UNDERSTANDING SELF AWARENESS:
A HEURISTIC STUDY
OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF AND OTHER

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Abstract of Dissertation

Understanding Self Awareness: A Heuristic Study of the Relationship with Self and Other

The purpose of studying the emergence of self-awareness stems from its importance in building authentic relationships and the lack of self-awareness evident in our daily lives. The conceptual framework is based on interaction theory (Gallagher et al., 2004). This qualitative study examined the lived experience of becoming self-aware of seven women and two men co-researchers. The study was conducted using three in-depth, semi-structured, dialogic interviews with each co-researcher except the primary researcher. Additionally some co-researchers provided journal entries. Following heuristic methodology, individual depictions were created, followed by a composite depiction allowing clusters, patterns, and themes common to the co-researchers to surface.

The findings were examined through the lenses of the affective sciences and biology, resulting in a number of outcomes including: (a) the natural, continuously emergent process of self-awareness includes two domains—self and other—and several aspects; (b) willingness to self-reflect, following initiating traumatic events often begins the process of becoming self aware; (c) relationships are an essential aspect of human interaction and emerging self-awareness; (d) human beings are self-determining, self-organizing and co-emerge in relationship with the environment; (e) the mind and body are not separate entities, they work naturally together with emotions and spirit as an integrated whole; (f) emotions predate cognitive ability in humans; and (g) relationships including work organizations can and do limit an individual's capacity for developing and utilizing self-awareness.

Theoretical and practical implications arose from this study and include (a) the need to explore current theories of human development through the lenses of affective science and biology; (b) the need to understand more fully the essential part played by relationships in human development, (c) the need to examine further the positive and essential yet unbearable nature of self-awareness, and (d) the need to explore the language used to describe living systems and the human experience.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to

Jim O'Rourke,

and the memory of

Jean and Frank Ogden

and

Suka Satu

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Many deserve to be acknowledged in the process of completing this research study.

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ears, when he was corrected my English by telling me “there is no such word as can’t” which at some level I took to mean *there is nothing I cannot do.* For those opportunities I will be ever grateful.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Life, being an ascent of consciousness,
could not continue to advance indefinitely along
its line without transforming itself in depth.
—Teilhard de Chardin (1959)

It is clear that while much enlightened thought has stressed the importance of self-awareness in our lives, self-awareness has also been tied to self-destructive behavior, pathology, and dysfunction and has therefore not always been highly valued in the mainstream. Likewise it seems that authenticity does not exist without self-awareness, and indeed modern psychologists have been extolling the essential nature of these two constructs since the first half of the last century (Jourard, 1968; May, 1953; W. Schutz, 1967, 1989; Rogers, 1980). Yet, self-awareness appears not to be understood in many organizations in today's society. Self-awareness as a form of mindfulness begins to frame the relationship between Eastern wisdom and Western knowledge (Weick & Putnam, 2006; Levinthal & Rerup, 2006).

My background of 34 years in individual, team, and organizational development as well as 10 years as a student and practitioner of Gestalt therapy has enabled me to understand the absolute necessity and value of self-awareness in developing and owning a sense of self for effective, authentic relationships. Moving permanently to the United States in 2003 provided the opportunity to view aspects of society in general and organizations in particular with a clearer vision and from a different perspective. The problems that have triggered this study now appear more focused by my direct experience.

I have noticed during my work as a consultant in organizations that many relationships appear to be superficial rather than authentic. Many individuals appear to have little awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, shadow side, and vulnerabilities, particularly at the affective level. Nor do they seem to value self-awareness or authenticity. Many seem to be operating automatically and mindlessly.

Equally, many people appear to be fearful or at least ambivalent (Piderit, 2000) of their bodies, emotions, and life experiences and seem to have a preference for remaining comfortably in their heads, within the safety of socialized cognition. In addition, when viewing the corporate world as an external consultant, I've seen that status, position, power, and cognition are considered important, along with contrived competition, politics, lack of respect and integrity, dishonesty, and poor communications. Conversely, self-awareness and self-disclosure, inclusion, authenticity, intimacy, meaningful relationships, collaboration, and work-life balance are often less valued, either unintentionally or intentionally.

This leads to a growing sense of disquiet in me that without the capacity and facility to be self-aware and therefore build authentic relationships, we are at risk of sabotaging our health, satisfaction and happiness, undermining our relationships, and severely curtailing the contributions we make to the organizations and communities in which we work and live.

The literature abounds with theoretical insights, research findings, and anecdotal reasons why self-awareness is essential to our individual and collective well-being. Much of the literature has come from the traditional disciplines of psychology (Munn, 1946; May, 1953; W. Schutz, 1967, 1989; Rogers, 1980; Jung, von-Franz, Henderson, Jacobi,

& Jaffe, 1990; Silvia & O'Brien, 2004), and sociology (A. Schutz, 1967; Kotarba & Fontana, 1987; Giddens, 1991; Jaworski, 1998; Lewin & Regine, 1999; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), along with both Eastern (Confucius, 2003; Chen, 2004) and Western philosophers (Bohm, 1980; Hora, 1983; Trungpa, 1983; Taylor, 1991; Anderson, 1993; Welwood, 1983, 2002; Guignon, 2004). The work of affective scientists (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Eisenberg, Losoya, & Spinrad, 2003; Lewis, 1991, 2000; Halperin, 1989), biologists and philosophers (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993, Damasio, 1999; Gallagher & Shear, 1999; Depraz, Varela, & Vermersch, 2002; Gallagher, 2005; and organizational theorists (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 2001) can be seen converging. Indeed, self-awareness can be seen as a multidisciplinary construct, and affective science may be the field of convergence. The constitutive ontology of affective science—where 'to constitute' means "a continuous process of giving an ever clearer meaning" (Strasser, 1969, p. 66)—has recently emerged to become a legitimate paradigm of exploration in organizational and social behavior (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003; Davidson, Scherer, & Goldsmith, 2003).

