going to write. This mood, and wondering, remained during the following day, when I attended a workshop on ethics and politics in professional life, met with visiting lecturers from overseas, and later the same day listened to a lecture by Dr. John Lees: “*The Relevancy of Spirituality to Research and Clinical Practice.*” After the lecture a group of us went out for dinner.

That night I had a dream:

It is late at night, I have just come home from being out to dinner with a group of people from the university, and I am in my study when I hear a knock on the front door. I run up my well-lit hallway, and the thought passes through my mind that it may be Dawn, my supervisor, looking for somewhere to stay. I am very, very tired and as I open the door, I find it very difficult to open my eyes to see anyone and it is dark, so I call out, “Who is there?” “Who is it?” No-one answers and I decide to close the door as I can’t see clearly and don’t know who is there. As I close the door I have to use great effort because there is a strong energy or force (neither positive nor negative) that I have to push against to close the door. I look through the glass window on the door, and see no-one. I feel puzzled and wonder who is there and in this moment I wake up.

Over three consecutive days, I had three very meaningful meetings that gradually shone light on this dream, and these meetings occurred in the context of a number of workshops and meetings facilitated by Dr. John Lees, a visiting university lecturer, therapist and anthroposophist. The first experience came in a conversation with the visiting lecturer, in which I spoke about my experience as a practitioner of psychophonetics, when suddenly, fear arose within me as an anxiety regarding a perceived consequence from what I had spoken about, and thinking that a certain person who had confronted me in the past may confront me again. I had experienced this anxiety before, situated in times when someone gets a second-hand version of what she thinks I have said. This anxiety infects my thoughts, only in certain occasions, when I am being outspoken in my knowing/truth. From this conversation, I was left with the pressing question: What happens in this dream image of opening or closing the door? The mystery of the door – open and/or closed! “There are two ‘beings’ in a door ... a door awakens in us a two-way dream ... it is doubly symbolical” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 224).

This reminds me of the following participants and the different ways we can relate to doors. For Marilyn, she had the image of a door as an archway, an inner threshold to enter and go through; for Zeus, the door of his home was shut for the last time by both he and his wife in a ritual of farewell, of finishing their marriage; and for Amandla, she moved in and out of many doors, as she moved from one place to another, over the year of the interviews. These events show how doors can appear as a passage in between one world and another, one state of being and another, and one place and another.

The second experience came in a workshop activity, with a fellow student at the university. We each had to engage in a dialogue and describe an experience of something still unfinished. I described my dream and my partner described an experience of overwhelming fear, and the feeling of the force of being attacked verbally and energetically, by a group of colleagues, when she speaks her truth. In this dialogue, while listening to her story, I made a connection with a knowing, that the force I had to push against may possibly be the traces of a memory of when I had suffered a similar group attack in the past (in another lifetime). In the

act of closing the door, maybe I am awakening to the intimacy of speaking in a more powerful way. Gaston Bachelard (1969) says a house can be a space for intimacy, or it can be a space that defends intimacy. I reflected on this realisation for awhile, as I was captured by the meaningfulness of closing the door, rather than opening it. Additionally, it was how I was closing the door that became most meaningful. It felt like I had owned something, I was standing more within my own power by closing the door, more able to express who I am. Perhaps I was/am more present when the door was/is shut! However, the door doesn't necessarily shut out the world, or turn us inward. Perhaps we turn in and out, or turn inside out! The following quote comes to the heart of this:

When we reach our innermost heart, we reach a realm where we are not only intimately at home with ourselves, but intimately united with others, all others. The heart is not a lonely place. It is the realm where solitude and togetherness coincide. (Steindl-Rast, 1984, p. 29)

The third experience came the next day, arising from a group conversation in a workshop at the university. We were discussing Jung, and a series of pictures that showed the process of transformation. We talked about some of the impacts that traditional ways of research can have on us, as researchers, when the inner process of knowing and researching is denied. We talked about how there appears to be a splitting into separate disciplines of knowledge, and how this splitting can be evident also in the ways of working of some academics, so that it can become very confusing for those people who want to embrace a more holistic and organic approach to knowledge and research. After this conversation, one of the people there approached me and acknowledged how she had been through a similar experience of confusion and anxiety, but had to leave that particular workplace situation. This meeting was very moving, heart-felt and healing for both of us, as we had found a space in which we could both speak freely about our shared experiences.

In the world of synchronicity, this particular person who approached me at the workshop, had also been connected with my research, during the early phase of the data collection. In relation to the phenomena of synchronicity, Carl Jung (1970, p. 551) came to the conclusion that: "The world inside and outside ourselves rests on a transcendental background." I now know that these events are

all linked with each other and with the dream. I am very grateful for this opportunity of learning, offered in the space created by the visiting lecturer, in which I could awaken from the dream. The dream became part of re-searching self in transformation, and as a launching pad for the epilogue.

After further conversations with my supervisors, and reflecting more deeply on these experiences as a whole, this house dream revealed a “psychic state” of intimacy, with three soul activities happening. At first, I felt that it was like the world was threatening to numb an inborn force, within my soul, to speak, until by giving attention to the dream, I could strengthen my perception and persevere. Emerging from the act of shutting the door, I felt the power of thought growing and living more within myself. In light of the supporting spiritual forces flowing into my soul, at this time, and by resolving the riddle of this dream, through meaningful meetings with people over the days following the dream, I felt a deep connection and love awakening through this research. For me, it was/is truly a deed of love (inspired from *The Calendar of the Soul*, by Steiner, 1974). William Braud (1998) suggests that the researcher can become attentive to:

what is known directly by the the eye of the spirit: this type of knowing seems to require a change or transformation in the investigator’s *being*. It requires that the investigator *become* what is being studied and to know it as *subject* rather than object. (p. 51)

Another perspective that was present in my experience, and was also mentioned by some participants, is the karmic dimension and reincarnation. I am not going to enlarge on this perspective in detail as it is beyond the scope of this study, and deserves to be a study in itself.⁵⁵ However, the idea of karma did raise some interesting questions and answers such as: How come I ended up with these four participants? How come I met my current supervisors when I was in great need of change? Could these meetings with these people be destiny meetings? Many more questions could be asked, but I wish to acknowledge the karmic perspective as a real possibility, and to mention something about karma and its relation to body, soul, and spirit:

⁵⁵ For further reading and study on karma and reincarnation, the following references are useful (Prokofieff, 1995; Steiner, 1994; van Doorn, 2003; van Houten, 2000) plus the series of books (Vols. 1-8) by Steiner called “*Karmic Relationships*.”

The human spirit must be reincarnated again and again; and *we*⁵⁶ are governed by the law that *we* bring the fruits of *our* former life with *us* into the next one. The soul lives in the present. But this life in the present is not independent of the former life. The spirit that has been reincarnated brings its destiny with it from earlier incarnations. And this destiny rules *our* life. The impressions that the soul receives, the desires that are satisfied, the joys and sorrows that it experiences, depend on its actions in previous incarnations. The body is subjected to the laws of heredity; the soul is subjected to the destiny that it has itself created. This self-created destiny of the *human being* is called *our* karma. And the spirit is subject to the law of reincarnation. The spirit is eternal; in corporeal existence, birth and death alternate in accordance with the laws of the physical world; the life of the soul, which is governed by destiny, provides the cohesion between the two during life on earth. (Steiner, 1973, p. 70)

This perspective is not only very practical and meaningful for me, but has been a reality throughout my whole life, and a particularly significant event revealed itself in this study, during a conversation with Dyann. We were discussing my dream and Dyann asked me the following questions: What am I not yet acknowledging and not seeing? What am I not speaking? We talked about the relational context and how I maybe haven't expressed this fully enough yet. In this dialogical space, I realised that I had not spoken enough about meeting the other in relation to body, soul, and spirit. The following picturing became clear to me, in a three-foldness. In chapter seven, I described the process of working through the three activities of soul, in thinking, feeling and willing, so that we can speak and express our true self. But this process is possibly part of a bigger picturing, of the "I" engaging in inner soul work, as well as connecting and meeting with the physical world and with the spiritual world.

The implications of this perspective are that the basis of inner work, is not just about coming into our own speaking but it is also about creating more meaningful meetings with others, in relationships and in how we do our work, as well as, creating stronger connections with our spiritual resources in communion with spirit. So this was/is exciting for me to write, as I am aware of a danger in psychotherapy, that it can become too inward looking and giving a false sense of the "I" which can isolate a person from the deeper meetings and communing with

⁵⁶ The italics refer to where I have changed the language of referring to 'man' and 'him/his' throughout this quote to '*we*', '*the human being*' or '*our*'.

others in the world (Sardello, 1999b; 2001a). But with this perspective, the “I” and the world are always present, in its wholeness. When I reflected on this study as a whole, one of the changes that occurred for me was my need to own more strongly and to claim my position as an academic, in this research, with the knowing and practice of embracing the whole, of body, soul and spirit. Dawn comments: As I read this I got the sense that it is almost as if your whole thesis has a transpersonal element to itand you have a transpersonal element too.

My hope is that this knowing that involves body, soul and spirit is returned back to find its place once again in universities, and is encouraged as a legitimate form of research. As Dyann and I were talking, I said that the last time it was integrated was in the school of Chartres, before knowledge was split into separate areas of study that did not interrelate with each other. We can see this development by observing the history of the university system. I found this to be a very an interesting comment that just popped out as I was speaking. I decided to follow up this idea and to refresh my knowledge of the school of Chartres. This school based its learning on the threefold nature of the human being and on the seven liberal arts, but many of the books and writings of that time were regarded as heretical and were burned. This was during the time that the Council of Constantinople banned the belief in spirit, and promoted the twofold being of body and soul, thus promoting the dualistic thinking that perpetuates today (Querido, 1987). The idea that the human being is considered an independent spirit with an individual ego and the idea of reincarnation was rejected by this Council. Some books that described the three-foldness and four-foldness, did survive and say that self knowledge means we must recognise the human being in its three-foldness, four-foldness, and seven-foldness. The building of Chartres cathedral also survived, and these teachings are carved into the walls and statues, and are imprinted in the stained glass windows of this wonderful cathedral.

This re-membering and re-searching is deeply meaningful for me,⁵⁷ as it restores my own connection within the present and embraces the past teachings from the

⁵⁷ I have a deep connection with Chartres cathedral in France. In 1994, I went on a pilgrimage there and spent many days in and around the cathedral. I remembered my time there in another lifetime and had some profound insights and connections. For me, I came away feeling that this cathedral, this school of learning and knowing, is living in my heart. As an interesting

school of Chartres, as well as with the future, as this thesis is one small step towards restoring ways of how we can come to know what we know, in its wholeness. As Gerhard Wehr (2002, p. 181) says: “To find meaning is to find wholeness.” Maybe we can make a difference by venturing forth towards creating more holistic and organic approaches in our universities. The task as I see it, is not to return to how it was in earlier times, rather, we now have the task, if we want to go in this direction, of including body, soul and spirit. To do this we will have to come to know our own inner school of knowing, to carve this in our being and in our hearts, and find new ways of manifesting and becoming in the world, in how we express and relate with others, and in how we behave and enact our deeds. I would like to summarise in the now famous words of Bernard of Chartres (cited in Querido, 1987):

If we see further than they, it is not in virtue of our stronger sight, but because we are lifted up by them and carried to great height. We are dwarfs carried on the shoulders of giants. (p. 113)

Contemplating and Reflecting

Contemplating the whole of this work, I am in awe at how it has evolved, come into being, and been created. For me, it is a deed of love. When I started I had no idea that it would be in this form, but by allowing myself to be in not-knowing, trusting my imagination and intuition for each step, and by developing the faith to follow the presenting process, the realisation of this creative and transformative research study is the result.

I began with the body of the work, the participants’ stories, and allowed these to guide me, discovering the way. Each story is a whole in itself and I had to honour and respect each one’s perspective by striving to write from the inside of their experience. I did this by immersing myself in their stories and seeing how I then perceived the meanings and processes therein. I entered into the life of each participant’s story, allowing imagination and intuition to guide me. I travelled through each story by putting the transcripts on the wall, and as I read through

coincidence, my ex-husband’s family are descendants from France and my married name for many years was Robin Chartres.

them I also walked, moved, gestured, breathed and sounded their experiences. By doing this, it became obvious to me that the seven life processes were a major activity operating in the participant's experience of change and transformation over time. At first, I held this as a tentative possibility and did not fully accept it as valid, until I had completed this process with the third story (Zeus). I then became more confident that the life/soul processes were a trustworthy and consistent activity that appeared throughout all the participants' experiences of change, over the time of their four interviews, even though there was a diverse range of issues and uniqueness in each of their stories. The truth of this way of working was also verified through my own experiences of observing people for many years, in educational and therapeutic contexts, and in this research, there appeared to be an internal logic operating, even though I couldn't see the full picture at that stage.

In Table 3, the three paths shown can address the human being as a whole, with the seven life processes transformed by the "I am" into soul forces to integrate these three paths. Learning to learn (willing) relates to knowledge about the world, and comprises all the learning needed for coping with our working life, as well as for parenting, and making continual improvements in what we are doing in our life (van Houten, 1995). Destiny Learning (feeling) relates to knowledge about our self, such as studying biography, for self knowledge, to know oneself more profoundly. Spiritual Research Learning (thinking) relates to knowledge of the spirit, as an individual path of knowing and understanding (van Houten, 2000). When the reality of this is practiced in our daily life, it becomes spiritual research, and we can creatively work with others in shaping the future (van Houten, 2000, pp. 13-17). I am aware that this approach is only one perspective of many just as valid other perspectives (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Wehr, 2002).

Once I had spoken the four stories during the supervision meetings, I had an insight and a glimpse of the whole picture. This is what I think Johann von Goethe (Bortoft, 1996) talks about in the process of metamorphosis, that we can come to the "Ur" phenomenon, seeing the whole, the archetypal nature of the phenomenon. This for me was glimpsing change and transformation involving the whole human being, as body, soul and spirit. As Gerhard Wehr (2002, p. 207) accurately summarises my experience: "An image, the image of the human being

appears,” and he also says that: “General experience shows that the spirit always reveals itself only in glimpses” (2002, p. 164).

TABLE 3
*The Seven Life Processes transformed by the “I am” into soul forces for three learning processes.*⁵⁸

	Life Processes	Learning to Learn	Destiny Learning	Learning for Spiritual Research
1	Breathing	Observing/ Perceiving	Observing a destiny event	Finding my research question
2	Warming	Relating/Memory	Relating it to one’s biography	Igniting an inner warmth
3	Nourishing	Assimilating/ Digesting/ Distinguishing	Digesting one’s destiny (cause) (learning task)	Discovering the way
4	Secreting (sorting)	Individualising/ Questioning	Accepting one’s destiny	Crossing a threshold
5	Maintaining	Exercising	Practising in daily life	Finding my way back/Grasping totalities
6	Growing	Developing faculties	Perceiving the web of destiny	The answer grows
7	Reproducing	Creating/Forming	Creating order in destiny	Realising research results

The four stories are each a whole that encompasses these aspects, but they also create the body of the thesis, as parts, that emphasise the interweaving activities of the four bodies or four perspectives (physical, etheric/life body, astral/soul and the “I am”). For example, one perspective is Margaret’s story, which emphasises an airy astral quality, while from another point of view, Marilyn’s story emphasises a watery, etheric (life) quality of the feeling life. Amandla’s story shows how she worked deeply through the physical body, with the power of imagination and the breath as instrumental in the in-spiring of profound healing. Each story also demanded of me to enter into and to write from different ways of thinking and feeling.

⁵⁸ This table was compiled from my reading of these books (Lindenau, 1985, p. 12; Steiner, 1990b; van Houten, 1995, 2000).

A Living Thinking

Nigel Hoffmann (1998) describes these elemental observational modes of thinking in detail, as stages of imaginative thinking or just particular ways in which consciousness intends a phenomenon in different phases of experiencing it. For instance, he says earth thinking involves sense perception: “The experiencing of a phenomenon in the objective or ‘factual’ state, as the given world, of resistance and solid which first stimulates the desire to know” (1998, p. 91). Earth thinking however, becomes limited when we think that this is *the* only way of knowing.

As I wrote the four stories I had to keep my thinking mobile, I had to be able to let go, and to move into another state of being, of imaginative thinking. Water thinking for me is more fluid, imaginative and moving, which Gaston Bachelard (1983, p. 107) describes as: “rhythmic, with a heavy rhythm, that takes hold of the whole body. It is thus vital. It has the dominant characteristic of duration – rhythm.” This was also evident in my monthly rhythm of writing.

