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## **On being-in-community : a phenomenological explication of the experience of being-in-community : in the context of the community building workshop TM and business**

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**ON BEING-IN-COMMUNITY**

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION OF THE  
EXPERIENCE OF BEING-IN-COMMUNITY: IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP™ AND  
BUSINESS.**

**by**

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**SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

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Be the change you want to see in the world

-Gandhi

The Healthy social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community is shaped,  
And when in the community  
Lives the strength of each human soul

- Rudolf Steiner

## Abstract

A call for business to introduce a humanistic workplace ethos within a supportive work community resounds throughout the western world. Scott Peck's model of community building workshops is explored as a tool for creating a business ethos centred on human flourishing which embraces the principles of socially responsible community. The CBW provides a concrete experience of a psychological and physiological sense of deep-community. In Peck's vernacular, this is termed as being-in-community.

In my research the experience of being-in-community is explicated via phenomenological analysis, which allows some of the eidetic structures of the phenomenon to come to light. The experience is represented by four interpretive themes; encountering the other; emptying and emptiness; speaking; and being-in-community, with chapters five and six showing the meaning of the experience for CBW participants. A phenomenological approach is used to report the meaning of experience, as phenomenology is suited to explicating both ideographic and nomothetic representations of experience. The experience of being-in-community is shown to have properties that can profoundly affect and change the experiencing person.

This research found that the experience of being-in-community has universal eidetic structures that exist beyond the embodied human, whilst being intrinsically connected to human consciousness. The experience of being-in-community is ontologically re-formatational and bridges and transcends perceived differences of self and Other. This experience is shown to contain connective and unifying qualities, which bond people in an empathic and inclusive experience of the Other in community. Personal barriers to community are laid aside and the Other is seen with 'fresh eyes'. Differences are accepted in an attitude of care and respect for the Other, which is supportive and healing. People are bound thus in a lattice of fellow-feeling which can fortify and support individual and organisational endeavours to change. The CBW is proposed as a way to build sustainable businesses for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, businesses that can create and sustain community.

## **Declaration**

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

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Dated *6-11-2003*

Carl Holroyd

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*This project is dedicated to all who practice building community - you are the unacknowledged pioneers of our times*

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The topic for this thesis arose from a confluence of my work experiences and personal interests over the last 25 years. My interest in self-development, spirituality, the search for meaning within my life, my varied and diverse working life and career path, have led me to this place, this point in time, this research project. My personal, life-changing experience of being-in-community is the anchor this project revolves around.

Since the conception of this project in 1999 we have witnessed world and local events that have challenged and shocked us. Many people are questioning a world where the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and the Bali bombings of October 2002 are possible, where massive corporate collapses have occurred, where corporate and individual greed have risen to staggering heights and where war, poverty and famine continue to affect millions of people. It seems to me that the continued fragmentation of our human pursuits into isolated seemingly disconnected and disparate parts has robbed us of an holistic and unified perspective of our world and has seriously undermined our belief in our ability to act or influence positive change. In 1995 Bolman remarked:

Technological breakthroughs have created previously unknown conveniences and efficiencies. Yet we still face an onslaught of problems that are frustratingly resistant to rational and technical solutions. (p. 166)

Eight years on and the situation has not improved. Rationalism and technology have not been able to remedy the events mentioned and the world continues to be besieged with problems. To effectively deal with these problems I believe we need to learn about ways of dealing with others that engender respect, tolerance, acceptance, and understanding. I see the world of business as a dynamic and powerful entity that can influence enormously how we interact with each other and our environments. I contend that attending to human flourishing within business will contribute to people re-connecting with a broader world-picture, that places our activities within business in a one-world, one-planet perspective. Community



building is a way of doing this. Hence, business becomes the intended recipient of this project which is titled: *On Being-In-Community: A Phenomenological Explication of the Experience of Being-In-Community: in the Context of the Community Building Workshop and Business.*

This thesis is informed predominantly by the work of psychologist M. Scott Peck, particularly his groundbreaking group development work which he called Community Building Workshops™ (CBW). The CBW is the arena for the experience of being-in-community. It is the window through which I peer at deep-community. The project is relevant to a western cultural demographic and addresses what I see as a western cultural and spiritual crisis in the workplace. It focuses on business from a western global perspective and is written in this context. However, community building as such is not confined to a particular culture and there are many examples of the CBW being used cross-culturally, particularly with disparate religious groups (Peck, 1990). Although business is the intended recipient for this project I believe the findings have application wherever groups of people gather.

This chapter sets the scene for the project in the following sections:

1.0 Background to the study

2.0 Purpose and significance of the study

3.0 Defining and refining the research parameters

4.0 Defining the CBW model

4.1 Development of the CBW model

4.2 The Community Building Workshop: Peck's idealised stages

4.3 Setting the Scene: A description of a CBW event

4.4 Defining community in the context of Peck's model

4.5 Being-in-community: a definition

5.0 Reading notes

## **1.0 Background to the Study**

Personal experiences of both community building and working life have given rise to this study. In 1990 I was introduced to a form of building community, the CBW, which radically changed my outlook on life. Prior to attending my first

CBW I had sensed something fundamentally lacking in my relationships with others, something I could sense but could not name. After experiencing a CBW I could name this lack as a 'sense of community'. The CBW was a profound experience that has shaped my life in many ways.

The next five years were spent deepening my sense of community and training to assist others to do the same. However, even though my personal relationships were deepening and becoming more satisfying, I started to feel more and more disenfranchised in my workplaces. This feeling has persisted to this day and my recent workplace experiences with a number of organisations has confirmed to me that our working life has become fragmented and isolated from our community life and is lacking the fundamental qualities that I believe are essential for both human and planetary flourishing. When I discovered Peck's model of community building had been applied in the business arena, my interest was stimulated to undertake applied research into this area.

## **2.0 Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experience of deep-community in the context of the CBW and whether this experience promotes individual and social flourishing within business. According to Peck (1990) a deep intimate experience of oneself and the other in-community can be powerfully transformative or re-formative. The supposition is that this experience helps people engage with their workplace, work colleagues and communities in a more connected and holistic manner. As Cowan (cited in Jason, 1997) proposes:

Work should be a setting in which one is motivated by care and concern for others. Workers need to be able to express their spirit in their jobs and to speak their minds despite the potential for disapproval. A new attitude of group spirit in work settings could allow workers to be peaceful and calm, bearing witness to both success and failures without being overwhelmed by doubts and fears. (p. 84)

This project explores the CBW as a potential tool for personal and business transformation in line with the ideals expressed by Cowan. I propose that business has a responsibility of care for the wider community and that, by embracing

community building initiatives, individuals within business can take a purposeful step towards meeting this responsibility.

To my knowledge, this will be the first purely phenomenological study into this model of community building and the first of its type in Australia, and is therefore pioneering in its field. As such this study hopes to contribute a unique, approach to community building strategies for business. By examining the experience of being-in-community, how the experience of being-in-community occurs and what the experience of being-in-community is, this study can provide a greater understanding of the nuances of community. Given the lack of research in this area this project can add significantly to the scientific literature about the deeper aspects of community. The following section outlines some of the difficulties encountered in the initial stages of the project and how these were overcome.

### **3.0 Defining and Refining the Research Parameters.**

Originally this research was to focus on the underdeveloped and under-researched area of community building in business by interviewing people working within a small business or business unit that had experienced a CBW as a part of business operations. My hope initially was that I would find a well-developed model of building community in the workplace in Australia, with many businesses using the principles of Peck's work within their day-to-day operations. However, during my research it became increasingly obvious that locating a business actually engaged in this method of community building in Australia was remote if not impossible. The major reason for this was because of confidentiality issues and agreements. CBW facilitators were unable to put me in touch with the few businesses in Australia that have implemented community building in businesses using Peck's model.

I was aware from the outset that this research project was breaking relatively new ground and that I may need to reformulate my thesis and take a flexible and adaptable approach to my research. To highlight the scarcity of research in this area a literature search uncovered three theses concerned with Peck's model. One of these was partially based on community building in business and formed the basis

of a book *The Power of Acceptance: Building Meaningful Relationships in a Judgmental World* by Douglas Shadel and Bill Thatcher (1997).

Given the difficulty of locating research participants I decided to advertise my research broadly, predominantly using e-mail and networking via contacts from within Community Building Australia (CBA) and the Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE) in the United States and other organisations concerned with community building. Eventually I was able to locate five self-employed consultants and one chief executive officer (CEO) who had been involved with Peck's work and had experienced a CBW. I interviewed these six people, and their transcripts form the basis of this research project. My interest was how, if at all, their experience of being-in-community had affected their life-world experience and workplace practices.

An understanding of the CBW and its components is necessary to contextualise this project for the reader. The next section outlines the development of the CBW, lists its components, and gives a working definition of the terms community and being-in-community.

#### **4.0 Defining the CBW Model**

Gusfield (cited in McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 8) has distinguished "two major uses of the term community". The first is the territorial and geographical notion of community-neighbourhood, town, and city. The second is "relational," concerned with "quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location." This study focuses on the relational aspect of community. The CBW can be used as a transportable tool that can be used in a wide range of environments and with diverse populations and can be located specifically within a geographical location or specific environment. However, the emphasis is on the relational aspects of community and how these can be encouraged, experienced and strengthened.

#### **4.1 Development of the CBW model**

Peck believed there was a need for authentic communication in relationships. This led him to develop a process of community building called

Community Building Workshops or CBWs. The workshops are a synthesis of ideas, methodologies and experiences that Peck was exposed to or used during his training and professional practice as a psychiatrist. Of particular importance are his experiences with Quakerism and their emphasis on only speaking in a group when 'moved' to and Bion's work on the leaderless group and group stages (Vogt, 1996).

In his internship as a psychiatrist Peck was required to become a member of numerous t-groups (laboratory training groups that meet for educational or therapeutic purposes to study its own communication) formed to investigate and participate in various forms of psychological exercises. He noticed that the t-group was a place where he had "no trouble being authentically [himself]" (1990, p. 47). That is, being able to share exactly what his emotions, feelings and thoughts were without self-censoring. Abraham Maslow (1965) in his chapter on unstructured groups felt that in his observation t-groups gave people a place where they could be exposed to or experience a "new kind of conceptualisation." Included in this were "a sharp recognition of individual differences, that people really *are* different", and the breaking down and restructuring of concepts to include "both the real world of things and objects and the psychic world of sensitivities, fears, wishes, and hopes" (pp. 154-187, italics in the original). Through this process new kinds of attitudes and approaches to living can be built up. Maslow names these as basic character attitudes towards "(a) the self, (b) significant others, (c) social groupings, (d) nature and physical reality, and (e) for some people supernatural [or spiritual] forces" and stresses that in terms of a person's character structure this is as deep as you can get (p. 171). He goes on to say that any changes that occur in one or more of these attitudes occur in the "deepest portion" of that person. Thus, the participation in one of these t-groups can be "growth-fostering, personality-developing, psychogogic, (as contrasted with psychotherapy which makes sick people well, psychogogic makes well people better.)" (p. 178, brackets in original). Peck's community building workshops offer a way of experiencing these basic character attitudes resulting from the experience of being-in-community.

## 4.2 The Community Building Workshop: Peck's idealised stages

The workshops are a forum whereby a group of people can meet over two to three days with the intention of building community. Groups may be intentional groups such as a religious group, a business, a government or non-profit organisation or other interest group, or a group of strangers. The CBW is offered in two ways. The first is termed an 'open workshop', available to any member of the general public. This kind of group is often temporary and ceases when the workshop is over. Exceptions to this are when part of, or the entire group, decides to form an on-going community-building group.

The second way a CBW is offered is as a 'closed workshop'. That is, when an already formed group, such as a club, business, business unit or church group, decides to meet with the intention of building community within their group. These workshops are closed to all but members of the group. Closed workshops can vary from a weekend experience to on-going weekly or monthly gatherings with a weekend workshop every so often.

In developing CBWs Peck has drawn on many ideas and his vast group work experience. Notably, he draws on the Quakers for inspiration, especially in utilising their concepts of a silence out of which members speak only when moved to speak (Green, Woodrow, & Peavey, 1994, appendix II). The overall effect of this method is that it enables the individual to focus on and clearly experience their own barriers to community and how these in turn affect reaching community with others (Peck, 1990).

The workshops follow four general principles or idealised stages of community, which are identified by Peck as being, *pseudo-community*, *chaos*, *emptying and community*. Any group seeking to experience authentic relationships in the search for community experiences these stages. The stages can be present at any time during the course of a workshop process. Peck and others point out however, that although pseudo-community and chaos are not necessary stages in reaching community you cannot reach community before experiencing and going through the third stage of emptying (Peck, 1990 & 1993b; Gozdz, 1995). Goff (1992) in his Doctoral study posits that conflict with others in the chaos stage of

community is the precursor to the experience of community. This is refuted by Vogt (1996) in her comparison study of two models of community building. This study's findings parallel Peck's thesis that emptying is the precursor to deep-community. Briefly, these four stages contain the following characteristics (for more in-depth descriptions see Peck, 1990, ch. V).

**1. Pseudo-community:** One of the hallmarks of pseudo-community is that members of a group deny having major differences. Collusion with group rules is the norm and the undercurrents of conflict are ignored. Attitudes of 'we are all right' are prevalent and this pretence is upheld behind 'normal' group behaviour. "The essential ingredient in pseudo-community is the avoidance of conflict" comments Peck (1990, p. 88). In building community these undercurrents can come to the surface. Previously hidden or unstated agendas emerge. These in turn can be seen to be contributing factors in frustrating authentic dialogue between group members, thus preventing real community. Inevitably this leads to chaos.

**2. Chaos:** "chaos always centres around well-intentioned but misguided attempts to heal and convert" (Peck, 1990, p. 90). In chaos people try to fix others or convince them their way is the right or only way. Individual differences are out in the open, "only now instead of trying to hide or ignore them, [as in pseudo-community] the group is trying to obliterate them" (p. 91). As Peck (p. 94) points out "the proper resolution of chaos is not easy... [but is] preferable to pseudo-community [as] fighting is far better than pretending you are not divided".

**3. Emptying:** According to Peck (1990, p. 94) "there are only two ways out of chaos...one is into organization – but organization is never community. The only other way is into and through emptiness". He says that this stage is the hardest part of building community and is the only bridge between chaos and community. By emptiness Peck means:

Simply that they need to empty themselves of barriers to communication...[being] specific things-feelings, assumptions, ideas and motives – that have so filled their minds as to make them as impervious as billiard balls. The process of emptying themselves of these barriers is the key to the transition from 'rugged' to 'soft' individualism. (p. 95)

Peck lists the most common barriers that people need to empty themselves of before they can enter genuine community: “expectations and preconceptions”, “prejudices, ideology, theology and solutions”, “the need to heal, convert, fix, or solve” and “the need to control” (pp. 95-103). In other words emptying is about making room and clearing some space. Old pre-conceptions and judgements need to be let go, previous methods of operating surrendered. In order for people to embrace change and move into new ways of operating, old systems have to die. This transformational change is often difficult and painful. For change to take place, people have to mourn what they are giving up. Groups often find it painful to move on to new ways of operating. Emptying enables group members to acknowledge the difficulty of the transitional process in a way that moves them on. Emptying allows for a space within which something new can emerge.

**4. *Community*:** When this stage has been completed and the group is ‘open and empty’ then the group enters community. Peck (1990) describes this final stage of a CBW:

A soft quietness descends. It is a kind of peace. The room is bathed in peace...and then something...happens. An extraordinary amount of healing and converting begins to occur – now that no one is trying to convert or heal. And *community* has been born. (pp. 103-104, italics added)

The above constitutes Peck’s model of community building and these stages are cyclical and transitory in nature. The above stages have been described to a larger or lesser extent, depending on theoretical concepts of groups and group work, by a range of people interested in the phenomenon of group processes. Stages may carry a different name, however, the literature points to a parallel in group developmental stages similar to Peck’s (Bowman, 1998; Monte, 1995; McMillan & Chavis; 1986).

#### **4.3 Setting the scene: A description of a CBW event**

The following is an account of a typical open CBW and is drawn from my own CBW experiences. It is included here to give the reader a feel for the process of a community building workshop and a picture of the kind of things that may happen during a workshop that can precipitate for participants an experience of being-in-



community. This account is drawn from experiences and observations I have had and made as a participant in the open format of the Community Building Workshop.

Open CBW's are usually held as 2 to 3 day residential events generally held over a weekend. The days begin at 9 am and finish at 9 or 10 pm. Regular breaks are scheduled with some flexibility in timing to allow for group processes. There are no extras or props other than the circle of chairs.

The preparation for a CBW begins when one registers to attend the workshop. Information is posted out and sometimes participants are asked to read a couple of chapters of Peck's (1990) book *The Different Drum* concerning emptying, pseudo-community and chaos. This gives the participant a prep or warm up to the event.

I arrive at the venue mid Friday afternoon with a sense of expectation and nervousness, my stomach feels pitted and my senses are heightened. I see some familiar faces and people I have never met. I book into my room and take a walk. I am in an old monastery, which has an air of profoundness and serenity, yet the silence seems overwhelming.

The first session is 7pm to 10pm I enter a large warm room with approximately 60 seats arranged in a circle. People drift in and take up places. I notice a tall male with a ponytail walk in. I immediately take a dislike to him and feel irritated. The facilitators, one male and one female, introduce themselves and their role for the weekend. The only agenda is to build community, how that happens is up to the group. Their job is to facilitate and hold the group, providing reminders of why the group is gathered, rather than to lead or guide the group along a predetermined path. They say the group is a leaderless group of leaders and they are here to facilitate the process of building community. We are all responsible for where the workshop takes us.

Procedures and breaks are explained and we are asked, if possible, not to break the circle over the weekend by leaving, even, and especially, when the going is hard. We are also asked to say our name before we speak and every time we speak, for example "I'm Carl and I..." and, if possible, to speak only when moved to. Questions arise in the circle about this but we are told being moved to speak is

different for everyone but you will know when you are. Speaking when not moved to is apparently a barrier to community.

The workshop begins. A tradition, we are told is to read a short story called the “Rabbi’s Gift” (Peck, 1990, preface) at the start of a workshop, which one of the facilitators does. It is a story about acceptance and respect that seems oddly out of place to me. After the reading the group is silent. I am feeling apprehensive and energised. Suddenly someone speaks and the silence is broken the process has started.

I am intensely aware of everyone in the room and am still feeling irritated by ponytail man. The circle intensifies this feeling because I have to sit with this person and hear him speak. He asks a lot of questions about people – I get angry and challenge him, saying I am angry that he asks all these questions and gives nothing up about himself. He does not immediately respond, which apparently, in the context of a CBW is quite acceptable. I am then left with my own self in relationship to this person. My tolerance of others is challenged and I am required to deal with it if I am to build community. As I sit in the circle and come to terms with how I am and how I can be, I feel my resistance to him fading and by the end of the workshop he is one of the people I feel closest to and I respect him greatly.

Encounters like this occur for others and myself over the next 2 days. There are sixty people who at varying times are at odds with each other, at peace with each other, laughing and sometimes crying together. There is anger and frustration being expressed and turf wars going on, someone is trying to make someone else ‘see the light’, some people talk all the time some haven’t said a word.

There are a number of nuns participating in this workshop and for some of the participants this has brought up painful memories of boarding school and associations with the church. The nuns became a focal point for the expression of anger and hurt that people are feeling. The facilitators see that the nuns are being used as a scapegoat by people unwilling to accept responsibility for their feelings and are thus ‘blaming’ the nuns for their pain. At this stage one of the facilitators points to the fact that some scapegoating may be occurring (without singling out any one person), and calls for a silence. This gives us time and space for inner reflection. One of the nuns breaks the silence and acknowledging people’s pain,

apologising for any pain their church or sisterhood may have caused. This is a graceful, humble and caring act that touches everybody. The group moves into a more peaceful accepting space. From this space individual story's emerged that no longer carry blame or anger. The telling allows some people to feel reconciled with this aspect of their past.

There are periodic silences called by the facilitators who remind us that we are here to build community and it is up to all of us. Generally there is a change in the group after a silence. Sometimes the silence is peaceful and the group is calm, at other times the silence is unbearable and I feel jittery and shaken, I long for the silence to be broken in these times and occasionally break it myself. In these times it is like the silence makes me focus on my internal feelings and thoughts and I feel alone in the group.

There are glimpses of something special along the way. The group spontaneously breaks out into laughter or feels suddenly lighter. These are fleeting but enough to tell me that something is happening, although what that may be is beyond me. I notice that I am struggling intensely within myself, like different parts of me are vying for position, expression and recognition. I am trying to make sense of being in a room with these other people. I feel the struggle most when I am about to speak and after having spoken. At one stage I feel like I am sitting behind numerous cardboard replicas of myself and it feels like I can't be seen by other participants. It also feels like I can't properly see them either – this realisation is startling and I feel something within me give way. I glance around the room and realise I am looking with different eyes, somehow the group of sixty relative strangers seem like close friends, the estrangement I was feeling was replaced with a softness, a more graceful sense of the group. Perhaps I am seeing myself differently and allowing a little more space for myself.

In conversations with others they speak of experiencing similar and also totally different feelings. The facilitators are at times the focus of blame, aggression and ridicule and at other times the focus of awe, inspiration and love. They hold the group as it struggles and always feel like part of the group, not separate from it. The fact we were a leaderless group of leaders grew more apparent to me in each session. My sense of personal responsibility deepened with each session. I had to

take responsibility for shedding my prejudices and judgements in order for me to fully experience community.

The final session is amazing as the group and I move in and out of a feelings and experiences of deep community. I feel very connected to every one and an extraordinary sense of calmness and acceptance. I feel I belong as an individual to a huge family and in that moment I am at peace with others and myself. This is hard to describe in words but I am feeling very complete. I realise that I had also experienced community at different times throughout the workshop, like it was always present but I was not always present to it.

The group changes with the slow, and sad, realisation that the weekend and this particular community as such, was nearing its end. There is a wrapping up to do; saying goodbye to this particular community, acknowledging that it may never form in this way again. The facilitators remind us that this has been an unusual weekend, time out from our family's, partners and friends and that we need to be mindful that people we meet up with will not be in the same place as ourselves. They ask us to take care of others and ourselves in this.

I say my goodbyes and I leave for home. I feel exhausted, elated and very alive. To sit in a circle of people with the only agenda to build community, with no props and no guide as to 'how to do it' was a truly humbling and empowering experience. The connections I made with people, particularly people I had initially taken a dislike to, were profound.

#### **4.4 Defining community in the context of Peck's model of community building**

The definitions of the following terms are used throughout this thesis. Terms may be augmented by an overall conception of community stemming from the German definition of a creative community or *Gemeinschaft*. As Loewy (1993) explains:

Members of a true community or *Gemeinschaft* share values and goals which are not merely individual interests...they share values and goals which have become communal values and goals for whose realisation community itself is necessary so that eventually community itself becomes a goal and value in its own right. (p. 131)

A person engaging in such a community could be said to possess what Adler (cited in Monte, 1995, p. 658) termed '*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*' which means fellow feelings or social interest in others' welfare. A basic premise of Peck's is that people, nations, communities, political and social groups are at odds with each other because of an inability to accept differences. Differences can include religious beliefs, ethnicity, socio-economic backgrounds, political allegiance, blue collar-white collar, sexual preferences, age or any grouping whereby someone is excluded due to being different. Community building is seen as embracing an inclusive model where by sharing their humanness, people can come to accept and celebrate difference (Peck, 1990 & 1993a). In other words, a community is a group of two or more people who have been able to accept and transcend their differences regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds. This enables them to communicate effectively and openly, and to work together toward goals identified as being for their common good. Peck (1990) defines the term community as having a very specific meaning and application which is:

A group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to 'rejoice together, mourn together,' and to 'delight in each other', 'make other's conditions our own'. (p. 59)

John Nirenberg (1993) supports this definition:

Community allows the full, authentic expression of one's whole personality and encourages completely honest communication; and also encourages humility, self-examination and vulnerability - the ability to truly be oneself. (p.117)

Community in this context, as applied to an aggregate group of people, closely equates to the above-mentioned German concept *Gemeinschaft*.

#### **4.5 Being-in-community: a definition**

The experience of being-in-community, which I also call deep-community, is the primary focus of this study. Being-in-community is a temporary state of deep-community experienced generally in the later stages of a CBW. Participants report moving in and out of being-in-community at varying stages of a workshop. Peck and others have described this temporary state as a psychological sense of

community. Although this state is transitory in the CBW, Peck has indicated that his ideas may also apply to more permanent situations (Vogt, 1996, p. 58). Peck (1990), Vogt (1996) and Goff (1992) describe the psychological sense of community as a mental state. However, as my findings show, being-in-community is also an embodied state characterised by profound physiological responses and experiences.

Community as experienced in the last stage of Peck's workshops has both a personal meaning and a group meaning which, because of its very nature cannot be definitively explained (Peck, 1990). It refers to a deep inner sense of connectedness, connectedness to one's self, to others and to the larger world, of being-in-community with others. How this form of deep-community is experienced and understood by each individual and each group is unique to that individual and group. However, what can be said is that the experience of being-in-community is always something more than the sum total of the individuals present and can incorporate transcendent moments or what Maslow (1965) would refer to as a "peak experience." Thus some say the experience of deep-community is a spiritual or a soul experience that connects them with something greater than themselves or a higher human nature. It incorporates the realisation and experience that each group member is a unique and creative individual. It is always inclusive of the other and arrives through authentic relationship between people. In this way it has been said that being-in-community with oneself and others can be powerfully healing.

In summary, the above contextualises deep-community and I trust gives the reader an anchoring definition with which to approach the rest of this text. The following chapters outline community concepts in more detail and contextualise the research project in terms of business and research methodology.

## **5.0 Reading Notes**

For ease of reading I have not included [sic] next to American spelling or masculine/feminine emphasis in quotations. Where this appears in verbatim quotations the reader should take terms such as 'man's or 'mankind' to mean human and humankind. I have however, tried to universalise the language into a non-gender specific language. The use of terms such as spirit and God when used by co-

researchers connotes meaning relevant to their own religious and spiritual leanings and beliefs. These terms can take on Judeo-Christian significance, American Indian significance or a non-specific, non-denominational significance. I have not made any distinctions in my writing except to say that the reader may take it that these terms mean an energy or presence that transcends each individual and is seen as a greater power.

# **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW: COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE WORKPLACE**

This chapter traces the development of this research project through an examination of the relevant literature. The first section gives a brief overview of the reviewed literature and introduces the research topic within the literature. The second section traces global issues eroding our sense of community. The notions of rugged individualism, individual liberty, suffering and community erosion frame this section. The third section places the business community within the broader context of globalisation and details the human costs of profit-only motivated businesses in light of the fragmentation of the workplace, as well as social and environmental communities. It also outlines the thinking leading to current trends in community-business development. The fourth section will outline the case for business to embrace a more holistic and community approach to their operations and state the case for community building within institutions, businesses and organisations. The fifth section explores research studies carried out on this specific topic and identifies gaps in current knowledge. The sixth section offers a critique of group work from a psychological perspective in the context of the intent of the CBW. These six issues are explored in the following sections:

## **1.0 Literature overview**

### **1.1 Prequel to community building in the workplace**

## **2.0 Individualism versus community**

## **3.0 The fractured workplace: A global perspective**

## **4.0 The emerging paradigm: people centred business**

## **5.0 Community building in business: An outline of current research and identifying knowledge gaps**

### **5.1 Current and previous CBW research**

### **5.2 Research gaps**

## **6.0 Not another workshop: The CBW in the light of psychological critique of group work**



## 1.0 Literature Overview

A review of the literature places this research firmly within an emancipatory approach to human flourishing within business. Drawing on a long history of business initiatives from Maslow's (1965) management theories to Peter Senge's (1992) important work on learning organizations, and from other leading business thinkers, I propose a reorientation of business practice in line with current calls for reclamation of civil society within a new community paradigm. Informing the civil society aspect of this research are such writers as Putnam (1993), Sarason (1974), Loewy (1993), Cox (1995), Peck (1990, 1993a, 1993b & 1995) and Hirst (1994 & 1997), who point out that trust, equality, participation and reciprocity are key measuring indicators of healthy civic interaction and are "the very social elements that sustain a community" (Cox, 1995, p 15).

Placing business within the global perspective and arguing the case for change are Barnett and Cavanagh (1994), Bauman (1999), Catley (1996), Hirst and Thompson (1997), Katzan (1989), Korten (1999), Martin and Schumann (1997), McRae (1995), Monbiot (2000), Ray (1995), Ray and Rinzler (1993), Rees, Gordon, & Frank (1994), Rees and Rodley (1995), Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) (1999), Roseland (1998), Simmons (1996), Stilwell (1994a), Theobald (1999a & 1999b) and Zolotas (1981). These authors argue that global corporations have become profit making juggernauts that create community fragmentation, isolation, inequality and, in some cases, to third world poverty levels. They argue for business to implement a human centred modus operandi that is concerned with human and planetary flourishing.

The above psychological, social and business approaches are drawn together in a cohesive case for building community in business by such authors as Campbell (1999), Conner (1998), Dattner, Grant, and Luscombe (1999), DeFoore and Renesch (1995), Drucker (1987), Garrott (1992), Gozdz (1995), Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Bechard, & Schubert (1998), Jason (1997), Johnston (1991), Kemmis (1991), Kinsley (1992), Mollner (1995), Nirenberg (1993 & 1995), Peck (1993a), Ray & Rinzler (1993), Renesch (1992), Schneekloth and Shibley (1995), Shadel and Thatcher (1997), Shaffer and Anundsen (1993), Simmons (1996), Stilwell (1994a &

1994b), Ulrich (1998) Weisbord (1988), and Zukav (1995). These authors call for a diverse range of community building initiatives for business including soul and spiritual development for both the individual and the business as a whole and offer practical alternatives to the current business regime.

Wheatley (1992) and Capra (1997) among others, offer a scientific systems perspective. They place business and human activity within systems theory arguing the case for the world being a series of interconnected systems each impacting on the other. From this perspective business is viewed as part of an integral whole, rather than as a separate self-contained identity. Holding this research firmly in place is the pivotal work on community building by Peck (1990), as outlined in *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*.

### **1.1 Prequel to community building in the workplace**

*In our life of business we are working out some profound issues, both as individuals and as a society. We would be less divided and alienated within ourselves if we acknowledged this deeper dimension...Each in our own way, we have to find means of cultivating this spiritual depth, or we will continue to suffer the hubris and insensitivity of business narcissistically preoccupied with its own egoistic concerns*

– Thomas Moore (cited in Renesch, 1996, p. 37)

Recently there has been a focus on the soulfulness of commerce, of the need for human and community spirit in business. Well known and respected business leaders, international business consultants, scientists, community leaders, psychologists, psychiatrists, theologians, educationalists and environmentalists have written extensively about the place of the soul, spirit and community within the business world (Gozdz, 1995; Defoore & Renesch, 1995; Dattner, Grant & Luscombe, 1999; Ray & Rinzler, 1993; Ray, 1995; Renesch, 1992; Peck, 1993b; Senge, 1992; Simmons, 1996; Weisbord, 1988; Whitmyer, 1994). This can be seen as a swell of opposition to the hard-line globally ambitious corporations, driven by new-liberal ideology and seemingly devoid of any humanitarian or moral principles. Collectively these works can be viewed as part of an overall shift to a new approach and attitude to the business of business, what some call a “new paradigm” (Ray &

Rinzler, 1993). These ideas are not new but point to a growing awareness that the current way of conducting business needs to embrace some fundamental changes in regards to its approach to people, the environment and civil society. As Stuart Rees and Gordon Rodley (1995) declare:

Every domain of human endeavour – cultural, sporting, [educational] and scientific is being sold to dominating financial interests. Apart from the immense injustices and hardships imposed on the ‘losers’ in this race to maximise profit and gain, society is losing its collective soul. (p. 233)

My premise is that if business embraced the principles of community it will make a substantial contribution to the creation of sustainable economies and communities based on humanitarian practices. It is proposed that one way to regain a collective soul is through the implementation of community building initiatives, in particular Peck’s model, the Community Building Workshop. Peck (1990) sees the western ideal of the ‘rugged individual’, which is upheld and promoted by new-liberal ideology, as contributing to an erosion of authentic individual expression and deep-community. The CBW is viewed as a tool for counteracting the over-emphasis on individualism whilst promoting human and community spirit. The next section explores the notions of suffering, interdependence, individual liberty and community as a response to rugged individualism and the ethos of rational economics.

## 2.0 Individualism Versus Community

*The institution of business offers the most fertile ground for application and development of the emerging paradigm. Then business, through the developing individuals in it, can begin to take responsibility for the whole rather than just operating in a competitive market system with its attendant negative externalities*

– Michael Ray.

The term ‘community’ is fast losing any relevance as a descriptive or meaningful word. As David Studdert (1999) points out:

It is a word bleached of negative connotations, an iconic word, epitomising all virtue, a solution for crime, a code word for caring

and sharing. It is a synonym for spiritual absence, the absence of joy and time, the loss of public space; the hardship inflicted upon honest hardworking people undermined in our name by greed, globalism, managerialism and 'user pays'. (p. 28)

Community has become a buzzword and the language of a "lived experience of community and localism" (Studdert, 1999, p. 28) has been subjugated. Along with Eva Cox (1995), Studdert (p. 28) argues, "the very social elements that sustain a community – trust, equality, participation [and reciprocity] continue to disappear." Seymour Sarason, who pioneered the theory for a psychological sense of community, noted back in 1976 (p. viii): "the dilution or absence of a psychological sense of community is the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people in our society." The question of how these social elements are being eroded is far too complex to be dealt with in any depth in this thesis. However, by drawing on a few examples a general picture of the trend emerges.

Robert Putnam (1993, p. 87), in his work on civil life in Italy, pointed to a "revisionist wave...[sweeping] across Anglo-American political philosophy" in reaction to the individualism of liberal ideology. This movement, described by Don Hertzog (cited in Putnam, 1993 p. 87) as "the discovery-and celebration-of civic humanism", is aligned with the "republican or communitarian tradition descend[ing] from the Greeks and Machiavelli through seventeenth-century England to the American Founders" (p. 87). In 1630, John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, in his "communitarian admonition" to citizens, describes community thus:

We must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, labour and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body. (cited in Putnam, 1993, p. 87)

The notion of a community "suffering together" has been well covered by Erich Loewy in his books *Freedom and Community* (1993) and *Suffering and the Beneficent Community* (1991). Loewy (1993, pp. 1-24) posits that the universal human capacity to suffer, bestows upon the person who has suffered, a "prima-facie obligation not to cause [avoidable suffering]" in others, and states the case for "the grounding of moral worth in suffering". This, along with Rousseau's "natural sense

of pity” which Loewy says, “gives rise to compassion and empathy as well as to sympathetic understanding” (being the ability to sympathise with people and conditions outside of our direct experience), contributes to a solidarity on which the survival of individuals and groups within a collective depend (Loewy, 1993, p. 37). Without this solidarity and sense of strong community vulnerable individuals and associations “cannot flourish” and, in turn “contribute their own particular...[or] peculiar talents” (p. 167). The notion of vulnerability runs contrary to the ethic of rugged individualism so entrenched in new-liberal economic ideology. As Peck (1990) emphasises:

The total failure-of the ethic of rugged individualism is that it ...incorporates only half of our humanity...it encourages us to hide our weaknesses and failures. It teaches us to be utterly ashamed of our limitations...it pushes us ...to look as if we ‘ha[ve] it all together’. (pp. 56-57)

In other words it asks us to deny our vulnerabilities and fake it, and in doing so isolates us from ourselves and from others making “genuine community impossible” (p. 57). Rugged individualism denies the fact that we are interdependent, that we are basically a social animal and as such that we rely on our sense of, and connectedness to, the other to gauge meaning and purpose in our lives.

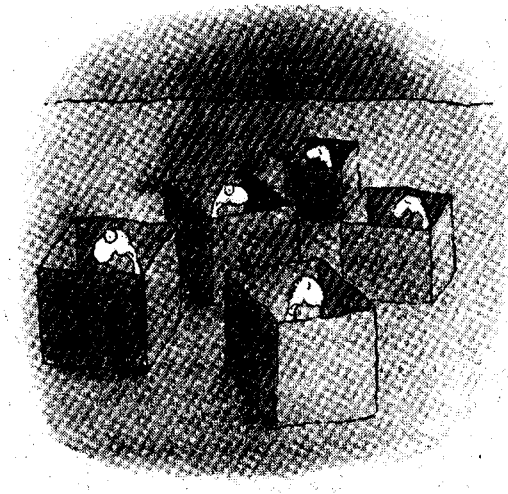
Rugged individualism, or as Saul (1993) calls it “false-individualism”, should not be confused with the idea of individual liberty. Individual liberty is based on the notion that individual freedom cannot be gained if in the gaining of that freedom another is imprisoned or harmed. New-liberal individualism would deny the responsibility of the individual for others’ situations or circumstances. The argument here is that if something is gained for the good of one individual it therefore follows that the collective good is increased. It is the economic ‘trickle down effect’ theory applied to individuals in communities (Korten, 1999; Machan, 1988; Reich, 1992; Saul, 1993).

New-liberal ethos creates competition between the individual seeking maximum gain and freedom and the community’s striving to promote the well being of its members; it “does not see obligations as emerging from vulnerabilities, capabilities and relationships” (Loewy, 1993, p. 166). Therefore obligations towards

the well being of another are not an integral part of the individualistic *modus operandi*. Paul Hirst (1994, p. 19) in his book *Associative Democracy*, argues for a democracy based on the notion of associationalism which holds that “individual liberty and human welfare are both best served when as many of the affairs of society as possible are managed by voluntary and democratically self-governing associations.” Cox (1995) and Putnam (1993) have shown that the capacity for a community to be resilient, responsive, dynamic and creative is one that has as essential ingredients a high degree of volunteerism and reciprocity such as are found in an associative democracy. A community of this nature would ask each of its members to adopt an accepting and empathic stance towards the other, a stance that recognises the human condition is in a constant state of flux and change which can contribute to human suffering. The ability to suffer together can contribute an important if largely unacknowledged role in developing a strong and resilient community, in helping us, as Winthrop states, to “make each other’s conditions our own” (cited in Putnam, 1993, p. 87). This does not mean that we take on complete and total responsibility for the other, what it does mean is that we approach others with respect, caring and forethought, which in turn builds the social elements of trust, equality, reciprocity and participation necessary for a sense of strong community.

In this section I have presented a case for an approach to community based on beneficence and a sense of mutual obligation to the other as a response to the individualistic tendencies of economic rationalism exemplified by the rugged individual. I have shown that individualism contributes to the erosion of a sense of community. The next section traces some of the effects of economic rationalism in the workplace. Drawing on Winthrop’s notion of “to labour together” (cited in Putnam, 1993, p. 87) I take a global perspective of economic rationalism and how it has contributed to fragmenting the workplace. I will also outline the thinking leading to current trends in community-business development.

### 3.0 The Fractured Workplace: A Global Perspective



**Figure 1: Michael Leunig © (1993)**

With the phenomenon of globalisation, the way in which work, commerce, trade, business and communications are carried out has changed, and continues to change rapidly. These changes can have dramatic and far-reaching effects on communities anywhere in the world. Author of *Global Nations* John Wiseman (1998) offered a definition of globalisation on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) program *Lateline* (October, 1999) saying:

Globalisation basically means the way in which...the acceleration of finance and trade and information flows have really affected people all around the world and mean that distant actions [and decisions] increasingly have local effects.

These distant actions are usually carried out by the controlling interests of transnational corporations or wealthy individuals. An extract from a report by John Kavanagh of the Washington Institute of Policy Research illustrates this point:

Globalization has given more opportunities for the extremely wealthy to make money more quickly. These individuals have utilized the latest technology to move large sums of money around the globe extremely quickly and speculate ever more efficiently. Unfortunately, the technology makes no impact on the lives of the world poor. In fact, globalization is a paradox; while it is very beneficial to a very few it leaves out or marginalizes two-thirds of the worlds population (cited in Bauman, 1999, p. 70).

This view is supported by Zygmunt Bauman (1999, p. 57) who states “in fact in 1996 the total wealth of the top 358 ‘global billionaires’ equal[led] the combined incomes of 2.3 billion [of the worlds] poorest people (45 percent of the world’s population)”. The phenomenal accumulation of wealth and power goes on almost invisibly. As Bauman claims,

The moulding forces of transnational character are largely anonymous and therefore difficult to identify. They do not form a unified system or order. They are an agglomeration of systems manipulated by largely ‘invisible’ actors...[there is no] unity or purposeful co-ordination of the forces in question...‘Market’ is not a bargaining interaction of competing forces so much as the pull and push of manipulated demands, artificially created needs, and desire for quick profit. (p. 57)

Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann (1997), authors of *The Global Trap*, call these artificially created needs and manipulated demands the “Disney-colonisation of global culture” (p. 57). In this new global culture commonly shared places take on the same iconified look — for example shopping malls containing the same globally franchised shops displaying instantly recognisable symbols such as the twin arches of McDonalds and the Nike slash — and community discourse becomes a rhetorical justification of the new global community. As Studdert (1999) points out the overriding emphasis is on:

Utility and convenience, the reduction of previous community practice to utilitarian concerns, the measurements of reality by reference to clichéd cultural icons...the equating of individualistic activity such as talking on cell phones to traditional notions of community. (p. 31)

Driven by new-liberalism ideology and championed by the competitive individualists this global culture, by its very nature, dislocates people from their past, from their sense of lived history. An example of this is the many workers who travel the globe in their employment. It is not unreasonable to ask, as Studdert (1990, p. 42) has, what responsibility or care should one have to people or the democratic process when one’s sense of belonging or “pseudo-belonging” is “strictly and absolutely demarcated by one’s employment”. Michael Maffesoli (1996) suggests that this form of belonging is akin to a form of tribalism, whereby one is identified as being a member of the tribe not by locality or birth but by



lifestyle and interests, by which clothes one wears, which cafés one drinks at, what one does for leisure or entertainment, among other things. In other words, driven by mass and popular advertising, supporting the homogenising processes of multi-national companies, our cultures become transient and subject to the vagaries and shallowness of fashion, popular culture and opportunism, a veritable playground for the rugged individualist.

In contrast to the apparent freedom of the mobile worker, often funded by the company's expense account, is the paradoxical use by corporations of a static labour force, typified by corporate approaches to 'hit and run' manufacturing within local communities. In their desire for quick profit, corporations are placing enormous strain on our environment, natural resources and communities. David Korten (1999) uses the analogy of cancer when describing the impact of global pressures on corporate behaviour:

These forces have transformed once beneficial corporation and financial institutions into instruments of a market tyranny...extending its reach across the planet like a cancer, colonising ever more of the planet's living species, destroying livelihoods, displacing people, rendering democratic institutions impotent, and feeding on life in an insatiable quest for money. (p. 12)

This strong condemnation of some corporate and financial institutions paints them as parasitical entities. Communities can unwittingly become host to these entities. Corporations moving in and out of host communities, acting and reacting to market forces can have a devastating effect. Author Gary Zukav (1995) supports this view:

The decision to relocate or not will be based upon projected comparative costs, plus factors such as inconvenience, psychological difficulties attending relocation, and potential loss of managers who will not relocate, but it *will not* be based upon the impact of the relocation on *the current host community*. (p. 26, italics added)

He goes on to say that decisions to "place a business in a particular community...are not based on...the needs of the community or the ability of the company to provide them" (p. 26). Martin and Schumann (1997) give this example:

Nowadays world-market leaders, such as the Nike sports shoes corporation or the toys giant Mattel, keep hardly any factories under

their own management. They simply allocate orders to changing producers...according to where the costs are lowest. (p. 118)

Unfortunately a lot of these cheap labour areas such as the so called *Maguilladoras* a massive manufacturing area on the US-Mexico border where companies are not obligated to follow any particular set of regulations or laws relating to the hire and conditions of labour, do not have any “social expenditure on such things as pensions or sickness benefits” (p. 119). The only commonly shared experience workers for these company’s have, is in producing a similar globally recognisable product for the duration that their labour is the cheapest. When workers and communities are treated as a resource to be used then discarded for whatever rational or pragmatic reasons, the erosive effect on a sense of togetherness, of contributing to a worthwhile endeavour in a creative and satisfying way, is significant. Rees and Rodley (1995) identify human costs as including:

Unemployment and associated poverty; part-time work and accompanying insecurity; stress, anxiety and loss of morale among employees; a persistent sense of powerlessness; and illnesses which may lead to premature death. (p. 209)

In other words there is a lack of provision for basic needs of the workers by the corporations involved, which contributes enormously to creating unhealthy, discordant communities, which brings me back to the thesis of suffering and community.

Erich Loewy (1993, p. 139) states that “to achieve the goal of community, solidarity and individual flourishing, is to hold suffering to a minimum”. In order to accomplish this goal he proposes three conditions:

1. All individuals must have equal access to first order necessities (those things needed to sustain biological existence) as well as to second order necessities (those things essential for individuals to fully develop their talents in a given social setting). (p. 139, parenthesis in original)
2. In societies in which some groups have been historically disadvantaged, some form of effective affirmative action for the historically disadvantaged, likewise, is a second order necessity. (p. 139)

3. Communities can reasonably be expected to see to it that all individuals within their society have full access to first or second order needs before allowing other members of the community to enjoy opulence. (p. 139)

The above reflects Abraham Maslow's well known and often referred to 'hierarchy of needs' and offers an approach to the application of this theory. Maslow (1970, p. 35-46) states that the basic human needs are:

- a) physiological – deficits such as hunger, thirst and fatigue,
- b) safety – avoidance of pain and anxiety, desire for security,
- c) belongingness and love – affection, intimacy, roots in family or peer group,
- d) esteem – self-respect, adequacy and mastery.

According to Maslow (1970, ch.11) these requirements need to be met before an individual can proceed to the other levels of need necessary to fulfil one's potential being. These other levels of need are the "need for self-actualisation – to be fully what one can be", the "need to know – truth-seeking" and "aesthetic needs – beauty seeking". As job security disappears and anxiety consequently increases; as unemployment and under-employment grows and people find themselves increasingly unable to obtain meaningful, if any, work in their primary communities; as the environment comes under increasing pressure from pollution, deforestation, salination, waste dumping and over-population, increasingly large numbers of people fail to have their need for food, clean water and shelter met, let alone the other 'basic needs', (according to Korten, 1999, this figure is almost 1 billion), there is a need on the part of humankind to reorganise resources and prioritise efforts to alleviate suffering and, as argued, a responsibility to do so. Suffering, whether physiological, psychological or spiritual, involves pain, physical and/or emotional, and suggests woundedness. Wounds need healing and it is within the notion of healing that I believe the case for business and community-building lies.

Wounds are caused by the tearing or renting apart of something, be it of flesh, of relationships, of physical relocation or of our sense of connectedness. It is

the great paradox of our times that whilst more and more of us get 'connected' to 'on-line' communities via electronic technology, e-mail and the World Wide Web there is a seemingly growing disconnection from our sense of self, our families, our 'off-line' physical and locational communities, from a sense of purpose and deep meaning in life and a sense of a higher calling or spiritual sense. This observation is not new. Corsini (1957) comments that:

There seems to be no question that society in its development has isolated people from one another. Paradoxically, increases of communication and of transportation appear to decrease intimacy of relationships...social isolation [is] engendered by technological improvements. (p. 7)

More than quarter of a century later Headley Beare and Richard Slaughter (1993) in their book *Education for the Twenty-First Century* recognise:

The Western industrial world-view...has become fractured and incoherent. Many core values and beliefs which once sustained the social fabric have decayed and are perceived as empty, threatening and problematic. (p. 13)

This fracturing is extremely visible in the work place. For instance multi-skilling in work appears on the surface to be an empowering process whereby the individual is able to contribute to their work by utilising a range of disparate skills. However, if we look at this idea from another angle, multi-tasking could be seen to be just another way to cope with our ever-fragmenting working environments. Those that fail to re-skill, multi-skill or are replaced by technology waste away in a round of ever increasing short term un-skilled and semi-skilled positions (McRae, 1995; Reich, 1992; Zolotas, 1981).

For many of us in employment, work becomes just another place where we learn in order to 'survive' rather than learn in order to contribute. Our ability to give to the world through our work becomes increasingly difficult and frustrating. Thus there is a tendency to withdraw from the larger conception of the world into a smaller and fragmented view in order to use what inner resources we may have to meet 'first order' necessities, such as safety and allaying anxiety. As Peter Senge (1992) author, business consultant and program director at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), says in his book *The Fifth Discipline*:

We are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world...[in doing so] we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the [possible] consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole. (p. 3)

Senge's work is based around creating 'learning organisations' and frames his thinking within a systems oriented, holistic paradigm. That is one that draws on the interconnectedness of all things, concerned not only with learning about tools of the trade, the job and coming to grips with change, but also relationships between people and other people; people and the environment; the environment and community; community and business, and business's relationships with people, communities and the environment. Senge's overall conception of organisational learning is *metanoia*, from the Greek "*meta*" being above or beyond and the root "*nous*" of mind. *Metanoia* therefore literally means transcendence or "shift of mind" (1992, p. 13), and equates to *metanoia* for organisations and individuals having the ability to "grasp the deeper meaning of 'learning'" (p. 13). Learning of this nature is an embodiment of learning beyond a mental, mechanical conception or construct of *what* we are learning about; it is more than just "taking in information". Senge calls this type of deeper learning "'generative learning', learning that enhances our ability to create" (p. 14). One of the qualities of *metanoia* is that people often feel connected to a greater power or energy (p. 13). Learning in this context would transcend any organisational goals and be potentially transformative in nature. *Metanoia* also means transformation and the concept of *metanoia* is significant in this project as descriptions of connective experience and transformation emerged in the transcript analyses. This will be expanded on in chapters five and six.

Around the same time as Senge was writing about learning organisations Margaret Wheatley was exploring organisational theory from a "new science" perspective. Wheatley (1992) in her book *Leadership and the New Science* explores organisations from three scientific viewpoints; quantum physics, self-organising systems and chaos theory (p. xiii). She explores the paradoxical concepts of chaos and order and concludes that these two universal forces working together create self-organising and whole systems, and draws similarities between this dynamic and the dynamic of organisations. Her work brings together the natural world, human art

forms and expression, scientific research and organisational theory and practice in a well-crafted example of whole-systems thinking.

Systems theory is rapidly gaining popularity as people look for a new approach to managing our planet. An example is the growth in awareness and popularity of Gaia theory, which sees the biosphere and all life on earth as a living organism (Senge, 1992, p. 371). In the United Kingdom, Schumacher College is dedicated to researching and understanding Gaia theory and providing a holistic ecological education. Many others are contributing important research and writings to this area (Capra, 1997; Wilber, 1996). Wheatley (1992) says of this approach:

In the past few years, a new way of thinking about organisations has been emerging. Whether they be large corporations, microbes, or seemingly inert chemical structures, we are now interested in learning about any organisations 'self-renewing' properties. We're searching for the secrets that contribute to vitality and growth both in nature and in our work places. (p. 140)

As these examples show, the world of business and work is intrinsically tied to our environment, societal communities, the individual's sense of belonging, purpose, meaning and connectedness, and thus to the deeper issues confronting the world today. Business can have an important role to play in repairing and healing the fracturing in our work places and communities. Rees and Rodley (1995) reflect on this:

Only when people within organisations are encouraged to learn in the workplace will local government cope with changing community expectations and increasing pressures...developing an environment which facilitates learning in an organisation has the potential benefit of high morale, quality output and greater clarity about the purpose of the organisation. That environment can encompass the broader dimensions of humanitarian concerns, which involve not only a commitment to serve the public but also the enrichment of the experience of being at work. (p. 143)

In the last ten years many business leaders, organisational consultants, community and organisation leaders have adapted community building and people centred principles and concepts and have begun to build community within organisations, businesses and institutions. Peck (1993b) has written extensively about the application of his community building principles to organisational life in

his book *A World Waiting To Be Born: The Search for Civility*. The following section outlines the case for the re-organising of business values around community building principles.

#### **4.0 The Emerging Paradigm: People Centred Business**

*The signs point to spirit and soul as the essence of leadership. There is a growing consensus that we need a new paradigm to move beyond the traps of conventional thinking. In truth, we may need to rediscover and renew an old paradigm, one deeply embedded in traditional wisdom*

– Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal

The efforts of business to build community are not new. The Ford motor car company, IBM and many other businesses over the years have attempted, some more successfully than others, to be a place where people are given equal priority to profit and production and are encouraged to learn and thrive (Drucker, 1987; Nirenberg, 1993, 1995; Renesch, 1992, 1996,; Renesch & Chawla, 1995; Weisbord, 1988). However the late 1980s and early 90s saw a swell in the amount of interest in, and literature about, a new way of conducting business. This emergent paradigm assumes that business is not just a place where people are ‘machines of production’ as proposed by the widely accepted practices of Taylorism (Hirst & Thompson, 1997). Nor is it a place where the pursuit of profit and economic growth are paramount and overriding factors in conducting business. Rather, the workplace, in which many people spend a large proportion of their waking hours, is by definition a ‘community’ or civic venture. The new paradigm proposes that business has a responsibility to foster and encourage the principles of civic and social community by locating activities within a larger praxis of human and environmental concern. New paradigm thinking is systems based. A systemic view of the human being is that we are intrinsically connected by actions, relationships and consciousness to others, our communities and the environment. As Michael Ray and Alan Rinzler (1993) in the introduction to their book *The New Paradigm in Business* say:

The new paradigm...is doing business from our most profound inner awareness and in connection with the consciousness of others and the earth...it is a time of having the freedom to use our highest resources

while taking responsibility for ourselves, for others and the environment in which we live. (pp. 4-5)

A forerunner in building this case for business as a place to foster change, growth and community was author and psychologist Abraham Maslow. In his book *Eupsychian Management*, Maslow (1965) explores the psychology of management within a business environment. His commentary and observations are based on the premise that a self-actualised manager is an enlightened one and therefore one most likely to ensure the place of work is one that encompasses the highest ideals of human kind. Maslow coined the word “eupsychia” to represent an “ideal social psychology.” He defines eupsychia as: “the culture that would be generated by 1,000 *self-actualizing* people on some sheltered island where they would not be interfered with” (p. xi, italics in original). He contrasts the eupsychian ideal with that of Utopia, a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions and Dystopia, an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives. Maslow claims utopian and dystopian ideals are “dreams of fantasy” whereas eupsychian ideals pose “very real questions” in regards to the development of society; questions such as “how good a society does human nature permit, how good a human nature does society permit? how good a society does the nature of society permit?” (p. xi).

Central to Maslow’s thesis is that human beings have a higher nature, which self-actualised people are in touch with and who are therefore, in principle, able to take beneficial actions in regards to their fellow human beings, the environment and civil societies in which we live. Thus a eupsychian culture would be one in which the welfare of others would be held in the highest order as eupsychia posits “only real possibility and improvability” based on “‘the higher’ forms of interpersonal and social organization”. Along with this definition eupsychia can also mean “moving towards psychological health...or it can be taken as an ideal limit; i.e., the far goals of therapy, education or work” (1965, p. xi). On re-examining his approach to individual therapy, Maslow states that the “work life” of an individual was as “important as education or perhaps even more important” in terms of achieving a eupsychian culture. Maslow believes that society can be greatly



improved by developing a psychologically healthy community-based culture within work. He claims:

If the lessons of psychology, of individual psychotherapy, of social psychology, etc., can be applied to man's economic life, then my hope is that this too can be given a eupsychian direction, thereby tending to influence in principle all human beings. (p. 2)

Maslow's ideas have been criticised as idealistic, utopian and a response to the positivistic, somewhat dehumanized, psychology of his times (Smith, 1991). Never the less, his concepts still have relevant application and influence today, particularly in the realm of business.

Echoing Maslow, Peck (1993b) states the case for situating the work of building community within organisations because they have a great "capacity to influence others", which he says is the "most potent factor in organisational behaviour" (p. 245). He argues that as business and large organisations are among our "best and most organised institutions" and as business over the years has changed "from a relatively small and simple family affair to a predominantly large, complex institution...[then] community in the work place is not only possible but rapidly becoming essential" (p. 245). This then places the possibility of very real change within the grasp of business. He is not alone in thinking this. James Autry (cited in Gozdz, 1995), former president of the Meredith Corporation magazine group, succinctly sums up the case for community building in business when he says:

By invoking the metaphor of community, we imply that we in business are bound by a fellowship of behaviour in which we commit to mutual goals, in which we contribute to the best of our abilities, in which each contribution is recognized and credited, in which there is a forum for all voices to be heard, in which our success contributes to the success of the common enterprise and to the success of others, in which we can disagree and hold differing view-points without withdrawing from the community, in which we are free to express what we feel as well as what we think, in which our value to society is directly related to the quality of our commitment and effort, and in which we take care of one another. (p. xi)

By members of organisations taking a care of one another as a basic underlying principle, the ground is set by which the organisation can become

healthy. As Peck (1995, p.3) points out suffering or pain are an essential part of healing and “health is an on-going process, often painful, of an organism becoming the most, the best, it can be.” He goes on to say, “any organised system, whether an individual or group, is an organism...[be it] schools, ...businesses, government agencies...and each may be healthy or diseased” (p. 11). Echoing this, the mayor of Missoula, Daniel Kemmis (cited in Korten, 1999) ponders:

I wonder if we wouldn't become more gracefully productive by recognising that we are all living cells within living organisms like cities, bioregions, continents, and the earth itself. Could we lessen our stress, become healthier and more whole, if we saw our work as simply helping these organisms realize their own living wholeness? (p. 325)

Given the above scenario I would argue that a great many of our institutions and businesses are not healthy and are in need of healing.

Community building has been shown to have, among its many benefits, a healing quality. As it also places people as its highest priority then a case exists for businesses to implement a new approach via this methodology. Terry Mollner (1995) is aligned with these ideals when he says:

When the openly professed highest priority of the corporation is the good of each and all rather than profits for shareholders, profits will become secondary *yet far greater on average*. People will be able to commit their entire life and soul to the company because it will be in alignment with nature and their deepest beliefs. (p. 43, italics in original)

In order for this to come about, business will need to undergo a radical transformation, yet one that does not divest business from the activity of commerce. Community building is one way to embrace the transformative process whilst holding common goals in alignment with people's deepest beliefs. Shadel and Thatcher (1997, ch.9) outline how transformation in the workplace has occurred through this process. They show how a program of community building in a car dealership, conducted over a period of three years, led to employees experiencing increased feelings of individual connectedness to a sense of purpose in life and in their work, increased self-esteem and a greater tolerance and acceptance of

themselves and others. They also experienced a deepening of their personal, co-worker and client relationships. Overall the business experienced more productivity, less sickness and injury, a greater retention rate of employees, increased communication and cooperation between all staff, greater ability to problem solve and create together and an increase in the company profit.

As Peck (1990 & 1993a) warns, building community in the workplace is not easy and requires hard work, effort and commitment from all concerned. A business has to be willing to see it through and pay the price. It takes courage and an enormous amount of risk to build genuine community, whether in a small group or in a business. However the benefits can be extensive. People are becoming increasingly aware that a change in the way we do business and the way corporations and institutions behave is necessary. This is reflected in *The Peoples' Earth Declaration* declared at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Non Government Organisation Forum, which states:

We the people of the world will mobilize the forces of transnational civil society behind a widely shared agenda that bonds our many social movements in pursuit of just, sustainable, and participatory human societies. In doing so we are forging our own instruments and processes for redefining the nature and meaning of human progress and for transforming those institutions that no longer respond to our needs. (cited in Korten, 1999, p. 293)

In other words the choice is for business and other organisations to respond to the call for a restoring of humanitarian principles to our mutual dealings. To meet peoples' needs in a practical and holistic manner, with the highest priority given to fostering the progress of humanity and caring for our planet.

The next section examines the research undertaken specifically on Peck's community building model, identifies gaps in knowledge and presents the case for this research project.

## 5.0 Community Building in Business: Current Research and Identifying Knowledge Gaps

The effects, benefits and processes of community building in business based on Peck's model or similar models are outlined in a number of texts by prominent leaders in this field. The authors were listed in the introduction to this chapter. However the texts are mainly based on anecdotal evidence with very little in the way of serious academic research having been carried out. Given the enormous potential for fundamental shifts in consciousness that community building can achieve it is surprising that research in this area is sparse. Peck (1995) acknowledges that a lack of research occurs:

Because it is a difficult subject to study scientifically. Primarily it is because this area is such a frontier that society has not yet chosen to devote the considerable resources necessary to study it with scientific rigour. (p. 3)

He also recognises that a conventional scientific approach in this area is difficult because:

This work [community-building] is transformational or 'reformational'. Traditionally, science defines itself as 'value free' and hence examines what is, not what ought to be. (p. 3)

The phenomenological qualitative approach to community used in this project, in part, addresses the transformational or reformational aspect of community.

Being-in-community is a phenomenon that has had little scientific exploration. This project addresses this gap by investigating the phenomenon of deep-community to illuminate how being-in-community is experienced by the individual and through explicates the meaning of this experience for the CBW participant.

## 5.1 Current and previous Community Building Workshop research

A literature search found little in the way of applied research into the phenomenon of the experience of being-in-community. The following research projects were the most substantial concerning the phenomenon in question.

In 1992 David Goff, undertook a qualitative and quantitative study at doctoral level entitled *An Exploratory Study of the Existential and Transpersonal Dimensions of the Psychological Sense of Community as found in the Community Building Workshop*. Goff surveyed 234 CBW graduates by means of a 98-item questionnaire. Included on the survey items were:

Forty-four descriptive statements generated from a synthesis of the phenomenological and affective elements described in the literature of group processes reported to lead to a sense of community. Results were subjected to a principle components factor analysis designed to identify the elements of the participants' experiences offering the greatest explanatory value as descriptors of that experience. (1992, p. 347)

Six factors were extracted, these being: sense of community, sense of otherness, sense of human existential dilemma, sense of engagement, sense of personal existential dilemma, and sense of difficult experience. Three of these factors were revealed as primary to participants' experiences. They were; "a sense of community," "the experience of otherness," and "the sense of the human existential dilemma." In a brief synopsis of his research Goff (1992) outlines the following:

The findings showed that the central experience produced by the workshop was a collective shift of consciousness towards a unitive state. This shift coincided with a collective experience of existential vulnerability catalyzed by the difficulties associated with an experience of otherness. This state was described as including powerful feelings, a strong sense of emotional connection, an enlarged sense of self, and an extension of kindness and compassion towards others. It included mystical features described as: feelings of sacredness, an experience of union with a larger whole (including the persons with whom the experience was shared), and the experience of having participated in something that was paradoxical and difficult to communicate in words. The experience had a positive impact on the respondents' feelings of connection with others and the larger processes of life. The respondents reported that their experience of this collective shift into a unitive state of consciousness had a

transformative effect on their trust in others as well as sense of purpose and hope for the future. (p. 347)

The results of this research correlate closely to the findings of research by Shadel and Thatcher (1997). Their research was conducted in two parts. The first study:

surveyed randomly selected individuals who had attended...[community building] workshops...[They] used a 307-question survey...Of the 200 people contacted, 31 ultimately completed this extensive survey. (pp. xviii-xix)

The second study:

used a 200-question survey given to employees of a very successful, forward thinking company...[whose] 600 employees participated in community-building workshops....[They] contacted 325 of these, and 135 completed the survey. In both studies, the behavioural changes people reported were striking. (pp. xviii-xix)

The research conducted on the experience of community to date has primarily been concerned with statistical data correlated with some phenomenological data indicating a similarity of effect or outcome by participants relating to the factors indicated previously. These data are applied to a wide range of participants and explicated in terms of general patterns of change comparing pre and post CBW experiences. The results have been averaged and presented as percentage increases/decreases experienced by participants surveyed in the behavioural, social and individual categories listed. Shadel and Thatcher include in their book some honest and open accounts of participant's experience of the CBW that bring to life for the reader some aspects of the community experience from a first person perspective. Their commentary on community is well crafted and offers an insightful rendition of the power of acceptance.