What has become clear through reviewing the literature is that there are similarities and differences in the definition of self-awareness as a construct, causing confusion. Such overlapping views have existed between the different disciplines for the last 60 years. While clearly there have been innumerable studies by psychologists and sociologists into self-awareness, the construct has been little explored from the relational perspective through the lenses of affective sciences and biology. The purpose therefore in using these two little-used lenses is to ascertain whether by viewing self-awareness differently, what we find may also be different.

Problem Statement

The premise for this study is that a strong sense of self and self-awareness is required to be able to build and maintain effective, authentic relationships. Those writing on self-awareness include Silvia and O'Brien (2004), who defined self-awareness as "the capacity to focus attention on oneself and thus to self-evaluate" (p. 475), which is required for constructive functioning. Other psychologists, such as Jourard (1964), May (1967), Maslow (1968), and Rogers (1980), have been expounding the benefits of self-awareness as part of living authentically for over 50 years.

Much has also been written about authenticity. Chen (2004) provided an excellent, clear, and full descriptive definition of authenticity from the teachings and philosophy of Confucius, which includes as the centerpiece "a strong sense of self" (p. 10). Yet, in the context of how self-aware beings relate to each other—referred to as interaction theory by Gallagher (2005)—authentic relationships have practically been ignored.

Varela et al. (1993) noted the importance of exploring "our everyday, immediate experience" to complement and expand normal science (Kuhn, 1996), which has been exclusionary for so long by denying "what is most immediate and direct" (p. 12). These researchers expressed concern that, "without embracing the relevance and importance of everyday lived human experience, the power and sophistication of contemporary cognitive science could generate a divided scientific culture in which our scientific conceptions of the life and mind on the one hand, and our everyday, lived self-understanding on the other, become irreconcilable" (p. xx). For the same reasons, Depraz, Varela, and Vermersch (2002) continued to call for more first-person accounts of

experience and suggested that "the ability to become aware of experience simply cannot remain unexamined and underdeveloped without seriously compromising our ability to meet a major challenge today facing several areas of research, practice, and indeed human life" (p. 11).

One of the main problems in understanding, clarifying, and agreeing upon this construct has been that the term is either used without clear definition or has been used variously and therefore remains ambiguous. Given the myriad definitions and uses of the terms, it is important before progressing further to provide a working definition of self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to reflect upon oneself as both an object and a subject honestly yet without such high levels of self-criticism that the process would lead to dysfunction (May, 1967).

In summary, the problems associated with self-awareness in the context of authentic relationships are fourfold:

1. There is no clarity of definition or agreement on terms and therefore little focused understanding of self-awareness and its connection to authenticity.
2. There appear to have been few empirical studies of self-awareness from the biological or affective science perspectives.
3. The concept of self-awareness has suffered from negative or pathological research results in the past, mainly due to its use in the study of disturbed and/or dysfunctional individuals for whom increased self-awareness has been harmful. Yet its contribution to our psychological functioning is clear and needs to be brought into a more positive focus, or at least be rehabilitated (Silvia & O'Brien 2004, p 476).

4. There appears to be little observed evidence of the wide-scale existence of self-awareness by individuals in their authentic relationships with self and others in work organizations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the concrete, lived experience of being and becoming self-awareness of individuals in the context of authentic relationships with themselves and other. The context is particularly important, since individual self-awareness has been exhaustively explored, but not necessarily in connection to authentic relationships in organizations. The perspectives used are the affective sciences and biology, which provide the potential for relatively unique and innovative understandings.

The relatively new, emerging, and multidisciplinary field of affective sciences focuses not simply on *emotion*, but on *feelings,* or the subjective representation of emotions; *mood,* or a diffuse affective state of lower intensity than emotion; *attitudes,* or somewhat persistent sets of beliefs, preferences, and predispositions; *affective style,* or disposition; and *temperament,* or genetically determined style. Davidson et al. (2003) pointed out that in a multidisciplinary approach to the understanding of human interaction and relationships, there is considerable overlap between the affective sciences and other disciplines, including cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive neuroscience.

The second focus of this exploration of self-awareness included in this multidisciplinary approach is the biological perspective; more specifically the biology of mind. Mindful of the variety of definitions of this approach, the next section explores some of the different understandings. Biology, the study of living systems and life, views humans as natural, living beings, whose essential intention and purpose is one of survival

and conserving life (Thompson, 2001). This is a higher order of logical typing (Bateson, 2002) that is beyond the mere psychological and sociological perspectives, which have often attempted to understand humans in a linear, mechanistic way. Damasio (1999) described as the biological function as that which "allows us to know sorrow, . . . joy, . . . suffering, . . . pleasure, to sense embarrassment or pride, to grieve for lost love or lost life" (p. 4). Varela (1996, 1999) provided greater precision and clarity to the construct of consciousness. In fact, "during the last decade of his life Varela made ground breaking experimental and theoretical contributions to our understanding of the large scale, dynamic brain processes involved in perception and consciousness" (Thompson, 2006, p. 19). This perspective allows us to discover the primordial roots and embodied mind (Varela et al., 1993), which enable us to make sense of our surroundings, other people, places, and objects in the process of coming to know and create a sense of ourselves, by including the lived experience of human beings and our understanding of the mind. Using a neuroscience perspective, Damasio (1999) and Varela (1996, 1999), have brought a more practical understanding of scientific research, so that individuals can become self-actualized (Maslow, 1954) through increased self-awareness enabling relationships to be more fulfilling and satisfying.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer one overarching question:

How do individuals experience being and becoming self-aware?

Three subquestions are also addressed:

1. What general and specific life experiences contribute to the emergence of self-awareness?

2. What general and specific life experiences undermine an individual's self-awareness?
3. What is the role of self-awareness in an individual's experience of authentic relationships with self and other?