We participate in the phenomenon of change so as to experience its time dimension, duration and formative activity, and in this we can imagine how this flows into forms. Thus through immersing myself into the transcripts by reading, sensing, moving, gesturing, breathing, visualizing and sounding, I discovered the activity of the seven life processes flowing throughout the transcripts, with each participant’s story having its own specific rhythm. When this flowing of forces becomes an idea in gesture then water has become air thinking, which Nigel Hoffman (1998) goes on to describes as when we give up our intellectual hold and allow something that was previously imperceptible to appear, to disclose itself, we become receptive and “inspire” it. Another elemental way of thinking is fire. “Thinking becomes fire when it lives in the freedom of life’s creative impulse and participates in the extraordinariness and sublimity of its arising” (Hoffmann, 1998, p. 131). This leap into intuitive perception is declared by Johann von Goethe: “Through an intuitive perception of eternally creative nature we may become worthy of participating spiritually in its creative processes” (in Hoffmann, 1998, p. 131). In this I can see that fire thinking involves me, as a whole human being, as I have to become active in the process, through thinking,

feeling and willing (doing). This process led me to perceive the importance of the coming forth of the “I,” as participating in the process of change and transformation. If I understand what Nigel Hoffman is saying, then fire thinking occurs in this research, in the moments of awakening, awakening to the next step, to the whole, and to the manifestation of a unity and integrity of this scientific and creative study.

TABLE 4
Summary showing characteristics of the modes of elemental thinking

ELEMENT	EARTH	WATER	AIR	FIRE
Mode of cognition	Physical cognition	Imagination	Inspiration	Intuition
Cognitive gesture	External-Active	Participatory-Passive	Receptive	Creative
Cognitive quality	Mechanical/analytical – formal logic	Pictorial or Sculptural	Musical	‘Archetypal Word’ – Poetising Speaking
Correspondence to the human being	Physical Body	Life Body	Soul	Ego or “I”
Correspondence to the kingdom of nature	Mineral	Plant	Animal	Humanity

(Hoffmann, 1998, p. 132)

I began to realise how in a “living methodology” and in a “living thinking,” this work was/is created by me having to participate fully as a researcher, in an embodied and intuitive way, as well as participating consciously, through being attentive and reflective to the activities of my whole being in the world. This then became chapter six – “I Am Participating.” In this chapter, I had to sort through what was happening. In terms of the life/soul processes, I had taken all the stories *in* and was now in the process of individualising, of crossing a threshold. I had to sort out what to focus on, what to let go of, and how to continue writing. What appeared through this exploration was that I chose to stay close to direct experience, to see how we were/are changing and transforming. This became a question of delving into the transcripts further from the point of view of satisfying the felt inner experience of the “I.” This meant contemplating the participants and myself as changing human beings, and then asking the question: How are we becoming aware of and responding to experience? How do we choose to respond and act?

Five images of experience awareness were found as forming how we respond to experience: I am sensing, I am reacting, I am feeling, I am beholding, and I am speaking. The importance of the “I” in making choices and in how we respond can bring us to the edge of inner thresholds, with questions such as: How do I wish to live in the world? Who am I? Am I living my full potential? Am I expressing my whole being? If I choose to stay in a situation that doesn’t serve me well and costs me, but is still comfortable, then will I still be able to become fully who I really am? The participants and myself show that in any situation, we have a soul choice to decide how we will respond and what meaning/s we will give to this experience.

When I reflected on my reflecting process throughout the thesis, it became clear that this process could be summarised in five main activities, as outlined by Margarete van den Brink (2004, p. 122). The process of reflecting, begins with observing current experiences, situations, and/or events, with resulting questions, thoughts, feelings, and ideas; from this it becomes thinking, to review and analyse, by gathering information, naming things, clarifying and sorting. Then, deeper insights can be gained through feeling and intuition, by turning inward to reflect (feeling-thinking-feeling etc), to discover inner connections, repeating this until understanding the deeper meaning and knowing becomes clear. With questions such as: What are the possibilities? What do I want to do with this? In my case, this process took two to three weeks to take in and reflect on each chapter, before I could write about it. All of this consolidates into a decision and plan for action, with questions like: What conditions need to be fulfilled? And, how do I handle all of this? (van den Brink, 2004).

When these four reflecting activities were completed, a decision was then put into practice, resulting in the chapter becoming a reality, or the cycle may begin again, with further observations. In brief, these processes included the whole of me, in the interweaving of observation and action, using the soul forces of thinking, feeling and will/action, as an instrument of active conscious awareness.

Summarising Work in Progress

Through speaking and writing, I discovered that this study includes three main sections: “Discovering the Way - Bodying Forth” (Introduction and participants’ stories); “Crossing a Threshold” (“I am” Participating) and “The Unfolding of Enfolding” (The “I” Awakening through Thinking, Feeling and Willing). I wanted to honour the participant’s stories and what became obvious to me was how each one was engaging in their process through their specific issues, which brought them into their own true speaking and expression, with a sense of wholeness. It was not just about feeling whole in their *bodies*, but I was interested in how did they practically bring this about? It was not just working with what they talked about, but with what they did to bring about change. That is, how did they “walk the walk.” It went beyond just becoming self-aware, each one appeared to learn skills, and as Amandla said, she gained a “bag of tools.” I explored the transcripts for how the participants were consciously utilising this “bag of tools” to change and transform. This became chapter seven: “The ‘I’ Awakening through Thinking, Feeling and Willing.” However, I wanted to focus on the practical perspective, as this seemed to be a more useful approach. I therefore decided to approach these three aspects from the therapeutic perspective as three types of issues that were evident in the stories, as orientation (thinking) empowerment (willing) and resourcefulness (feeling). Searching through the participant’s stories, I chose to explore in more depth how they experienced meaningful soul movements as resonating processes. In these three types of issues, the participant’s described how they faced fear, self-hatred and doubt of the spirit, which had distorted their thinking and feeling and their ability to take action in the world. By mobilizing the soul faculties of courage, love and creativity, they were able to live with, as an act of picturing, and to encounter, the inner dimensions of their difficulties, thereby changing them into their own unique perspective and process of growth and creativity.

The specific practical therapeutic processes described in this chapter relate to the therapeutic work of psychophonetics. and only those specific processes described by the participants were included in this chapter. These processes offer a map for each one of us, for the potential transformation of psychological and psychosomatic challenges to become journeys of soul transformation, spiritual

awareness and a furthering of the evolution of consciousness (Tagar, 1999a). For instance, overcoming reactions is probably a good starting point for being able to meet others in a more meaningful and caring way, for connecting deeply with spiritual resources and for working fruitfully in the world. By doing this, therapy becomes a political act.

Some of the specific processes explored include consciously entering into the *inner chamber* of a reaction, uncovering past hurt, and healing this underlying hurt by providing the quality and resource that is really needed. For example, Amandla described how pain became a pathway for meeting inner needs and through a participatory approach she was able to heal her finger. This could only be done after she had penetrated into the deep bodily memory and embedded patterns of her experience of past abuses. Through Amandla's story, the following activities can be seen: how she became aware and understood that the presence of past embedded memories were actually still happening in the present; how she learnt to stay in the body instead of leaving it or disappearing, as she had done as a child to survive and as a defence strategy; how she released the negative forces of abuse; how she found a safe and protected area inside her body; and how she was able to connect with and utilize spiritual resources to heal her body, and her finger, to restore a sense of wholeness.

The creative and expressive aspects of the participant's processes are also an important part of the experience of change. For instance, Margaret addressed her inner reactions to parenting and relationship, and showed how she used clay-work, painting and poetry to express and heal her reactive patterns of behaviour, to become a better parent for her children. Using clay (or painting/drawing) can create a direct access to the living, unconscious dimensions of the human soul (Richards, 1989), and Margaret described, how expression through clay brought her inner life up to the light of consciousness and displayed it in front of her: *It is all there in-front of me*. For me, participating in the process of transformation is ongoing, unfinished and always changing, as we venture forth through life.

Throughout this research I had to be attentive to the transformative power of my inner life, of it becoming a resource for empathic perception in the research. By

creating an empathy-in-action method, I was able to make more visible the experience of the movement of thinking. Ernst-August Müller and Dietrich Rapp (1985) clarify this idea:

Hence, our relationship to movement is not merely receptive; it is productive. 'Movement' cannot be separated from cognition, from movements of thought. It can only be objectified formally, in definitions in which cognition freezes its own movements into concepts. Inwardly, thinking remains united with movement. Thinking, 'the unobserved element in our ordinary mental life,' comes to attention in the phenomenon of movement. (pp. 93-94)

The ongoing *parallel process* for me as the researcher meant having to refine my capacity for empathizing with the participants' stories, by further developing my faculties of imagination, inner-listening, and intuition. This inner alchemical process informed and guided me through the creation of this work. I did not do this alone. My supervisors are an integral part of the research and provided an open conversational space for me to develop in my own way, guided and encouraged by them. While I am striving to own my inner authority as a researcher, I am also mindful of my belief that this authority must not deny another's freedom and authority, in their own knowing and perspective. How I approached this research is influenced by who I am – as a white Australian heterosexual divorced female in my fifties, with three adult children, living in my own home in the south-west of western Australia, for the last four years, with an educational background ranging from early childhood teaching, parent education, adlerian family counselling, relationships counselling, philophonetics counselling and psychotherapy, to adult learning and teaching. In the beholding and as an interpreter of the participant's reality that is based on my personal experience of meeting with them, and on the transcripts of interviews, I was aware that I was also influenced by my own experiences, knowing, and ways of working, to make sense of their life-world (van Manen, 1990). In centering my experience as the researcher, with all of who I am, with the participants' "lived" experience, I am giving particular meaning and creating theories out of these relationships. "The way in which we know is most assuredly tied up with both *what* we know and our *relationship with our research participants*" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 182).

I respect that there are other valid perspectives of the phenomenon of therapeutic change and my attempt in this research was to keep understanding and experience closely linked, so that there is very little to no gap between theory and practice, in researching the phenomenon. I found this way of working liberating and freeing, in the sense that the actual choices I made in the doing of this research study, are an act of freedom. My wish is for a *lucidly lived body* to be returned to academic research and to our culture, with a more holistic approach that embraces the whole human being. I hope that by exploring the experience of change in an embodied way, we can consciously awaken to who we are and learn to transform bodily sensations into sense-free capacities of imagination appearing in our thinking, with love and creativity in our intuitions and with faith in our own knowing to inspire us with hope for the future (Sardello, 2004). This research isn't the result of factual readymade knowledge, I had to create the necessary conditions within myself first, in a parallel process, on which I can now claim some authority as a researcher. I had to discover this knowledge anew for myself, as embodied intuitive knowing, guided by the wisdom of others: "The whole idea is to arrive *at our own insights*, however modest they may be" (Wehr, 2002, p. 259).

By including rich and thick descriptions and interpretations of lived experience, my hope is that this will: "evoke a resonant response" in you (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 225), in your own knowing. It is usual to use the term, resonance, for an echoing or resounding process occurring between people, but I would like to add to this by including resonance as a way of developing the self through interaction with others, reading and participating, as an educational, therapeutic and creative process. In this latter sense, Carola Conle (1996) defines resonance as:

A process of dynamic, complex metaphorical relations. It is not confined to one single strand of connections. It is a complex relationship among many aspects of a story. The metaphorical connections or correspondences come holistically, as a field, a scene, a narrative image. (p. 313)

This relates to the *parallel process* as well, in which I listen and reflect on what resounds within me, living in soul picturing, to allow a space for coming to know more explicitly what I am doing. In this activity, I find that I know more than I can speak and that this: "tacit knowledge shapes our practice" (Conle, 1996, p. 316). This challenges me to stay even more attentive to experience and to be more

reflective on what is happening, in how I come to know things and in how I do this work. Robert Sardello (2000) suggests that we must do this by nourishing the soul:

Nourishing the soul, as I see it, concerns the act, to be made ever more conscious, of shaping, forming, and interiorizing the essence of each moment of experience, of both an inner and of an outer nature, which when released act to amplify soul in the world. In such a manner, we are doing psychology, not giving it over to professionals. (p. 4)

In striving towards being more present to myself, and to the world in the realm of resonance, we must, Robert Sardello (2001b, p. 6) says: “begin to listen for resonance rather than just content.” I hope that you will also feel encouraged to be more attentive to your own experience and to connect with your own knowing, that may arrive through reading this work. That, through sympathetic resonance our knowing may radiate outward and mean something for you and others in the world. Robert Sardello (2001b) encourages us to read with soul:

If we allow ourselves to resonate with the vibratory field of the writing, a sense of soul will be felt. When read in this manner, communication changes to communion ... the living body has to be fully present for the resonant field to be felt. (p. 6)

For me, creating resonance of story was crucial in communicating meaning and understanding, not just throughout this study but hopefully in an educative and/or therapeutic way, to a broader audience (Conle, 2000; van Manen, 1990).

My attempt was to be as open, honest, authentic and consistent as I could be, by putting myself on the line and exploring lived experience with my whole being, regarding what appeared in the field of my consciousness, in that moment. This research is therefore open to an ongoing process of change and transformation, as each time I come to read and reflect on it, different shades and depths of meaning may reveal themselves or be created anew. Therefore, this research study remains an ongoing work in progress.

I would like to conclude this epilogue by returning to the beginning, to the lived experience of change – of not knowing! In the spirit of this hermeneutic phenomenological endeavour, of the changing human being, let us keep finding

our knowing afresh, as is written by St Augustine, in his *Contra Epistulam Manichaei* (cited in Wehr, 2002):

Let no one assume that they have already found the truth. Let us seek it together as something that none of us knows. Because we can seek for it in love and peace only if we forgo the bold assumption that we alone have found it and possess it. If, however, I cannot expect that much from you, at least allow me to listen to you and to talk with you, as with people that I do not presume to know. (p. 260)

May we continue striving to discover that which is truly human within us.

To be continued!

Dyann Ross

The Messy Text of our Post-Graduate Supervisory Relationship

Messy texts are neither models to follow nor the much awaited products of a new paradigm nor empty conformity with radicalising fashion. Rather, they represent the substantive, deep effects of post-modern debate on personal styles of thought and work in established relationships. They are the testing ground – always a mix of strong engagement by the author with ‘what goes on’ among particular subjects of study and of equally strong reflexive engagement with their own self making as scholars – in which qualitative social science is being re-made in the absence of authoritative models, paradigms, or methods. (Marcus, 1994, p. 573)

It is somewhat out of character to write here as a lone author when our relationship has been predominantly performative in all but written form. Yes I have scribbled some comments on Robin's chapters as they came 'hot off the press.' But not before have I, separately, been called upon to write but do so now with a view to including my contribution in Robin's thesis. How to put into written form something that has been so organic, unplanned and multi-faceted in the cross influences between student and supervisors.

The idea of messy text best captures this relationship and work, where we three have been, to some extent, secondary research participants for/with Robin. We each have been open to self reflexivity as women, academic colleagues, supervisors/supervisee, citizens of the world, researchers and writers. When we've shared our experiences it has provided an energetic field within which Robin, I believe, drew confidence to be her newly forming researcher self.

Now as at other points of contact with Robin, sometimes with Dawn, her principal supervisor, sometimes without, our relationship is coloured by other impacting influences. When we've paused to note some of these, we each have been surprised at the parallel lives we are living even though it is Robin who has the main task of recording some of these parallels within the larger project of her doctorate. This is my attempt to make myself visible and take my due responsibility for the supervisory relationship that has provided the creative container for Robin's writing over the past twelve months.

While it is probably the case that post-graduate supervision is peculiar, I find the synergies with other supervisory relationships quite poignant. The main differences though will be first noted before some more generic comments about my learning as a supervisor are made. There is something terrifying about being in academia which so highly prizes (a certain type of) intelligence and having some formal responsibility for enabling another's intellectual work. Doctorates remain the highest expression of scholarly achievement where the student is expected to put their unique mark on knowledge development within their discipline. As a novice post-graduate supervisor I was perhaps foolhardy to take on the associate supervisor role especially when Robin's area of research was not directly on my disciplinary strengths.

My enduring experience in this regard was that Robin was teaching me a whole new area of scholarship without me having to do all the background research finding the references and reading them. Here I have continued to benefit to a greater extent than what I could reciprocate. From my sociological perspective, with a feminist and post modernist lens, I have, in the main, contributed comments about what I saw as Robin's need to unsettle and make less certain some of her claims. I also found my professional work as a social worker provided much common ground as I had a practice based sense of the transformative dynamics of therapeutic encounters.

I also love the leap from other participants' stories as the research data to Robin's relationship with them and us as part of the research data. This coincided with my interest in autoethnographic research & researcher reflexivity which I used for my doctorate. So I was able to encourage Robin to stretch her wings in this regard – she has long since left me behind in her capacity to write integratively across formal knowledge sources, primary and secondary participants' material, her own stories and public events of relevance. It is very intoxicating to think I/we played a small part in the blossoming of Robin's creative writer self. It is probably more accurate to say, we played a part in witnessing Robin re-claiming her pre-existing creative capacities that she had foregone due to intimidation around what was expected of doctoral work,

As a novice postgraduate supervisor, I was perhaps more adventurous because I was in the company of an expert supervisor, Dawn. This is where the three way partnership

allowed greater potentialities, which Robin picked up and ran with, than may have been possible in a dyad supervisory situation. When we all met together, I was often beside myself in case my feedback to Robin was perceived as inappropriate. So it was with a building delight that I found there were wonderful complementarities when we entered into dialogue as open, interested colleagues.

Another enduring experience was being a steady source of encouragement in daring Robin to 'do it her way' working from what turned out over time to be a well founded confidence in her intellectual discernment and integrative writing skills. There was no terror for me in this support role because I have a canny sense of peoples' own creative capacities, so here the terror was replaced with sheer joy. This joy was mostly in the form of a quiet confidence each time I read something from Robin, and at other times I experienced intense surges of delight, usually when Robin was telling me/us of how she felt her way forward one step at time according to her intuitive sense of what was needed.