What these studies offer is an indication that the experience of the CBW has, in the main, beneficial outcomes for participants. They show that the level of individual confidence increases, that relationships overall improve, that people feel respected, listened to, understood and cared for, that social masks are removed more easily, that there is increased tolerance to ambiguity and paradox, that trust and risk taking increase, that the work environment becomes a place to be human as well as

a place to be productive, that business thrives and profit increases, that social responsibility and awareness improve and that differences are acknowledged, respected and celebrated (Shadel & Thatcher, 1997; Gozdz, 1995; Goff, 1995, p . 342-349).

Another study, a clinical research project by Kay Vogt (1996), compares two models of building community: Peck's CBW and Powloniak's Trust Level Community Making workshops (TLC). Drawing on Goff's work, Vogt (1996, p. 11) investigated whether the TLC engenders a sense of community similar to that reported in CBWs. This project was a quantitative statistically based piece of research, which aimed "to investigate whether there was a statistical difference in the two workshops and to consider what might be the source of the difference" (p. 12). To this end Vogt applied the questionnaire developed by Goff to participants of the TLC group and compared them with results from Goff's research. According to Goff's findings, CBW participants experienced high levels of conflict, which led to existential crisis, which was a necessary condition for the experience of community. Vogt, however, found that the TLC reached a similar psychological sense of community without "the intense and protracted conflict of the CBW" (p. 104) and that despite the variance in levels of conflict similar levels of existential dilemma, kindness, compassion and noetic experience occurred in both workshops

Julia Sadovska (2000) has undertaken a study intended to detect changes in CBW participants for the following categories:

Acceptance of self, acceptance of others, trust and responsibility in interpersonal relations, inner-directedness or in other words self-direction, capability to deal with uncertain or ambiguous situation, ability to healthy [sic] communicate and build intimate relationships, ability to use one's personal potential to the maximum, to live meaningfully and to enjoy life as it is. (p. 1)

A two-part qualitative and quantitative method was used to highlight differences before and after community building stages. The qualitative data analysis used the consensual qualitative research method (CQR) (Sadovska, 2000, p.1). CQR bears some resemblance to phenomenology, as it was developed to investigate complex phenomena and inner experience as they naturally occur.

Although Sadovska uses Peck's theory of community, her interest stems from a community psychology background and draws on the development of a psychological sense of community as proposed by Sarason (1974) and McMillan and Chavis (1986). Her work is concerned with the on-going development of methods to measure the psychological sense of community across a diverse range of community groups and she has developed her own measuring instruments. This thesis is written in the Slovak language and the results are not yet available in English.

## **5.2 Research gaps**

Both Goff and Vogt point to the lack of research into the individual and group experience of deep-community and their work along with Shadel and Thatcher's adds significantly to the available literature. What is common to these projects is the mixed methodology. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse data with the majority emphasis on statistical quantitative analysis. My research was unable to locate any purely qualitative research or any from a social science perspective. The other difference is that the research to date has used control groups or contrasted and compared different group methodologies for building community. This project focuses solely on the CBW as the research vehicle.

The above findings show that people do experience an underlying transformational shift in the course of building community. The pivot around which these shifts take place is the experience of being-in-community or deep-community. The research to date has detailed important aspects of the community experience and has drawn insightful and useful conclusions about the community experience. However, the essence and universal structure of the experience of being-in-community is still under-described or more aptly under-illuminated. Therefore, I believe a gap exists in the current research for a qualitative phenomenological social science project that can illuminate the experience of being-in-community and add to a broader understanding of deep-community.



## **6.0 Not Another Workshop: The CBW in the Light of a Psychological Critique of Group Work.**

I am aware of the criticisms levelled at many forms of group work and the tendency by certain people and organisations towards exploiting people who are seeking a deepening of their self-understanding. There is a tendency towards ‘fads’ in workshops and self-development courses and there are a plethora of such events available. I include this section to offer the reader a view on why I think the CBW does not fall into these categories.

The encounter group movement grew out of the counterculture movement in the late sixties to early seventies and, what Smith (1991, p. 133) and others, term as a “culture of seekership”. It has been criticised as being individualistic, utopian and, in some cases, seen as contributing to the very same symptoms it was purportedly trying to counteract. Smith outlines the dissention and debate about the efficacy of encounter groups by drawing on two extreme positions. The first is from Carl Rogers (cited in Smith, 1991) who says:

The encounter group or intensive group experience is, I believe, one of our most successful modern inventions for dealing with the feeling of unreality, of impersonality, and of distance and separation that exists in so many people of our culture. (p. 130)

This is contrasted by Koch (cited in Smith, 1991) who claims:

It is my assessment that the group movement is the most extreme excursion thus far of man’s talent for reducing, distorting, evading and vulgarising his own reality. (pp. 130-131)

Koch criticises the encounter group movement for prostituting human potential by reducing noble human attributes such as authenticity, intimacy, individuality and spontaneity to a “psychic striptease.” Smith (1991, p. 133) himself is highly critical of many aspects of the encounter group and human potential movements and frames his critique using the following interrelated themes: “individualism, human perfectibility and self-disclosure”, and emphasis on the “here and now, hedonism, and irrationalism.” On individualism he says:

The centre of value is found in the fulfillment of the individual virtually stripped of interdependence and commitments to other lives...individual finite selfhood is taken as an inferior state to be

transcended, but it is transcended in a mystical (and individual) experience of merging with the all, not in concrete and caring relations with finite others. (p. 133, parentheses in original)

Individualism is played out under the doctrine of human perfectibility, which he says is a “sentimental doctrine that predisposes those who hold it to neglect realistic consideration of politics and ethics, which are concerned with how to enhance actual life among imperfect creatures who are often at cross-purposes with themselves and others” (p. 134). Smith (1991, p. 135) critiques self-disclosure in a group setting as a cheapening of intimacy that “becomes truly less intimate. The promiscuously transparent self is at risk of becoming less a self.” Smith views much of the group movement as having an emphasis on a “here and now”, hedonistic, self-absorbed culture which absolves oneself from a moral obligation and responsibility to the other. He says this arises from a sense of hopelessness and lack of real meaning in life which gives rise to an irrationalism that “is reflected in disrespect for intellectual process in the group process” (p. 136). This adds up to a condemning critique of the encounter group movement.

Given the context and range of ‘fad’ encounter groups over the last forty years ranging from Transactional Analysis (TA), through to the modern day Forum, (known more recently as Landmark Education), I believe Smith has a point. Some of these groups do embody an extreme sense that the individual is both root cause and saviour of all their ills. Such groups encourage catharsis (which they see as a breakthrough) by manipulating extreme responses through lack of sleep, high demand on time and concentration and other sensory deprivation techniques, and, forcing the group to conform to group and leader expectations.

Smith’s call is for an approach to psychology that is ultimately humanising, one that recognises our lives as complex and imperfect, lived out in the concrete world of imperfect others. He contends that a deficit in community drives lonely, rootless people to seek quick gratification of their need to feel loved and accepted which he sees as a “pseudosolution, which may be shoddy and mindless and could become fascistic” (1991, p. 138). He is not alone here; Peck (1993a) in his book *The Road Less Traveled* outlines a case for consciously practising delaying instant gratification, which, in agreement with Smith, he sees as problematical to healthy

human functioning. Smith (1991,) feels that bringing human interdependence into “better focus” and combating what he sees as a deficit in meaning and a deficit of hope brought about “by the collapse of religiously based tradition and the erosion of *Gemeinschaft*” (p. 131, italics in original). The encounter group movement was, in part, a response to the erosion of community. However, for much the same reasons as Smith, Goff (1992, p. 40) points to the general failure of the “intensive group experience...as a collective vehicle for achieving community”. He also states that individual interdependence and the encounter with the other were understated and undervalued in the group process and that in the end “the movement lost impetus and gave way to the ‘age of narcissism that it had helped to spawn’” (p. 40, quotation marks in original).

There are, however, many groups that legitimately offer interactive, non-manipulative environments where the individual can participate free of any particular religious content or so called ‘mystical’ theory. Places where the intention is indeed to focus upon human interdependence and interconnectedness. It would be a mistake to categorise these along with the more dubious encounter groups with a more commercialised and exploitative intent.

There are some distinctions between encounter groups as discussed above and Peck’s CBW. Significantly the CBW is not an encounter group, a therapy group, a counselling group nor a recovery group. The primary intent of a CBW is to offer an experience of community that may lead people to a conception of *Gemeinschaft*. Goff (1992) states that whereas encounter groups tended to “allay the anxiety associated with otherness by focusing upon self-disclosure and self-actualization, Peck’s model focuses upon otherness...and difference...until members begin to experience how their own reality constructs create and maintain separateness” (p. 43). As noted in this chapter, there is evidence that this form of group workshop promotes a sense of interdependence and interconnectedness that counters the self-absorbed narcissistic tendencies that Smith and others have been critical of.

An understanding of the experience of deep-community in this context addresses a critical gap in knowledge, literature and research about this form of intentional group community building experience.

## CHAPTER THREE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY BUILDING RESEARCH

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

– Lao-Tzu.

The preceding chapter outlined the case for building community in business using the Peck model, the Community Building Workshop. I have shown that research into Peck's model of building community is scarce and that an explication of deep-community addresses a gap in the current research. The CBW is a gathering place for people to have a short term, intentional experience of deep-community. The phenomenon of deep-community can have profound physiological and psychological effects on the experiencing person. The intent of this project is to explore and explicate this experience and develop a picture of the inherent structures or essence of this phenomenon.

I chose phenomenology as the research methodology and method because it is ideally suited to the investigation of the non-material, non-quantifiable aspects of human behaviour and experience. A purely qualitative approach was used intentionally to offset, and contribute to, prior research, which has used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

The research question, "what is the experience of being-in-community?" focuses on the participant's experience of community. I am interested in how community manifests in one's inner life. Phenomenology is the primary science of experience and is a philosophical movement that approaches the study of human beings from an experiential viewpoint. A phenomenological approach is ideally suited to the explication of inner experience, inner meanings and deep feelings, such as are the focus of this research, as it:

- a) does not superimpose external meaning categories that could lead to a misinterpretation of the phenomenon
- b) seeks to provide a first-person ideographic description of the experience of community
- c) seeks to explicate the essential structures of community nomothetically with the aim of generalising the phenomenon for greater understanding
- d) is concerned with meaning and how meaning is construed
- e) offers the possibility for fresh interpretations of experience and new meanings to emerge
- f) is a rigorous methodology that requires a reflexive approach to the research
- g) is qualitative in approach and requires a sensitive and thoughtful approach to the participant by the researcher
- h) is dedicated entirely to and focused solely on the phenomenon under investigation
- i) encourages participants and the researcher to delve into ever-deeper levels of 'lived experience' via the process of the phenomenological interview

Phenomenology is concerned with understanding human phenomenon via explicating the meaning of its 'lived experience'. The terms experience and phenomenon have particular meanings when attached to phenomenology. Giorgi (1997) states that:

By experience Husserl means the intuition of "real objects"; that is objects that are in space and time and governed by causality such as tables and chairs etc. Experience being "the 'narrower' term as it refers to those presences that carry within them the 'index of reality' and Intuition being the broader term as it refers also to those aspects of 'presences' that may not have 'realistic' references [e.g. hallucinations, religious conversions, symbols etc.] yet are vital for proper understanding of human phenomena. (p. 236)

Phenomenon means:

The presence of any given precisely as it is given or experienced. In other words phenomenology begins its analysis of intuitions or presences not in their objective sense, but precisely in terms of the

full range of “givenesses” no matter how partial or marginal, that are present, and in terms of the meaning that the phenomena have for the experiencing subjects. (p. 237)

Thus, this project investigates the phenomenon of deep-community as it is presented in its givenness to the experiencing subjects via the agency of the CBW.

Phenomenological enquiry seeks to explicate the richness and complexity of experience through writing. As van Manen (1990) observes, “in phenomenological human science, writing does not merely enter the research process as a final step or stage...creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process” (p. 111). The validity of phenomenological research is contained within this textural description as Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) assert:

For purposes of phenomenological interpretation, the criterion of validity becomes whether a reader, adopting the worldview articulated by the researcher, would be able to see textural evidence supporting the interpretation [or description], and whether the goal of attaining first person understanding was attained. (p. 53)

In particular, is the co-researcher able to recognise their experience through reading the text. Using a phenomenological methodology and method I will give a multi-layered explication of the experience of community that articulates the deep meaning of the experience for participants and illuminates this experience for the reader.

In keeping with Morgan and Smirich’s basic thesis that:

Research method... cannot be considered or presented in the abstract, because the choice and adequacy of method embodies a variety of assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods through which that knowledge can be obtained, as well as a set of root assumptions about the nature of the phenomena to be investigated. (cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 178-179)

this chapter will outline a phenomenological perspective and methodological approach to research. The first section will outline the phenomenological approach to the research of the individual experience of community building within a business context. The second section will give a brief description of Husserlian phenomenology and its derivatives. The third section will outline the philosophical

underpinnings of phenomenological methodology. In the fourth section I outline a personal worldview and detail where I as a researcher position my self phenomenologically. These four sections are explored under the following headings:

1.0 A phenomenological approach to this research project

2.0 Introduction to phenomenology as research method

3.0 Outline of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological methodology.

3.1 The phenomenological approach to the object-subject split.

3.2 Intentionality

3.3 The phenomenological reduction: epoché and eidetic reduction.

3.4 Intersubjectivity

4.0 Personal worldview and phenomenological position as a researcher

## **1.0 A phenomenological approach to this research project**

A phenomenological approach to research is concerned with the uncovering and explication of meaning and essence of a phenomenon. Previous research indicates that people involved in community building experience something deep and powerful, which engenders real and lasting change. One could draw the conclusion that people are moved by the ‘essence’ of community. In line with Edmund Husserl’s proposition to “return to the things themselves” (cited in Farber, 1943, p. 213) a phenomenological approach would be concerned with the phenomenon of community as experienced by people who have participated in a CBW. By deepening the focus of the research, meaning units would be sought which could then be explicated and described. DeRobertis (1996) interprets phenomenology as:

The disciplined description and interpretation of the lived-meaning of experience. The phenomenologist proceeds by investigating *what* a phenomenon is, its *meaning*, as well as *how* it occurs as a meaningful event for people within the concrete life-world of human affairs (p. 19-20, italics in original).



Max van Manen (1990) says “phenomenology attempts to explicate...meanings as we live them in every day life” (p. 90). In this way phenomenology differs from other social or human sciences that may “focus not on meanings but on statistical relationships among variables, on the predominance of social opinions, or on the occurrence or frequency of certain behaviours etc.” (p. 11). Borrowing from van Manen the approach to this study is “what is the nature or essence of the experience of ...[being-in-community]...so that I can better understand what this particular...experience is like” (p. 10). Gaining new insight into the experience of community is an important step in understanding the larger picture of how humans fit and interact with their world “since things are primordially tied to other things, people, and situations” (DeRobertis paraphrasing Heidegger, 1996, p. 18). In other words we are all connected to events and people along with things or objects in the world. How we make sense or meaning of these things primarily determines the actions we take. In illuminating the meaning of the experience of community, how the experience of community occurs and what the experience of community is, then the case for businesses building community and therefore possessing a more intentional consciousness towards their activities can be stated. This in turn can lead not only to the enhancing of business life but can also contribute to humanity progressing towards a more encompassing, holistic way of life.

## **2.0 Introduction to Phenomenology as Research Method**

Edmund Husserl, the widely accepted father of phenomenology, conceived phenomenology as a rigorous scientific account of essences as an adjunct to the prevailing empirical positivistic approaches and in contradiction to the empirical mechanistic view of a human being. Husserl saw the limitations in examining the world from its natural appearance only. He viewed the positivistic and natural sciences as lacking a methodology that took into account the intersubjective nature of human being-in-the-world. In what has become the phenomenologists ‘rallying call’ Husserl called for a return to ‘the things themselves’ as experienced pre-reflectively as a basis for a first science of primacy. He describes his response to the materialistic natural sciences as an attempt to return to a pure science of knowledge.

The great gift of Husserl was his humanisation of science. According to Levinas (cited in Moran, 2000):

No one combated dehumanization of the Real more than Husserl, the dehumanization which is produced when one extends the categories proper to mathematized matter to the totality of our experience, when one elevates scientism to absolute knowledge...Husserl's phenomenology has furnished the principle intellectual means for substituting a human world for the world as physiomathematical science represents it. (p. 327)

Husserlian phenomenology is known as classical or transcendental phenomenology. The central works of phenomenology by Husserl are *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1964), *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (1965), *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1970) and *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (1982). Also influential in transcendental phenomenology is the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962). The influence of phenomenology on modern thought and discourse is captured by Edwards (2001) when he states:

Phenomenology is probably the dominant European philosophical tradition of the twentieth century...In its recognition of multiple world-views, realities and multi-verses, phenomenology may also be viewed as a foundation for such perspectives as post-modernism, social constructivism and narratology. (p. 4)

Since Husserl, many differing phenomenological methodological and theoretical perspectives have developed. Three of the major branches are *Existential Phenomenology*, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology* and *Phenomenological Psychology*. These three in turn have been appropriated and developed into what could loosely be described as the North American humanist perspective of phenomenology, which, some feel, is a departure from the more traditional philosophical phenomenology (Crotty, 1996).

Both existential and hermeneutic phenomenologies have been informed largely by the work of Martin Heidegger. Following these, phenomenological psychology developed as a scientific method to investigate those phenomena pertaining to the human psychological realm that did not rely upon the natural sciences. One of the leading proponents of phenomenological psychology as an

applied and human science is Amedeo Giorgi who concluded that philosophical phenomenological method was too ambiguous for concrete research and so outlined an approach based on Merleau-Ponty's "phenomenological-method" (Ehrich, 1999, p. 34). For a lucid and detailed account of the development of phenomenology see *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* (Speigelberg, 1969) and *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Moran, 2000). Other major influences are Alfred Schutz (sociological phenomenology), Paul Ricoeur, and, Joseph J. Kockelmans and Karl Jaspers who contributed to the development of phenomenological psychology.

### **3.0 Outline of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological methodology.**

Phenomenology as research cannot be isolated from phenomenology as philosophy (Crotty, 1996, 1998; DeRobertis, 1996; Giorgi, 1997; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Ihde, 1977; Lanigan, 1972; Moustakas, 1994; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Reason, 1988; Valle & King, 1978; van Manen, 1990). The understanding and application of the following key dimensions is the minimum required to call an enquiry phenomenological. The key dimensions are:

1. How phenomenology approaches the *object-subject split* in research
2. The notion of intentionality
3. The phenomenological reduction, which consists of the epoché and eidetic reduction
4. Intersubjectivity

These dimensions have their roots deep in philosophical phenomenological epistemology and will be addressed in turn in the following sections.

#### **3.1 The phenomenological approach to the object-subject split.**

Underpinning all phenomenology and fundamental to its comprehension is the rejection of the objective-subjective dichotomy stemming from Cartesian dualism (Hammond, Howarth & Keat, 1992). Cartesian dualism is epitomised by the rationalist and empiricist traditions which "locate subjective phenomena 'within' a subject and contrast these phenomena with objective phenomena located 'outside'

the subject” (Hilde, 1977, p. 23). Phenomenology overcomes this split through Husserl’s notion of intentionality (see next section), which places the subject and object in an intentional relationship. According to Moustakas (1994) Husserl’s thinking on this was influenced by Descartes’s posture on objective reality, in that “the object is said to possess objective reality in-so-far as it exists by representation in thought; for objective reality (i.e. the reality of representation) is in truth a subjective reality.” Object representations in thought are seen to contain the meaning of the object or phenomenon thus represented. Lisa Ehrich (1999) sums up the phenomenological position saying “for phenomenologists...[the] separation between appearance and reality or the separation between the description of objects and the objective external world is untenable since experience is always the experience of something” (p. 24).

### 3.2 Intentionality.

The “reality of representation” is tied in with Husserl’s notion of intentionality. According to Hilde (1997) “the central feature of experience is a *structure* called ‘intentionality’, which correlates all things experienced with the mode of experience to which the experience is referred” (p. 23, italics in original). Intentionality has been defined by Kocklemans (cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 28) thus: “in Aristotelian philosophy the term intentionality indicates the orientation of the mind to its object; the object exists in the mind in an intentional way.” For example a wallet exists in the life world as-it-is-in-itself (a hyletic entity) before being taken into consciousness. When it is taken into consciousness first as immediately encountered and later as a mental construct or memory, the wallet is consciously intended by the subject and is “existing in the mind in an intentional way.” This relationship between the intending object and the mind is thus constructed intuitively as having meaning.

Husserl’s explanation of intentionality is that it is the essential feature of consciousness, and it refers to the fact that consciousness is always directed to an object that is not itself consciousness, although it could be in reflective acts. According to Giorgi (1997) “consciousness always takes an object, and the object always transcends the act in which it appears. This idea is important in the human

sciences as it...[contributes further to overcoming] the Cartesian...subject-object [split].” Schweitzer 1998a) points out:

Examples of intentionality are that any perceptual act of consciousness intends a perceived object in the world. Emotions reveal the same intentional structure, in that one is sad that, angry with etc. Consciousness, conceived as intentionality, is essentially directed toward the world. (p. 5, emphasis in original)

It is important in phenomenology to understand the use of the term intuition and its relationship with intentionality and consciousness. Giorgi (1997), referring to Husserl, says “the chief characteristic of consciousness is that it presents objects to us, and this presenting function [Husserl] calls “intuition” which refers to ordinary types of awareness, not anything romantic or esoteric” (p. 236).

Phenomenology investigates the essence of a thing or phenomenon in-the-world, be it a concrete object, a feeling or a perception, via the relationship between object and perceiver. Once a phenomenological enquiry has established the phenomenon under investigation, through the intentional relationship that the subject has with the object, then the enquiry proceeds using the phenomenological reduction.

### **3.3 The Phenomenological Reduction: Epoché and Eidetic reduction.**

#### **Epoché**

In order to approach the essence of a phenomenon in as pure and untainted a form as possible, which is the objective of classical phenomenology, it is necessary to apply the phenomenological reduction which consists of the first step of epoché, (sometimes known as bracketing), followed by the eidetic reduction. Epoché is from the Greek meaning, “check” or “cessation.” Husserl used it to name several different operations all of which involved “suspension of belief in something, or at least, not operating with some belief so as not to rely on that item in the conduct of research” (McKenna, 1997, p. 177). Echoing this Giorgi (1994) states “the reduction means that one tries to bracket all past knowledge or theories about the phenomenon being researched that are relevant to the research question” (p. 212). There is much debate about the possibility of ever completely bracketing one’s preconceptions,

conditioning or life experiences. However what is important is the attitude the researcher takes to this aspect of phenomenological research. Wolf (cited in Crotty, 1996) advocates, “suspending (neither rejecting nor affirming) one’s traditions *as best one can*” whilst undertaking research (p. 132, brackets in original, italics added). McKenna (1997) succinctly sums up this saying: “...epoché then is a way of making the transition from our more normal way of considering consciousness and the world to the properly phenomenological way of considering them” (p. 177). This can create an exiting opportunity for new knowledge to emerge. Moustakas (1994, pp. 85-86) says the exercise of epoché gives us an “unfettered stance” and an “original vantage point” which not only allows the phenomenon to emerge fresh and new, it also allows us to be “transparent to ourselves.” Thus, the epoché is an opportunity for the researcher to learn about themselves just as much as it is about the phenomenon under investigation.

To assist the process of bracketing the phenomenological researcher may use a reflexive journal for tracking and organising the research effort, in which Harwood and Pidgeon suggest the researcher’s reflections on “the role of one’s own values and interests, are noted along with ‘a log of methodological decisions and accompanying rationales’” (cited in Henwood, 1993, p. 25). This enables the phenomenological researcher to uncover and make explicit any presuppositions or bias they have in approaching the phenomenon under investigation and heighten awareness of one’s values and position in the research process.

### **Eidetic reduction.**

Following epoché comes the eidetic reduction (sometimes called the phenomenological reduction), which “involves the movement from objects as facts to objects as exemplars. In this process, particular features of a phenomenon are reduced or set aside so that note can be taken of that which shows itself as universal” (Ehrich, 1999, p. 25). Patton (1990, p. 408) adds to this saying “[eidetic reduction means] the researcher holds the phenomenon up for serious inspection. It is taken out of the world where it occurs. It is taken apart and dissected. Its elements and essential structures are uncovered, defined, and analyzed.” According to Giorgi (1994, p. 212, italics added) “what the reduction offers...is that a fresh and different

way of experiencing a phenomenon is possible that may be relevant for gaining *new* intuitions about the phenomenon being researched.” Hence the phenomenological reduction allows new meanings and understandings of a phenomenon to emerge, which explicates its essential nature. Moustakas (1994, p. 90) talks of this as being the “rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self”. I feel this as a dialogue between intuitive-self, reflective-self and mental-self, where the phenomenon and my experience of it ebb and flow somewhat akin to a tidal river that takes in the sea and then gives back the sea, so that both paradoxically remain the same but are also changed. Thus, the aim of the phenomenological reduction is to approach the phenomenon under investigation with fresh eyes, to take the encounter as if encountering it for the first time, and to experience the encounter from the other’s (the researched) perspective.

### 3.4 Intersubjectivity

Finally, phenomenology needs to be understood as an intersubjective discipline. Intersubjectivity in phenomenology is an on-going and at times a somewhat problematical debate. According to Moran (2000) there is some confusion and distortion as to Husserl’s position on intersubjectivity. Moran argues that Husserl’s fundamental position is that he “acknowledges the intersubjective nature of our experience but always grounds it in the subjective. [Husserl says] ‘the world is continually there for us, but in the first place it is there for *me*’” (p. 178, italics in original). If the world is there for me, it is given that the world is there for others as well, as Moran (2000) explains:

Our natural life is a life in community, living in a world of shared objects, shared environment, shared language, shared meanings. Moreover, this is something I can read off the world at a first glance. I see a tree in the garden and know it is a publicly accessible object, a tree others can see also, not just as a physical object but indeed precisely as a *tree*. In other words, my perception of the tree already indicates that it is a tree *for others*. (p. 178, italics in original).

The givenness of a tree to oneself and to others suggests that there is a fundamental agreement as to the nature of the givenness of the tree as it presents itself to consciousness, for both the perceiving other and oneself. Thus the constituting of a tree as a tree, in its immediate givenness, by others and oneself can be termed

intersubjective agreement. This applies to not only actual physical objects but to all phenomena, which present to consciousness within a shared life-world of others. Gurwitsch (cited in Schweitzer, 1998b) says “It is through intersubjective agreement, brought about in a number of ways, that we find ourselves living in one and the same life-world, with respect to the social group, however small or large” (p. 9).

Through methods such as the extended description the phenomenological researcher seeks to reproduce the experience of a phenomenon as accurately and thoroughly as possible, thus inducing in the reader a replication of the experience; the reader can imagine having this experience, of being moved in their core, by what van Manen calls “poetic phenomenology”. As Haney (1995) states “intersubjective constitution is precisely what moves consciousness from the primal level to the level of the shared world” (p. 43). It is within this shared world or life-world that phenomenology situates its activities.

In summary it can be seen that the phenomenological attitude comprises a rigorous approach to human experience through the intentional relationship of perceiver and the object (phenomenon) perceived. Phenomenology aims to explicate the essential structure of the phenomenon in question via the phenomenological reduction. It is, according to Bien (1978) “[the] task of discovering the fundamental structures which ground...[a] phenomenon we are concerned with” (p. 28). Moustakas (1994) points out that “phenomenology is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides, angles and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved” (p.58). Achieving a “unified vision of the essence” of being-in-community is the aim of this project.

The next section explains where I stand as a phenomenological researcher.



#### **4.0 Personal Worldview and Phenomenological Position as a Researcher**

My own worldview could easily have an impact on the research topic and be a source of bias that unconsciously shapes the research findings. Phenomenological methodology requires that I bracket, to the best of my ability, this worldview. In order to facilitate the bracketing process I need to make explicit to the reader my position in the world. I view the world through an essentially Christo-centric lens combining a wide range of spiritual teachings and philosophies ranging from Buddhism through to Rudolf Steiner's (1971) view of the human being as body, soul and spirit. I hold that humans are essentially spiritual beings and that our spiritual nature can become 'known' to us with serious personal investigation. I have had experiences that have been transcendent, transformative and healing, such as are talked about in this thesis. However closely MY experiences may parallel someone else's, they remain unique to me in my own perceiving and knowing. I believe that through the human qualities of imagination, empathy, deep-listening verbal and non-verbal communication, human experience may be commonly shared with others. I reject the tenets of positivism and any worldview or theory that seeks to arbitrarily break the world into discrete, completely isolated and disconnected parts. Essentially my worldview is holistic and systemic, considering all things to be interconnected. Thus, the challenge of bracketing for me was a process of constant reflexivity and contemplation where I became aware of when "I" was actively reaching out or speaking for the phenomenon (non-receptive), as opposed to when the phenomenon was reaching out and speaking to me (receptive). The process was noted in a diary and instances of my bias 'overlying' the phenomenon were recorded.

As a social scientist, professional counselor and consultant, community member, musician, poet and human being-in-the-world, I believe that lived experience forms a rich and informative pool with which we can consciously engage to illuminate our personal and social understanding. Lived experience provides us with a foundation from which effective change and action can manifest within our personal and social worlds. My searching for a methodology of explicating experience led me - delightfully I must confess - to phenomenology as

the primary science of experience. As such I place myself firmly within the phenomenological tradition of the explication of lived experience as a vehicle for new knowledge of the human condition. Hence, phenomenology emerges as the research tool for this project.

In grappling with phenomenology as a philosophy, methodology and an applied research method, I have travelled a path with many junctions and diversions, some leading to dense, impenetrable philosophical jungles and others to rather pleasant meandering fields and yet others that disappear down valleys only to reappear as roads to no-where. I finally settled on a path that treads the ground between new phenomenology and classical phenomenology, as I understand it.

In testing a method of phenomenological explication (Holroyd, 2001) I commenced with what I thought would be a rendering of an experience in classical or Husserlian phenomenological terms. However, given my pre-disposition to empathy as a basic human ethical practice (see next chapter) my analysis tended towards a first person descriptive account of participant's 'feelings' about the experience (ideographic subjective description), and neglected somewhat the experience as it appears as structurally generalised essence, (nomothetic objective description). Given this I will briefly outline the ground I currently occupy as a phenomenological researcher.

The North American development of phenomenology which some call the "new phenomenology", is seen by some phenomenologists as taking "subjectivism" as its only concern, which loses the traditional rigorous criticality of Husserlian phenomenology (Crotty, 1996). This approach is about explicating people's feelings and insights about experience and stops short of distilling the essential structure of a phenomenon in a nomothetic or universalised account. However, I believe this kind of subjective phenomenology to be a pendulum swing against an overly philosophical and dense form of classical phenomenology. As Willis (2002, p. 3) says: "phenomenological writings with their concern to name the un-nameable can easily become impenetrable and unreadable". He also states that phenomenology "seeks to give space for the subjective in knowing how something immediately affected the knower while also attending to the so called 'what ness' of the

experience itself” (p.3). Willis (2001) makes a distinction between new phenomenology being an “empathetic” mode of phenomenological analysis and classical phenomenology being an “intuiting” mode of phenomenological analysis. He further states that:

The phenomenological question...[is] to find a way to name and portray human experience which would be both somewhat subjective and at the same time somewhat objective. To meet this challenge, I have coined the phrases ‘subjectivised subjective’ experience and ‘objectivised subjective’. (p. 11)

This is further defined: “The phenomenological project seeks what can be called objectivising subjectivity - focusing on the thing being experienced but still as experienced *by me* - as apart from subjectivising subjectivity.” The challenge then becomes to balance the ‘what it *feels* like’ with “what *it is*’ as the “phenomenological project seems to be enriched by integrating both emphases” (Willis, 2001, p. 11). In my attempt to integrate both emphases, I have followed a thematic approach to analysis, which uncovers themes within the interview transcripts. This reveals both the subjectivised subjective feelings of the experience from the co-researchers’ point of view as well as an objectivised subjective revealing of essential aspects of the presenting phenomenon using the phenomenological reduction as outlined in the next chapter. Thus, as Willis (2001, p. 5) says, in producing the phenomenological text one “need[s] to tread a fine line which somehow brings together the objective and subjective dimensions of the lived experience.” The next chapter outlines the method used to walk this fine phenomenological line.

# **CHAPTER FOUR: PHENOMENOLOGICAL PROCEDURE, METHOD AND DESIGN**

Building on the last chapter I take phenomenology as a philosophy and theory and bridge it into phenomenology as method and procedure. This brings phenomenology from a theoretical perspective into a practical application for proceeding with the research. This chapter outlines the method of phenomenological explication used in this study and details the research design and procedure.

The first section outlines the procedural steps used in this study and includes demographic details and research questions. The second details the phenomenological approach I used in the data gathering stage. Particular emphasis is given to the participatory nature of phenomenological research via the phenomenological interview and the human quality of empathy as a methodological tool. The third section outlines the method of explicating interpretive themes from the interview transcripts. The fourth section gives a brief description of each research participant's experience of the CBW, which places him or her in contextual relationship to the research. These four sections are explored under the following headings:

## **1.0 Procedural steps for the research**

### **1.1 Sourcing participants**

### **1.2 Target population and demographic profiles**

### **1.3 Research questions**

## **2.0 The phenomenological method: a participatory approach**

### **2.1 Participants as co-researchers**

### **2.2 Fidelity to the phenomenon within the interview**

### **2.3 Empathy as method**

## **3.0 A Phenomenological method of explicating experience**

## **4.0 Participants profiled using succinct sub-narratives**

## **1.0 Procedural Steps for the research**

### **1.1 Sourcing participants**

Co-researchers were initially contacted by utilising a variety of procedures including direct mail, e-mail bulletin boards and networking via contacts from within Community Building Australia (CBA) and the Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE) in the United States, and other organisations concerned with community building. The criteria I set for choosing co-researchers were as follows:

- a) the co-researchers had attended at least one CBW
- b) co-researchers had significant business experience in senior management roles, consultant roles or running their own business.
- c) co-researchers had no prior connection to myself

Once the candidates had been accepted as co-researchers, letters of invitation to participate in the research were mailed out or emailed (see appendix A).

The following formed the procedural steps for this project.

1. Contacting interested parties. Research parameters were negotiated and agreed upon by research participants. Ethical and procedural documents were signed and copies distributed to relevant parties (see appendix A). Interview dates were then set.
2. Interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. Interviews were conducted in two or three stages. The initial interview was for the purposes of clarifying any participants' questions and developing rapport. The second interview asked a series of unstructured questions and was between one and one and a half hour's duration. If necessary a follow up third interview was conducted to finalise the interview stage.
3. Interviews were then subjected to the phenomenological method outlined below.
4. A thorough and extended analysis of the data was performed

5. Analysis was then reviewed in light of the current literature in preparation for thesis writing
6. Thesis was written and submitted

## 1.2 Target population and demographic profiles

The target group was made up of self-employed business consultants and CEO's, who met the criteria for this study. Participants were consenting adults and, with one exception, from a Western demographic background as shown in Table 1, combined demographics. Of the six participants, two were from Australia and four from America. There was some connection between the American participants who had occasionally attended the same CBW training event or CBW's together. Two of the participants had also worked together. The interviews were recorded using a small tape recorder and a speakerphone.

**Table 1: Demographic profiles**

Total participants		6
Age	Median age	48
Nationality	Australian	2
	American	4
Ethnicity	Caucasian	5
	North American Indian/Caucasian	1
Gender	Female	4
	Male	2
Socio economic status	Middle class	3
	Not supplied	3
Religion	Christian	2
	Not supplied	4
Work profile	CEO's non-profit organisation	2
	Self-employed business consultants	3
	Psychologist/business consultant	1

No of CBWs attended	1-3 CBWs	2
	3-10 CBWs	1
	More than 10	3
No of participants who have occasionally attended the same CBW		4

### 1.3 Research questions

This study is concerned with the phenomenon of being-in-community and how the phenomena unfolded and was experienced by the participants. To uncover the essential aspects of being-in-community the following open-ended question was asked at the commencement of each interview:

How would you describe your experience of being-in-community?

The open-ended question allows dialogue to proceed in a spontaneous, exploratory fashion whilst directly addressing the phenomenon in question. Having previously trialled this question with two respondents I was confident in my ability to respond to the flow and direction of the dialogue whilst maintaining fidelity to the phenomenon. The formulation of other relevant questions arose out of the dialogic flow of the interview and included the following:

How has the experience of being-in-community affected your self?

How has the experience of being-in-community affected your working life?

How has the experience of being-in-community affected your relationship with others, including family and work colleagues?

How has the experience of being-in-community affected the way you see your world?

The next section details the approach I used towards the participant and the interview process. Phenomenology views participants as co-researchers. From this point on both terms will be used and will carry the same meaning.

## **2.0 The phenomenological method: a participatory approach.**

A phenomenological approach to enquiry comprises the following: a) an ontology that is concerned with being-in-the-world and the experience of being, b) a validatory method of enquiry, congruent within the intersubjective framework of its methodology, that is focused within the life-world, c) a methodology based on the construed meaning within relational encounters (with others or with objects/phenomena), d) a method which utilises an empathic and reciprocal approach to co-researching in the form of the phenomenological interview or the written description of experience.

According to Kvale (1994) “the research interview is flexible, context-sensitive, and dependant on the personal interaction of the interviewer and interviewee” (p. 159). His premise is that the interviewer is regarded as “the primary methodological tool.” Kvale emphasises that this approach places “strong demands on the empathy and competency of the interviewer” (p. 159). The interview offers the phenomenologist a unique research tool that requires the researcher to utilise a participatory empathic attitude towards the co-researcher whilst maintaining fidelity to the phenomenon. The following section details the approach I took during this stage.

### **2.1 Participant as co-researcher.**

In conducting human research Pollio et al (1997) point out that “all social science data arise from a dialogue between a researcher and [the researched]” (p. 35). From a phenomenological perspective dialogue, in most cases, takes place within the phenomenological interview. Pollio et al also say “the data arising from the interview is dialogic in the true sense of the term. Within phenomenological methods, interview participants function as co-researchers and not merely as research subjects” (p. 39). The ‘investigator’ treats the co-researcher as the expert of their experience in an attitude of positive regard, “in this way a path to understanding emerges from the common respect and concern of two people committed to exploring the lifeworld of one of them” (p. 29). What this requires is that the self and other “clarify for each other the meaning of their dialogue as it unfolds between them” (p. 29). This shared experience could be termed



participatory knowing where dialogue is a dynamic interactive process through which knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation emerges.

Giorgi (1994) asserts that:

The first criterion of good [phenomenological] research is to capture as clearly as possible, the way in which a phenomenon appears in everyday living...which implies that the essential dimensions of the phenomenon are permitted to manifest themselves in an observable way. (p. 207)

The challenge is to let the phenomenon emerge in spontaneous dialogue that allows for an expansion of the phenomenon whilst keeping any digressive tendencies in check. The focus should always remain on the particular phenomenon being researched, which is a process phenomenologists call “fidelity to the phenomenon” (Giorgi, 1994, p. 206).

## **2.2 Fidelity to the phenomenon within the interview.**

As stated, when exploring a person’s experience of the phenomenon in the interview it is essential the phenomenological investigator maintains fidelity towards the phenomenon. This requires the researcher to keep constant vigilance over the phenomenon under investigation, so that it does not become obscured or polluted during the investigation, particularly in the interview stage. For instance focusing on the consequences of expressed anger, rather than concentrating on the anger as experienced by the person could easily sidetrack an investigation into the lived experience of anger.

To assist the co-researchers to maintain focus and clarity, and not lose sight of the phenomenon, the phenomenological investigator may utilise two procedures – those of bracketing and reflexivity. As detailed in the previous chapter, (section 3.3, p. 50), bracketing ensures that the co-researchers keep the phenomenon in sight and approach it with ‘fresh eyes’. As Crotty (1996) notes

Phenomenology suggests that, if we lay aside, as best we can [bracket], the prevailing understandings of those phenomena and revisit our immediate experience of them, possibilities for new meaning emerge for us or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning.

Maintaining an attitude of constant reflexivity will assist the process of bracketing. Henwood and Pidgeon (1993) define reflexivity as “the way in which [naturalistic] research activity *inevitably* shapes and constitutes the object of inquiry; the researcher and researched are characterised as interdependent in the social process of research” (pp. 24-25, italics in original).

The procedures of bracketing and reflexivity carried out in a rigorous and vigilant manner, whilst at the same time, maintaining fidelity to the phenomenon will ensure a competent and thorough investigation. However, as Pollio et al (1997) voice “well executed...procedures that do not generate meaningful results are technique without soul” (p. 55). It is my belief that the degree to which the interviewer is able to respond empathically to the other reflects the extent to which a phenomenological investigation will be meaningful.

### **2.3 Empathy as method.**

The notion of empathy in the research interview can be aligned with Dilthey’s original conception of *Verstehen*, which “is an understanding based on empathic identification in which an other’s experience is relived by the other...[or] a conceptual understanding in which the interpreter is able to understand what the world means to another person” (cited in Pollio et al, 1997, p. 45).

An essential aspect in the empathic effort is inclusivity. The phenomenological investigator includes the other fully in this stage of the research process by making explicit their intentions, previous history with, and interest in, the phenomenon in question and by owning any bias and presuppositions, and sharing these with the co-researcher. Inclusivity is a key to human participation in any project. A person who feels included is more likely to reciprocate, participate, creatively contribute and trust the other (Cox 1995; Hirst 1994; Loewy 1991, 1993; Peck, 1990). As Cox (1995) establishes “experiences which engender trust and recognition of common ground allow people to move comfortably from the defensive ‘I’ to the mutual ‘we’” (p. 22). Trust enables people to relax into the dialogic space, to open up to the other, thus enabling a depth, intensity and reciprocity in the interview that otherwise would be difficult to achieve.

The value of an empathic interaction between investigator and participant as co-researchers is captured by Martin Buber (cited in Douglas & Moustakas, 1985) who says, “the word arises in a substantial way between men who have been seized in their depths and opened out by the dynamic of an elemental togetherness. The interhuman opens out what otherwise remains unopened” (p. 51). Uncovering the hidden is one of the aims of phenomenological interview. The degree that the investigator is empathically open and sensitive with the other can be seen to have a direct impact on the depth and quality of the interview and the ‘uncovering’ of essentials of the phenomenon within a person’s experience. Pollio et al (1987) contend that:

In an open dialogue, such as typified by a phenomenological interview, questions function differently...[to other types of non-participatory enquiries]. The full meaning of a question emerges *only* from the engagement of a researcher with the participant and vice versa. Latitude exists for the participant to ascertain the researcher’s frame of reference and to specify his or her own frame of reference. (p. 35, italics added)

Boyd and Fales (cited in Douglas & Moustakas, 1985) remark, “the essence of this openness stage appears to be a trust of self to discover and recognise relevant information” (p. 45). Thus, the phenomenological interview is the primary space in which both participants can explore a person’s experience. In order to create as presuppositionless and supportive an environment as possible the procedures of bracketing and reflexivity are utilised, along with an inclusive, empathic approach to the research interview. My attitude toward the phenomenological interview was one of creating a respectful space, one in which the participants can communicate with openness, with an awareness to new possibilities arising from the dialogue. Empathy and inclusivity are key elements in the inter-human attempt to accurately penetrate and understand the experience of the phenomenon in question and were used with sensitivity and awareness, to the best of my ability, during the interview stage. Once the interviews were concluded and transcribed they were analysed using the following procedure.

### 3.0 A Phenomenological Method of Explicating Experience

In a paper entitled Phenomenological Research Method, Design and Procedure: A phenomenological investigation of the phenomenon of being-in-community as experienced by two individuals who have participated in a Community Building Workshop (Holroyd, 2001) I pointed out that:

There is much debate in phenomenological circles as to the 'method' of research one should use in a phenomenological enquiry. What is quite clear, however, is that there is no single method that will suffice for all enquiries. Phenomenological researchers in professional areas ranging from pedagogy and nursing to existential psychology agree to some basic guidelines and indicate that the approach to a phenomenological method design should be flexible and adapted to suit the phenomenon under investigation. (p. 1)

In that particular trial I used a phenomenological research method of analysis adapted by Schweitzer (1998) from Giorgi (1997). This model was drawn from the psychological disciplines and is detailed and explicit in its method. However, for this project I modified and adapted this model using van Manen's and Coliazzi's ideas to supplement and streamline the analysis procedure. In particular I replaced Giorgi's natural meaning units (NMUs) with Coliazzi and van Manen's significant statements and combined Schweitzer's constituent profile and central theme stages. I felt the blend of van Manen and Coliazzi's particular methodological orientation combined with Giorgi and Schweitzer's methods would lend themselves well to this project.

The appendices show examples of the method of explicating the phenomenon of being-in-community from the research interviews. All of the original transcripts, with names changed or deleted, have been included in Appendix B. Additionally transcript two has been used in appendices D and E to show how the phenomenological method was applied to transcripts. My method progresses through four stages of data analysis as follows.

#### **Stage 1. Gaining an intuitive holistic understanding of the raw data.**

The transcripts were read a number of times in order to achieve a holistic and intuitive understanding of the data.

Stage 2. Ideographic analysis: Forming constituent profiles, thematic indexes and succinct sub-narrative. The following steps were undertaken in stage two.

**1. *Extracting significant statements.*** Using Coliazzi's (1978) and van Manen's (1990) approach I highlighted what I deemed to be significant statements in the text pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation.

**2. *Significant statements numbered and grouped against categories from research key.*** I developed a research key, a method device designed by Stuart Devenish (2001, p. 160) in his phenomenological doctoral thesis, which is used for grouping categories and sub categories related to the research question (see appendix C). The research key helps identify themes emerging from the transcripts, which are indicative of emerging interpretive themes. Each significant statement was then numbered against a category from the research key (see appendix D). The significant statements were then grouped into categories indicating aspects of the co-researcher's experience such as Speaking, Experience of God/Spirit Energy, Feeling Reflected and Understood, Encountering the Other etc. The significant sentences enabled me to maintain a contextual relational sense of the co-researchers' experience.

**3. *Forming a constituent profile incorporating central themes.*** These statements were then examined and reduced to central themes by removing any extraneous or duplicated statements. Central themes are recognisable sentences conveying a discrete expression of experience. This step was modified from Schweitzer by combining central themes and constituent profiles into one step. According to Sherwood and Silver (1999) a constituent profile is "the reconstitution of central themes that provides a non-repetitive list of descriptive meaning statements for each participant" (pp. 10-13).

**4. *Forming the thematic indexes.*** I further reduced the constituent profile by removing extraneous or duplicated items to form a list of non-repetitive sentences representing discreet meanings of experience for each co-researcher called the thematic index (see Appendix E). The thematic index "establishes a non-repetitive,

sequenced list of meaning statements...used to search for interpretive themes. The thematic index contains the “constituent profile statements attributed to singular meanings of experience” (Sherwood & Silver, 1999, pp 10-13).

**5. *Extracting interpretive themes.*** The thematic index was then searched for interpretive themes for each co-researcher.

**6. *Writing succinct sub-narratives.*** A succinct sub-narrative capturing the essence of the community building experience for each co-researcher was written. These are included at the end of this chapter.

The above steps are carried out for each individual participant. From this point on the data is examined collectively or nomothetically.

**Stage 3. Nomothetic analysis: forming a combined thematic index and identifying interpretive themes.** The following steps were undertaken in stage three.

**1. *Combining individual thematic indexes into one thematic index.***

Individual thematic indexes were combined to form one document. Any repeated or non-relevant statements were removed to produce a combined thematic index of the essential aspects of the phenomenon of being-in-community (see Appendix F). With this step the phenomenological investigator moves from an ideographic explication of an individual's experience to a more generalised nomothetic description.

**2. *Performing a thorough and repeated reading of the thematic index.*** The combined thematic index was read thoroughly a number of times and I became immersed in the data. Once I felt I had a sufficient intuitive grasp of the data in the combined thematic index I proceeded to the next step.

**3. *Identifying and extracting interpretive themes.*** To aid this process a concept map was drawn up (see Appendix G) to give a visual reference of the interrelationship of emerging themes. Through meditating and reflecting on the data a cluster of twenty-eight interpretive themes emerged which illuminate the

meanings of experience (see Appendix H). These were then prioritised into four major interpretive themes with the remaining interpretive themes forming sub themes (see Appendix I). It is important that the relationship between interpretive themes and the context in which they arose in the central theme/constituent profiles is kept in mind. Some of the interpretive themes correlated with interpretive themes that emerged whilst trialling a phenomenological method using the first two interviews as a testing ground. The preliminary findings from this trial were published in the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* (Holroyd, 2001). The following is a list of major interpretive themes and interpretive sub-themes extracted from the transcripts using the phenomenological analysis procedures outlined above.

**Encountering the other as:**

a sense of difference  
confronting and threatening  
giving, nurturing and supportive  
a reflection of self

**Emptying and Emptiness.*****Emptying as:***

risk taking and vulnerable making  
a sense of relief  
as revealing authentic-self

***Emptiness as:***

a state of readiness

**Speaking as:**

a physically compelling calling  
a threshold event  
a transformational event

**Being-in-Community as:**

elusive  
transcendent  
a connective, unifying and healing experience  
being formed by God or spirit  
calming, supportive and peaceful

Once the themes were identified and listed I proceeded to the final stage of data analysis.

**Stage 4: Explicating experience using interpretive themes.** The interpretive themes were identified as a major pivot around which participants' experiences of the CBW and being-in-community revolved. The experience was then explicated by addressing each of the interpretive themes and sub-themes, in turn, in chapters five and six.



#### 4.0 Participants Profiled using Succinct Sub-Narratives

This chapter has outlined the method, procedure and design used to rigorously examine the raw data and form a phenomenological nexus of themes from which an extended description of the phenomena can be given. To complete this chapter and as prelude to chapters five and six the next section introduces each research participant to the reader by providing a contextual picture as a brief snapshot of their individual experience and the relevant interpretive themes related to this experience. These sub-narratives were developed in stage two of the ideographic stage of the phenomenological analysis

##### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher one.**

Gail is a psychologist and consultant who, for several years prior to encountering the CBW, had been on a search for self and quest for meaning. She explains: “I’ve done heaps of stuff, I’ve been into therapy at times, I am a psychologist...I have done past life regressions, childhood regressions, I have done channelling, and I’ve done body work.” Gail says of the CBW “that clicked, that gave me something” and, along with another program *Psychology of Mind*, has been “the real catalyst for my change.” At the start of the workshop Gail was “going in as this professional...who was really keen on identifying you know the thing to run in workshops” but describes a transition from “observing the process” to a point where she “just let go I just stopped looking, I stopped analysing I stopped dissecting and started to see differently.” This gradual change of perspective led to some powerful insights and experiences during the CBW, which were precursors to experiencing being-in-community and catalysts for change. One of the most powerful realisations came when Gail realised that “I am in community all of the time” and that this wasn’t dependant on others; it was dependant on how she was “seeing it” from moment to moment. This perceptual shift has transformed the way Gail experiences and participates in her life. As she says she was “probably one of the most depressed people about” however, now her “love of life and...openness to people is growing each day.”

The major interpretive themes emerging from Gail's account of the CBW are:

**Encountering the Other:** as a sense of difference

**Emptying:** as a sense of relief, and as revealing authentic-self

**Speaking:** as a threshold event, and, a transformational event.

**Being-in-Community:** as a connective, unifying and healing experience, being formed by God or spirit

### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher two.**

Louise had been inspired to travel to America to attend a CBW after reading Peck's seminal work on community building, *The Different Drum*. Ostensibly she went to 'do' facilitation work or train as a CBW facilitator to enhance her consultancy practice. Louise describes herself as "Miss corporate Australia" walking into the workshop and feeling "very much like a foreigner, feeling very different, very isolated and very disconnected." This encounter with the other was a pivotal experience in Louise's community building, one that not only precipitated an existential crisis, "it was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, it was scary absolutely like life and death"; but also provided a new and healing experience of the other, "I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much."

This encounter with the other was experienced as a mirroring of herself that was profoundly transformative "it felt like I was looking and being reflected... that [was] the powerful transformational point for me." As a child Louise says her emotional life was suppressed by her family and that expressing emotion was "bad behaviour and unacceptable". The community building experience has helped her reclaim her emotional life. Her experience of being-in-community was described as whole making "It felt like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted, I felt more whole." The changes have continued in Louise's life: "I have altered significantly...that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind of had the ripple effect...it's changed dramatically my relationship with my children."

The major interpretive themes emerging from Louise's account of the CBW are:

**Encountering the other:** as a sense of difference, as confronting and threatening, as giving, nurturing and supportive, and as a reflection of self.

**Emptying:** as risk taking and vulnerable making.

**Speaking:** as a physically compelling calling, as a threshold experience, and as a transformational event.

**Being-in-Community:** as transcendent, as a connective, unifying and healing experience.

### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher three.**

Sue's self description when she started her community building journey in 1994 was "I was an east coast high level banker with Ferragamo shoes, red nails, big blonde hair, perfect clothes, just perfect everything." Similar to Gail and Louise she "went as an incredibly prominent business person, who would learn about community so I could teach everybody else." Sue's life up to then had been fraught with difficult relationships, particularly with male authority figures, and she was an alcoholic. What attracted Sue to Peck's work initially was his concept of emptiness and emptying: "it was my recognition button that I needed to go." Sue emptied her life dramatically. Her life went from "this huge complex constructed life [to] rebuilding a completely new life, a pretty simple one." Sue credits the CBW with peeling "enough of a layer of protection away from me for me to be able to know that I wanted an authentic life and that I didn't have one" and her decision to quit drinking: "I decided to quit drinking and go to Alcoholics Anonymous and I've always credited somehow my community experience with that." Participation in the CBW enabled Sue to slowly find her voice and reveal her authentic self. As a result her life and consulting practices have "changed dramatically, I [now] follow [my] intuition and I'm way more willing to tell the truth about how I feel, where I am, far more able to feel where I am, know where I am." She says of her community building experiences "the value and the beauty was the healing that came to me."

The major interpretive themes emerging from Sue's account of the CBW are:

**Encountering the other:** as giving, nurturing and supportive, and as confronting and threatening.

**Emptying:** as a clearing process, and as revealing of authentic self.

**Speaking:** as a transformational event, and as a physically compelling calling.

**Being-in-Community:** as a unifying and healing experience, as being formed by God or spirit, and as calming, supportive and peaceful.

#### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher four.**

John has been involved with community building and the Foundation for Community Encouragement for the last 17 years. He has attended dozens of workshops as a facilitator and a participant. His overall comment on community is that it shatters the illusion that we are single unconnected entities: "when a group is in community that is one of the times that that illusion is broken for me, in other words you can sense that we are all truly connected in some way, and to some degree that group coming into community changes the world." He describes being in community as "feeling alive, extremely alive, the full range of emotions are available."

His journey with community building has been about becoming authentic and connected with his life purpose: "when I'm in community I believe I'm fulfilling [my] purpose through [a] feeling of being connected with everything that exists including the divine." Community building has helped transform him "Two basic things that shaped my life were getting sober and community building it has had a profound effect on my life."

The major interpretive themes emerging from John's account of the CBW are:

**Emptying:** as revealing of authentic-self.

**Speaking:** as a transformational event.

**Being-in-Community:** as transcendent, as a connective, unifying and healing experience, and as being formed by God or spirit.

#### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher five.**

Jane's encounter with community building has been predominantly in her role as CEO of a large financial association. She was one of the people responsible for the amalgamation of two institutions and attended a workshop with the other CEO. As Jane says, "it greatly strengthened our ability to work together as a leadership team; I do not think we could have done the co-executive directorship for a year...without having had the experience of that workshop." She experienced being with others as "more free than I have felt...to share my fears as well as my hopes and dreams." The overall experience was of "being supported...supported by others and supported by spirit." In terms of her workplace she says of the CBW: "for the organisation it builds trust and understanding."

The major interpretive themes emerging from Jane's account of the CBW are:

**Encountering the other:** as giving, nurturing and supportive.

**Speaking:** as a physically compelling calling.

**Being-in-Community:** as calming, supportive and peaceful and, as a connective experience.

#### **Succinct sub-narrative co-researcher six.**

David grew up in a Presbyterian "White American" family who denied their Native American ancestry; as he says "I hadn't...even any knowledge that I was a Native American but I knew that growing up there was something different about me in relationship to the dominant culture." David's search for meaning and life path brought him eventually to the CBW. Commenting on his first encounter with the CBW he says "I'd done T-groups and I'd done Transactional Analysis and various things...and I thought wow this is more authentic." This theme of

authenticity is central to David's life and his lived-experience of community centres around experiences of authenticity. He attributes much of his ability to reconnect to his authentic self, what American Indians call 'original medicine', to community-building experiences: "it was a spiritual kick in the rear... It was the first time I had allowed myself to remember my dream." David spoke his dream to the group: "the only time I spoke during the entire workshop was...the second morning and I shared my dream." This experience caused David to feel vulnerable, tenuous and awkward but "as the workshop progressed and more people started sharing deeply and more authentically then I felt like I belonged."

The encounter with personal authenticity and the CBW led to some major changes in David's life. He left what he termed a good job in pursuit of his calling, which was to be a medicine man, and is also a trained community building facilitator. Since engaging in community building David has embraced more of the American Indian ways. As he says, "community building is so valuable to me I get to be real and be me."

The major interpretive themes emerging from David's account of the CBW are:

**Emptying:** as vulnerable making and risk taking, as a sense of relief and, as revealing of authentic-self.

**Speaking:** as a physically compelling calling, and as a transformational event.

**Being-in-Community:** as illusive, as transcendent, and as a connective, unifying and healing experience.

The explications of interpretive themes form the next two chapters. These chapters illuminate both the first-hand empathic account of people's experience of being-in-community and highlight some of the invariant universal aspects of the phenomena of being-in-community.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SELF IN RELATION WITH OTHER: THE DANCE OF CHANGE

*Change is the constant, the signal for rebirth, the egg of the phoenix*

– Christina Baldwin

The preceding chapters have outlined the development and rationale of this research project and laid the phenomenological foundations for proceeding with the explication of the experience of being-in-community. This chapter and the following chapter explicate the major thrust of this thesis, which is the illumination of the phenomenon of 'being-in-community'. As Haney (1994) says: "the 'unbuilding' of the first phase of phenomenological method [the epoché], must be complemented by the rebuilding of the world as intentional constitution" (p. 8). The rebuilding phase commences by using the interpretive themes arrived at from participant transcriptions to explicate meaning attributed to the phenomenon under investigation. Using the interpretive themes identified in Chapter Four, an explication of the experience of a Community Building Workshop (CBW) building up to the last theme of 'being-in-community' will be given.

All themes are interconnected to form a dynamic flow and interchange that is the river of building community. The experience of being-in-community is the underpinning motif of this thesis and is the final interpretive theme explicated in chapter six. However, being-in-community cannot be separated from the preceding themes or the context in which it occurs. As Devenish (2001) points out:

Phenomenology insists on the relational and contextural components of a phenomena [sic] including its originative context and its horizons as being essential to the...process of deriving meaning. (p. 175)

Chapters five and six elucidate the experience of a CBW by placing participants in relational context to the interpretive themes. By necessity the themes

appear linear following each other through to the final theme; however the appearance of thematic aspects occurs throughout the CBW in varying degrees. Thus, themes should be seen as being interwoven and overlapping with a constant interplay prior, during and after the physical event of the CBW.

This chapter entitled “Self-in-relation-with-other: the dance of change” explores the following three interpretive themes and sub-themes:

Encountering the other as: a sense of difference; confronting and threatening; giving, nurturing and supportive; and, as a reflection of self.

Emptying and emptiness as: risk taking and vulnerable making; a sense of relief; revealing of authentic self; and, a state of readiness.

Speaking as: a physically compelling calling; a threshold event; and, a transformational event.

The CBW was an event that participants travelled to, bringing with them their expectations and hopes. As a prelude to the explication of the phenomenon via the interpretive themes the next section sets the intentional scene for the CBW from a participant and phenomenological perspective.

## **1.0 Prelude to the workshop**

Most participants were drawn to the CBW because of their search for personally fulfilling experiences and a richer deeper experience of themselves and relationship with others. This was a response to a longing for a way of being that was sensed as possible but not yet realised. It could be said that they were ‘reaching’ towards something they knew was absent in their lives. Sokolowski (2000) talks of presences and absences in phenomenology as being necessary components of the thing in question. He asserts that:

Things are given in a mixture of presence and absence, just as they are given in a manifold of presentations. We should also notice that it is this identity, this invariant in presence and absence, to which we refer when we use words to name a thing. (p. 36)



In the build up to a workshop, participants hold expectation and anticipation of the forthcoming CBW. Although these are not themes as such, I believe their inclusion is warranted as correlate intentionalities that Sokolowski describes as empty intentions.

Gail and Sue were seeking “the thing to run in workshops” and to “learn about community so I could teach everybody else.” Their expectations were geared to their professional lives as consultants; their empty intention was that which they imagined would happen in a workshop. John, David and Louise were attracted to CBWs in their quest for self-understanding and authenticity. As Louise says: “I travelled half way around the world, I’d read the book, I wanted to be in this experience.” The sense of expectation is linked to the initial intentionality of the person. For instance Sue had a result in mind. Prior to attending she was going to “learn about community so I could teach everybody else.” From a phenomenological perspective the intentional relationship Sue had with community was ‘community as something that can be learned’. That is, community was already held in her mind as a hyletic entity, but as an empty intending or absence. As the workshop progressed and the intention became a filled intention, her intentional relationship with community, changed. Her original expectation, or empty intention, was surpassed by the unfolding reality of community in the CBW. As Sue states, “the value and beauty was the healing that came to me.”