Statement of Potential Significance

This study of self-awareness has theoretical and practical significance for individuals, groups, organizations, and the world at large. By providing empirical understanding and insights into the emergence of self-awareness, it may increase our knowledge of ourselves, enhance our personal fulfillment, and improve authentic interactions and relationships with others. Authentic relationships generally are likely to have a positive effect within collectives and work organizations, thus a greater understanding of self-awareness will enhance the functioning of such people in work organizations. Equally, it is anticipated that the process and research conclusions will be of great value to the primary researcher and other co-researchers by providing insights into our own continued development, growth, self-knowledge and therefore self-awareness. Beyond such personal insights a greater understanding of the factors involved in the emergence of self-awareness will contribute to our understanding and theories of human learning and development, self reflection, self-disclosure, and subsequent self-transformation.

Realization of the human potential that lies in the emergent, multifaceted self is vital to those involved in education and development of persons broadly, such that more effective learning opportunities, which include self-awareness, can be designed and

incorporated. In particular, those involved in leadership development and the relational nature of the organizational leadership process may be prime benefactors.

Finally, this study adds to the growing understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of an embodied mind approach to understanding consciousness (Varela et al., 1991; Damasio, 1999) theory of mind (Gallagher, 2005; Thompson, 2007), mindfulness (Weick & Putnam, 2006; Levinthal & Rerup, 2006), and the heuristic method and practice (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). More particularly as an investigation into embodied experience and subjectivity it supports the work of Thompson (2007) in developing the science of mind and the work of Gallagher's (2005) interaction theory. It also complements Parsons' (1978) Action Theory by exploring human beings as biological living systems and therefore human adaptability. Utilizing the affective sciences and biological lenses for the understanding of human experience---including the mind---is still in its infancy. Therefore the results of this empirical study contribute to the body of knowledge of human experience.

Conceptual Framework

This study is carried out at the individual level of analysis. While the theoretical framework for this study may seem to indicate a conventionally psychological approach, the notion of self-awareness as an essential and central element of human nature is clearly a multi- and cross-disciplinary one, which could also include sociology, philosophy, biology, and the affective sciences. The context for the study is the emergence of self-awareness in authentic interactions—and therefore relationships—with self and other, since it is through authentic interactions (Gallagher, Watson, Brun, & Romanski, 2004) and authentic relationships that we have the opportunity to realize our full potential

(Maslow, 1954, 1968; Rogers, 1980).The conceptual framework for this study is based on interaction theory (Gallagher et al., 2004), a theory of mind that studies "how one person understands and interrelates with another person" (p. 206). Yet interaction theory differs from other theories of mind in that it enables not only explanation and prediction, but also evaluation and understanding based on emotional and other embodied practices. Embodied practices are defined as "pragmatic interaction and evaluative understanding" (p. 218), meaning in our interactions with others, we are not detached observers, rather we are connected.

Figure 1-1 depicts the conceptual framework, showing an individual within the context of a relationship with others in an organizational setting. The inner circles represent the four domains of the authentic self, or mind—our biological, affective, cognitive, and spiritual nature. Much has been written about cognition separately as a central element; in fact, conventionally, cognition has, for the most part, been considered the only important aspect of the individual. The feeling aspect or affective phenomenon has long been ignored or denied, in society broadly and more particularly in organizations, although it is attracting greater attention currently (Barsade et al., 2003; Fineman, 2003). There exist factions supporting the separation of affect from cognition (Zajonc, 2000) and others viewing the two as being inseparable (Smith & Kirby, 2000; Leary, 2000). Likewise, the biological, or embodied mind (Varela et al., 1993) component, has until fairly recently been ignored, and the spiritual element has been confined to the realms of theology, religion, and philosophy, with perhaps the exception of the paradigm of the human condition (Parsons, 1978).

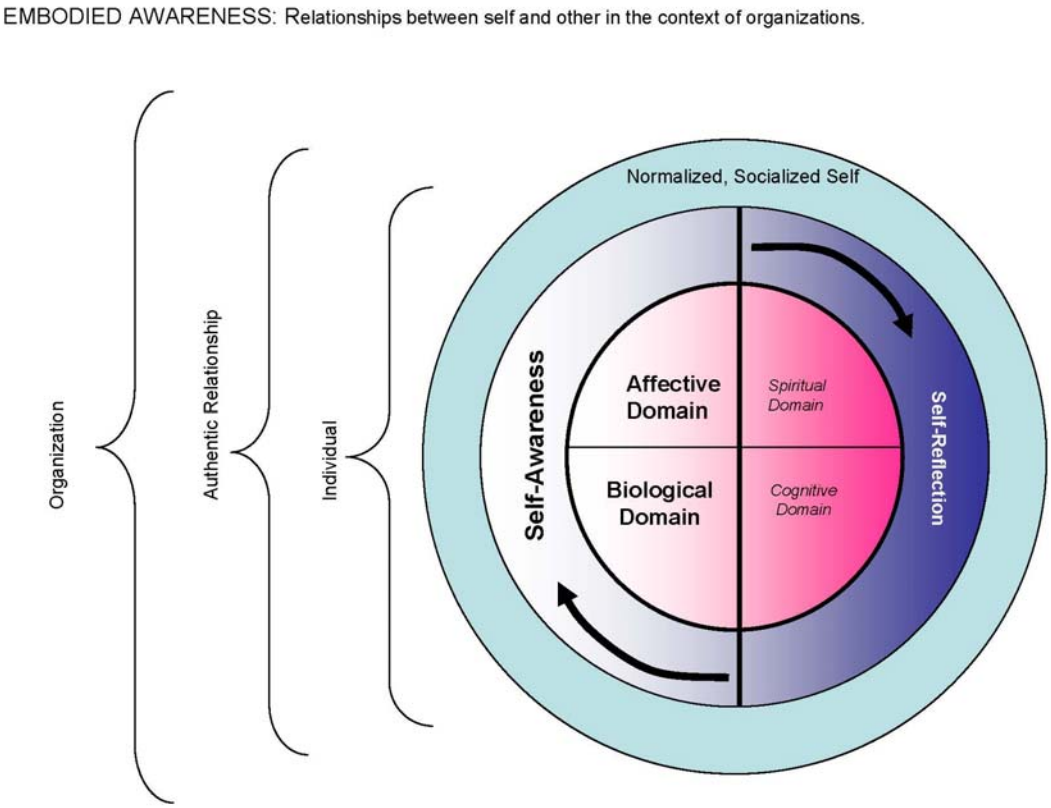

Figure 1-1. Conceptual framework.