Some generic supervisory reflections are also relevant here. As part of professional practice I provide supervision to human service workers, usually on a one to one as required basis. These relationships contained similar transformative experiences as those presented by Robin in her research. So I have a fairly good sense of the therapist/client relationship due to these synergies. I've found when I allow myself to be 'in their story' and when the supervisee invites me to reciprocate regarding my practice issues and learning, the hierarchical, expert and one way flow of wisdom and exercise of power is turned upside down. Things become very messy. Boundaries are transgressed for moments, minutes or whole meetings.

Feedback from supervisees is along the lines that to the extent that I am willing to cross boundaries, break down dualisms, acknowledge the supervisor, the sage, the expert in the other, then to a similar extent it becomes possible for heightened creative insights and shifts of hurt or blocked feelings to occur. In them and in me. This is like a mutual engagement in transformative change work, I would like to suggest there needs to be a mutual respect and willingness to change for our 'other' to achieve their own transformatory goals.

I see Robin's research as articulating this potentiality for mutual transformative change and believe this to be its unique contribution to knowledge development. I think our three-way post graduate supervisory relationship mirrored, at times, the same experiences I had with less potency and no records thereof with my professional supervisees. It has been Robin's genius that she has found a language, ethic and rigour in communicating this. In turn, Robin has been my supervisor as she has shared with me a journey in transformative change. One dimension of this is my coming into something of my potentiality as a post-graduate supervisor. And while I don't intend to elaborate on it here, Robin and Dawn have provided a container for my re-claiming of my academic self at a crucial point of challenge in my career.

This brings me to the usually undeclared intrinsic and even substantive gains that can accrue for supervisors by the hands of the supervisee. It also brings me to the realization that the participants in Robin's research provide the primary container for my/our transformative supervision work together. Their deeply moving stories of seeking to heal and change their lives are both honoured in how Robin re-presents them and are also given new life and give new life to me.

This is something of the messy text of my supervisory relationship with Robin and Dawn. Any limitations in Robin's thesis that link back to what has been my responsibility I suggest are points of potentiality for she and I yet to be explored.

Dyann Ross, 1st April 2005.

Reference: Marcus, G. (1994). What comes (just) after 'post' ? in the case of ethnography. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dawn Freshwater

Supervision, Alchemy and Transformation

When something evolves, everything around that thing evolves too.

The etymology of the word transformation literally means a change of shape, a metamorphosis or a change of character. Such change usually takes place after a period of incubation, and implies a movement from one state (often negative) to another (more positive) state. I have argued elsewhere that for transformation to take place a qualitative leap is required and that whilst:

'In archetypal mythology the mercurial god Hermes represents the mobile dynamic element within the transformative process' ... the 'presence of a second element called the fixed is needed for change to be actualised' (Freshwater, 1998: 177).

The process of supervision whether of research students, colleagues in clinical practice or in an educational setting, should always hold at its core the potential for transformation. And, importantly, the potential for transformation is as present for the supervisor as it is for the supervisee, if the supervisor really has the ability, the Vision to see beyond the actual.

I first met Robin in February 2003 on a visit to the ECU Bunbury Campus from the UK. Interestingly, I really shouldn't have met her; she was not on my pre-organised schedule of 'important' people to meet during my one-week stay. However, her then supervisor and professional colleague introduced me to two of her research students, both of whom have become very important and influential figures in my life over the recent past. We shared a very brief conversation about our mutual interests in psychotherapy, anthroposophy and real world research before exchanging cards and committing to staying connected. Two years later I find myself reflecting on the process of mysteriously becoming and being Robin's PhD supervisor.

Very few writers associate research supervision with the creation, for the supervisor (and supervisee), of existential meaning. In a project such as Robin's, it is of course only natural to draw comparisons, with the therapist/client and supervisor/supervisee relationship, using what many psychological thinkers might term parallel processes to provide a stimulating framework within which to understand the emerging dialogue.

It could be argued that clients approach therapists in order to reclaim disenchanting aspects of themselves, to seek and make explicit meaning. Of course many clients present in a state of suffering, but this in itself is not what motivates the client to seek

help. As Morrison (1992) argues suffering alone does not destroy man, he is destroyed by suffering, without meaning, that is personal meaning.

I would further posit that most, if not all, researchers embark upon research studies that are personally meaningful to them. Indeed, it is this personal meaning, manifest in passion and sincerity that motivates the researcher to study. The study is part of the unfolding narrative plot and story line of the both the researcher and the co-participants.

In my view, it is just as consequential to investigate the purpose of each individual supervisory relationship from the perspective of supervisor/supervisee. In what way does the experience of meeting each other through a dialogic process such as supervision contribute to the narrative enplotment of all parties concerned? I guess what I attempt to emphasise here is notion that we cannot learn by just watching the process, we have to be exposed to and part of the journey ourselves. Which, in my experience, is a challenge, not least because this involves seeing ourselves as we truly are and being disciplined to be true to our subjective (and intersubjective) selves.

Working with Robin in the process of her transformation (and indeed bearing witness to the testimony of her co-participants) has been a privilege. Having the opportunity to be with someone as they explicate the process of coming to know themselves through research, education and practice is always an extraordinarily auspicious position. Nevertheless this does not acknowledge the learning that has taken place for me during this time, both through angst and through friendship. For me it is rather like the notion of 'communication by impact which Casement (1985) explicated in his work 'On learning from the patient' almost two decades ago.

Research supervision can provide an interactive and intersubjective space within which both/all parties share their common humanity as equals. Such an alliance, once it transcends the ego bound dynamics of transference and counter-transference, and appreciates the un-knowing that consumes all concerned, (even the so-called expert), is open to what Jung termed the '*participation mystique*'. Entering into the participation mystique demands a degree of letting go both of roles, of ego and of the desire to know. As you can imagine, this does not fit with the usual nature of research supervision and of course responsibility has to lie somewhere, but perhaps it lies between rather than in some objective formulaic *en-light-ened* approach?

At times I have been very much in the dark about Robin's PhD. Not about her ability to complete it or about the value of the content. More about where we are going and to what end. When I encountered Robin as a potential supervisor to her study, she had already done a lot of waiting, and not all of it welcome. As we made the decision to work together

it became clear that this would involve a further process of waiting, albeit a slightly different quality.

I have subsequently learnt more about 'waiting' and as Eliot wrote about, 'waiting without hope' or reaching after conclusions and answers. Waiting has not been easy given that when I became Robin's supervisor we were both aware of the very tight and short time frame she had to complete her thesis. The temptation is to push for action and outcome rather than wait. But wait we did. As Robin incubated her thesis in the most appropriate way for her and for the material, holding it in her body until it was ready to be birthed, to be incarnated. She took herself off to the darkened laboratory of the alchemist, whilst I/we waited, but this was not a passive act of waiting. Rather this was/is an active process of evolving, both individually and collectively as a supervisory team, which embraced its own alchemical process: that of turning lead into gold. Hence for me, the transformatory process illuminates something about the phenomena of waiting and it could also be said that the phenomenon of waiting indicates something of the nature of change.

Dawn Freshwater, May 2005.

References

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March 11. Vol. 6, 25, 36-38.

ADDENDUM

Hold on to it like
you hold a day old
chicken



Hold on to it like you
hold a bowl of soup.



HOW TO HOLD ON TO IT.

Hold on to it like
you hold a live fish.



Hold on to it like you
hold a door open for
the Queen Mother.



Hold on to it like you
hold a horse



Letting go of it is
just as difficult and
shall be dealt with
at some later stage.



LOWERY

Figure 39: © Michael Leunig 3 - How to hold on to it.

BACKGROUND METHODOLOGY

The review of the literature demonstrates the need to investigate this topic from an under-researched perspective, that is, as it is lived through by the clients. A phenomenological descriptive approach was chosen, to rediscover the process of therapeutic change in its primary form. Initially, a reduction process seemed appropriate, in which all preconceived understandings of the process being studied would be “put to one side” (bracketed). By doing this, I hoped that the process of therapeutic change would show itself in its most fundamental and original context, so that the full spectrum of its essential meanings could become visible.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology as applied in this study means: "the study of human experience and the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2). The research question that asks each client to describe in as much detail as possible how they perceive their experience of change in relation to the therapy, shows my interest in understanding the meanings of personal experience from the point of view of the person who is having or had the particular experience. I chose a phenomenological approach because it allows for thick descriptions of experience, which acknowledges that people create meanings for their own reality, values the participants perceptions and experiences, and accepts that each person's experience has an unique context (van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenology is the most relevant method for this study as it is ideally suited for investigating human experience, and the many facets of an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Phenomenology asks: "what is the nature or essence of the experience [of change] so that I can better understand what this particular ... experience is like for these [participants]" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). On this basis, quantitative research methods would tend to fragment and reduce

human experience to a number of objective criteria predetermined by the researcher and was not relevant for this study. The main purpose of the phenomenological methodology for this study on therapeutic change was to gain different perspectives, to describe the phenomena within the context of therapy and everyday experiences, and to reveal the in-depth meanings and activities.

The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), was the originator of the phenomenological movement, and was primarily interested in finding the essence of immediate experience (Crotty, 1996; van Manen, 1990). His goal was to develop a philosophy and a methodology which would not require: “the reduction of subject matter to constituent elements” (Schweitzer, 1998, p. 10). Since then, many differing methodological and theoretical perspectives have developed. The three main branches are Existential, Hermeneutic and Psychological Phenomenology. Psychological phenomenology developed as a scientific method to investigate phenomena relating to the human psychological realm that did not rely upon the natural sciences. Psychology and psychotherapy are a human science (Giorgi, 1985) rather than a natural science. Amedeo Giorgi outlined a “phenomenology of practice” approach in psychology, based more on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work (Giorgi, 1997). It could also be called experiential, life-world or applied phenomenology. Other contemporary practitioners who work and write in the area of phenomenology of practice are Clark Moustakas (in psychology), Patricia Benner (nursing) and Max van Manen (in education) (van Manen, 2000a). The phenomenological method was therefore developed out of the work of the following phenomenologists, as a way to understand the structures of lived experience and to uncover meaning structures (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1985; van Kaam, 1996; van Manen, 1990; von Eckartsberg, 1998a, 1998b).

Major Attributes of Phenomenology Appropriate for this Study

Phenomenology focuses on the exploration of *human experience* from the perspective of the person who has had the experience, utilising a method that allows the researcher to appreciate, observe, validate and articulate human beings experience of themselves, and in relationship with others. A research

methodology which incorporates the experience of individuals in its approach is relevant for this study. People are seen as actively participating in and co-creating their worlds, as essentially being-in-the-world. It is in this context of the life-world which provides the appropriate starting point for this study of human experience of change. Amedeo Giorgi (1997) states that:

By experience Husserl means the intuition of 'real objects' that is, those objects that are in space and time and regulated by causality ...such as tables and chairs etc ... Experience being the 'narrower' term as it refers to a narrower range of 'presences' that carry the 'index of reality' with them. Intuition is the broader term it refers also to those aspects of 'presences' that may not have 'realistic' references (eg. hallucinations, religious conversions, symbols etc.) yet are vital for proper understanding of human phenomena. (p. 236)

The “data” of human science research are human experiences, therefore, in order to investigate the meaning dimensions of therapeutic change it is obvious that I had to ask the clients to describe, through the interviews, their lived experiences of change. Edmund Husserl refers to the world of lived experience as *life-world* and each person's life-world contains a structure that can be studied (van Manen, 2000a). For this research the *context* of the experience is important. For example, the time and place of the experience being described, that is, during or after completion of therapy, in relationship with self and others, the type of therapy experienced, the experiences of the intra-psychic world as well as the external world, plus the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the participant's experience.

Consciousness is described as:

the medium of access to whatever is given to awareness, since nothing can be spoken about or referred to without implicitly including consciousness. The phenomenological stance, then, is that it is more rigorous to acknowledge the role of consciousness and take it into account than it is to ignore it. (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236)

Consciousness is also seen as the medium that attributes meaning to objects. An important aspect of phenomenological thought is the belief in intentionality, that it is always directed towards the world. The word “*intentionality*” comes from the Latin *intendere*. “*to stretch forth*.” The ability of consciousness to explore and to articulate experience as an intentional act of consciousness, establishes the unique

nature of the relationship between the person's awareness and the world. This is important to the research because both the participants and researcher need to be conscious of what is happening, in order to enter into the world of the client's experience of therapeutic change, to observe, to be present and to articulate the meanings of the experience.

Phenomenology is focused upon consciousness as it relates to the lived experience of a particular person (Giorgi, 1997). Therefore, phenomenology, according to Clark Moustakas (1994), utilises a method of empathy to access the experience of the other and assumes the world to be an *intersubjective* world. "When the researcher - researched dialectic can be shared and repeated, the researcher discovers a sense of objectivity that is humanly realisable and scientifically meaningful" (Schweitzer, 1998, p. 32). Because the therapeutic process is a very personal and subjective experience, the phenomenological methodological approach which incorporates the many facets of reality was very important in this research.

Phenomenological research focuses upon the *descriptions* of what people experience and how they experience what they experience, and asks the question: "What is the structure and essence of experience for these people?" (Patton, 1990, p. 69). The focus on and the ability to observe and to articulate the encountered experience as it happens, is vital to the ability to trace the impact of change over time on the client process during the counselling/ psychotherapeutic process. Richard Chessick (1995, p. 160) emphasises that: "the aim of phenomenological study is to rediscover the whole living person and how being in the world is experienced by that person and those around that person." Amedeo Giorgi (1971, p. 98) confirms this also by stating that the fundamental unit of analysis is not an observed sequence of events, but rather: "the meaning of the experience for the person who lives it."

Robert Schweitzer (1983) considered that by exploring the client's experience of psychotherapy, a more comprehensive description would emerge from an holistic encounter with the client's lived-experience of therapy. In order to study the

client's perceptions of therapeutic change, I must be aware of how my own belief system about psychotherapy may affect the relationship, during the interviews and during the analysis. Clark Moustakas (1994) refers to this concept as *bracketing*, which may reduce any bias that I may introduce, due to my previous experience or interpretation of their experiences. This process of reflective reduction allows us to come to an understanding of the essential structure of change. The method involves detachment (Patton, 1990), although I also accept that I am an active part of this process with the participants. In addition, because of the nature of following their experience of change over time, then it was possible that through the reflective nature of the interviews, their experience of change may change! I accept that the interviews constitute a relational dynamic in which our experience of change will be influenced as part of our interactions. I attempted to be aware and make my influence explicit in the reflective process: by talking with the participants during the interviews and with colleagues; when analysing experience; by emphasising thick descriptions of the structure of experience; and presenting a distillation of the structures of experience.

Phenomenological Research as Applied to this Study

Psychotherapy research involves researching a potentially vulnerable population of people. People who come for therapy are considered to be a group who may be at risk of exploitation. I was sensitive to each person's vulnerability during and after the therapy had concluded. Ethical considerations are important in determining the most appropriate research design in order to minimise harm when researching this group of people. I am a psychotherapist and adult educator, who utilises a phenomenological approach in my everyday practice, and uses supervision as a means for reflection and feedback on how I am working. On this basis, I did the interviews, as I am in a good position to be aware of the ethical considerations involved in psychotherapy research, and am bound by the ethical guidelines of my professional associations. As the interviewer, I could judge how each person was reacting to our discussion, stopping the interview or pausing the tape as needed, or redirecting the nature or style of the questioning. These occurrences were documented in my notes and were incorporated into the writing of their stories where relevant. The phenomenological style of interview is

investigative by nature and not supposed to be therapeutic as such, however participants in this style of research often state that the interview had a positive and therapeutic effect (Cobb, 2002; Moustakas, 1994; Stevick, 1971). I was mindful, during the interviews, if the participants became stressful or found the interview to be therapeutic for them. For instance, one participant had a difficult day, so we changed the interview time to another day. This did not put me out either, as it was a telephone interview.

Psychotherapy research needs to show sensitivity and respect to the individuals involved. Phenomenological research allows me, as the researcher, to get close to the phenomenon being studied. To ensure this closeness was maintained, I stayed open, friendly and interested in my manner with the participants during the interview process. Using open-ended, in-depth interviews allowed me the opportunity to vicariously experience what they were experiencing. Through this interaction I could write about a real world or lived experience, which allows you, the reader, to develop empathy and understanding of the phenomenon under study.