Gail had a similar experience, “I had this huge intellectual thing of oh yes I have picked this workshop out and this is what I will learn here and then I get in there and I have this completely different experience which completely blows my mind away.” The intentional constitution of community as intuited by participants broadens and deepens or is completely replaced. Sokolowski (2000) terms this broadening and deepening of an experience an “additive fulfillment” (p. 33). For instance added to Sue’s concept of community as ‘something that can be learned about’ is community as ‘something that can heal’. For both Sue and Gail added to their experience was community as ‘something that can radically change one’s perception’. In this sense expectation and anticipation provide an origination intentionality that subsequent experience and change can be reflected against. It was evident from the following explication of participants’ experience that there was a

reflective differentiation between self pre-workshop and self during and post-workshop.

## **2.0 Encountering the other**

Being-in-community is dependent on there being others with whom we can be in community. Encounter with the other is a necessary component of building to community. Community cannot be separated from our interaction with or encounters with others, as Jason (1997) says: “social settings...provide a sense of community to all members and a sense of meaning to one's own individual needs” (p. 108). The research shows that the encounter with the other in the CBW is the precipitator of change. As people move through stages of the workshop there is a transition from the encounter with the other as adversarial, confronting and threatening to a more open, welcoming and respectful stance. The opening stages of a CBW evoked intense feelings and responses in participants. These ranged from existentially threatening feelings through to experiencing the other as caring and nurturing.

### **2.1 Encountering the other as a sense of difference**

Gail's experience of the Other in the workshop was instrumental in her having a transformative shift in perception and self-understanding. The Other provided a reflective screen on which Gail could clearly see how she included or excluded Others in her life. She states:

I started to observe in the workshop that there were people I was including in my sense of community and people that I wasn't...and what struck me was the people I was including were those people that made meaning of themselves in exactly the same way that I made meaning of myself.

Three aspects are relevant to Gail's perceptivity. One is 'meaning for myself', two is 'including alike Others', and three is 'excluding different Others'. In the moment of Gail's perceptive clarity, she was thinking 'they have the same meaning making faculties as I do'. That is, some Others make sense of their life-world in a fashion Gail can relate to. The thing thought about (the *noema*) 'making meaning' existed in that moment for Gail as both a *Self-Thou* and an *Other-Thou*

shared intentionality. This act of reflexive-self occurred within the noematic schema of 'meaning' for Gail with the correlate act of inclusion and acceptance of the Other arising from recognition of 'sameness'. Similarly, the act of exclusion and rejection arose in the same moment from recognition of 'difference'.

Previous to this perception, these actions of inclusion and exclusion were carried out unawares by her, in the natural attitude. The setting of the CBW enabled Gail to bracket her natural attitude sufficiently in the workshop to perceive her experience from the stance of self-observing-self. This dawning realisation was for Gail a transformative point in her understanding of community. This was an important shift as it led Gail to becoming more open and inclusive of people she meets. She was able to penetrate her a priori impressions and pre-reflexive responses to the Other, and see that she was ultimately responsible for her reading of the world. As she says: "my big realisation was I am in community all the time...and that it's not dependant on...what the people around me are doing, it's more dependant on how I am seeing it." Gail's experience of sameness and difference had a positive effect on her behaviour. Again this can be viewed as an additive fulfilment where in Sokolowski's (2000, p. 38) terms "more and more profiles on the thing in question" are provided. The profile of Other and her perception of the Other within the workshop were added to and deepened as the workshop progressed. Thus community for Gail became a thing, which was dependant on how she was reading her life-world at any given moment; where-as the encounter with the Other for Louise was at first the antithesis of community.

Encountering the Other as a sense of difference was experienced strongly by Louise: "I felt very much like I was a foreigner, feeling very different and very isolated...here I was in this incredibly foreign culture and there was every conceivable difference you could possibly, visually imagine in the room." This initial encounter threw Louise into defensive and judgmental appraisal of others. As she says it was her way of "dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different to them." According to Ranly (1966) Max Sheller contends that "what is immediately given in the human experience is a stream of conscious experiences at first undifferentiated between *I* and *Thou*. What is first experienced is the general sphere of the 'we'" (p. 58, italics in original). It is possible that in the Pseudo-

community stage of a workshop, participants are experiencing this flow of undifferentiated experiences as a 'we' experience. Participants describe this stage as unbearable perhaps *because* differentiation has not occurred in the group and people can feel the underlying currents and tensions of difference. Participants attempt to 'smooth' over these tensions by trying to "fake community". Peck (1990) says of pseudo-community "the members attempt to be an instant community by being extremely pleasant to one another and avoiding all disagreement" (p. 86). When differentiation does occur the CBW becomes chaotic. People feel their differences intensely and tensions and disagreements surface. Some participants feel a need to 'convert' or 'fix' people to ease the chaos, as was the case for Louise.

When differentiation occurred for Louise it was so sharp a contrast that the separation seemed insurmountable. Here the Other takes on the dimension of the enemy; they become a 'them'. Levinas (cited in Moran, 2000) says of this characteristic of the Other "in alterity we can find an enemy" (p. 326). At this point Louise is clearly differentiating 'them' as people she does not have anything in common with. She is located within her sphere of oneness as a person alone in the world. Louise is unable to make the transcendental move into the sphere of otherness, into the sphere of Thou. There are no shared meanings and her intense feelings of difference completely isolate her in an experience of the Other as confronting. The encounter with the Other as different intensifies one's perception of self in relation to the Other. For Louise the intensification led to feelings of existential threat.

## **2.2 Encountering the other as confronting and threatening**

Louise's experience of the Other gave rise to intense feelings and sense perceptions which threatened her sense of being: "I was experiencing a lot of emotional intensity, because there was a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group, and I felt powerless... it felt explosive, unmanageable, like internal shaking...my capacity to be able to contain that [emotion] was seriously tested." This struggle left her feeling alone and very isolated. The other becomes problematic, something to fix, "I wanted to run over and solve it, or save it, or fix it, or stop it, because it was all too much." Louise desired this more than anything else

not for the benefit of the Other but to relieve the intense internal pressure of her emotions triggered by the encounter with the Other. Sue also experienced the initial stages of a workshop as difficult “I find pseudo-community unbearable, and I have occasionally experienced an uncontrollable desire to “fix’ the chaos.” The Other becomes intensified, and at times magnified to an almost insufferable presence. The Other is seen as a threat, which can be overcome by ‘fixing’ or converting to the threatened self’s world-view. Peck (1990) sees the need to convert people to ‘our’ way of being as a fundamental problem with how our society treats difference. He sees most conflict in the world as stemming from an inability to accept others and their differences and so we try to change people to our world view, coerce people into accepting our beliefs, convert people to our way of thinking (Peck’s stage of chaos). This can manifest as racism, bigotry, sexism, and religious intolerance and, in the extreme, warfare. The encounter with the Other in the CBW exposes this aspect of human behaviour to the light. In chaos this behaviour becomes explicit and visible. Participants become acutely aware of this behaviour in themselves and the Other. This affords an opportunity to directly confront and change these behaviours.

The Other as being confronting contrasts with the Other as being confrontational. In the former, one’s own perception of Otherness triggers a response that arises within the individual because of the mere presence of the Other. In the latter, the Other acts towards one in a way that evokes a response. The Other moves from being a mere presence to being an active agent. This is evidenced by Sue who was struggling to find her voice in a workshop when a participant directly confronted her by asking “just one little question”. This confrontation caused Sue to make a deliberate choice to speak, to ‘act’ differently. It was as if the Other was speaking to an aspect of Sue that could hear, could respond, and was strong enough, wilful enough to overcome her fear of, and difficulty with, speaking. This experience touched her deeply. Sue experienced this confrontation as “the biggest gift anybody’s ever given me ... that is the most incredible example of human community... [the Other] called forward something in me that for years I could [use]”. The active agent of the Other moved from being constituted in her as ‘Other as confrontational’ to ‘Other as giving’.

### 2.3 Encountering the other as giving, nurturing and supportive

After the initial encounter with the other as confronting and different, Louise and Sue both had experiences that signified a shift in perception of, and attitude towards, the Other. For Sue the experience of the other as giving of themselves by divulging their dark and difficult selves was revelatory.

Describing her first CBW she says, “it was the first time I had ever been in a group where people showed up as themselves and...told the dark and difficult stories of themselves.” This was a new encounter with a previously unknown aspect of other. It was experienced as a culmination of a life long preparation, “I had the experience of feeling like I had been getting ready to be there my whole life but I have never experienced it before and it blew me away.” Phenomenologically this can be expressed as absence and presence. The presence or ‘filled intention’ of the CBW made Sue aware of an ‘empty intention’ that had been a theme for her during her life, this was “getting ready for the CBW”. Sue’s life had been leading her towards a something that was a felt but unfulfilled need within her. In her recovery from alcoholism Sue attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which for her has many similarities and attributes of the CBW. Attending AA supported Sue in her healing process and gave her exposure to different ways of being. Hence, Sue was no stranger to listening to people tell their stories. However, the way this unfolded in the workshop was beyond her previous experience and expectations, so much so it ‘blew her away’.

Sokolowski (2000) describes different kinds of absences, such as “things being absent because they are in the future...others that are forgotten...concealed or hidden”(p. 37). In Sue’s case the absence was hidden until the intention was fulfilled. I would describe this as a hindsight absence, an empty intention, that of ‘getting ready for’. A knowledge or consciousness of an absence of a thing in one’s life can also indicate or point to the thing that is absent. In Sue’s case what was absent was deep-community. She had a longing to belong and an innate ‘knowing’ that belonging was possible in a way yet unrealised by her. According to Chartres (1992, p. 18), Adler describes this as a “dynamic force” of longing and striving towards the communal and social aspects of life, which is an “innate potential” in

human beings. Sue experienced a fulfilling of this potential in the CBW through the depth and honesty of the Others giving of themselves. Their telling of their “dark and difficult” stories was an unexpectedly powerful and healing experience for Sue, as it became a filled intention and a realised potential. The theme of healing will be elaborated in Chapter Six.

Louise’s initial encounters with the Other in the workshop were difficult and induced intense feelings of isolation and desperation. However, consequent encounters for her were experiences of the Other as being caring, nurturing and supportive. This motif is repeated for other participants in this study and usually arose as a result of them taking a risk, speaking or emptying. These themes are addressed in subsequent sections. For this section suffice to say that risk taking, speaking and emptying requires one to be vulnerable, and most experiences of others as caring were inextricably bound to feelings of vulnerability. Louise reports that after speaking and feeling profoundly “reflected” by Others she was cared for in a way that had no precedent, “I haven’t had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much. . . They respected and honoured my experience. . . It was an unbelievably supportive environment.” Similarly Jane felt she “was being supported by others”. The experience of the Other as supportive and caring led to an increased sense of belonging for Louise. After speaking she reported, “I felt very much like I belonged to the group.”

This experience of the Other as nurturing and supportive gave birth to the realisation that people *are* interconnected and precipitated a move from the *I-Them* to an *I-Thou* stance. The significance of this move to viewing the other and self as belonging to, or in, a community of others is highlighted by Loewy (1993) who contends that:

Without a community in which we act, without others with which to work, build or contend there can be no 'us.' It is community, which enables our existence and allows our flourishing; in turn, our individual actions and talents are what fashion and shape our community. (p. 230)

According to Edwards (2001):

Zulu people describe this process as '*umuntu umuntu ngabantu*', which literally means 'a person is a person through others,' 'I only become an I through you', and 'I am because we are'. (p. 2)

Thus, in this sense community transcends self and the other and offers infinite possibilities of constitutional otherness. Husserl (1982) remarks:

The intrinsically first other (the first non-Ego) is the other Ego. And the other Ego makes constitutionally possible a new infinite domain of what is the "Other" and Objective Nature and a whole objective world, to which all other Egos and I myself belong. (p. 107)

The Other then becomes a powerful and originative project where the I-Ego reflects and is reflected by the Other-Ego. The constitutional possibilities of the intersubjective relationship between I-Ego and Other-Ego are demonstrated in Louise's experience of being reflected.

#### **2.4 Encountering the other as a reflection of self**

Louise reported that the circular space of the CBW became "like a pond" in which she experienced "looking and being reflected," which was for her "the most powerful experience [in community]". The other participants became like mirrors for her. She describes how "it took me a long time to look at them and you know, I think very much [when I did] then the whole group changed." To "look in somebody else's eyes" and feel "truly understood" was a major transformational shift for her. The power of the Other to mirror Louise and reflect her in a different light coupled with her feeling deeply understood by the Other, was self-revelatory and instrumental in changing Louise's experience of herself and others. Up until that point Louise had reported she was "pissing people off" and being a "pain in the arse". She was feeling isolated and disconnected from the group and all of a sudden she experienced for the first time in her life "being reflected in an incredibly profound way". It's as if a portal to her 'other' selves had been opened which allowed her to peer out at the world and allowed the world to peer in at her. This was an overwhelming experience for Louise, "the contrast is huge, I go into this space where I can't take in any more, it's all about me, it's all kind of Oh My God, it's not about me, ego me, it's about me being reflected and the powerful experience of that." The intensity of this experience became too much and Louise had to "kind



of shut down from there”. This experience for Louise was paradoxical, feeling truly seen and at the same time feeling completely exposed and overwhelmed.

From the above experience a CBW could be seen to provide a unique and powerful opportunity to observe oneself with new eyes. The reflection of new or different facets of one’s being is received by the self-same being. It is like standing in a hall of mirrors where one can see aspects of oneself usually hidden from one’s eyes. Every way you turn there you are, confronted by self, exposed to the bright light of new self-perception. It is the intensity of this reflected self that Louise withdrew from. Reflection of this type seems to function as a reminder of our other facets, that there is more to us than meets our eyes. This experience has an essential quality of otherness, i.e. without others Louise’s ability to perceive hidden aspects of herself is reduced; the other also becomes a pivotal reference for feeling understood.

The above themes show the encounter with the Other as a series of affiliated experiences that form the choreography of the dance of change. Participants move through a series of events that precipitate a change in perception of the self and the Other. The stance one takes in relation to the Other undergoes a transformation as a result of the encounter. The encounter with the Other is instrumental in moving participants toward a different way of being. Husserl (1982) brings a phenomenological sense of otherness to bear in saying: "the only conceivable manner in which others can have the sense and status of existent others...consists in their being constituted in me, as others" (p. 128). However, the move is not a deliberate ‘decision’ to change. It comes about through the struggle with self in relation to Others. The Other calls into question our ontological reading of ourselves in the world. According to Sartre (cited in Owens, 1971) this is because the encounter with other accentuates “‘my-existence-*for-the-other*’ as other than himself [therefore]... the structure of ‘my being [is] determined by the other, mediated by him’” (p. 34, italics in original). Sartre gives an example of the ontological reformation using the example of the stare, “the ‘Stare’ of the other engenders in me this new ontological structure which was not there before and which could arrive only by the agency of the other” (p. 34). Thus for Sartre “these relations are not only of an external nature; they contribute to the very internal

structure of the self' (p. 34). In the CBW these "internal structures of the self" become apparent and visible through the agency of the Other. One can become transformed through a radical ontological reconstitution of the self in relationship with the Other.

These relations within a horizon of multiple Others provide a theatre of discovery that brings otherness into sharp contrast against the screen of self, thus enabling a perspective derived from reflection and differentiation to be achieved by participants, which highlights their personal barriers to community. According to Peck these barriers have to be 'let go' or 'emptied' before community can be achieved. Peck (1990) lists the most common barriers that people need to empty themselves of before they can enter genuine community as being; "expectations and preconceptions, prejudices, ideology, theology and solutions, the need to heal, convert, fix, or solve, the need to control" (pp. 95-103). The next section explicates the theme of emptying and emptiness.

### **3.0 Emptying and Emptiness**

Emptying emerged as a relevant and powerful theme in this research. From a phenomenological view point emptying is similar to the epoché or reduction. As will be shown there is a distilling of self to almost irreducible selfhood (what some call the authentic self). That is, the act of emptying removes extraneous aspects of self. One's normal way of encountering the other in the natural attitude is slowly revealed and then set aside. The self assumes an attitude of empty readiness, which is a precursor to being-in-community. According to Peck "there are only two ways out of chaos...one is into organization – but organization is never community. The only other way [to community] is into and through emptiness" (p. 94). The way into emptiness is through the act of emptying. The act of emptying precipitates a range of participant responses that emerged as the following sub-themes; vulnerable making and risk taking, as sense of relief, as revealing of whole self, and as a clearing process. Emptying was achieved by participants as an act of speaking and is intrinsically tied in with the theme of speaking. In most cases emptying is a moment, or series of moments, of self-disclosure that eventually lead one to a state of emptiness.

Emptying has a cyclical progression in that each act of emptying leads to a slowly deepening level of sharing. Louise reflects this understanding in observing that: "I needed to give that part of me in order for them to give a deeper level or deeper part of them to the group." The deeper the emptying the more people begin to feel included in the group. As David says, "as the workshop progressed and more people started sharing deeply and more authentically, then I felt like I belonged." Smith and Berg (1987) point to the paradoxical nature of self-disclosure and building trust in a group, "only as individual members in the group risk self-disclosure, with all the uncertainty about how the group will deal with it, does it become safe to self-disclose in the group" (p. 115). This could be viewed as intersubjective group agreement to deepen the acts of emptying and self-disclosure. According to Haney (1994) this "intersubjective constitution is precisely what moves consciousness from the primal level to the level of the shared world" (p. 43).

### **3.1 Emptying as risk taking and vulnerable making**

Participants describe the first periods of emptying for themselves as a process of risk taking. Risk by definition implies a degree of uncertainty and danger. Emptying is a risky business as John vividly describes: "it's a letting go, it's jumping off the cliff, it's like a death and it's different each time." Most participants talked about the risk of speaking in a CBW. David says, "I was the first one that presented authentic information to the group, it felt like a risk."

Coupled with risk was vulnerability. A profound sense of vulnerability overcame most participants at one stage or another. This vulnerability was a direct consequence of taking a risk in the group. David and Louise felt so exposed and vulnerable that they withdrew into themselves. Louise reports:

[After emptying] I felt very small, actually, I felt very much like a child, and I felt like I wanted to self-nurture in that space, I wanted to withdraw and take away the focus from me and just be. I didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point. I could hear their voices, but I wasn't really engaged. I didn't feel very big at that point; I was exhausted all I wanted to do was lie down in someone's arms and just go to sleep.

Louise withdrew because of the intensity of the attention and reflection she was receiving from others whereas David withdrew because he felt extremely uncertain about his actions:

I was sort of numb to what was going on...I was going into myself, I was a bit withdrawn from the group because you know after I did it...I had second thoughts, I wasn't sure, I'd never done something like that before. I'd exposed myself; I made myself extremely vulnerable so I was feeling very tenuous and a whole bit awkward.

The above accounts point to the act of emptying and self-disclosure as experiencing the self as tenuous and fragile. Uncovering the cloaked self is a courageous act. Roland May (1976, cited in Bowman, 1998) defined social courage as "the courage to relate to other human beings, the capacity to risk one's self in hopes of achieving meaningful intimacy" (p. 392). Risk does not diminish with practice. John has attended and run many CBWs and emphasises that for him the process of emptying does not get any easier over time, "the more [I] do it the more difficult it becomes. It's a process I trust but it does not make the risk any less riskier, my own personal risk to empty." History resounds with acts of social courage and the consequences of going against the grain, standing alone and speaking out; Gandhi and Martin Luther-King are two examples of individuals that engendered change through acts of social courage. This cost King his life. As Robert E. Kennedy said, "change has its enemies." Taking a micro-scale view this is evident in the CBW. To speak out and stand in your truth is a risk because one may be isolated, ostracised or ignored, particularly if the Others are not able or ready to hear what is being said. John observes this: "if [participants] empty too early they're really hung out there to dry, they get ignored... That's a very hard place to be at for an individual if the group's not there." Paradoxically, Peck (1990) observes that the effect "on others of this type of vulnerability is almost invariably *disarming*" (p. 227, italics in original) and they are likely to respond in a similar fashion. This observation points to why speaking and emptying is risky; it takes an act of faith to empty and be vulnerable. One is called to an act of courage in emptying. Being called to speak is explicated further on in this chapter.

Once participants have started to empty or have emptied, they experience a sense of relief.

### 3.2 Emptying as a sense of relief

Pre-emptying can be seen as a state of tension between holding on and letting go. Participants become aware that there are certain beliefs, attitudes or ways of being that they need to let go of, and they experience their reluctance to do so. However, participants need to make a choice to let go and empty. As John says:

[When I empty] it's normally something I'm holding on to, and I'm holding on to it for a reason, so when I empty it's a feeling of both of relief but also a not knowing... and sort [of] vulnerable

David has a similar experience: he recounts: "I've never found it easy to empty, this is something I want to hold onto even though it's not helpful, it's sort of like an addictive kind of thing, what I need to empty." The difficulty to make the move to empty precipitates a sense of relief and peace after doing so. David captures this, "when I am able to empty that which is difficult, I feel a sense of peace internally." The early stages of a CBW are often a struggle. One struggles with oneself and the relationship with Other. One struggles with the concept of community and how to be, what to do. One struggles with ones ontological make up and perhaps has to deal with existentially threatening experiences. Participants are aware by this stage of their barriers to community and that *they* may need to take responsibility for change. The result of so much struggle is a build up of tension that culminates in emptying. The sense of relief is palpable for participants. Emptying is like the release of a pressure valve, the dam breaks and equilibrium is restored. David likens emptying to the act of confession, "it's like what I think confession is supposed to be, it's a bit like that, I've let go of something." The concept of confession is a useful motif for understanding the emptying stage as a revealing of the authentic-self.

### 3.3 Emptying as revealing the authentic- self

Confession is an act of contrition whereby people expose their misdeeds, sins, unpleasant thoughts and actions, their darker or shadow selves, to an accepting other usually in the form of a priest. In this sense confession is an exposure of the 'unacceptable self'. Similarly in emptying participants talk about revealing their 'unacceptable selves' to the group. For Sue "emptying is in part a willingness to not look good, [it is a] willingness to reveal self in its messy form not just its perfect

form” and for David “emptying is facing my shadow, facing those things that are less than desirable”. This can be seen as the beginning of revealing the authentic-self through authentically communicating with others. Authentic communication asks us to be honest and real with others and ourselves. As Peck (1990) explains:

As the masks of composure drop and we see the suffering and courage and brokenness and deeper dignity underneath, we truly start to respect each other as fellow human beings. (p. 69)

Most personality theories state that humans present different masks or aspects of their personality to suit the particular social situation they find themselves in (Monte, 1995). Emptying is a way of removing masks and sharing hidden aspects of self with others. Gail emphasises this, saying, “I started to talk about how I *really* felt about some things that were going on in my life.” Revealing of the whole self can be seen as a paring down of the self to essentialities and then sharing this with others. Owning the undesirable or messy self leads to a sense of renewal, like a spring-cleaning of the soul. As Gail says, “once it was done [I felt] clean, clear, fresh, new.” Louise also observes this; “when you speak from the heart space the communication is clear, there’s no static, no crap, it feels very clear.”

As the communication becomes authentic and clear, participants describe discovering their ‘authentic-selves’. For David this meant discovering and claiming his North American Indian heritage:

I’ve learned a great deal about myself - what I call my original medicine as a way of my authentic self...that’s why community building is so valuable to me I get to be real and be me and I’ve embraced more of the American Indian ways only since community building, because of telling my story in community building experiences.

Telling one’s story in this sense is a journey of discovery and re-discovery of the originative self. Story telling exposes one’s false stories and allows the real story to be expressed, like peeling the layers off an artichoke until the heart is revealed. The authentic self is what lies behind the mask.

The CBW gave participants the opportunity to lower their masks, to reveal deeper aspects of themselves, to be honest with where they were at and what they

were experiencing. It provided the space where participants could discover their authentic-self and practice authenticity. For John and Sue authenticity means responding with their truth in the moment. As Sue emphasised, “responding to self in that moment...to me that’s what authentic means.” For John, “to be really authentically there I need to be able to say what’s happening for me in that moment with that group of people, that’s the deeper sense of community and that’s what I strive for.” We recognise truth when we encounter it, as this statement from Sue acknowledges: “someone says something and the truth of it sends those prickles...that truth which is so deep you just know that it’s true.” Sokolowski (2000) says “with truthfulness as such... the human conversation, the human attempt to disclose the way things are...the human...is concerned with being as it manifests itself to us” (p. 156). He talks of two forms of truth, the truth of correctness and the truth of disclosure. The truth of correctness he proposes is where a statement or proposition is made and “we then go on to verify whether the claim is true”, whereas “the truth of disclosure is simply the display of a state of affairs” (p. 158). The expression of authentic-self seen in this light is the disclosing of self-truth to Others in that particular moment. Thus emptying is a revealing of authentic-self.

The expression of personal truth through authentic expression emerged as an essential component of deep-community for participants in this study. The CBW was the arena of discovery for personal truth and authenticity. John emphasised, “the act of sitting in a community building circle peeled enough of a layer of protection away from me for me to be able to know that I wanted an authentic life and that I didn’t have one or a life expression.” This is also evidenced by Sue: “the CBW over the years pulled from me, coaxed from me the ability to know what that authenticity would be, what it is.” Emptying through authentic expression can move individuals and a group from a restless, conflictual space to a more grounded and accepting space. This space is pregnant with the possibility of community; it is a place of readiness.

### **3.4 Emptiness as a state of readiness**

The encounter with the Other enables a transparency of self, which highlights one’s barriers to authentic communication and community. Emptying is a

clearing process, a 'confession' of sorts that allows these barriers, quite often the unacceptable self, to be spoken and witnessed by Others. This leads to emptiness being a state of readiness within which something new can emerge, as the following excerpt from Gail demonstrates: "[After speaking] you are left with the emptiness...you are left with something else...the real moment when universal spirit comes through." This moment of feeling 'universal spirit' will be given attention in the next chapter under the theme of 'deep-community as being formed by God or spirit'. However, it indicates that Peck's thesis of emptying being the path to community is close to the mark.

Both Gail and Sue experienced emptiness as not being 'empty'. Both Gail and Sue's descriptions point to emptiness as being a state of creative preparedness for new experience. In Sue's case what she was left with was contact with her unfettered self, in touch with her life world as given in its immediacy. This allows action to spring from the moment unconstrained by other-selves or aspects of self that operate in her normal social realm. In Sue's words emptiness is "freedom...it's the ability to respond in the moment, the ability to respond to the self." Rosabeth Moss Canter (cited in Holman & Devane, 1999) says, "true 'freedom' is not the absence of structure but rather a clear structure which enables people to work within established boundaries in an autonomous and creative way" (p. 60). Freedom, in Sue's case, is experienced within the structure of a CBW via the process of emptying.

I have described emptying as a release of pressure and likened to an act of confession that leaves the self, clean, clear, refreshed and new. This place of emptiness is a state of creative readiness. Cartoonist and modern day sage Michael Leunig (1993) captures the qualities of emptying beautifully in the following drawing and poem.





Let it go. Let it out.  
Let it all unravel.  
Let it free and it can be  
A path on which to travel.

**Figure 2: Michael Leunig © (1993)**

Sue also captures the essence of emptying and emptiness, saying:

To show up in that moment and do what is in front of us or what comes from the inside, that to me is emptiness...to me emptying involves being willing to follow that thread wherever it goes

In a CBW that thread tends towards community and the path it travels is emptying.

The motifs of letting go, vulnerability, peace, relief, uncertainty, and whole self show up as manifold presentations of emptying. Sokolowski (2000) talks of things as having “identity in manifolds” that is, a thing’s identity can be given through its manifold appearances yet the identity, ‘the thing itself’, transcends its manifold appearances (p. 30). Thus, emptying has the manifold appearances of uncertainty, risk, letting go, and vulnerability, and yet emptying is not any one of these aspects. These aspects, however, point to ‘the thing itself’ and are constituted in consciousness in their ‘givenness’ as present intentionalities of the experience of emptying. The presentation of the qualities of emptying as it moves through stages is captured in this description of how the room is intuited by David when he says:

[In the beginning] the room feels large, it feels cold, it feels unfriendly, it’s something you want to escape from. I can’t hear people across the room...whereas when the group gets deeper into emptying...I [think] this is a huge group but it [feels] so small, I’m having no problem hearing and I feel very comfortable, it’s an intimate space, trusting and compelling.

Emptying encourages authentic communication. This occurs through a stripping away of layers. Authentic communication asks us to be honest and real with others and ourselves. People recognise truth when they encounter it.

Krishnamurti comments that:

You must strip yourself of all those things and allow truth to come into being; and it can come only when the mind is empty, when the mind ceases to create. Then it will come without your invitation (Krishnamurti, [www.kfa.org](http://www.kfa.org)).

Louise observed this in the CBW, “people gave up everything, it was a real stripping down”. One is left with a sense of vulnerable bare necessity. Being vulnerable with others encourages intimacy, it demands of the other a response, a meeting of ‘authentic-selves’ in a spirit of acceptance. Bolman and Deal (1995) remark that “accepting vulnerability allows us to drop our masks, meet heart to heart, and be present for one another. We experience a sense of unity and delight in voluntary, human exchanges that mould the "soul of community"(p. 103).

Emptying is generally performed in a CBW as a verbal sharing of self with others. Although emptying can occur as an internal act, it gained significance for participants when performed externally as an act of speaking.

## 4.0 Speaking

*Speaking*

*A hand moves, and the fires whirling take different shapes.*

*...all things change when we do.*

*The first word, Ah, blossomed into all others.*

*Each of them is true*

– Eighth century Zen master Kukei.

One of the few guidelines that facilitators give in a CBW is that participants should speak when moved to. Peck (1990) asserts that one of the barriers to reaching community is people speaking when they are not moved or not speaking when they are moved. Being moved to speak in the presence of others precipitated divergent responses from participants. The most prominent responses are, reaching

existential boundaries, feelings of calmness, peace and inner serenity, a sense of newness and rebirth, and a heightening of physical, emotional and mental senses.

The following explication of the theme of speaking includes the sub-themes of speaking as a physically compelling calling, a threshold experience, and a transformational event.

#### 4.1 Speaking as a physically compelling calling

Being moved to speak is indicated in a number of ways. Primarily participants, such as Louise, reported strong physical and physiological indicators, “I knew I had to speak, it was a very different body feeling...I was going to be physically ill if I didn’t speak...I was so moved to speak from some place that I’d never spoken from before in my life.” David also reports feeling “extremely nervous, my armpits were sweating, my palms were sweating, my stomach was pounding.” There was inevitability about the rightness of speaking for David: “I was convinced that that was my moment and I seized it, it was amazing for me.” Sue reflects the discomfort of being moved to speak, saying:

The physical sensation of being called to speak is very clear to me, I feel awful! I feel I want to crawl out of my skin really fast, preferably alone and not in that circle, because it hurts I mean it literally hurts to not [speak].

Jane experienced being moved to speak as both physical and cognitive:

It just it comes up and dominates my thoughts and I have a conviction a firmness that this is something I need to share, it literally feels like it bubbles up, it’s in my stomach and it bubbles up.

The stomach was the originator of speaking for Sue also:

Its starts in my lower belly, it’s like the words are shoving their way up through my lower torso, you know up through my throat and if I don’t say them I will be physically really uncomfortable.

These statements indicate a heightened sense of body awareness not usually associated with day-to-day acts of speaking. Speaking emerges as an irresistible compulsion that arises from a pre-reflective response to conditions in the group. The urge is so strong that people literally feel that *speaking* is moving *them* and that they

have very little control over its appearance. It is as if speaking has its own being, its own intentional bearing within the self that wants to be expressed and be shared. Louise highlights this saying, “I had no conscious control over the step that I took, to make the move to speak from thin space, and I went for it”” The reference to “thin space” indicates a spatial perception of her immediate lived-environment that is attached to the intentionality of speaking. Other participants reported similar experiences of spatiality and temporality before, during and after speaking.

Gail reports, “I was in a really different space to what I would normally be in, it was expansive, it wasn’t a head space, it was a body space.” This describes a reoriented sense of Gail being-in-the-world. Her ‘normal’ orientation was displaced and replaced by a different awareness of being, “I was then left with OK I’ve said that ... now what? Like a different person, freeing, different.” Louise describes her experience of being reflected as moving into a space she experienced as somewhat threatening:

It’s a huge shift into this space where I can’t take in any more, it’s like I’m not going to even hold myself together here, I’m going to fall off the planet if I don’t move through this space, I’m not going to be able to sustain this.

Louise demonstrates a giddy urgency to move through this space. The space becomes something alien that threatens her existence, as if her being will unravel like a bail of twine and dissipate. In this space Louise feels existentially threatened. The relationship between being moved to speak and experiencing a shifting sense of being-in-the-world led some participants to reach their self-boundaries, experienced as threshold events.

## **4.2 Speaking as a threshold event**

Both Gail and Louise reported coming from family environments, which oppressed certain aspects of self-expression. For Louise “sadness and anger were things that I wasn’t allowed to actually express”, and for Gail “my whole family rules are that you don’t speak.” The urgency or compulsion to speak created a situation in which the past had to be confronted by taking a risk. For both women the build up to self-expression manifested as a ‘threshold’ experience. Gail and

Louise had vivid threshold experiences as evidenced by the language used in description.

Louise: I would explode, if I kept going, I would explode, I wasn't going to be able to continue because it felt very explosive ...fortunately this guy that was next to me, he was extraordinary he was like my anchor to the ground, he just intuitively anchored me, cause it was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, It felt kind of like scary, really, really scary, it was scary absolutely like life and death.

Gail: the physical boundaries of my body didn't exist, I went over the threshold, I might have created a new one, I'm not sure if I would come back, the feeling of it would be like to explode and not exist and just be it would be like I didn't exist, to explode would mean to move into the oneness, the total oneness.

The above indicates a heightened awareness of the internal self of being pushed to extremities; somewhat like a balloon that has been filled up to the point where, with one more breath, it will burst. Both participants were confronted with the possibility of dissolution of self; for Louise this meant death whilst Gail had a sense her being would 'merge' into a cosmic oneness. Both participants sought to resolve this internal intensity by placing limits on it or trying to 'stop' the experience continuing. Louise says; "[there was] an incredible immediacy, an urgency...to put the emotional intensity at rest", and Gail; "I chose to cap it, it was like I will stop there".

Gail felt she transcended her boundaries by going over the threshold by doing "something beyond what I think I am". Although going beyond one's 'normal' experience of self was clearly articulated by Gail it was implicitly indicated for other participants. The tension and build up to speaking and the resultant physical and physiological experiences indicate participants attain a heightened awareness of self in regards to 'what they think they are'. Participants make a decision to exceed their usual operative boundaries in the act of speaking which amplifies their senses. This provokes responses ranging from withdrawing and feeling numb to John's experience of "being the most alive" and Gail feeling, "very energised, very alive almost like electrocuted, it was almost like glowing." Speaking in this context has both an expansive, extroverted, transcendent bodily

aspect and a contracting, introverted, withdrawn aspect. It can be physically powerful and felt as an extreme reaction in the body. Participants report speaking as a threshold experience as being prior to experiencing transformational shifts.

### 4.3 Speaking as a transformational event

*Speak, o human –*

*And thou revealest through thee*

*The calling into being of the worlds*

- Rudolf Steiner (1960)

Speaking in the presence of others was a catalyst for transformational shifts at both a personal and group level. The act of speaking their stories and having their stories heard and acknowledged by the Other created a shift in personal consciousness and self-perception. David experienced speaking as profoundly changing his life. As described in the previous section he embraced his North American Indian heritage “only since community building, because of telling my story.” By overcoming ingrained family messages Louise experienced a release of some kind that enabled a perceptual shift to occur. She reports “when I looked at them [after speaking] the whole group changed, I didn’t feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group...there was a transformational point where I suddenly realised that I was actually part of the group.”

Sue’s experience of finding her voice “was profound, to even find a voice to speak authentically in the circle.” This led to changes in the way Sue is in the world:

I was a very generalising mental sort of person when I came to this and now I feel much more inclined to speak about what’s true for me, tell my story and I think that that’s an important shift, it allows people to be with me more easily

Gail recalls, “emptying stuff, feelings, emotions which reflected my sense of powerlessness”. This enabled a transformational shift to occur where Gail took action that was not previously in her repertoire of behaviour, particularly around the act of speaking her ‘truth’ where she overcame her self-censoring, what Gail called

her “head rules around what I should and shouldn’t do”. Transformation in this way equates to a *metanoia*. Tremba (2000) says that “*metanoia* is about hope, about a change of outlook, a change of attitude and consciousness that leads to transformed behaviour” (§ 7, italics in original). Participants overcame prior inhibitions and responded in-the-world in a new and radical way. They reported changes in outlook and behaviour during the workshop and as an on-going process in their work, family and life-world in general. Transformation occurred through the act of speaking from a place within, uncovered in a dialectical, sometimes paradoxical, process, in the company of others.

The above accounts show speaking in the context of a CBW as having numerous qualities. In the first stages (those of pseudo-community and chaos), the act of speaking has the flavour of inauthenticity. People are speaking from behind their social masks, maintaining a composure and attitude of acceptance towards the other. This breaks down in the face of Otherness: people tend to retreat into their belief systems and what they know. They respond in their ‘natural attitude’. This is evidenced by the amount of conversion, or fixing, people want to do. As the workshop progresses and the masks of composure are lowered, challenged or removed, the participants’ focus becomes more self-aware and speaking emanates from a different aspect of self. Participants describe these aspects as ‘real me’, ‘authentic self’ and ‘original self’. Speaking from this authentic aspect was a powerful event for nearly all participants. Perhaps this is because “in speaking we take up a position in the world” (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Moran, 2000, p. 426). Taking a position in the world orients us contextually in intersubjective relation to others and our lived-world. According to Feather (2000, p. 16) “intersubjectivity is something performed, enacted or made real through utterance...rather than being consciousness or knowledge itself.” Through the agency of speaking we make ourselves known in the world to others striving to make themselves known in the world. Rudolf Steiner (1910, p. 1) says “we feel the possibility of expanding our being infinitely, the ability to make our being extend into our environments through language.” This excerpt from Louise’s transcript captures beautifully the awe and grace that speaking evoked in her:

I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone before in my life and I'd slowed right down, I'm slowing down now because I [just] relived the experience, extraordinary because I could hear the difference in my voice, I could hear the difference in the words, I could hear the difference in the tone, I could hear and I could see the difference in group, and this is very much a core of how I experienced community

Louise demonstrates a highly differentiated aspect of self that was witness to her speaking. Her perceptions were heightened to such a self-aware state she was able to recognise a different way of self-being in the act of speaking. This was a transformative perception of self that induced an experience of deep-community for Louise. The reciprocal act of being witnessed by the group is also significant; this transformative act could not take place without the presence of the Other. The differentiation of self as individualised and separate from the Other enables the Other to be perceived. Ranly (1966) points this out, "this other-reference can take place only within the background of the consciousness of my own Self as individualized" (p. 77). It is this essential interaction between the individual and Others that constitute, and can reconstitute, our perceptions of the community we are in or belong to. In forming deep-community, intersubjective intentionalities meet at the intersection of I-in-world and Thou-in-the-world. Thus, deep-community could be seen as the melding of I-Thou-in-the-world into We-in-the-world.

This chapter has explicated the themes of encountering the other, emptying and speaking in relation to the CBW. These three themes in their interrelated, overlapping and cyclical interplay combine to create the conditions from which a sense of community may emerge. The encounter with the Other progresses through dialogue and reflection to a point where one sees or experiences one's personal barriers to community. This enables participants to take responsibility and create change commensurate with their desire for deep-community. Through a sharing of stories, the shadow self, one's history, pain or joy, one becomes transparent and vulnerable, one's authentic self emerges. Through honest and open communication in the process of emptying one becomes empty. Emptiness is a creative space where transformation, new perception, experience and awareness can arise. According to



Peck (1990) the only way to experience genuine deep-community is in and through emptiness.

Participants' descriptions of the three themes in this chapter show a clear awareness of their own responsibility and participation thus far in a CBW. However, all participants claim that the appearance of deep-community was not of their direct doing. That is, community was seen to be something they made space for, moved out of the way for, as something that was not created by them but by spirit, energy or God. All participants report this experience sometime in a CBW. The following chapter "Self in relation to deep-community: the dance of spirit" will explicate the theme of Being-in-community.

## CHAPTER SIX: SELF IN RELATION TO DEEP-COMMUNITY: THE DANCE OF SPIRIT

*Find the real world, give it endlessly away*

*Grow rich; fling gold to all who ask*

*Live at the empty heart of Paradox*

*I'll dance there with you, cheek to cheek*

– Rumi

The previous chapter described participants preparing for community via the encounter with the Other, speaking and emptying. This chapter explicates the theme of being-in-community or deep-community. Building on Sarason's (1974) notion of a psychological sense of community Goff (1992), Vogt (1996) and others have defined being-in-community as experienced in a CBW as a transitory short term psychological sense of community. My findings support this description but also show that being-in-community is an embodied state of being that can have an impact on the participant extending beyond the direct experience itself.

The experience of being-in-community will be explicated by means of the following sub-themes:

Being-in-community as; elusive, transcendent, being formed by God or spirit, a connective, unifying and healing experience, calming and supportive and peaceful.

## **1.0 Being-in-Community**

The CBW as a vehicle for community building encourages conditions for community to arise. When or how community is experienced is contingent on conditions being right, that is, when individuals and the group are in a stage of empty readiness as detailed in chapter five. Being-in-community is a short-term experience of deep connectivity with others and for some ‘to all that is’.

This particular phenomenon is hard to capture in words. Peck (1990) has stated that Community as experienced in the last stage of a CBW workshop has both a personal meaning and a group meaning which, because of its very nature, cannot be definitively explained. Goff (1992) in his doctoral research described the difficulty of capturing the experience as “an ineffable quality indicating that the experience was difficult to describe and communicate to others” (p. 105). This next section is an attempt to capture some of the essential aspects of deep-community and communicate this to the reader using phenomenological explication and writing.

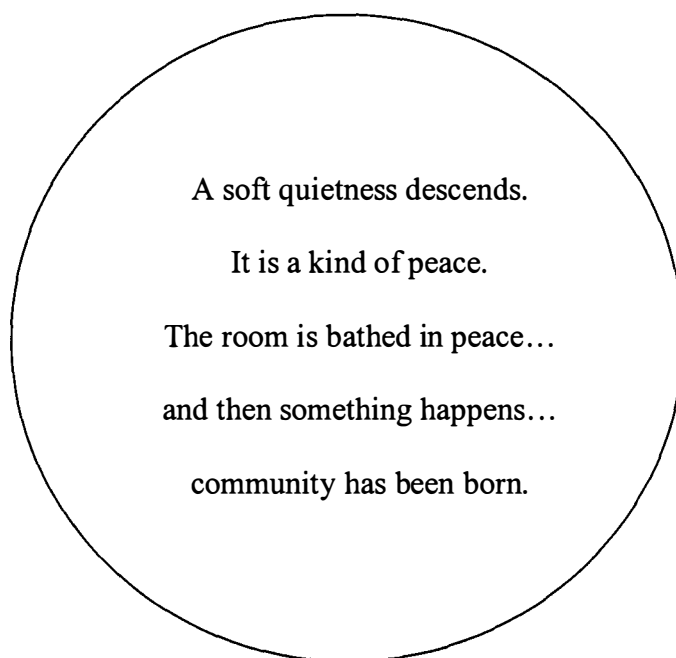
The language used in conjunction with the experience of being-in-community transcends the personal into the spiritual/religious realms. Words like ‘wisdom’, spirit, spirit of community, God, energy, and grace are prominent. All participants were talking about being-in-community or deep-community when using these words. The language used reflects participants’ backgrounds. Demographically five participants are from a Judeo-Christian background and one participant has a Judeo-Christian/Native North American background.

### **1.1 Being-in-Community as elusive**

Being-in-community is something independent of human will. It cannot be forced, made to appear, or created. Sue says, “I have no control over calling it forward at my beck and call.” David observed, “it can come in a second and it can go in a second.” Once community has arrived it is just as difficult to maintain, as Sue points out, “you think that you should be able to return to it anytime but the harder you try to recreate it the more elusive it becomes.” David echoes this,

It's not something that any one person in that group can make happen, it takes the group to make it happen and it can disappear as quick as it comes...you can't hold it, you can't capture it, it's elusive.

The individual cannot make community happen, this suggests that community as experienced by a group is an act of intersubjective group agreement; the group becomes a vessel for the being of community to enter. This is indicated by Sue, "it's almost as though silently without us talking about it we've all noticed that spirit is with us." Peck (1990, pp. 103-104) reflects this in saying:



Participants who report moving aside or making way for community also highlight this elusive quality of community. Louise was explicit about her experience of making way for community:

It's natural, community is not created, its not a conscious process of we've done pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness, here we are, we are going into community; the group don't create it, they make way for it to become present. I absolutely and utterly experienced the group making way for community to become present. People gave up everything, it was a real stripping down, to make way; everybody had cast aside all that stuff for a full moment, for a moment.

Thus community needs a clear space for it to appear and yet there is no guarantee that when that intentional space is available that community will appear. Deep-community remains a mystery whose appearance is contingent upon, and yet not created by, an empty space in which it can appear.

The above accounts suggest that community exists as a separate entity in its own right and is waiting for a space to be created that it can fill. The phenomenon of community as having its own 'being' from a phenomenological perspective is captured by Owens (1971), who proposes:

If the essence of the appearance is an 'appearing' which is no longer opposed to any being' [then] 'phenomenon itself has a being'... 'The being of the phenomenon is transphenomenal' that is phenomenon has a being which is a foundation which is transphenomenal. (pp. 24-25)

Thus the appearing of community presupposes a 'being' of community that transcends the aspects of its appearance. That is, it exists as an entity whose being remains undisclosed and unfathomable and yet is indicated through the various aspects of its appearance to participants.

## **1.2 Being-in-Community as transcendent**

Participants describe community and being-in-community as transcending the personal. Gail says, "it came from somewhere beyond me, that was something that was not created or was dependant on my history or my past, it was new" and for Louise, "it felt very much like something intangible became present." Again this points to community as something universal that exists beyond the embodied human, yet is intrinsically connected to human consciousness. Louise describes this: "there is truly something that connects humanity that transcends gender and race; story and history even become irrelevant." Gail expressed this as an experience of oneness, "it was a growth, and an emergence of that experience of oneness." David describes the group transcending itself when deep-community is experienced, "[when you] reach this palpable spirit [you've] moved, the group itself has moved to another place." This "other place" is one where the group harmoniously experiences being-in-community. Louise sums up the transcendent nature of community emphasising that:

[Being-in-community] is encapsulated in that sense of being connected, incredibly deeply connected with people that we have no [prior] connection with. It took story and history and shit to get us there but [community] transcends their stories, their life, their history, their everything.

From descriptions we can see that participants experience this shift in almost opposite or paradoxical ways. For David the group moves into a place where community is, for Gail community emerges from “the inside out”, and for Louise community appears because the group has ‘moved aside’ for it. In all instances this occurred within the horizon of the CBW. The CBW space becomes more than the sum of the total of its participants, it transcends the group of individuals comprising a CBW. It is the crucible from which deep-community is drunk. As Gail states the CBW “creates space for spirit to be experienced, spirit to be felt.” This shift into a different space can be likened again to the concept of metanoia meaning ‘shift of mind’. People experiencing this ‘shift of mind’ often experience “being a part of something larger than themselves, of being connected” (Senge, 1992, p. 13). The experience can be powerfully transformative or what Peck calls re-formative. It is essentially an experience of interconnectedness.

### **1.3 Being-in-Community as a connective, unifying and healing experience**

*One person alone is nothing; when two people are together, you have a unity*

– from a small Brazilian village.

Being-in-community is attributed with connective, unifying and healing qualities. Participants experienced being connected to the group along with experiences of reunification of the self, experienced as healing. The theme of connectivity emerged from all participant transcripts.

For Jane, “the feeling of being-in-community is like connecting all of us with or through that feeling of spirit or God. I might experience that differently than [others]...but we’re still connected through it to each other.” Louise echoes this: “it felt very much like something intangible became present which connected us for that period and that’s what I experienced as community, it was awesome.” John

experienced being connected “with the group not individuals.” Likewise David sensed a “connection with everybody in the room.”

John’s experiences of deep-community are essential for his sense of purpose and mission in life. He states “I believe we’re here for a purpose and that when I’m in community I believe I’m fulfilling that purpose, through [a] feeling of being connected with everything that exists including the divine.” Louise expressed the following: “whatever it was that happened there, felt to me like in the presence of spirit.” According to Scheler (cited in Ranley, 1996) “It is in and through *God* that for the first time we are truly *bound in spirit* to one another” (p. 94, italics in original). The above accounts support Scheler’s view and reflect the notion of spirit or God being the glue of deep-community. That is, deep-community shows up as a semi-pneumanistic, almost monistic experience that is a spiritually unitive force expressed as such via the agency of human consciousness.

The experience of deep-community is also potentially healing. Although Peck (1990, pp. 103-104) asserts that the CBW is not a workshop for intentional healing, he acknowledges that an extraordinary amount of healing can occur in a workshop. Being-in-community was experienced by Louise as: “it feels healing like it doesn’t feel as hysterical as amplified as urgent as agitated, it’s healing, and feels like it’s coming back together and calmer” and Sue says, “my experience of the community building process is that it is deeply personally healing to me, anything that stands between me and community comes up and takes a step toward healing.”

Deep-community is an experience of unification of self with self, self with others, self with cosmos, and self with spirit or God. This leads to participants feeling whole, being in touch with parts of themselves that have been alienated, suppressed, submerged and hidden. Louise describes it thus, “a very big part of me that’s been alienated from who it is that I am came back...It felt like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted, I felt more whole.”

The space in which re-incorporation of self comes about can be likened to Victor Turner’s (1969) concept of ‘liminal space’. Arnott (2001) credits Victor Turner with introducing the concept of ‘liminal space’ in his work on *Communitas* or

existential community. According to Goff's (1992) reading of Turner, liminal space is "moment [or movement] in and out of time and 'in and out of the secular social structure'", a space of transformation between phases of separation, "signified [by] the detachment from a point in the social structure, or a set of cultural conditions", and reincorporation, signified by reaching a "relatively stable state once more, assuming again the rights and obligations, norms and ethical standards that are associated with social status within a structural system." According to Goff "Turner contends that the liminal experience, with its conditions of emptiness, structurelessness, statuslessness, and ambiguity, provides access to a 'strong sentiment of human kindness, a generic social bond between all members of a society'" (p. 29).

The CBW mirrors Turner's concepts of transient community. Theoretically and practically a CBW is a leaderless group of leaders with no individual holding more or less status than any other. There is a reliance on emptiness as a path through chaos and into community, and it is a relatively unstructured process. Thus, conditions for a liminal transient experience of community are present in the CBW. *Limen* from the Latin signifies "threshold" (Mirriam-Websters Dictionary, 2002) or "in physiology or psychology, the threshold of a response" (Wordsmythe Dictionary-Thesaurus, 2002). Participants reported undergoing threshold events as discussed in the previous chapter, which consisted of heightened senses and feelings of vulnerability. These were reported prior to undergoing a transformative shift into emptiness. The process of emptying is akin to what Turner calls separation and the experience of community parallels his notion of reincorporation of self, leading to a 'generic social bond' connecting members of the group, which is being-in-community.

The process of building community leading to the experience of being-in-community is largely a journey of discovering, uncovering and reincorporating self. It is like a gathering of pieces of self and weaving them into a unified tapestry. Unification comes about through transformation, which is a moment in time in the CBW, which contains the qualities of liminality. According to participants the thread that holds the tapestry together is spirit or God.



#### **1.4 Being-in-Community as being formed by God or Spirit.**

The descriptions in the preceding themes show deep-community as having transcendent, liminal and transpersonal qualities, which manifest in particular ways. The unseen, intangible suddenly becomes seen and tangible, as in David's description of "palpable spirit". All participants attributed the appearance of deep-community to the divine, or God, or spirit, or energy and wisdom. The appearance of spirit was contiguous with previously mentioned qualities of personal and group emptiness, a space for it to appear, and a quality of submitting to something other than self. As David states, "you also have to submit, that's the emptying part, if I am not constantly submitting to I call it the greater spirit or a power greater than myself, it [deep-community] won't happen." For Sue the difficult process of emptying gives way to spirit, "as it becomes true emptiness it's as though all of those things are completely replaced by a lightness, a grace an uplifting sort of feeling, it's easy to remember that God is in that emptiness you know that spirit's there." The descriptions point to deep-community as dwelling in emptiness. Thus, paradoxically, emptiness, in this form, is a fullness of God or spirit experienced by participants as deep-community.

Louise attributes her sense of spirit to the agencies of speaking from the heart and being reflected by others: "there's a sense of spirit present when you have that bringing together of the reflection and the speaking from the heart." The experience of spirit is dynamic and has its own movement independent of those witnessing this movement. Gail saw "the movement of spirit between all of us, it just flowed, it bubbled, it just kept popping up" and John observed spirit "moving through the group."

Phenomenologically speaking, this is a movement from the intersubjective encounter with the Other to the intrasubjective encounter with a cosmically perceived and derived spirit. Thus, participants' consciousness centres on spirit rather than on self or the Other. Sue captures this move succinctly saying, "it's more like the group as a whole notices that God is in the room and is turned more towards that, than toward a destination or each other." Jane also notes the move of consciousness from self to spirit: "being in community is more a feeling of being

connected...to others and spirit...it's less me oriented.” Ryba (cited in Devenish 2001) observes that:

Human consciousness, as part of the world and an instantiation of spirit, is the medium by which the cosmos knows itself as spirit.... The knowledge thereby gained, are the revelations of spirit to itself in the guise of man's conscious life. (p. 119)

It is in and through intrasubjectivity that community reveals itself as imbued with cosmic spirit and appears as such via the agency of human consciousness. Max Scheler (cited in Ranly, 1966) states:

All community-experience is incomplete until it is had within the background consciousness of God, in Whom the supreme and final community of all spiritual beings receive its fulfillment. (p. 94)

Scheler is commenting on a divine or supreme consciousness from a western Christian perspective. However, whether spirit is defined as the God of Christianity, the great spirit of the North American Indian or some other cosmically derived spirit, is subordinate to the fact that participants all experienced community in and through spirit. The gathering of people in a CBW whose intentionality is directed towards deep-community, whose consciousness is seeking communal experience, is a significant factor in this experience. Rabi Harold Kushner captures the sense of gathering together in search of community in his description of a religious gathering:

We go to services and read prescribed words, not to find God but to find a congregation, to find other people who are in search of the same divine presence as we are. By coming together, singing together, reading the same words together, we overcome the isolation and solitude with which each of us ordinarily lives. We all become one and we create the moment in which God is present. (cited in Bolman & Deal, 1995, p. 140)

The CBW performs the same function in being a meeting place where a moment is created in which spirit or God is present, which is experienced as deep-community. The experience of deep-community as spirit or God formed is also evidenced in the next section.

## 1.5 Being-in-Community as calming, supportive and peaceful

Participants describe being supported by spirit in deep-community. The language is soft and reverent and descriptions are permeated with a sense of the sacred; it is as if participants are being held and nurtured whilst in the experience of deep-community. As Sue states:

Having the experience of being-in-community in that circle is the same as having that experience of an extraordinary sense of peace and God in a meditation. To be comfortable in that silence it just feels to me like being surrounded by God, surrounded by Grace, like being enveloped in something, comfortable.

The experience for Jane was one of relief from everyday encumbrance:

For me the experience of community definitely felt as if I was being supported by spirit. [It was] a lightness of being, as if the burdens that I normally carry didn't have to be carried by me alone

The qualities of silence are an indicator that deep-community has arrived.

Sue describes the transition into deep-community as an

“ease,

quiet,

slow rhythm like the heart beat has slowed down to a resting heartbeat, of the group...it is when the group is comfortable in silence,

it's like ah we did it,

it's here,

it's arrived.”

She also says that “in community silence is such a beautiful thing, it's like taking a bath in peace.”

The CBW space becomes imbued with spirit; silence is welcome, graceful and comfortable. As Sue points out “being-in-community is simple, its often very quiet especially in the very beginning, the silence is no longer uncomfortable to people.”



## 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 love and lover  
that neither flesh nor mind bridge over;  
the silence between word and word,  
in which the truth wants 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 water  
spring  
from that dark source I long to find*

– Judith Wright (1994)

The journey towards community precipitates divergent participant responses that contribute to creating a space in which community becomes manifest. As described in the preceding interpretive themes, participants experience themselves and others in intense duality that precipitates external and internal conflict. Reconciliation of conflict is achieved through speaking and emptying. Johnson (1991) says that “good talk restores unity to a fragmented world” (p. 104). Speaking, in the context of the CBW circle, moves from an initial experience of fear and anxiety to a place where people feel ‘heard’ and their stories are accepted. This is a gift of self to Other, as Johnson testifies; “you can give another person a precious gift if you allow him to talk without contaminating his speech with your own material” (p. 106). The overall stance towards the other becomes inclusive, open, accepting and humble. Leunig (1993) captures this gesture towards the other in the following illustration.



**Figure 3: Michael Leunig © (1993)**

Once participants feel accepted, they rest in a state of empty readiness, a place pregnant with possibilities and the promise of community. This state of empty readiness is a place in which participants reach a threshold where they feel the ‘insolubility’ of community, that is, they report as wanting community and as having no control over whether or not it appears. Johnson (1991) says, “the religious experience lies exactly at that point of insolubility where we feel we can proceed no further. There is an invitation to that that is greater than one’s self” (p. 94). Participants stand on a threshold where the person meets community. Spirit or God calls them over the threshold where the self and the group are transcended in a unitive experience that is called being-in-community.

The container in which deep-community appears is the CBW. The CBW space is representative and metaphorical. It exists as a finely balanced tension of opposites; of sacred and profane, safe and dangerous, connective and disconnective, absorbing and reflective, individual and group, self-hood and Otherness, internal and external, inclusive and exclusive and so on. Being-in-community is an experience of a temporary psychological sense of community where duality is reconciled and participants feel wholeness and unity. John talks of the illusion of duality being broken by this experience:

When a group is in community that is one of the times that that illusion is broken for me, you can sense that we are all truly connected in some way, and to some degree that group coming into community changes the world and I feel blessed and honoured and humbled to be a part of that.

The unification of opposites is captured by Moore (2002) citing Christian mystic Nicholas of Cusa who speaks of coincidence of contradictories or *coincidentia oppositorum*:

The coincidence of opposites is a certain kind of unity perceived as coincidence, a unity of contrarities overcoming opposition by convergence without destroying or merely blending the constituent elements. Although in one sense not obliterated, in another the constituent elements shed their multiple, differentiated status. (§ 6)

The intentionality of participants directed towards community intersects with the intentionality of the being-of-community to form deep-community. The

participants in a CBW merge into deep-community by shedding their “multiple, differentiated status.” Deep-community is a space where the whole person is welcome and accepted with positive regard and tolerance, a place where one can risk being their authentic-self and where one’s humanness and personal journey are honoured. As Peck (1990) reminds us “community is a safe place precisely because no one is trying to heal or convert you, to fix you, to change you. Instead the members accept you as you are” (p. 68). Not only do members of the CBW accept you as you are, participants accept *themselves* as they are. As Carl Rogers noted “the curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change” (cited in Shadel & Thatcher, 1997, p. xvii).

The CBW is a road to discovery and acceptance of the self and Others that can lead to personal transformation and positive and lasting change. This occurs in a sacred space created by the intersection of self and Other, self and God or spirit, self and cosmos and inner self with outer self.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

*People are practical. They want change but feel powerless, alone, do not want to be the blade of grass that sticks up above the others and is cut down. They wait for a sign from someone else who will make the first move, or the second. And at certain times in history, there are intrepid people who take the risk that if they make that first move others will follow quickly enough to prevent their being cut down. And if we understand this we might make that first move. This is not a fantasy. This is how change has occurred again and again in the past, even the very recent past*

– Peggy Holman & Tom Devane,

I have proposed in this thesis that business has a responsibility to develop and sustain human flourishing. As a background to this proposal I have outlined the tenets of beneficence in the light of human suffering and have argued that individualistic ideology runs counter to community. I stated that a possible pathway to encouraging beneficence in business is through community building and the Community Building Workshop (CBW), and have explicated the experiences of participants in a CBW and the experience of a short term psychological sense of community, known in the CBW as being-in-community. This chapter summarises the CBW, restates the case for building community in business, voices some concerns in doing so, points out the limitations of the research, suggests on-going research possibilities and is finalised with some concluding remarks. These issues are summarised under the following headings:

- 1.0 Summary of the community building workshop
- 2.0 Building community in business
- 3.0 Concerns about implementing CBWs in business
- 4.0 Limitations to this study
- 5.0 Recommendations for further research
- 6.0 Concluding remarks

## 1.0 Summary of the Community Building Workshop

*The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual.  
The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community*

– William James

This project concentrated on a small sample of participants that have experienced a community-building workshop and incorporated their learning into their business practice and life-world in general. As such it highlights the benefits for individuals who have experienced a CBW and shows that the community building experience can enhance one's sense of being-in-the-world, whilst providing an environment for learning, healing and change. All participants reported striving to bring community-building principles to bear in their business practice and indicated that community building had radically changed their approach to business life.

The CBW can be viewed using phenomenological concepts. The participants' regular life-world activity experienced in the natural attitude is in a sense bracketed when they enter a CBW. The binding glue of a workshop is the intent to build community. There is no other agenda, no other task and the 'getting there' is the responsibility of each individual and the group as a whole. Participants are with Others in ways that may be unfamiliar. There are no props, no immediate deadlines or events to attend to. This affords an experience with the Other that is immediate, direct and as close as one can get to the Other in their primacy. The *prima facie* encounter with Other then becomes a catalyst for the intensification of Self in relation to Other. *Prima facie* encounters with the Other in the natural attitude are contained within the structure of our known life. We can respond to the Other in spontaneous, reflective, deliberate or pre-reflective ways. Challenging encounters can be mitigated by my actions or by responding to real or pretended demands. For instance, I encounter the Other as uncomfortable, scary, as undesirable to talk to etc. I can move away, call on an appointment; be running late for a meeting and so forth. In a CBW there is nowhere to go, nothing to do; participants are not distracted from the immediate experience of the Other. They may withdraw into themselves, become defensive or aggressive, make judgments

and display other anti-social behaviour; however, they are still in the presence of the Other. This tends to throw one back on oneself and processes, behaviours and responses to the Other become axiomatic. Participants bracket their 'natural attitude' thus opening up the possibility of deep inner reflection that can uncover pre-reflective ways of being.

Previously unchallenged originative responses are illuminated within the landscape of the workshop and horizon of the Other. This encounter highlights one's barriers to community and can precipitate existentially threatening crises and cathartic experiences. Participants come to a realisation that they are responsible for their barriers to community and start to empty themselves of these barriers. This is a courageous act that leaves one in a vulnerable, unencumbered state of preparedness, a state of grace, resting in the quiet company of others. At this point community may appear. Community is experienced as a unifying and encompassing phenomenon, which has inherent qualities that transcend the group of individuals comprising a CBW.