The circle surrounding these four smaller circles represents the continuous and iterative conversation between self-awareness and self-reflection, which can continually expand and potentially develop the self and therefore the self in relation to others also. The outer circle represents the normalized, socialized, and learned cultural behaviors that make up the social view of self we have come to expect.

Summary of Methodology

Conducting research into lived experience is by definition subjective and intersubjective and therefore requires a qualitative, interpretive methodology, or naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While exploring different phenomenological

methods, the heuristic approach as explicated by Moustakas (1990, 1994) seemed to be the most appropriate, because connectedness and relationship are emphasized and the co-researchers are portrayed as whole persons with their essences being retained. This approach clearly fits well with the purpose of the study and the research questions. Additionally, engaging all the co-researchers in a personal journey into the emergence of their tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1962, 1966, 1969) was energizing.

Moustakas (1990) also made the point that heuristic research "begins with the internal search to discover, with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, a devotion and commitment to pursue a question that is strongly connected to one's own identity and selfhood" (p. 40). Such a methodology would allow the nature of self-awareness to be revealed and to emerge throughout the study. Svendsen (1997) clearly stated that a heuristic study is "not about measurement or cause and effect . . . providing a hypothesis" (p. 16). Neither is it about research being 'done to subjects'; rather, it is about exploration being undertaken with co-researchers, who are valued as human beings and whose experiences are honored (Reason & Rowan, 1981; Braud & Anderson, 1998). While "new paradigm" research (Reason & Rowan, 1981; Reason & Bradbury, 2001) is no longer new, the philosophies underpinning it are still appropriate, and the intuitive method would encourage the subjective, intuitive contribution from the primary and co-researchers, which would include journals, poems, and personal stories.

Heuristic methodology focuses on the developmental experience of all the co-researchers, through the shared reflection and inquiry (Patton, 2002) and although this is an anticipated outcome, it is not the main focus of this particular study.

Whereas Moustakas (1990) undertook an individual heuristic study of loneliness, he suggested that up to 15 co-researchers could provide "richer, deeper, more profound and more varied meanings" (p. 47). The selection of co-researchers for heuristic research is normally carried out through intensity sampling (Patton, 2002), defined as requiring co-researchers with a level of depth and experience in the phenomenon to be studied. Therefore 8 co-researchers, in addition to the primary researcher, with intense experience of and an interest in further exploration of self-awareness were deemed to be appropriate for this study. The 8 co-researchers were selected and interviewed on three separate occasions using a version of the Seidman (1998) interviewing technique. The primary researcher conducted a 'self- interview' answering the same interview questions. All the co-researchers were required to keep a regular journal from the first interview to the last interview and to allow this information to be accessed by the primary researcher. The three interviews took place over a 3-week period to allow sufficient time for mindful self-reflective journal entries. Possible co-researchers were recommended by personal and business acquaintances, well-known to the primary researcher. Moreover these contacts had an understanding of, some interested in and/or personal experience of the phenomenon in question and who through extended discussions over several months became aware of the criteria for co-researcher selection. These criteria can be found in Appendix A.

The data were organized and synthesized using a slightly modified heuristic method. This required the primary researcher to be fully immersed in all the data collected from each co-researcher. To then enter an incubation period enabling "the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28), followed by a

process of illumination, which Moustakas describes as enabling "a breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question (p. 29). An individual depiction of each co-researcher using the qualities and themes identified from the data is then produced. From this, a composite depiction is developed, which maintained the uniqueness of each individual co-researcher and "yet characterize[d] the group as a whole" (p. 50). The next stage required the preparation of individual portraits from 2 or 3 co-researchers who exemplify the whole group. The final stage was the development of a "creative synthesis" that would "reflect the researcher's intuition, imagination and personal knowledge of meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 50). In this particular study the stages of incubation and illumination were combined and the penultimate requirement of 2 or 3 individual portraits were not undertaken for the sake of redundancy.

Moustakas (1990) described heuristic research as "a demanding and lengthy process" (p. 54) and suggested that the process include "moments of meaning, understanding, and discovery that the researcher will hold and savor. Feelings, thoughts, ideas and images that have been awakened will return again and again . . . that will serve as a reminder of a lifelong process of knowing and being" (p. 56). He concluded with an image from Polanyi of a person (the primary researcher) changed forever following this process of discovery.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is its size. Exploring and understanding the lived experience of being and becoming self-aware of eight co-researchers (nine, including the primary researcher) will not necessarily provide transferable insights outside the group

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and any interest in exploring the findings further would necessitate a much larger study, delimited to certain categories.

No attempt was made to select the co-researchers on any other basis than their interest, experience, and willingness to devote the necessary time for the process and their fit with the criteria mentioned in Appendix A. This in itself provides a limitation to the study, in that only those who could devote such time and were interested and willing to share and learn about themselves and the phenomenon of self-awareness were involved.

Definition of Terms

The key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Affective. This refers to the domain of emotions, feelings and associated characteristics, such as mood, temperament, and disposition.

Authenticity. In defining authenticity, I refer to being true to one's self (Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1991), it is the intimacy of the relationship one has with one's self and others. The balance and congruence between the inner and outer manifestations of the whole being, including the cognitive, affective, physical, practical, and spiritual, indicate authenticity.

Authentic relationship. The ability for two people to interact from a position of honesty, openness, respect and value arising from the self-awareness that enables the true or real self to be present.