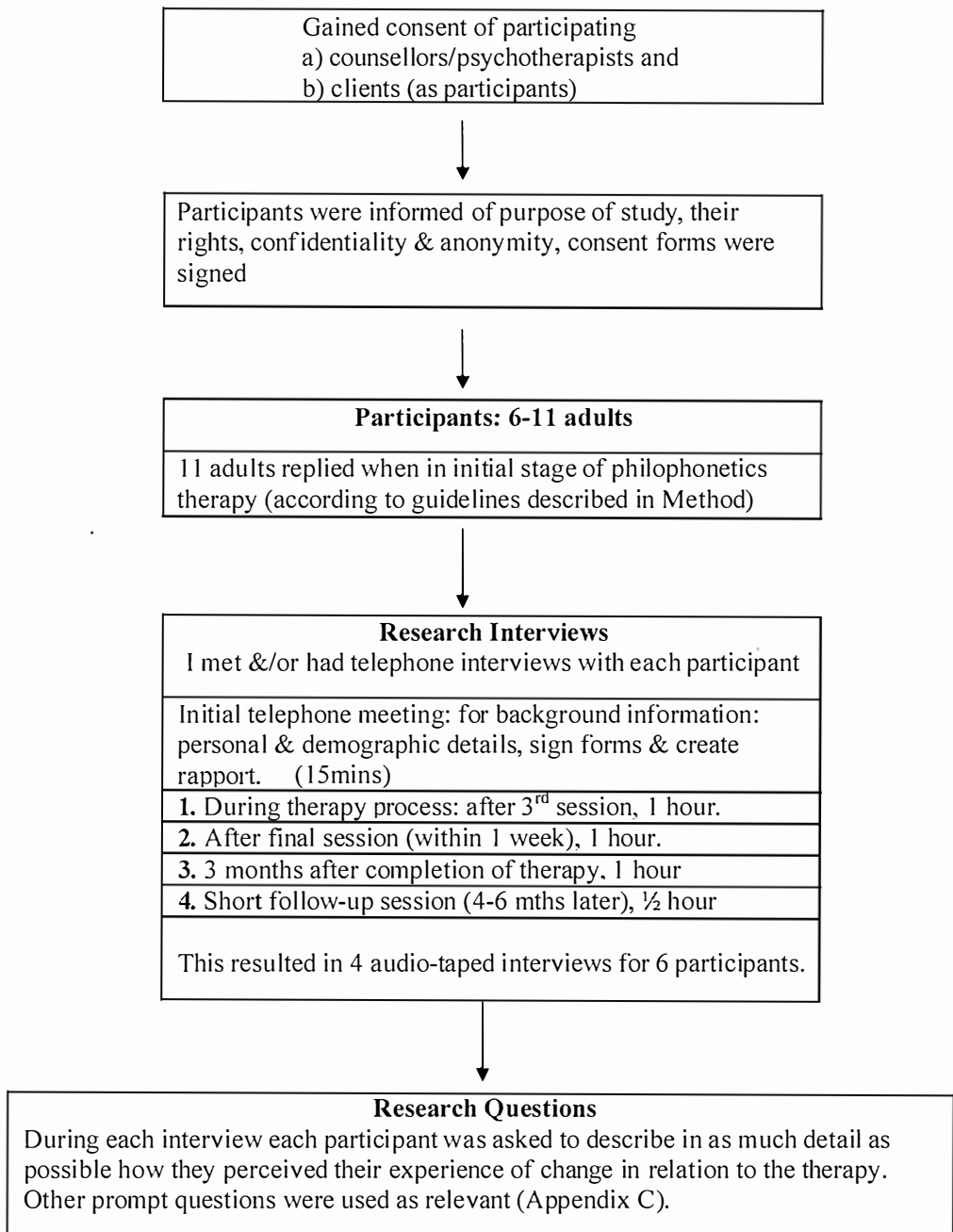
Design

Figure 40: Flow chart of research design - Data collection.

The interviews were conversational, focused on the person's experiences and perceptions related to the processes of therapeutic change, as experienced in-session, between sessions and as an outcome of therapy. The conversation was free flowing with little prompting from me, however a list of questions (Appendix C) were available as prompts if needed. I did not need to use these during most of the interviews, but the participants found it useful to have a copy to keep, to help them to prepare before each interview. More than one interview was needed to allow time for each participant to reflect upon the therapeutic changes and the interviews, so that I could obtain ongoing, rich descriptions and understanding of their experiences. The conversations were recorded, transcribed, and were initially examined for common themes or categories according to existing qualitative research practice (Valle, 1998). According to Michael Patton (1990, p. 11): "the validity and reliability of qualitative data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity and integrity of the researcher."

Participants

Eleven volunteers, who were in the initial stage of therapy as clients, and who were willing to participate in this project for about 6-12 months, were interviewed. Criteria for participant selection was in agreement with the notion that: "Experience with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice as criteria for selecting subjects" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 58). This included an initial meeting, by telephone with some, in person with others, followed by three in-depth interviews and one follow-up interview. The interviews occurred in either the participant's home, my home, and/or by telephone for those people who lived interstate or in South Africa. With the interstate participants, I travelled to Melbourne and did at least one face-to-face interview with each of them. The number of participants was congruent with accepted phenomenological research criteria, as participants who have all experienced therapeutic change with the support of therapy. I had hoped that there would be a balanced representation of at least six to eight men and women interviewed. However, only three men volunteered and only six people completed all four interviews. Margarete Sandelowski (1995) recommends that about six people are necessary for a phenomenological study, with the

underlying purpose in sample size selection being that of redundancy. Redundancy refers to when no new information is forthcoming from any new participants, thus the need to interview more participants was not required (Patton, 1990). “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). On this basis, four to six participants were sufficient for this study. The process of saturation and redundancy is described in chapter six where it is actively experienced after working through the transcripts of four participants, which brings the decision to include four participant’s stories in detail.

People who had a psychiatric or medical diagnosis were not included, with variables, such as race, socio-economic, educational level or occupation were not considered as influencing factors in this study, as these perspectives were not explored. However demographic data was collected, which enabled me to place the participant into a context that allowed me to establish any patterns that were discovered from the data. This was relevant, as research shows that 40% of the factors accounting for change in therapy are client factors. That is: “the resources clients bring into the therapy room and what influences their lives outside it” (Miller & Duncan, 2000, p. 57). For instance, this project was widely promoted amongst the relevant counselling centres in order to attract volunteers from a broad spectrum of people. The demographic data helped to clarify and acknowledge that those people who did volunteer, were representative or not of this spectrum. For example, the six volunteers who completed the interviews ranged in age from mid-thirties to mid-fifties, and came from a wide range of backgrounds, including business and textiles, graphic design, artist, mother, labourer, student, and farming.

Procedure

Participant clients were found through word of mouth and by putting notices in a number of relevant counselling centres. Some of the clients came from other states or overseas, as the therapists who were willing to cooperate in this study, were not all situated in the one area. The main locations for therapists included Western Australia, Victoria and South Africa (Cape Town and Johannesburg). Once contact was made with each participant, a letter was sent describing the study (Appendix D), along with a consent form (Appendix E). When each interview took place, personal details were recorded, coded and kept separate from the other material. Basic demographic data was recorded, such as the age of the participant, their occupation; highest level of education; current relationship; nature of the relationship (eg. shared living or not); number and ages of children, length of time between the interview and last therapy session. There were four recorded interviews per person: an initial short meeting at the beginning of therapy was not recorded; recorded interviews were done during therapy - after the third session, after the final session and three months after completion of therapy. A short follow-up interview occurred about four-six months after the third interview. Each interview continued until the conversation came to a natural close. Artistic expressions were encouraged as a way to articulate their experiences (clay, drawings, poetry). For example, Amandla did a painting of how she was feeling during one of the interviews. This is included in chapter five. I also made a number of follow-up contacts with the participants to review and clarify certain aspects of their interviews, and to receive their feedback on what I had written.

The quality of the descriptions depended on how well I understood the main research question for myself and for the participants: During each interview each person was asked to describe in as much detail as possible how they perceived their experience of change in relation to the therapy. My understanding of this question is: “How” means being open to whatever emerges during the interview; “perceive” implies that each person will perceive change differently and uniquely; “describe” refers to what change is and means for the participants; “experience” is that I am interested in their stories of how they perceive and describe therapeutic

change. The word “experience” is used to describe any input (that is, content originated from within or outside the person), that reaches/impresses itself on the participants' awareness. “Meaning” refers to individual ways of making sense of experience and of knowing. In this particular study, the meanings of change were described by the participants regarding what the experience meant for them in their life context. “Client” is a person who is an active volunteer participating as a participant in this study, and had chosen to undertake a series of counselling sessions for the purpose of self-change. An interview protocol was developed, informed by and adapted from a survey of other phenomenological interview formats (Moustakas, 1994; Valle, 1998), as well as from experiential psychotherapy research information, the "client change interview protocol" (Elliott, 2001).

As the therapeutic approach utilised expressive non-verbal methods, different forms of expression, as descriptions of change, are incorporated into the study. During, and at the completion of each interview, participants were given the opportunity to express creatively their experience of change. These artistic expressions, including other ones from their sessions, plus ones done at home, are also incorporated into the study.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by myself. The transcripts accurately reflect both the words that were uttered as well as the non-verbal aspects. All transcribed interviews were verified for completeness and accuracy by comparing the text word by word with the audio-tape. Parenthetical notations regarding tone of voice also were verified with the taped interview. Field notes regarding body language were used to add to the text parenthetically. These aspects included sighing, emotional moments, laughing or crying and were noted in my notebook, during or immediately following each interview. When writing up the findings, quotes and any artistic expressions through drawings, paintings, clay, or poetry were used, to add depth and colour, as expressions of experience.

Analysis of the research material was initially based on Robert Schweitzer's adaptation of Amedeo Giorgi's method (Giorgi, 1997, 1985; Moustakas, 1994; Schweitzer, 1983; 1998; Valle, 1998). This procedure remains in the thesis, to portray my research process of how and why I changed at a later stage, to a more appropriate method.

Giorgi describes a series of steps in his psychological model:

- a) Listening to the audio-tape of the interview and reading all the transcripts, to gain a sense of the whole experience for the participant.
- b) Each transcript is reflected upon in order to discriminate Natural Meaning Units (NMUs) from each participant's description of the phenomenon being studied and within a psychological perspective.
- c) Transformation of the participant's everyday expressions into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated. Reflective and imaginative variation is used in expressing their experience in psychological language.
- d) All of the transformed meaning units are synthesised into a consistent statement of the structure of therapeutic change. Insights contained in the transformed meaning units are integrated into a consistent description of the psychological structure of therapeutic change.

Adapted from Amedeo Giorgi (1997).

Schweitzer's Model of Phenomenological Explication:

Stage 1. Intuitive/holistic understanding of the raw data.

This stage requires reading data, repeatedly if necessary, to achieve a holistic and intuitive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. It is necessary that all preconceptions and judgments be bracketed.

Stage 2. Forming a constituent profile.

This stage summarises the raw data from each participant.

- 2.1 *Natural meaning units (NMU's)*: NMU's are self-definable, discrete segments of expression of individual aspects of the participants' experience.
- 2.2 *Central themes (CT)*: Central themes reduce the NMU's to recognisable sentences conveying a discrete expression of experience.
- 2.3 *Constituent profile (CP)*: the reconstitution of central themes that provides a non-repetitive list of descriptive meaning statements for each participant, which is termed the constituent profile.

Stage 3. Forming a thematic index.

Constituent profiles from each participant are used as a basis to construct a 'thematic index', which highlights major themes that have emerged.

- 3.1 *Delineating constituent profiles*: As with central themes, constituent profiles are reconstituted to remove any repeated or non-relevant statements.
- 3.2 *Extracting referent*: referents are defined as specific words that highlight the meaning of the experience being researched. Constituent profiles are searched for referents, which are extracted and listed separately.
- 3.3 *Thematic index*: The thematic index establishes a non-repetitive, sequenced list of meaning statements and referents used to search for interpretive themes. The thematic index contains the constituent profiles statements attributed to singular meanings of experience. From this point on the data is examined collectively.

Stage 4. Searching the thematic index.

This enables the comparison of referents, central themes and constituent profile to form a set of interpretive themes. It is important to note that the focus is on the explication of data that reports the meaning of experience.

Stage 5. Arriving at an extended description.

Interpretive themes are used to rigorously explicate meaning attributed to the phenomena under investigation.

Stage 6. Synthesis of extended description.

This is a summary of the interpretive themes to produce an in-depth picture of participants' experience of the phenomena under investigation.

A revised version (Schweitzer, 1983; Sherwood, 2001, pp. 4-6)

6 STAGES	STEPS
1. ORIGINAL DATA	Intuitive/holistic understanding of raw data
2. CONSTITUENT PROFILE	Natural Meaning Units (NMU) Central Themes Constituent profile
3. THEMATIC INDEX FILE	Delineation of Constituent Profiles Identify Referents Construct Thematic File
4. SEARCHING THE FILE	Searching the data Identify Interpretative Themes
5. EXTENDED DESCRIPTION	Explicate Interpretative Themes
6. SYNTHESIS OF EXTENDED DESCRIPTION	Summarise Extended Description



This is a creative research study which will look at the extended descriptions of the experience of therapeutic change in Psychophonetics holistic psychotherapy. The following additional steps are therefore included.

Profile of therapeutic change.

From the essence of the descriptions, their psychological significance will be generalised, to the extent permitted by the data, to develop a general profile of therapeutic change.



The meanings and implications

of the results will be elaborated upon in light of the client's theory of change in psychotherapy from a phenomenological perspective.

Figure 41: Summary of method to explicate data from transcript of interviews.

Based on Giorgi (1997) & (Schweitzer, 1983, p. 182)

Establishing Rigour

The following aspects and questions were addressed in carrying out a rigorous research study. Observing any biases and reflexivity, refers to my ability as the researcher, to be empathic and open to the participant's experience, with a reflective attitude. Support and feedback came from a group of fellow post-graduate researchers, colleagues, my supervisors, as well as from discussions with the participants. Earl Stevick (1971), described the interview process employed in a study on the experience of anger:

The fact that the interview was not pre-structured, but followed each subject's response did not obviate rigor from the methodology. Rigor here is understood in its proper sense – subject oriented rather than experimenter defined. Rigor dictated that each subject be led to describe as fully as possible her own experience in her own language. The interviewer worked rigorously to allow the subject to speak freely, unhampered by the experimenter's prejudice. A careful, learned listening technique was employed to allow all the obvious and subtle emphases and meanings to emerge and be pursued. After exhausting the data provided by the subject, the interviewer asked specific questions about anger which previous research and experience had pointed to. The interviews were concluded when both subject and experimenter agreed that they had exhausted all the available possibilities. (pp. 135-136)

This general procedure constitutes the basis of most phenomenological interview processes described in the relevant literature (Elliott, 2001; Giorgi, 1985; Kvale, 1983, 1996; Moustakas, 1994).

Following this, I asked the question: "Was the study done in such a way that the participants' data were accurately identified or described?" By doing this I was really determining the validity of the study, which was done by taking the findings of the study back to the participants to review. Several measures were taken to improve validity in the present study:

1. I remained alert, to be aware of my own prejudices, to prevent them from influencing participants' accounts of their experiences (Kvale, 1983).
2. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions included not only the verbal content of the tapes, but also comments that indicated significant pauses, hesitation, emotional responses, and so on (Kvale, 1983). All transcriptions were checked against the original tapes. Participants were

given the opportunity to keep a journal during their therapy, of important experiences as they happened, which they then used as prompts in their interviews, so that they were able to include information that they thought enhanced the understanding of their experiences.

3. The relevant chapter of each participant's story and descriptions was offered to them for critique and suggestions (Moustakas, 1994). Participants enjoyed doing this and gave constructive feedback.
4. The principle of contextualisation, with brief descriptions of the personal history of each participant, plus any relevant artistic expressions, were included as relevant. However, some details of participants were excluded, usually in consultation and agreement with the participant, to respect their need for confidentiality.

Limitations of the Study

The main concern with this study initially, was whether people would be willing to follow through and be comfortable in disclosing their personal experiences over a year. Six people completed the interviews, and all of them were very willing to speak freely of their experiences over this time period. The phenomenological method presupposes the possibility of generalising, at least to a certain extent, its findings. A limitation in this study is that any conclusions derived by me as the researcher, apply only to that aspect of reality that was perceived by the participants and mutually identified by both parties. In this sense, the criteria that guided the selection of participants in this research define the initial conditions under which its findings can be valid. These characteristics placed additional limitations to the possibility of generalising the findings of this investigation. The size of the sample in this investigation was small. Hence, this sample cannot support statistically based generalisations. It could be argued that any conclusions drawn about the small sample would be too idiosyncratic to be theoretically relevant. Contentions regarding sample size are beyond the scope of the present study, and belong to the ongoing debate between the quantitative and the qualitative research traditions (Hubble et al., 1999; Kvale, 1996). To counteract for any bias or inconsistency in the analysis of the data, the research

material was reviewed, with feedback and guidance from PhD colleagues, supervisors and from the participants.

Ethical Considerations

The decisions and actions involved in a research project have been a concern of writers (Kvale, 1983; Moustakas, 1994), as well as for academic and professional associations (eg. Australian Psychological Association, Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia). Ethics clearance from the university was granted before I could begin collecting any data, in which the following considerations were addressed. Confidentiality of all of the research material was maintained by myself, with all of the research material kept in a locked filing cabinet. No identifying features were made on the tapes, or notes, or transcripts. The research material was coded, with the name of the participant known only to myself. The tapes were erased after the research was completed. The research material is kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed by shredding after five years. The participants were clearly informed that they could withdraw their consent and participation at any time. Five of them did withdraw, at various stages, for reasons not directly to do with the research, but mostly because they had withdrawn from the therapy. I also provided each participant with a contact list of counselling services, in case they wished to do further counselling, following the interviews. Two of the participants did follow up with further counselling, many months later, and did one free session each with me. A composite description of these sessions (combining my experience and the participant's experience), are included in the study, with their permission.