The process of building community enables a 'sensitive awareness' towards oneself and the Other as unique beings in an essential human relationship which is interdependent and connected. Community, in this sense, equates to the German concept of creative community or *Gemeinschaft*. A person engaged in such a community possesses '*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*' (fellow-feeling) and acts in the world with care and concern for one's fellow human beings. Another translation for '*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*' is 'social interest which according to Manaster and Corsini (cited in Chartres, 1992):

can be viewed as a mode of operating with consequences both for the individual and for the social group. Beyond that it can be conceived of as a striving for a better future for mankind, the world, the universe. (p. 17)

A way to engage with creative community and embrace the tenets of beneficence is through the experience of being-in-community. In the next section I restate the case for building community in business with the aim of reinstating social interest and beneficence as core business values.

## 2.0 Building Community in Business

*If we don't change our direction, we're likely to end up where we're headed*

– Chinese proverb

As early as 1893, Durkheim (cited in Ritzer, 1983, p. 120) identified the role of industry and business in the creation of community. He saw the need for industry-based associations to develop strong integrative bonds to replace those dissolved through the secularisation of society and the breakdown of traditional communities. This did not eventuate in the way Durkheim envisaged it. However, the idea of business providing a principle arena for community has emerged again in recent decades (Holroyd & Sherwood, 2000, p. 1). There has also been corresponding growth in the role of soul and spirit within business. I have proposed that for business to change the way it operates and align with what many see as the emerging new paradigm, enterprises could do well to implement community-building initiatives centring on beneficence as a core value. I believe lasting change and benevolent action can only come about from the concrete experience of the community of Thou, as Max Scheler (paraphrased by Ranly, 1966) emphasises:

The unity of mankind as a species must first be realized emotionally through fellow-feeling in all its concreteness as a felt intentional act before true benevolence is possible. (p. 81)

The experience of deep-community as a felt intentional act offers a concrete experience of beneficence and fellow-feeling, which can sustain and support companies and organisations to undergo transformation in their core practices. As Eric Tryst (cited in Holman & Devane, 1999) observes

Nobody can force change on anyone else. It has to be experienced. Unless we invent ways where paradigm shifts can be experienced by large numbers of people, then change will remain a myth. (p. 43)

The CBW has the capacity to offer large groups of people the experience of community. Thus as Peck says, business has the potential to affect and influence large groups of people through implementing processes that create and sustain conditions for change. However, there is hard work and risk involved in doing so.

The overall process of building community is an unknown and sometimes difficult journey. Kazimierz Gozdz (1995) tells us that “[building] community in organizations requires both creativity and perseverance”(p. 420). Creating an environment where people can experience change and growth in the context of a workplace community is possible. For organisations and individuals willing to commit to the journey and persevere with the task of building community the rewards can be great. Businesses that include in their core practice concerns for human flourishing, sound environmental policies and practices, and a demonstrated concern and care for their communities are seen to benefit from a more motivated, happy and stable workforce, an increase in quality and productivity and an increase in community perception and value (Holroyd & Sherwood, 2000; Holroyd & Silver, 2001; Shadel & Thatcher, 1997; Suggett, Goodsir, & Pryor, 2000). Gozdz (1995) sums up the benefits of community building in business saying:

Organisations that close the gap between their ideal for community and their capability to create and sustain it will find themselves not only achieving competitive advantage but also reveling in the joy, freedom, and peace of true community. (p. 420)

One way to close the gap between the ideal for community and implementing community building capacity is the CBW. The CBW is a meeting place for diversity and difference. It is a place where one can have an intense experience of oneself in relationship to the other. It is this interdependent relationship with the other which allows for the creation of a resilient community capable of embracing difference and diversity (Holroyd, 2000). In his book *The Web of Life*, Fritjof Capra (1997) shows that diversity in an ecological community is fundamental to its resilience. He draws a comparison with human community in saying:

A diverse community is a resilient community, capable of adapting to changing situations...if the community is aware of the interdependence of all its members, diversity will enrich all relationships and thus enrich the community as a whole, as well as each individual member. (p. 295)

Resilience and the ability to adapt to change have been cited by Gary Hamel (2000), author of *Leading the Revolution*, as the key ingredients to business survival and growth in the twenty-first century. Given recent and current world events such

as September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in New York, the Bali bombings of 2002, impending war in Iraq, and general levels of dissent, upheaval, tragedy, environmental degradation, famine and war around the globe, I would add to Hamel's horizon of business survival and growth, planetary and human survival, flourishing and growth. If, as I believe, we are living in an interconnected world, then we cannot separate our business activities from our societal and community activities. A new paradigm in business is not an idealistic pipe dream but an urgent necessity. I believe business needs to rediscover and embrace its community and societal obligations and re-establish its old charter of being of and in service to its community and the people who make up that community. Given the global push for open border and trading policies by governments, trade organisations and corporations, community in this sense equates to the global community. John Nirenberg (1995) talks about the future role of organisations and community building in saying:

Undoubtedly the future will witness the extension of democratic principles into our workplaces and the conversion of bosses to "work partners" as a way of resolving the individual-organizational conflict. As in the civil body, it will not happen without a deliberate effort; and, building workplace community will only come about when organizations are accepted as being legitimate venues for exercising one's civic responsibilities. (p. 322)

The CBW has been shown to increase people's awareness that they live in an interconnected shared world and as such are responsible for their actions and responses towards others. The concrete experience of deep-community decreases feelings of separateness and isolation and can provide a foundation for both personal and organisational transformation. Community Building in business as proposed in this thesis is a small step to creating beneficence, communal responsibility and *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* or social interest as core values within business and corporations. As such it can provide a bridge between the present business paradigm and a new paradigm for doing business.

### **3.0 Concerns about implementing CBWs in business**

In advocating building community in business using Peck's vehicle of the CBW it would be remiss of me not to bring to attention the difficulty of doing so

within the current economic rationalist paradigm in which business seems irrevocably entrenched. The individualistic approach to the workplace and career advancement, and the demands made on people to survive in this climate, are great. There is not a great deal of incentive or encouragement for people to be vulnerable and authentic in the workplace; in many businesses these concepts would be frowned on and seen to be interfering with the business of business. Although participants in this study gained personally from the CBW experience and have implemented change in their business practices in line with community principles, they all harbour hesitations about whether the CBW would be embraced by business in its current form.

Two issues that stand out are the demands of a CBW on an organisation's time and resources, and whether the level of vulnerability needed to gain and sustain community could be tolerated and respected, and remain impervious to abuse or manipulation for individual gain.

In its original form the open CBW takes two or three days of uninterrupted time. This allows the process to develop naturally and for the group to experience the four stages culminating in the experience of being-in-community. For a business or organisation a closed CBW would be appropriate. This would initially take the same amount of time as an open CBW, but with the addition of on-going facilitated community-building initiatives, targeted to the organisation's needs. For an organisation to dedicate this amount of time it would need to commit considerable resources to the venture and be committed to following through with the process. To be successful the CBW process needs the participation, support and cooperation of CEOs and executive staff, which could pose serious logistical problems. Also, I would not advocate the CBW as the sole agent for change in an organisation. Rather, I would advocate its use to maintain authenticity and keep the organisation on track with its organisational goals concerning genuine change and community development procedures. As Gozdz (1999) observes, a number of processes need to be implemented to support the on-going development of community building in an organisation and enhance and support its ability to learn and grow.

The second issue, that of respecting and honouring vulnerability, is a more complex issue. The CBW is a deep process. The very nature of the process will require some individuals to empty and share their shadow selves, possibly revealing aspects of self that would usually be hidden or unknown to fellow workers. The possibility for using or abusing this information, or for prejudice towards a person for revealing, say for instance an addiction or health condition, is a concern. Any journey is a risk and there are no guarantees with any of life's journeys. The risks of abuse can be minimised by the approach the organisation takes towards its community building efforts and the structures they put in place. The key structures which participants in this study have identified are the agreement and participation of CEOs and senior managers, the organisation's commitment to follow through with community building efforts, the use of an appropriate space for community building, and the allocation of sufficient time for the process to grow and develop. These would be minimum requirements for serious community building initiatives. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate these factors in depth and further research is needed in this area.

#### **4.0 Limitations to this study**

The small sample group of six participants may not have represented the *breadth* of the experience of being-in-community. However, I believe, it has reflected the *depth* of the experience of being-in-community.

The limitations of phenomenological enquiry are that it does not offer a critical analysis of cultural or social issues and does not seek to 'explain' phenomena. It is not a science that analyses language or one that seeks to deconstruct experience or meaning. However, phenomenology is in a unique position to offer a solid basis for further research as phenomenological analysis seeks to disclose "primordial reality", (that is, experience as it is encountered pre-reflectively and in as pure a form as possible), in which all other reality has its roots (Husserl, 1982). As such this project can add greatly to the research into the CBW and community conducted by Shadel and Thatcher (1997), Goff (1995), and Vogt (1996), and contributes generally to the knowledge of the human condition.



## **5.0 Recommendations for further research**

This project is a preliminary phenomenological investigation of being-in-community. As such there is room for extending and deepening the research in the following areas.

The research could benefit extensively from a longitudinal phenomenological study within a business to detail community building efforts and benefits derived from these efforts.

Research into community building and business would benefit from a study detailing what structures would best support building community in business and how these could be implemented to gain optimal benefit and use of resources.

There is also a need for examining the CBW in the context of non-business groups and researching the use and application of Peck's model in varying social and community development programs and initiatives.

Given the religious aspect of participants' descriptions of deep-community as being formed by spirit or God and the associated notions of metanoia, emptying, transcendence and transformation, there is scope for a comparative study of the experience of deep-community and religious experiences such as grace, forgiveness, repentance, confession and religious conversion.

## **6.0 Concluding remarks**

Like a river, replete with raging rapids, strong undercurrents, quiet pools, restful billabongs and back washes, community building makes its way along the course of human interaction to the ocean of community. Community is cyclical in nature. It can evaporate in seconds, and flood back as rapidly. Community building is not one journey; it is many journeys, many rivers and streams. It changes course, erodes and is eroded, goes subterranean and bubbles up again. Community is the water of life and the CBW is a containing well.

By implementing CBWs we can create a context and provide conditions for something to emerge, for something to happen, but we cannot cause, determine or make it happen. As my colleague and friend Robin says, “community is always in the process of coming to be, of exploring and awakening to possible ways of being in the world” (personal communication, January 16, 2003). I have attempted to illuminate some aspects of community but in the end community is what it is, a mystery to be experienced. Some of what it is has been described as experiences of sacredness, spirit, God, connectedness, unification, healing, calmness, transcendence, transformation, reflection and wholeness. For me community is a heartfelt embracing of Others and self, an act of agape, of unconditional love that is deeply respectful and honouring of all we are as human beings and as people together sharing this world.

I have been touched in many ways by the content of this work and am grateful to have had dialogue with participants and to have shared and witnessed to this extent their journeys. I feel humbled and privileged that I have been able to research and write about deep-community. I hope that this work touches the reader in a similar way.

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# **Volume II - Appendices**

## **On Being-In-Community**

### **A Phenomenological Explication of the Experience of Being-In-Community in the Context of the Community Building Workshop<sup>©</sup> and Business.**

**By**

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**Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Social Science**

**At Edith Cowan University, faculty of regional and professional studies  
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# Appendix A: Procedural Forms

## Appendix A1: Consent Form

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT - SOUTH WEST CAMPUS (BUNBURY) - MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

### CONSENT FORM

**Project Title:** A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING-IN-COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP<sup>®</sup> AND BUSINESS.

I (the participant) have read the information above (or, "have been informed about all aspects of the above research project") and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am taking part in a research project concerning Community Building and Business being conducted by Carl Holroyd, a postgraduate research student at Edith Cowan University.

I also understand that participation, non-participation or withdrawal from this project will not affect my standing in any way, shape or form with my employer and that my employer fully consents to my involvement.

I am willing to participate in the aforementioned study through granting a personal interview on the basis that the strictest confidentiality will be observed and that my name will not appear in any published papers or articles on the said research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## **Appendix A2: Consent to Tape Record Interview Form**

**EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT - SOUTH WEST CAMPUS (BUNBURY) - MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM**

**Project Title:** A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING-IN-COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP<sup>®</sup> AND BUSINESS.

I am happy for my interview(s) to be tape-recorded, provided there is no identification of my name and that the tape will be erased on completion of the study.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## Appendix B: Original Transcripts

### Transcript 1 - August 2000

#### Can you tell me about your experience of being in community?

Umm by big realisation when I did the community building workshop last year, which I did in Portland in I think it was December-early December last year, Um my big realisation was I am in community all the time....and that it's not dependant on ....what the people around me are doing it's more dependant on. how I am seeing it. What I started to observe in the workshop was that there were people I was including in my sense of community and people that I wasn't.... and it was almost like, and what struck me was the people I was including were those people that made meaning of themselves in exactly the same way that I made meaning myself.....**humm** so I started to notice people that.....did drama-you know victim stuff and how shitty my life is which at that time I guess that's how pretty much I was making meaning of my own life...and they were the people that were in, those people that sat there and said something different they were out and it just I don't know what stage it dawned on me but I thought Georgina you are including those people that make meaning out of there lives same way you do and you're excluding those that don't **ummm** and as the workshop just went on just my biggest insight was that I'm in community all the time it's not dependant on peoples behaviours it's dependant upon how I see it and I guess now that I would say that I am seeing myself in community more and more and more all the time even if someone is being the shittiest person ever I am still in community with them so community which-and I don't think .... I don't think Scott-Peck even you know he he made a brave attempt to write about it-but how each of us interprets what he is writing about is our own stuff **um** so probably at the time of writing – you know-that I read some of his stuff and even applied it in the workshop- I kept thinking that community was like this group that I.. had the.. luck to work with years and years and years ago we would just have that same experience and I kept thinking yeh it depends upon the people in the group it depends upon you know what we do you know it depends upon everything out there. The only thing it depends upon is the way I see it, that's it. **and that that was a real-that moment in the workshop yep that you realised you were including people, yeh that had -that saw community or their life experience or interpreted their life experience similar to what you did -you were in community with- can you tell me more about that moment? like that realisation?.....it was like a high....um.....it was like a huge buzz it was like an insight I mean it just, it was it was an insight it was like and I wanted to share it with everybody but it wasn't uum....it did get I did share it at later times cos I really liked.... the....guidline in those workshops about speak when you are moved.... that is the best? I mean I that I.... that is so deep that is so deep that is just so: profound and.....but that moment of.....see?ing what I saw um.....I guess I knew that that came from somewhere beyond me that that was something that was not create-that was not dependant on my history or my past it was new it was.... umm.....it was: a knowing (I guess) rather than an intellectual..... you know observation so to speak umm: **so a knowing that was an inner /yes Um/knowing?** yeh yep **yeh** and the OTHER thing that I really: observed about the group was: the movement of spirit....between all of us....so that? you know jus-no the movemet of wisdom I'm gonna say the movement of that wise stuff that comes out is that .....I- and again see it's an inside out process it's not outside in it's about.....just observing and just seeing that you know (though) person was talking about such and such and I-? would sit there and I'd think (no-) I don't know how to respond to this and gradually it just dawned on me you know that I am not..... I really don't have to control this because what ever is going on un-.... under (there) or.....between us all will come forth here= and look it did you know someone would sit there in anguish and then this person would come in or.... you know it would be like wow and did you see -**

that?..... and yet we don't I think you know in business and in our private lives we don't even look? for that that what... we observe what we see? what were looking for.... and we're so caught up in our own....stuff that we really don't see the movement of anything between us we really don't see the oneness and the....the unity and the (power?) um..... so....that was really just- and I continued to see that that that when you are in a group.....{It'll come out it com-whatever wisdom comes out somewhere}....umm-.....{{come somewhere}}so that was just another thing that I had a big (people) insight about **so that uhh can you say something about what you were looking for?** I think yeh I was looking for ah.....Oh look think when I first went in there I was going in as this professional you know who wanted to....who was really keen on identifying you know the thing to run in workshops and I was just observing the process....and then it wasn't long before:.....h'o.....(I just let go I just stopped looking I just stopped.....umm-....analysing I stopped....dissecting an-d...I started to see differently became.....softer=THE other thing that occurred for me Carl was I that I had wanted one of the faclitators sit next to me and you know so little things happened and.... big man and at one stage my back m was killing me (n—s) at he just lent over n- I had not said anything he just lent over and he put this finger on the exact spot in my back that was excruciating me and 'h he just....hmm and I sat there and I 'h (I thought)....and AFTERwards the other interesting thing for me which (is) perhaps more (common) dunno how you say this but at the end of the wopkshop I started to get my period and I had terrible pain he felt it, he started to verbali-se.... my pain=I was sitting there actually quite rocking and I hadn't even started rocking....when I got in to it...but he started to moan which I really wanted to do but because I was in this group- and I asked him afterwards....**was this when he was still sitting next to you?** /no **no ok** he/ was over the othe side of the group by then.... and I just said "you felt everything I was feeling didn't you" **yes** he said yes.... (/he's.....extrodinairy) so-.....**what happened for you when you realised somebody was feeling everything you were feeling?** huumm\_'h get out of your mind Gail theres more out there to understand than whats in your head ummm...(your) interpreting stuff through the physical world and this doesn't exist that way I mean I had given really no signs about what was going on for me none and particularly the bit with the back I mean he just he just got the exact spot....then I- that shocked me it was like I don't even=this was like within the first....morning oh ok IT WASN'T LIKE AFTER....you know a day a day this was in the first morning because actually he sat next to me first and they kept moving around and he never sat next to me again so that was in the very first part of the whole workshop and that was like ... again I was reminded you know you your intellectual mind thinks that it is coming here for one reason and you don't realise that you have been brought here for some totally different reason and I am continually reminded of that one, so I have this huge intellectual thing of oh yes I have picked this workshop out and this is what I will learn here and blah blah blah and then I get in there and I have this completely different experience which completely blows my mind away and like OK , lesson again you know ah... you fool yourself if you think that your mind your personal mind knows it all, there is something beyond you and that is what really came through for me in that workshop hmmm ..... **and the body how did the body respond? How did the body respond? How did you respond in your body like racing heart, shortness of breath, or you've described to me something that somebody was picking up, actual physically – what was happening in your physical body and yet responding.....** No my response was more in my head, you know I went racing , you know like trying to make sense of it all but I probably wasn't paying attention to what was going on in my body. The only thing I said to them at the end of the group when he was doing the minding, I said normally I would have 8 panadeine at this moment and even then that would not alleviate the pain and I said, I'm ok, so when I was getting my period you know he was doing this, he was just doing .....??? this really deep,and I thought he knows what's going here ahm and I did in fact tell the group that I have these very strong pain killers which really wouldn't help ahm and I'm not having to do anything, so something was going on bodily wise..... but I don't know what it was mmmmm I was pretty .... , I think by the end of it you know when you're





still ruling and dominating our lives. So when we come to look at community, .... ha ha we are not dealing with adults, we are dealing with everyones stuff tucked away .... about.... what they think .... no ????? how they experience themselves as a child and they just keep perpetuating it. **mmmm** So when you, when I give Scott Pecks workshops .. for me I mean I have been fascinated by the concept of emptying. **Uh huh, yes** and I really think that is what he is doing. I mean when I have a look in our workshop, I mean we had a woman in there with bi-polar disorder in our group, who .. arhh was fascinating. I knew when she was present and I knew when, ..... whether I am right or wrong, .....but when all her old stuff, she would constantly verbalise to the group what was going on in her head. Oh but, you know. .... Joyce or I don't know someone else said, ... you know ... "but I should speak my stuff and then I should tell you what I am doing and my counsellor says that I should tell everyone here what I am doing and at this moment I am feeling rather", ..... and at one point I just looked at her and I said, ... We have a tape recorder and you know its just like a tape recorder going. And that's when she told me to go fuck myself. And then afterwards ..... why is she doing it .... it was almost like I could be that little kid, ..... and I don't know what is was ... and afterwards I said ..... "I think you're soothing yourself, I think you are trying to soothe yourself to make yourself feel OK". Now her history ended up being horrendous. I mean it came out in the workshop, and I went, ... yeah well that makes total sense. **Right** To soothe yourself in that way, but what I also know is that you don't have to do that. If you can let go, .. and I think, like the making total sense is what attitudinal healing focuses on. Like responses to things. Like they are still responses based on past. they are still memory based responses. They are still childhood responses, you know like, "I want speak" or "I will withdraw" or "I will talk to myself in my head". They were kid responses to situations where we had no power. And I now know that as an adult the trick is to let go of that. And is some way the emptying part is about doing that and having other people there say, .... or not say, ... because we didn't say ... that was OK. And as soon as that sort of gets ... hoh (breath out) .. well its like OK, well what next and then you are left with the emptiness, then you are left with something else and I think that is the real moment when universal spirit comes through. We let go of past conditioning. **So the condition of emptying for you, and then the spirit coming through** yeah **do you want to recall.....??? some of that for me or tell me how that ... really ....** I was aware of some of my stuff being triggered in the earlier parts of it when ahmm, I would go in and it is probably in ...ahh ... chaos, when I would attempt to go in an intellectualise what was going on for someone else. And I think one of the facilitators turned around and said OK we are not .... on two occasions, ..we are not here to fix someone else up. And it was like, I got really pissed off, sort of . uhmm, but in reality what I was doing was what I do to myself. You know, which is like understanding so this will be OK. And I knew it was an intellectual thing, I didn't have no feeling in my body, it was straight up here. Umm so ..... the emptying part came ..... breath out ... where I stopped doing that, so that was .... that was .. chaos and then I just started to talk about how I really felt about some things that were going on in my life. What annoyed me was having people come up afterwards and say .... you take care of yourself, or you make sure, .... because I now know that what I say in that moment is simply emptying of my past powerlessness. It is not an affirmation of my power, it is ... an emptying of my powerlessness. ([said as an aside]-It's interesting I haven't said that before)/. Umm **mmmmmm** and people shouldn't pay attention to that ..ooh ... people shouldn't pay attention to that ... because spirit is not powerless. .... People just need to hear that and then pay no attention to that .... and to fully expect ..... that the .... the strongest part of spirit .... the wiser part of spirit ... will ... will ... rend, make an appearance and see things differently, and choose its behaviours according to .. its own innate power. Because when someone came up to me and said ..... "you be careful and look after yourself", I know that inside of them, they were trying to help me and .. make me, .....help me, love me! but that is also a child like way of loving. An adult way knows that I have every resource within me and that ..... I will ..... by hook or by crook, .... whether in this lifetime or whatever ..... find a way which is reflective of my own power, ... my own ....., the power of spirit and ... or the power of God, .. I mean I am not a

religious person but the power of that universal intelligence I guess. Um ..... so the emptying was about emptying, ... was about expressing ... stuff ... emotions, feelings which reflected my sense of powerlessness. To put that in the group and not have anyone feed it at that moment .... because no one would, ... no one would get in and fix it or whatever, .... was then left with OK, said that ... now what? Do you know what I mean, it was ... **How does that, ... can you describe how that felt in your body, that stuff you know** Freeing, .... different ..... ummm almost like a different person ..... The build up to the expression of that was..... quite tense and quite emotional and most of the time was really emotional in the expression of it, so lots of tears and lots of sadness and all the rest, and once it was done ..... clean, clean .... clear ... fresh ... new, ... new ... and I think that is what the emptying is about. .... Shifting .....but that is what I would really like at turning point, because the turning point does that, but he then gets you ... and it is all somatic, he then gets you to engage with that cleanness and say OK use it differently. So I think that being in community, for me anyway without an understanding that I just let go, because most people assume that well, I think unconsciously assume that once they have let go there is nothing else to take its place. The point is that something else has been there all the time, we have just smothered it over with this other powerlessness stuff. So what Hector did in the turning point was ... to keep us in there and to choose to use it differently and to feel that in our bodies. I mean he did a lot of bio-energetic stuff where physically it just .....and then he just said OK just .... just use it differently. And it was like oh WOW, it is not something that I have to wait for, I **am** really a creator. .... I mean that is just what ..... spiritual, ..... some spiritual realms call it a transformer, ..... and I think that is really what we are, .... we just transform energy .... but most of us do it unconsciously. **Himself called the work of community building, particularly workshops as transformational, and reformational.** Yeah that would be right. Although I think you could put in some other things in there that would really .... umm ..... expand and ..... yeah ..... **I am interested in what you said before about yourself. That moment that you had never put it like that. That emptying for you was emptying of your powerlessness mmmm arhmm and is that the first time you have conceptualised it?** mmmmm Like I can feel that. When I said it I can feel it in my legs, I can feel it .... it is almost like .... those insights come from, ... because I am not sitting in my head. And I am aware I am looking in different places and ... um .... yeah ..... because I have been pondering the question of that emptying for quite some time .... and I have been pondering the value of doing things like the turning point, where physical emptying and doing things like the Centre for Attitudinal Healing .. which is an emotional emptying .... and that .. that conflicts a little with some stuff that I did with psychology of mind which says that you don't really need to do that. In talking the other day with Hector from The turning point, he... this has been the biggest issue .... is about the emptying of past emotional stuff ... and look in the workplace it is bloody rife on it. Like every single bloody interaction, that is what it is about. It's just, it's total illusion, it's so (ha) it's such a game, but in talking to hector, you know, he was saying that one of the that one of the things that people had done from psychology of mind, they were most angry about was that psychology of mind will not go into ....., ah ... the emotions of the past, the feelings, the ...the .. physical energy of the past which is about powerlessness and I said to him ??????? just prior them ??? turning point I would have agreed with you. Now having done the turning point I can absolutely see that activating all that past stuff is not necessary. I can choose in this moment not to do that, and ..... it is simply, ... that's what consciousness is about. And he ... and I, I said to him though that ... I don't think that what the psychology of mind people saying is wrong, what I think though is that the way of teaching that could be quite different. And incorporate (**right**)some of the semantic stuff that Pictor(?) had been doing. And I said the other thing is, and I said I know the founder of psychology of mind, a chap by the name of Syd Banks who had some ephiphany about all of this. I said he still goes into past stuff. He still gets his down learning(?) and I said, but for him he is just so grateful (?) he just sits and knows that's being acted. And this is what I think the other thing about our relationship to ourselves. That it is actually OK ..... to be emotional, it is

OK but it is a/our relationship to that and I think that's where most of it comes in. It is almost, and that really comes out of our past too, because most of us in this anglo saxon country called Australia, were told that emotions were not good and you shouldn't have them .. when in fact it is just a natural flow of life. And I am reminded lately of ... you know .. friends (in my country?) who are saying, why isn't it all the one way? And what comes to my mind is .. a flat line, remember the movie Flatliners where they go **I do, yeah yeah** where they die **yep they do** and I think .. well if you want to be all one way, your dead, you know but us being here, the only reason we are here is for our soul to experience itself ... in its glory .. in its .... fullness ... in its ... and to just love every moment of it ... Wow, look at ...and I, I.. I.... don't know whether I am right or wrong Carl but it's like, wow look at myself now, you know I'm being angry .. and then the next moment .. oh no I can (snaps fingers) change .... I can be (....?) me. **you are talking like there is almost a detached part of you that can observe however you are yes yep Would .... would you say that with community, with the workshops, ... how has that affected your relationship with yourself and do you see yourself** part of the process, I do see myself differently, its been part of the process and I think that what you will find that for every individual that will be different. It will depend upon where they're at .... and this is where the power of thought comes in because you see I had made an intention or a desire ..... of what I was going to change, I was going to move beyond where I was. **was this before the workshop yes yes** and I think intentions have a very powerful impact .. whether we know it or not and I guess I pretty much perserved with genuine enquiry and I feel pretty deeply towards ..... it was part of the process. It wasn't the part that finally allowed me to see it all, I think the turning point was that, but who knows Carl, if I had have done turning point a year ago, ... um .. CV ... ah community building workshop (.....?) community building workshop might have been it. .... it just ... all I know was that I did psychology of mind in October last year, ... an I can honestly say that these last things that I have been involved in, they have ..... been the real catalyst for my change **right**, that issue that you are talking about being a witness of myself. Prior to that, look I had done heaps, I've done heaps of stuff. You know I've been into therapy times, I am a psychologist anyway, I have done past life regressions, child hood regressions. I have done channelling... um .... I've done body work, ... um probably there are other things in there as well, but it was only through doing psychology of mind in October ..... I then went and did a Lazius (.. spelling?) workshop which is the channel workshop, which had no impact whatsoever, paid a huge amount of money for it. I then went up to Portland and did ... well I did that one in San Francisco, I then went up to Portland in the beginning of December and did Community building. That clicked, that gave me something – just the whole thing about .... I was deciding whether you really wanted community or not (clicked fingers). That was the most, and .... just a couple of the rules, you know.... like **there are moments that were very powerful for you** it was really powerful for me, it was like ... oh Wow, and then with the realisation that I am actually in community with everybody if I allowed them in. **And can I ask about when you felt that, what your attitude towards the excluded people was, from memory.** Oh I opened myself up to them. **hmmm** you know ... I think actually that is a good question because I think in that moment I didn't fully grasp that I was still probably limited in my capacity or ability to allow people in, but certainly now, .... I now sit and go ... I now say it's OK, I don't like this person, and just sit .... open .. you know .. da da ....whatever, and I am probably still on that journey and I think that is really where things like attitudinal healing I have been involved with now for a couple of months. The other thing I want to say about all these things, is that I really didn't kown why I was getting involved **hmmm** . There was a half hearted intellectual reason and sense of .... um .... do this. But in the end it is not even a .... in the end it doesn't matter what you do. It is what you get out of it. It really doesn't matter. I could go off tomorrow and do a windsurfing course ... **hmmm** If I am open to the learning, or whatever. If I want to see it on the basis of my na....(?) but it is like community, it is like life in the end. You know ... I bet that ... that ... there is a really strong correlation between those people who have no experience of community and who think life is shit ... because it is inside out ... because it

is me who determines how I experience and see those things, and my love of life and my openness to people is growing each day. .... I think that was probably one of the most depressed people about (..... couldn't hear this bit mumbled) **hmmm** So going back to what I was saying. Psychology of mind,..... CBW, ... came back here, .... continued to liaise with the chaplin (??) about psychology of mind, .... um .... we have tried to have an interim CBW group continue, but hasn't worked. **right, there is one called moved to speak** we have just kept **carl's voice in the background but words not heard, client speaks over** we kept going our own group **OK** but hasn't worked **within the community group** the Portland one, **the important/Portland group** the small group **how many people were in that** nup. Now this was small and this is what the facilitators were really amazed at because they made the comment at the end of it that they were really fearful that ... we wouldn't have enough people in there for the workshop to work (.... people (mumbled lines) **that is an interesting comment** and for me it was like ... oh I hope we don't have too many ... because then you know you can't interact sort of thing. And ... um ... yeah having been able to maintain by internet, and my view is .... that .... given our stage of openness, we need to be in physical contact with each other. If we were more open to the movement of energy between people, ... it wouldn't matter. There you go that's my view(?) **hmmm**. Ummm, .... so I did, came back kept doing those things .... I thennnnnnn got involved in attitudinal healing. Hated it to begin with, .... thought this is a load of bull shit, but stayed with it. Don't know why I have stayed with it. Starting to see there is (....?) connections. Recently just done a turning point, and am about to start mastery of turning point which runs over 13 weeks. Anndddd, it is just .... all coming together .... soooooo ... hmmm. But that moment yeah (both talking together) **what** but that moment there, I mean there were some key things that came out of that, that workshop, and one of them was about, I decided (who ?) was in or out. And I have just been mindful of that ever since **yeah**, even walking the streets, you know, he's in, she's not da de da de da de da de da de da .... and now starting to come to grips with that decision making or that experience .... because its' the (.....???) decision, it's unconscious. that experience of who's in, who's out is dependant upon how much I am paying attention to my old stuff and (.....?) Its an energy thing its not an ..... **hmmmm** and the other things I was saying to you (.....??) is that everyone, I recently, if I do some training for a defence client. I recently did a team building workshop, which I just loved doing, I haven't done it before. I took Scott Pecks stuff in there. It was interesting I went through the stages of group .....development. And I ended up putting up Scott Pecks stuff. **So this is how you can bring it in to your work**, yeah I did then. I was sort of spontaneous, its not premeditated. I thought Wow look at this, and the group really..... I got some feedback .... and the evaluation I got from that workshop was the best they had had in Australia ever. **fantastic** so something .... **and they do a lot of work the defence department** yeah, so I must have, you know I think that is probably a result what I was thinking on the day and I was really able to put some stuff back on the people. Take some of what I had learnt over the last 6 months and put really just put it back in there. Umm what was I going to say (aside). **What other things of Pecks did you put up?** Just his stages of group development. **OK yeah** Umm ..... and just kept reflecting back to what was going on with the group because there was actually Peck's ..... sssstages ..... hmmm ... because they actually go beyond..... if you,.. if I, .... as I interpret the traditional stuff of (??norming storming..... ?) or whatever it all is, there is no emptying **yeah** and it is only when I think they get to the point of .... umm it gets (disrupted?) again you have to go back to one of those earlier phases, but they keep going back to pseudo community, they keep going back and not doing emptying. And it was just... I mean, just all evolved over the whiteboard, over the 2 days that I ran this workshop and it was like Wow and everyone started to see that. You know, umm .... ..... hmmm. some stayed in pseudo community (..... with realisation?). **and that is your experience of community building so far in organisations?** Ummm ..... (mumble) a chance of teaching it .... yes ..... umm..... I was just wondering whether I have finished with that last question about umm..... (mumble). Ah OK experience with (mumbles) .....I don't consciously think about it, (mumbles?) when I teach and I

facilitate I guess it automatically starts to come out and umm..... I'm mindful of things some times, you know like, I'm mindful like at the moment, I .... volunteer my services down at the naltrexane clinic and I would have liked to get some work happening there which really would build on what we are talking about here. Oh god you know (..... CBW.....) ah Jesus Christ – ha ha ha laugh ..... **laugh** for weeks, weeks, without letting that stuff come out hummm, **well there ahh**, because **there** there is a lot there **there isn't a time limit is there? It just ahh tends to be** it keeps 'cummin' up **yeah** but it's like yeah, but for me I needed the understanding that's what's going on. And as soon as I start to feel it in my body now I don't have to go down this path. That's what I do..... I don't have to go down this path. I don't have to activate this one at the moment. I can choose. Let go of it and choose something else. **So you really .... it sounds to be like you are really aware in your body .... and and that awareness has been the result of this ....** whole, plus this 6 months journey I guess yeah. Really. and I just liked the way that those things come together, so I'd ..... um .... yeah .... they're the main ones for me. I think they are all really good. I mean I wouldn't even get out and create another personal development workshop now because I think ..... there is enough there if people choose to see it. If they really want to go in and just .... it's almost like how far do you have to go of not having something good happen before you start to look elsewhere. ummm ..... so I guess being at the naltrexane clinic, which is actually a Christian based organisation, and umm .... haaaaaa, ..... what was I going to say about that. what I don't like about, some,... some people's sense of community is that, the in and out part of that, you know like ..... **who's in and who's out**, who's in and who's out, you know like , ..... so ..... that's it, that's what's really shitting me, is that ... their way, or the churches way or whatever is operating there at the moment is about giving people, its about getting people in so that you fit with my way of ..... making meaning of myself, then ..... your in. And that's really what it is about. I .... I was there the other day talking about this sort of stuff, and the pastor turned to me and said I couldn't run groups, and I talked about ..... some work that had been done in the states with people with addictions that had had some phenomenal results, ...he said I couldn't .. work with that, because .... when people allow themselves to be open to spirit, evil forces get in and satan makes it's way in. So I couldn't do that. I couldn't allow that to occur. So he was in fact saying ..... you know, that his definition of community is that people are in there validating the way that he makes meaning of himself. And I said **which was similar to your experience (tape – changes sides)**

At the moment is the issue of ..... haaaaaa..... oneness, goals. Ummm, which I guess I don't know how it relates to business, but it is like I sat there thinking .... geez ... you know, I felt that we are helping here ... helping junkies, and ..... it's almost like ..... you know I've heard of, or if I know of a programme and have experienced it, which is having a really great effect ..... because he then went into, .... Oh yes there is some really great work being done north of Sydney. And I said who by, because I'm really interested. To the Church of Christ. I said Ok yep and I really wanted to know about it, but as soon as I said my stuff, he couldn't, didn't want to. And I thought,..... **hmmmm** you know, I went wow but I thought isn't this about ..... enabling people to engage with life more, isn't, isn't, isn't..... isn't there a universal thing that say's we should all be on this planet, I don't mean ..... just going off and just abusing everything and having fun, but isn't it about our own purpose being here to experience my spiritual soul. Like I can only do that through my physical body, and isn't it about ... you doing that and being aware and conscious, 'cause as soon as you start to realise that then it is almost like, hey I don't get to experience all that much of myself while I'm stoned. Or drunk or whatever, so I might choose, ..... there might need to be a bit more variety in my life. Whatever, you know what I mean? .... **yep** but he, he ..... he, no. For him ..... huh.. that really wasn't ..... like I .... this is a programme that is set up here to help junkies. What your actually telling me is that it is not a programme to help junkies, it is a programme to help recruit people to your church, so that you feel like you are in a bigger community. .... **mmm** That's abuse. **mmm** which is such a prevalent thing in our society. Ahhmm. **yeah that's** ..... that's abuse! It's just a

very sophisticated form of abuse. It's all under a beautiful banner of being .....  
(mumbles) ... anyway I may just be seeing it that way. Ahhmm. then I went and had a  
coffee with Hector from Turning Point and we were talking about various agencies in Perth.  
The ones that I have been mentioning and .... how I see the connections in what they are on  
about and how they could synergise to really ... you know .... but again,  
.....to move towards that thing of one, but I spoke with Hector one of the  
things I'm coming to grips with is Um when I look at Say self-personal development and  
community building or whatever when I have a look at what they're each trying to do on  
the ground it's all the same, whats getting in the way is own personal interpretations, I'm I'm  
really conscious at the moment of how I understand something at ... in the moment has  
nothing to do with the reality of what I am trying to understand, It's simply is a reflection of  
my own level of consciousness, If I read a book of it's not a reflection of what the author  
has written it's a reflection of my own level of understanding, I could probably go back and  
read Scott-Pecks books now, and they would have totally different meaning to me, because  
I think that something has expanded in me. It is a reflection of where I am at. So for me it  
is like, gee if each of these people could get together and get out of the way, let go of all  
their personal mind sets and .. there need to ... make meaning of everything according to  
how they make meaning to themselves so that we feel connected, but to let go of that ....  
then how much could we achieve with all of that stuff. Now the other thing that has been  
coming to my mind is that ....ummm.... how am I going to describe ... I have a sense of  
..... if I look at ..... I am almost like a pair of sunglasses. Me a human being, my physical  
sense is almost like a pair of sunglasses, so ... that how I interpret those things out there is  
just the way this sunglass was constructed. But the sunglasses get put on something and I  
have a sense that there is something behind me. So I have a sense of this oneness behind  
me. I am like a pair of sunglasses. Out there is still a oneness, but because I have my  
sunglasses on I don't see that oneness. Do you know what I mean. **I, I have a sense. I  
think you were talking about this, about the spirit. You mentioned spirit in the CBW  
that, that, that, it came and, and actually continued. Would that be it just flowed, it  
bubbled up [talking over top of Carl], like the experience it just kept popping up. And,  
and how did that, like what was that like when that happened? A huge relief for, for I  
just have to get out of the way. Yeah, you said that [talking over top of Carl] before,  
but.... I just have to take, ... I just have to ..... take my sunglasses ..... put the sunglasses  
..... and get out of the way. Laugh, it's .... I didn't have to take responsibility for what was  
going on with people. I certainly didn't have to fix them up. Um ... I in fact probably  
didn't have to understand with my mental head. I probably could have just sat there and  
waited until I felt moved to speak. Ummm And what would have come out of my mouth  
would have been perfect. And that started to happen towards the end of the workshop  
which was really a bit scary actually ...Ok ... that was really starting to happen for me.  
**That you were speaking** .... yeah like I almost thought, all those fears about ... you know  
I can't say this now... and I, I'd all... I'd really got right to the very edge of just letting go  
of that. Let go if you can't speak now. That's all past history. And so someone would say  
something and I would have this huge urge to say you know this is all I heard you just say  
and this is what I want to say back. It was almost like being God. I mean it was a bit  
bloody scary because I just thought 'you can't say anything like that'. **It was like being  
God?** It was a bit like that. It was like you can't say things like that to people. And then I  
thought ..... **are you able to expand a little on 'things like that'. Is there any particular  
instance that comes to mind.** Just to tell them what I really heard them saying. Umm to  
tell them what they were feeling. Umm I ... it was really weird. Umm **weird** weird.  
**How, how was is weird?** Because I don't do that. I, well I haven't been doing that. I  
probably do it a lot more now. Umm **Can you tell me how you experienced that? You  
said 'telling people how they felt, so ... that's what you felt?** [talked over Carl][ I just, I  
just umm] I wrestled with it just before I even allowed myself to speak. And then I ....  
don't know ... it sort of grew ... it grew from just, I don't know, reflecting ... I don't what  
I did. Something quite ... um not non confrontive, but ...non, I don't know ... umm ..... it  
was almost like in the end when I was speaking, it was like actually reading or speaking to**

that essence within them. And in that process leading up to that it was umm the fear that the head part of them would pop in and say no you are wrong. OK so I started off by saying things that were ... less of a risk, I guess of the person reacting ... by the end of it, which may have only lasted an hour. It might have only been in that particular space for an hour, but I had actually let go of all my head rules around what I should and shouldn't do and I was just and I was going in and saying exact....., so this person might have, ... I can remember one guy talking about how he experience, or what he saw was happening in other people and I just turned to him and looked at him and I said, yes and this is what I heard you saying about yourself. I didn't say it in those words but that is what I said, and he sat there and he looked down and he looked up and he said 'yes'. And I sat and went 'oh far out' .. laugh, you know it was like ooooh wee. But I really did, I just got out of the way. I just got out of the way. I just got out of the way and let whatever. Now **was that in your experience** [talking over top of Carl][so in tune, yes it was] It was so in tune with ..... where people were at. It was so in tune with that.. Then .... yeah, it was just .... mmm .. quite powerful and I did, its, and I can recall at one point thinking 'oh stop this'. it was almost like well who are you. It was all... 'cause what I was probably doing is raking through my own perceptions about myself and to get to that point the question was really rising. 'Well who on earth are you?' Because .... to do something beyond what I think I am .... ummm raises that question. **So was that like reaching a threshold of your ... experience of yourself.** Oh yeah, yep. It went over the threshold. Went over the threshold. Might have just created a new one. Laugh. But yeah, but I probably did do that. I probably put another cap on that umm, but that process hasn't stopped I don't think. yeah yeah. **What was the space like, that you were in during that?** Mmmm expansive, umm .... wasn't a head space, was a body space. I was aware of my head thinking but it wasn't all that, it wasn't foremost, ... ummm .... very energised, very alive. Almost like electrocute... it was almost like electrocuted. It was almost like ..... glowing, it was almost like ... the physical boundaries of my body didn't exist. Umm they did ... but ... I remember sitting there in the group being conscious of having my feet on the ground and my hands here, and I could just feel this thing, stuck (?) and I thought .... OK, and I was just umm .... just alive, just incredibly alive. Yeah and I get it quite often, not quite often, but certainly often compared to the past now. **So you went into the body** yeah and I don't feel frightened of it any more. It's like OK lets see what, what's going **Can, can, can you articulate any more pictures or senses in the body that happened in that space?** .....mmmmm ..... very sensitive, very sensitive so that I can actually send umm .... its like things, its just like super aware of the movement, I think in my body I am aware of the movement of the energy, or spirit or wisdom or whatever I am talking about. the movement of it flowing around the group and where it has gone to next. Umm ..... **that's the experience of spirit, it moved around the group?** Well .... it is almost like if you can picture an energy field and there is one spark which is probably, that feels very limited actually. Ummm, I don't know **mmm** ..... yeah. But just mindful that I, ... well, not mindful, I didn't have to cap it, but I chose to cap it and it was like I will stop there. Almost like I would explode, if I kept going I would explode. **I need to ask you about.....** [mumbled] mmm..... yep, it would almost be like I wouldn't [mumbled] ... that I didn't exist. **mmm and that** to explode would mean to move into the oneness **uh huh** yea, the total oneness. and I'm not ..... I was going to say I'm not sure if I would come back, but that what I think the feeling of it would be like. mmm..... to explode and not exist and just be ..... I don't know ... part of whatever that is. **Right** mmm. .... **Oneness, mmm was there anything else that was an experience of oneness?** Mmmmm ..... [mumbled} was a growth, [mumbled] was an emergence of that experience of oneness. Ummm the whole way through. Laugh. and I that oneness was there all the time, I just wasn't seeing it. Umm ..... you really get in the way and I think that's what, you know. I know people say it and Scott Peck has probably said it, the point is ..... we are one, it is there. So the question is not about how do we create it, the question is about what is getting in the way of experiencing and seeing. that is the question. Because it is there. It is there all the time. That's the other thing that perhaps I ought to mention with that umm ... my



[mumbled sentence] huuuuuh. Not long, ... when I returned from the States and ... no, it was prior, prior to that workshop actually. I had been doing ..... I don't know what I had been doing, anyway. One of the questions that crossed my mind, was that I really didn't know what that experience of love was. And I don't mean romantic thing, I mean that spiritual, whatever that was. And I can remember one day, I actually asked God or whatever that was, 'I want to have the experience of companionism [?? right word-mumbled] I walk my dogs every morning and afternoon and go to this park down by the river and ummm.... I was down there walking and all of a sudden I started to see this stuff come out of people and trees and everything. It is almost like .... when you see a mirage on the road and you know how above it is all that sort of shimmm... yeah, start to see it. And it was like, it was like, if you were there it was coming out of you and out of the furniture and it was in the air and I looked at the dogs and I all of a sudden realised ... God this is God expressing itself through you the dog and God expressing itself through you as man, and God expressing itself through you as a duck, and when God is coming through me too. And this lasted 20 minutes. Now I hadn't been drinking, I hadn't .... nothin'. And I just ... I thought I don't want to stop this happening. I don't want ..... this is. And I knew what it was. it was love. That horrible four letter word that everyone uses you know in so many ways. **All kind of things** yeah, but this was just. I thought. I don't know, I just sat there like, I thought if anyone had have observed me from outside they would have said, what was she on, but all I could do was sit down and I, and that, that was the feeling, that was, .. I just sat there again and I did this. And I said, 'wow my God' for about 20 minutes. I couldn't stop watching. Umm and then it just went again. No, I just stopped seeing it. I don't know what happened. I don't why this happened. I didn't tell anyone about it until quite some time later, because I just thought it was a bit of an apparition or something and this person said to me 'and you wrote that off?' I said 'yeah, well who else is going to believe me'. And I think that's really a demonstration of the question. Everything mmm community exists for universal force, the connection, the flow, love, God, whatever, that exists. The only question is – what is getting in the way of us seeing and experiencing this. And the only thing that is getting in the way is thought accumulated from the experience of the physical world. [mumbled} so we really are I think quite phenominal creatures, ummm laugh, and over time we have to learn how to lose ourseleves and [mumbled] and I guess the danger in the future, which is probably what you were identifying in the business, is that we will continue to do [mumbled end of sentence] unless we start to want to see [mumbled sentence] becoming [mumbled] and limitlessness. mmmm **mmm. I really appreciate you sharing that story with me because it really strikes me that .... there is not a lot of places you can talk about those experiences, .... in a way that, in my experience you could judge, or that you won't get judged. that it will be accepted** mmmm **I find it quite enervating really I am sitting here immersed in it. It is amazing.** I have heard umm not ... I have actually read, I am reading ummm ... John Gr????'s book ummm, 'the sacred self' and he actually describes it in there and I thought wow, that was the experience ... it is a Wayne Dyer **Wayne Dyer** and that was the experience that I had, and ..... I have heard other people who have had similar experiences but you know probably slightly different. But isn't it really weird, that ..... ummm our whole reality is that we think we need to go ..... which is again what all the great spiritual masters would say, but which I never understood is that we have to go seeking, we have to create [mumbled] you know, we don't, we are just getting in the way. We are just ... like I think that that probably for psychology, community building and personal development and whatever else, ..... if it could focus on how you are getting in the way .... like pointed questions in that direction, it would move a lot quicker than what it is currently, because at the moment, it is not asking that question, it is asking the question of how do you get something. And the point is that it is not the right question. The question, that direct question is leading us in the wrong direction. mmmm **Reminds me of a faulty triangle that my psychodramatist used to point out. She used to say that the typical western world is 'to do, to have, to be'. Where as a more eastern approach is 'to be, to do, sorry, to be, to have, to be and yeah and I must say that my first experience with community building was exactly that of**

seeing, almost in a ghosted way, what was preventing me from getting into community, was me here and then another me inserted here and then another me inserted there. mmmm and it strikes me throughout that conversation that you alluded to the fact that we get in our own way and that one thing, these things have done is let you see how you get in your own way And even the other night at attitudinal healing there were two people there that were having conflict. Well actually the conflict happened on the weekend. And this person here had spoken about that conflict. Now the facilitator what she kept doing to this other person who then was actually quite reluctant to speak. She wouldn't, the facilitator was saying, and it was all, and she was saying things like there is a line here. I can't step over the line. And the line was about speaking and you know I thought it is the same thing. I thought Jesus Christ can you see ..... you are creating that line and the rules within that line and that is, and she was talking then about her experience of what was going on out there, and I have been there, I have experienced that you know where like ..... I can't come out of here, I can't speak, because you know my whole family rules are that you don't speak, and even though she was in an entirely different space, of a very holding space and that is one thing that attitudinal healing which I like which probably applies to Scott Peck's work, that I hold the space for people to come out of there self imposed limitations to have a different experience which is the emptying of the powerlessness, that is what she is doing, in stepping over the line, she empty's herself of, she breaks down the .... rule of powerlessness which is you can't speak, and in doing that free's up for something else to come in. But that was again, it was so .... look get out of your way Christi..... get out of your way, you know, step out, get out of your own way, let go of that way. Which is what the turning point did. You are invited, this experience is an invitation to you to experience yourself. How are you going to greet it? What was it, he just used that word so ... you know, created, that was so good. That is so good. Here is an invitation to you. How are you going to greet it? Make it just a totally fantastic turn it around. It was just so good. **Such an inviting way to place it and say it too, it is like mmm mmm throws, throws the oness and responsibility back on the person** yes and that is what I am saying, and that's what psychology of mind gave me that it really is inside out. Hector at the turning point when he went further into how your energy actually affects external events. I don't understand enough about that but certainly what I have really come to grips with is my experience of everything around me comes from within that [mumbled] There is nothing in here until ...[mumbled] and in fact quantum physics, and I think he is talking about it in that book now, that really comes to grips with the fact that we observer influences the event. Now they have obviously seen that through some tangible way. And that is like wow **the zen buddhist [mumbled] mmmm the tree falls in the forest and the tree [mumbled] yeah yeah** mmm exactly that. But I think the quantum physicsists are even saying that a simple act of observing actually influences, .. now that is going, that's like wow ... **yeah so they are saying we can't really tell what happens.** mmm and it is almost like because my energy of observing what ever in the moment is actually influencing that. **Amazing isn't it** OK laugh. And that is where you really, I think I really start to think, start to come to grips with the power of our own thinking. 'Cause I don't think our energy is just stagnant and that's where [mumbled] I think. .... is our gift of creating things, but who knows. **Just an observation I made before. You know when you were talking about when you were in the park with the dogs and you sat there like this and experienced it which is how you described you were sitting in the community building workshop experiencing that state where you thought God. Is that in your experience, the two moments, are there similarities for you?** yeah yeah yep, yep. Yeah it is almost like, umm. .... the thinking was going on in my head, not ran???? just every now and then, but I was so in tune with that feeling. That these little thoughts could come in behind, 'yeah ok bugger off' you know it was almost like .... umm yeah, I was just so connected to whatever that this thinking couldn't break it. That's what was going, ... and it was exactly the same experience. So even though my head was going 'oh wow, God through a duck, wow, God through a wow, you know that didn't distract me. yeah it didn't distract me I was still experiencing the experience and even in the community

building workshop sitting here with like ..... are you going to say something now or not ... it just didn't break whatever I was physically experiencing. They were the same yeah. .... I was going to say rare, but they are increasing occasions in which ... umm I have less influence, .....my ooohh .... things going through my head have less influence over what I am experiencing they don't break it. Whatever I am experiencing is ummm stronger. **mmmm** So I have probably got out of the way [mumbled]. **When you say the experiencing, talking about your head .... and one thing with the thoughts, the experience** the body, something else yep, that is doing the experience in the body. the head stuff is just a distraction, a delusion really. I actually think that if I wanted to use the word, my soul knows exactly what is going on. My only problem with life is that my mind is taking a long time to catch up and you know, in colour [???] that's what's going on is that we are here just to help our mind catch up and enable it to catch up. 'OK come on'. You know 'get a little aware of what's going on'. ummm .... **mmm** any other questions? **Oh look, probably hundreds, but it feels like a really good place to kind of leave it for the moment. I just want to say that the experience of God through a duck, , my partner, she is a member of a group who have met through community building and other things and they have a meeting called the sacred ducks and they all meet and that is what it is called laugh,, Laugh. Wonderful isn't it? The sacred ducks. And I think they got it off Leunig. You know leunig yeah yeah with the ducks, yeah. I think it came from that somehow. It is yeah, so God through a duck. I couldn't think of a more wonderful thing to experience of God through. Besides the dog and cat. I had a fun one in our attitudinal healing night the other day when the facilitator rang up and umm I said to her, I said "I got the [mumbled part of sentence] or are we actually doing the principles of attitudinal healing' And she laughed and I said well [can't hear] end of tape**

## Transcript 2 - August 2000

### Can you tell me about your experience of being in community?

In community. (pause) Well I guess, um yeh, just to put it in context I guess. I flew from Australia to America to participate in a community building workshop in the p.... and 'I walked into a room of, I guess, about 20 people and felt very much like I was a, really a foreigner. (C/ laughter) And a, yeh cause I literally arrived in the country something like a, twelve hours before or something. So I was feeling very different and very isolated. Actually personally very disconnected. (C/ right) Extremely disconnected. Because here I was in this incredibly foreign culture and uh, there was every conceivable difference you could possibly, visually imagine in the room. There were black people and, there's a guy that was clearly American Indian, look. There was a theologian, a so (phone) **(C/ there was an American Indian I think your were saying)** American Indian, much difference in the room and a, we were joined by two facilitators and being kind of who it is that I am, this kind of corporate Australia arrives in the community building workshop in America. I kind of looked around and thought um God this is all a bit weird, weird. The facilitators came in and I thought, God I'm not very well presented and I made very, very harsh (C/right) enough, and somewhat surprising really for me, because I kind of am feeling I'm reasonably OK about embodying difference and whatever, but I was very judgmental and I guess it was, (pause) um, my way of, of perhaps dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different, to them and wondering what was going to happen. And um, I guess for the first day, um. In fact it was interesting because I ended up sitting next to a young guy and um, who I don't know, was a 28 year old from New York or somethink. And he had the incredible significance in the experience, as it so unfolded, to be quite honest. Because a, anyway, the upshot of that a, and as you do in community I think you typically connect very, very strongly for some reason, unknown to yourself, with particular people in group.

I remained I guess very disconnected, and in fact very early in the piece, there was a guy from Los Angeles who was a HIV Aides, he was dying of aides and um, he just kind of dumped, right in the middle of pseudo community and all this tension, his stuff and it just absolutely and utterly threw me. And I guess (C/ in what sense?) um, it was kind of too premature, it felt, like big for me. It was, suddenly felt and I guess um, some of what I recognised about myself is that um (long pause) is that I can only tolerate certain levels of, if, you know, I uh (struggling for words) my experience of community was very much about how it is, that it felt and internalised for me. Because, my capacity to tolerate too much of that stuff, too much, of that all at once, was just, overwhelmed me and my levels of emotional sensitivity are really typically, incredibly high - do you know what I mean? (didn't wait for reply) And I often felt myself like in this incredibly turbulent wave of emotion and all I wanted to do, was go and help these people all the time, I wanted to run over and solve it, or save it, or fix it, or stop it, because it was all too much.

And (C/ what was happening internally, like why, [wow] how do you, what's that like inside for you?) (sigh) It's, it's it has an incredible immediacy an urgency, it's a sense of kind of um, (pause) put it to an end. It, it translates for me in my (C/ It?) put the emotional intensity at rest. (C/ OK your experience of ...) I'm experiencing, because I, it feels explosive, it feels unmanageable, it feels like internal shaking. It's not about me wanting to actually say anything, I think that it's very much to do with my capacity to be able to tolerate, um, because imagine I'm an incredibly compassionate and empathetic person, and feel and pick up (pause) the emotional states of others and I, (pause) uh uh, community building I guess for me, that was one of the most extraordinary difficulties for me, personally was that you kind of did this, people would share their stuff and then you weren't allowed to go over and comfort them. I could, I could see the value in, uh, eventually when community finally came about. But, It was not, I couldn't, I couldn't go over and say (door bell) Carl, Oh!

Now you'll have to remind me where I was. (C/ OK, you were saying something about not being allowed to actually go over and, and a help people. Which interests me. Not allowed, your not allowed yourself to go over and) Oh well, to my understanding of the process, (drawn out) was, that at that point, oh that's actually interesting, (she laughed) in retrospect, because my sense was that it kind of, you weren't allowed to say anything to them, you weren't allowed to say um, because there was all this 'I' focus. And you weren't allowed to be in (pause) um, Dan, this particular guy's name was Dan, I mean you know I felt as though I couldn't kind a, be there for him, or, or (pause) (C/ Um) Do you, do you? yeh. Because if, maybe that's the pseudo community (laugh, laugh) I don't know. Maybe, maybe it's because, maybe, well it is, it's obviously all about how it is that I was in the process, because I thought very much, I felt powerless. (C/ um) Too actually assist or help, or whatever. Because I didn't think that was, kind of allowed. Isn't that a bizarre, well now that I actually open up and say allow because it actually happened, later in the process where people did connect, but at point in time I felt very much like I was kind of, um, well experiencing a lot of, you know, like emotional intensity, because there was a lot of, you know, I'm dying of aides and you know a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group, and um (pause) I felt powerless, I guess. Or too, and maybe allowed is too, yeh allowed is how I felt, I mean I felt as though I guess the, the rules of the group. (laughter - C/ alright) That you weren't allowed to do that. Did you, maybe that's not, maybe I've got that wrong.

(C/ Well, I don't know about a right or wrong. It sounds to me like, at that time that, that was what was true for you, and therefore you've got power) Well maybe, maybe what we're now saying is, that you know I was afraid of my own, you know, emotional intensity and I felt very much, I guess, for that first part of the day and it kind of changed during the course of the day, to be quite honest. It felt very emotional, it felt like, I don't know how much of the other people's pain I'm going to be able to sustain. (pause) Without kind of, and sit here and listen to it, and not kind of fall apart at the sayings. Do you know what I mean? (C/ um) Like, fall all over the floor, so to speak.

**(C/ How did that change for you?)** Well, it became, well do you know what's really fascinating, is because, and I'm digressing slightly. I'm in my own personal journey and this is my, now that I speak about it with you, out loud, it kind of contextualise the kind of stuff that I've done. Because, my own emotionality is something I have never been able to (pause) beat. You know, emotionality within the context of my own life is being, kind of not OK, getting angry, getting you know, all those things about, my emotionality is always been treated as if it kind of unexceptionable or bad behaviour. Little girls don't cry, you know, little girls don't get angry, little girls scream, little girls don't, kind of, we don't buy into other peoples emotionality, that's their problem, not our problem. That's all, so when I speak about it now (pause) which is for the first time out loud, it's kind of an interesting experience when I hear how I actually articulate it. (C/ right) So I experienced it as kind of a real, I don't know how much ----- it's a tolerance issue. My capacity to be able to tolerate, alright, other people's pain (pause) to kind of going into (pause) a really defensive behaviour, like if I can't kind of stop these people, from kind of dumping their, you know, their really difficult stuff on me, then I gonna put up, I'm just going to be a brick wall here. You know, because I can't tolerate this, so I effectively built this brick wall, and it's like can't this be happy (with emphasis) do we all have to be dealing with sad stuff?

**(C/ OK, so do you see emotionality as being the sad, stuff, I mean for you? Is that, like you said, angry you can't cry or scream, so is emotionality for you is those sort of things?)** Well now, upon reflection, cause, cause we were kind of working in two places here, but back in the community building exp, but now that I'm out of there, no. I, I can't remember working in my own personal process on being able to be in my own emotionality, no I been in my head and that's very much how it is that I was. I think. I believe that was in the workshop because Miss Corporate America was in the workshop, my twin was in the workshop, as well. (C/ Ok) We could out-head anyone. Anyone wanted to get in head to head argument with us in the workshop, it kind of we could out-head. That's where you live, when you don't want, when you afraid of your emotional kind of state, you know, we have very complex strategies to live in our head, right? And that's how I sense myself. (C/ uh um) And that's how I sensed it was. It was like Oh My God! This is really confronting, there's a lot of emotion ...I see he is (?) There's a lot of emotion and probably, you know, tough emotion. So in answer to your question, I don't know whether I see emotionality necessarily as being sad and angry, as distinct from joy. But I guess on pon, kind of putting a name to some kind of pontics I guess, sadness and anger were things that I wasn't allowed to actually express. Um, (pause) so, and I was kind of, you know, (3 banging sounds) brought out, to give you know family, I guess, joy and whatever. But all the bad stuff was hidden away. (C/ um) So, um, yeh. It was the difficult stuff that was kind of like, um, yeh. So, I don't, it was about me being able to tolerate that, and that, that was actually, that, I felt that very much internally. (C/ hm hm) If you ask about body experience, it was like it feels explosive and it was kind of like (pause) my capacity to be able to contain that, a, we seriously tested. It was not like I felt like I wanted to actually, kind a, be compassionate or empathetic at that point, ah, I was feeling the pain but I didn't have the words. And there's a reason for telling you this, because it kind of actually changed, shifted dramatically and I went into this incredibly defensive mode and now when I think about it, as you ask it, I guess I kind of um, (pause) was having the body experience and kind of went to where I know best, which is the head. And so the head became very arrogant and very defensive and kind of tried to orchestrate this group back into kind of seeing this shit wasn't necessary, and that we could actually get through to community and it didn't actually have to be, um all this great purging (emphasised)stuff. (soft laughter both) And um, I was supported in the group by a young girl, who was in fact an FCE employee, who was 18 or 17 or something. Who in fact hadn't said anything for the entire first day. And um, she actually supported me and said "well I've got to agree with Louise, I mean this is, why is this all about ugly shit" you know, and it was quite interesting cause at that point in time I'd then saw the value of innocence to the group. (C/ um) The fact that you didn't actually have to have shared, that was kind of like there was a bit of a trans, do you kind of understand what I am saying?