Autopoiesis. This term was invented by Maturana from the 'auto' in autonomy or self and 'poiesis' as in creation or production. He used it while referring to human beings

as "autonomous, self-referring and self-constructing" (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p. xvii), and therefore emergent systems.

Awareness. Depraz et al. (2003) essentially followed Buddhist philosophy by equating awareness with mindfulness, the practice of which results in "a gradual development of the ability to be present with one's mind and body . . . in the experiences of everyday life" (p. 60).

Self-awareness. The phenomenon of knowing that one is the experiencer of experiences which take place both internally and externally to oneself and therefore understanding how one experiences oneself. (Zahavi, 1999).

Being. More than simply knowing, thinking, and doing, *being* in this study indicates the complete or whole engagement of all aspects of a person, including the biological. "All ways of knowing serve to support our skillful being-in-the-world from moment-to-moment-to-moment, our ability to act intelligently in the pursuit of worthwhile purposes" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 8).

Embodied awareness. Taken from Thompson (2007) is the bringing together of the lived bodily experience from the first person perspective and his or her cognition, which traditionally have been separated. Embodied awareness therefore includes many aspects beyond objective cognition; it includes subjective emotion, affect, motivation and movement.

Embodied cognition. "Cognitive science has had virtually nothing to say about what it means to be human in everyday, lived situations," and "the new sciences of mind need to enlarge their horizons to encompass both lived human experience and the possibilities for transformation inherent in human experience" (Varela et al.,

1993, p. xv). Varela et al. maintain, that our bodies are *both* physical *and* experiential, and therefore *both* biological *and* phenomenological. Therefore "It encompasses both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms" (p. vxi).

Fulfillment. The nearest definition is that of self-actualization (Maslow, 1968) of humankind: "a higher nature and that this is part of its essence—or more simply, that human beings can be wonderful out of their own human and biological nature" (p. v). Maslow held that "beneath the surface, at the psychological and biological core of human nature, we find basic goodness and decency." Being able to achieve this state of being and being aware of it is the way fulfillment is used in this study.

Mindfulness. Taken from Varela, Thompson & Rosch, (1991) mindfulness is defined as the mind being "present in embodied everyday experiences" (p. 22).

Normalize. This is the process by which everyone loses their individuality. Chen (2004) held that "we need to refuse to be made into merely nobodies or anonymous parts of the collectivity of society" (p. 61) and suggested that "authenticity may imply a resistance to specific pressure to normalization that destroys individuality" and that this is not rebellion.

Other. Alterity is the term used for other by Gallagher et al. (2004) and is defined anything other than self (Ipseity). This would include an individual, team, living system, culture, work organization, environment, civilization or the Universe.

Organization. The process of generating a set of relationships between living components (Maturana, 1978). This biological process is concrete human experience as discerned from an abstraction or objective reality.

Proprioception. A stimulus produced and perceived within an organism, particularly the position and movement of the body (The Oxford Concise Dictionary, 8th ed. 1991). Referred to by Gallagher (2005) as non-perceptual, non-observational self-awareness.

Relationship. Any interaction between the component parts of a system and the structure of said system can be said to be in relationship. This is true of individuals with parts of themselves and between individuals and any aspect of their environment. Maturana (1978) also defines organization as relationship hence the distinction between organization and work organization in this study.

Self. This study focuses on the affective and embodied sense of self and mind (Varela et al., 1991; Gallagher et al., 2004). "The actual experience of the real self is . . . a mystical experience. This is the feeling of being in touch with my own centre, my inner identity, my true self, my authenticity—that self which lies behind or beyond all self-images or self-concepts or sub-personalities" (Rowan, 2001, p. 115). Chen (2004) stressed the importance of being "self-creating and self-defining" (p. 47), which is the definition of autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela, 1980). In this study, the self refers to the real, truthful authentic self as opposed to the "unreal, false, or social self" (Chen, 2004, p. 48).

Trauma. A psychophysical experience, even when the traumatic event causes no direct bodily harm (Rothschild, 2000).

Work Organization. Any relationship, structure or system with a unique culture based on values, beliefs, artifacts and acceptable behavior which an individual joins for the purposes of being rewarded in return for his or her contribution to its development and success.

Summary

In explicating the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions, some of the literature has been discussed. It is an immense, varied, and fascinating body of knowledge, spanning centuries. By far the greatest amount of literature on the topic has come understandably from the psychological and philosophical perspectives, while the sociological and organizational perspectives are also represented. As has been noted, thus far literature from the affective sciences and the biological perspective is less well known and there are fewer authors. Depending on the different perspective chosen, the definitions may vary, as may the purposes and issues associated with the construct. What appears not to be in doubt is the belief that self-awareness and its connection to authentic relationships are essential to our individual and collective well-being, and yet have not been easily translated into practice. It is to a review of this literature we now turn, to gain a deeper understanding of the construct.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

"You can only be as authentic as you are self-aware" —Campbell (2001)

This chapter reviews the literature surrounding the notion of self-awareness, within the context of authentic relationships as they exist generally and in organizations. It includes the extensive and more traditional psychological, philosophical, and sociological perspectives of self-awareness, including self in relationship to other, as well as some of the emergent literature from the biological perspective and affective sciences. Other dimensions that have some relevance to self-awareness but were insufficient to warrant a complete section, such as views of the educationalists and anthropologists, are included in the most appropriate place. Reference is made to some of the literature on authenticity, since its existence appears to be linked in a most fundamental way to self-awareness.

In virtually all the phenomena associated with the social sciences, there is considerable disagreement about certain definitions across the differing perspectives from which such phenomena are viewed, and self-awareness is no different. However, there are also similarities, even when viewed from different perspectives. This makes the argument for a cross- and multidisciplinary perspective more important and indicates why agreement and understanding have been so difficult. These similarities and differences are seen throughout the literature review.