Ethics also relates to power and to my power as the researcher, in how through a reflexive openness to feedback, helped in checking any power differences with the participants. I attempted to practice from a universal human ethic that Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2000, p. 34) describe as: "the sacredness of life, human dignity, truth-telling, and non-violence" [with] the values of empowerment ... care ... love and community" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 34). Throughout the research process, I strived to be trustworthy, collaborative and

non-oppressive in my relationships with the participants. I committed myself to being accountable, and valuing: “of individual expressiveness and caring, the capacity for empathy, and the sharing of emotionality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 35).

Ethical issues that relate to what I do as a researcher, and that arise during the study, will be addressed and discussed in the context of the particular situation and chapter.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review will attempt to give a brief overview of the diverse field of psychotherapy, in particular, it will focus on the research literature relating to the adult clients' experience of therapeutic change, in individual therapy. It will not include the extensive material on quantitative research of change studies for particular modalities, family therapy or specific problems. A brief overview of the field of psychotherapy research on therapeutic change will be given, embracing both qualitative and quantitative research studies generally. The trans-theoretical perspective, such as the stages of change and the common factors research, will be mentioned in the context of the client's experience of therapeutic change. The common factors research findings will be highlighted. Key qualitative research studies will be mentioned with the main emphasis on the discussion of relevant phenomenological studies. Phenomenological research studies on change and using non-verbal action approaches will be discussed. The gaps in the research will be indicated and related to the scope of this study. The review will be concluded with a summary of the main points.

Brief Overview: Psychotherapy and Change, the Client's Perspective

Change processes are a significant area of research in the psychotherapy literature (Hanna & Ritchie, 1995), but we still do not know exactly how people change and what makes psychotherapy effective (Lambert & Bergin, 1994; Orlinsky et al., 1994; Strupp, 1988). Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross (1992, p. 1102) noted that even though outcome studies showed that psychotherapy is effective: "outcome studies have taught us relatively little, however, about how people change," within and outside of the context of therapy. Process research is also needed.

The nature and field of psychotherapy practice is very diverse. It has been estimated that there are about 400 different types of psychotherapy approaches (Bohart & Tallman, 1999; Holmes & Lindley, 1989; Miller & Duncan, 2000). This diversity resulted in the establishment of a whole range of schools with their own theoretical approaches (Smail, 1983), where, in the past, differences rather than similarities were emphasised, as many therapists tried to defend their own theoretical stance (Dryden, 1996). Research focusing on the client's experience of therapeutic change has also been limited by the particular theoretical beliefs of the researcher. For example, psychoanalytically oriented therapists may interpret what the client says as being defensive or in resistance, and the client's description of their experience may not be accepted at face value (Mahoney, 1991; Westerman, 1986). Similarly, those who work behaviorally, may be less interested in: "vague internal events such as experiences" (McLeod, 1990, p. 67). If the researcher is committed to certain theoretical beliefs about the nature and goals of therapeutic change in psychotherapy, then it may be difficult for them to focus on the clients' perspective.

Very little has been done to explore in depth how clients experience change in and between therapy sessions and what difference this makes in their lives (Prochaska, 1999). Focusing on the client's experience is an important factor in developing an understanding of the process of therapeutic change and its effects. McLeod (1998) notes that very little research has been done which asks the client how they perceive their therapy, which means there has been little interest in exploring client's subjective feelings, thoughts or beliefs. This issue is addressed by Smail (1983), who suggests that many quantitative studies ignore how the client perceives their experience of therapy, as they are more concerned with the degree of improvement rather than the quality of change (Luborsky, Singer, & Luborsky, 1975). In this type of research, there appears to be an implicit assumption about what change is, wherein preconceived ideas become validated (Miller & Duncan, 2000; Snyder & Ingram, 2000). Changes described from this perspective are interpreted in retrospect, thereby losing the lived experience of the individual client's struggle to change. The results of these studies seem to shed little light on the nature and process of change as it is experienced by the client (Carney, 1984).

Since the late 1980's research has increasingly been aimed at investigating the change process across all approaches (Gendlin, 1986; Greenberg, 1986; Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 1997). A comparative analysis of the major systems of psychotherapy discovered that people go through a series of stages: "Change is a process that unfolds over time [and] involves progression through six stages: precontemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination" (Prochaska, 1999, p. 228). In an earlier study, on clients' ability for self-change (eg. for stopping smoking), Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente's (1995) concluded that positive change depends on the relationship between the client's stage of change and the strategies used by the therapist. The main strategies that people used to self-heal by themselves were: "consciousness-raising, dramatic relief, self re-evaluation, environmental re-evaluation, self liberation, contingency management, stimulus control, counter-conditioning and social liberation" (Bohart & Tallman, 1999, p. 40). This research implies that clients have a lot of resources potentially available to access for change, and is an under-used resource in therapy.

Recognition of the client's perspective, along with qualitative and phenomenological research methods is becoming increasingly acknowledged as important (Carney, 1984; Elliott, 1984; Greenberg et al., 1998; Hubble et al., 1999; McLeod, 1990; Miller & Duncan, 2000; 1994; Paulson, Truscott, & Stuart, 1999; Sherwood & Silver, 1999; Sherwood & Tagar, 2000b; Tagar, 1999a). Clients' perceptions of the counselling process are crucial in therapy, as research shows these perceptions often differ from those of the counsellor (Bachelor, 1995; Bohart & Tallman, 1999; Clarke, 1996; de Shazer, 1988; Duncan & Miller, 2001; Elliott, 1984; Elliott & James, 1989; Hagan, 1971; McLeod, 1990; O'Connell, 1998; Orlinsky et al., 1994; Thorneycroft, 1998).

Process research identifies the specific ingredients and mechanisms of change in therapy. Hayes & Strauss (1998) propose that new research methods are needed, and mention that the process of change from the dynamic system perspective has been re-conceptualised by a number of authors, such as Greenberg, Rice & Elliott, (1993).and Mahoney (1991). Their view is that we grow and change throughout our life, in which we experience periods of stability and instability. Change is

seen as a natural result of a period of destabilisation for new patterns to become established. Hayes & Strauss point out that this state of destabilisation before change is important in therapy but more quantitative and qualitative research is needed. My comment to this is, what about asking the client, as he/she is the most important variable?

Another study on change processes (Cummings, Hallberg, & Slemon, 1994) used questionnaires to collect what clients' felt were important change events in each session. From this, they identified three processes or patterns of change that could promote effective outcomes, as: *consistent change*, *interrupted change*, and *minimal change* patterns. Bachelor's (1995) study confirmed earlier research findings (Rice & Greenberg, 1984), and was also oriented toward the understanding of change events, using the discovery-oriented approach. They focused on collecting descriptions of how participants' created, understood, and dealt with their behaviours, to develop a rich understanding of these events that needed no interpretations imposed on them.

A review of the research literature shows that views on human change are changing (Hubble et al., 1999; Mahoney, 1991). For instance, Mahoney (1991, pp. 15-17) summarises a number of research studies that show effectiveness of therapy across theoretical orientations. A number of studies support the *dodo bird* findings of Luborsky, Singer & Luborsky (1975), that assert: "no particular psychotherapy is better than any other in effectiveness of change" (Bohart & Tallman, 1999, p. 27). One of the implications from this research is that techniques may not be a major contributor for effective therapeutic change. The *common factors* across therapies are becoming more relevant (Hubble et al., 1999). Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross (1992, p. 1108) noted that the integration of various approaches is the: "prevailing zeitgeist in psychotherapy." The common factors comprise the active ingredients of change (Grencavage & Norcross, 1990), and in 1989, Norcross and Grencavage (cited in Hanna & Ritchie, 1995, p. 232) state that: "common factors may, in fact, be curative factors."

In their study of the active ingredients of change, Hanna & Ritchie (1995) searched the literature and listed common factors on therapeutic change. They compiled them into three general groups of types of change, and I have included a summary version of this list, as it offers a comprehensive and helpful overview of many aspects of change. From my perspective, Hanna and Ritchie appear to have grouped these common factors into groups that relate to aspects of willing (doing), feeling and thinking.⁵⁹

1. Willing includes factors such as:

Ideas on self-determined behavior change ... effort or will ... a new perspective in the areas of the self ... a stressful situation or problem ... or the world in general ... a sense of necessity for change ... a readiness or willingness to experience anxiety or difficulty ... confronting the problem or stressful situation ... or stepping back or detaching oneself from it (Hanna & Ritchie, 1995, p. 177)

2. In the area of feelings and emotions factors included:

Catharsis ...and becoming more aware of or conscious of the problem or situation ...feeling free to pursue options ... feeling released or freed from a problem or burden ... becoming more tolerant or accepting of a particular person, situation, or problem ... experiencing a sense of becoming more (of) oneself ... sense of mastery ... insight ... !and" a greater or enhanced sense of meaning (Hanna & Ritchie, 1995, p. 177).

3. Thinking or: "cognitive aspects of change such as a change in thoughts or thinking ... problem solving; making a decision to change ...hope ... and the idea of knowingly or deliberately changing a certain behaviour to change a feeling or set of feelings" (Hanna & Ritchie, 1995, p. 177).

More recent research of the literature on the client's experience of change relating to the common factors has been published by several authors (Asay & Lambert, 1999; Bohart & Tallman, 1999; Davis, 2005; Greenberg et al., 1998; Hubble et al., 1999; Messer & Wampold, 2002; Miller & Duncan, 2000; Miller, 2004; Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 2004; Wampold, 2001). A major contribution to a common factors perspective was made by Michael Lambert (1992), where he identified four main therapeutic factors accounting for therapeutic change. These four common factors are succinctly summarised by Duncan & Miller (2000):

⁵⁹ The references for each of these factors can be found in Hanna and Ritchie's 1995 article.

1. Client/extra-therapeutic factors (client strengths, resources, persistence, faith, community support networks, a new job, sense of responsibility etc.), accounting for about: “40 percent of improvement during psychotherapy is due to client factors” (2000b, p. 57).
2. Relationship factors (caring, empathy, warmth, acceptance, encouragement): “account for 30 percent of successful outcome” (2000b, p. 57).
3. Placebo, hope and expectancy: “the contribution of expectancy to psychotherapy outcome ... is 15 percent” (2000b, p. 58).
4. Models and techniques: “contribute 15 percent to change in therapy (2000b, p. 58).

Miller et al (1997, pp. 25-26) state that: “the research literature makes it clear that the client is actually the single, most potent contributor,” to the process and outcome in psychotherapy, with the resources they bring into the therapy room and with what influences their lives outside it (that is, up to 40 percent). For example, Rennie's research studies (1990) and in 1994 (cited in Bohart & Tallman, 1999; Hubble et al., 1999) on client factors, shows the influence of the client's perspective. Rennie used a grounded theory approach, using interpersonal process recall data (Elliott, 1984), and found that clients in therapy do a lot of their own personal process within themselves, without telling the therapist (e.g. scan feelings, finding personal meaning, play with ideas in their own thoughts). This implies that many therapists and research studies may not be getting the full picture of what is happening in the client's experience, hence the need for this phenomenological and longitudinal study on therapeutic change.

Duncan and Miller (2001) propose that the client interweaves their perceptions with ideas arising in therapy, wherein a theory of change is formed, which can describe the client's specific situation:

Clients are, in essence, in ‘charge’ of the content and their lives, while therapists are in ‘charge’ of unfolding that content and channelling it toward change. The matching decision is based entirely on the content-rich description of change possibilities that unfolds from the therapist-client conversation. (2001, pp. 18-19).

What if changes occur outside of the context of therapy? Self-change is more common and effective than realised (Norcross & Prochaska, 1986b), with many

people solving their psychological problems on their own (Hanna & Puhakka, 1991; Miller & Duncan, 2000; Norcross & Prochaska, 1986a). This alerts me to the need for researching how clients are changing, on their own, during the months after the completion of therapy. Finally, Mahoney in 1993 (cited in Chwalisz, 2001) notes that:

The common factors approach has yielded some fascinating themes of convergence that were not previously anticipated (e.g., (1) the agreement that novelty is a critical element in successful therapy, (2) the convergence on corrective emotional experiences; as pivotal in therapy, and (3) the acknowledgment of the experiential self as the fundamental forum for psychological change). (p. 7)

The third point in the above quote, confirms Elliott's (2000) recommendation, that researchers need to develop alternative criteria which are more appropriate to the experiential therapies, and this includes the body-based therapy of psychophonetics. There are not many longitudinal studies in this area and even less research on experiential therapies, but one recent one has been partially completed by Hamblin (2002) titled: *"The promotion of impressive in-session client changes: A discovery-oriented study of psychotherapeutic change."* This study examined data over five years and found eight categories of impressive in-session changes which occurred in two overlapping but different patterns within sessions. Hamblin goes on to state that this thesis is part of an ongoing study which will continue to collect data for another three to four years.

In another study, Sherwood and Tagar (2002) researched the effects of action/experiential therapy interventions, using psychophonetics counselling and psychotherapy, for prevention of burnout in nurses. They combined short qualitative interviews and quantitative self-rating systems, with two sessions audio-taped for the researcher to clarify presenting issues, and to analyse the tools used in the sessions. Pre and post-test scores of the two sessions showed positive improvement resulting from the therapy interventions, and changes were maintained between sessions one and two. The themes of feeling victimised, disoriented, loss of decision making power, lack of interpersonal boundaries and disconnected from their inner being and internal resources were discussed. The research also indicated that the combination of verbal and non-verbal methods

were effective for some clients. Sherwood and Tagar recommend that further research in this area is needed over longer periods, with more in-depth interviews of the client's experience in and between sessions. Hence, this present study intends to build on this initial research, from the psychophonetics perspective.

Phenomenology Research and Client's Experience of Change

A number of purely phenomenological studies, show that obtaining descriptions of change isn't enough to unfold the structure and meaning of change. A systematic, rigorous and reflective process is also required. For example, Hagen's (1971) study revealed that the essential constituents of clients' experience of positive transformation, included an increase in personal meaningfulness; a decrease in catastrophic expectations; increased sense of self in the world, with a sense of freedom and self-determination. This was a retrospective study and recommended that further research be done in briefer forms of therapy. Holfrichter (1976) and Ward's (1977) studies of the process of change through psychodrama, and imagining phase of systematic desensitisation respectively, were also retrospective. They recommended that future research focus on how clients' apply what they learnt during therapy, in their everyday lives. Carney's (1984) case study on the meanings of therapeutic change in short term psychotherapy showed that clients go through a phasic and general transformation, of struggles and resolutions, in relation to self, others and the world. Carney also recommended further studies to deepen research and build our understanding of therapeutic change.

Phenomenological studies on therapeutic change in psychotherapy are sparse but some more recent ones were found. A study by Clarke (1996) involved intensive analysis of a meaning event, or change episode that involves perceptual, affective and cognitive processes. He found that meaning of emotional experiences was created by the individual's need to put these into words (Clarke, 1996). This involved finding linguistic symbols to represent the meaning of a feeling and emotion while in the experience. Gendlin (1962, p. 8) describes the essence of creation of meaning: "Meaning is formed in the interaction of experiencing and

something that functions as a symbol.” That is, creating meaning and verbal symbols for the *felt sense* of an experience. Clarke found that the creation of meaning appears to involve an emotional, experientially based exploration.

Paulson, Truscott, and Stuart (1999), in their study on client's perceptions of helpful experiences towards change, used Giorgi's (1985) method and a research team to analyse participants' responses. Four categories of client experiences were identified: client resolutions, gaining knowledge, emotional relief, and accessibility. From the clients' rich descriptions, they found that the experience of helpfulness in counselling is multifaceted with complex dynamics. Paulson et al. (1999) argue that attending to the emotional experiences of clients is a necessary part of experiential therapy, thereby allowing time for cognitive, and behavioural changes to occur.

Cobb (2002) identified significant change events within and between sessions from the couples' perspective. He found six categories of specific change processes which all related to one core category called *accommodative connecting*, or making an inner space: "to allow oneself to be influenced by alternative perspectives, possibilities, ways of being and viewing" (abstract). This connects with an earlier study by Rebecca Terry (1995), who focused on the experience of a fundamental transformation rather than on affective, behavioural and cognitive change. She interviewed seven participants about their experience of psychotherapy and found that the main characteristic of change expressed in their descriptions was: "a development of a relationship with the innate, centred, authentic core of one's Self" (Terry, 1995, p. ii).

Another study by Jasper (1999), explored clients' descriptions of their experience during, and after participating in a process of narrative therapy, combined with body awareness interventions. From these descriptions, Jasper developed a theory about how these two therapies interacted in empowering and appropriate ways to produce change. All the studies mentioned in this section, are relevant to the current study, as verification of the phenomenological method for research on

therapeutic change, as a way to reveal the in-depth and complex nature of human experience.

In relation to research on action methods Weiner (1999, p. xiv) states: "little or no rigorous research has been conducted to test or substantiate the clinical efficacy of action methods in general." He proposes that the reason for this is that researchers have not been interested in studying action modalities. This idea could be partly confirmed by Rennie, Watson, & Monteiro (2002) in relation to their questioning about what type of research would be required to study the more active, experiential and expressive therapies. They found the rise in qualitative research in psychology (that is, grounded theory, discourse analysis, phenomenological psychology, and empirical phenomenology) in the 1990's: "only amount to nine percent of the whole of the amount of psychological research generally" (Rennie et al., 2002, p. 187).