There was a kind of a bit of a transformational point there where I suddenly realised that I was actually part of the group and that, that, that I was getting a lot of angry stuff back, to be quite honest. And I wasn't liking it. (Laughter) I wanted to change it and I was pissing people off, and little miss innocence over there who could never have any ugly shit happen in her life, you know, and um, her, she kind of stood up and for the first time, you know when somebody, and you've been there for a whole day and they don't say anything and then suddenly this sweet thing sort of kind of speaks and (long pause) and agrees, but it, she agreed from a different space, it was kind of like I got my contrast of like, (pause) um, and I'm not articulating this very well, but I kind of got it from her. And it kind of tempered me slightly and I, I thought then, at the end of that day incredibly separate from the group. I felt very isolated.

**(C/ And did this really tie in with that feeling of disconnectedness you talked about right at the start ----- during that, is that something that ?)** Oh, it's yeh, it's, it's not, look I have to say it's not, it's not conscious, because I didn't consciously walk in feeling antagonistic like I wanted to kind of, I wanted to be a part of it. I was there committed to being in this community thing. I travelled half way around the world, I'd read the book, you know, I wanted to be in this experience, but kind of this is how it unfolded, you know, I am very vigilant about how it is I experience my own self, I guess. I watch, I am a watcher and I just had my conscious control over what was happening. I knew I was being a pain in the arse, but I was kind of trapped in it. And I, upon reflection think it had something to do with my capacity, (pause) because, you know, and it gave me a real sense of how fragmented I was and how difficult I was. Um, and how I was protecting that emotional part of myself and what lengths I would go to, to do that. You know, I would isolate and alienate myself from some wonderful human beings and, and really the potential to be in community, a, to protect that part of me, that vulnerable part of me that kind of looked like I was just --- than ever.

Anyway, I actually at the end of the day spoke to one of the facilitators and said, "-----" and she said "look, you know I encourage you to kind of just" and she did it really gently, she said oh, you know something along the lines "of what separates me from the group" and I kind of got that, you know, well I didn't get right then, (C/ hmm ) but, but I went out, in fact with, to dinner with the HIV aides guy and the um, the young guy who sat next to me. The New York guy. And um, (pause) I had dinner and, cause a, we didn't do an inhouse one, they don't, it's, it's kind of just a day by day thing. Cause I understand here you do J H---- is all residential, whereas mine wasn't. (C/ right, OK)

And um, I got that I didn't get what it, what, I really didn't know what speaking from the heart was. I didn't really know what that part, I never been there, you know I can speak from the head, but I didn't really understand what it meant to speak from the heart. You know, to kind of be present in that space. And it was all this speaking from the heart stuff, that was kind of driving me nuts, you know? (Laughter) And uh, first thing the next morning I said uh, and I was a very different body feeling, I knew I had to speak. **(C/ What happened in the body. Can you describe something about what your body was like?)**

Oh, It, it just um, um, (long pause) I was going to be, I was actually probably going to be physically ill if I didn't speak. I was so moved to speak from someplace that I'd never spoken about before and um, it was dry throat, it was agitated, it was kind of like close to, you know that pre feeling of fainting type, it's like I'm not going to even hold myself here together. (soft laugh) I'm going to fall off the planet if I don't kind of move through this space. (C/ umm) I'm actually either, I not going to be able to sustain this. So, I went for it, I just kind of, kind of spoke, from this place that I never spoken from before in my life.

And um, I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone, (C/ right) told my story before in my life and I could hear the difference, I could hear the difference (with soft emphasis). And um, you probably kind of, I'd slowed right down, (soft laugh) I'm slowing down now, cause I relived the experience, extraordinary because I just, I could just hear the difference in my voice, I could hear the difference in the words, I could hear the difference in the tone, I could hear the, and I could see the difference in group, and it felt to me and I

guess this is very much a core of how I experienced community, it felt very much like a, um, (pause) the reflection in the pond. I, I, (slight stutter/hesitation) I actually couldn't open my eyes, I spoke with my eyes closed. And um, I couldn't, and fortunately, fortunately this guy that was next to me, he was extraordinary, I mean he was like, he was like my anchor to the ground, he just intuitively anchored me, cause it was incredibly terrifying experience for me. (gentle laughter)

And I kind of, it was almost like I didn't have to tell the putrid ugly parts of my life, which have historically been you know, very unpalatable, abuse things and things like that when I was a child, whatever. But I didn't actually have to get right down to the ugly stuff, but I kind of, (pause) went to this space um, and it kind of just, it was like a pond, that's what it was, it felt like I was looking and being reflected, which I think is the powerful experience in community, being the (emphasis) most powerful experience, which kind of, that for me was the transformational point, where (pause) and that's why I guess I'm so interested in that, that part, that part when you actually get the capacity to look in somebody else eyes and it kind of mirrors, they truly understand, they truly are there and present for you, right at that point.

And, I mean that was that part of me that knew that it didn't matter whether they were Indians and they had, you know it was just that, you know (pause, soft laugh) that point in which you are truly reflected. And I, I keep on I guess whilst I'm talking I keep on, cause I have children of my own you know, and I know (emphasis) the power of reflection and mirroring, for small children and the importance of that - I'm going to cry in a minute - (crying) and I miss a lot of that (C / hmm) so, it's a very powerful - huh, I was going to cry - (sniffing) that's the powerful (struggling with words/tears) transformational point for me. When you try to connect with people (struggling with emotion) at, I looked at them and it was kind of, it took me a long time to look at them and (pause) you know, I think very much then the whole group changed and it was kind of, um, I mean it, yeh, it changed with the group and that ---- I guess. (reaction laughter) And uh, for me (walking away) a huge experience, I guess (walk back) and unbelievably facilitated by um, the guys that took us through the p-- cels.

I guess what I am saying is, that, that it's about, that's, yeh what is that? What is that? (Huh/laugh) Um, and I was exhausted all I wanted to do after that point was kind of, you know (pause) lie down in someones arms and just go to sleep. I felt very small, actually I felt very much like a child and very much like um, yeh, I just wanted to kind of sit quietly and, I sat quietly and I guess I heard, you know, the group move on you know, kind of a comforting but distant way, and I came back into the group you know, maybe a good two hours later or something. I didn't leave, physically leave I was there or some.. Kind of, and it sounds you know, when I talk about it it kind of sounds a bit indulgent almost, because I became, I mean you know, it was kind of like I became the Messiah and that's how they referred to me as being very much in on the Rabbi's gift thing, you know. I became very much that person, an that was like - huge for me, huge (emphasised) the fact that for the very first time in my life, I actually had the experience of what being reflected in such an incredibly profound way, and I had to go half way across the world (laughing) to do it. So, (C / for me I just want to say I feel really touched, that you're able to explain it to me in that way, in honest and beautiful way, talking about sense of community that, like, I was, that reflectiveness was I had it in here (heart) somewhere, it was like I was very moved by your story. - Louise softly laughing) Thank you. Um, so it just kind of transformed then, it just completely transformed and, and, and um, I became very aware that um, (long pause) no, I kind of lived in this world of needing feed back you know? it's like, have I said the right thing? Is that OK? Is this going to be OK? blrr, blrr, blrr, blrr and I'd done, I kind of like, and it became the kind of jolly me and they kind of supported me and it became a, oh we can try that, we can give her feed back, you know? So it was really this unbelievably supportive environment where it, kind of, I became like a, (pause) and it does sound indulgent (reflecting) now when work about, when I talk about it but I kind of like needed to give that part of me in order for them to kind of give (pause) a deeper

level or deeper part of them (C / hum) to the group. And I guess that's, that was profound for me.

Do you, do you know what I mean? It was kind of like I had to go there (long pause) and maybe that's, that's lesson learning, there's some huge learning in that for me, that kind of there's, there is this part of me that has the capacity not to only you know, to step into that space and I was, I felt kind of like scary, let me tell you really (c / really scary) really scary. (laugh - C / terrified before ..) Oh, it was, it was scary absolutely like, like life and death. It's really that (C / right) you know. And I think, I mean as I do you know, some of the work I do now, I mean, I think that that need for reflection in humanity is so strong and it's kind of like (pause) you know, it's like the fear associated with that, it's that I am really interested in this kind of fear based behaviour stuff and, and where that fear came from, because once I'd over come (emphasis) that fear and realised that I wasn't gonna die (drawn out) if I opened my eyes and looked at these people and be, in that space, then I was going to survive and it was gonna be that profound, it's like God it, that seems like such a huge step, but it's such kind leaping step. It looks like a little step but it's really huge (emphasised/laugh). So um, (C / it doesn't feel like a small step from where I'm sitting/ laugh) well it kind of yeh, I mean and I can minimise it you see and that's who it is and I'll make it look kind of small and insignificant and whatever. It so contextualises, it's kind of like um, you know for me post that experience, or after that experience it's like and you know, my um, my background or my history, career has been in I.T. and it feels like a network upgrade to me, it feels like ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, (C / ha) ch, ch, ch, you know what I mean? (laughing) Every parker (?) so that's why it feels like, you know, it feels like as I, it's back to this internal/external thing, it's kind like it brought a whole bunch of pieces together. (pause) You know what I mean? It felt like bits of, you know, like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted and it was kind of like ump, I felt kind of more whole. (C / um, um) And um, that was a very big part of me that's kind of been alienated from who it is that I am came back and I think that that's some, in fact I've written about that and um, and also contributed to you know, some of the, some who've worked at FCE wants to do about internal and external community, because I think that's the experience that you've had where you actually kind of (long pause) you know pseudo, it, it's like pseudo community, it's kind of like you keep those parts, you know what I mean? It's kind of like, it's really hard for me to articulate cause I'm very visual space, I'm very right brain so, I don't do things ---- I'm thinking the whole time in pictures you see, that's why it gets very confronting for me when I get into the emotional stuff, cause it's very, like, I'm right there in the experience of what's happening, so, I kind of call back on some of that stuff. So when I'm talking I don't know if I'm actually making a lot of sense to (laugh).

**(C / Yes, you are making sense to me and your talking about wholeness and changes in, can you describe to me how that wholeness felt, in the body? What, was there anything that you could say about that?)**

(Louise - deep sigh) It felt, I guess, I guess um, and I guess it best described because um, (pause) oh, OK, I can explain it, it feels not, it doesn't feel like the previous experience where it was kind of agitated and explosive and erupting and volcanic and all that, and typically uh, what I dump cause I'm in this personal process, I've done a lot of voice work, not voice, but I mean not to sing, but to kind of make sound stuff, so for me to kind of naturally do that, and I guess what it actually comes as as sound and it feels like it comes very much from my body, you know it's not from like a manufactured sound in fact when I went to Colorado I said in the group one day, I said "look does anyone want to go to the mountains this afternoon", you know after the workshop, because I wanted, I couldn't get up there and a couple of these guys had their four wheel drive and they said "Yeh". So I went and so, and made this sound, I'd never made this sound before in the mountains and um, there was a group of us and they sat and, and I felt, it feels mournful, it feels like it comes from long way away. It feels very timeless sound, and in fact it's got a very mournful sadness, it's like, it to me it's like I kinda got back that part that I lost when I was small. You know, it's kinda felt like it came, in fact it even felt like it came back before I



was born (laugh) it sort of comes from like, had a really long historical kind of feel about it, coming from a long way away and I had to go to the mountains to do it, and in the Rockies in Colorado it was just awesome, infact there was another Sarah Jane joined me and she said "do you mind if I join you in the sound" and I said "no I didn't", and we sang and she had her small daughter, six year old daughter there, and uh, it was a pretty amazing experience because I just produced this sound, I a, I don't sing --- away, hah! I just had this incredible sound that I a, kinda comes (pause) deep from within my being and a, anyway yes. So, that, I guess the best way to explain it is through body experiences through the sound I was, a, it feels um, (long pause) sad. I don't know if that's the kind a, that an emotional isn't it, it's, it's kinda feels healing (pause), like a, it doesn't feel as hysterical, as amplified, as urgent, as (pause) agitated.

So it, I guess if you think about it it's like, yeh, it's healing it feels like it's coming back together and, and to calmer and feels kinda more (pause) full. Connected (C / yeh) connected, it doesn't feel fragmented, it doesn't feel kinda lost. (pause) ----- going. (C/ yes it does, does) So, I you know I guess my, my and I, you know historically I would have been a, somebody who would have been desperate to give things form, but now I kind of just say well that was an experience, I don't know what it really meant, um, but my sense is that it kind of was connected to the reflection thing. And um, I have a pond upstairs, like I've, I've drawn a pond you know, and when, anytime anyone says anything positive about me, actually I don't know how to take neg, I don't know how to take positive things in, so I have a pond that I stick a toe on (laughing) as part of my work. Cause I typically hear the negative and not the positive.

**(C / Has that changed since your experiences -----?)** (long pause) I, I have, I have al significantly, I mean yeh, uh, er, and I still work on that in my personal process, because I have some very significant issues to work on in my personal stuff, um, and that is a real issue. I mean the emotionality issue and actually, cause, because what actually you know, I guess is a result of my experiences being, that as a result of kind of what has transpired in my life I have actually disconnected from my sensing and my feeling functions. Strongly disconnected from those feelings and when I am in community, I kind of have like a really strong feeling function is very present and cannot be controlled and the sensing function is really acute, it's become much more kind of you know the hunch, the feeling, the intuition, the kind of knowing part of me which I have never been able to trust because I've always been told that I'm kind of, you know, been, it's been not ok (hesitant). (C/ um)

I think those things become very present (pause) when you're connected at that level, because I kind of knew almost knew before kind of, it's like I knew that this is what I had to do. (C / OK) My capacity to know that was kind of, like nobody pushed me there, nobody said to me I mean, the facilitators made some statement about "what is it that keeps you separate?" And I guess I just intuitively knew, what kept me seperate, now that's not an easy thing to kind of know, I don't know where that answer came from, you see (C/ yeh) there's a part of me that says that at this time, the ether something provided me all my knowing, provided me with the answers to that question. And here was I in this incredibly unique, and a, so there was a part of me that oft, often continuously says, you know, maybe I went all the way to be in a community building workshop to just get that experience.

(laughter) You know, I am not supposed to feel ----- stuff or whatever. (laughing - C/ yeh) You know what I mean? (laughing softly) A long way to go to get the experience. Um, but, yeh so um, (C/ hummm) OK

**(C/ amazing, it sounds like an amazing experience. Can I take it back to something you said about, that really intrigued me, was after you had spoken and that incredible experience that had the group reflect you back, reflect, you'd seen your reflection of yourself back. You went into a very small space after it (V/ umm um) and you left the group kind of for a couple of hours, can you tell me a little more about the sense of that for yourself, that couple of hours?)**

Yeh, I, I think it was um, I am, just going back to the experience I kind of um, (pause) I could only tolerate again and I always use the word tolerance, for my capacity to tol, it's not

about tolerating other people it's my own capacity for tolerance um, it's like the tolerance of emotionality on this occasion, when there reflection I couldn't take in, you know, it's like the, the I can't, it's like taking in the reflection was just too much, and I had to kind of shut down from there. Because I couldn't tolerate that, you know, too much taking in. It's like in that the contrast is huge, do you understand the shift? What I'm trying to say is kind of un, un, I go into this space where I can't take in any more, you know, it's, it's, it's all me, it's all about me, it's all kind of Oh My God, you know? God! And um, it's not that, don't get me wrong, it's not about my, me ego me, it's about me being in, being reflected and the powerful experience of that. So I felt small, and I kind of felt like I wanted to kind of sort of self nurture in that space, I felt very kind of I wanted to withdraw, take away the focus from me and kind of just be. I didn't have a lot of energy, let me tell you. I mean, I just didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point. But I could hear their voices, but I wasn't kind of really engaged. Uh, because I didn't feel kind of very big at that point.

**(C/ right [nervous laugh] so your relationship with the group at that point was?**

Oh, I was, I was ----- I felt very much like I was, belonged to the group, I didn't feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group, I felt very very connected to the group. And I felt like they were kinda taking care of me by just kind of moving on and just doing their thing and yeh, I didn't feel like I been through this incredible experience and then just kicked out, or left to, not, I didn't feel that at all. In fact I think they respected and honoured in a funny sort of way the experience and really truly kind of, in fact I was kind of like in a little kind of overwhelmed to be quite honest by their, the response and reaction in the group, and I remember quite distinctly thinking maybe this is an American thing, you know? (laugh) You know, this is kind of like it was **(C/ a strange cultural thing?)** Well no, I didn't actually think it was a strange cultural thing, I had a sense it was a human thing, but it was kind of like (pause) you know, that, they, it was, it was that it was very nurturing, I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much. You know, there was kind of, and they were trying to understand and they kind of deconstructed me a bit, so I kind of was, do you know what I mean? I was listening to this stuff as they kind of, like the Indian was saying "you know it's interesting, cause yesterday Louise gave me, you know, she was a real pain in the arse and if she didn't shut-up I was gonna tell her to shut-up" and um, you know they kinda kind of, kind of, it was, it's just, it's just amazing how, you know, this can happen. (door knock) This never happened in my house, let me tell you (walks away - and back). Sorry about that.

**(C? No, no you were saying about being deconstructed and having the Indian was saying like sort of you were a pain in the arse)** And a, this is the kind of dialogue that I kind of heard, but it was kind of, um, I didn't feel offended, I didn't feel like they didn't show any respect for it, or whatever, it was kind of I become, became the kind of moving on point for them all and it kind of took their discussion a little bit deeper. I guess they, they saw cause you know, as you do, they, there was a lot of joining of hands and a, kind of you know, whatever. Connection really, obviously my experience at that point was as I said the reflecting part, but that experience of, there is truly something that connects (pause) humanity that transcends whatever shit has gone on in this room. Transcends gender, race, story it transcends story, it, it, story even becomes, history becomes irrelevant you know, it's kind of like (pause) it took story and history and shit to get us there - sorry - to get us there, but kind of whatever was that happened there, and it felt to me like in the presence of spirit or it felt very much like something intangible became present. Um, that connected us, for that period and I guess that's what I experienced as community. **(C/ wow)** That's truly what I experienced, I mean it was like um, I mean it was awesome, I mean it was awesome and I guess you know, um, I had the personal experience, I kind of, had no conscious control over the step that I took, um, to go to that move to speak from thin space. So, I don't know if everyone else experience it like that?

**(C/ What was the sense like after you explained sort of a spirit or something that came into the group or connected you, can you tell me more about your sense of that, or of how you experienced the group or the space at that time?)**

(long pause) (C/ **I mean there are three questions there**) No, no, I'm, I'm kind of a, processing what you just asked. I guess it was like um, it's, Scott Peck uses this, this description but I absolutely and utterly, yeh, that's how I experienced, it's kind of like the group makes way for community to become present, it's kind of like a natural, I think he says that in his book doesn't he? I mean a community is not created, it's not like we go in there and we consciously go, Oh My God we've done pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness or whatever, here we are, we are going into community it's actually not, the group actually don't create it, they make way for it to become present and it's through you know, the way in which that group dynamic works or that group works or is facilitated, or whatever and I am sure at some level, and I know that now having done the training, there's interventions, there's transition stuff and all that stuff as the group moves forward and you know, it's the skill of the facilitator to say (phone) what of ---- thing (phone) Experience of that, that at that point, it was people kind of gave up everything. I think it was a real stripping down, to make way. Do you know what I mean? I mean the kind of, you know the Indian alcoholic who, who ended up being an alcoholic and he ended up being all these things and I kinda get, it kind of put, it put yeh. (emotional) Because like it or lump it, it doesn't matter whether you've kinda got all the best intentions you do walk into that room and you go, you know, yes I mean Dan the HIV Aides guy he laughed at the end of it. He said "you know, I didn't tel, you how cynical I am, I thought you were just some bloody, you know, fake Indian you know, guy that just, guy that wanted more attention, you know, and Indians are pretty God dam do ya, (soft laughter in voice) I thought you were gonna make out ..." (soft laugh) He actually thought he was making out he was an alcoholic (laugh) Indian to get sympathy. I mean, but it was kinda like people became (pause) at that moment I guess, you know, it was kind of, it felt whole, it felt, it felt calm, it felt (pause) kind like everybody had cast aside all that stuff for a full moment I guess. For a moment (emphasis) and it felt, urr, I try kinda (long pause) an, as, it is, it is encapsulated in that sense of being connected, incredibly deeply connected with people that we have no (emphasis) connection with, that transcends, I mean not no connection, but it transcends, you know, (long pause) their stories, their life, their history, their everything. Oh a, we had a black African American in the group and a, I forgot, and a we had white Americans who, you know, dump their shit on the black Af.. and we're never going to feel guilty about your crap, don't you b, we had huge chaos, I mean massive chaos cause there was an enormous amount of guilt felt. And um, and, and the troubles and the issues and the, there was a married couple there with a, you know, one of the facilitators was a um, homo, she lived a life of a heterosexual female left her husband and was living in a kind of ur, lesbian relationship with, a I mean just, you name it every (pause) possible complexity (soft laugh) and everyone spewed all over one another for the first day. (C/ um, um) And it kinda went beyond that, where it just kinda didn't matter. (C/ hum) So it felt supportive, it felt um, it kinda felt to me, it felt very unleashed, it felt, I didn't feel suffocated or explosive anymore. (long pause)

And a, as I do my, I guess my work and I don't know whether you've known that, but I did up to a certain point until my circumstances changed with starting psycho therapy and, and a you know, there's a character structure in, in this work, or in the work that we do, which is the expressive clinging which is kind of exacerbate by the fact that hu, if you are denying that you kind of emotionality and whatever, you do be come very amplified and clinging, you know, you become very much the drama queen, you become very explosive, you become very whatever and um, it kind of knocked that right out of me. (laugh) (C/ good one) You know what I mean? It's, it's, it's like, I didn't feel like I was on the raft clinging to, kind of, and that's how first day felt. (C/ OK, yeh) You know there were times when I felt like I was really old ----- eyes I wasn't really gonna kina you know, I wasn't going to be able kinda continue it (nervous cough) because it felt very explosive (C/ hum) And that's very alienating because nobody is buying your shit, nobody's buying your drama queen stuff, all your amplification or anything. It's only when you actually kind of move to that real, I mean that kind of move to speak or speak from the heart space. Uh, and that's

how I actually began, when I spoke I said, "I'd realised that um, I don't know what it means to speak from the heart, I actually don't even know what means," I said "no, I can't do that, I don't know what to do." And that's how my story started. And um, I really could sense that, you know, I could see that I just didn't know where to go with that. And I think that my realisation now is that um, (C/ what?) what it's on me through speaking from that space that you truly connect with others. And a, and then there's a sense of spirit present when you do have that kind of bringing together of the reflection, the speaking from the heart, the, cause your kind like you know, it's like the communication is kinda clear, there's no static, no kinda crapp in a way, you know there's no, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff, there's no, everything just gets kind of moved away, kinda really clear you know, feels very clear and uh, it feels very primitive, it feels kind of like it hasn't got the shit of the ages on it. (joy/laughter) Do you know what I mean? (C/ um, magic) It feels very primitive for me, felt very tribal to me, very primitive.

Has that? Cause that's actually Oh sorry. (C/ no go) Ah, it's been, it's really been interesting because I guess in my personal, cause there's a lot of like, I had a lot of dreams and a lot of other stuff happening all at the same time when I was in America, extraordinary ----- amazingly rich complex and a lot of really interesting stuff happened, you know, the dream world and stuff like that and insights and it's relationships I made, you know, connections I made in the community, as it's ---- community and whatever. So um, ah what was I going to say, I am gonna say something (C/ you were talking about tribal.) Oh, yeh thank you, um, because I have a lot of kind of middle age type, not middle age (laugh) my chronological age, I, I dream in the middle ages, I dream in Egyptian times I have very ancient dreams and so um, and I kind of have of lot of this feminine and masculine and I think that's part of my personal journey, it's kind of, my life, I've manifested myself in, in the world at large in a very masculine way, you know, run the corporation, accumulated money whatever and it's kind of like there's this part of me that feels like it's kind of going back to the old (emphasised) feminine ways and that feels very pre patriarchal I've done a lot of dreams about the, you know, feeling that new state of encar---- a lot of very kind of rejecting the masculine and reconnecting with that, so it feels very, a lot and the sound is very, you know, the sound from what I kind of been reflected it sounds very kind of tribal but, and very ancient sound. So um, the experience was very much a nurturing kind of feminine u, u, connected u, u thingy do you know what I mean? Tribal thing. (C/ yes, yes) Does that make sense? (C/ yes, your looking at me like you ...) No, no (C/ like you, do you want conformation, yes, yes it does, it does um ) you see, actually I think their questions I've never articulated you see, so I've kind a of um, trying to kind a put it into words. (C/ and for me I'm hearing those words I [V/ oh, good] I do get a sense of it and um, it's not gobble-de-gook. It does, it does resound with your mind [V/ right, good] --- personal experiences and um, yeh.) cause we did um, I don't know whether I can digress, cause, cause we, we were in the context of (C/ I was just going to say we could actually finish the interview there, if you want.) (other voices)

**(C/ I was just wondering maybe just briefly how this experiences maybe effected or, yeh effected how you are now after you return and the sort of post work shop and post being in community experiences that you've had or changes you may have experienced and maybe how that may relate to work? Your conception of what you want to do with your work?)**

Yeh, wa, wa, I guess um, I guess there are a number of parts to it because for me the you know, I went esensably to America to do facilitation work a, because I was inspired by the book and the materials I read and um, and had a very profound personal experience um, so I guess at a personal level it kinda feels, I'm really unclear about how it will translate into my work. I guess, I guess um, the you know, it's kind of hard for me to seperate the two because I am ---- the group, because I am whatever um, but the experience of community is been unbelievably profound and I mean I suppose how I experience that now is with a sense of frustration purely and simply because I kind of believe that this is (pause) what humanity, the, I mean it's not, it's not just one small thing it's like very big you know? It's kind of like it's a universal thing, I think this reflection connection stuff is what everyone

kind of, everyone is out there kind of seeking happiness and this, that I mean a connection good, bad, different whatever it's just that connection that, that connection is what humans want. (Ha) So I've come back with a kind of, and I've got to be really cautious about this because you know, I know that I'm, I'm a big humanity person I kind of want to make it big, you know, I want to make it kind of whatever. And so, in answer to your question, I think um, it has an incredible impact on me because I, I now lived the experience and I kind of, just know that this is just something that other people think, I mean it kinda contextualises the consulting work that I did historically where, I've written about it, I worked in most places where people would come in and say you know, "we want you to kind of you know, we've got these issues" and I did, I don't know whether you knew this I want to explain it to you and I'd go on and do this kind of strategic visualizing stuff large corporational wal, wal, wal, wallop and it was always about the economic bottom line and I talk to these people and I kind of, did corporate chiropractic like ----- right across layers and things like that. Kind of a process mapping not so much process but kind of get the vision of the company and find out these people got a different one and it's all over the place, so I kind of built congruent type stuff and there's an incredible amount of fall-out in corporate life in me, I mean in the work place um, because people do feel undervalued, people feel isolated undervalued, um, and people interpret their own truth, they kind of create their own truth within that context and they kind of go, and that's really tragic because it's like you know, what do you think this organisation ----- on they go yab-a-dy yabba well (laugh) that's not where it's going you know, it's going somewhere else it's all that sort of stuff. So a, um, (pause) I just, I just, it's we in forces as I see it in families, I see it in my own family experience I, --- where, disconnection it's just, it's just people seeking that mirroring connection all the time (C/ umm) so I just see it as something that humanity kind of ---. So it's pretty big, you know, I can't change humanity (laughing) well I can do my small bit to creating this, some understanding of that (C/ yes) So how will that translate for me I don't know, will I conduct workshops, will I go and talk about it, will I write about it, you know? I mean I might. I can write, I can speak and I mean I've done speaking historically, I want to talk about it, I want to actually be able to be kind of, and so I'm in that confusing state at the moment. It's like, do you actually have to go on, and do it (dropped voice) make a little bit, make it big, do you know what I mean? Every less, everything that comes my way I wanted to go up and do the national series of workshops and that's big right? (C/ yes) Then I suddenly realised ----- in a block away, everything I see.

I have this incredible experience by the way, when I was in the mountains in Colorado doing this exercise we were actually on the mountain and we were given this kind of test, it wasn't a test wrong word, we were to go and spend time in the bush by our self and collect something that kind of had some significance, that kind of spoke to us in the natural surroundings, right? Quite an extraordinary experience, you might have even done this before (C/ **hmm, hmm, I have**) oh you have, and (C/ **something similar**) something similar, well and it was really again really interesting because I'd been through this incredibly humbling experience in Seattle in the community building workshop, and yet again her was I on the mountains of Colorado, an this is another thing that answers your question about kind of being in this space and moving in and out of it and do you actually permanently stay in space or do you actually kind of move in and out of it all the time? But I went into the bush and I wanted to make, I wanted to make this huge kind of warrior woman headdress thing out of all sorts of things in the bush, I was looking for a big stick, do you think I could find one single bloody piece of nature that look like (laugh) I couldn't find a bloody big stick that wouldn't break, I mean every bloody stick just crumbled and every bit of, you know watch-a-ma-call-it straw, twig or bit just broke. So I gave up, I actually gave up infact when I stepped out on this rock to contemplate what it is that I was kinda regroup, I was actually sitting there and I picked up this rock and it was actually had, it was a little rock with (C/ little rock) that rock (bumping sound), with all these gold pieces in it and I kinda looked at it and thought a well that's not, well I don't know what that's got to do with any, I'll just put that near the rock and then I left off and um, tried to find this

hair dressing and got seriously pissed off and went back and sat on the rock, and thought this is not gonna work and we gonna have to finish this exercise and so I've done my thing what am I gonna do-oo? And I actually realised, I mean that led to the -----  
- and I guess all, all this so many, and this is how I experienced America you know, it's kinda like the lessons about fear.

Now, that which you seek is about this far away and I kind of always look out there for the big answer, cause what I actually found in the end was my unbelievably, perfect and fragile stick and this absolutely the most exquisite and unique, you know, I wanted to crown the stick thing but it was kinda like it ended up being, this rock spoke to me with my venerability and my fragility and my kind of, that whole exim was there for me and I guess that's what I took back to the group and it was kind of, (giggle) that's how I live my life you know, I wanna make it big, I wanna worry about the media, I need to kina bring it, you know make it smaller but there's always that part of me that kind of gets dragged back into the bigness part, so um, (cough/clear throat) and that's not big because I think (pause) and I've worked through this, it's not big because I necessarily have to be-ee big (emphasised) it's just I've kind of got the energy for that (C/ ummm) I'm kind of, that's who it is that I am, and so that when you (pause) ah, I'm sorting at the moment about what principles, how I apply these principles in the work that I do um, and where they fit and a, I want to make, yuo know, I want, you know, my, ah, my perspective on community building is kind of like, sure but, this is the sort of shit that we need to, for reconciliation you know, this is kinda that level of stuff, you know, this is, that's where this stuff should be. And I have to be really cautious about saying this Carl, because I kinda, that's how it is that I am, but it's not about me being whatever it's like just absolutely knowing that these principles in some way shape or form whether they come in the shape of a workshop as it currently is, or whatever it (long pause) clearly what people want and, and, and it you know, it's me working out my own life you know, that kind of like about it, speaking about it, publishing a book about it, what is it? That kind of brings this awareness greater, is it joint kinda workshops and whatever (C/ hummm) um, cause I'm a build, I guess my skill is you know, I'm a bridge builder, I'm a kind of a yeh, I have, I can build bridges between things and I kind of I guess my gift is knowing when things don't line up, and when, not when they do line up but when things don't kinda fit. And the way in which the workshops can't, the workshops themselves are an extraordinary experience but it's kind of like how this community stuff is brought to the world but it doesn't kind of fit.

To me it kinda doesn't fit (C/ hum, hummm) it needs kinda be in the context of people that (phone) that, that are (phone) committed to the principles (phone) of community need to work behind that (break) thing, do you know what I mean? I could go and do what I've done historically is, you know, tarnish the model, change it, bastardise it, call it something else not, not, not because I'd want but do you know what I mean? To kind of slink it in the back door, to kind of get greater awareness in the workplace (sigh) but I wrote about this in fact I don't even know why I wrote about this with ..., but I (chair sound/laugh) I've got a captive audience I gonna actually write this because (pause) the sense that I have currently is that um, you know when I talk to people about community it's kind of like that part of people that go 'st', this is it. I've got a ----- friend of mine who writes for the Age right, she reads my stuff and she physically, this is extraordinary, this is absolutely this, this is what humanity wants, but it's like do I personally have to be a part of, I mean, you mean I've actually got to go and sit in a workshop, that's my sense of it. Do you know what I mean? (C/ um, umm, yeh) But what act, but they don't quite know or maybe that's an Australian thing, they don't know whether they want the experience of being in community. So what I guess I(C/ they want without doing it) I want to know that there are people like you and me out there that kind of gets the essence of this work, (pause) that kind of can somehow pioneer this through to a point where we can keep that kind of (pause) because there's, an, also this is what I wrote to ..., it's kinda my sense also is that as much as, cause he wrote something along this line about, you know, he, he expounded that ----- about his kind of sense of community and whatever and I kind of responded to that, because I think as much as people want to be connected they also want to be disconnected. People

want, they fear connection it's kind of like they really want to be reflected but kind of there's this underlining, I mentioned this earlier, it's like there's a fear you know, if I stay too connected for too long I'll whoo, woo, and I think that's what happens in community, like post community workshop so there's an answer for you. (deep breath) It's kind of like there's a, Oh, My, God; Oh, My, God do you mean this is actually gonna happen, you know, are we gonna stay connected for the rest of our life I'm not sure I can manage that, do you know what I mean? Do you know what I'm, do, do you get that sense? People just kind of staying in that spot is like their capacity to tolerate whatever it is they perceive that spot to be (pause) is too great. (C/ hummm)

Now this guy that sent me this - I actually, he fell in love with me in the workshop and it's kinda like really stuffed him up a bit, and, and I (pause) cause he started writing me e-mails like expressing how much he thought I was gorgeous and whatever, and I went wh, ab, and it really kind of threw me and it was like OH! OK, so there's a new different rule do you know what I mean it sort of (long pause) people can't tolerate that whatever that being in community actually means without kind of thinking well, we've gotta have sex, or we gonna bloody, whatever whatever do you know what I mean? (C/ I think I can remember Peck saying something like, it's almost like everybody falls in love with each other in one sense um, and at one of his talks and saying that a, yeh, something along the lines that a, that, that you know the energy is so extraordinary that yes, that there's some people do interpret as a sexual experience or an erotic experience or falling in love experience or hum, ummm) Well, I a, I just think though it's not (long pause) I mean, I think that, and this is (emphasised) this is the essence of the Rabbi's gift, it is, it is about (pause) a gift. (C/ ummm) I give you a gift and you give me a gift, I mean I don't knowingly go on, going on to give Carl a gift but through that kind of, you know, whatever it is that I am giving here to you, your kinda giving back to me and you might not have even said anything like, but you're giving me the opportunity to tell my story. That's a gift in itself. (C/ yeh) OK, and maybe I am giving you something that, that kind of helps in someway, shape or form as well. And that's what to me it's about, it's just a ---- being able to do that. (C? hummm) It's that simple, you know, it's not like I have to give up a part of myself it's not like Oh, My, God! You know, your taking anything away. Kind of like, you know what I mean? If you look closer, it's like close, my story, it's kinda like I'm here for a trade off and I'm thinkin' oh, you know, the whole time, oh my god (softly) and a weird part of me oh, I hope this is valuable, I hope he's getting what he wants. But you know what I mean? In terms of, cause it's kind of inherent in who we are, but that's, that's to me what it's about you know, that's why I kinda like get this, this FCE kind of view of the world where it's like (pause) murrrrrrrr orrr, maybe it comes down to the fact that people want to make bucks out of this, people want to be important with it, I mean (C/ I think people -- all of those things) I just, my passion (drawn out) comes from knowing that, that you know, a lot of the shhhhit that goes on out there could kind of be resolved with, I don't think we need, I don't, you're not, Scott Peck model in any way shape or form needs to be tarnished I reckon in it's pure prestine bloody, in the real essence and I'm, maybe my interpretation of what the real essence of it is, (C/ ummm) but whether it becomes kind of butchers paper on walls and things and it's not that to me it kind of keep on the principle of it, I reckon you can do it, I reckon you can do it, you know, kind of one on one almost, I reckon you can kind of, it's a, you know, yeh, I don't know, I mean formulation kinda that's who it is that I am by the way, I mean I'm always in (pause) you know probably what, what Gail does, I kinda work in a you know, with my experience, personal experience work experience, whatever will, will all those bits fit together, but you know, it's, I think it's the essence of community it um, is certainly something that I now, and it's changed dramatically for my relationship with my children, at a very personal level to be quite honest, because, it kind of gives me the opportunity to see that, how it is that I've experience life can actually be, can re-enact it unconsciously on my own children and I kinda bin' have been able to break that pattern as a result of being in community and seeing the power of reflection, and seeing the importance of emotionality. I'm like, have an emotionally gifted child, it's just extraordinary, so um, and, and seeing now I mean the

revelation for me is extraordinary through him (emphasis) have been able to get a greater understanding of who it is that I am and, and if I hadn't stopped and, I mean, --- not stopped but yeh, it's a, community is under-pinned or transformed that experience, that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind of had the ripple effect (C/ ummmm um OK) the pone is it, it has, **(C/ powerful metaphor for you)** it is a powerful (laugh) in fact I've actually had quite a few dreams about the pond, so pond is significant. (C/ humm, humm, ) So, I don't know if that's um, it gives you something? **(C/ it gives me lots).**

## Transcript 3 - October 2001

### **Can you tell me about your own personal experience of being-in-community?**

Yeh you know I have been thinking about this you know! I attended my first community building in early 94 or 93 but about then and my first one was actually for people in business a 4-day thing for people in business

### **What? leaders in business?**

Yeh um and an interesting about, I dunno some time in the next year I decided to quite drinking and go to Alcoholics Anonymous and I've always credited somehow my uh community experience with that. Well I the - I dunno if you have any familiarity with that program but in that program **(yes)** one of the things we talk about is that it is not really about not drinking it's about having a psychic spiritual change that allows me to live in my skin without having a drink. **Right OK**

That notion came up about what it is like for me to be in community. It's like, both myself personally and the group in general has had a psychic spiritual shift that allows it to be in its skin without fixing without despair without showing off without all that stuff it just over-you know the shift happens and suddenly we can all be their in the skin of the group without angst you know, and for me that's you know without alienating, without isolating without being aggressive without you know all those sort of fear based defence mechanisms, so that's one way I would put it.

Another way I would put it is it's almost as though silently without us talking about it we've all noticed that spirit is with us, another way to say might be like a giant exhale and then the emptiness is filled up with grace or it's easy to remember that God is in that emptiness you know that spirits there **(Its like a full emptiness? Its empty but its filled with spirit or God?)** yeh you know the stage before - the emptiness stage - um that can be really dreadful, I mean that can be despair that can be dark that can feel hopeless and then as it becomes true emptiness its as though all of those things are completely replaced by a lightness, a grace an uplifting sort of feeling - so for me being-in-community is like its simple its often very quiet especially in the very beginning, the silence is no longer uncomfortable to people Um there is nothing urgent for me to do - it's like an absence of struggle and seeking and usually in the early stages even as a facilitator even though I may not act on it and I probably bracket it I feel struggle I feel seeking like there's a destination you know all of that, and in community it just is - it just is- there is nowhere to go and nothing to do (laughs) I love that (laughs) which is not to say - I mean you know I think community-I have been in community that felt passionate, where there might be difference, there has to be difference, in intention around that perhaps or laughter or action, it's not like its dead but there's an absence of struggle for sure, well the notion of being able to just be in our skin without doing anything about it really works for me in terms of what community feels like to me.

**I like that description of being in a skin now from what I am hearing that when you first go into community you are in your individual skin and somehow there is a transference from individual skin to group skin would this be does this resound with you. -----(Whether you noticed for yourself whether it is true for you whether you noticed delineation between the two?)**

Well I mean what I can say is I can feel the group as an entity and when it is not comfortable in its skin and when it is a group and I know that I'm not comfortable, I have



the distinction of when I'm in –ha- (struggling for expression) oh I dunno maybe its because \_\_\_\_\_ in the beginning of Community Building well I'm hopeful optimistic, confident and patient generally now having been though so many of them, I still don't feel comfortable in my skin, in the earlier stages

**Could you tell me a bit more about how that manifest? How does uncomfortableness manifest?**

Busy mind uh but its literally a feeling in my stomach and my chest

**Ah what's that feeling do you think?**

Uh fear (laughter) literally (more laughs)

**So is it like a tightening of things? A rapid heartbeat are those some of the symptoms?**

For me it would be like an anxiousness to have us cross the bridge that we need to cross to get to that feeling of (peace) serenity of the group that feeling of community and anxiousness and under that anxiousness is the question running what do I need to do to make this happen; what do I need to do to help this happen you know now what I know intellectually –now- is probably the answer to this question is nothing (laughter yes) but that's the feeling of discomfort that's part of it and then you know just the unknown of the group and now at this point having done so many of them knowing there is bound to be chaos and you know just the anxiety that would come from not knowing what that chaos this time would look like.

So that stage required of me to empty a lot I mean to really be intentional about letting go of the feelings I feel in my chest or feel in my stomach or how my mind's jumping around and try to empty that out as much as possible.

**Ok so when you say empty those kinds of feelings how do you do that?**

Well for me I literally name them and let them go um now I It just happens that I had done a lot of work for several years with a group that is that focuses on emotional release work it is literally as simple as that there is a feeling let it go there is another feeling let it go, so it's fairly simple for me. Now sometimes the feeling gets bigger as a result and sometimes it's replaced by something else. So then the waiting to be called to speak – I think that's worth mentioning around this notion of individual skin and group skin to. The physical sensation of being called to speak is very clear to me

**Great can you describe that to me?**

Oh yeh! Its starts at the uh in my belly – in my lower belly, it's like the words are shoving their way up through my lower torso, you know up through my throat and if I don't say them I will be physically really uncomfortable.

**With that uncomfortableness again – I might harp on this because it's interesting – If you didn't speak at that stage um, have you experienced not-speaking when being called to?**

I experience it as either trying to control myself or being cowardly, (laughter)

**and what happens in the body when you do that,**

Oh I feel awful! so I feel I want to crawl out of my skin really fast, preferably alone and not in that circle, because it hurts I mean it literally hurts to not, no I can be called to speak, somebody else says something for me or says something...that might be called passive, by itself because of what happens in the group, but if its me deciding that I am not willing (laughs) that's when it's painful.

**Again painful in the sense of what, in all senses – If you could describe some bodily sensations some thoughts feelings those kinds of things**

Well um again for me it centres in the torso, in the middle, in that like column going up the centre of the Torso's and it feels almost like there is a boxer inside my chest you know like in the centre where the heart would be, you know just trying to box its way out and its being held down so I would say its feels like that I also would say that I get really restless in the chair and um I've been told (laughs) that I make little noises, just these little noises like it's a little engine starting to rev up or something,

**Um some of what you are describing is familiar to me I actually get a pounding in my heart and my palms just go so sweaty –**

Now it's my belief, I can't separate that experience from individual and group, because it is my experience of Community Building process is that it is deeply personally healing to me, anything that stands between me and community comes up and takes a step toward healing if I you know, by participating in the circle, but by the same token I am aware of is that whatever I am called to say is for the group, so both are true you know,

The hard - the dreadful part is when - I mean I love it when what I'm called to say is funny, inspiring or pretty - when what I am called to say is like being a plunger you know and unclogging something, especially when it me I'm unclogging, its like Oh Yuk! - but in order to -even if I truly am part of the organism of the group then I have to do that right -

**Um yeh I think so and I think that is the unpleasantness of it - sometimes its uh it's a cauldron - yeh) what intrigues me here to is that you have mentioned healing a couple of times particularly one in terms of having to do with drinking and the other is it's a healing process but do you necessarily go there as a person needing healing?**

(Lots of laughter) Oh I love it that is really very good, but no I went as an incredibly prominent businessperson, who would learn about community so I could teach everybody else.

**Oh ok so you were wearing the 'wise leader hat' were you?**

Totally, you know (ih-ya-yi) but the value and the beauty was the healing that came to me, but oh know I did not want I mean I had (read) the book I had written ahead of time I mean you know (laughter Oh God).

**You'd done you were prepared you'd ploughed the field hey?**

**Oh could you tell me something more about healing in this context?**

Well oh gosh I mean I, I don't even know where to start, Um ...my experience is that whenever I go to a Community Building - whether as a participant or as a facilitator - that whatever in my life is up to be healed at that time, to be looked at, to be let go of you know to take a step forward, intensifies and shows up in the circle (*intensification*) and um shows up in the circle and as a facilitator frequently it will show up before the circle actually, its like you can feel the people coming down the road well before you get on the plane to go do the facilitation, you've had the same experience right? And you know whatever went wrong or really right in my life, the week before is in that circle you know so that sense um uh I mean I feel like each year that went by in my participation in some way in FCE, Um each time I went to a circle process whatever I was working on showed up, so I mean I distinctly remember in my first community building it was just profound for me to even find a voice to speak authentically in the circle, I mean even toward authenticity, just a voice I just and I remember that at that time in my life finding my voice and being able to speak it was like a big thing.

**Can you tell me more about that? What it was like for you how that was?**

Well it was the first time I had ever been in a group most certainly a business group but really any group, where people showed up as themselves (surprise) and told not only, you know and told the dark storeys of themselves, and Um and the difficult stories of themselves and the notion of being with people as they expressed their pain and I mean all of that was oh I had the experience of feeling like I had been getting ready to be there my whole life but I have never experienced it before and it 'blew me away' and then to begin to start to reveal a bit of myself now you know you see I didn't know myself to begin with so we talking revealing it to me (laughter) as well as to a group you know

**So you were revealing yourself to yourself**

By sitting there yees, you know and by watching my reactions and what I identified with from other people and what I didn't and you know. ....relationship issues came up, one of the difficulties that I have - this is um - I have difficulty with authority male figures, Um and in those, in the beginning- I had lost a lot of it by then but thank God I've lost much much more of it since then - I had a habit of I um delivering an Atom bomb to the heart of any especially white male brave enough to act like an asshole, in my judgement you know, and I mean that showed up I the circle in those first two years really and it had to because it stood between me and being in community with people you know and it was really

embarrassing, but it had to show up and it was enormously healing for me and my whole process you know but....

And just the fact that my participation was followed not long after by the (realisation) Ahh I' unable to stop drinking by myself I need help, that doesn't seem to me like an accident, because I find the twelve step program the alcoholics anonymous program to be like a daily community building session (*the process of daily redemption?*) I mean that's the process "I" statement sharing no cross talk it's beautiful it's what heals it's what keeps people sober.

**Thankyou for your honesty in sharing I feel really um touched and slightly disappointed that we can't have a face to face, I'm sure that we could have a wonderful time talking together,**

I have a feeling that's true when I had a look at some of your background I thought oh yes a fellow clansman half way around the world. (laughter)

**It's wonderful to connect in this way**

**This is fascinating I don't know how much time you've got I'm prepared to go overtime but I don't want to cut into your time either. I'd like to know more about this experience of speaking, and if you could maybe say how it was, what sort of effects did it have on you post-speaking or during speaking.**

You mean what I was referring to about finding my voice

**Yeh finding your voice can you tell me some more about that?**

Yeh I can tell a couple of really good story's about this, actually – the first thing to say is that for me group process like this is very natural it feels like breathing to me to understand that sitting in a circle, I mean it took me awhile to get this the first couple of years but, it's a process I love, sitting in a circle surrendering to the group dynamic and trusting that whatever comes up it's what needs to come up now and that it will move me forward you know heal me in some way just follow it you know I have enormous trust in that, now and probably did to some extent even then, but the voice

Um I had always been articulate and I had done a lot of speaking I mean public speaking, but what I mean in terms of finding my voice is finding the voice of who I am and what I believe and what I feel and the notion of revealing myself to people the biggest thing that stumped me was, what was I supposed to reveal, you know, So that was all a part of it, but what happened to me in the community building process over a couple of years is first I started out blaming other people for making it unsafe so that I couldn't bring my voice forward if others in the group would behave differently then I would feel like I could speak And then the second step was becoming sort of aggressive which was not really good either but was needed but then I remember – have you come across a woman named Pat Colari yet? –**no-** well Pat is one of our facilitators here she's done work on South Africa she's an African American woman she's pretty extraordinary and so I thought maybe you may have come across her work – I did a woman's community building in the desert about six years ago and she was included, it was there and I was sitting in the circle and I was complaining about not being able to find my voice and she looked at me in the context of the circle, she said "you know a cannot relate to this, I just can't relate to"- she was the only African-American in the group this particular day and she said, "you know a group of middle class white women complaining about not finding their voice I just don't get it" she said "as an African-American woman if I had lost my voice I'd be dead" and then she just looked at me and said "SUE I'd just like to know if you found your voice what would you say?" and I mean I was really knocked over by that and she has done that kind of confrontation to me about five times in community building circles and every time it has been the biggest gift anybody's ever given me, the answer to that question I had to sit there for a while and after about I dunno 15 minutes, down in the depths of me started to well the answer to her question which was "I would say no",

**Wow, you would say no**

No, and so she I mean that to me is the most incredible example of human community uh because she called forward something in me that then I mean for years I could mine that even more you know and it was just one little question

**One small question from her one large question for your spirit in a sense**

Yeh,

**That's a great story thanks**

One of the choices I could have made was is to reject her run away from her make her wrong you know any number of things but I mean she just handed me the key to the city you know (laughter)

**Sure - what happened when she asked you that question what do you think happened inside what were you feeling at the time**

Well I felt stunned embarrassed a little shaky but we had a context for being together already so I had a certain amount of trust, and then after I got through all of that I was curious, like what would I say? What would I say you know.

**That's an incredibly profound encounter with the other isn't it?**

Yeh (laughter)

**The other in more senses than one the other in terms of her but the other in terms of you that has remained unvoiced (yes)**

**In terms of speaking and voicing do you find what do you think it is within a circle or CBW that assists this or encourages it or doesn't encourage it?**

Give me a little bit more information about what you're wanting to know,

**OK just a thought on, you said before that it felt to you a natural kind of process group work, when you are in a CBW circle what is it about that circle that encourages or discourages you to speak?**

I'm still not with it, you mean back then?

**Oh no anytime, basically I mean look in one sense sitting in a circle for a weekend is to me not a natural thing for me to do but it is something I love doing, um and I probably feel more at home there than in lots of other places in my life, but that's what I was wondering about you, just in terms of your own being able to speak or your own voicing, what is it about that circle that encourages that to happen?**

Well what flashed through my mind when you asked the question is what I was struggling with when I first found FCE was an incredible frustration in myself with consultants who gave clients the answer or leaders who knew the answers I was going through this transition where I needed to find ways to work with groups and with people I consult where I was helping them bring forth their wisdom not me give them wisdom that was my theme at the time – so for me what made it clearly worthwhile was it was an opportunity with other people to sit and hear myself and hear the group but without any kind of expert or leader or gender or structure and so that I mean that's what I wanted that's what I wanted that's what I needed to add to my own practice that's what I needed in my life so that was a big part of it It's a model where there is not an authority, there's not somebody who does the fixing and the knowing and I wanted that more than anything.

**Is that because you have had a lot of authority in your life?**

Well Uh (laughter) well yes and no, authority happens to be one of my childhood issues (laughter) heres a bit) this is not for your research you'll get a kick out of this and we'll keep this conversation short – what my mother would always ask me for my birthday what I wanted for dinner and I would tell her I wanted asparagus because on my birthday I had the freedom to choose what I ate and I hated asparagus and so each birthday I got to exercise my own authority by refusing to eat what was on the table – now how HOW screwed up is that?

**That's fairly sophisticated I think (laughter)**

But also I have a really deep personal belief that direct knowing remembering our own wisdom, I mean all of my work is dedicated towards helping people find that place in themselves not be told by somebody else so it's more like a life theme for me too. But yes personally I don't like – I like suggestion, group process, consensus, dialogue, but directive authority doesn't work to well for me.

**Right yeh I am a little along the same lines (laughter) – I work a lot better on my own with others than in a kind of authoritative structure in fact when I am in authoritative structures I don't last very long.**

**OK Can I take us back close to the start of the conversation you were talking about emptiness and when community comes in – Can you tell me about your experiences of that – you mentioned something like uplifting feelings and spirit filling the emptiness, how does that manifest itself for you how do you notice that?**

Well the words that come up are ease, quiet, slow rhythm like the heart beat has slowed down to a resting heartbeat, of the group you know of the um but I always say that the most easily recognisable symptom is when the group is comfortable in silence you know it's like ah we did it! You know its here it arrived. To be comfortable in that silence it just feels to me like that is...it's like being surrounded by God, surrounded by Grace you know like being enveloped in something, comfortable

**That enveloping it's like palpable for you that there is another presence in the room other than the group?**

Let me think about that because I pray through the entire time and I see a lot in the whole process so what does it, so to me God is in the room the whole time, so it's more like the group as a whole notices that God is in the room and is turned more towards that than toward a destination or each other in a confrontive way and that's the way I would put it

**Turned towards God**

One time I was essentially with a business group and this might be a time when I dunno I, I believe that it is impossible to screw up Gods script and I couldn't really say this but what's coming to mind is a facilitation in a company that was difficult,

Where I really challenged the group towards the end and it may or may not have been a good idea, I guess I'll never know and they never really reached community this group and the push from me was actually because I wanted that for them so much which of course you know as a facilitator well it's really better when we empty that need to (laughter) but anyway, whatever that's what happened with this group and literally in that group I saw the higher selves of people standing right there with them, it's like the people were in the chairs and these huge presences were all circled around and so the feeling I would ascribe to community is when the individual has relaxed back into that whole presence of themselves it's like they just. Its like they have exhaled and like somebody's holding them in their arms, that's what it feels like in the group to me,

**And that's what it feels like to you, for you?**

Yes, yes

**That's a beautiful description "leans back into" That backspace I think is really important and it's something that in a western society we don't do a lot of and contemplation and reflection helps me do that –**

(yeh and giving up giving up thinking, the same woman I told you the story of the voice business she and a fellow called RM I have done a couple of facilitations called black white together (– I've heard of RM – Oh yeh you should talk to R actually — etc. interruption around talking about R) the two of them were facilitating this black white together you know a diversity based or racially based community building so you've got to have really brave people right? Yes I mean just to get there, (fuck) and you know it was during one of those circles when Pat just really went after me 'sometimes you just have to let go of the psychobabble and let go of the fact that this can't be fixed that it can't be right that the wrong can't be righted ' it's in that diversity work that I think an even deeper level of community shows up, um because there's so much pain from the past and wrong from the past that feels like can never be fully healed, except by Grace,

**We have it here with Australian indigenous aboriginals, yep (silence) Our PM won't apologise and it's a bone of contention in this country about wanting to apologise or nor? Whether he actually is big enough to just say sorry for past hurts and injustices he won't do that and reconciliation<, I think we need to move but we need statements from authoritative figures from the leader of our country that facilitate a different dialogue, the leader of your country? Yeh John Howard he won't say sorry he's constantly refused to actually apologise to aboriginal people for past injustices and some of the inhumane treatment.**

Uh that's funny Um 2 weeks before, I've been sober for quite a number of years now, but 2 weeks before the September 11th events here in the states I was overtaken by the need to call dozens of people from my past and make amends to them for even the slightest things, and I certainly only got a small way through the list before September 11<sup>th</sup> happened and then I completed it after and it was like a new level of willingness

And what I know from that process is it gives me freedom, that to is incredibly healing and so when you say that and every cell in my body on some of these amends screams 'you're about to kill us are you crazy don't do this' so when you speak about that the thing that so sad about the Prime Minister did you say, that is the hesitation is that it is a simple act that is totally freeing to everyone and costs nothing and is so powerful.

**The cost nothing – one of the reasons is that the Government thinks it will cost them everything because it will be admitting a culpability and therefore they will have to be paying for it evermore in terms of money, in terms of being held responsible and you know it's utterly very very thin lacks leadership and has no heart spirit or integrity behind it and unfortunately this is kind of like who is leading our country at the moment?**

Well we have similar leaders

**I do some lecturing at the indigenous school up here at University and it's been really good for me because it keeps me connected to different ways of being because you know Australia's basically 1% of Australia is aboriginal and there's not a lot of contact with aborigines like in South Africa what was great was everywhere you went it was like black and white and in that sense you can't get away from the fact that there are differences and there are different people but over here it is basically white Australia especially in Western Australia**

Hmm you know it's really funny because I never think of whites when I think of Australia that's my last thought not my first thought,

**That's interesting that's very interesting yeh, so you think of Aboriginals yeh?**

Yes I do,

**Can we um - I'm just going to flip this tape over -**

**Talk about community building workshops specifically and the experience of anything you would say about your own personal journey with community building in terms of say encounters with the other, bit more about emptiness and chaos those kind of things? Big Sigh... I am particularly interested in spirit how that for you yeh, maybe the transition you've talked about you know there's a transition pre-community and there's post-community and then there's during community, so what happens in terms of your own journey particularly bodily sensations, feelings thoughts, in that process?**

Hummm.....well I'm kind of blank with where to go with what you've asked, I don't know why, I don't have anything to say **Maybe it's a big question**, Ask it another way maybe

Yes well, especially when facilitating the uh, I view my job as continual prayer calling down the energy and holding the space for the group to do its work and in the early stages I would say I experience a lot more physical discomfort, uh maybe even pain maybe difficulty sitting, you know like back ache, I'm always alert it's not like tired in a sleepy sense but tired in a heavy sense. When the group starts to move to really move, that heaviness evaporates it's like it never existed, so I would say that that change occurs. I also have had the experience sitting in the circle of feeling like something comes up and it sends prickles all through me, usually that happens, it's as though love has just been expressed and it's presence can be felt you know I mean that prickle or someone says something and the truth of it sends those prickles you know just that truth which is so deep you just know, that it's true,

**It's like a cellular thing isn't it**

And you know the other image that came forward is um Hum, and this may not be for our conversation here I don't know, I sponsor a lot of people in AA now and of course the way that that works is you show up and say what you're given to say, say what you're called to say, it's exactly like being in a circle only it's one on one you know,

And you tell it you reveal the story about yourself it's exactly the same...and what I notice is that over the years in a weird sort of way maybe this is just a – this is a current issue for me- forgive me but we'll do a little work on it here on your call, but I notice myself getting more and more impatient when what I would call the darkness or in the case of alcoholism the disease speaks, what the disease of alcoholism will say 'I don't really need to go to meetings or 'I should be afraid about something' or if 'I do this I'm going to lose the very thing I don't want to lose' but it's all a voice a lie, you know 'people of the Lie' Scott-Pecks book people of the lie, it's that voice when that voice comes forward in a sponsee or in a circle there is a visceral grabbing of a sword sort of thing that happens in me, now that doesn't mean I'm supposed to act (laughter) but that physical sensation of recognising the enemy and wanting to slay it is, it is a physical reaction that is really strong and when I say recognising the enemy it is not the face of the person in the circle or that I am speaking to, you know what am saying?, it is something bey – it is something attached to that so that's definitely physical for me also,

**Does that come up when you're on your own or is it more likely or is it more stimulated by encounters with the other?**

Uhhh..tell me what you understood me to just say and what you mean,

**What I understood you to say was that when you hear those kind of voices or the lie that's within there's the enemy within you kind of grab a hold of something what you call a sword I think of the sword of Michael straight away, (yeh) and it steels you against that in a sense reminds you that it's still there and that that is the enemy that it's not the other person you're talking to or part-anybody in the circle but it is 'inner' but I am just wondering if you are more aware of that, um the enemy within or the lie when encountering the other**

As opposed to just when alone

**Yeh sorry as opposed to when alone**

Um...no for me their both equally but the reason for my pause is that I am thinking that certainly was not always true and certainly up until the last two or three years I would say the only way I could experience that voice, really was to see it in another and then see how it related to me

**Right, you did mention right at the start of the interview that somehow your experience with community building assisted in you giving up drinking**

Yes

**Can you tell me a little more about that or what else you know about that for yourself?**

Uhm well the way I would describe it is the act of sitting in a community building circle peeled enough of a layer of protection away from me for me to be able to know that I wanted an authentic life and that I didn't have one And uh or a life expression and I feel got me ready – empty enough let's say- to hear someone else suggest to me that I didn't have to live this way anymore and that if I took a particular action seeking help with quitting drinking then it would move me closer to what I wanted, now that was all very abstract it was not you know a concrete exchange do you know what I mean" (yes) that was a process over I believe it was about 6 months if my timings right about when I went to the first community building but it just felt to me that that flushed out enough in me to open me to be able to hear the message when it came to me and then follow it, community building and Peck's work attracts a lot of people in 12 step programs because it's he uses a very similar to the 12 step model so every circle I've ever been in there were lots of '12 step recovery people so that proximity I'm sure has an influence also

**Right Yeh you mentioned quite a lot - two things flushing out or that experience of emptiness being essential as well as authentic – I've got two questions the first one would be around emptiness again your experiences of emptiness over and during CBW's**

My experience of what?

**Emptiness, emptying can you tell me more about that experience of emptying**

Well emptying and emptiness are two really distinct things aren't they?