The following section on self-awareness starts with the more traditional perspective of psychology. It then explores aspects of the physical perspective and the Eastern and Western philosophical views. Here it is interesting to note that more writers

on human behavior, including self-awareness, are turning to the Eastern philosophies to make sense (Weick & Putnam, 2006) of the current situations, and vice versa (Harrington & Zajonc, 2006; Wallace, 2007). The section closes with the sociological perspective.

Self-Awareness

Below the surface-stream, shallow and light,
Of what we say we feel—below the stream,
As light, of what we think we feel—there flows
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
The central stream of what we feel indeed.

—Matthew Arnold (1950)

Psychological Perspective

This section is divided into self and self-knowledge; the humanistic tradition; the therapeutic perspective; current thinking and concludes with a summary discussion. However, given the considerable overlap between the thinking of the different traditions within the psychological perspective, some overlap may be unavoidable.

Self and Self-Knowledge

In the early psychological literature, "self" is referred to as "the individual as represented in his own awareness, and in the setting of those things with which he identifies" (Munn, 1946). Later, Masterson (1990) refers to the "real self" and the "false self" defining the real self as the sum of their internal psychic images and those of important individuals in their lives, together with the "feelings associated with those images and the capacities for action in the environment" (p. 23). Such self-images include our body images, whether real or imagined, conscious or unconscious. The false self on the other hand is usually based on childhood fantasies and acts as a defense against painful feelings.

Jung (Jung et al., 1990), in his later thinking he suggested, "Each human being has originally a feeling of wholeness, a powerful and complete sense of the Self" (p. 128). During the childhood process of development and separation, this sense of self is considerably damaged, and the "ego must continually return to re-establish its relation to the Self in order to maintain a condition of psychic health" (p. 129). Without this, "the individual is unable to relate himself to his adult environment" (p. 129). In his earlier text, Jung (1958) suggested that what generally passes for "self-knowledge" is limited to social knowledge of the knower, rather than "real psychic facts, which are for the most part hidden" (p. 7). He also maintained that it is not possible to base self-knowledge "on theoretical assumptions" (p. 9) since individuals are unique, "an irregular phenomenon" (p. 9), and "an enigma to himself" (p. 43). In his desire to understand "the plight of the individual in modern society," Jung (1958, p. 3) maintained it is "fear of the unconscious psyche which not only impedes self-knowledge but is the gravest obstacle to a wider understanding and knowledge of psychology" (p. 49). Moreover, he suggested that "only when the individual is willing to fulfill the demands of rigorous self-examination and self-knowledge" (p. 89) will he take the first steps in understanding his own consciousness. He warned of underestimating the psychological factors of human beings and suggested that "the discrepancy between intellect and feeling, which get in each other's way at the best of times, is a particularly painful chapter in the history of the human psyche" (p. 94). Only when we are able to "recognize our prejudices and illusions" (p. 102) by clearly knowing ourselves and others will we be able and willing to take responsibility for our behavior towards others and society. Further, Wesorick (1999)

made a similar point about knowing our real core when she said: "We cannot be with others as they are, unless we can be with ourselves the way we are" (p. 3).

On the other hand, Stevens (1971), a follower of Gestalt, disagreed with the notion of humans needing a strong sense of self, suggesting that the result would be an obsessive, rigid person caught up in the image of self rather than the reality of genuine, authentic experiences and feelings.

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) and Gallagher and Shear (1999) made similar points to Jung et al. (1990) in relation to self and attachment, separation, and loss. The children's fiction writer McCammon (1991) also made a similar point, in that our sense of magic and ability "to see our destiny . . . is educated right out of our souls" (p. 2).

The Humanistic View

The humanistic psychologists Rogers and Freiberg (1969) suggested that awareness was one of five essential requirements for an individual's transformation, while W. Schutz (1967, 1989) wrote about the expansion of human awareness as a function of joy and suggested that any method that increases internal awareness would enable a person to know and use himself or herself more fully and "increase understanding of others" (p. 45).

Rogers (1980) described human beings as "moving towards the more complete development of awareness" (p. 127), which he suggested was "not only of the stimuli from outside, but of ideas, and dreams, and of the ongoing flow of feelings, emotions and physiological reactions that he or she senses from within" (p. 127). Rogers (1980) also included the notion of self-acceptance as part of self-awareness.

Rogers (1980) later suggested that "the degree of self-understanding is perhaps the most important factor in predicting the individual's behavior" (p. 57) and pointed out that "with greater self-awareness, a more informed choice is possible" (p. 127) and "the greater the awareness . . . a person is free to live a feeling subjectively" (p. 128). Additionally he maintained that without barriers and inhibitions, the individual could be fully present and "moving in the direction of wholeness, integration and a unified life" (p. 128).

At approximately the same time that Rogers and Jung were exploring self-awareness and the human psyche, another psychotherapist, May (1953), was also exploring the topic of the human predicament. He echoed the theories of Rogers and Jung, and while his perspective was of the troubled individual, his thinking focused on the necessity and relevance of self-awareness generally. May (1953), who talked about our capacity for awareness, providing us with "the ability to see ourselves as others see us and to have empathy with others" (p. 86), suggested that "to fulfill these potentialities is to be a person" (p. 86). Equally he argued that "the self is always born, and grows in interpersonal relationships."

Therapeutic Perspective

It is clear that self-awareness plays an important part of development within the therapeutic context. For example, Perls (1969) stated: "Awareness is the only basis of knowledge and communication" (p. 48), and Yontef (1993) wrote about the power of awareness and presence in enabling both client and therapist to grow during sessions. Yontef (1993) also talked of "knowing your state," which he described as including knowledge of specific experience, situations, and behavior along with "needs,

capabilities, environment and duties" (p. 26). He continued: "Awareness must include self-acceptance, real self-acknowledgement" (p. 184).

Increasing self and other awareness is the main goal in Gestalt psychotherapy, so that clients are enabled to make more choiceful decisions about their lives. Stevens (1971) devoted a whole book to exploring, experimenting, and experiencing awareness from the Gestalt perspective, which included aspects of the physical body in relation to movement and awareness in much the same way, again, as the biologists talk about today.