Another study worthy of mention is Dale Brook's (1999) thesis, "*The meaning of change through therapeutic enactment in psychodrama.*" Eight narratives were investigated in-depth, using an existential and hermeneutic phenomenological approach to create essential themes. Additionally, a theoretical story was then presented as: "a thematic sequence of multi-modal change processes representing a model of change through therapeutic enactment" (Brooks, 1999, p. ii). The first part of Brook's study appears similar to this one, in that it looks at change before, during and after a session. However, it focuses on change in only one session and not in change over a number of sessions. In many of the phenomenological studies mentioned, there are only a small number of participants (a couple, seven, eight), but this allows for extensive thick descriptions and/or narratives to be developed, enabling the client's story to be told.

In Australia action research is sparse. There are a few research studies emerging that include phonophenetics/psychophenetics counselling and psychotherapy (Sherwood, 2000, 2001; Sherwood & Tagar, 2002; Tagar, 1996c), with one in South Africa (Eggers, 2003). Besides the one previously discussed by Sherwood and Tagar (2002), a phenomenological study by Sherwood (2001) investigated the client's experience of therapy to discover what heals or harms. It did not

differentiate the particular modalities used in the findings, but did include action therapies, such as Gestalt, Psychophonetics, and Psychodrama. This study highlighted the importance of the client's experience of the client-therapist relationship, and how verbal and action methods can encourage or discourage therapeutic change. More extensive research on action methods is needed in the psychotherapy field.

Indications for Further Research: Gaps

This study is important as it adds another phenomenological research study to the field of psychotherapy, focused on the client's perspective, which may increase and deepen our understanding of psychotherapy, and the meanings of therapeutic change. The research is an attempt to come with a fresh and open approach to the topic of therapeutic change, to allow the complexities, meanings and possible links between the bodily, emotional, mental and spiritual dynamics to be revealed. The decision to focus on the psychophonetics holistic approach in particular, is an attempt to encompass these complexities and links.

With the scarcity of studies on holistic and action (for example, psychophonetics) methods (Weiner, 1999) it leaves a gap in the research. Through these expressive therapies, clients can describe the deeper and non-verbal aspects of experience which may be omitted in other research methods or models of therapy. This study takes on board the recommendations mentioned in this review to provide more focused attention to the experience, language and understanding of clients. Phenomenological approaches have been few so this study is particularly appropriate as the phenomenological method can, through interviews and explication of the data, reveal the possible depth and meanings of client experience. Many studies were retrospective, whereas this study will identify and describe the quality of therapeutic change over time, during, and between sessions, as it is happening, as well as after therapy is completed. This will add further in-depth descriptions and meanings to the change processes. For example, further intensive analysis of change episodes has been recommended, to build up a collection of internal client mechanisms that make change possible, so as to better recognise and encourage opportunities for client change (Elliott, 2000; Rice

& Greenberg, 1984; Sherwood & Tagar, 2002). The current study will take this work further, to explicate and investigate client change experiences in an action therapy, and to derive any implications for therapeutic practice.

Jones (1982) makes the point about doing research of therapeutic change by stating that:

much of the significance in human experience will remain impossible to describe. People are not fixed entities. Because of their capacity to be aware of themselves and to initiate change they have the ability to modify and create the kind of person they can be. (p. 23)

This highlights the need for more studies that take the complexity of studying human experience into account, and this research is another contribution to the understanding of therapeutic change. For example, through open-ended interviews a rich source of stories can be gathered, revealing multi-layered meanings and interpretations, to give experience both depth and context. Therefore, using a phenomenological approach, combined with psychophenetics psychotherapy, will give this study the opportunity to stay as close as possible to the client's experience, to reveal the meanings of therapeutic change as it is lived. Most of the research studies reviewed are drawn from the American literature as there is a dearth of phenomenological studies on this topic, thus emphasising the need for further research to be undertaken.

Summary

This review looked at the research literature on the adult clients' experience of therapeutic change, involving a brief overview of the research, with the main focus on the relevant phenomenological methodologies. The common factors research findings were highlighted as they appear to be a major influence on current research and practice, and they honour the client's perspective. Examples of some key process research studies were mentioned which add to our understanding of therapeutic change. Phenomenological studies were discussed and concluded that these offer more complex layers and a wider variety of perspectives of experience, with greater colour, warmth and depth. Relevant

research studies were noted, as were the gaps in past research and recommendations for more descriptive types of research data. For instance, phenomenological studies of clients' experience of change within an Australian context, has not been undertaken and highlights the unique contribution of this research.

This review concludes that the study of therapeutic change is complex and there is a great need to understand the nature of therapeutic change and its meaning from the client's point of view, rather than to reiterate any pre-existing notions about change, hence the relevancy of using a phenomenological and holistic approach.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT'S TRANSCRIPTS

Interview transcripts for the four participants, ranged from 13,500 words (Margaret) up to 24,500 words (Amandla), totalling over 65,000 words, of transcribed interviews, just for the four participants. A total of eleven participants were interviewed, some only for one interview, others for two or three interviews. Six participants completed all four interviews, and all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by me. Each participant had been informed that they could request to receive a copy of their transcribed interviews, of which four participant's requested and were sent a copy.

ZEUS - REPRESENTATIVE DRAWING OF HIS PROCESS OF CHANGE

See drawing and notes on the next page.

WISH - To change who I was & just be able to express myself, as an equal & another, Zeus.

Confronting Fear
 Connecting & own Resources / Spiritual
 -> Balancing M & F in & expressing Self fully.

Inner Strength & Confidence

SORTING

Spiritual support & knowing

Decisions } Main use of furniture work, family, life

Individualizing

CHOICE

To take next STEP in RISK/CHASM
 waiting/preparing TIMING

TURMOIL

RISK/CHASM

Speaking/Expressing = UNFOLDING

BREATHING
 OBSERVING
 PERCEIVING

EVOLVING
 change is happening

NOURISHING
 DIGESTING

Relating/Not relating
 - facing separation fear

Interpersonal warmth, relax/tense, Empowerment & release (clay)

Emotional interpersonal dimensions of Past issues impact new

Awareness of past tendencies & resources
 Evolving of life purpose is working out -> things are changing, spiritual support

MAINTAINING PRACTICE DAILY LIFE
 s2 Taking care of self boundaries issues - s2@wk maintaining personal space in daily life.

GROWING FACULTIES

s2 Developing the ability to move on, be open to new life & relationships (ekana) expressing F (receiving)

CREATING SOMETHING NEW

To start afresh, open to new relships setting down

Reassurance - SETTLING DOWN
 Confirmation

s3 Done = easy/relief - communication
 Flip-closure, completed purpose

Being an Indian self responsibility Rebirthing of self.

Coming to terms & Male/Female side of myself.

PAST

closed down

Masculine side } hurt, pain of the male closed, hiding the emotions

Now (s2) Waiting on
 BAZAN in C M & F
 love of the Self



open / Freedom / release
 Female side / softness, emotional, spiritual

Transition Time = GROWING / developing self male (meditation) yafa

Future

Timelines

2mths after separation from wife
Began ^{to} therapy

Int 1 - Decision made/known - in limbo, waiting, planning for action, in therapy, learning to express feelings/emotions (closed \rightarrow open)

Int 2 - Practicing tools, turmoil/facing fear, process of sorting out
(1mth later) On treadmill - find right time to take next step

Int 3 - Decision acted upon = fine.
(3 1/2 mths later) Transition time, separating/waiting re house, furniture, family
Growing time, M&F aspects within

Int 4 - Completed separation, ritual to complete. (2mths after Int 3)
(6mths later) On own, settling down, developing self
Power of choice, finding new direction - timing!

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Semi-structured in-depth phenomenological interviews are to be conducted as follows:

Preparation:

- # Initial introductory meeting: rapport building, review of confidentiality, risks, tape consent form signed; reminder of freedom to end interview or to stop tape at any time.
- # General background inquiry: How do you usually experience change in your life generally? What is/are the main change/s you hope to achieve from therapy?

Label notes & tapes:

- # Notes and tapes are labelled with a code, date & number of interview, how many previous sessions the client has had.

Interview Strategy:

- # Researcher and participant meet at a mutually agreed time and place within a few days after the 3rd session, the final session and 3 months after completion of therapy, for an hour long semi-structured in-depth interview, or until the conversation came to a natural conclusion. About 4-6 months later, there was a short follow-up interview. For details of interview strategy and procedures refer to the methodology chapter.
- # The main purpose of this interview is to allow each participant to describe their experience of therapeutic change in their own words. The interview is tape-recorded for later transcription. Participants are asked to provide as much detail as possible.

Interview Questions:

- # **Main question:** During each interview each participant is asked to describe in as much detail as possible how they perceive their experience of change in relation to the therapy.

Prompting questions (to use only if needed):

1. How would you describe your experiences of change in the therapy.
2. Can you describe any particularly important or significant moments of change that you experienced during, between, & after the sessions.
3. What are the major changes you have experienced in or between the sessions?
4. Describe how you experience these change/s and what they mean to you?
5. Describe how has this affected your presenting issue?
6. Describe how the experiences of change have affected your relationship with others, including family and work colleagues?
7. Describe how the experience of this change process has affected the way you see your world?
8. In general, can you tell me what you think has caused these changes? (including things both inside & outside of therapy).
9. How has it been for you today? How have you felt discussing this? Has this interview session today made a difference to your experience of change? How?
10. How would you express and name the outcome or meaning of change for you of the overall counselling process?
11. How would you describe the overall change/s since starting therapy?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to say?
13. Participants are offered the opportunity to express/describe creatively their experience of change at any time during the interview and at the completion of the interview (drawing, clay work, poetry).

Client is to be thanked and given a thankyou letter after all interviews are completed.

This interview protocol was informed by, and adapted from a survey of other phenomenological interview formats (Moustakas, 1994; Valle, 1998), as well as from experiential psychotherapy research information, the "client change interview protocol" (Elliott, 2001).

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS



INVITATION TO CLIENTS

2003

My name is Robin Steele, and I am inviting you to participate in a Research Project that will be exploring your experience of change during the time you are attending counselling & after completion of your counselling sessions with your counsellor.

This project forms the basis of a Doctor of Philosophy, which I am currently studying at Edith Cowan University. When this project is complete, the PhD will be available in the ECU library and in journal articles, and a possible book about the study may be written for other people to read. The themes and findings from this study may help guide other therapists and clients to understand change processes in therapy more deeply.

I would like to know, what are the changes you experience during, between and after your therapy sessions and how you describe these changes. It is hoped that this study will assist counsellors and training organisations, by allowing for a greater understanding of what and how you experience change over this period of time.

I understand that your story and feelings are very personal, so please be assured that your personal details will be known only to myself and not connected to any of the information that you give. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. You will be able to withdraw your offer to participate or refuse to have some or all of your information used at any point in the project.

The interviews are informal and conversational, and about one hour in duration. There will be four interviews, conducted in private, in person and/or by telephone (conference phone) and audio-taped - **after the 3rd session, after the final session, 3-4 months after completion of therapy, followed by a short follow-up session about 4-6 months later.**

All participants will be able to stop the recording at any time during the interview or request that certain comments be edited from the tape if you so wish. A copy of the interview transcript can be made available for you if you wish to clarify anything or add further comments.

An advantage of your participation in the study is that it offers the opportunity for you to reflect and describe your process with an impartial person and have these descriptions recorded. This can be a valuable and supportive process in addition to the counselling sessions. If you wish to discuss this project with an independent person, you may contact the head of the school at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury: Ken Robinson on 08 - 97807 777.

If you agree to participate after having read the consent form, would you please contact me either by email or telephone (I will ring you back), so we can clarify the details and make arrangements on how and when is the most suitable time for me to ring you to organise an interview.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time, to inquire or discuss this project further.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider this request.

Yours sincerely

Robin Steele

PhD candidate,

Edith Cowan University,

Bunbury, Western Australia

Tel/Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

For further background information about Robin:

Web: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



2003

Working Title: A phenomenological study of clients' experience of therapeutic change: in Psychophonetics counselling and psychotherapy.

Researcher: *Robin Steele* - Email: [REDACTED]
Tel: (Aust) [REDACTED]

I understand that the nature of this study is to interview adults who wish to change and who are participating in the process of attending Philophonetics holistic counselling sessions. I am participating voluntarily, and I am free to not answer any questions and I know that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

I give my permission for the data gathered from me to be used in the researcher's written doctoral project report and any other future publication/s. I understand that only the researcher will have access to the research material obtained, and that there will be no identifying evidence on disks, cassettes and transcripts. I also understand that my name will not be associated with the research, so that my identity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym.

I agree to be interviewed by telephone in the initial stage of therapy for a short meeting, then for an in-depth interview **after the 3rd session, after the final session, 3 months after completion of therapy, and about 4-6 months later, for a short follow-up interview (total of 4 interviews)**. I also agree, if necessary, for an additional clarification interview (15- 30mins) by telephone, at a mutually agreeable time. I grant permission for the following personal information to be used: approximate age, gender, brief background descriptions about me given during the interview, as well as the information I provide verbally and artistically, about my experiences of therapeutic change.

I grant permission for the research interview/s to be audio-tape recorded, and for the tape/s to be transcribed. I am aware that the tape-recorded interview and other material written/emailed by me for the research interview will be kept confidential, following the guidelines for ethical research.

I understand there is a possibility that I may experience some discomfort as I recall my experiences. In the unlikely event that the research interview/s results in significant distress, I understand I am able to receive telephone consultation from the researcher and that she will provide relevant referrals if requested.

I understand that it will be my responsibility to decide whether or not to share the research interview experience with others, such as the therapist, and that the researcher will not disclose such information. I am aware that I have a right to request a copy of the general summary of the findings from this study, once they are available. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I want to, and these questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I

_____ agree to participate as a volunteer participant (co- researcher) in the above named project.

Research Participant (Print)

_____ Researcher Name (Print)

Research Participant Signature
Signature

_____ Researcher's

Date ____/____/____

Date ____/____/____

APPENDIX F**ARTICLE**

Steele, R. (2004). The theory and practical application of sounds in therapy.
Psychotherapy in Australia Journal, 11(1), 66-71.

The Theory and Practical Application of Sounds in Therapy

ROBIN STEELE

Sound and, in particular, the sound of the human voice, have been used since time began to quieten the mind and for healing. This is reflected in the use of mantras and chanting in Hinduism and Buddhism. Dance, movement, breath, voice and sound are used as therapeutic tools across many of the somatic approaches to therapy, to increase awareness, to support expression, to 'energise' and to calm and soothe. In this article, ROBIN STEELE describes Psychophonetics - a method founded by Yehuda Tagar that draws on the work of Rudolph Steiner - and uses the sounds of the human voice, sensing, body awareness, movement, gesture and visualisation as extensions to conversational counselling.

The power of sound and music are celebrated in many of the great spiritual traditions as an important tool to quieten the mind and open the heart. There is a long tradition in the use of sounds for healing. Many ancient cultures used the sounds of human speech for healing and ritual purposes, and mantras or repetitive chants are still common in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Sound can effect us on all levels – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual and there is increasing research that shows the use of voice, resonance and music can improve physical, emotional and mental conditions (Tomatis, 1991; Goldman, 1992; Andrews, 1994; Skille & Wigram, 1995; Maman, 1997; Heather, 2001 & Gaynor, 2002). These writers also show that modern science supports the belief that all matter comes from vibration or sound, and that physics continues to find evidence that the physical world is made up of vibrating energy. Sound is produced when an object vibrates and each organism exhibits its own vibratory rate and every object has its own unique resonant frequency. One example of how this is applied is in medicine where sound waves are now used to break up kidney and gall stones in the body. An overview of the positive results of scientific research into sound are described by Heather (2001, pp. 20-37). More extensive and detailed research can be found in the work of Dr. Tomatis (1991) done over fifty years with more than 100,000 clients and Maman's (1997) research on the biological effects of sound on cancer cells and with people with breast cancer.

This growing interest in the use of sounds for healing can be seen in the

increasing number of music and sound therapy courses being established. One of the most powerful ways to explore the power of sound is through our own voice. The voice can transmit a healing intention more effectively than any instrument (Maman, 1997, Goldman, 1992 & Heather, 2001).

Psychophonetics

This article explores the use of human speech sounds as a mode of experience- awareness within a theoretical context of *Psychophonetics* counselling and psychotherapy. Some practical applications of sounds for self awareness and healing are discussed, in particular, how sounds can be used to express inner experiences, leading to greater perspective, as well as being used as therapeutic tools for releasing blocks, for nurturing, healing and for transformation.

Psychophonetics (previously called *Philophonetics*) is a body-oriented expressive and artistic therapy that embraces the whole human being as body, soul and spirit. Developed in the 1980's by Yehuda Tagar, its theoretical and methodological roots are based in the spiritual work of Rudolf Steiner, in Anthroposophy and psychosophy, humanistic psychology and the

expressive arts. It is a methodology of experience awareness that applies Body awareness, Movement/Gesture, Visualisation and Sounds as extensions of conversational counselling by utilizing these nonverbal tools to access, explore, express, transform and to communicate human experience, from the individual's own point of view. *Psychophonetics* psychotherapy is a phenomenological approach to human experience that facilitates the client to become more conscious of their own knowing and way of being in the world.