**They are suppose along the road to emptiness**

Right (laughter) you know when I first went and started talking about it, it's like in fact it was Pecks use of the word emptiness and empty- his use of the word emptiness that attracted me to the work and was my recognition button that I needed to go  
Because I had really noticed that organisations were needing to let go of a lot of things and create empty space in order to be creative and that that was the very last thing people wanted to do, so that was kind of my contract, and the way - I don't know how your consulting practice works- but the way mine works is I get this phewey obsessive idea and I learn about it and learn about it and you know a couple of years later notice the reason I was teaching it to everybody else was because I desperately needed to learn it myself (laughter) so I must have been at a phase in my life when I was ready to empty out you know, and for me by the way this went from this huge complex constructed life, big house, big job big expensive big everything, to selling everything, emptying everything out from beliefs to lifestyle to god and you name it, taking a van around the country for two years, me and my dog and then rebuilding a completely new life a pretty simple one I might add, so I took this emptiness thing to an extreme and I learned in community building circles so emptying well unfortunately for me what it means is saying out loud what I feel called to say and frequently at the beginning stage of the process those are things that feel stupid to me in one form or another they don't feel very graceful or brilliant or they don't look good so for me emptying is in part a willingness to not look good willingness to reveal self in it's messy form not just it's perfect form and I guess for some people that's not that big a deal for me that was a very big deal

**It's funny you know when you just mentioned that I got a tightening of the lower regions It's like that gut feeling, I know what that's like and there's really not enough of it, it's um yeh**

Willingness to say what is in front of us to say and I mean the way I've worked this life out now is I get down on my knees everyday in the morning and I pray that God guide my every thought word and action and then I do what gets put in front of me and I have become way more willing to look like an idiot than I ever was in those beginning days because I've come to know that if that's what I am called to do it's of use to somebody I mean it's of use so to me emptying involves that just being willing to follow that thread wherever it goes

**And when you get to emptiness what's that like?**

I would call it freedom first of all I don't think that I've ever got to complete emptiness but it's freedom its the ability to respond in the moment and I heard this great definition of the word responsibility one day the ability to respond to the self **hmmm I've heard that to I actually use it**

Do you I love that to me that is what emptying and emptiness is really about, to just show up in that moment and do what is in front of us or what comes from the inside that to me is emptiness not I do it because that is my belief system or this is my hope or expectation or I feel obligated to do it or I want to change what that other person is doing but totally just responding to self in that moment hopefully with a capitol S

**yeh hopeful and is that what you call being authentic?**

Yes to me that's what authentic means yeh

**So this desire you had you mentioned to live your life authentically it seems to me that the CBW helps delineate for you when you are or what is unauthentic behaviour and what is authentic behaviour is that right?**

Oh I would go even a step further and say that the CBW over the years pulled from me coaxed from me the ability to know what that authenticity would be what it is yeh that it literally supported that totally

**And what is the difference for you in living authentically?**

Today verses six years ago for example? (yeh) You know I don't simply credit CBW's with the result - but gosh words are hard on this one – and it comes out kinda negative it's really interesting what I find myself wanting to say is what is no longer true, no longer everything about having to find my voice (ha ha) and I no longer ever feel like I have a muffler wrapped around my throat choking me never I mean I just say what's there to say and I do not feel uncomfortable in my skin and (clarification of last bit from me) and I have faith I



mean I have enormous faith and I have faith that my even my off-the-wall behaviour or miss-behaving or whatever it might be has a purpose and so as a facilitator I will trust what comes up and say or do it on a good day if it's really a bit odd let it go once and make sure it comes back a second time but even that I don't do that much anymore tell you the truth

**So there is definitely a lack of there's less self-censoring**

well it was complete censoring in the beginning but I would say it is fairly low now yeh fairly low and I have a coaching client who ask me to – picture this I was first of all I was an east coast high level banker with feerrodomo shoes? Red nails, big blonde hair perfect clothes just perfect everything and (laughter) so that was the starting point, and one of my executive coaching clients wanted me to coach her because she'd like to learn to be more authentic and more messy – be more messy – and when she asked me I thought oh my God all this really works, somebody thinks I'm messy this is great! Somebody thinks I'm messy and is willing to pay to learn how to be that way (I'm joking) **That's like a de-makeover (laughter)–** That's right deconstructive therapy

**It reminds me of a time in our group this was a mix of facilitators, training facilitators and ongoing community building group running a workshop that was public but for training purposes and we had had a grinding Saturday and on the Sunday morning this person turns up this woman with a bit of her hair sticking up and she sat down and said 'you know I got up this morning and I looked in the mirror and this bit of hair would not go down, I tried everything I gelled it I washed it and it stood up and I said blow it I'm going to turn to this workshop this morning with all my sticking out bits like it or not'**

How perfect was that

**Oh it was just great the whole group moved and it was really for me it was one of those moments I say you can come with your sticking out bits you know**

Yeh it's so powerful gosh and it's so scary and this is the thing and do you mind me in interjecting a direction here a minute

**Absolutely not**

The thing is – because you're interested in building community in business- now R may have had different experiences, others may have had different experiences and seen it work really well I have maybe it's my own hesitation to let it all loose in an organisational setting, a I dunno you know, its because as an aside – I am considering taking a full time job for the first time in ten years and I am terrified that the past will repeat itself the past to me meaning loosing myself, not being authentic, being workaholic, like dying inside that job so maybe it's just my stuff but - in the business and organisation stuff that I have lead where it is an organisation, not where it's peers from a lot of different organisations, but where it is the department or division or organisation the level of fear about showing any sticking out parts is to the level of terror and I have never seen a group successfully cross that chasm really cross it you know, show up totally as who they are,

**Well I think you share that experience and those fears with quite a lot of other facilitators I've never seen it myself and I've never – this is I suppose my starting enquiry into business but I really hear what you say and it intrigues me that you get better response from people as you said that are members of organisations or executives that meet together but don't particularly work together**

Yeh If I had knowing what I know today I would go to my first community building if it were in my division where I was working and I might risk all that authenticity maybe in knowing what I know today but then that was imposs (ible) I mean I could barley do it in a group of strangers it was a gradual process over many sessions in a group of strangers – although we were able to get to community without being perfect I mean that's the beauty of community isn't it? I mean our ability to get to community in the first or the last session I was in wasn't about it wasn't dependant on me

**Yeh which is the beauty of it – and yet it is dependant on you as well**

Yes their both true!

**I might talk to you more about the organisational stuff next week, I'm sure during the week, something.... I know for me that talking about this now for some reason I'm**

feeling a kind of fear or anxiety over the last 20 minutes which is really interesting, that will give me something to reflect on I don't know why that's there I think I haven't been involved in a CBW for some years and just that kind of chaotic tension and you mentioned that it's scary has triggered something off for me so I was just wondering if you could say something about your feeling of fear and being scared within a CBW context?

Oh yeh got a couple of flashes of this dream I had, it was at facilitator training I think, and one of the dreams was coming up to walking on this path coming up to a cliff and seeing a had to risk leaping over this enormous chasm to get to the other side and every cell in my body going 'no I'm not fucking doing it this time' someone else can do it this time I'm not doing it and like stamping my feet (laughter) and this was the dream at the end of the first day right, we're now at the chasm and somebody's going to have to dive and I just went NO I just don't want to have to do this again and I'm not suggesting it was always me but that place in me that just goes 'Oh God' no matter how many times I've experienced a workshop or circle my anxiety about that has never lessons I think that's natural **So you think for you that's this is a natural process this anxiety and fear and is it always as intense?**

No it depends, no, and it's always less intense when I am the facilitator, but see I'm convinced that I became a leader and facilitator in life in general so I could be at the front of the room and have my back against the wall so no one could make me do anything, so to me its .... (better or less intense) to be a facilitator than to be the participant

**That's interesting what star sign are you?**

What star sign – a Gemini

**That's interesting you know I'm an Aries but I have a Gemini moon and rising One thing us Gemini's like to do – and I consider myself fairly Gemini – is learn something today and teach it tomorrow**

Yes (laughter) – oh yeh .....?

**You haven't mentioned Chaos much, your experience of chaos, got anything to say about that, your experience of chaos in a CBW**

Well I like chaos Um and I love stirring the pot as a participant and so the chaos part isn't, is not as disturbing to me

**Interesting**

Yeh, I find Psuedo-community unbearable, and I have occasionally experienced an uncontrollable desire to 'fix' the chaos, which of course is nothing like being right in the center of it, but I (that was a little joke) that's not the disturbing part to me the difficult the scary part is beyond the chaos, it's coming out of the chaos and I've never found revealing myself to be an easy thing to do even in later years so it's always that part that's harder, scarier

**So it's almost the lead up to revealing yourself that's is scary?**

Yeh and the other reason I don't have much to say about chaos is because I place such a high value on it and I am so happy for both people and groups when they are willing to allow some of it, because I know that there's a gift on the other side, so chaos is my friend (laughter) **I also think that is, I suppose my observations are that chaos plays the role of pacing the group in the sense that sometimes you get close to emptying and that possible abyss a bit too quickly and somebody whacks it back into chaos – it's a bit like approaching a cliff a step at a time one step forward one step back**

Yes definitely

**Look it's possibly a good time to finish I was just wondering if for the last question could you focus just for a minute on that feeling within you when you approaching post-chaos and pre-revealing what happens for you I that moment**

... Well this is what came up, the feelings are wanting to pull the covers up over my head, become very small and invisible in the group and pray that somebody else will do that work, and at the same time feeling from the inside out an urge to move to do something to reveal something (*community as an urge*) there's sort of a desperate feeling that no matter what I do it will probably look messy it won't end up the way I like I have no control over it

just the sense of having no control over it which is why pulling a cover over myself looks so appealing

**yeh it's like a paradox you want to be small you want to be invisible yet visible**

**This sense of not having any control how does that manifest bodily wise and thoughts and feelings like what is that?**

.....deep breath in well what comes up to say is it's the moment in the circle – as a participant at least- when I agree to move my participation totally from my head into feeling, when I give up that moment when I give up the last gasp hope that all this can be explained with some kind of concept rather than be felt and experienced fully and I dunno and that's how that come up to say,

**So it moves location within yourself**

Yeh and it changes from a rational linear sort of processing to a sensory emotional processing which to me feels far less in control and far scarier, I mean that wouldn't be true for everybody but it is definitely true for me.

**HMM OK Yeh yes I do understand I think for me too it's a processes I know that process of not being in control but having to do something, In a sense it's to surrender myself to actually looking stupid,**

Yes

**Well look there's lots I that interview in that sharing,**

Well I thank you you know that you know that you help each of us when you ask these questions

**Thanks yeh I have never done an interview over the phone (Really) Yeh, so thanks, how was the experience of being on the phone for you for me it was like gee I'd actually like to see your face, see your smile and see your eyes and check your breath and all that kind of stuff you know**

Yeh yeh Well I can understand that it's interesting I do a lot of research and I vastly prefer the telephone and the coaching I do is on the phone etc.....with interviewing particularly I prefer the telephone because it allows me to hear the person in a different way and I'm a really sensitive person and so when their in front of me it's like over information, it's harder for me to hear what they're really saying, and I know other people are not like that necessarily so for me I was relieved when I could do it by phone

**Ok so you're not getting a sensory overload of all the other nuances of face to face (laughter) right**

**so that immediately makes me want to ask how does that affect you when you are participating in a workshop**

Oh well I think that I um, what comes up when you ask that is the prayerfulness of facilitating takes care of that for me - the sitting I mean that's why I love facilitating community building workshops – because it's so easy for me to focus on a meditation as a part of facilitation and the only way I know how to put it is turn over the facilitation to something higher in myself that's easy it's when it's a very active sort of event or a very verbal event or so forth that is gets kind of overwhelming to me or overstimulating the way a community building workshop is set up is perfect for someone like me because that sensitivity is of value not a problem

End interview

### **Transcript 3 - Interview 2, October 2001**

**How have you been during the week? Was there anything new or anything come up for you about what we have been talking about?**

I don't think so no – other than – It's funny the interview caused me to be thinking more about community building, I'm also in the process of getting together a website so my work with FCE has come up relative to that to. This week several people spoke to me about how they would like to do A CBW here on the island so that was kind of a surprise so maybe what I would say is that you're just giving these interviews has stirred up some activity so that's interesting

**Yeh something in the air – OK I was reading through the interview and I came to the part that said the “experience of community building to you is deeply healing to me and anything that stands between me and community comes up” and I immediately thought how do you know when you are not in community?**

Oh I want to escape or attack

**OK so it is basically that for you you want to escape or attack that’s interesting, It was just a question like for me I know that I feel isolated and feel like I am not reaching people when I am speaking**

Like on the other side of a pain of glass or something

**Yes Yes**

Yes those are also true for me

**Anything else any other things come up for you when you know you are not in community**

Well I keep thinking of that feeling not just of not being able to connect but the yearning or almost despair at that, you know the desire to connect but the powerlessness to know how to do it

**Right yeh it’s like there is a motivation or a real wanting to but there is no vehicle you don’t know how to get in the vehicle to do that?**

And it feels impossible, sometimes

**Can you tell me more about that for you that feeling of impossibility?**

Well it’s like being invited to a banquet with phenomenal food on the table but being told you can’t really eat dinner, and totally really enjoy it - Not being in community with a group of people where you want to be has that quality to it to me

**Yeh with a group of people you want to be, so would you say that it is important for you to be with people you want to be in community with or**

NO the context I imagined it was you are in a room and you’re with people and you’d like to be in community but you can’t seem to get yourself there at that moment

**Yeh so your talking about intentional community here (right) What about in other aspects of life you know when how does community manifest when you are away from the intentional circle**

Just tell me a little bit more of what you have in mind here

**OK you might go to a CBW as a facilitator or a participant and its an intentional act in terms you are going knowing you are going to be in a circle with a group of people that hopefully want to achieve a community, then you leave and come back out into your normal life or another life or a different set of circumstances – How does community manifest itself for you in those other circumstances?**

Well what comes up to say is that I think that one of the things that’s hard for people who go to CBW’s is that it doesn’t in a lot of cases and then we see people really want to bring a CBW to their town or their company or their place so that they can have that experience with people that they know. You know I think that one of the conclusions is it doesn’t happen a lot of times..... I’m just thinking in terms of my own life personally the easiest lowest maintenance, closest place that I know

To have that sense is in AA meetings which are very very close to the model of the CBW – except that the purpose isn’t to create community the purpose is to stay sober, but people tell their story’s in “I” statements no cross talk, no control over each other no changing, fixing I mean it’s so so – in my life do feel that I have sustained community all of the time every now and then I don’t feel in community with the group - it doesn’t happen very often any more - but it’s possible bit usually it’s because I moved (laughter) I, something shifted in me for a little while

Let’s see my First CBW was in 1993 and in those 8 years I have found a dramatic shift in the sophistication of people and groups in speaking and I statements and also in terms of a circle or dialogue process of being together in ’93 people were almost incapable of doing that and today it’s almost the norm, now perhaps they don’t reach community but just that way of showing up and being present individually is a lot more common I think

**OK I wonder I immediately think of these talk show where people get on them and bare their souls to the world on telly it's kind of like a cultural thing**

Yeh I don't have a lot of familiarity with that but so you have to take this with a grain of salt cos I don't really know what I am talking about, but the hit I got when you said that is 'that's the obsessive compulsive side of life, you know it's like the I statement that's gone amuck

**I think you're right yes that's a good observation**

Cos I mean in the circle in the community I community and the community building circle I've never felt compelled to like dump all of my garbage on the floor just to reveal enough of myself so that it is possible to connect with other people and how wonderful it is when they share a piece of themselves with me but that other feels like melodramatic overkill and then they have to be special

**I've actually been guilty of some melodrama in my life myself**

(laughter) yeh well me too

**I remember at my first CBW I did something I went into this stuff and a really close friend came over to me and said what was going on there that's not you, I thought that's what I had to do to connect**

Right I had a very funny experience this was with ..... actually and ..... I don't know if you know them

**Yes they were my two CBW trainers**

We were in a workshop this was actually in a facilitators training group CBFS – you do community building for a day and a half and then you debrief for 1/2dat and learn about community building and now I facilitate that but then it was my first one and so it's like 11 o'clock of the second day so were now at the end of our community building work together but I don't get that at al I mean I don't get how this time breaks up you know I just know that inside me I am moved to stand up and sing and I just sing Tones like calling down the energy kind of tones (ha) cos I was really working on finding my voice in those days just my voice just to be able to say what I thought you know so I stand up and start to sing and then other women stand up and start to step to the centre and do the same and suddenly this whole sort of passion play toning women is happening in the centre of the circle and this woman this grand woman ..... from ..... Her body is moving as though it's inhabited by something bigger than just herself and then out of this depth of consciousness I start hearing this woman screaming the lords prayer and it slowly it dawns on me as it unfolds that some people in the circle feel that the devil has entered the room and are praying like mad to keep the darkness from whatever the word is but hurting the circle and now it's lunchtime at the end of the first day and a half and .... And .... Are facilitating and all hell has broken loose and I mean it was a scream now I would call that melodrama for starters although it was incredible material for the group to work with and the debriefing was – what happened was phenomenal out of it bit I mean J...was horrified and I was clearly the culprit – so out of control I could sing in the middle of the circle and cause all this to come forward so (laughter) it was crazy

**It's amazing what kind of craziness manifests though I think that the intensification you mentioned last time like everything's intensified even craziness is intensified**

Well everything becomes symbolic (**In that space**) In that space that's right so I mean I think life is that way to begin with that everything, we have a choice we view life as literal or we view it as more metaphorical and symbolic and can detach from being right in the middle right? For sure that is true in those circles the imagery the speaking through each other in dreams even that singing example these metaphorical symbols come forward and speak to us we don't even know what they are saying but they really speak loudly in the circle and guide us where we need to go yeh, R.. who you know R..... he's fond of saying that his dreams or your dreams are my dreams are better facilitators with the group than any mental concept that we could say to the group that our dreams speak- when we share those dreams and also our story's they speak to the group in a way that is far far more powerful than any thought we could say individually yeh?

**Yes I think your Right well there's no right really, there is definitely there's that sense of um yeh there is something playing in my back space at the moment and I'm just trying to pick it up (*Take your time*) a couple of things come to me one is that that happens, it feels to me like when you are speaking I think of first of all 'when two or more are gathered in my name' there's that kind of intensity and presence to a circle, two that maybe community in that sense is only possible when people meet with the intention of community and three that those symbolic acts or signs or dreams are comprised of the sum total of the people in the circle are present for that particular moment, do they transfer outside of the circle?**

**I don't think we are aware of them the same way outside of that circle.**

Well I can share my experiences about that with you if you like

**That would be great thanks**

The last one first I think that the combination that comes up in a work shop is unique as you say to the group that's gathered and in that sense is like a rare precious gift, the symbols will change also, but I do think that there are people (certainly...) who live very much like in the circle but outside of it in terms of listening to dreams looking for the symbols watching for the metaphors that sort of thing I think there is an aspect of it that can become aware of life so I'm not sure if that's what you meant or just that when the group breaks up those specific symbols no longer exist in that way

**Yeh OK yeh I see what you are saying yes I understand that outside of a group I could sort of take those things and become more aware of them just thinking about the power of being-in-community in a group it's that that doesn't seem to last like the other things can go on so if I was an individual living my life I've been to a couple of CBW's I could definitely be more aware of my dreams symbols interpretations how I act how I am being in the world but being-in-community isn't here the same as it is within the circle**

It's almost there is a capsule created that allows us to focus solely on that for those two days and when it is over the world encroaches on us again, life sort of becomes distracting, but I forget what the second thing was you said because I actually my experience took exception to the second thing that you said Oh that it only happens in the community building workshops – what came up when you said that was well the most frequent surprising place it shows up is in crisis you know when there is some catastrophe and what that makes me wonder is, you know in a catastrophe people are totally outside themselves focused on, it's like the left brain is tricked out of the way and they're able to connect in a different way and there's also a levelling effect a levelling in that everyone's in the same boat regardless of class money whatever, It's interesting because in the spiritual retreats that I did with executives that I mentioned that they almost always came to that extraordinary sense of community at the end (yeh) we had them work with wood we had them making talking sticks (..?) or walking stick with hand tools and they sat working from that wood working on those sticks being together talking together the process was very open ended very unfacilitated very unstructured but because their left brains were tricked out of the way by the wood, gave them something to do, the quality of their exchange and their revealing with each other and their talking was extraordinary and the thing that almost always happened somewhere near the end of the first day beginning of the second there was always somebody who went into resistance about the process not wanting to be there whatever that was a little bit of chaos but what never happened the groups never had chaos the way it happens in a Community Building Circle it's like having that left brain focus out of the way they skip that step and of course they skip that step in a crisis too, for the most part you know

**Yes I'm with you I am hearing what your saying It's really interesting isn't it because it's often I often think what is it that needs to be removed or moved out of the way in order for me to be in community and you said left-brain processes but immediately I think a more material more rational way of thinking is what needs to go**

You know which leads me to the next thing your comment that is goes away that community goes away um it was also R.... who taught me to think of community as a gift

of spirit that there is enough space that can be filled up by this gift of the spirit of community and I really like that way of thinking about it which suggest that we have no control over it and that we can't keep it once we've experienced it and it reminds me of like in the eastern traditions it's often said that you get to a state of 'samadhi' (*Check word*) or a meditating state that is just sweet and wonderful and you think that you should be able to return to it anytime but the harder you try to recreate it the more elusive it becomes so to me having the experience of being-in-community in that circle is the same as having that experience of an extraordinary sense of peace and God in a meditation but I have no control over calling that forward at my beck and call – you follow what I am saying (**I do**) – so things that we know in sitting in a circle and in meditating that increase the chances of it happening mostly that is letting go getting empty, letting go of all of that. So this one of the reasons why it is very difficult in business yes because letting go and viewing something as a gift of spirit as opposed to an agenda item made to be so by a manager these are opposite paradigms

**They are they don't really seem like they can meet, It's grace isn't it it's grace we don't own the experience**

Right, and we can't promise it (**no**)

**No you can really only make the intention or set up the container for it (right) OK as I'm talking to you, this is kind of a different interview for me, I'm kind off ruminating on the things I need to cover in my thesis I think and they're just coming up, a lot of what I am saying to you today hasn't been present until now** (*write something about the illuminative process of interview for the researcher*)

Is that ok? **That's fine is it Ok for you?** Fine (laughter) **ok let's get on to work in terms of what I would like to look as is at first of all How do you think the experience of being-in-community and community building has affected your work practices and attitudes**

Well...I have never been in a traditional full time office job since attending a community building session (**Huh congratulations**) (laughter) well it happened before that to, but my point is I don't really know what it's like to be in the workplace full-time in that circumstance, it's been all consulting since then so it really affected my consulting

**Ok could you tell me about that?**

Well it began and then helped me refine my practice of speaking I statements and sharing my personal experience as opposed to concepts as much as possible (*very phenomenological grand schemes etc*) because I was a very generalising mental sort of person when I came to this and now I feel much more inclined to speak about what's true for me tell my story you know and I think that that's an important shift, it allows people to be with me more easily, people don't have to decide whether they agree with me in order to be with me, when I was conceptualising it was always about convincing somebody of another point of view that or that sort of thing and it was exhausting actually, So I think it would be fair to say that as I started doing community building I gave up the need to convince other people of a point of view. (*build this in to thesis*)

**Right and do you think this has increased the quality of you relationships**

Yeh I would say so (laughter)

**And you have more energy for your work now?**

...uh, I don't know the answer to that

**Ok it's just you were saying before it was exhausting trying to convince people up to a point of view that conceptual approach**

Right it's no longer exhausting (ok) I would also say it introduced me to the notion of praying while doing my work

**And how has that affected how things are for you and how you do things**

(laughter) well I think there are more surprising outcomes than there might have been, and my focus is less on making things happen and more on praying that the best things happen, so the energy really shifts, there's less striving yeh

**So it sounds to me – and I don't want to put words in your mouth- but you're kind of emptying as you're working making space**

Yes It became fairly natural to adopt this point of view but I would say that after attending my first couple of CBW's my work changed dramatically in that I followed the intuition that had already been there that my job was not to tell people the answers it was to create a space in which they found the answers and that my job was not to go in full my job was to go in empty and pray and stay present and do what was put in front of me

**That must be an extraordinarily powerful position to be in as a consultant I mean personally I don't mean powerful in any big way I mean personally powerful**

Um yeeh although I would say I spent a couple of years being really scared about it and um also I struggled to find the balance of how much lack of structure and silence and so forth that would be useful to groups, because that's the other thing I would say my value, the value I place on silence and the way I use it changed dramatically after these work shops and I started using it a lot

**Can you tell me more about your experience of silence, how you've experienced it what it's meant for you**

.....Oh I came very quickly to accept the notion that silence is a form of communication that communication is happening in the silence, so for me personally in the early stages of community building the silence is usually filled with a lot of inner noise and struggle and as things progress it then shifts to sort of hearing the group in silence and being able to focus and become more sensitive to what's really going on and then of course in community silence is such a beautiful thing it's like taking a bath in peace or something

**That's lovely – What do you think the difference between those two silences is the pre-community and the community one**

Well for me that's fairly simple the difference is that in the second one I have remembered God and I am just resting there

**That's a great image**

In the first one I think that God needs my help

**(Laughter) you're a bit more omnipotent in the first one**

Oh way more yes (laughter) way more so I use silence a lot in my work and one of the things I have really learned (*CBW as a learning place for learning orgs etc*) in doing that is that there are many people who view silence as frightening and many people who were punished with silence, and so the first thing that comes up for a lot of people in silence is that they are being punished that they've done something wrong or something bad is about to happen and that's such a sad thing but it's important to be aware of because it's important to be aware of

**Hmm you know I was punished I did something to a friend in my early years that I had no idea about and he didn't talk to me for two full years**

Yeh it's really nasty isn't it?

**It's amazing it was flabbergasting and I never knew what I did and I think when I found out it was something inconsequential well to me, obviously not to him, It was probably to do with a girl (Probably ha) you know how it is, So how has the way you work been received in the circles you work in**

Um.....well there is several answers to that so beginning to work like this attracted a very intimate circle of people who felt really called to go in this direction and felt really natural going in this direction, it also created a line over which there were many people not willing to go although I was often surprised I made up I my mind some of the people who wouldn't go there and that wasn't always the case, so that was an example of that is there was a leader who was extremely Christian fundamental in his practices and beliefs but somehow was able to was totally comfortable working in this space in this way and I would have guessed that he wouldn't have been and I was wrong I mean I was wrong, but what I would say is I have found that people are not wishy washy about this they are either in or they're out, it engenders extreme reaction. The other thing that happened to me was that I had trouble with making the shift, I was clearly called to do it, it was my natural style all of that was cool but in my mind it was not ok, I didn't believe people would accept it I did not feel comfortable I felt like a pioneer that was unappreciated I really self-isolated myself you



know what I mean by that I like declared that I was too different and I felt separate from the main stream as a result and I went through several years like that

**That would have been difficult**

It was difficult (laughter) one of those classic difficult by my own making you know and I would say that any lack of acceptance during that whole period of years was far more my perception than it was reality cos people yearn for community

**So it was your lack of acceptance of yourself (Yes), Just on acceptance it just reminds me of Doug Shaddels book and Bill Thatchers “ the power of acceptance”, Is that a theme for you that is constant with community (Acceptance?) Yes Acceptance how important is that in terms of the scheme of community**

Well I think that's all there is yeh

**So in those terms when you experience the other and yourself in the CBW and elsewhere, what I have just heard you say is that when you are not accepting yourself you create difficulties for yourself, is community when you do accept yourself and others**

Yes I would say so

**So where is your work at now after travelling through the difficult times how is it sitting now?**

.....I'm not quite sure where to take that answer, just tell me a little bit more about what you're asking

**well you described how it was difficult for you for a while of your own doing but there must have been a time, I would assume that is became less difficult or there was something that transitioned from difficult to not so difficult**

.....one of the things I have already mentioned which is I find that people have become far more sophisticated at these skills today than they were seven or eight years ago that there's been a general increase in the sophistication in that regard in the population that I work with anyway

**Something that comes to mind is it actually a general increase or are you just mixing in circles, you know how like attracts like Cos I used to have the same thing you know I would say no people are a lot more men, men are a lot more able to share their feeling now than they used to be, I tell you what they're not it's just the men I know who would have been around anyway who I didn't know – do you know what I am saying**

Yes I do It's possible I guess what I am meaning is the community that I have been working in for the last 10 years seems to have gotten more sophisticated with these skills,

**Right OK we're becoming less sophisticated with these skills in terms of University, which is a real tragedy**

Even as you say that I start to question my statement you know maybe it's because I'm more comfortable (laughter) and as you say maybe it's that I don't find myself in groups that are very resistant anymore because I don't work in a general market I mean I don't work a lot, so when I work it tends to be with people who really want it

**these people that want it would you say with follow up conversations, consultations, etc. that what they're doing through these experiences or this type of approach to business is actually bringing, do you think it's affecting their workplace, have they reported it's affecting their workplace?**

What the community building work?

**Yes whether that is actually engendering change or difference in the workplace for them.**

.....Hmm.....you know I guess so for some reason my brain is resisting this question I think partly because I have watched so many times participants in a CBW want to take it home to their friends and family and it is not something that can really be taken home, to me process changes the person so they are different in their relationship and different over time you know, and when I think about the retreat for example, that we've done and I think about the people going back into their workplaces one guy went back and

wanted to set up a room that would just be for quiet time and meditation and bringing spirit into the workplace like a sacred room that when they walked in they would be able to regenerate faster than if it wasn't there He was sued (laughter) for religious discrimination, I mean I believe... I mean that this is all part of a process but that was one extreme... that the most frequent.. and then I have watched

several of them become seeds, leaders for new ways of doing things out in the community I have been working in for a while and they each sort of carry a flag of a different colour, but they are definitely leading the way because of what happened to them in this process and then the most frequent change of course is that people change the way they are living they adjust their lives to reflect far more what they really think is important and far less of what they really think they ought to be doing and that's the most profound change. So I think that change is big but it's not but I think it's a very tender, personal thing that it's not a text book thing and I think it is also further evidence of Gods grace working that we can't control, prescribe or control the outcome that happens as a result of the experience, that is different for every one and even more importantly we can't really have a clue what the seeds of that, so for example how could we get what the seed of having felt community in 1994 or 1993 when ever it was for me, what that will grow into what other lives it has touched as a result, we just can't even imagine I think I can't even imagine, so

**Yeh I know I mean It's one act of kindness or warmth or love towards another human can have huge consequences – So really I hear what you're saying and I think you are talking about the individual being the model and the leader for change through the experience**

The individual is changed and then changes their environment as a result just by being different

**I would agree with that I don't think you could institutionalise this particular thing, you're right we don't have any control or ownership of any of those kind of outcomes – but they're there.....but (change sides – lost some conversation)**

Did you say meditation?

**Yes meditation J's done CBW's he was one of the guys that facilitated and ran the training group and he now trains people he trains IT companies on recruitment but he uses a lot of the principles of meditation, being present, treating people like human beings etc etc. and has remarkable results – So in terms of relationships and the other can you tell me any noticeable things that stand out in the way that is different for you now? I know that's a big question and it's been an on-going process**

You know it is and each of these questions in terms of the follow up after the session is a little hard because there have been other things in my life that have also really supported the change and the growth and catalysed it so but a couple of big ones in terms of relationships looking good looking perfect on the outside used to be really important to me and that is completely, well not completely gone, but a lot of that is gone, I believe that those circles and the experience in the circles helped that to leave me, it's just really hard after sitting in circle after circle and seeing that the power is in telling the truth and even telling the truth about the messiness and that that's the greatest gift of the group, it makes it very hard to hold on to the notion that it's important to look good,

**Ok hey look the fashion industry aren't going to like that**

It doesn't mean you can't stay looking cool (laughter) but I haven't worn make-up in five years so they probably won't like me yeh (laughter)

**Guess what I haven't worn make-up in five years either – well maybe that's not true a couple of party's I may have**

I'm also way more willing to tell the truth about how I feel, where I am, far more able to feel where I am, know where I am I don't think that is was very easy for me to access my feelings in that first community building circle, my faith is absolute that the process will take care of itself, it doesn't stop me from feeling like I ought too give it a hand etc etc, but truly when the chips are down my faith is that the process will take care of itself, so that's been helpful to me also and I think it also lets the notion that if I am true to myself , if I am true to my intuition, if for example I speak when I am called to speak and I say what I'm

called to say whether I'm looking like sweetness and light or whether I am looking like a plunger, that that's a gift to other people to the people I am around, and that it is enough and that it is way more powerful than me thinking of something clever to do or to say, so I've come to trust that and I know that part of the reason that I trust that is having sat in a circle watching over and over that when people trust and just say what comes up it's the most powerful thing to do, the group moves when that happens

**Yes and that gets back to really speaking when you're moved to speak, you said something about now you're much more aware or know where you are and I was just thinking of sense of place, so do you feel more firmly located within yourself now?>**

absolutely but you know in that eight year period that we're talking about my whole foundation on which I live has been dismantled and rebuilt (laughter) and nothing in my life is the same so yes I feel totally different and grounded (*does CB have the effect of 'grounding' people?*) and I mean I feel happy now I didn't feel happy when I staring going to these but I don't credit these with the only reason that's happened

**Well no it sounds like you've done a hell of a lot of hard work**

But in the end the hard work led to making enough room for the spirit, that joy to come in to me

**The spirit of joy, It's sad that we have to empty such a lot out to let joy in isn't it – we must be so crammed full (laughter), yeh well you know it just feels like I've got nothing else to ask you right at the moment, I like that**

Yeh that's good.

**(talk about phenomenology is similar to Community Building) That into the emptiness something else will flow) (willing to make myself a vessel)**

**Thank you for doing this just think, just by asking these questions and having these communications you are adding energy to building community in the worlds that in itself is very powerful.**

End of Interview

## **Transcript 4 - November 2001**

**Can you describe your experience of being-in-community?**

Yes it's an experience of connectedness – Uh...so...you know

**When you say connectedness can you describe what that feels like for you?**

Well, Yeh, so I believe that, well I believe that we're here for a purpose and that when I'm in community I believe I'm fulfilling that purpose, though, uh feeling of being connected with everything that exists including the divine

**And that manifests for you in being in community – so what would you say for you the difference is in terms of how you feel not being connected and then feeling connected**

Lost and Found

**Lost and found yeh – so when you're feeling found what sorts of things are present for you? Like for instance would you describe it as feeling euphoric or those kind of things?**

Feeling alive, extremely alive, Um OK, so the full range of emotions are available

**So you're present? Yes and with being in community, you've been involved in this for what about 16 years? yes can you recall the first time you had that experience?**

Well I mean the uh, community building isn't not the only times I've had that experience, ah uhm...so uh...No I can't really

**I guess I am looking for is, like I remember when I did my first community building workshop I um was quite profound to me because I sat there and I was going through all these things like uh, fear and my heart pounding and not wanting to speak and all kinds of things and getting in conflict with people, but at the end I think the person I got into conflict with most at the start I felt most in community with,**

Well yeh I've had that experience a number of times, so my first community building experience was I was running a drug treatment centre and we had a chance to get a large grant and so the school district who was the lead agency called all the players together that were going to be a part of putting this grant proposal together and had the foundation come up and to a CBW with us..and it was L...P and a woman by the name of P...W.... who was the director of the foundation at the time...

and I did, it was a feeling of uh, I mean it felt all right to me but I wondered if, you know it wasn't a real big AHHA, but I asked them at that point I mean you know how do you facilitate this? how do you get involved?, they said well, in those days they would call people who were prospective facilitators to a workshop and Scott-Peck would be there and the whole board and then they would select the people that they wanted, That's where I met R.....as a matter of fact **Ok..**and now this was years ago so yeh, I would when you say be moved to speak I would actually be shaking and uh I was a bit insecure in those days and was not used to hanging out with people like Bishops and Churches and Scott-Peck..

**Sure...**and so I would think if I was moved to speak certainly these people here would know you know would know what I was feeling in other words why weren't they saying it (laughter) **OK..** You see what I mean that's how insecure I was **Yeh** and I have come to believe that basically once we remove our masks and get into community...the native people have a saying that 'we're all original medicine' meaning we all have a unique gift and they mean all beings not just human beings but we all have a unique gift to give and so that's what I have come to believe now **right**, well now now the being moved to speak is much different, because I've sat in a lot a lot of circles it's a place where I feel the most at home if you will, even though there is still anxiety and and so I don't get those body sensations any more, now usually being moved to speak is more um you know I am not wanting to say what it is that I have to say if you will

**So um it's more like there is a censoring going on for you? (heard sensitive??)**

Yeh I a probably very center, sensiti, sense things yes, but not just that it's not there's not the anxiety there's not the same kind of anxiety of being in a circle that there was

**OK can you describe for me the kind of anxiety you have now what happens when you feel anxious now? You're talking particularly in a community-building circle? Yeh particularly in that circle usually prior to speaking isn't it? Excuse me, for you is it prior to speaking? The anxiety?**

Well you know I feel I don't know if anxiety is the right word, normally now what it would be is there's something I want to say right..but many times it's something that I don't think that would uh....it's paradoxical it's something I want to say but don't want to say if you will and then what I do I sit on that for awhile and if it continues to come up I I follow the guidelines, so I say it

**Right OK that's interesting I've had somebody else say the same thing they check it and then they check to see if it comes back and if it comes back they say it**

Right as a matter of fact if you're a facilitator that was one of the directions we were given as a facilitator

**yeh I think that C... I did a little bit of training with C... and J... I can remember them saying something about the return or repeatability and I've done other facilitation with very similar things too**

Right but I no longer I seldom any longer get those body sensations that I got

**Seldom Ok so in the start you got sensations like what – uncontrollable shaking was it?**

Oh no I wouldn't say uncontrollable but I would be moving like I am doing now my legs are shaking or you know I mean I'm not, because I thought about it I'm doing it not because the sensations going through me

**sure it's ineresting when you think about things like that and you start doing it – So in the earlier days speaking for you – you were saying that you felt insecure so speaking for you was a challenge was it ? Yes this has come up with other people that speaking was the most difficult thing they ever had to do a circle nearly everybody said exactly the same thing but what was it for you? The most difficult thing?**

Well, uh in other words it uh...how shall I put it, I had, I have a real belief in the process so I am a true believer right, so many time if I'm moved to speak I speak and at some level I don't even know what I am saying especially if I am also in the role of a facilitator, so that I get the sense that people are listening deeply but I'll, but my reaction will be a lot checking at the break with the other facilitator was that alright

**Ok** You see because it depends on which way you look at it if ya look at it around, in other words if you have a belief in the divine then literally it's a part of the divine speaking through you, are you familiar with dialogue process by this guy by the name of David Baum? **Yes, I have heard of David Baum are you talking of dialogue with two people or dialogue with self** – it's a process similar to community building but more of an intellectual process and his belief is that there is an implicit order in other words there is a order that wants to be spoken in the group and the whole deal is to speak from that to lower your defences and speak from that, so that is a feeling that happens

**Can you describe it what actually speaking within that context and in those circles has done for you personally? Like you know say you were aware that say maybe for you speaking you used to shake, what was it like after you had spoken in that context?**

Well I explained it, it was like being the most alive, it was like what was supposed to happen and I've been involved in many things that were quite far-out, one time in a workshop in England we went into third day and they didn't quite like the third day, its hard to explain the whole thing, but there were some difficult people in the group and we were no longer in circle cos we were going to do these exercises and it all fell apart people some people started to almost fight and I had to stop them form doing that you know that wasn't acceptable and it was all falling apart and I felt this energy go through me and I howled literally at which point when it was over some people started singing amazing grace and there were other people who were pagans and they didn't like that so they sang the other song but it was clear that at that point we were in community now you don't read that in any of the books you know but it was following the guideline to do what the spirit moves you to do, but you know but at that point it's not an intention in other words the thing I like best about community building is that it's real, it's not to be manipulated if you will, although there are people who try to manipulate it,

**In my experience it can't be manipulated, you can't even get there by trying your hardest**

Well it can be I assure you, **It sounds to me like you are talking about an extremely sophisticated, sort of sly way of Pseudo-community**, right, well, it's a matter of words but... **Yes Sure**

**So in terms of the circle how would you describe um..when you are in a group and that whole goes into community that being-in-community, can you describe how you see some of the changes that happen in the group or to the space?**

Well, it's uh..It's basically explained in the mission statement that differences are transcended but not annihilated in other words, it's experience like you talk about the same, and the same person could say the same words, that same person who who you had the conflict with early on, in the group, right could say the same words they said in-community and It's felt entirely differently, it's described as 'looking with soft eyes' if you will, that there's a real feeling with connectedness, not only in the group but in, to all that is

**Yeh the soft eyes is interesting you personally, is there any sort..with your own experience with others in the group have you had any experiences that kind of like stand out for you in terms of encountering the other then coming to see them through soft-eyes, something that's vivid that's personal to you?**

Well I mean it's happened so often that it's hard to come up with, well that time I talked about in that group in England was an extremely powerful part, **that must have been amazing to be there and have somebody let out a howl that would be um it's almost like for me the image is that it kind of shatters the chaos and allows something else to happen,**

yes that's basically what happened, but it's happened time and time again I mean it, it happens more often than not that I feel that connectedness and because I attend community

building workshop but my most recent experience was facilitating them so so Uh Uh it isn't it isn't most..oh well individual things may get worked out it's not an individual process for me it's a group process so Uh there are, they're just numerous experiences but it's in connectedness with the group not individuals and usually what I remember myself is doing something that is that is uh you know being moved to do something that isn't Uh in the book if you will, for example one thing I am remembering the first time we went to Russia it was right after they had the change over and there were literally groups of people there that were beginning to be at war with each other in other words Russians that were staying in Chechnya for example and there were people from all over what used to be the former Soviet Union and we thought the group was really getting into chaos, cos people were really, course we were doing this with interpreters, they were really expressing themselves and talking loudly but when you look around the group other people were reading like newspapers, **Oh Ok**, because they were used to lecturing in that way right, and people were sitting together, you know the Russians from Chechnya would stay right there you know and so something told me to separate these people you know so I go and sit in the middle of 'em at which point I don't have an interpreter (laughter) well that was very interesting, and in that same workshop, on the way there we got flowers which were, before the change over apparently the only time you'd really get flowers is like in summer periods or is a very big thing right, but unbeknown to us my co-facilitator got three flowers and put them in a wine glass in the middle, now that was an i..that ended up being an insult because flowers are so precious and an empty wine bottle right, they would never put them in a wine bottle and also odd number flowers were a sign of death (laughter) which of course is what the group needed to do right at that moment right, it was totally we had no, no knowledge of any of that right, and also in that same workshop a very elderly and elderly gentleman who was wearing these medals, he had a suit on but he had medals, and the medals were for achievements for science and bravery in the second world war and they were of course, even though we'd told them we're coming to do community building, they were looking for guidance and a lecture and all right, well at one point in this workshop this old gentleman, who was obviously an elder right, a respected person says "oh I got it you want us to figure this out for ourselves" he said "it's about time" So, and that has been my, I other words they stand out because they're in another country and it's a little something out of the ordinary, but energy goes through me all the time, but it's something certainly it's the way I sense things and feel things matter of fact I work on people with my hands now, a gift that's been given to me, **Oh Ok**, but that feeling is a standard feeling it doesn't happen all the time, but something like that usually happens

**So it's like the spirit of community is moving you?**

Well, moving through the group! You keep saying me right so I'm the one that has the senses but I think you know, it's like the new physics me to some degree is an illusion **Yes**, do you understand, **Oh yes I do look when I say you I guess Um**, I don't take...offence I'm just ...right, so that when a group is in community that is one of the times that that illusion is broken for me, in other words you can sense that we are all truly connected in some way, and to some degree that group coming into community changes the world, that's how I feel, and I feel blessed and honoured and humbled to be a part of that

**Yeh I'm just thinking back to my last community building workshop and the uh..it is something that I have been actually missing in my life over here** Right,

And it's like the season's in other words to get that feeling is to know that that feeling exists, not to assume that I will have that feeling all of the time, especially in an on-going group because it will go through phases but if your actually in-community with people those phases become oh....uh...there's a context in which you can work through those phases, it's very difficult for people to stay in that the foundation (FCE) can't do it, by the way they're deciding to disband, **Yes I heard that**, I'm going to work with people to start another non-profit, I think that will probably happen who knows, **Yeh some people will be going through some amazing things at the moment with that happening**, Oh yeh huh huh,**Ok what I am looking for at the moment is like quality's – could you describe for me the quality of say emptying or emptiness, what do you think emptying is?**

It's like a ah it's a letting go, it's jumping of the cliff, it's like a death and it's different each time, in other words in the process itself I never know what it is I'm going to need to empty myself of, and the more you do it the more difficult it becomes, **Oh really why do you think that is?** Well uh... I don't know it's diffi..I ...**is it actually the things your asked to empty of or the things that come up to empty of are actually more difficult to let go?**

Well, there are two parts to this so it's my belief the reason the foundation is disbanding is because people, we stopped as a group practising community building, at that level when you're with someone it gets deeper and deeper so you get to more Uh touchy parts of yourself, plus some people are prone to sort of intellectualise, so it's easier and there's a whole bunch that we've learned so we wanted to teach it, rather than continue to practice it but to that degree it becomes more difficult, for myself personally in a, in a workshop I dunno if more difficult is... well so like a lot of the issues that I have already emptied myself of the fact that I'm an alcoholic, my bad marriage you know the things that would come up, when I would first come around right are no longer there, they're no longer a big deal for me, do you understand what I am saying? **Yes I do** so because it is so because it is an adventure, to that degree it becomes more difficult because if I would go over my past history or things that were important to me early on right, that would be a way to manipulate the group, they're not going to know that, you understand **yes**, I won't do that so so because what I am going to need to empty myself off is a surprise, you see and because I know longer have the body sensations, do you understand? **Yes** I can't always use my body now as a clue on what to do, although a lot of things do happen because I sense things, and literally they move through me in a group, I'm not the kind of facilitator who sits there you'll know when something hits me, cos I'll jerk back but that doesn't usually have any...that's the role of a facilitator that's not the role of me needing to empty something, does that that

**yes no no I think I' with you there..what I heard you say was that in the facilitators position when the energy runs through you you have a response to that that you feel with your whole being**, Right that has nothing to do with what I may personally need to empty, **Yes Understand that it's more like you are sensing the groups energy there**, exactly, **Yep I'm with you there..I'm just thinking with letting go then it gets to the stage where what I heard you say if you kind of re-hash the past in that sense it would be inauthentic**, exactly,

**So when you have emptied what's that feeling like, a what? when you've emptied of whatever it is you need to empty of, what's then what's that like when you've emptied at the end of that?**

Well..uh **What I am looking for there is probably the quality after emptying**, Yeh I understand your question,

So because it is normally something I'm holding on to you know I'm holding on to that for a reason, you understand, so normally when I empty it's a feeling of both of relief but also a not knowing, like I explained earlier you see and sort of uh uh (???) vulnerable, you know

**That not knowing seems to be very important to the process of community building?**

It's essential, because if not it's inauthentic manipulative, you know even though the reaction is almost been almost entirely been a positive one, it makes no difference, so it's a process I trust but it does not make the risk any less riskier, my own personal risk to empty you see what I am saying, **yes I do**, you see because I believe the process is ancient Scott-Peck did not discover this himself but it's something that's been here for a long period of time and it seems universal and it seems like we almost all of us have been enculturated in such a way that we yearn for this authentic connection, but in order to have authentic connection I have to be authentic **Yes** and we're inauthentic for reasons **yes I was pondering this actually just before I got out of bed I woke up early and Um was just thinking about those process, I was actually thinking about the group process and having to go through all that painful confrontation with my sense of unauthenticity the striving the insincere sort of speaking's and all kinds of things in order to get to some kind of space and in that sense it's all leading up to emptying isn't it? So that something else can happen**, That's right and in that sense it's all necessary, **yes**, at least in

this process, now this is not the only process that does this, but it's a common theme that once you get in this process, we're doing a workshop here now actually my room mate has been trained I'm in the same town, (..) but she's in a smaller group and these people in these smaller groups are saying well can't we bring children and can't we do this and can't we do that It's all.. my point is almost always somebody in a community building workshop somebody's going to want to do something differently right now normally that's to avoid both the chaos and the emptying so if it's to avoid that we don't do it, I will say something like look there many ways to do this you've come here to do it this way so why don't we do it this way (laughter) know what I mean, **I do Yeh look I've been to workshops where people want us to exercise, do this stretch, get up it's like,** There's been community building workshops where I have friends who are very much into body movement I'm not opposed to that at all and one..during one of the sessions they did nothing but body movement, it isn't as if any of those things are wrong it's that if it's to avoid rather than go through which in most cases it is, that's what's make it ... **yes yes I think you know that quality of avoidance, you get to pick it in yourself and others,** sure,

**Well what about chaos what are some of your observations around chaos?**

First of all the most difficult, using our language right, the most difficult part for me and especially, well either as a facilitator or a participant, is Psuedo-community, I will regularly for example at the end of the first day have a headache, and I don't ever get headaches, because you're holding something that isn't, something's wanting to emerge and it's not emerging, so at that point the chaos is a movement and a positive release, so I find myself real aware during the chaos part, whereas during the pseudo-community part I feel, sometimes a feel like going to sleep, I get headaches, you see, but it's a movement, **Yeh that's really interesting what with the fact that you get a headache, it's almost like something's been capped under pressure,** that's exactly what it is, **So chaos for you is a movement, so you welcome it?**

Yes, (...?) figured out, sometimes occasionally people will start emptying without going into the chaos, but most points, most of the time when that happens, they revisit the chaos at a later time, **Yeh yeh I have been in workshops where that has happened, early emptying,** Very painful part in a workshop, my brother R always mentions this, he always looks at the first person that empties and if they empty too early they're really hung out there to dry, they get ignored and you see what I mean? That's a very hard place to be at, for an individual if the group's not there, **Yep sure cos the groups doing, yes I've actually seen that I haven't experienced it**

**So chaos that tension with the other just seems to be such an integral part of our trying to come to terms with ourselves,** Right, but when you're in it you don't look at it that way, **No** (laughter) If you have that understanding that's why it's a positive movement, **Yes,** for example I've never put anyone out of a workshop and I've been in workshops where people actually physically threatened people, and the group takes care of it, yeh **that happened to me I got physically threatened once – the group took care of it**  
**So um would you say overall your experience with community building can you describe a little bit about the effect it's had on things like your relationships with others, work colleagues etc?**

Well, Uh...depends on whom they are I mean it's shaped my life, two basic things that shaped my life were getting sober and community building and of course one of the basis for Scott-Pecks work is the twelve-step program do you understand what it's based on? **Yes yep I do,** That Quakerism, and I've also become a Quaker based on this work, so it's had a profound effect on my life now uh I don't believe that it has been explored in the workplace adequately enough but I've had a lot of synchronistic, especially, so my major learning with community building and the Foundation for Community Encouragement especially when I was a director of programs which actually I am now but there aren't any programs and I'm doin it for nuthin (laughs) is that I made the assumption that we were more or less on the same page as far as it came to community building and that was an extremely incorrect assumption so that many people did not carry the learning outside and go deeper with it



To me it just follows naturally that I should not have any hidden agendas with others, you see what I mean? that does not mean that I don't think somebody's an asshole, but if I think they're an asshole I think that it's part of community building if I'm going to tell someone else I better tell that person, that's spoken a little roughly but that's the way I speak sometimes, **That's fine by me I understand that language**, so what happens is because I think because of cultural blind spots and other things that many people have this separation that instead of going deeper and emptying they tend to organise, this happened to the foundation not once but twice with relatively the same type of executive director and the first time it almost went bankrupt and now this time it has, so it has had a profound effect on my life and my belief in it's what's needed in organisations and I think it fits very neatly with this stuff that Peter Senge is apparently doing I just had a ton of synchronistic experiences for example one of the letters I wrote to the board around this when they were looking at should we close up or what should we do, what I told you is we stopped practicing and started teaching and we had cultural blind spots which were there from the beginning one of which was is the pro sort of upper class Christian background bias we didn't have any people of colour in the organisation for about ten years to speak I mean so these are blind spots and I said one of the things I said and our organisation was basically the same kind of structure as IBM or any non-profit in the hope – especially in the last time we had a board of directors and then they had an executive director and the executive director had all the power and it was crazy and I said we should look to our Quaker roots and I said the other thing we need I advised them not to disband but they didn't have enough information, the other thing we needed was a truth and reconciliation a gathering the first part of which would be a truth and reconciliation cos many people were helped by this work there's no question about that, but it also appears that the people closest to it were also hurt by the organisation, meanwhile I'm reading this book the dance of change, I wrote this first, and I get to a part in there and they say you know well in corporations lots of people get hurt and I think one way of going about doing this is to have a truth and reconciliation ... seriously, in another part they said and looking at a structure we may want to look at the Quaker tradition and have a discernment committee, damn I'm a genius, **Ah there you go you're ahead of your time there mate**, no I think well, **You're a man for the time when that happens it sounds like you're right on the button there in terms of where your energy is**, ye so its that connectedness

**Yeh are you talking about the stuff that's developed out of quantum physics**, yes so for example even thought is not individual it's a collective, well that thoughts in the air so you get it you know everything's alive you see we don't act like that and uh **no we actually act like we're predetermining everything**, Yes and it's not true I mean the mystics have known this for ages but now the physicists know it and unless we catch up with that pretty quickly you know the handwritings on the wall, **yeh look I agree I actually used some of it in my Masters work comparing self organised systems that organise themselves from chaos into community um acids on a plate and there's a series of pictures this woman's used and she's talking about quantum physics and organisational development it's fascinating stuff**,

right, Community building is a powerful tool for that but you have to be a believer meaning you can't mix the cultures, either you believe that to you don't see what I mean? **Yes** once things start getting chaotic in an organisation the strong tendency is to organise and also to follow that as a life path you know there's a lot of things you find out about yourself that aren't quite right, you have to be continually willing to look at that, **Yes it is a continual process, unfortunately self enlightenment now would be great**, Uh I don't know, **The Quakers: what interests me about the Quakers is silence can you say something about silence in the context of community?**

Yes it's probably the most powerful intervention, it's uh just to ask the group to be silent, because then we tend to go deeper have access to what it is that needs to be said verses having a discussion or defending my own particular point of view

**Why do you think silence does that, why do you think silence allows us to go deeper?**

Because if a vessel is full or babbling there isn't anything else that can fit in there, still waters run deep I dunno Man it seems rather self evident to me

**I do ask some self-evident questions, but what I actually look for is other peoples perspective cos Um things that I thinks of, generally I get something you now I like that gem that somebody has that I have never ever thought off, Oh right. There is two qualities' to silence that I have noticed in a community building the community being-in-community silence is a lot different to the silence you may have in the middle of chaos or psuedo-community?**

Well silence can be a well yes I've had the same experience, a number of time silence can be an avoidance, though simply people are just too scared to speak, and this happens more with groups that know each other by the way, especially in a work environment this will be more prone to happen, because you don't want to say anything that's gonna offend the boss or so you don't say anything at all so it's a very nervous silence verses a contemplative silence

**Yeh that's been one of the reasons people I have talked to have said that community building is difficult in business it's because of those things, offending the boss, disclosing ones self, so that they're vulnerable and that vulnerability may be used later by somebody to gain power or advantage those kind of things,**

Right well if but if we go into an organisation, that's why we go in and do an assessment first, and if your assessment is that that is going to happen then you simply don't do it, **Ok you do an assessment,** That's why you add other things other than the circle and you might have to teach people why we are doing it, so,

**So you kind of like it's more like you'd run an education and an on-going process for that organisation,** Oh I dunno simply tell after the assessment if in fact you felt that there was a hidden agenda on the part of the persons that had the power probably would simply tell em not to do it,

**Yep sounds like good advice to me, I remember Peck saying about a group of people I think it was some doctors that he ran a community building workshop for that he wouldn't do it unless everybody including their secretaries was there and went through the whole process,**

Although but you see I think like this thing that Peter Senge's work and some other more sophisticated organisational development things go hand in hand with this if you're going into an organisation there are a lot of things that need to happen the circle only being one of them, so in the end it's the idea is that they are going to create better widgets of course, well I mean why else, that's what they're in business for

**Is there anything else you want to say that hasn't been said?**

No thanks for calling me and lets keep in touch.

End of interview.

## **Transcript 5 - November 2001**

**Would you give me a little bit of background on how you got interested in Scott-Pecks work particularly?**

Well I'm an addicted reader - I started reading Scott-Pecks books, I actually got an audio tape of the different drum and but it was probably 4 or 5 years later that I got motivated to buy the book and read that and coincidently I was acquainted with ... and when she was going to do a leadership retreat for me and ..... she invited another FCE facilitator to come help facilitate our retreat,

**Sue sounds like she does some very interesting work, as a reciprocal I got interested in Pecks work about 7 years ago I was sharing a house and a guy came home – maybe 8 years ago – and he came home and said you've got to go to one of these workshops there's one next weekend – he was very exited he had just been to a 3 day one and uh consequently I went to that workshop and a number of others and then got involved in**

running facilitators training group in Melbourne for a couple of years and I moved from Melbourne to Bunbury which is about 3,800kms across desert to study at ECU Uni and here I am talking to you

So in terms of my work for some reason I got interested in the fact that I thought community building principles, particularly community building around Pecks model would be useful in business because I became concerned with the hard-line economic rationalist and didn't see that, well my experience was that there wasn't much room for humanness within organizations and I'm still observing that a lot, so my interest is a hypothesis that these workshops could be beneficial

So what interests me specifically the experiences of being in community, now I think you mentioned that you haven't specifically been to a CBW is that correct or not?

That is correct, I have not been to an FCE CBW no

OK but you have experienced something MB has run and things like that?

Yes

OK and S.. had informed me that in fact what happens in those workshops is that they follow or tend to follow a very similar pattern to Pecks even though they are not run the same way and um I would like your story about that and what it has meant to you So the first experience that I would have that I would say mirrored that was when MB did a workshop or a retreat for. ...and myself we were merging two organizations two voluntary membership associations and D... was the executive director of the other membership association and I was the executive director of .... and we wanted to serve as co-executive directors of the new organisation at least for the transition period – so S.. got her other FCE colleague ... and we went to a retreat the two of us and the facilitators which is about as intimate as you could get – **It is four people** – and we spent the time together there talking working with wood, sitting outside about what we wanted for the new organisation and how we could work together to create it, I do not think we could have done the co-executive directorship for a year – which is what we did – without having had the experience of that workshop

OK so what things did you experience in that workshop that enabled you to co-direct something like that for so long?

Uh chiefly I would say a course of trust that was the key, D... and I trusted each other just implicitly or we would never have even bothered doing the co-executive directorship because that's extremely difficult to do but the experience of being in retreat with M... and P... and talking about what was important to each of us and our lives and our work and our experiences of organisation and what or aspirations were allowed that trust to deepen to a point that despite a lot of things that happened in that following year that if I had not had that level of trust in D... I would have thought somebody was trying to stab me in my back I knew that he was not because of the level of trust I had developed in him

So my picture there is it enabled you to see past somebody's immediate actions to the intent behind them

Um not always to see the intent but to have an unwavering faith in the goodness of the intent

very well put Ok –got that- that's wonderful Look we don't have much of a relationship so I want to give you a little bit more that anything is welcome in this conversation it will be kept completely confidential but I've got a fairly strong spiritual orientation and a fairly broad ranging I suppose experience in the world so um don't feel you have to sort of censor yourself if anything comes up – OK, maybe it would be appropriate if I gave you a little bit of background on me I have lived in or near Atlanta Georgia all of my life my college degree was actually in journalism but my very first job at college was with a tax exempt organisation that was the G.... association, I discovered association management as a career and I've done that, I graduate ed, from college in 1974 so I've been doing that ever since. This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> association depending on how you count the merger I was 6 years with the Georgia school board association then 10 years with Technical association of the pulp and paper industry and the

I came to the International association for financial planning in 1991 and then we created FBA at the beginning of 2000 so I have been the chief staff person since 1991

**it sounds like a large organisation,**

it is this is now we have about 80 staff members about 29,000 members

**No wonder you're busy, Yeh, I've actually just written a handbook on volunteering and I came across association management journals and United way and fundraising through that and realised what a huge sort of world non-profit organizations are yes – So that was fascinating to dabble in that area that I was aware of but on a very fringe level**

**In the workshop – you done one workshop with S... have you done anything else since?**

Oh yeh after that retreat we did a retreat for the two staff this was about six months prior to the actual merger and so we wanted to get all of the staff members from the both organizations together to try to create a community and M..and P.. came and they bought two more FCE facilitators Uh R...and Ro.... **I've talked to R... and I will be talking to R... as well**

Ok great and I was pleased with the retreat but I would say in some ways it was probably a failure as a community building exercise and there are two reasons I would attribute that to one was the fact that the staff the ICFP staff from Denver in particular was not ready to think about..to Uh they weren't ready to merge yet...they Uhm I D... and I are extremely different people, just very different approaches to life, which is another reason that the fact that we could coexist as co executive directors was kind of amazing I had in the merger process-and the talks went on for 18 months before we actually reached the merger agreement – I had early on that this needed to happen and probably was going to happen and so I had been preparing the staff from IAFP that you know it's going to happen we need to figure out how to make it work and also we simply had a more I would say action oriented culture, sometimes to the extent of ready, fire, aim, but definitely ok make a decision, do it and move on (SPELL) where as the IFCP culture was much more contemplative, slower decision making, leaving options open for a lot longer, well as an extreme of that D... had not at all told them that this is going to happen get ready for it and when it was actually formally approved in May a lot of them were in shock a lot of them had not been paying that close an attention to it, they didn't think it was a good idea and they were just still in the I guess probably in the denial phase of grief, and so when we brought them together and actually went to K...resort in Colorado, which is actually a beautiful place to be and you know my feeling was , gee this is July we're supposed to be merging officially merged in January we have so much stuff to work out and first of all we've got to get this group of people thinking like one staff instead of thinking like two staffs, that's why I thought that the community building was just essential and to me it felt right to be doing it in July before January kick off day, but OK that was a soon as we could get it together and yet when we got there definitely some of the people from ICFP were just upset, still in the denial stages of grief over the fact that IFCP itself was going away and they weren't ready to deal with it, so that was one reason that I think it was a kind of a failure as a community building the other way more fundamental probably to community which is that we had them show up but they hadn't as individual participants bought into the idea of attending a CBW –**Oh dear** – so some people were open and willing to share even people who weren't necessarily ready for the merger to happen were, some of them were open and willing to participate in the self disclosure involved in the community building, others even others who were ready for the merger to happen weren't ready for all that touchy feely bullshit

**Yeh sure, so what happened? You had a high level of conflict did you?**

Ah,... I don't know that you could classify it as a high level of conflict, conflict would have meant that it was verbalised and possibly even dealt with and I think to answer it might be that we didn't have a high level of participation

**Right Ok so using say Pecks terminology did you kind of stay in psuedo-community the unspoken stuff?**

Well we did do some pseudo-community and I would say we er kind of got to chaos on occasion but we didn't ever get past that into community no  
**yeh right ok well that would have been a big call actually um because I suppose, what I'm thinking of is that level of participation has to have fundamental agreement**  
Byes it definitely does and that you know in retrospect uh that was a fundamental error on our part not to have at least tried to get them to buying into the concept before they got there

**yes yes but you know again I suppose your intention was there – was the fallout severe or not?**

NO actually I don't think the fallout...in fact the only real fallout from it was that they kind of told us the next year when we were starting to plan our staff retreat just don't bring those facilitators back, **OK**, probably the worst fallout from it

**Well that's not too bad really,**

No it's not that's why you hire outside facilitators cos they can go home

**Yes sure and they can be sacked,**

Yeh get rid of the bad guys and you know that's ok

**Yes, yes good old scapegoat – uh huh**

**Have you personally – I know you've read Pecks work would you say you have experienced being-in-community**

Yes Um for instance the next year D... and I went back with M.... we took our key lieutenants with us, so that there were six of us there four of us and two facilitators and we did another retreat and that I would say definitely got to the point of community

**Hmm can I ask you to sort of delve back into that experience a bit and in your own words describe to me the experience of community for you? How it felt, how you knew it was community those kind of things , um bodily experiences – if you had any**

I don't tend to identify and express my experiences in a physical way – in fact M and I have been talking about that a little bit- but Uh I would say that the experience of community definitely felt as if I was being supported um I felt more free than I have felt – other than a couple of different situations in my life- to share my fears as well as my hopes and dreams  
**Supported, supported by others – Yes- yes supported by others and supported by spirit**  
**So in terms of a feeling would you describe that as any particular feeling, sensation, thought?**

Hmm I.....for me the experience of being supported was Uhm....probably I guess you could say a lightness of being,

**Lightness of being I like that – It was as if the burdens that I normally carry didn't have to be carried by me alone**

**and that must have felt quite amazing – Yes it did**

**Did you notice anything shift in terms of time, uh or um quality of the space when that happened?**

I don't know that I could necessarily attribute anything to that to the actual experience of community – we were at a retreat centre at the mountains in Arizona and there was no TV, no telephone, no radio and we were mostly sitting outside, so that the space was already pretty amazing and it already felt fairly timeless

**\*Hmm so would that be a quality for you that you would link with that feeling of community timelessness? - oh yeh I do not think it is possible to get into community if you are aware of time, the minute you are focused on time and time passing and a deadline approaching I just don't think that it's possible\***

**so it seems to me that for you there are conditions in which community can be manifest – Yes – Could you say anything more about those other conditions you might think are necessary?**

The presence of other people who would also like for it to happen – Hmmm- that's kind of harkening back to the experience of the staff retreat where some people weren't ready to go there – sure – and I think that the primary one is the feeling that we are not ruled by the clock that there is sufficient time to be together and talk about whatever we need to talk about or have space sometimes quiet, that was one of the real advantages of working with

the wood whilst we were doing it was that um there would be times when we would all just be working on our wood and nobody felt the need to say something- it wasn't like the – if you're sitting around a conference table and then you just sit that starts to get awkward pretty quickly someone feels the need to fill the space and that takes you back I think either to pseudo community or chaos - **Hmm yep** - but the woodworking we actually the first year we carved eggs out of cedar and the next year we made talking sticks - **Fantastic** - and I've never done anything like that before the first year I had some performance anxiety about my ability to do this wood working the second I knew you know Ok this is going to be ok it doesn't really matter how the stick turns out just keep messing with it you know and I like the way it turned out but I think having the that was useful for me I certainly wouldn't say that's a condition of creating community but it was useful particularly for someone like me because I tend to be normally very schedule driven, I've got this much time for this, I've got this much time for that, I've got eighteen reminders to handle even when I get home tonight and so forth so to be able to sit there for a couple of days and not have an agenda and not know where the conversation was gunna go, it was very helpful to have to have something to do like the woodworking

**OK yes I was really interested in that when M...mentioned it so it's great to get your perspective, yes thanks for sharing your experience of what the wood does I'm really interested in that sort of aspect, I do some counselling and I use clay occasionally, very occasionally but also colour just to engage a different part of ones being**  
**Can I take you back to the moment before community can I ask you in that group whether you emptied?**

Yes I think so

**Can you remember the quality of the emptying? Like you know there is emptying and then there is emptiness and the two are kind of one's on the way to the other and for me they tend to share slightly different quality's, when I am emptying it is different to when I am empty, Yes so could you talk about your experience of that?**

Ok I'll try – see emptying I think is uh, some of it is even dumping it's getting out anything that maybe a barrier, um I think that, in all of these cases these are people with whom we all I think we keep fairly short accounts, that is we don't let much of this stuff build up that we're tense over – but nevertheless sometimes there's probably something that you might not even realise need to be said until you're you have that time that unmeasured time that M...calls (Kiro's?) time, um and that it kind of comes up so that's more of the emptying  
**Just on that point the 'coming up' what happens for you when something comes up?**  
It literally feels like it bubbles up and it's like it's in my stomach or something and it like bubbles up

**And you know that you have to speak? Yes – How do you know?**

Ah that's a question I'm not sure that I can answer – it just it comes up and dominates my thoughts and I have a conviction a firmness that this is something I need to share –**Hmm**

**OK I'm going to prompt a little bit- do you get a nervousness or anything that happens within the body a fast beating heart, any of those things happen?**

I wouldn't say a fast beating heart I probably get a little nervousness, a little not a lot –

**Hmm OK so there is a conviction that you have to speak and say this – Yes – and what's it like after you've spoken it?**

Uhh.....I would say calmer, peace

**Would you differentiate that feeling from actually being in community?**

Yeh- because the calmness and peace of having spoken and shared something and for me it's something frequently that I was not overtly aware of before coming to this place that calmness or peace has more specifically to do with me and having shared it helps build the feeling of being in community it helps create or nurture and nourish the feeling of being-in-community but it's different because it's more specifically oriented towards me and having shared whereas being in community is more a – what I tend to think of is a Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome more a feeling of being connected, it's less me oriented

**Hmm so when you say connected, connected too?**

The others there- **OK the others and spirit? Did you say? -Yes I did – That’s fantastic J.. it’s a really clear differentiation and it’s something that actually hasn’t come up in all the interviews that I’ve done, so I thank you for that – Your welcome**

**So spirit-everybody, regardless of who I talk to mentions spirit in the same breath as community for you that feeling of spirit can you say anything more about it?**

Well I have a strong belief in God, which for me primarily operates more at a personal level I’m not a member of an organised church. The feeling of being-in-community is like connecting all of us with that or through that feeling of spirit or God

**So is it for you the feeling that your inner personal spirituality and sense of God is then shared with others?**

I don’t think I would say it that way Carl because that somehow implies that we’re talking about God or spirit or our spiritual beliefs and that’s not necessarily the case it’s so it’s not all an assumption for instance that D.. and D and M and P share the same beliefs I do about God rather, it’s a feeling that I know, I know that God is there and God is touching all of us, I might experience that differently than D....but we’re still connected through it to each other.