Janov (1994), a Gestalt psychotherapist, who also happened to be an organizational consultant had much to say on self-awareness. She defined personal power as the power of self-understanding and suggested that we need an ability to see ourselves clearly before we are able to understand ourselves. This "involves exploring and knowing the multiple aspects of self" (p. 242) and requires that we are able to differentiate and integrate all aspects of ourselves. She described how "our behavior results from interplay among various aspects of self at any moment in time" (p. 243), particularly in terms of the "believing self and the anti-self" (p. 244). She described these two aspects: "The believing self is the part of us that aspires. The anti-self is the part of us that doubts" (p. 244). She also suggested that understanding "our needs for control," which she defined as certainty, support, relatedness, and alliance, "is basic to our self-awareness" (p. 244).

Unfortunately therapy has generally only been considered to be useful for the damaged or disturbed within society, and yet a Gestalt approach has been and continues to be used effectively to enhance organizational life in the United States and United

Kingdom (Dibella & Nevis, 1998; Karp, 1996; Merry & George, 1987, 1990; Nevis, 1987, 1998).

Current Thinking

Organization theorist and medical doctor Jaques (2002), in his exposition of "the life and behavior of living organisms" referred to awareness as "the primitive or basic feature" (p. 51), which he defined as "engaged direct awareness" (p. 58). He described the term as containing a sense of aliveness, vigor, alertness, and wariness, yet not including the ability to use language to describe whatever the organism was aware of—this he defined as consciousness. He maintained that awareness takes place prior to any articulation of the awareness and warned against using articulation of awareness, as the sole indicator of awareness. Building on his definitions of awareness, Jaques (2002) described our ability to articulate the awareness of inner experiences as "self-conscious" (p. 199). He also warned against holding our rational beings as superior to our biological natures. This, it would seem, means that the mind operates with awareness prior to language and cognition, not unlike physicist David Bohm's (1996) term of "proprioception."

Reviewing the work of Silvia and O'Brien (2004) provided an answer to the puzzle of the lack of attention paid to self-awareness in spite of the immense psychological literature on its importance to our well-being. They suggested that the idea of self-awareness has been linked with "theories of depression" and "socially irresponsible behavior," increasing "negative affect" and self-destructive behavior, and "reducing well-being" (p. 475). Notwithstanding this state of affairs, they called for the

rehabilitation of self-awareness due to its essential quality for the benefit of individuals, relationships, and society generally.

Summary

From this journey through a brief selection of the literature of the psychological perspective, the importance of self-awareness is clear to see. In every decade over the last 60 it seems that in spite of the variety of definitions, the overwhelming view is one of self-awareness, or self-knowledge or the real self being essential to our development, our relationships, and our general well-being. Moreover we can begin to see the convergence of ideas and the complexity associated with the phenomenon. In spite of the difficulty reflected by the lack of commonly agreed descriptive language for understanding any phenomenon in any other than the traditional way.

Jung et al. (1990), Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), and Gallagher and Shear (1999) agreed on the importance of our early environment in the quest for understanding behavior. Roger's (1980) definition of complete awareness needing to include external stimuli and internal feelings and emotions seems analogous to "embodied mind" (Varela et al., 1993) from the biological perspective. Psychologists, organizational theorists, psychotherapists are making similar points with regard to self-awareness being an essential element in interpersonal relationships (Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Janov 1994; Rogers, 1980). Rogers also linked self-awareness with the definitions and theories of authenticity, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Self-awareness then is the essence of human being rather than human doing, the latter being a more realistic description for our existence in the world today.

Having explored the psychological perspective, we now move to the philosophical perspective.

Philosophical Perspective

Following an in-depth review of human nature, Gallagher and Shear (1999) concluded that there is no agreement on the definitions of self, the problems of understanding the self, or how to resolve such issues. Rather, our current thinking has been restricted into two historically opposing views: scientific or objective and philosophical or subjective. This split has resulted in the lack of progress made thus far in understanding self and consciousness from developmental and pathological perspectives. Their answer was to bring together differing models of the self, representing a variety of approaches including psychology, philosophy, theories of embodiment and development, and the neurosciences to explore these issues phenomenologically. Interestingly, they also included meditation-based approaches and Buddhist interpretations of the sense of self as a way to reverse the Western narrowing of the self construct.

In his earlier work, Bohm (1980) described in detail the Eastern philosophical notion that while *measurement* is viewed as essential, this measurement is not to be understood as comparison with an external standard but rather as an "outward display or appearance of a deeper inner measure" (p. 25)—an indication of inner harmony and integrity. He continued to explore the roots of the word *meditation*, which he described as a means of measuring, contemplating, and considering thought processes and bringing them into harmony. This "awareness of the inner measure of things" (p. 26) at a physical, social, and mental level was seen as "the essential key to a healthy, happy, harmonious life" (p. 26). He suggested that such measurement is a necessary precursor to "insight into

the essence of everything" (p. 27), which then enables our perceptions to be evident, thus bringing about "generally orderly action and harmonious living" (p. 27).

Throughout history and particularly in Western society, the definition of measurement has come to mean an external measure of rules and standards, rather than insight or awareness, and we have therefore lost the ability to use our thinking to explore insights arising from our inner being. Bohm suggested that the answer to understanding 'wholeness' is not to look backwards at the thinking that led to this split, but rather to take the learnings from both interpretations and "discover for ourselves the meaning of wholeness" (p. 30) by exploring "new and original perception relevant to our present condition of life" (p. 31). He warned, however, that this would be difficult since it requires us to explore the measurable and the immeasurable, both of which must be in harmony for the meaning of wholeness to be understood. The immeasurable does not sit comfortably within our generally preferred scientific measurement techniques as a way of creating meaning and understanding.