'One way to deliver new faculties of self-knowledge is through the sounds of our inner landscapes, within the psyche and through conscious relationship to one's experience through sensing, movement, visualisation and sounds of human speech.' (Tagar, 1995, p.8).

Tagar (1996) identifies four major modes of knowing and communication that allow for direct experience and verbal communication: *sensing, gesture/movement, visualisation and sounds*. In the first phase of a counselling session, conversation, a common picture between the client and therapist is developed. This is regarded as a *'reflective dynamic of intelligence'* and is viewed as a *'second hand medium, a translation'* of experience. (p.13).

Human experience, according to Rudolf Steiner's (1994) model of the human being, is imprinted or registered in the 'subtle bodies' that lie somewhere between the physical body and the mind – in the ether or life body and the astral body (the body of emotions, desires, feelings). The memories of experience live here, at an unconscious level, an 'invisible reality' made up of 'processes, rhythms and formative forces' (Tagar, 1995, p.2).

The 'subtle bodies,' are similar to the concepts of chi, prana, etheric, dream-body and other notions of the life body. Steiner (1982; 1983a; 1994) describes the nature of the human being, as comprising a physical body, life-body, sentient-body and self, or I. The life body is seen as the source of the formative forces where memory is held. Tagar (1995) proposes that the material or substance of these subtle bodies is made up of vibrations, the same 'material' that constitutes sounds. Because of this, sounds have the capacity to resonate within the realms of the subtle bodies, and through this are able to access directly all of the unconscious stored memories and experiences residing there:

'...when all the sounds of human speech resound around a living human body, every aspect of one's inner experience, from every phase and level of one's life echoes and vibrates with them, like the strings of a piano with the sound of guitar strings nearby. Our subtle bodies, etheric and astral ...are like the resonance chamber of the sounds...The sounds are the hidden language of our inner life.' (Tagar, 1995, p.23).

Chopra (1991) confirms this and suggests that every part of the body holds the memory of all of our experiences within its cells. These atoms, cells and tissues are composed of very faint vibrations that hold DNA together, which Chopra contends are the strongest forces in nature.

Assagioli (1975), the founder of psychosynthesis, discovered through his therapeutic work that every sound or note can have physical and psychological effects. In the 1960s Hans Jenny, a Swiss scientist, spent over ten years conducting experiments to discover that sound has the power to cause geometric shapes to form on sand and to cause glass to shatter. By 1974 he came to the conclusion that:

'... each individual cell generates its own

sound, groups of cells also generate their own sounds, as do the organs of the body and these are harmonically related to each other. Sound creates form and the entire human body has its own sound made up of all the sounds of its cells, tissues and organs' (Heather, 2001, p.21).

Assagioli (1975, p.240) remarked 'how much more powerful then must be the impact of this force (sounds) on the vibrating, living substances of our sensitive bodies!'

expression of the same sounds in words from different languages (the sound 't' in this case), Tagar (1999) proposed in 1986 that:

'Beyond cultural differences, there lies the universal human experience of the single sounds and the choice of a particular sound for the expression of a particular experience, is of a universal nature ... The sound 'T' is an expression of a range of very specific experiences. One has to experiment with the sound 'T' ... in order to become conscious of it: one has to sense

The power of sound and music are celebrated in many of the great spiritual traditions as an important tool to quieten the mind and open the heart.

The sounds of speech

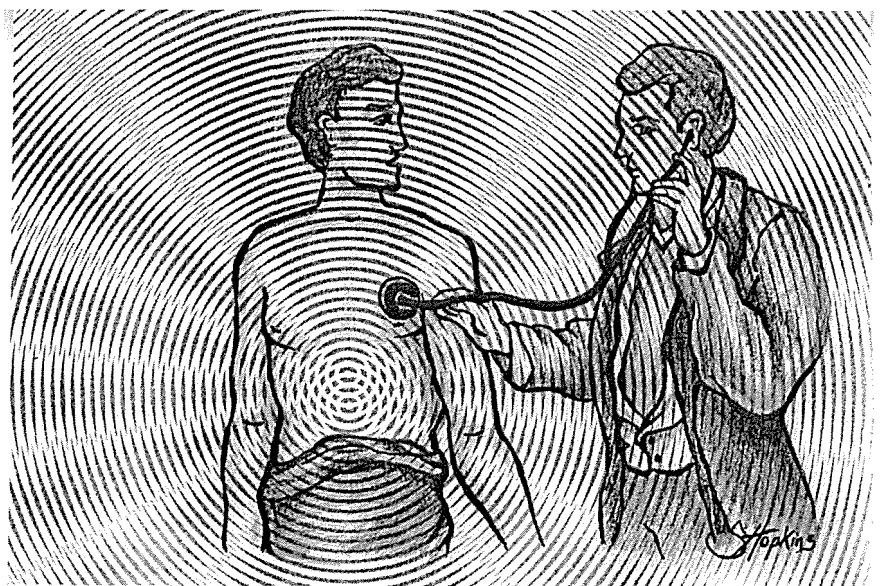
In utilising human speech sounds the focus is on the single sounds of vowels and consonants, as these are universal and underlie all languages, connecting to the most primal human sounds of expression before the formation of words – babbling. Tagar states in Crowley and Crowley (1992, p.290) that 'babies all babble in exactly the same way'. Just as babies spontaneously play, experiment with and 'express much of their inner experiences through the sounds themselves', so adults can reconnect with and renew 'this intimate relationship with the single sounds of language'.

In the discussion of the function and

it, feel it, act it and play with it. The sound 'T' will then be able to reveal its various characteristics. It will appear to be pointy, tight, penetrating, tough, strong, ticklish. It will make sense then why a word like 'tree' starts with 'T', while a word like 'post' ends with it. The first starts from its strong grip in the ground and ends in its free movement in the air above, expressed by the 'R' of 'tree'; the second comes into the ground from above, gets stuck in the ground, where it stays at rest. (p.143)

The basic elements and sounds

One of the major classifications of the sounds is by the basic elements. The European classification consisted



of four elements: *Earth, Water, Air* and *Fire*, while the Chinese scale included five elements: *Metal, Wood, Water, Air* and *Fire*. Tagar (1997) has developed this further and included the sounds of human speech, as the following scale of the elementally classified sounds:

Earth element: G, K, D, T, B, P (the plosives).

Wood element: Ng, N, M (the Nasals)

Water element: L, W .

Air element: R1, R2, R3, R4 (said in four different ways – Scottish, English, French or African accent)

Fire element: H, S, Sh, Z, Th, Ch, F, V, Ts (C), Tch, Dj, J, Y, Th. (the fricatives)

Light element: All the vowels (16). A (ah), E (eh), I (ee), O (oh), U (oo), Ä, Ö, Ü and the diphthongs: A-I (ai, ah-ee), A-U (ao, ah-oo) and O-I (oi, oh-ee), U-I (ui, oo-ee) and reversed.

This basic alphabet is culturally biased in the direction of the sounds we are most familiar with, but others are also free to add more sounds that come from their own experiences and from different cultures. Steiner (1960, 1982, 1983b) and Tagar (1997, 2001b) describe in more depth the spiritual and cosmic nature of the alphabet, and its application in healing which I will not go into in this paper, but is interesting to study further once a personal exploration, awareness and connection with the sounds has been established. Maman (1997) concluded from his experiments that the human voice has not only a physical aspect and emotional colour, but an added element not found in any musical instrument. This is a spiritual resonance that comes from the will of the person making the sound.

In exploring the sounds listed on this model I became aware that the following sounds have not been referred to – ch, q, x, y, and z. This is because they are a combination of other sounds. (e.g. q = k & w). On this basis, Steiner (1960) stated in 1924 and Tagar (1997) confirms that there are only about 35- 40 sounds world wide that form the foundation of all languages. These sounds can perform a variety of functions, including expressing inner experiences, releasing inner blocks, as tools for nurturing and transforming experiences. If we explore each sound we find they have a unique quality or characteristic. Speaking single sounds creates a particular shape of air flow

through the mouth and nose that can be traced through joining the air flow with hand movements.

Crowley and Crowley (1992, p. 289), Steiner (1982,1983b) describe some of the typical inner and outer expressions and responses that can occur while experiencing the sounds said aloud, and when expressed with the whole body:

A (ah) - opening, wonder,

U (oo) - narrowing, deepening,

K - breaking through a barrier, cutting, MMM – nurturing,

T – pointing, of incarnating,

D- consolidating,

G- guarding, fending off,

B- embracing, holding movement.

However, it must be remembered that although there can be a commonality of experience with each sound there are also individual differences in the experience of the sounds and in sound combinations. Newham (1999) in Heather (2001) supports this by saying that our voice reflects our sense of identity and the sound of our voice reminds us of who we are. The definition of personality comes from the latin words 'per sona', which means 'the sound passes through'. This can mean that changing our voice pattern can change the way we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us, and our voice can help us to express the different personalities within us.

Sounds have shapes, movement and direction (Tomatis, 1991; Tagar, 1999 & Jenny in Heather, 2001). The shapes made by experiences in the subtle bodies echo with the shapes created in us in response to sounds. Tagar's research found that this experience of the shapes is of the imprinted experiences in the subtle body, which can be sensed through bodily sensation, and expressed through bodily gestures, movement and sounds. For the practitioner, the skill of *sound-naming* is to find the compatible sound that creates the same specific shape of the already created and imprinted experience. For instance the shapes could be closed/open; straight/curvy; hard/soft; imploding/exploding ... etc.

Sounds also create forms and disperse them, allowing or preventing movement. In many healing traditions the life body (etheric, chi or prana) is seen as a sphere of energy in constant motion. Sickness is considered to be movement that is

blocked, while healing involves the release of blocked energy into movement. Therefore the sound naming of the movement is as important as the sound naming of the form. Some examples of types of movement are: heavy/light; fast/slow; contraction/ expansion; inward/outward; straight/round ...etc. These movements and sounds also have a specific direction, for example, upwards, downwards, pulling, pushing, from behind, from the front ... etc. (Tagar, 1999).

The experience of sound

When I experiment with sounds by saying them aloud and continuing or extending them, I come into contact with this elemental characteristic of each sound. For instance, *earth* sounds such as 'dddd, bbb or kkkk' can suggest to me the qualities of incredible resistance and denseness, as well as solidity, holding, enclosing and an ability to break through. As expressions of inner experience, the earth sounds evoke in me feelings of frustration, anger and unresolved struggle and effort as well as solid foundations. They can effectively express all that is blocked and being held back. The same sounds however, can also be used to release blocks. By exploding the sound I make to express an inner block such as anger, I experience a corresponding release of energy of what was blocked previously inside of me (eg. moving from sounding a blocked HUG/ or HUD/ into a released GAAH or DAH .. etc.). The release is even more effective if accompanied by corresponding physical gestures or movements. Sounds are most effective when they arise organically out of breathing into a gesture of a particular experience and physical movement with the whole body and sounding aloud. The particular sounds applicable for each person emerge as unique expressions of an individual's specific soul experience in that particular time and place.

The sounds related to the elements of *wood* and *water* (eg. n, m, ng, w and l) can be for me warm, flowing, caressing and nurturing. They can evoke experiences of being soothed, calmed and comforted. There seems to me to be a suggestion in these sounds that there is a certain fluidity about things. This is reflected in the common expression

'mmmm', when something is still being 'mmmulled' over, ponnndered ... mmmm...mmmmaybe..

The water sounds (w and l) for me can still be nurturing, but appear more light and open with more motion in them that involves the whole body. The gesture that comes to me is a fluid wavelike motion.

releasing sounds, made by combining a particular earth sound with a particular fire sound and with no vowel sound in between them: For example, G-H; K-Ssss; T-Ch; T-Ssss; D-J; P-Fff; P-S; P-Sh; etc. (Tagar, 1999).

The vowel sounds are different from the consonants. It is an interesting

*I am the warm winds,
I am the shifting sands
I grow and change forever,
The landscape expands*

From the psychotherapeutic perspective, Tagar (1999, 1997, pp. 47-49) describes in more detail the nature of the different sounds in his paper 'Cooperating with the life forces from within', especially with regard to the connection between the characteristics of the elements and their corresponding groups of sounds. Tagar (2001a, 1997) concludes from his observation and experience that:

'The sounds of human speech, consonants and vowels, are forms of vibration which can directly echo and simulate the whole range of human experience, which live in the body in forms similar to the vibrations of speech. Every human experience, once expressed in a gesture, can find its precise counterpart in a particular combination of sounds of speech (2001a, p.2).

Tagar (1997) suggests that sounds are the deepest and most powerful mode of operation of our body of life and its forces. Assagioli (1975, p.260) supports this comment by saying that 'we trust that the magic of sound, scientifically applied, will contribute in ever greater measure to the relief of human suffering, to a higher development and a richer integration of the human personality.'

The application of sounds in Psychophonetics theory therapy

With regard to therapy, through working with body awareness, gesture and visualisation the sounds can then address and enhance the bodily memory of experience and access untapped inner resources. The capacity of sounds to resonate with specific imprints of experience makes them a powerful therapeutic tool as they can simulate the experience of invasion, of inner and outer pressures, impositions, abuse, criticism as well as the experience of protection, pain, release, nurturing and all aspects of desired inner strength. Sound therapy in combination with the other nonverbal modes is also effective for the practice of creating personal boundaries and for asserting one's own power, presence, rights, speaking and expression (Tagar, 2001b). The sounds give the client a range of

The capacity of sounds to resonate with specific imprints of experience makes them a powerful therapeutic tool as they can simulate the experience of invasion, of inner and outer pressures, impositions, abuse, criticism as well as the experience of protection, pain, release, nurturing and all aspects of desired inner strength.

The sound 'lll' suggests something 'alive, living, like a waterfall' These sounds correspond to the life (or etheric) level of existence and the life processes.

The air sound 'rrrr' is an effective and fun way to enliven the energy when feeling tired, it travels and moves around, dispersing and scattering the energy, depending on how it is sounded. Combining sounds as 'brrr' (sounded through the lips) and shaking the whole body at the same time can be even more effective.

The fire sounds (s, sh, ha, f, v and possibly j and z) can represent to me a further enlivening and development from the air sounds. They have action, warmth, force and direction. Like fire, there is no holding them back, especially Hah, Shh, S. In exploring some combinations of sounds, for example - k-sh, w-sh - these seem to describe a process of breaking out from some form of resistance. The words 'crash' and 'woosh illustrate such a process. The sounds can always be explored further and will mean different things to different people according to their own experiences.

There are also a group of sounds that are useful for specific types of release and sometimes for naming certain types of attacking inner forces. They are the fricatives/explosive and steam

exercise to become aware of where the vowel sounds originate in the body and to explore how the expression of the vowels can possibly relate to and stimulate our faculties of imagination, inspiration and intuition (Steiner,1982). For instance, the experience of seeing a beautiful sunset and the feeling that arises within may be enhanced by responding aloud with the sounds 'aaah', 'oo' or an extended 'w-ow' or with whatever sound/s that come naturally with that feeling.

This articulation may serve as a beginning of being inspired to paint the scene or to write a poem or to imagine a future holiday or to realize intuitively that it is time to go and live by the sea ... The point is that by engaging in an exploration of the different vowels this activity could help to identify more clearly what is being evoked within one's soul life through this experience of the sunset. It may be a yearning, a knowing or maybe excitement for a future possibility. The sounds can be a source of release and of healing in our life body as we experience them as events taking place within us, as subtle vibrations. The following poem is inspired from an experience of sounding and moving the whole body with 'shhh'.

'Shhh ...' (sounded with extending, rising & falling of the sound, on the breath)

tools for the exploration, expression and communication for change and improvement in their inner life. It is important to always approach this activity in a phenomenological way, this means that we are encouraged to 'study human experience and the way things present themselves to us in and through such experience' (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2), so that the freedom and uniqueness of each person's experience is respected.

The following examples describe the client's experience of using sound as part of their therapy:

Marilyn: 'On this particular day there was a difference in my nurturing, (imagined/visualised) my heart was first covered in a woven blanket of love and warmth, which was pink and gold, and this then replaced with a pure gold blanket and it was ultra fine like fine toffee, but was soft not brittle, that covered my heart and yeah, it felt, was really lovely. The sound (I sounded) was a warm high vibrating energy 'MMMMMM' sound, with a central point to it but also vibrating graduating out, that was very nice and then after a couple of days of nurturing my heart, this beautiful pink colour surrounded by exquisite perfumed rose petals, I could visualise and smell the petals. I had some wonderful sessions nurturing my heart, I can smell, a divine smell absolutely. A warm gentle feeling sound 'MM' came with feeling.

...I could see the colour yellow with that sound and it's dancing, so the sounds changed which was interesting because there was a difference in the changes, it felt like the heart had been healed, so with that healing the joy was able to manifest itself and be in there. Until the heart had actually been healed and been given these nurturing sounds and the love that it required it couldn't experience joy. The sounds made a big change for me.'