**Hmm yes very well put that’s fantastic thankyou very clear – you know I was thinking it’s been some time since I have done a community building workshop it’s been a number of years and when I hear people like you talking about it I have this yearning for it you know –Yes I was corresponding with C... this morning about a pure spirit circle practicum that she’s going to do, I don’t know the extent that which she’d say that what she does is similar to Scott-Pecks community building or different, I know that in actuality that they are very similar because I have experienced both of them but I don’t know what distinction she might draw but I was thinking that this morning too I am yearning for that again**

**Yeh it’s a peculiar sense for me it’s one of trepidation but one of longing as well In terms of what these kind of endeavours and involvements and experiences have meant to you could you elaborate a little on things like what they have meant for say relationships your own personal, well your own life, what kind of changes may have happened because of these experiences?**

Uh well I commented earlier on how I don’t think D.. and I could have done the co-executive directorship without having done this, I think that the experience of doing the retreat two years ago with...definitely strengthened our leadership team. D.... left the organisation a couple of months after that retreat and last year Dale, marg and I [others] did a workshop, that also greatly strengthened our ability to work together as a leadership team for the organisation it builds trust and understanding –

**and what about other relationships like uh loved ones family etc, do you think it’s affected the way you have those relationships?**

.....I don’t know honestly that it has, I am married and I think a key to a good marriage is kind of the ability to be in community with each other, that’s easier for me to do at any rate than it is with people that I am not married too, now I don’t mean that we are in community all the time, Lord knows there is plenty of chaos, plenty of chaos, plenty of pseudo community

again you have to make the time to have the conversation and the time for the emptiness in order for the community to emerge and I’m speaking specifically now within a marriage so I don’t know that these experiences have effected the way I’ve been in my marriage although maybe giving me labels some of it that I might not have otherwise had – **Right** – and I can’t think of well ya there is something, um it has made me more cognizant of the pseudo community that we normally encounter in business meetings and less patient with it, and the impatience is the hallmark of my – as if couldn’t tell by the way I was on the phone originally I am not patient – but it, if you don’t know any other way to be then the pseudo community of normal business meetings is fine – if you know that there are other possibilities out there it makes you less patient with putting up with that – **Yes I understand I have had that experience myself – I had a question there and it disappeared, flew off into the ether somewhere – the experiences of chaos and pseudo**

**community are they familiar to you? In terms of, I know you just said you are more cognisant of pseudo community, in these groups and things that you have been in have you experienced much chaos**

Occasional, but unless the group is fairly consciously focused on achieving community there's not a whole lot of tolerance, generally speaking - in business for chaos, **Hmm more outcome result oriented**, exactly and if the group descends into chaos- and it is always regarded as a descent into- uh, the fingers start getting pointed, somebody should have prevented this, somebody should have had a plan for this discussion so that it wouldn't get chaotic on us, as I said unless the group is fairly focused fairly consciously focused on moving into community the experience of chaos is always experienced as a negative which *should* have been avoided,

**Yes I think that's fairly understandable if you're operating at a pseudo community level but once you operate or can operate at an emptying well maybe that changes, Yes, one of the reasons I think community building may not work in organizations is and I've shared some of this with MB and talked about it with other people as well, is that the level of disclosure required may be politically too damaging for certain people or leave them open to unscrupulous manipulation later on because of the time factor and the lack of commitment to actually follow through with community building practices – do you have any thoughts on that?**

I think you're correct I think that one of the best things leaders of organizations can do is to make the organisation a safe place for disclosure that to set the norms, the organisational values and culture in such a way that is safe to self-disclose, and yet for some people that can be very fearful, and might not even be wise, I think everybody has to reach a level which they are comfortable, we've been doing some work actually with my board of directors there, they wouldn't call it community building and we've not labelled it that way for them but we've been using circle practices with them, so we start with a started a meeting with a check in and then we do a check out at the end and we may do check in's periodically during say a two day meeting and the level of disclosure in those is relatively high if you, if you're thinking of a typical board of directors meeting it's a whole lot higher than a typical board of directors meeting, **Right**, and we just started this within the last year, I think over a couple of years we will build a culture within that board which will increase everybody's comfort level with it right now I would say the comfort level with it varies

**Business is actually buy building that with key people for them to pass principles down the line is that something you agree with or have some comments on?**

Oh yeh I would definitely say you have to start at the top, if you don't have a huge level of commitment from the key leaders you can't do it – period. - I mean you could do it within a small context if I was head of a department I could do it within my department but I could not take it to the rest of the organisation unless I had the top persons, total buy in um in fact taking it to our board would not have been possible except I have the buy in of our top elective leaders, I could not have done that by myself

**Yep Ok so you got the buy in – yeh ok so how did you do that?**

Well on reflection probably not as overtly as we should have that is we didn't exactly explain to them what we were doing we just started doing um not with any intent of being manipulative but simply with the thought that getting the[m in a circle] was a good thing and the check in was a good thing – are you familiar with Margaret Wheatley? **Margaret Wheatley yeh I've got her book here I used some of it in my presentation** well she facilitated a board retreat for us last July **Oh how wonderful** Oh yeh it was fabulous, **OH yeh somebody gave me her book and I thought Oh this woman is fantastic**

Yes she is, so she's the one that kind of kicked off the circle practices within our group and what we did was simply continue them, **OK I'm thrilled to hear that, it gave me little goose bumps to know that, it's really nice when you bump into somebody who's worked with an author you admire**, o yeh and she's super, **Yeh she's a highly intelligent and articulate person I really like her sense of connectedness and her understanding of it**



**Janet I've got to check in here, we've got 5 minutes left on our 1/2hr and I'm really conscious that you're really busy, so I don't want to stretch you over your time Um how are you feeling about where we are at at the moment**

I'm feeling pretty good and I do need to get of fairly quickly, if you want to schedule some more time, or if you wanted to send me some questions by e-mail and get me to respond by e-mail I'll be happy to do that,

**Well that would be wonderful, after transcribing this interview, if you could gather any thoughts epiphany's that would be great, lets catch up at the end of January.**

## **Transcript 6 - December 2001**

**Can you tell be about your experience of the CBW?**

I eventually got to one, and I wasn't sure about what the leadership or facilitation stuff was about but I do know that I had a profound experience and it was a more authentic experience I mean it was different, I'd done T groups and I'd done Transactional Analysis and various things I was working for an alcohol and chemical dependency treatment program as an administrator at the time and I was a therapist licenced in 7 states in the United States and I just thought wow this is more authentic and I hadn't really at that time really even any knowledge that I was a native American but I knew that growing up there was something different about me in relationship to the dominant culture and so because of that personal experience, even though I'd done therapy before the therapy was more about, I dunno, being, you now you go to a therapist and it's all confidential and you don't talk to anybody about what you did with the therapist, all of that, that was different I mean what was happening in the community building workshop people were talking authentically about the things you talk about in a therapists office and they were doing it quite openly and I thought I'd keep that in confidence but it was also a different arena and I yearned for that I mean it was very compelling to me, uh at the time one of the leaders asked if I would be interested in facilitating it, I didn't have a clue about what they did or how they did it and I declined I had a full life anyway, but this woman persisted and said we're having an invitational would you just come at our expense and so I said OK, so after that experience I knew I didn't want to have much to do with it although I was still intrigued by what happened, and it was compelling and over time it kind of grew on me and then they asked me if I would come to the training and after persuasiveness by a woman by the name of Pat White I said yeh ok I'll come and there were three weekends, I think we went to for training a group of us, this is in I think 1986 or something like that and eventually I started facilitating it and the process of facilitating, cos facilitating is participating it's a participatory leadership kind of thing it's what we call leading form emptiness (**Chinese proverb??? Empty vessel etc**) and I've learned a great deal about myself - what I call my original medicine as a way of my authentic self - .... (race) language, **yeh I know I really like that concept of Original medicine R... mentioned it to me when I talked to him..** and you know life has been increasingly getting better and better as I learn to be more authentic in my day to day life rather than saving authenticity for a workshop or saving authenticity for a counselling session or something like that **Yeh and I guess therein lies the task** that's what community building as I know it has been teaching me,

**Ok that first experience you had that first community building, what happened to you or for you in that workshop**

Well you know it's difficult to talk about the spirit (laughter) part of the literature, English is a pretty inadequate language to speak about spirit but **It is but think we can manage** Yes I would say it was a spiritual kick in the rear, if nothing else, It was the first time I had allowed myself to remember my dream, you know I know I was dreaming always as a.. I had remembered visions but those come when I am awake but my sleeping dreams I just never payed any attention to and of course the facilitator suggests after the first day that if

you know if ..what she said was 'you probably will dream most of us but most..probably not all of us will remember our dreams when we wake up but if you do it's probably important to this process you're in' and so she said 'if you feel moved, share it', that's the only time I spoke during the entire workshop was I was the first one to speak the second morning and I shared my dream and evidently my dream according to the facilitator's was catalyst for the group to ... cos we were in utter chaos first day we went into the night and left in utter chaos and you know I was a bit disgruntled in fact my room mate at that first workshop didn't come the second day he was an engineer and he said this isn't what I'm about (laughter) but anyway I stuck it out to see what would happen and I was amazed that not only the transformation that took place but the significant transition that a group of people made just the transformation in individuals and in their ability to trust and share and be authentic so I was astounded by that but as time went on particularly it was a two and a half day drive, I drove it just to give myself some space in-between work that two and a half day drive back to my workplace and these things that resonated in me were things that I identified with other people, things that I hadn't thought about that were coming sort of to the surface psychologically I assume or spiritually and it was a very profound experience, **Yes it really sounds like it – I was just wondering what the experience of actually speaking on that second morning was were you nervous**-Oh extremely nervous, sweating underneath you know my armpits were sweating my palms were sweating my stomach was pounding (laughter) yeh I knew if I didn't speak right after the silence that I wouldn't speak, you know I would probably leave the thing **let it go** I was convinced that that was my moment and I seized it I had, and it was amazing for me cos I ask, I didn't know anybody at this group I went to this thing I knew absolutely no one, one participant who I thought I knew but actually I didn't know it's the first time we met, we're very close friends today but other than that I just didn't know anybody, so to even remember the dream it woke me up at 3 o'clock in the morning, considering the dream, and then going out I did a twenty mile run, (playing) the dream not only, you know I thought it was very personal just about me you know and it was a big confrontation about my denial patterns, you know I've been going to AA for at this point I've been going to Al-ano for 14 years so I know what denials about, I've been in an alcoholic marriage and it hadn't worked and, so I had done quite a bit of work psychologically and even spiritually because I worked the steps as an (...) alcoholic and a so it wasn't like I was you know foreign to doing hard work with spirit and psychology but to share this stuff what I thought was publicly was a whole different thing AA meetings didn't seem public to me but a Community Building Workshops felt public to me **Right ok and I suppose that, was a... it sounds to me that what you did was take a big risk** yeh no question about it

#### **and what was it like after you spoke**

well I was sort of numb to what was going on people were referring to my dream I was aware of that but I was going into myself, I was a bit withdrawn from the group because you know after I did it I wasn't, you know I had second thoughts, I wasn't sure, I'd never done something like that before I'd thought I'd exposed myself, I made myself extremely vulnerable so I was feeling very tenuous and a whole bit awkward but as the workshop progressed and more people started sharing deeply and more authentically then I felt, then I felt like I belonged (*this is important – how setting a precedent and example can change a culture but also taking a risk to set an new example of what is acceptable behaviour, ways of being etc*) according to the facilitator I was the first one that presented authentic information to the group **Right** so and they said you know that's a risk, well yeh I felt like a risk but it felt like if I didn't I wouldn't get, you know I wasn't going to get what I came to get (*agenda*) so it was like you know if I don't this is going to be a waste of time so that was a kind of a feeling I had,

**So this was like something like confronting your barrier it was like you have to do it or that's it** absolutely yeh

**I just want to feedback a little bit something that you said like um that experience that you said you felt a little withdrawn a little numb after speaking is shared by a couple of my other interviewees who have said similar things**

**That they felt small or tiny or withdrawn or just wanted to drift away for a while after speaking taking that risk and step to speak**

I think that's not universal but I think it's fairly common in community building that when people do risk that that feeling comes on from many people that, especially people that have become vulnerable before (*become like little children*)

**Yeh speaking just seems so integral to the community building process or the model of Scott-Pecks**

**So your experience of emptying and emptiness can you say a little about that?**

Well you know I think that's you know emptying becomes very uh individual, what one empties is what needs to empty varies depending on ones' circumstances at the moment, what's happening in their life and what and then in essence what's happening in the community building process itself, now you know you can save all of that for a workshop but if that's what it's about then it's not, it's ok but for me I need to go further than that, I need to be able to take what I have learned in the experience of emptying, letting go, surrendering, those are other words I use for emptying, giving up it's will, uh you know my tendency as a male in this culture is to be full that, that's what's rewarded the male who's glass is full gets the rewards he's got everything together and all of his ducks are in a row and often time you know that individual is in deep denial but in our culture because of rewards it really doesn't matter whether they confront the denial or not maybe if you will even the demons that might be you know pushing at them **sure yep** so for me emptying is facing that, my shadow facing those things that are less than desirable the places that I choose to deny about how I behave and how I respond, and those are things I discover in the process of, in workshops, I discover those about myself because when the communication gets authentic you know I may need to empty stuff that I brought to the workshop in order to be present but to be really authentically there I need to be able to say what's happening for me in that moment with that group of people, that's the deeper sense of community and that's what I strive for in other words it's easy for me to talk about my issues outside today, you know I can go to the CBW and talk about the difficulties I am having outside the circle pretty easily, it's still difficult for me to talk about the issues that are happening in that group, (SPELL) so a group of people who are meeting regularly or on-going or business or whatever it's more difficult for them to sustain community or the experience of community because you have to live with that which we empty sometimes what we empty is difficult for others to hear or to even live with, but that, that is a challenge for me to be able to do that with my spouse with people I interact with on a day to day basis, be authentic with them and not be harmful to them and still be true to myself **that sounds like a real challenge, you know after you've emptied do you notice any difference within how you feel in the body when there's that emptiness that you are actually in?**

Oh tremendous relief, tremendous relief, I mean internally, personally I mean I might be a little bit apprehensive or frightened because I've shared it with others but just the fact that I shared it brings a tremendous amount of relief to me

**So how does that manifest do you sit easier, breath easier?**

Oh gosh uhh.. yeh I mean all of those things and I feel a sense of peace internally that, yeh the more not the more I am able to empty but the sooner I am able to empty that which is difficult, cos it's always difficult to empty for me I mean I've never found it easy to empty, this is something I want to hold onto even though it's not helpful, it's sort of like an addictive kind of thing, that what I need to empty, it's it may be a little lie I've been telling myself for years, it hasn't affected anybody externally, I mean maybe it has but mainly it's about me, what I empty is about me and Uh you know it may be in my emptying I refer to another but if I'm authentically emptying it's about me **yes**, and I can project real easy, you know it's not about me but if I'm going to be authentic it's about me what I empty and so yeh there's a sense of peace you know it's like confession, what confession I think is

supposed to be, I don't think confession has turned out that way but, in the true sense of the word confession it's there's a bit of emptying it's a bit like that, I've let go of something and maybe I can just get into, in the moment I can get into maybe an argument or a disagreement where I am holding a position that I don't really need to hold you know, I'm just holding it because who knows, I mean there is a lot of literature written about this phenomenon but if I say oh I can let go of this, this isn't helpful here and apologise in the moment, that's a huge relief **Yeh it takes a certain amount of insight and reflection to be able to do that, practise, and practise yes, I think community is about discipline and practise, yeh I just want to clue you in a little a realise that my the kind of study I am doing is actually about experience it looks at, so why I ask about bodily feeling is their important to the experience as well as all the other things feelings, what I am looking for is a deep explication of what community, and spirit and meaning to the human in-community so yeh my questions will range and might seem a bit strange sometimes but the reason is we look at my questions is what is this thing called community how does it show in people**

Oh I can't talk about others I have to talk about myself, **Yeh sorry that's what I meant how does it show in you?**

yes um I mean I'm gonna give you some feedback I guess **Yeh great**, I get feedback consistently from people say I am going into a restaurant for instance and they say wait to be seated well somebody comes and they are going to seat us and that period of time from them greeting us and taking us to our seat um frequently that person will share something deep and meaningful with me OK I didn't ask for it, .....but I and people I constantly get comments from people who are with me how do you do that, why does that happen, why are people sharing deep intimate things with you they never share deep intimate things with me and why are they doing it so spontaneously, now there's a spirit involved here and this is where you can't talk about spirit, but the spirit has to do with what I am willing to do, what I'm willing to do, what my will, will will that I will myself to do, and my will is to say I want to be authentic with you in this moment when I greet a stranger ok, and I'm not talking about the new age term where we talk about uh, what is the word they use, no **Dunno there's many and I don't like most of them!**, what I'm talking about is it's not something I cognitively think about, **yeh, it's not a deliberate "I'm going to be authentic no You're just being I am being but I have something to do with my being cos I practise and have, oh the word is intention I was trying to find, It's not just an intention you see I can have the intention to do something but not do it and you know it doesn't happen, this is different to that, this is, I would say this is a soul kind of thing but it comes deep it is not cognitive, it comes from my body in the way I carry myself the way I look a person in the eye the way I address them with my demure if you will, my language, my presentation, all of that carries a message, I mean I don't know if that answers your question, **Yeh look I really appreciate that it just reminds me that um, that the spirit manifests, what is it, it's like you attract, it's like there is something in how you are in the world that speaks to others and people recognise it** but you need to set a goal to do that, it won't happen, **you have to constantly work at it**, You have to constantly work at it but you also have to submit, see that's the emptying part, if I am not constantly submitting to, I call it the greater spirit or a power greater than myself it won't happen, **so you're talking about something other than you here**, absolutely, that's what the foundation (FCE) says at the end of their mission statement 'remembering our reliance on a spirit within and beyond ourselves' that's the bottom line,**

**So in that bottom line when you actually reach community what happens then? What do you notice?**

Well a lot of people (laughter) in the beginning because frequently a group would reach a cathartic experience and people would equate that with community and I don't think that has anything to do with community, I think it's when, I mean I know as a facilitator of the process I know I've done a good job when I am not being congratulated and everybody's hugging one another and wanting to make deeper further connections with one another, when the things over with, when the experience of building community is over with and

people are engaging with one another as a community and they don't see anybody as a significant leader I've done a good job and that's what I look for, when I've done facilitating, if they're looking at me and thinking I'm the significant one then we need to build some more community because I haven't done a good job (SPELL) here it's that authentic communication that's coming out that's important, you know I did a workshop in Tarino, Italy just a couple of weeks ago, **Lucky you I love Italy**, and uh this group were struggling, and I mean struggling and of course the whole issue was this thing that happened on September 11, they didn't know how to process this, so the emptying just went deeper and deeper, but still that palpable spirit wasn't in the room, so in the closer they were trying to figure out how to close and we really weren't done, so they said let's stand and hold hands and they were looking for a common song, they didn't have a common song there wasn't a song that all of them knew and then somebody asked me to sing in my native tongue so I did, and people started crying, well then I started crying, the next thing you know the whole room crying, now that's 49 people not one person was not crying and then they dropped hands and they just went into a huddle and sobbed and I mean you've never seen so much snot running out of people's noses, **I've been in a few groups and seen a fair bit!** That was a powerful, powerful experience and nobody and nobody was the leader at that point, it was a group of all leaders and we were all very authentic in our tears, we were crying not just for ourselves but for the world, you can feel it, I mean that what the comments were afterwards people said 'I wasn't just crying for myself I was crying for something bigger I don't even have an understanding off, see that, that's the authenticity, **That's a touching story to I feel it in me,**

**The um palpable spirit you mentioned how does that appear to you or how do you sense that?**

Well, I sense, I sense a connection with everybody in the room myself and then I recognised that there are others who are sensing that too in fact they're sort of like the majority of the people that (...) there is a word for it but anyway the majority people around me are feeling that too, they feel connected to everybody not just certain individuals but there isn't a person in the room they don't have some draw or connection to, you know some people might be more difficult for them, but non the less is they're drawn to them, the palpability of it, it's there and it's critical mass that's what there's a critical mass that feeling it and it can come in a second and it can go in a second (**community as fleeting moments? Illusive**) that's the thing it's not something that any one person in that group can make happen, it takes the group to make it happen and uh it can disappear as quick as it comes, **yeh yeh**, the whole process is cyclical in nature, you know it may be that, it's kind of like the way I draw it is that if a group goes through these stages and they reach this palpable spirit they've moved, the group itself has moved to another place (**transcendental**) but if they're going to continue to grow they may need to do it again, it's you can't hold it you can't capture it it's illusive and it's real and it's honest, **Hmmm, Hmmm Yeh it is real and it is illusive you're right I've been in a community, I've had a little facilitator training too with J.... and C.... I did think of another question..Oh yeh, could you describe for me, your experiences, your observations around the difference between the space when a group is in chaos to when it's in community?**

Well, there's the obvious things about the space particularly when groups that are in chaos, I mean chaos and emptying the words that describe those that people use to describe those two phenomena are pretty much the same, they're the same words and the room feels the same you know it's feels large, it feels cold, it feels unfriendly, it feels you know it's something you want to escape from it's um its um ya people often times are wanting to turn the heat up cos they're feeling cold, people are saying gosh this is a large space, the groups too big, I can't hear people across the room, you know you're too far away, all of these type of comments take place when a group, even in pseudo community, those kind of comments will come out, whereas when the group gets deeper into emptying and there is palpable spirit happens people say gosh this is a you know I thought this was a huge group but it's so small and I'm having no problem hearing and I feel very comfortable – temperature's the same, the room isn't any bigger or any smaller but it's how the perception of some people

start connecting authentically, it's an intimate space, trusting and compelling **Quite amazing how that can happen to a space isn't it Yeh,**  
**So what sort of um, do you think community building in itself is obviously meant a lot to you can you say how you think your relationships with others whether significant others or work colleagues has actually changed?**

Oh most definitely I mean I had to leave the job I was in because I knew that what I was doing wasn't about my original medicine, I wasn't being authentic in the work I was doing, now it was, the pay was excellent the benefits were incredible but I had to leave that work (SPELL) I also discovered that I'd been called to be a medicine man for years but because of the culture I grew up in and my father was in denial, I did a three day thing with one of these professional counsellor consultants to find out what your vocation is spent a lot of money, got to me everyway upways and downways, from psychology to aptitude you know everything talked about it and did the whole thing and cost me a big hunk of money and at the end of it he said well, one thing there isn't a vocation that you're suited for, he said your work is about spirit and in our culture there is no vocation for the spiritual, he said you could go, he said my advise is to go get you a degree in clinical psychology and then you know so you have legitimacy and then forget it and do your work, that didn't make sense to me either cos that didn't feel authentic, so the struggle, and he said you need to do is get counselling cos this is going to be a difficult processes for you, course then I thought because I was a Presbyterian and very active in the Presbyterian church I'd go to the seminary that's a spiritual place, but you know it was a good education, I got a tremendous education I learned a lot but it wasn't a spiritual place, it was a very academic place, I did pick one of the most academic settings in the country to do this, cos that's where my ego was if you will, **Yeh right**, to get a degree in theology I had to go, one of the most, not to the, you know I could have gone to Union in New York , but if I really wanted to go where the real academics were I'd go to the University of Chicago and you know I can be all around those folks , so that's what I did but when it came to ordination I couldn't do it because the words, the vows, were exclusionary, and I knew that my life was about inclusion, now this is before I came in to any experience with community building, so I was, I got distraught, you know I was very distraught, depressed and Uh I was a banker prior to that I'd made some money so I you know just blew everything off and went skiing, in the mountains with skiis, but in that you know it it's like I can't do this either it's an educational process you know it doesn't matter how much money I have or how much this money will afford me my life is still not authentic I'm not participating in life as I feel called to participate, so you know the community building process has helped me figure that out, as I figure it out by being in community with my fellow human beings and for me with the other beings, **right with fellow humans and other beings?** For me the human being is not any more or less significant than the other beings, the creative process is what's important and that I participate wholly and authentically in that process, **Hmmm yeh thanks for sharing that that's really, I think community building in that sense is obviously very powerful, I mean I've been involved with vocational stuff myself I've worked with unemployed people for a long time, done vocational testing, career testing we call it over here, and I'm always trying to argue for a vocation, something that we are passionately engaged in**

**And do you think community building has a place in business, in the business world, in your experience have you done much with anybody from business,** Yen I've done quite a bit of work in business, It depends you know because business is tied to capitalistic phenomena, to monetary economics and not real economics, it depends on the leadership, it's a very hierarchical, it's main purpose is profit, profiting means that someone, one cannot profit without somebody else not profiting it's a balance, so there's a sense of game and competition in business which is not necessarily, but can be kind of the enemy of community, so you it depends on (what) the people who hold the power in any given business really want, there's going to be a loss of profit at some level if you're going to have authentic community in a business, now it maybe if the business can tie the way they do business, how they do business, to the relationship with their customers so that it's, the

community is in relationship not only with the way they operate but with the way they work with their customers I think it has a tremendous place, but if they think they're going to just have community with their customers, or they think they are just going to have community with their staff, it's not going to work it has to be a total relationship of community, now the difficult part of building community with your customer is, is you don't have control, you can't create a forum, a circle you have to relate to them where they are and what they want from you and so you have to exemplify your community in the way you do business with them and so it's difficult and it takes a not only does it take a long term commitment but it takes a great deal of discipline and you have to be willing to have people come and go, your turnover rates gonna be bigger, because not everybody that works for you is going to want to behave in that way,

**we've got 5 minutes left on this particular call, Yeh I was just thinking of Carlisle motors and the study that David Goff did that showed that they had better retention rates after a while, after they'd got the staff that wanted to work in that way, that they kept them longer, But initially they lost a lot of staff, Yeh I can understand that it's a challenging model and requires a lot,** The other thing that they did was they took community building psychologically too far in other words they took it over the psychologists - **Oh did they** – Yes the community building circle then became like counselling rooms **oh right so they left the model** - they left the model, **Ahh I didn't realise that,** Goff wasn't there long enough to see that happen, **Yeh I could see that could really I mean God that could just throw it back,** yep it really was a harmful to a lot of people

**Have you run any successful, well success is a strange word but community building with business that you've felt has kind of worked that's been accepted?**

Well there's a process right now I mean I'm not the head person on it but I'm participating with Kaz Godz that has that potential Ok, But it's not but right now phew it's up in the air I mean it could go any way but the potentiality of it certainly exists, It's not a huge group of people but it's a large enough company to give a good example of it, it's a theatre company they run movie theatres, it's you know they hire people at minimum wage level for short term employment you know college students, high school students those kinds of people I mean it, you know he's using somewhat the community building model but also he has to sort of abandon it because of the restraints upon, you don't have enough time with the group in community so you know you get 3 hour segments here and 4 hour segments there so it's very strong led so it's a it's not pure but it's good the other thing is that he's using a lot of Peter Senge's learning community which is very much in tune with community building, **Yeh it's good stuff Peter's work,** right an uh that's what gives him legitimacy to do it because he's using that, so what you do is you compromise some things (laughter) that's ok I don't think that's good or bad, compromise some things to get some results but of course the problem he runs up against time and time again is that various people in the hierarchy are attaching this to the bottom line and basically community building has little to do with the bottom line I'm finding that out, I mean the bottom line has to do with how well you provide your service or your product and how well you make it and how well you present it and will it stand and is it what the people want that's good business now to make your business to work more effectively and better and to be say you know, I don't know what he word id, if you want your business affect social global concern community building is a good way to do it because it gives you authenticity, integrity, It also you know idealistically it would make you more transparent, business would become aware that it's interconnected and not apart from the natural world and has a responsibility to it etc

**precisely right,**

**End of interview**

## **Transcript 6 - Interview 2, December 2001**

**How have you, have you had any thoughts about our conversation last week any kind of stuff you thought oh wow I'd like to share that**

Well no not, really I've actually been so busy I haven't really thought about it much, I actually gave an interview in Italy while I was there and they sent it to me just to look it over before they published it and it was interesting to re read what, what it said, cos I kind of just say it and kind of let it go you know

**I think it was Fritz Pearls who said don't quote me from yesterday because that was yesterday, what is the publication that the Italian interview is being published in?**

It's called 'Bearing Witness' The Journal of the Peacemaker Community - It's a Buddhist, quarterly, There headquarters are in Santa Barbara California, Rome, Switzerland, USA, France, Italy (ed board) an International group (IPJP Address)

**Well to be honest I don't feel like interviewing for my project today it's not with me today,**

It's not with you today, yeh I know the feeling of that

**I felt like I got enough out of our last interview to actually start doing my analysis anyway, so I am going to take you on holidays with me along with the others I interviewed, Here's some synchronicity etc....**

Do you facilitate vision quests?

Yes I do those as well it's more um a Dakota, Pawnee and Hopi tradition I'm a mixed blood my father was Cherokee, Omaha, Fox and one other tribe, that was on my Grandfathers side of the family and then my Grandmother was a Makota of the Sioux nations, the Dakota and Wyoming and Montana area

**So that's quite a heritage and your father was a full blood,** mixed blood, It's hard to say cos you can't, when they get to be breeds, like figure out who they are, because there's no written records and the other way, my Grandmother was probably (...) at wounded Knee you've heard of Wounded Knee? **Yes I have, read that book bury my heart at wounded knee,** Yeh she was a baby at the time was actually I think rescued, we believe, it's hard to know, we believe her mother was killed there but she was adopted by a German family who homesteaded in Kansas, It's illegal to adopt native American children so that was, so all of that all of her history is sort of wiped out, the only reason we believe, we knew she was Indian, there was no doubt about that but you know they made no records of the adoption because it was an illegal process but a woman here about eight years ago showed up at Red Cloud a graph of Red Cloud days looking for you know relatives that she had, you know she couldn't keep, hadn't been able to keep track of, she had information that this family had adopted you know a, this person this woman was a not a sister I guess an aunt of hers, and was willing to believe, was fairly confident after all of her research that it was my Grandmother, so that the only connection we have to verify any of that, so you know it's just word of mouth kind of thing you know nobody talked about it, my father pretty much denied his entire heritage I didn't even know he was Indian until he died, **really wow,** Yeh there was a great aunt of mine who actually lived on Atoka? Reservation Okalahoma, we didn't actually meet but I saw her twice, when I was kid my dad when we used to drive from my home town to a larger city which was oh maybe a five hour drive and in the middle he would, this was the days before four lane superhighways, these were just what we call little byways in the United States, and he'd stop beside a dirt road and out from the tress this woman, this Indian woman would come and my dad would take a walk with her, and I remember to my recollection it happened twice, my aunt Margaret, my Grandfathers sister, so you know I have sort of a historical perspective that comes from a bit of denial, in **Interesting though that you said your father denied it and yet he didn't because he met with the family so**

Well I guess that was his favourite aunt, right, you know she, the rest of the family you know was trying to enculturate, and as a breed it's difficult, I mean my Great Grandfather who was a breed it was, he wouldn't have been accepted in any one tribe, **ah right a bit like the Australian aboriginals,** yeh he ended up joining the Union army in the civil war and because he's an Indian they didn't pay him money they gave him land (laughter) now that's the paradox irony of the whole thing **That is really ironic isn't it?** Yes yes and then



of course the land they gave him was around white settlers and he didn't feel comfortable there so he sold it to one of them and he came out you know west and the buffalo, by the time he got out to the great plains the Buffalo were pretty much wiped out, **yeh that's sad**, Yeh and then he just settled down and started living along this creek and then you know the guy, in this town called Carcer city, who was the land agent he didn't get payed unless he got people to homestead, so he didn't care who you were if you were Indian or anything if he could get you sign the paper he got money, **ok**, so he got my great grandfather to sign homestead act papers so he ended up, and he also got him to go into what the government called the tree program, so he ended up getting, I don't know, Uh I don't know if you know what a section of ground is but a section of ground is a square mile, **ok**, so he ended up getting a half a section of land given to him just given to him, you know to own cors he didn't believe in ownership but at least it gave him a place to live where there was plenty of game and fresh water, **that's a remarkable story really, as you say the paradox's in it**, oh yeh amazing, so that's my heritage and then my mother is Scots, Irish and Dutch, **Yes now that's a mixture (laughter)** yes well so you know and basically in the United States, you're just American, growing up that is what I was I was American so **But yourself you've embraced more of the American Indian ways?**

Well basically only since, actually community building, because of just you know telling my story in community building experiences and developing a new set of friends which, yeh I mean it's just been in the last about ten or eleven years that I've, actually in 1986 I received the first bit of information that told me I was Indian came from my great aunt, she was a hundred and five when she sent this packet of information **one hundred and five wow!** She never had any children but all of her siblings had children but she didn't send the info..She sent the information to their children so all of her like you know brothers and sisters grandchildren received this packet which was quite a lot of us there were thirteen kids in her family, **oh ok right**,

and and then of course many of us started talking and knew one another and most everybody said oh she's just an eccentric old lady and because she lives on a reservation that this information wasn't valid, so then there were mixed emotions in me, **right**, but what it was doing for me was affirming (dog barks in background **hello doggy** –yes that's my dog) it was an affirming thing I felt and I had already even before that taken all three of my children to the wounded knee monument just to let them know that you know that some extreme atrocities took place in this country, that built this country and many lives and lots of genocide took place and that was the closest one to us, so that's where I took my children, and when I would go there you know there is a strong connection of I mean it's, it's just an intuitive kind of thing that you know, that somebody's buried here that I know very well you know I couldn't it wasn't anything I could really talk about cos there wasn't anybody there on the reservation with I made any connection with at all, cors I look like the Scottish you know when I go to Scotland I look like I'm right at home, **ok do you really?**

Yeh so you know, I mean my skins a bit darker than most Scottish people but you know I'm bald and I have sandy hair and a sandy beard, so you know you can't tell that I'm native American by my physical appearance so you know it's been a, but over the years I've kind of stuck with it, if I get a lead or a, and in particularly I mean these are longer story's but I you know, I've had visions since I was a little kid, those got confirmed by other ...medicine men, holy men, dream catchers and I also sang a purification song, the second half of it, cos I got through I followed I ended up with a Hopi elder called Guacamole, so you know but I'm a breed in our culture they call me a breed/half breed my fathers different tribes, that's breed, half breed is you're half white half Indian, **Ok so you're a breed/half breed interesting yeh**, lot of us around you know they're scattered throughout the country and none of us quite know where we fit, we \*definitely don't fit in the dominant culture that's why community building is so valuable to me I get to be real and be me,

**That's an interesting comment that the It's easier for you in community to be you than it is in the dominant culture so you said you've more claimed and investigated this side of yourself since community building but, so the authenticity and that ability that community building has to be real has really assisted you with claiming that part of**

you? Absolutely **Hmmm, ....You know that's amazing isn't it R... that's quite a valuable thing because as you say there are a lot of people like you there are a lot of people like you over here, when I was working in Alice Springs full bloods Half bloods what do they call them quarter bloods nomads, there was all kinds of different groupings of indigenous Australians you know, yeh and I hadn't actually thought of the cultural implications of community building in terms of assisting who you are and being true to your roots in that sense, I could talk to you for hours I'm fascinated, you know like the story's just um I haven't heard I think I might have mentioned I do little bit of lecturing in the indigenous bachelor of science we've got here It's great occasionally we get a few guys in to talk about, like in this area where I was there was a huge killing down in a forest because an aboriginal killed a stockman helper and so they just wiped the whole lot of them out in Ludlow forest and there was one survivor and apparently she ran from a place down the road here called Capel to Margaret River now that's some sixty kilometres didn't stop but apparently, my supervisor gets her to come up and remind people who are studying history and culture up at UNI that it's not all what they read in the history books, you know, Right, that's goo yes it is good she gets very strong reactions though you know some actually people complain about it and don't like it**

Well, yeh but I mean it's like in this country now the history books are starting to tell some of the real realities and I think that's good, we tended to take in our history books you know if anything happened bad in the world it happened over there, I mean we still do that in our press, I mean you know it's like this whole thing that happened on the 11<sup>th</sup> you know we won't claim that we do terrorism I mean if you can imagine what it was like to live in Vietnam when the United States was doing what it was doing,

**Absolutely can't imagine it it's just horrific**

They were just doing terrorist acts all over the place, the same thing in Korea, I mean Hiroshima was we didn't drop that bomb on you know we dropped that bomb on innocent people and that's, in the history of humanity there were more innocent people dies in the one instant with that bomb than any time in history, so you know those things we justify those by some rationalisation that if we didn't, the world would be wiped out or something which is simply not true, **yes**, so you know the denial patterns of the culture and the way it's justifies it's own behaviour, I mean even today you know because we tend to side with Israel we say what Palestine does are terrorist acts and what Israel does is **self-defence or whatever**, viable and the actual truth of it when I visited (unclear) the Israelites might have been there but they don't have any more claim to that territory or even to Jerusalem than Palestine does and uh you know simply because in the United States we have more Jewish people that have places of influence and power you know those are the people those are the things as an indigenous person or half indigenous person I constantly confront, but I'm a pacifist you know the last thing I'm going to do is raise my fist toward anybody so I have to do it in ways more like Martin Luther King and Ghandi, those are my public heroes, **Yeh, I um ask classes sometimes who their heroes are and what I get is wrestling stars or sports stars and we could all do with Ghandi as our hero I think**, I just found a book with a tape, my grandchildren are really quite young, but I found a book with a tape that goes with it so my grandchildren can listen to the children's story but it's very accurate about Mahatma Ghandi, **OK what is it a story history is it?** yes a historical perspective on Ghandi and then I got my grandson you know a book about Robin Hood, cos the energy of his house is not that of that nature even there will be poor always I guess according to Christian tradition there's still, but that doesn't mean that you don't have an obligation and if you are accumulating great wealth there are people that need to be payed attention too, this represents my opinion, **well I'll concur with you on that one I agree**, Robin Hood you know **oh yeh Robin Hood and Sherwood, me being English originally and in Manchester**, yeh right close to the forest, **oh yeh Robin Hood was one of my hero's I loved him, but of course the rascal you know the artful dodger in Oliver Twist was always a favourite of mine as well,**]

There's a new movie that's coming out you know the lord of the rings and I like this stuff, this Harry Potter stuff for my Grandchildren because there's the mystical and magical are there and it's real clear boundaries between good and evil but there's also these cloudy areas where you can't quite, you don't quite know where the shadow is and whether I'm participating in it or not you know, I think that, those are good story's, **yeh there's controversy here I suppose you probably get it from your other fundamental side over there but Reverend Fred Nile over here wants a public enquiry into the damage, psychological damage Harry Potter is doing on young children in turning them to witch craft, you know that it's just the other side, it's fundamentalism gone crazy, yeh gone crazy I know, and those kind of story's are wonderful, I read fantasy from a very very young age I think there wonderful things to buy kids thank God for books,** (laughter) yeh I agree so we used up your interview time here, ah yeh look R, no really it's just been great, really nice talking to you (end of interview).

## Appendix C: Research Key

1. Work/career/context
2. Formative childhood experience
3. Awareness of others and sense of difference
4. Sense of self & body
5. Speaking from the heart and the experience of (liminal) space
6. Speaking and space
7. Feeling reflected and understood
8. Feeling scared/confronted
9. Transformative shifts in being and experience of personal change
10. Workshop process
11. Being-in-community/making way for community
12. Changed; behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, ways of being
13. Changes/insights
14. Perceived benefits/post-community
15. Sense of meaning/purpose
16. Search for meaning
17. Relationships/family/others
18. Sense of connection and dis-connection
19. Sense of god/spirit/energy
20. Tolerance of emotional states of others and self
21. Self as observer
22. Authentic self
23. Sense of self/transcendence
24. Dreaming/archtypes
25. Dispair/existential dilema/crisis
26. Emptiness/emptying
27. Healing
28. Intensification
29. Facilitation
30. Other Programs
31. Chaos & Psuedo-community
32. Control/out of control
33. Not being-in-community
34. Silence
35. Trust
36. Time
37. Vulnerablity
38. Risk

## Appendix D: Transcript 2 - Significant Statements Numbered and Grouped

### 1. Work/Carreer/Context

1. I flew from Australia to America to participate in a community building workshop and arrived in the country twelve hours before the workshop
1. A friend of mine she reads my stuff and she physically responds, this is extraordinary, this is absolutely what humanity wants, but do I personally have to be a part of it, you mean I've actually got to go and sit in a workshop?
1. I absolutely know that these principles in some way shape or form, is clearly what people want, so how do I apply these principles in the work that I do and where do they fit will I conduct workshops, will I go and talk about it, I want to talk about it, will I write about it...
1. I ask "what do you think this organisation is about?----- on they go yab-a-dy yabba and I say "well that's not where it's going you know, it's going somewhere else"
1. I could go and do what I've done historically, tarnish the model, change it, bastardise it, call it something else not because I'd want to, but to slink it in the back door, to get greater awareness in the workplace
1. I was inspired by the book and the materials I read and had a very profound personal experience
1. I went ostensibly to America to do facilitation work
1. I'm a builder, my skill is I'm a bridge builder//I can build bridges between things. My gift is knowing when things don't line up, when things don't fit.
1. I'm really unclear about how it will translate into my work.
1. I've come back with a kind of (zeal), and I've got to be really cautious about this because you know, I know that I'm a big humanity person I want to make it big, it's not just one small thing it's like very big you know? It's kind of like it's a universal thing,
1. I've manifested myself in, in the world at large in a very masculine way
1. I've run the corporation, accumulated money
1. it's a long way to go to get the experience
1. It's kind of hard for me to separate work and life because I am what I do
1. The sense that I have currently is that when I talk to people about community there is part of them that goes "'shit', this is it"
1. there's an incredible amount of fall-out in corporate life in me, in the work place, because people do feel undervalued, people feel isolated undervalued and they create their own truth within that context and that's really tragic

### 3. Awarness of Others and Sense of difference

3. I am miss corporate Australia who arrives in a community building workshop in America.
3. I am very vigilant about how it is I experience my own self//I watch// I am a watcher and //I had conscious control over what was happening.
3. I didn't walk in deliberately antagonistic but that's how it unfolded you know (feeling isolated)
3. I ended up sitting next to a young guy a 28 year old from New York

3. I felt like they were taking care of me by just kind of moving on and just doing their thing they were trying to understand and they kind of deconstructed me a bit.
  3. I felt very much like I was a foreigner, feeling very different and very isolated
  3. I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much, I had a sense it was a human thing and it was very nurturing, it felt supportive
  3. I looked around and thought God this is all a bit weird, weird, it doesn't matter whether you've got all the best intentions, you do walk into that room and (make judgements)
  3. I made very, very harsh judgments somewhat surprising for me, because I'm reasonably OK about embodying difference, it was my way of dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different to them
  3. I was a little overwhelmed by the response and reaction in the group they respected and honoured my experience
  3. I was committed to being in this community thing, I wanted to be a part of it, I'd read the book and I wanted to be in this experience
  3. I was feeling extremely disconnected
  3. I was in this incredibly foreign culture and there was every conceivable difference you could possibly, visually imagine in the room. There was an American Indian, a theologian there was a married couple there, one of the people was a lesbian, she lived a life of a heterosexual female left her husband and was living in a lesbian relationship, we had a black African American in the group we had white Americans who, dumped their shit on the black Americans there was every possible complexity.
  3. I was listening to this stuff, like the Indian who was saying "you know yesterday V... was a real pain in the arse and if she didn't shut-up I was gonna tell her to shut-up" it's amazing how this can happen and I didn't feel offended or that they were being disrespectful
  3. I was wondering what was going to happen
  3. my twin Miss Corporate America was in the workshop as well.
  3. one of the most extraordinary difficulties for me in community building was that people would share their stuff and then you weren't allowed to go over and comfort them, I could see the value in this eventually when community finally came about, but I couldn't go over and comfort them This particular guy's name was D..he was dying from AIDS and I felt as though I couldn't be there for him//maybe that's the pseudo community I don't know
  3. the facilitators made some statement about "what is it that keeps you separate?"//I just intuitively knew, what kept me separate, now that's not an easy thing to know
  3. Very early in the piece, there was a guy from Los Angeles who was dying of AIDS and he dumped his stuff right in the middle of pseudo community//there was all this tension//it just absolutely and utterly threw me it felt big for me and it was too premature
  3. We could out-head anyone//Anyone wanted to get in head to head argument with us in the workshop, we could out-head them.
- 4. Sense of Self and Body**
4. I was brought up to give family joy and whatever and all the bad stuff was hidden away.

4. My own emotionality is something I have never been able to beat in my life has always been treated as if it is unexceptionable or bad behaviour
4. Suddness and anger were things that I wasn't allowed to actually express, Little girls don't cry, little girls don't get angry, little girls don't scream
- 5. Speaking from the Heart and the Experience of Liminal Space**
5. [After speaking] I felt very small, actually, I felt very much like a child, I felt small, and I felt like I wanted to self nurture in that space,I wanted to withdraw and take away the focus from me and just be. I didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point//I could hear their voices, but I wasn't really engaged//I didn't feel very big at that point, I was exhausted all I wanted to do was lie down in someones arms and just go to sleep
5. do you actually permanently stay in the space or do you actually move in and out of it all the time?
5. extradinary because I could just hear the difference in my voice,
5. first thing the next morning I knew I had to speak//It was a very different body feeling I was probably going to be physically ill if I didn't speak, I had a dry throat, it was agitated,it was kind of close to that pre feeling of fainting type
5. I actually couldn't open my eyes// I spoke with my eyes closed
5. I came back into the group a good two hours later
5. I could hear the difference in the tone,
5. I could hear the difference in the words,
5. I could hear the difference, I could hear the difference (with soft emphasis).
5. I could see the difference in group this is very much a core of how I experienced community,
5. I didn't actually have to get right down to the ugly (stuff)
5. I didn't have to tell the putrid ugly parts of my life//which have historically been very unpalatable//abuse things and things like that when I was a child
5. I didn't leave, physically leave, I was kind of there
5. I really could see that I just didn't know where to go with that. (speaking from the heart)
5. I really didn't know what speaking from the heart was to be present in that space I've never been there I can speak from the head
5. I sat quietly and I heard the group move on you know in kind of a comforting but distant way.
5. I was feeling the pain but I didn't have the words and it was all this speaking from the heart stuff, that was driving me nuts
5. I was so moved to speak from someplace that I'd never spoken from before in my life, I had no conscious control over the step that I took, to make the move to speak from thin space. I went for it
5. I'd slowed right down, (soft laugh) //I'm slowing down now, because I am reliving the experience
5. it's like I'm not going to even hold myself here together, I'm going to fall off the planet if I don't move through this space I am not going to be able to sustain this.
5. It's not about me wanting to actually say anything
5. It's only when you speak from the heart space you truly connect with others, the communication is clear, there's no static, no crapp, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff, everything just gets moved away, really clear, it feels very clear and it feels very primitive, it feels like it hasn't got the shit of the ages on it, it feels very primitive for me, very tribal, very primitive.

- 5. there is this part of me that has the capacity not to step into that space//
- 5. When I spoke I said, "I'd realised that I don't know what it means to speak from the heart, I can't do that, I don't know what to do." and that's how my story started. I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone my story before in my life
- 7. I know the power of reflection and mirroring, for my children and the importance of that – (crying)

### **7. Feeling Reflected and Understood**

- 7. At the point in which I was truly reflected, whether people had stuff just didn't matter, for the very first time in my life, I had the experience of being reflected in such an incredibly profound way
- 7. I couldn't take in the reflection it was just too much, and I had to shut down from there, it's not about tolerating other people//it's my own capacity for tolerance the tolerance of emotionality,
- 7. I couldn't tolerate too much taking in because the contrast is huge, it's a huge shift into this space where I can't take in any more, you know, it's all me, it's all about me, it's all kind of Oh My God! God!. It's not about me, ego me, it's about me being reflected and the powerful experience of that.
- 7. I miss that[mirroring] – that's the powerful (struggling with words/tears) transformational point for me.
- 7. I think that that need for reflection in humanity is strong
- 7. I went to this space and it was like a pond //it felt like I was looking and being reflected//which I think is the powerful experience in community// being the most powerful experience, it felt very much like the reflection in the pond was the transformational point for me.
- 7. When you actually get the capacity to look in somebody else eyes and it mirrors you, they truly understand, they truly are there and present for you, right at that point.

### **8. Feeling Scared/Confronted**

- 8. I became very arrogant and very defensive and I tried to orchestrate the group back into seeing this shit wasn't necessary, that we could get through to community without all this great purging (emphasised) stuff.
- 8. I'm very visual, I'm very right brain. I'm thinking the whole time in pictures, that's why it gets very confronting for me when I get into the emotional stuff. I'm right there in the experience of what's happening and I retreat to my head. I was having the body experience and kind of went to where I know best, which is the head. That's where I live when I am afraid of my emotional kind of state. I have very complex strategies to live in my head.
- 8. There was a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group; like "I'm dying of aides" and at that point I was experiencing a lot of emotional intensity. Oh My God! This is really confronting, there's a lot of emotion, there's a lot of emotion and probably, tough emotion and for that first part of the day I was afraid of my own emotional intensity. I wasn't going to be able to continue because it felt very explosive. It felt very emotional this changed during the course of the day, Fortunately this guy that was next to me, he was extraordinary he was like my anchor to the ground, he just intuitively anchored me, cause it was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, It felt kind of like scary, really, really scary, it was scary absolutely like life and death.

### **9. Transformative Shifts in Being and Experience of Personal Change**



9. I became the kind of moving on point for them all and it took their discussion a little bit deeper.
9. I became very aware that I needed feedback in my life, have I said the right thing?// Is that OK?// Is this going to be OK?
9. I saw the value of innocence to the group when she spoke for the first time and agrees with me, but she agreed from a different space. I got my contrast from her and it kind of tempered me slightly
9. I was pissing people off by asking “Why can’t this be happy (with emphasis) do we all have to be dealing with sad stuff?” and I was getting a lot of angry stuff back, I wasn’t liking it and I wanted to change it, when I was supported in the group by a young girl who was 17 or 18 who hadn’t said anything for the entire first day//she supported me and said “well I’ve got to agree with V... why is this all about ugly shit”
9. It was an unbelievably supportive environment where I needed to give that part of me in order for them give a deeper level or deeper part of them to the group//that was profound for me there’s some huge learning in that for me
9. The realisation that you didn’t actually have to have shared [to be part of the group], that was a transformation
9. There was a transformational point there where, I suddenly realised that I was actually part of the group. I became the Messiah and that’s how they referred to me as being very much like the Rabbi’s gift//I became very much that person//and that was like - huge for me, huge it transformed then, it just completely transformed me (*Rabbi’s gift see appendix A*) and once I’d overcome that fear and realised that I wasn’t gonna die if I opened my eyes and looked at these people and be in that space, I was going to survive, it was that profound. God that seemed like such a huge step, but it’s a leaping step//It looks like a little step but it’s really huge (emphasised/laugh) I did strategic visualising for large corporations, and it was always about the economic bottom line, and I would get the vision of the company and then find out that these people [employees] have got a different one and it’s all over the place, wal, wal, wal, wallop I did corporate chiropractic like, right across layers and things like that.  
I don’t knowingly go to give X a gift but through whatever it is that I am giving here to you, your giving back to me.  
it feels kinda more (pause) full, It felt whole and calm.  
it felt very much like something intangible became present that connected us for that period and that’s what I experienced as community. That’s truly what I experienced, it was awesome, it was awesome .  
maybe that’s an Australian thing, they don’t know whether they want the experience of being in community.

## 10. Workshop Process

10. everyone spewed all over one another for the first day we had huge chaos, I mean massive chaos cause there was an enormous amount of guilt felt and then it kinda went beyond that, where it just kinda didn’t matter.
10. I walked into a room of about 20 people and we were joined by two facilitators at some level there’s interventions, there’s transition stuff and all that stuff as the group moves forward and it’s the skill of the facilitator
10. My understanding of the process was that you weren’t allowed to say anything to them (participants in pain/deep emotion) because there was all this ‘I’ focus

and I felt powerless. I felt as though the rules of the group said you weren't allowed to do that.(comfort someone)

### 11. Being-in-Community/Making Way for Community

11. (refer back to question) the best way to explain the feeling [of community] is through body experiences through the sound it actually came out as is sound and it feels like it comes very much from my body. The sound of being reflected is very tribal and very ancient. There were times when I felt like I was really old ----- eyes
11. [being-in-community] is encapsulated in that sense of being connected, incredibly deeply connected with people that we have no connection with. It took story and history and shit to get us there but [community] transcends their stories, their life, their history, their everything
11. [My body] doesn't feel like the previous experience where it was aggitated and explosive and erupting and volcanic I didn't feel suffocated or explosive anymore, it felt very unleashed.
11. Connected its connected, it doesn't feel fragmented, it doesn't feel kinda lost
11. D... the HIV Aides guy he laughed at the end of it. He said "you know, I didn't tell, you how cynical I am, I thought you were just some bloody, you know, fake Indian you know, a guy that wanted more attention, you know, and Indians are pretty God dam do ya, (soft laughter in voice) I thought you were gonna make out ..." (soft laugh) D... actually thought he was making out he was an alcoholic (laugh) Indian to get sympathy.
11. I didn't feel like I was on the raft clinging [anymore] which is how I felt on the first day
11. I don't know what it really meant//my sense is that it was connected to the reflection thing
11. If you look closer I'm here for a trade off, and I'm thinkin' the whole time, oh my god (softly) in a weird part of me, I hope this is valuable, I hope he's getting what he wants.
11. it feels healing like it doesn't feel as hysterical as amplified as urgent as agitated, it's healing, and feels like it's coming back together and calmer
11. It felt like bits of, you know, like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted. I felt more whole,
11. It's natural, community is not created, its not a conscious process of we've done pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness, here we are, we are going into community, the group don't create it, they make way for it to become present. I absolutely and utterly experienced the group makeing way for community to become present. People gave up everything, it was a real stripping down, to make way, everybody had cast aside all that stuff for a full moment, for a moment
11. it's through the way in which that group dynamic works or that (particular) group works or is facilitated. It was unbelievably facilitated by the guys that took us through the process.
11. my experience of community was very much about how it is, that it felt and how I internalised it. It was a huge experience and obviously all about how I was in the process.
11. The community building workshop was an incredibly humbling experience
11. The essence of the Rabbi's gift is, I give you a gift and you give me a gift.
11. The experience of community has been unbelievably profound,very much a nurturing kind of feminine, connected tribal thing.

- 11. Whatever it was that happened there, felt to me like in the presence of spirit,
- 11. When I am in-community I have a really strong feeling function present, which cannot be controlled and my sensing function is really acute, those things become very present when you're connected at that level
- 11. You're giving me the opportunity to tell my story, that's a gift in itself and maybe I am giving you something that, helps in some way, shape or form as well. That's what to me it's about, being able to do that, It's that simple, you know it's not like I have to give up a part of myself it's not like Oh, My, God! your taking anything away.

### **12. Changed Behaviour, Beliefs/Attitudes/Ways of Being**

- 12. I typically hear the negative and not the positive and I don't know how to take positive things in so now I've drawn a pond upstairs and when anytime anyone says anything positive about me, I stick a toe in it as part of my work.
- 12. There's this part of me that feels like it's going back to the old (emphasised) feminine ways and that feels very pre-patriarchal, it's become much more the hunch, the feeling, the intuition, the kind of knowing part of me which I have never been able to trust because I've always been told it's not been ok

### **14. Perceived Benefits/Post-Community**

- 14. I have altered significantly
- 14. I've actually had quite a few dreams about the pond, so pond is significant it is powerful. that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind of had the ripple effect
- 14. In denying my emotionality, I become very amplified and clinging, I become very much the drama queen, I become very explosive and community building knocked that right out of me, a very big part of me that's been alienated from who it is that I am came back
- 14. It gives me the opportunity to see that, how I've experienced life can be re-enacted unconsciously on my own children and I have been able to break that pattern as a result of being in community by seeing the power of reflection, and seeing the importance of emotionality
- 14. It has an incredible impact on me because I now live the experience
- 14. it's back to this internal/external thing, it brought a whole bunch of pieces together, extraordinary ----- amazingly rich complex, it's relationships I made, connections I made in the community, it's in the dream world and insights
- 14. The essence of community it's changed dramatically my relationship with my children, I have an emotionally gifted child, through him (emphasis) I have been able to get a greater understanding of who it is that I am and community has under-pinned that experience, the revelation for me is extraordinary

### **15. Sense of Meaning/Purpose**

- 15. (community building) is what we need to do, for reconciliation, that's where this stuff should be, my passion comes from knowing that a lot of the shhhhit that goes on out there could kind of be resolved with this
- 15. everyone is out there kind of seeking happiness, a connection good, bad, different whatever it's just that connection, that reflection is what humans want, what humanity needs
- 15. I can't change humanity // I can do my small bit in creating some understanding of that (community building/reflection) I want to know that there are people like you and me out there that gets the essence of this work,

that can somehow pioneer this through to a point where we can keep that kind sense of community

15. I need to make it smaller ,but there's always that part of me that kind of gets dragged back into the bigness part
15. I think this connection stuff is what everyone wants
15. I wanna make it big not big because I necessarily have to be-ee big it's just I've kind of got the energy to make it big

#### **17. Relationships/Family/Others**

17. As a result of my life experiences I have strongly disconnected from my sensing and my feeling functions and I see it in families, I see it in my own family experience, disconnection, it's people seeking that mirroring connection all the time
17. this guy he fell in love with me in the workshop// and it's really stuffed him up a bit, he started writing me e-mails like expressing how much he thought I was gorgeous, it really kind of threw me and it was like OH! OK, so there's a new different rule. People can't tolerate that whatever that being in community actually means without kind of thinking well, we've gotta have sex, or whatever.