Zeus describes his experience of using the whole body when speaking the sounds of 'Gah', and 'D' during part of his therapy process:

'I think using the body makes a big difference, because it's not just a conversation, you are actually participating and what you do is you, you are not told how to do it, it's just what comes out of you in each situation. It's just invigorating and feels that once I've released the block and set up the boundary I do find I come back within myself.'

During Margaret's twenty hours of labour she seriously considered taking a painkiller, but changed her mind when she remembered her learning from the therapy sessions, to accept the pain and not fight it. When she joined it with her breathing and sounding 'om', 'uhhh', and other fluid, open sounds, she could endure her contractions and ride with the experience. 'I was meeting each moment with sound and by the time I had sounded out the sound fully, the pain had passed.'

The experience of the therapist

Perhaps, more so than in many other approaches, the therapist who chooses to use their voice or non-verbal communication tools in their therapeutic work, must attend to their own development first. Heather (2001) describes research by John Diamond that proposes the purpose of speech is to raise the life energy of the listener so that he/she is benefited by the communication. From his research in 1983, Diamond suggested that about 90% of professionals who use their voices as their therapeutic tool 'will not be able to raise the life energy of their client – their voices are non-therapeutic'. (Heather, 2001, p. 35).

Eggers (2003) emphasises in her study that if the therapist is using nonverbal communication tools in therapeutic work then the therapist must first experience, and make an in depth connection with, these tools and their own issues and experiences. Without attending to their own experience and development, the therapist may be limited in their ability to reproduce a transitional space whereby the client can become increasingly integrated, intra-personally and inter-personally.

Conclusion

Psychophonetics psychotherapists incorporate the cognitive and experiential aspects of the therapeutic process through work with a combination of expressive and non-verbal elements, in a participatory therapy process that takes account of each client's experience and particular needs. The capacity of sounds to *echo simulate* specific imprints of experience in the soul life makes them powerful communication and therapeutic tools in

every aspect and phase of the therapeutic process, and for every type of presenting issue.

Steiner predicted in the 1920's that pure tones will be used for healing before the end of the 20th century, while Nostradamus foretold the healing of cancer through pure tones and Edgar Cayce also predicted that the medicine of the future would be sound.

Perhaps the future is now?

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APPENDIX G**ARTICLE**

Steele, R. (2002). Introducing - Robin Isla Steele. In K. Easton (Ed.), *The way of women: Challenges and transitions found on our life's journey* (pp. 34-35). Bunbury, Western Australia: The South West Women's Health and Information Centre.

Introducing... *Robin Isla Steele*



I arrived on the 23rd of June in 1950 and landed in the western volcanic plains of Victoria. I lived on a farm that I loved and danced my way through the childhood years dreaming of joining a dance company and travelling the world expressing myself through the body in movement.

I awoke from this dream at 14 years and moved to Torquay and went to school in Geelong and into a phase of my life where everything around me was new. Dancing was the only constant companion and I moved into modern dance in my late teens, when I moved to Melbourne to study teaching for 3 years.

At 21 years, a major shift occurred again. I moved into my twenties working as an early childhood teacher and accepting the calling of motherhood. By 30 years old I had birthed 4 children - Paul, Daniel, Julia and John - was also teaching and completing B.Ed. studies. My second child, Daniel died at 2 months - a cot death baby! The impact of this experience was felt deeply within my body and soul, and it took a long time to be able to feel deeply again and be at peace.

I have always been the main provider for my family, juggling work, family and my own needs into every day life. I found I could cope very well in the world. My interest in spirituality and psychology developed more through my thirties and allowed me a way to work with all my inner questions and struggles. Eventually, I made another move and became a single parent, moved into a new home and consolidated my learnings so far in a Masters thesis.

Being in my forties was full on. My oldest two children left home to pursue their lives in other places, I left my teaching career after 21 years and entered into a body focussed and spiritually based psychotherapy training and then as a teacher in a counselling training college, using movement, imagination, art and sound therapy as a way of understanding and expressing the inner resonances of the soul life, through the medium of the body.

The major transitions in my life have occurred on a regular basis, about every 7 - 10 years since I was 14 years old. At times this was experienced through an outer change but mostly it was a response to a deep inner workings of the spirit in my soul that strived to become more visible and true; learning to express with love and wisdom, to make a difference in the world. I can see that there is a pattern and a wisdom that emerges in my life that makes sense.

I have learnt that in the face of enormous feelings of sadness, loss, hurt and aloneness we can find the courage, inner strength and love to go on in life. Within us there is a knowing that can guide us, an inner strength that can enable us to do things and inner resources that we can connect with

that can enrich us in our times of need. Life is there supporting us in many ways, we may not like or want the experiences we are facing but we can choose how we want to meet them.

I know because I have been in some very dark and alone places and found that spark of hope that shines through the cracks and guides me: through violence, poverty, death of a child, surgery, illness, divorce and more - through the grief and sadness of many separations and tragic losses, on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels.

All these experiences interweave with each other and with all the joys in life - such as giving birth to four children, seeing them become adults with the love between us growing deeper. I feel very privileged to be doing the sacred work of being a mother, teacher, counsellor/ psychotherapist and adult educator with people of all ages and I feel very grateful for meeting all the warm, deep and enduring friendships along the way.

Life is full of meaning for me - On August 19th, 2001, I left Victoria, moved everything arrived in WA to begin a new way of life built on the foundation of what had been before (good compost!). This transition is different - I am collecting all the threads of my life and am weaving them into a wholeness that is more visible and true. Through this transition the fruits of all the earlier experiences can be expressed more fully.

I am here on my own now - day to day responsibilities as a mother are done (my grown up children are moving in their own directions and living in different countries), teaching counselling, working in private practice as a psychotherapist, completing a PhD; meeting new people and having fun living in this new community.

NEWSFLASH!! While writing this story, in February 2002, I received a post graduate scholarship which has completely changed my life **AGAIN** - this is wonderful news (somewhat daunting too!) and a great support for me to be able to consolidate my life's work in a written form.

Arriving in WA awakens a feeling of returning home - I love the calmness of the ocean, the intensity of the sun, the clarity in the air and the rugged beauty of the land.

I come to a beginning place once again - returning to myself, where things once thought lost are found anew and the blossoming of life's creative journey is happening. Living in my fifties and the garden is blooming!



POSTSCRIPT

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now we know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians:13).

Now it is time to borrow another phrase from Alice in Wonderland and look “through the looking glass,” to reflect and respond to the examiner’s reports, so that the conversations can come full circle and be completed, in terms of the University requirements. Beyond the official requirements, my faith and hope is that the conversations are not completed, but continue as an ongoing, evolving, living and transformatory process.

A letter to the three examiners⁶⁰ (J, C, & T):

I am most appreciative to receive such rich and constructive feedback in the your reports, to which I am responding in this postscript/letter. I would like to acknowledge that I am not entirely comfortable with this approach as I would rather have a conversation with each of you face to face, so that what is spoken sits in the inbetween, in a relational context, as: “to reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one’s point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 379). However, it is in keeping with how I situated myself in the phenomenological approach, with the notion that this work is a process that continues to unfold, with the possibility of creating new meaning and perspectives. It is encouraging to see that each of you were stirred in different ways, for example, the picking up on activities rather than themes as important; that one of you experienced a parallel process while reading; and another wanted to converse with me as you were reading and also hopes to pursue this area of research. From this perspective, the work continues as you show that there is the potential for others to be stirred in different ways, through the reading of this thesis. Thankyou.

⁶⁰ As all three examiners’ have not given their permission for their names to be identified, I will use a code letter in place of their name.

Many of your comments had either been done already, or have been taken up with the necessary alterations or additions made within the thesis itself. This included typos, reducing cited references, being more explicit about the participant's that were not included, plus contextualising better how some were included in a different way (eg. through drawings and quotes) so that the reader doesn't feel 'irritated' when coming across different participants in the later chapters. Additionally, the concern by J. about the possibility of 'blurred boundaries' has been addressed in the context of the thesis. This related to one free counselling session conducted with two participants, five and eight months after the completion of their final interview. Interestingly, this week I received the November edition of the *Psychotherapy in Australia Journal*, in which two articles addressed this issue, suggesting that: "much of the literature on this topic is rigid and pathologising of practitioners and clients" who decide to negotiate the boundaries (Cleret, 2005, p. 48). The issue of: "the interchangeable use of dual relationships with notions of 'harm' and 'exploitation'" was seen as questionable, and that becoming a more effective therapist may mean daring to negotiate non-exploitive relationships with our clients when appropriate (Zur, 2005, p. 36).

During the four months while waiting for the examiner's reports, I also went through the thesis again to do my own assessment and interestingly, some of your comments matched my own revisions. One area that had not been addressed fully, was the need for a definition of parallel processing, so I was pleased to see that this point had been noticed. A definition of parallel processing has been added in chapter 1, in the 'Definition of terms' section.

After addressing most of these areas, I come to one remaining area to be addressed or not. In J.'s report, that asserts I accepted: "without any critical reflection the theory of psychophonetics psychotherapy and the seven life processes," and states 'Steiner's (1917)' point that: "preconceived theories can distort our capacity to observe phenomena," when contrasted with C. & T.'s reports, shows different views have been expressed. In regard to the use of the word *critical*, I prefer to use the word *imagining*. Alex Nelson's (1997, para 31) comments on these two words are pertinent:

An odd couple, imagining and critical reflection, live in the house where lives and life stories are composed. Imagining skirts the thresholds of the unconscious underworld, bringing home unreliable shady friends such as dreams, questions, flashes of insight. Critical reflection's friends are eminently respectable, though a bit hard for imagining to bear. Sometimes they throw a party, to invite all their friends. There's great conversation, when all the participants get their say. What's more, you can't say in advance what might come of such a get-together.

The main aspects of the research process were imaginative awareness, the hermeneutic circle/spiral and an attentiveness to language and the writing processes. Hermeneutic imagination asks: "what is at work in particular ways of speaking or acting to help facilitate an ever-deepening appreciation of the world or lived experience" (Lavery, 2003, pp. 21-22). I did not know in advance, how the thesis was going to unfold and the focus of the research was not on a specific theory or the particular approach as such, but on the participant's and researcher's experience of change/ing. This included three of the interviews conducted up to about eight months *after* therapy had been completed. I was not trying to prove whether this approach was true or not but rather through a process of questioning in response to the transcripts, came to see how it worked or not, from the participant's perspective, in the context of their life, and from my interpretation of these experiences. Knowledge in this context, is more about being able to articulate our: "best understandings ... thus far, not a statement of what is ultimately real" (Lavery, 2003, p. 13), and acknowledging that this an evolving process. In my original research proposal, the intention was to compare clients' experience of change in verbal (solution-oriented therapy) versus action psychotherapy (psychophonetics). However, the feedback from one of the reviewers is relevant and provides a rationale for not doing this:

My strong advice is that you should finesse this ...by taking the direct approach of exploring how clients themselves experience change during and after the therapeutic process. If you follow my suggested route, then you immediately place yourself outside the onerous responsibility of establishing the bona fide rationale for philophonetics therapy ...Let others demonstrate this to the world – it is not necessary for you to be at the forefront of this effort, and not important for the really interesting question that you wish to address. The upshot of this aspect of my critique is that you will need to radically modify your proposal and stated intention of comparing therapeutic outcome as measured by phenomenological experience. Instead of arguing that

evaluation of differing therapeutic approaches is essentially a waste of time ...you should take the view that a client driven approach informed by phenomenology could add a considerable, and positive dimension to the debate. As I mentioned in my verbal appraisal, my strong feeling is that you wish to follow this approach from your own intuitive understanding of the issues involved. You should follow your heart, and embrace the rich and varied experience of clients (Ken Robinson, personal communication, 5/11/02)

So I did follow my heart, as these comments had a profound affect on how the thesis was changed. The following comments confirm for me that I had made the right decision:

The author's rigorous, reflective, process and critical insight into the change process is so clearly explicated that her process itself is a knowledge product for the community of scholars. She has lifted the veil and described an innovative embodied process of work. (C)

And: "I had to confront my reservations about the angst that usually seems to surround students' interpretations of phenomenology but find in this work the best interpretation yet encountered" (T).

It is probably not useful to go searching for evidence to defend J.'s concerns about how our capacity to observe may become distorted, as you did state that this could be more about your parallel process, and this aspect was discussed a number of times throughout the thesis. As J. quoted *Steiner, 1917* in regards to this issue, I take the liberty of quoting from the same lecture (Steiner, 2004, p. 22):

What matters here is that we must be able to let each question live on in us, in the fullness of our inner life, not seeking to consider them rationally, bringing all our inner powers to bear, but to live through them and have the patience to wait and see if something of a revelation will not come from the outside. And this does happen.

Without a face to face conversation, it is difficult to really understand each person's point of view. I do agree that there is a danger inherent in psychotherapy in general, whereby therapy can inadvertently promote a self-absorbed, narcissistic way of being that tends to isolate the individual from others and the world (see pages 288, 294), and this is an error or distortion that can occur when we delve into the inner life (Sardell●, 1999b, 2001a). This can also be true in

phenomenological research, as there is always the possibility of creating distortions of reality. The difference for me is created by being able to enter into the soul life of living inner experiences, that lead to imaginative awareness, intuitions and inspirations, as perceptions that live independently of the body (Steiner, 2004/1917). Differing points of view show a particular angle of what is perceived, and as such, each angle is valid. As C. & T. appear to see this work differently, I prefer to withhold judgement, and wait; for when this work is out in the world for others to read, whereupon I look forward to conversations that will bring a diversity of perspectives to the work.

I take the opportunity to respond differently, in this letter to you. At each step of the way in the writing of this thesis, I was confronted with some sort of resistance, either coming in the form of a relationship with another person, with some aspect of the participant's transcripts, or with some event happening in the world. Accepting the resistance as a way of learning, allowed me to reflect on what was happening, and by staying with this experience, something became clearer, a way through arrived or revealed itself, and the resistance dissolved. This happened in different ways before each chapter was written, which meant learning to wait, to be with, to listen, to meditate, and/or to let it go, until something arrived that enabled the writing to flow. The theory that is in this thesis, has been built up through the experience of encountering the particular transcripts and the supervisory dialogues, as: "the way in which we know is most assuredly tied up with both what we know and our relationship with with our research participants" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 182). I would recommend that further research be done, to see how this methodology works with participants who have experienced therapeutic change through different modalities. I agree that there are many perspectives on any one experience and I find it is interesting that Rudolf Steiner's "notion of twelve different ways of viewing phenomena" is mentioned. I am aware of his thinking on this, and it was constantly in the background of my mind, which is why I did not assume that what I wrote was/is the truth, but is just one person's interpretation, developed and created from the diversity of relationships engaged with during the research process. In working through the research process, I discussed in detail how the encounter with these relationships changed my perspective a number of times, enabling the thesis to be constructed in

its present form. For example, on page 297: “I am aware that this approach is only one perspective of many just as valid other perspectives” (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Wehr, 2002). The importance of differing perspectives was also mentioned and supported by a quote from J; who is the one who raised this point (see page 244-245). Also see pages 305-306.

In my understanding, the processes that Johann von Goethe’s used in his phenomenological research show how to work with a living idea creatively and his aim was to show phenomenologically how thinking can grow as a self-distillation process (Goethe, 1988). This is shown in the thesis, in how different kinds of thinking arose from the phenomenological process or journey through the elemental stages of cognition, as described in chapters 2-5, in the participant’s stories, and are summarised in Table 4, in the epilogue. These differing shifts in perspective became the basis for a transformative process experienced throughout the thesis.

In exploring the phenomena of change, as the researcher, I had to keep an open and flexible heart and mind, in which the activity of questioning and dialogue was a helpful safeguard. For example, the supervisory dialogues served this purpose well and offered constructive feedback, such as in chapter four, with the inflated archetype experience, that created a perspective transformation. Questioning also can safeguard against distortion and allows for not only differing perspectives, but also for *perspective transformation* (Mesirow, 1981). Through the process of questioning of something that deeply interests us, there is an opening of possibilities, to: “‘live’ this question ... we ‘become’ this question” [and] “Is this not the meaning of research?” (van Manen, 1990, p. 43). The love of questioning demanded my full attention and interest and had an affect not only on how I interacted with others but also on how the shape of the thesis unfolded. My assumptions, values and biases are embedded in the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, thus by making my questions and the dialogues explicit throughout the thesis, by including the participant’s own words in thick descriptions, I attempted to make these communications publicly observable.

Rather than talk about whether an idea or concept is true or not, Martin Heidegger (1987, p. 142) makes the point that: “Not only because people have been so busy writing books that they have forgotten how to question, but because the writers already possess an answer and what is more an answer that forbids questioning.” Martin Heidegger (1987) sees the lack of questioning as the *distortion of perspective*, and he goes on to say that the question that only asks *what* is the human being is a deception, it has to be rather “*who*” is this human being? This journey of hermeneutic phenomenological research is more about how we see differently, and the *levels of consciousness* from which experience is observed (Bignell, 2000). In this light, I would like to pose an ongoing question that is a constant companion: Are we in the research activity of reflection or refraction, or as Alice imagines - through the looking glass, darkly or clearly, what/how/who do we really see?

Warm regards

Robin

October, 2005