#### **18. Sense of connection**

18. I didn't feel like I had been through this incredible experience and then just kicked out, or left, there was a lot of joining of hands and a connection
18. I knew I was being a pain in the arse, but//I was trapped in it
18. I spoke to one of the facilitators and she said "look, you know I encourage you to kind of just think of what separates me from the group"//she did it really gently//I got that, you know
18. In community I think you typically connect very, very strongly for some reason, unknown to yourself, with particular people in group.
18. To protect the vulnerable part of me I isolated and alienated myself from some wonderful human beings and the potential to be in community and at the end of the first day I felt incredibly separate from the group, I felt very isolated It 's very alienating when nobody is buying your shit, nobody's buying your drama queen stuff//all your amplification or anything.
18. When I tried to connect with people (struggling with emotion) it it took me a long time to look at them and when I looked at them the whole group changed, I didn't feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group, I felt very very connected to the group I felt very much like I belonged to the group
- 18 I remained very disconnected
18. I'm an incredibly compassionate and empathetic person,//I feel and pick up the emotional states of others It was not like I felt like I wanted to actually be compassionate or empathetic it was that I felt powerless to actually assist or help because I didn't think that was allowed.

#### **19. Sense of God/Spirit/Energy**

19. At this time, the ether or something provided me all my knowing, provided me with the answers to that question I don't know where that answer came from
19. There is truly something that connects humanity that transcends whatever shit has gone on in this room. It transcends gender, race, story it transcends story, it, story and history even become irrelevant.
19. There's a sense of spirit present when you have that bringing together of the reflection and the speaking from the heart

#### **20. Tolerance of Emotional States of Others and Self**

- 20. All I wanted to do was go and help these people all the time//I wanted to run over and solve it, or save it, or fix it, or stop it, because it was all too much.
- 20. I don't know how much of the other people's pain I'm going to be able to sustain and listen to without falling apart, without falling all over on the floor,
- 20. I often felt myself in this incredibly turbulent wave of emotion as my levels of emotional sensitivity are typically, incredibly high in the body
- 20. I recognised that I can only tolerate certain levels of ...emotional intensity, too much of that stuff, all at once, just, overwhelmed me
- 20. If I can't stop these people, from dumping their really difficult stuff on me, I go into really defensive behaviour, I'm gonna put up a wall, I'm just going to be a brick wall here so because I can't tolerate this stuff I effectively built a brick wall.
- 20. My capacity to be able to contain that emotion was seriously tested, it feels explosive, it feels unmanageable, it feels like internal shaking and I have an incredible immediacy an urgency to put the emotional intensity to rest (emotional intensity)
- 20. My capacity to be able to tolerate other people's pain (pause...(emotion) was about me being able to tolerate the difficult stuff, I felt that very much internally. This gave me a real sense of how fragmented I was, how difficult I was and how I was protecting that emotional part of myself and //what lengths I would go to, to do that.

### **23. Sense of Self/Transcendence**

- 23. historically I was somebody who was desperate to give things form, but now I kind of just say well that was an experience
- 23. I experience that now is with a sense of frustration, purely and simply because I believe that this what humanity needs
- 23. I'm in my own personal journey and now that I speak about it with you, out loud, it contextualises the kind of stuff that I've done To contextualise the workshop post-experience my career has been in I.T. and it feels like a network upgrade to me, it feels like ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, (C/ ha) ch, ch, ch, Every part [upgraded]

### **24. Dreaming/Archtypes**

- 24 a lot of rejecting the masculine and reconnecting with the feminine
- 24 I have very ancient dreams I dream in the middle ages, I dream in Egyptian times
- 24 I've had a lot of dreams about feeling a new state of incarnation

## **Appendix E: Transcript 2 Thematic Index**

### **1. Space**

1. it's like I'm not going to even hold myself together here, I'm going to fall off the planet if I don't move through this space, I am not going to be able to sustain this

#### **1a. Reflected space**

1a. it's a huge shift into this space where I can't take in any more..it's all about me, It's not about ego me, it's about me being reflected and the powerful experience of that.

1a. [the mirroring] – that's the powerful transformational point for me.

1a. I went to this space and it was like a pond, it felt like I was looking and being reflected, which I think is the most powerful experience in community

1a. the reflection in the pond was the transformational point for me.

### **3. Hightened senses**

3. When I am in-community I have a really strong feeling function present, which cannot be controlled and my sensing function is really acute

### **4. Boundaries and Threshold**

4. right in the middle of pseudo community, there was all this tension, it just absolutely and utterly threw me

4. once I'd overcome the fear and realised that I wasn't gonna die if I opened my eyes and looked at these people and be in that space, I was going to survive, it was that profound.

4. I was afraid of my own emotional intensity, I wasn't going to be able to continue, it felt very explosive

4. it was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, it was scary absolutely like life and death

4. it's not about tolerating other people, it's my own capacity for tolerance, the tolerance of emotionality

4. My capacity to be able to contain that emotion was seriously tested, it feels explosive, it feels unmanageable, it feels like internal shaking and I have an incredible immediacy an urgency to put the emotional intensity to rest (emotional intensity)

4. My capacity to be able to tolerate other people's pain (pause...(emotion) was about me being able to tolerate the difficult stuff, I felt that very much internally. This gave me a real sense of how fragmented I was, how difficult I was and how I was protecting that emotional part of myself and //what lengths I would go to, to do that.

### **5. Spirit, Energy, God**

5. Whatever it was that happened there, felt to me like in the presence of spirit,

5. There's a sense of spirit present when you have that bringing together of the reflection and the speaking from the heart

### **6. Authenticity and Truth**

6. I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone my story before in my life

### **7. Speaking**

7. Sadding and anger were things that I wasn't allowed to actually express, Little girls don't cry, little girls don't get angry, little girls don't scream

7. first thing the next morning I knew I had to speak

7. It was a very different body feeling I was probably going to be physically ill if I didn't speak

7. I had a dry throat, it was agitated, it was close to a pre-fainting feeling

7. I actually couldn't open my eyes// I spoke with my eyes closed

7. extraordinary because I could just hear the difference in my voice, in the tone, in the words

7. I was feeling the pain but I didn't have the words, all this speaking from the heart stuff, that was driving me nuts

7. I was so moved to speak from someplace that I'd never spoken from before in my life

7. I had no conscious control over the step that I took, to make the move to speak from thin space

7. I'd slowed right down, I'm slowing down now, because I am reliving the experience

7. when you speak from the heart space you truly connect with others, the communication is clear, there's no static, no crapp, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff, everything just gets moved away, it feels very clear and it feels very primitive, it feels like it hasn't got the shit of the ages on it, very tribal

### **7a. Post-Speaking**

7a. [After speaking] I felt very small, I felt very much like a child and I felt like I wanted to self nurture in that space

7a. I wanted to withdraw and take away the focus from me and just be

7a. I didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point

7a. I was exhausted all I wanted to do was lie down in someones arms and just go to sleep

7a. I sat quietly and I heard the group move on you know in kind of a comforting but distant way

7a. I came back into the group a good two hours later, I didn't leave, physically leave, I could hear their voices, but I wasn't really engaged

### **8. Perception and Perceptive Shifts**

8. I became the moving on point for them all and it took their discussion a little bit deeper

8. The realisation that you didn't actually have to have shared [to be part of the group], that was a transformation

8. There was a transformational point there where, I suddenly realised that I was actually part of the group.

8. I became the Messiah and that's how they referred to me as being very much like the Rabbi's gift it just completely transformed me (*Rabbi's gift see appendix ???*)

8. It gives me the opportunity to see that, how I've experienced life can be re-enacted unconsciously on my own children and I have been able to break that pattern as a result of being in community by seeing the power of reflection, and seeing the importance of emotionality

### **9. Getting out the way, Emptying Surrender**

9. It's natural, community is not created, its not a conscious process of we've done pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness, here we are, we are going into community, the group don't create it, they make way for it to become present.

9. I absolutely and utterly experienced the group making way for community to become present.

9. People gave up everything, it was a real stripping down, to make way, everybody had cast aside all that stuff for a full moment, for a moment

### **10. Personal change**

10. I had a very profound personal experience

10. There's this part of me that feels like it's going back to the old (emphasised) feminine ways and that feels very pre-patriarchal,

10. its become much more the hunch, the feeling, the intuition, the kind of knowing part of me which I have never been able to trust because I've always been told it's not been ok

10. I have altered significantly...that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind of had the ripple effect

10. a very big part of me that's been alienated from who it is that I am came back

10. It has an incredible impact on me because I now live the experience

10. The essence of community it's changed dramatically my relationship with my children

10. historically I was somebody who was desperate to give things form, but now I kind of just say well that was an experience

10. To contextualise the workshop post-experience my career has been in I.T. and it feels like a network upgrade to me, it feels like ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, (C/ha) ch, ch, ch, Every part [upgraded]

### **11. Purpose**

11. I've manifested myself in, in the world at large in a very masculine way

11. I've run the corporation, accumulated money

### **12. Mental Understanding V Other (mechanistic/creative)**

12. I made very, very harsh judgments, it was my way of dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different to them

12. I was having the body experience and went to where I know best, which is the head, where I live when I am afraid of my emotional state.

### **13. Sense of difference**

13. I felt very much like I was a foreigner, feeling very different and very isolated

### **14. Experience of others**

14. I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much

14. I was a little overwhelmed by the response and reaction in the group they respected and honoured my experience

14. I had a sense it was a human thing and it was very nurturing, it felt supportive

14. I felt like they were taking care of me by just kind of moving on

14. I could see the difference in group this is very much a core of how I experienced community

14. There was a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group and at that point I was experiencing a lot of emotional intensity

14. It was an unbelievably supportive environment

14. I needed to give that part of me in order for them give a deeper level or deeper part of them[selves] to the group that was profound for me

14. everyone spewed all over one another for the first day we had huge chaos, I mean massive chaos...and then it kinda went beyond that, where it just kinda didn't matter.

14. I didn't feel like I had been through this incredible experience and then just kicked out, or left, there was a lot of joining of hands and a connection

14. When I tried to connect with people it it took me a long time to look at them and when I looked at them the whole group changed

14. I didn't feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group, I felt very very connected to the group, I felt very much like I belonged to the group

### **14a. Experience of being reflected by others**

14a. At the point in which I was truly reflected, whether people had stuff just didn't matter,



14a. for the very first time in my life, I had the experience of being reflected in such an incredibly profound way

14a. I couldn't take in the reflection it was just too much, and I had to shut down

14a. When you look in somebody else eyes and it mirrors you, they truly understand, they truly are there and present for you, right at that point.

### **15a. Connection and dis-connection**

15a. I was feeling extremely disconnected

15a. [being-in-community] is encapsulated in that sense of being connected incredibly deeply connected with people that we have no [prior] connection with

15a. it felt very much like something intangible became present that connected us for that period and that's what I experienced as community

15a. Connected its connected, it doesn't feel fragmented, it doesn't feel kinda lost

15a. As a result of my life experiences I have strongly disconnected from my sensing and my feeling functions I see it in my own family experience

15a. There is truly something that connects humanity that transcends whatever shit has gone on in this room. It transcends gender, race, story it transcends story, it, story and history even become irrelevant.

### **15 Being-in- Community**

15. It felt whole and calm.

15. It took story and history and shit to get us there but [community] transcends their stories, their life, their history, their everything

15. [My body] doesn't feel like the previous experience where it was aggitated and explosive and erupting and volcanic, I didn't feel suffocated or explosive anymore, it felt very unleashed.

15. I didn't feel like I was on the raft clinging [anymore] which is how I felt on the first day

15. it feels healing like it doesn't feel as hysterical as amplified as urgent as agitated, it's healing, and feels like it's coming back together and calmer

15. It felt like bits of, you know, like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted, I felt more whole,

15. The experience of community has been unbelievably profound, very much a nurturing kind of feminine, connected tribal thing.

15. it brought a whole bunch of pieces together, extraordinary

### **16. Personal history**

16. I was brought up to give family joy and whatever and all the bad stuff was hidden away

16. My own emotionality is something that has always been treated as if it is unexceptable or bad behaviour

**The circle space as a container for community**

what made [CBW's] clearly worthwhile was the opportunity with other people to sit and hear myself and hear the group but without any kind of expert or leader or gender or structure

[The CBW] creates space for spirit to be experienced spirit to be felt, [from the] inside out

[In Chaos and Emptying]...the room feels the same you know it's feels large, it feels cold, it feels unfriendly...it's something you want to escape from (contracted self - Unsafe)

[when] people start connecting authentically, when the group gets deeper into emptying and there is palpable spirit it [becomes] an intimate space, trusting and compelling (expanded self - Safe)

the act of sitting in a community building circle peeled enough of a layer of protection away from me for me to be able to know that I wanted an authentic life and that I didn't have one or a life expression

there is a capsule created that allows us to focus solely on that [community building]...and when it is over the world encroaches on us again, life sort of becomes distracting

**Community as re-formative**

my whole foundation on which I live has been dismantled and rebuilt nothing in my life is the same, I feel totally different and grounded

**Community as a unifying and healing experience**

a very big part of me that's been alienated from who it is that I am came back To contextualise the workshop post-experience my career has been in I.T. and it feels like a network upgrade to me, it feels like ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, (C/ ha) ch, ch, ch, Every part [upgraded]

It felt like bits of, you know, like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jig-saw had kind of fitted, I felt more whole

I've manifested myself in, in the world at large in a very masculine way, now there's this part of me that feels like it's going back to the old feminine ways

it brought a whole bunch of pieces together, extraordinary

it feels healing, it doesn't feel as hysterical as amplified as urgent as agitated, it's healing, and feels like it's coming back together and calmer

it is deeply personally healing to me, anything that stands between me and community comes up and takes a step toward healing by participating in the circle

my experience is that whatever in my life is up to be healed at that time, to be looked at, to be let go of you know to take a step forward, intensifies and shows up in the circle

**Emergence and Birth**

things that I hadn't thought about were coming to the surface psychologically or spiritually and it was a very profound experience

**Community as destination**

an anxiousness to have us cross the bridge that we need to cross to get to that...feeling of community

in the early stages I feel struggle I feel seeking, like there's a destination

**Community as a sense of expanded self**

I was in a really different space to what I would normally be in It was expansive

it wasn't a head space it was a body space as if the physical boundaries of my body didn't exist

the experience of being supported was...a lightness of being  
as it becomes true emptiness...all of those things are completely replaced by a lightness, a grace an uplifting sort of feeling

### **Expanded self as a hightening of senses (sub-theme of above)**

I find myself real aware during the chaos part

it was like a high, it was like a huge buzz

I think by the end of it I was on a high, I was on this acute alertness, I felt all tingly feeling alive, extremely alive...the full range of emotions are available

I was alive, incredibly alive, very energised, it was like electrocuted, glowing

I was so in tune with where people were at

I was very sensitive, super aware of the movement[of energy]

When I am in-community I have a really strong feeling function present, which cannot be controlled and my sensing function is really acute

### **The CBW as a threshold, existentially threatening experience**

I didn't have to cap it, but I chose to cap it and it was like I will stop there

it's like I'm not going to even hold myself together here, I'm going to fall off the planet if I don't move through this space, I am not going to be able to sustain this

I was afraid of my own emotional intensity, I wasn't going to be able to continue, it felt very explosive

I went over the threshold, I might have created a new one

to explode would mean to move into the oneness, the total oneness

I would explode, if I kept going, I would explode

I'm not sure if I would come back, the feeling of it would be like to explode and not exist and just be

it was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, it was scary absolutely like life and death

it would be like I didn't exist

My capacity to be able to contain that emotion was seriously tested, it feels explosive, it feels unmanageable, it feels like internal shaking

I have an incredible immediacy an urgency to put the emotional intensity to rest once I'd overcome the fear and [I] realised that I wasn't gonna die if I opened my eyes and looked at these people and be in that space, I was going to survive, it was that profound

before the emptiness, that can be really dreadful...that can be despair that can be dark that can feel hopeless

it's a huge shift into this space where I can't take in any more..it's all about me,

### **Being-in-community as an experience of God, Spirit and transpersonal energy**

I saw the movement of spirit between all of us, no the movement of wisdom

I couldn't stop watching the movement of it [spirit] flowing around the group

I have a sense of this oneness behind me

I know that God is there and God is touching all of us, we're...connected through it to each other

usually what I remember being moved to do something...energy goes through me all the time, it's the way I sense things and feel things

I saw the higher selves of people standing right there with them...these huge presences were all circled around

I was aware of the movement of the energy, or spirit or wisdom in my body

it [oneness] was a growth, it was an emergence of that experience of oneness

it's a part of the divine speaking through you...  
like a giant exhale and then the emptiness is filled up with grace or it's easy to  
remember that God is in that emptiness...that spirits there  
silently without us talking about it we've all noticed that spirit is with us,  
something comes up and it sends prickles all through me...as though love has just  
been expressed and it's presence can be felt  
the difference [between pre-community silence and community silence] is that in the  
second one I have remembered God and I am just resting there//In the first one I think  
that God needs my help  
the experience of community definitely felt as if I was being supported...supported by  
others and supported by spirit  
the group as a whole notices that God is in the room and is turned more towards that  
than toward a destination or each other in a confrontive way  
There's a sense of spirit present when you have that bringing together of the  
reflection and the speaking from the heart  
To be comfortable in that silence is...like being surrounded by God, surrounded by  
Grace...like being enveloped in something, comfortable  
Whatever it was that happened there, felt to me like in the presence of spirit,  
[spirit] flowed, it bubbled, it just kept popping up  
**Community as revealing of authentic self (truth)**  
I didn't know myself to begin with so we're talking revealing it [me] to me as well as  
to a group  
the difficult, the scary part is beyond the chaos, it's coming out of the chaos, I've  
never found revealing myself to be an easy thing to do  
the feelings[post chaos] are wanting to pull the covers up over my head, become very  
small and invisible in the group and pray that somebody else will do that work, and at  
the same time feeling from the inside out an urge to move to do something to reveal  
something  
after sitting in circle after circle and seeing that the power is in telling the truth, even  
telling the truth about the messiness, it's very hard to hold on to the notion that it's  
important to look good,  
[I've embraced more of the American Indian ways] only since community building,  
because of telling my story in community building experiences  
[in silence] we tend to go deeper have access to what it is that needs to be said verses  
having a discussion or defending my own particular point of view  
I had a profound experience [in the CBW]...I thought wow this is more authentic  
[than anything else I'd done]  
I started to talk about how I really felt about some things that were going on in my  
life.  
I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone my story before in my life  
I was astounded by the transformation in individuals and in their ability to trust and  
share and be authentic  
I was the first one that presented authentic information to the group, it felt like a risk  
but it felt like if I didn't, I wasn't going to get what I came to get... this is going to be  
a waste of time  
I'm way more willing to tell the truth about how I feel, where I am, far more able to  
feel where I am, know where I am  
I've learned a great deal about myself - what I call my original medicine as a way of  
my authentic self  
in order to have authentic connection I have to be authentic

it was profound for me to even find a voice to speak authentically in the circle...  
finding my voice and being able to speak was ...a big thing.  
life has been increasingly getting better and better as I learn to be more authentic in  
my day to day life...that's what community building...has been teaching me  
my life is still not authentic [if] I'm not participating in life as I feel called to  
participate, the community building process has helped me figure that out  
responding to self in that moment...to me that's what authentic means...the CBW  
over the years pulled from me coaxed from me the ability to know what that  
authenticity would be what it is  
I had to leave the job I was in because I knew that what I was doing wasn't about my  
original medicine, I wasn't being authentic in the work I was doing  
someone says something and the truth of it sends those prickles...just that truth which  
is so deep you just know, that it's true  
that is a challenge for me...to do that with my spouse with people I interact with on a  
day to day basis, be authentic with them and not be harmful to them and still be true  
to myself  
that's why community building is so valuable to me I get to be real and be me  
the thing I like best about community building is that it's real, it's not to be  
manipulated  
to be really authentically there I need to be able to say what's happening for me in  
that moment with that group of people, that's the deeper sense of community and  
that's what I strive for  
as the workshop progressed and more people started sharing deeply and more  
authentically then I felt like I belonged

**Being-in-Community as an agent of change (Perception and Perceptive Shifts)**  
the whole way through that oneness was there all the time, I just wasn't seeing it  
[now] my focus is less on making things happen and more on praying that the best  
things happen,so the energy really shifts, there's less striving  
a key thing that came of that workshop was I decided who was in or out  
I was raking through my own perceptions about myself , the question was really rising  
'well who on earth are you?' to do something beyond what I think I am raises that  
question.  
I am now seeing myself in community more and more...I can feel that when I said it I  
can feel it in my legs  
I discovered that I'd been called to be a medicine man for years  
I do see myself differently, its been part of the process  
I had the experience of feeling like I had been getting ready to be there my whole life  
I started to notice people that did drama, you know, victim stuff and, at that time,  
that's how I was making meaning of my own life  
it was really powerful for me, it was like ...oh Wow with the realisation that I am  
actually in community with everybody, if I allowed them in.  
my work changed dramatically, I followed [my] intuition  
now I feel much more inclined to speak about what's true for me...people don't have  
to decide whether they agree with me in order to be with me  
The realisation that you didn't actually have to have shared [to be part of the group],  
that was a transformation  
there is something beyond you and that is what really came through for me in that  
workshop  
There was a transformational point there where, I suddenly realised that I was actually  
part of the group

it greatly strengthened our ability to work together as a leadership team  
we could have done the co-executive directorship for a year...without having had the  
experience of that workshop  
for the organisation it builds trust and understanding  
the places that I choose to deny about how I behave and how I respond...those are  
things I discover in in workshops...I discover those [things] about myself  
I feel [CBW's] got me empty enough...to hear someone else suggest to me that I  
didn't have to live [with alcoholism] anymore and seeking help with quitting drinking  
would move me closer to what I wanted (Group as a personal focusing lens?)

### **Personal change**

I was probably one of the most depressed people about now my love of life and my  
openness to people is growing each day  
basic things that shaped my life were getting sober and community building... it has  
had a profound effect on my life  
historically I was somebody who was desperate to give things form, but now I kind of  
just say well that was an experience  
I [now] do what gets put in front of me and I have become way more willing to look  
like an idiot than I ever was in those beginning days  
I became softer  
I decided to quite drinking and go to Alcoholics Anonymous and I've always credited  
somehow my community experience with that.  
I have altered significantly...that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind  
of had the ripple effect  
I now say OK, I don't like this person, and just sit .... open [to them]  
It has an incredible impact on me because I now live the experience  
it helped me refine my practice of speaking I statements and sharing my personal  
experience as opposed to concepts  
its become much more the hunch, the feeling, the intuition, the kind of knowing part  
of me which I have never been able to trust because I've always been told it's not  
been ok  
my job was not to go in full [it] was to go in empty and pray and stay present and do  
what was put in front of me  
my job was not to tell people the answers it was to create a space in which they found  
the answers  
The essence of community it's changed dramatically my relationship with my  
children  
I no longer ever feel like I have a muffler wrapped around my throat choking me  
never  
leading up to that (speaking) was the fear that the head part of them would pop in and  
say no you are wrong

### **Being-in-Community**

**a) as a connecting experience**

**b) as transcendant**

**c) as calming, supportive and peaceful**

a) [being-in-community] is encapsulated in that sense of being connected incredibly  
deeply connected with people that we have no [prior] connection with

a) As a result of my life experiences I have strongly disconnected from my sensing  
and my feeling functions I see it in my own family experience

a) being in community is more a feeling of being connected...to other's and  
spirit...it's less me oriented

- a) Connected its connected, it doesn't feel fragmented, it doesn't feel kinda lost
- a) I sense a connection with everybody in the room myself and then I recognised that there are others who are sensing that too
- a) I was feeling extremely disconnected
- a) I was just so connected to [the] experience that thinking couldn't break it
- a) it felt very much like something intangible became present that connected us for that period and that's what I experienced as community
- a) it's an experience of connectedness...connectedness with the group not individuals
- a) The experience of community has been unbelievably profound, very much a nurturing kind of feminine, connected tribal thing
- a) There is truly something that connects humanity that transcends whatever shit has gone on in this room. It transcends gender, race, story it transcends story, it, story and history even become irrelevant.
- a) there's a real feeling with connectedness, not only in the group but in, to all that is
- a) when I'm in community I believe I'm fulfilling [my] purpose through [a] feeling of being connected with everything that exists including the divine
- a. The feeling of being-in-community is like connecting all of us with or through that feeling of spirit or God
- b) differences are transcended but not annihilated...that same person who who you had the conflict with early on, in the group could say the same words [when] in-community and it's felt entirely differently
- b) It took story and history and shit to get us there but [community] transcends their stories, their life, their history, their everything
- b) It's like, both myself personally and the group in general has had a psychic spiritual shift and suddenly we can all be there in the skin of the group ,without fixing without despair without showing off without all that stuff , and for me that's without alienating, without isolating, without being aggressive
- c) [My body] doesn't feel like the previous experience where it was aggitated and explosive and erupting and volcanic, I didn't feel suffocated or explosive anymore, it felt very unleashed.
- c) ease, quiet, slow rhythm like the heart beat has slowed down to a resting heartbeat, of the group...the group is comfortable in silence...it's like ah we did it!...its here, it arrived
- c) for me being-in-community is simple, its very quiet the silence is no longer uncomfortable, there is nothing urgent for me to do – it's an absence of struggle and seeking
- c) in community it just is – it just is- there is nowhere to go and nothing to do
- c) in community silence is such a beautiful thing it's like taking a bath in peace
- c) It felt whole and calm
- c) the feeling I would ascribe to community is when the individual has relaxed back into that whole presence of themselves, It's like they have exhaled and like somebody's holding them in their arms, that's what it feels like in the group [and to me]
- c) the notion of being able to just be in our skin without doing anything about it really works...in terms of what community feels like to me

### **Community as illusive**

it can disappear as quick as it comes...you can't hold it you can't capture it, it's illusive and it's real and it's honest (does this go with authenticity?)  
 the experience of being-in-community in that circle is the same as having that experience of an extraordinary sense of peace and God in a meditation but I have no

control over calling that forward and the harder you try to recreate it the more elusive it becomes (calm and peace)

that feeling [of community] can come in a second and it can go in a second

**Speaking:**

- a) **as a threshold experience**
- b) **as a transformational event**
- c) **as a transpersonal experience**
- d) **as a physically compulsive calling**
- e) **as a threshold experience**

a) [speaking spontaneously]...started to happen towards the end of the workshop which was really a bit scary

a) I actually couldn't open my eyes...I spoke with my eyes closed

a) I feel awful!...I feel I want to crawl out of my skin really fast, preferably alone and not in that circle, because it hurts I mean it literally hurts to not [speak]

a) I get really restless in the chair

a) I had a dry throat, it was agitated, it was close to a pre-fainting feeling

a) I was extremely nervous, sweating underneath you know my armpits were sweating my palms were sweating my stomach was pounding

a) I was feeling the pain but I didn't have the words, all this speaking from the heart stuff, that was driving me nuts

a) The build up to the expression of that was quite tense, quite emotional

7. the only time I spoke during the entire workshop was...the second morning and I shared my dream

**as a transformational event**

b) [after speaking] it was like being the most alive it was like what was supposed to happen

b) [after speaking] you are left with the emptiness...you are left with something else...the real moment when universal spirit comes through

b) almost like a different person, freeing, different

b) I could just hear the difference in my voice, in the tone, in the words

b) I felt more free than I have felt ...to share my fears as well as my hopes and dreams

b) It came from somewhere beyond me, it was something that was not dependant on my history or past, it was new

b) once it was done [I felt] clean, clear, fresh, new

b) when you speak from the heart space you truly connect with others, the communication is clear, there's no static, no crapp, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff, everything just gets moved away, it feels very clear and it feels very primitive, it feels like it hasn't got the shit of the ages on it, very tribal

b) I was ready to empty out ...and for me this went from this huge complex constructed life[to] rebuilding a completely new life, a pretty simple one

b) I would call [emptiness] freedom...it's the ability to respond in the moment, the ability to respond to the self

b) to me emptying involves being willing to follow that thread wherever it goes

*(Lewinig cartoon)*

**as a transpersonal experience**

c) [I felt] when I was speaking, I was speaking to that essence within them.

c) It was almost like being god (speaking with empathy)

**as a physically compulsive calling**



- d) first thing the next morning I knew I had to speak
- d) I am aware that whatever I am called to say is [also] for the group
- d) I had no conscious control over the step that I took, to make the move to speak from thin space
- d) I knew if I didn't speak right after the silence that I wouldn't speak
- d) I speak and at some level I don't even know what I am saying [but] I get the sense that people are listening deeply
- d) I was convinced that that was my moment and I seized it...and it was amazing for me...
- d) I was so moved to speak from someplace that I'd never spoken from before in my life
- d) it centres in the torso, in the middle...and it feels almost like there is a boxer inside my chest...in the centre where the heart would be...trying to box its way out and it's being held down
- d) it comes up and dominates my thoughts and I have a conviction a firmness that this is something I need to share
- d) It literally feels like it bubbles up, it's in my stomach and it bubbles up
- d) It was a very different body feeling I was probably going to be physically ill if I didn't speak
- d) Its starts in my lower belly, it's like the words are shoving their way up through my lower torso...up through my throat and if I don't say them I will be physically really uncomfortable
- d) now being moved to speak is more I am not wanting to say what it is that I have to say...I sit on that for awhile and if it continues to come up I say it
- d) now the being moved to speak is much different, there is still anxiety, [but] I don't get those body sensations any more
- d) the physical sensation of being called to speak is very clear to me
- d) when I am called to speak and I say what I'm called to say...that's a gift to other people it is way more powerful than me thinking of something clever to do or to say it's the most powerful thing to do, the group moves when that happens
- d) when moved to speak I would actually be shaking, I would be moving like I am doing now my legs are shaking

#### **Emptying as:(Post-Speaking)**

- a) **vulnerable making & risk taking (intensely personal)**
- b) **withdrawing, contracting into self**
- c) **relief**
- d) **a clearing process**
- e) **vulnerable making (intensely personal)**
- a) I came back into the group a good two hours later, I didn't leave, physically leave, I could hear their voices, but I wasn't really engaged
- a) I didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point
- a) I felt very small, I felt very much like a child and I felt like I wanted to self nurture in that space
- a) I was exhausted all I wanted to do was lie down in someones arms and just go to sleep
- a) I was sort of numb to what was going on
- a) I'd exposed myself, I made myself extremely vulnerable, I was feeling very tenuous and a whole bit awkward
- a) people were referring to my dream I was aware of that but I was going into myself withdrawing, contracting into self

b) I sat quietly and I heard the group move on you know in kind of a comforting but distant way

b) I wanted to withdraw and take away the focus from me and just be

b) I was a bit withdrawn from the group, I wasn't sure, I'd never done something like that before

### **relief**

c) [after emptying]...there's a sense of peace you know it's like confession, what I think confession is supposed to be...

c) I feel a sense of peace internally...the sooner I am able to empty that which is difficult

c) tremendous relief, tremendous relief, internally, personally the fact that I shared brings a tremendous amount of relief to me

c) When I empty it's a feeling of both of relief but also a not knowing... and sort [of] vulnerable

### **as a clearing process**

d) [emptying] was really emotional, lots of tears and lots of sadness

d) for me emptying is facing my shadow, facing those things that are less than desirable

d) the hard, the dreadful part is when what I am called to say is like being a plunger and unclogging something, especially when it's me I'm unclogging

d) for me emptying is in part a willingness to not look good a willingness to reveal self in it's messy form

d) so the emptying was about was about expressing, stuff, emotions, feelings

### **Emptiness**

to show up in that moment and do what is in front of us or what comes from the inside, that to me is emptiness...

### **Emptying as a creative act – sub theme?**

I'd slowed right down, I'm slowing down now, because I am reliving the experience if it's me deciding that I am not willing [to speak] that's when it's painful

### **Letting go and getting out of the way: a process of trust**

Whatever I am experiencing [in life] is stronger [now], I have probably got out of the way

it's a letting go, it's jumping of the cliff, it's like a death and it's different each time as I started doing community building I gave up the need to convince other people of a point of view

I absolutely and utterly experienced the group making way for community to become present.

I just got out of the way, I got out of the way and let whatever

if I am not constantly submitting to, I call it the greater spirit or a power greater than myself, it won't happen

in the moment I can get into maybe an argument or a disagreement where I am holding a position that I don't really need to hold..if I say oh I can let go of this, this isn't helpful here and apologise in the moment, that's a huge relief

It's natural, community is not created, its not a conscious process of we've done pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness, here we are, we are going into community, the group don't create it, they make way for it to become present.

People gave up everything, it was a real stripping down, to make way, everybody had cast aside all that stuff for a full moment, for a moment

you have to constantly work at it but you also have to submit, that's the emptying part

letting go and viewing something as a gift of spirit as opposed to an agenda item made to be so by a manager, these are opposite paradigms

### **Mental Understanding V Other (mechanistic/creative)**

I was observing the process and then it wasn't long before I just let go, I stopped looking, I stopped analysing, I stopped dissecting and I started to see differently there are increasing occasions in which things going through my head have less influence over what I am experiencing, they don't break it.

[emptying is] the moment in the circle...when I agree to move my participation totally from my head into feeling, when I give up the last gasp hope that all this can be explained with some kind of concept rather than be felt and experienced fully I was having the body experience and went to where I know best, which is the head, where I live when I am afraid of my emotional state.

it was a knowing rather than an intellectual observation

when I was conceptualising it was always about convincing somebody of another point of view it was exhausting, it's no longer exhausting

### **Encountering the other as:**

a) sense of difference

b) giving

c) transcending difference

d) nurturing & belonging

e) confronting

f) reflective

a) I felt very much like I was a foreigner, feeling very different and very isolated

a) I have never experienced being with people as they expressed their pain and it 'blew me away'

a) I made very, very harsh judgments, it was my way of dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different to them

Giving

b) confrontation in community building circles has been the biggest gift anybody's ever given me...it is the most incredible example of human community because [it] called forward something in me that for years [after] I could mine

b) I needed to give that part of me in order for them give a deeper level or deeper part of them[selves] to the group that was profound for me

### **Transcending difference**

c) everyone spewed all over one another for the first day we had huge chaos, I mean massive chaos...and then it kinda went beyond that, where it just kinda didn't matter.

c) I could see the difference in group this is very much a core of how I experienced community

c) I didn't feel like I had been through this incredible experience and then just kicked out, or left, there was a lot of joining of hands and a connection

c) I was amazed [by] not only the transformation that took place but the significant transition that a group of people made

c) When I tried to connect with people it took me a long time to look at them and when I looked at them the whole group changed

c) when the group starts really move, that heaviness evaporates, it's like it never existed

### **Nurturing and Belonging**

d) I didn't feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group, I felt very very connected to the group, I felt very much like I belonged to the group

d) I felt like they were taking care of me by just kind of moving on

- d) I had a sense it was a human thing and it was very nurturing, it felt supportive
- d) I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much
- d) I was a little overwhelmed by the response and reaction in the group they respected and honoured my experience
- d) It was an unbelievably supportive environment
- d) It was as if the burdens that I normally carry didn't have to be carried by me alone
- d) these things that resonated in me were things that I identified with other people

### **Confronting**

- e) it was the first time I had ever been in a group where people showed up as themselves and...told the dark and difficult stories of themselves
- e) There was a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group and at that point I was experiencing a lot of emotional intensity

### **Reflected**

- f) At the point in which I was truly reflected, whether people had stuff just didn't matter
- f) for the very first time in my life, I had the experience of being reflected in such an incredibly profound way
- f) I couldn't take in the reflection it was just too much, and I had to shut down
- f) When you look in somebody else eyes and it mirrors you, they truly understand, they truly are there and present for you, right at that point

### **The other as reflection of self – Sub Theme**

[the mirroring] – that's the powerful transformational point for me.

I went to this space and it was like a pond, it felt like I was looking and being reflected, which I think is the most powerful experience in community

It's not about ego me, it's about me being reflected and the powerful experience of that.

the reflection...was the transformational point for me.

### **Psuedo-community and chaos**

during the pseudo-community part sometimes I feel like going to sleep

I find Psuedo-community unbearable

I place such a high value on it [chaos]...because I know that there's a gift on the other side

I will regularly at the end of the first day have a headache, something's wanting to emerge and it's not emerging, so at that point the chaos is a movement and a positive release

it has made me more cognizant of the pseudo community that we normally encounter in business meetings and less patient with it

the most difficult part for me...is Psuedo community

unless the group is consciously focused on achieving community there's not a whole lot of tolerance...in business for chaos

### **History**

My whole family rules are that you don't speak

Sadness and anger were things that I wasn't allowed to actually express, Little girls don't cry, little girls don't get angry, little girls don't scream

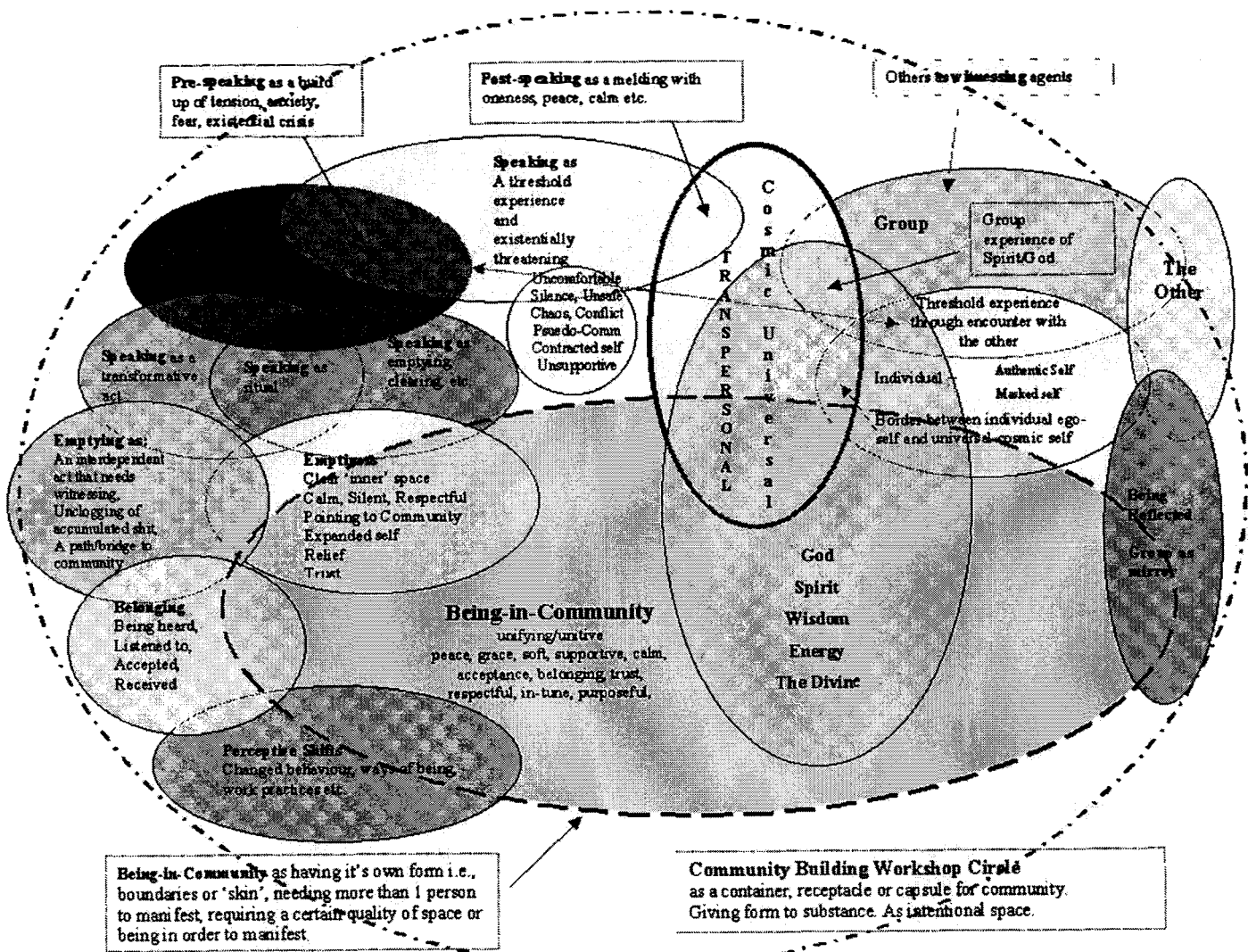
My own emotionality is something that has always been treated as if it is unacceptable or bad behaviour

I was brought up to give family joy and whatever and all the bad stuff was hidden away

**Purpose**

I was going in as this professional who was really keen on identifying the thing to run in workshops

I went as an incredibly prominent businessperson, who would learn about community so I could teach everybody else, but the value and the beauty was the healing that came to me



## **Appendix H: Reduced Thematic Index Sorted Into Interpretive Themes**

### **1. Encountering the other as:**

#### **A sense of difference**

I felt very much like I was a foreigner, feeling very different and very isolated

I have never experienced being with people as they expressed their pain and it blew me away

I made very, very harsh judgments; it was my way of dealing with the fact that I was feeling incredibly different to them

#### **Giving**

Confrontation in community building circles has been the biggest gift anybody's ever given me...it is the most incredible example of human community because [it] called forward something in me that for years [after] I could mine

I needed to give that part of me in order for them to give a deeper part of themselves to the group; that was profound for me

#### **Transcending difference**

Everyone spewed all over one another for the first day we had huge chaos, I mean massive chaos...and then it went beyond that, where it just didn't matter.

I could see the difference in group this is very much a core of how I experienced community

I didn't feel like I had been through this incredible experience and then just kicked out, or left, there was a lot of joining of hands and a connection

I was amazed [by] not only the transformation that took place but also the significant transition that a group of people made

When I tried to connect with people it took me a long time to look at them and when I looked at them the whole group changed

When the group starts really move, that heaviness evaporates, it's like it never existed

#### **Nurturing and belonging**

I didn't feel like I was dislocated or alienated from the group, I felt very very connected to the group, I felt very much like I belonged to the group

I felt like they were taking care of me by just kind of moving on

I had a sense it was a human thing and it was very nurturing, it felt supportive

I haven't had that experience in my life where there is a group of strangers and they just care so much

I was a little overwhelmed by the response and reaction in the group they respected and honoured my experience

It was an unbelievably supportive environment

It was as if the burdens that I normally carry didn't have to be carried by me alone

Those things that resonated in me were things that I identified with other people

#### **Confronting**

It was the first time I had ever been in a group where people showed up as themselves and...told the dark and difficult story's of themselves

There was a lot of very confronting stuff came up in the group and at that point I was experiencing a lot of emotional intensity

### **A threshold, existentially threatening experience (the CBW)**

I didn't have to cap it, but I chose to cap it and it was like I will stop there

It's like I'm not going to even hold myself together here, I'm going to fall off the planet if I don't move through this space, I am not going to be able to sustain this

I was afraid of my own emotional intensity, I wasn't going to be able to continue, it felt very explosive

I went over the threshold; I might have created a new one

To explode would mean to move into the oneness, the total oneness

I would explode, if I kept going, I would explode

I'm not sure if I would come back, the feeling of it would be like to explode and not exist and just be

It was an incredibly terrifying experience for me, it was scary absolutely like life and death

It would be like I didn't exist

My capacity to be able to contain that emotion was seriously tested, it feels explosive, it feels unmanageable, it feels like internal shaking

I have an incredible immediacy an urgency to put the emotional intensity to rest

[I] realised that I wasn't gonna die if I opened my eyes and looked at these people and be in that space, I was going to survive, it was that profound (transcendent experience?)

Before the emptiness, that can be really dreadful...that can be despair that can be dark that can feel hopeless

It's a huge shift into this space where I can't take in any more...it's all about me,

### **Reflective**

At the point in which I was truly reflected, whether people had stuff just didn't matter

For the very first time in my life, I had the experience of being reflected in such an incredibly profound way

I couldn't take in the reflection it was just too much, and I had to shut down

When you look in somebody else eyes and it mirrors you, they truly understand, they truly are there and present for you, right at that point

### **A reflection of self**

The mirroring] – that's the powerful transformational point for me.

I went to this space and it was like a pond, it felt like I was looking and being reflected, which I think is the most powerful experience in community

It's not about ego me, it's about me being reflected and the powerful experience of that.

The reflection...was the transformational point for me.

## **2. Emptying as:**

### **Vulnerable making and risk taking (intensely personal)**

I came back into the group a good two hours later, I didn't leave, physically leave, I could hear their voices, but I wasn't really engaged

I didn't have much energy for anyone else at that point



I felt very small, I felt very much like a child and I felt like I wanted to self nurture in that space

I was exhausted all I wanted to do was lie down in someone's arms and just go to sleep

I was sort of numb to what was going on

I'd exposed myself, I made myself extremely vulnerable, I was feeling very tenuous and a whole bit awkward

People were referring to my dream I was aware of that but I was going into myself

### **Withdrawing, contracting into self**

I sat quietly and I heard the group move on you know in kind of a comforting but distant way

I wanted to withdraw and take away the focus from me and just be

I was a bit withdrawn from the group, I wasn't sure, I'd never done something like that before

The feelings are wanting to pull the covers up over my head, become very small and invisible in the group and pray that somebody else will do that work, and at the same time feeling from the inside out an urge to move to do something to reveal something

### **A sense of expanded self**

I was in a really different space to what I would normally be in It was expansive

It wasn't a headspace it was a body space as if the physical boundaries of my body didn't exist

The experience of being supported was...a lightness of being

As it becomes true emptiness...all of those things are completely replaced by a lightness, a grace an uplifting sort of feeling

### **A heightening of senses**

I find myself real aware during the chaos part

It was like a high, it was like a huge buzz

I think by the end of it I was on a high, I was on this acute alertness, I felt all tingly

Feeling alive, extremely alive...the full range of emotions are available

I was alive, incredibly alive, very energised, it was like electrocuted, glowing

I was so in tune with where people were at

I was very sensitive, super aware of the movement [of energy]

When I am in-community I have a really strong feeling function present, which cannot be controlled and my sensing function is really acute

It's a huge shift into this space where I can't take in any more...it's all about me

### **A sense of relief (from inner turmoil)**

[After emptying]...there's a sense of peace you know it's like confession, what I think confession is supposed to be...

I feel a sense of peace internally...the sooner I am able to empty that which is difficult Tremendous relief, tremendous relief, internally, personally the fact that I shared brings a tremendous amount of relief to me

When I empty it's a feeling of both of relief but also a not knowing... and sort [of] vulnerable

### **Revealing whole self**

[Emptying] was really emotional, lots of tears and lots of sadness

For me emptying is facing my shadow, facing those things that are less than desirable

The hard, the dreadful part is when what I am called to say is like being a plunger and unclogging something, especially when it's me I'm unclogging  
For me emptying is in part a willingness to not look good a willingness to reveal self in it's messy form  
So the emptying was about was about expressing, stuff, emotions, feelings

### **A clearing process**

Once it was done [I felt] clean, clear, fresh, new  
When you speak from the heart space you truly connect with others, the communication is clear, there's no static, no crap, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff, everything just gets moved away, it feels very clear and it feels very primitive, it feels like it hasn't got the shit of the ages on it, very tribal  
Once it was done [I felt] clean, clear, fresh, new

### **3. Speaking as:**

#### **A threshold experience**

[Speaking spontaneously]...started to happen towards the end of the workshop which was really a bit scary  
I actually couldn't open my eyes...I spoke with my eyes closed  
I feel awful.. I feel I want to crawl out of my skin really fast, preferably alone and not in that circle, because it hurts I mean it literally hurts to not [speak]  
I get really restless in the chair  
I had a dry throat, it was agitated, it was close to a pre-fainting feeling  
I was extremely nervous, sweating underneath you know my armpits were sweating my palms were sweating my stomach was pounding  
I was feeling the pain but I didn't have the words, all this speaking from the heart stuff, was driving me nuts  
The build up to the expression of that was quite tense, quite emotional

#### **A transformational event**

[After speaking] it was like being the [most alive it was like what was supposed to happen  
[After speaking] you are left with the emptiness...you are left with something else...the real moment when universal spirit comes through  
Almost like a different person, freeing, different  
I could just hear the difference in my voice, in the tone, in the words  
I felt more free than I have felt ...to share my fears as well as my hopes and dreams  
When you speak from the heart space you truly connect with others, the communication is clear, there's no static, no crap, there's no difference, there's no gender stuff  
I was ready to empty out ...and for me this went from this huge complex constructed life to rebuilding a completely new life, a pretty simple one  
I would call [emptiness] freedom...it's the ability to respond in the moment, the ability to respond to the self  
To me emptying involves being willing to follow that thread wherever it goes

#### **A transpersonal experience**

[I felt] when I was speaking, I was speaking to that essence within them.

It was almost like being god (speaking with empathy)  
I speak and at some level I don't even know what I am saying [but] I get the sense  
that people are listening deeply

### **A physically compulsive calling**

If it's me deciding that I am not willing [to speak] that's when it's painful  
First thing the next morning I knew I had to speak  
I am aware that whatever I am called to say is [also] for the group  
I had no conscious control over the step that I took, to make the move to speak from  
thin space  
I knew if I didn't speak right after the silence that I wouldn't speak  
I was convinced that that was my moment and I seized it...and it was amazing for  
me...  
I was so moved to speak from someplace that I'd never spoken from before in my life  
It centers in the torso, in the middle...and it feels almost like there is a boxer inside  
my chest...in the center where the heart would be...trying to box its way out and it's  
being held down  
It comes up and dominates my thoughts and I have a conviction a firmness that this is  
something I need to share  
It literally feels like it bubbles up, it's in my stomach and it bubbles up  
It was a very different body feeling I was probably going to be physically ill if I didn't  
speak  
Its starts in my lower belly, it's like the words are shoving their way up through my  
lower torso...up through my throat and if I don't say them I will be physically really  
uncomfortable  
Now being moved to speak is more I am not wanting to say what it is that I have to  
say...I sit on that for awhile and if it continues to come up I say it  
Now the being moved to speak is much different, there is still anxiety, [but] I don't  
get those body sensations any more  
The physical sensation of being called to speak is very clear to me  
When I am called to speak and I say what I'm called to say...that's a gift to other  
people it is way more powerful than me thinking of something clever to do or to say  
it's the most powerful thing to do, the group moves when that happens  
When moved to speak I would actually be shaking, I would be moving like I am  
doing now my legs are shaking

### **4. Deep Community as God or Spirit Created Entity**

It's a part of the divine speaking through you...  
Like a giant exhale and then the emptiness is filled up with grace or it's easy to  
remember that God is in that emptiness...that spirits there  
Silently without us talking about it we've all noticed that spirit is with us,  
Something comes up and it sends prickles all through me...as though love has just  
been expressed and its presence can be felt  
There's a sense of spirit present when you have that bringing together of the reflection  
and the speaking from the heart  
To be comfortable in that silence is...like being surrounded by God, surrounded by  
Grace...like being enveloped in something, comfortable  
Whatever it was that happened there, felt to me like in the presence of spirit,  
[Spirit] flowed, it bubbled, it just kept popping up

There is something beyond you and that is what really came through for me in that workshop  
I have a sense of this oneness behind me  
The group as a whole notices that God is in the room and is turned more towards that than toward a destination or each other in a confrontive way I saw the movement of spirit between all of us, no the movement of wisdom  
I couldn't stop watching the movement of it [spirit] flowing around the group  
I know that God is there and God is touching all of us, we're...connected through it to each other  
Usually what I remember being moved to do something...energy goes through me all the time, it's the way I sense things and feel things  
I saw the higher selves of people standing right there with them...these huge presences were all circled around  
I was aware of the movement of the energy, or spirit or wisdom in my body  
It [oneness] was a growth, it was an emergence of that experience of oneness  
The difference [between pre-community silence and community silence] is that in the second one I have remembered God and I am just resting there, in the first one I think that God needs my help  
The experience of community definitely felt as if I was being supported...supported by others and supported by spirit

## **5. Being-in-Community as:**

### **A connecting experience**

[Being-in-community] is encapsulated in that sense of being connected incredibly deeply connected with people that we have no [prior] connection with  
As a result of my life experiences I have strongly disconnected from my sensing and my feeling functions I see it in my own family experience  
Being in community is more a feeling of being connected...to others and spirit...it's less me oriented  
Connected it's connected, it doesn't feel fragmented, it doesn't feel kind of lost  
I sense a connection with everybody in the room myself and then I recognised that there are others who are sensing that too  
I was feeling extremely disconnected  
I was just so connected to [the] experience that thinking couldn't break it  
It felt very much like something intangible became present that connected us for that period and that's what I experienced as community  
It's an experience of connectedness...connectedness with the group not individuals  
The experience of community has been unbelievably profound, very much a nurturing feminine connected tribal thing  
There is truly something that connects humanity that transcends whatever shit has gone on in this room. It transcends gender, race, story, history even becomes irrelevant.  
There's a real feeling with connectedness, not only in the group but in, to all that is  
When I'm in community I believe I'm fulfilling [my] purpose through [a] feeling of being connected with everything that exists including the divine  
The feeling of being-in-community is like connecting all of us with or through that feeling of spirit or God

### **Transcendent**

Differences are transcended but not annihilated. . . that same person who you had the conflict with early on, in the group could say the same words [when] in-community and it's felt entirely differently

It took story and history and shit to get us there but [community] transcends their stories, their life, their history, their everything

It's like, both myself personally and the group in general has had a psychic spiritual shift and suddenly we can all be there in the skin of the group, without fixing without despair without showing off without all that stuff, and for me that's without alienating, without isolating, without being aggressive

### **Calming, supportive and peaceful**

[My body] doesn't feel like the previous experience where it was agitated and explosive and erupting and volcanic, I didn't feel suffocated or explosive anymore, it felt very unleashed.

Ease, quiet, slow rhythm like the heart beat has slowed down to a resting heartbeat, of the group...the group is comfortable in silence...it's like ah we did it!...it's here, it arrived

For me being-in-community is simple, its very quiet the silence is no longer uncomfortable, there is nothing urgent for me to do – it's an absence of struggle and seeking

In community it just is – it just is- there is nowhere to go and nothing to do

In community silence is such a beautiful thing it's like taking a bath in peace

It felt whole and calm

The feeling I would ascribe to community is when the individual has relaxed back into that whole presence of themselves, It's like they have exhaled and like somebody's holding them in their arms, that's what it feels like in the group [and to me]

The notion of being able to just be in our skin without doing anything about it really works...in terms of what community feels like to me

### **Revealing of authentic self**

I didn't know myself to begin with so we're talking revealing it [me] to me as well as to a group

The difficult, the scary part is beyond the chaos, it's coming out of the chaos, I've never found revealing myself to be an easy thing to do

After sitting in circle after circle and seeing that the power is in telling the truth, even telling the truth about the messiness, it's very hard to hold on to the notion that it's important to look good,

[I've embraced more of the American Indian ways] only since community building, because of telling my story in community building experiences

[In silence] we tend to go deeper have access to what it is that needs to be said verses having a discussion or defending my own particular point of view

I had a profound experience [in the CBW]...I thought wow this is more authentic [than anything else I'd done]

I started to talk about how I really felt about some things that were going on in my life.

I told my story in a way in which I've never told anyone my story before in my life I was astounded by the transformation in individuals and in their ability to trust and share and be authentic

I was the first one that presented authentic information to the group, it felt like a risk but it felt like if I didn't, I wasn't going to get what I came to get... this is going to be a waste of time

I'm way more willing to tell the truth about how I feel, where I am, far more able to feel where I am, know where I am

I've learned a great deal about myself - what I call my original medicine as a way of my authentic self

In order to have authentic connection I have to be authentic

It was profound for me to even find a voice to speak authentically in the circle...

finding my voice and being able to speak was ...a big thing.

Life has been increasingly getting better and better as I learn to be more authentic in my day to day life...that's what community building...has been teaching me

My life is still not authentic [if] I'm not participating in life as I feel called to participate, the community building process has helped me figure that out

Responding to self in that moment...to me that's what authentic means...the CBW over the years pulled from me coaxed from me the ability to know what that authenticity would be what it is

I had to leave the job I was in because I knew that what I was doing wasn't about my original medicine, I wasn't being authentic in the work I was doing

Someone says something and the truth of it sends those prickles...just that truth which is so deep you just know, that it's true

That is a challenge for me...to do that with my spouse with people I interact with on a day to day basis, be authentic with them and not be harmful to them and still be true to myself

That's why community building is so valuable to me I get to be real and be me

The thing I like best about community building is that it's real, it's not to be manipulated

To be really authentically there I need to be able to say what's happening for me in that moment with that group of people, that's the deeper sense of community

As the workshop progressed and more people started sharing deeply and more authentically then I felt like I belonged

### **An agent of change**

The whole way through that oneness was there all the time, I just wasn't seeing it [Now] my focus is less on making things happen and more on praying that the best things happen, so the energy really shifts, there's less striving

A key thing that came of that workshop was I decided who was in or out

I was raking through my own perceptions about myself, the question was really rising 'well who on earth are you?' to do something beyond what I think I am raises that question.

That realisation came from somewhere beyond me, it was something that was not dependent on my history or past, it was new

I am now seeing myself in community more and more...I can feel that when I said it I can feel it in my legs

I discovered that I'd been called to be a medicine man for years

I do see myself differently, its been part of the process

I had the experience of feeling like I had been getting ready to be there my whole life

I started to notice people that did drama, you know, victim stuff and, at that time, that's how I was making meaning of my own life

It was really powerful for me, it was like ...oh Wow with the realisation that I am actually in community with everybody, if I allowed them in.  
My work changed dramatically, I followed [my] intuition  
Now I feel much more inclined to speak about what's true for me...people don't have to decide whether they agree with me in order to be with me  
The realisation that you didn't actually have to have shared [to be part of the group], that was a transformation  
There was a transformational point there where, I suddenly realised that I was actually part of the group  
It greatly strengthened our ability to work together as a leadership team  
We could have done the co-executive directorship for a year...without having had the experience of that workshop  
For the organisation it builds trust and understanding  
The places that I choose to deny about how I behave and how I respond...those are things I discover in workshops...I discover those [things] about myself  
I feel [CBW's] got me empty enough...to hear someone else suggest to me that I didn't have to live [with alcoholism] anymore and seeking help with quitting drinking would move me closer to what I wanted (Group as a personal focusing lens?)  
I was probably one of the most depressed people about now my love of life and my openness to people is growing each day  
Basic things that shaped my life were getting sober and community building... it has had a profound effect on my life  
Historically I was somebody who was desperate to give things form, but now I kind of just say well that was an experience  
I [now] do what gets put in front of me and I have become way more willing to look like an idiot than I ever was in those beginning days  
I became softer  
I decided to quite drinking and go to Alcoholics Anonymous and I've always credited somehow my community experience with that.  
I have altered significantly...that reflective experience has been so powerful it's kind of had the ripple effect  
I now say OK, I don't like this person, and just sit open [to them]  
It has an incredible impact on me because I now live the experience  
It helped me refine my practice of speaking I statements and sharing my personal experience as opposed to concepts  
Its become much more the hunch, the feeling, the intuition, the kind of knowing part of me which I have never been able to trust because I've always been told it's not been ok  
My job was not to go in full [it] was to go in empty and pray and stay present and do what was put in front of me  
My job was not to tell people the answers it was to create a space in which they found the answers  
The essence of community it's changed dramatically my relationship with my children  
I no longer ever feel like I have a muffler wrapped around my throat choking me never  
Leading up to that (speaking) was the fear that the head part of them would pop in and say no you are wrong

### **A unifying and healing experience**

A very big part of me that's been alienated from who it is that I am came back  
To contextualise the workshop post-experience my career has been in I.T. and it feels  
like a network upgrade to me, it feels like ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, (C/ ha) ch,  
ch, ch, Every part [upgraded]  
It felt like bits of, you know, like parts of the tapestry or bits of the jigsaw had kind of  
fitted, I felt more whole  
I've manifested myself in, in the world at large in a very masculine way, now there's  
this part of me that feels like it's going back to the old feminine ways  
It brought a whole bunch of pieces together, extraordinary  
It feels healing, it doesn't feel as hysterical as amplified as urgent as agitated, it's  
healing, and feels like it's coming back together and calmer  
It is deeply personally healing to me, anything that stands between me and community  
comes up and takes a step toward healing by participating in the circle  
My experience is that whatever in my life is up to be healed at that time, to be looked  
at, to be let go of you know to take a step forward, intensifies and shows up in the  
circle

### **A process of trust, letting go and getting out of the way**

Whatever I am experiencing [in life] is stronger [now], I have probably got out of the  
way

It's a letting go, it's jumping of the cliff, it's like a death and it's different each time  
As I started doing community building I gave up the need to convince other people of  
a point of view

I absolutely and utterly experienced the group making way for community to become  
present.

I just got out of the way, I got out of the way and let whatever

If I am not constantly submitting to, I call it the greater spirit or a power greater than  
myself, it won't happen

In the moment I can get into maybe an argument or a disagreement where I am  
holding a position that I don't really need to hold, if I say oh I can let go of this, this  
isn't helpful here and apologise in the moment, that's a huge relief

It's natural, community is not created, its not a conscious process of we've done  
pseudo, we've done chaos, we've done emptiness, here we are, we are going into  
community, the group don't create it, they make way for it to become present.

People gave up everything, it was a real stripping down, to make way, everybody had  
cast aside all that stuff for a full moment, for a moment

You have to constantly work at it but you also have to submit, that's the emptying  
part

Letting go and viewing something as a gift of spirit as opposed to an agenda item  
made to be so by a manager, these are opposite paradigms

### **Illusive**

It can disappear as quick as it comes...you can't hold it you can't capture it, it's  
illusive and it's real and it's honest

The experience of being-in-community in that circle is the same as having that  
experience of an extraordinary sense of peace and God in a meditation but I have no  
control over calling that forward and the harder you try to recreate it the more elusive  
it becomes

That feeling [of community] can come in a second and it can go in a second



## Appendix I: Final Interpretive Themes

### *Encountering the other as:*

- a sense of difference.
- as confronting and threatening.
- e giving, nurturing and supportive.
- a reflection of self.

### *Emptying and Emptiness.*

#### *Emptying as:*

- risk taking and vulnerable making.
- a sense of relief.
- as revealing authentic-self.

#### *Emptiness as:*

- a state of readiness.

#### *Speaking as:*

- a physically compulsive calling.
- a threshold event.
- a transformational event.

#### *Being-in-Community as:*

- illusive.
- transcendent.
- a connective, unifying and healing experience.
- being formed by God or spirit.
- calming, supportive and peaceful.