In contemplative science (Wallace, 2007) suggests there are four immeasurables seen as worlds of intersubjectivity: loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity (pp. 118-124). As mentioned in the introduction the researcher has observed little evidence of these in work organizations today, and indeed Fineman (2000) recommends that since work organizations "are such important centres of people's time and energy" and that they "seek a feeling of connection with one another, a feeling of belonging, and a feeling of being cared for and respected" without compassion, defined as "caring interactions" (p. 26) people's experiences of work organizations will be largely negative.

The philosopher, Chen (2004) posited that a strong sense of self is one of the five core ideas of Confucian authenticity and that authenticity is unlikely to exist without extensive self-awareness (Goleman, 1998; Goleman et al., 2002). Chen (2004) continued: "To create truth and value to our beings (*to be individually authentic*) requires us to understand truth and value first. To understand the truth requires us to live examined lives so that we recognize the truths and untruths of our beings" (p. 19). There can be no clearer description of self-awareness than that.

Sociological Perspective

While the focus of sociologists generally is on groups or collectives, the sociological literature on self-awareness is scant. Giddens (1991) however devoted a considerable amount of space to the individual self and awareness, suggesting that reflexive awareness is symptomatic of all human behavior and that all human beings continuously observe the situations in which they are involved as a way of knowing what they do. Indeed, such reflexive awareness is also required for the development of self-identity, which is "routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual" (p. 54). Moreover, a relatively stable self-identity is required for an individual to be able to communicate this self to others. Like Varela et al. (1993), Giddens (1991) defined the self as "embodied" (p. 56), suggesting that the first level of awareness of a child is of the shape and features of the body. He suggested that "awareness of the body is basic to grasping the fullness of the moment, and entails the conscious monitoring of sensory input from the environment as well as the major bodily organs and body dispositions as a whole" (p. 77), and "experiencing the body is a way of cohering the self

as an integrated whole" (p. 78). Giddens (1991), however, provided little understanding of how this awareness operates or could be achieved.

"No human being can live for long, except in a state of total dependency, without a reasonably stable but slowly evolving sense of inner self." So stated Douglas (1984, p. 69). He suggested that this sense of inner self "is the highest-order centrally integrating sense that our mind has of our overall being-in-the-world" (p. 69) and allows us to respond to the continually changing and complex experiences we face during our daily lives. This inner sense of self needs to be relatively secure otherwise we feel "formless, lost, disintegrated and confused . . . and our lives constrained by anxiety, dread and panic" (p. 69). Moreover he holds that the notion of self is essential for understanding human behavior. He suggests that the anxiety and threats experienced in childhood activate the "emergence of the sense of self" (p. 74) and begin to be explored in adolescence, although true self-reflection is unlikely to take place in childhood. He also suggests that provided a child "lives a relatively secure, slowly changing and unconflicted and undemanding life" he or she will display "little sense of self-awareness" (p. 76).

In the context of education, Freire (1998) posited that as the essential work of self-exploration, using both "intellectual and affective encounters, the student attempts to discover her own subjectivity" (p. 4). Additionally, when addressing his own development, Freire (2004) talked of the necessity of knowing himself as an integrated whole: "I know with my entire body, with feelings, with passion and also with reason" (p. 30). This resonates closely with the work of Varela and Shear (2000), Varela et al. (1991), Nonaka (1994), and Polanyi (1966, 1969). Further, Cranton and Carusetta (2004),

in an empirical study of teachers, described self-awareness as one of the five dimensions of authenticity, which enables teachers to "cultivate their teaching skills" (p. 5) and communicate effectively with their students.

So far in this review we have explored the notion of self and self-awareness from the psychological, and philosophical, perspectives, with a glance at the sociological perspective, including education. Irrespective of the domain and despite the difficulties presented by different definitions and language, the point is made that self-awareness is self-evidently essential to our own authenticity, development and well-being. Its importance in our authentic relationships will be explored in the next section.

Self and Relationships

Sedikides and Brewer (2001) brought together a collection of chapters on various forms of 'the self.' Those pertaining to the relational selves are most appropriate at this stage. The definition of the relational self is "the self that contains those aspects of the self-concept that are shared with relationship partners and define the person's role or position within significant relationships" (p. 1). They referred to specific relationships such as "parent-child, friendships and romantic relationships as well as specific role relationships such as teacher-student or clinician-client" (p. 1). Tice and Baumeister (2001) drew attention to the self as "fundamentally interpersonal" (p. 71), and while they accepted the value in exploring the self as it operated independently and autonomously, they suggested that "interpersonal identity . . . precedes self-awareness" (p. 71), as did Depraz et al. (2003). Indeed, Tice and Baumeister (2001) maintained that the purpose of the self is "relating to others" (p. 71), such that "the self is constructed, used, altered and maintained as a way of connecting the individual organism to other members of its

species" (p. 71). They argued that while many psychologists consider the interpersonal nature of the self as secondary, the need to belong is in fact the primary and most powerful motivator. This certainly accords with Gestalt theories (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951; O'Leary, 1992; Yontef, 1993; Hycner & Jacobs, 1995; Lee, 2004) of individual development and growth through relationship.

Wheatley (2006), like the Gestaltists, suggested that "in the quantum world, relationship is the key determiner of everything" (p. 11). In relation to self-awareness, she commented on the irony that "even the simplest forms of life often seem more self-aware than we humans do" (p. 98). She contended that we need to find different ways to be in relationship with each other, including within organizations, and suggested that this requires "awareness, patience and generosity" (p. 130). To achieve this, "we have to develop much greater awareness of how we're acting; we have to become far more self-reflective that normal" (p. 130). Yet, she provided no method for achieving this, although in discussing the notion of self-reference, she quoted Shakespeare: "This above all, to thine own self be true" (p. 167) and suggested that self-reference "is the source of growth" for living systems. Her notion of self was not of selfishness; rather, it "includes awareness of those others it must relate to as part of its system" (p. 167).

The overarching outcome in the section on self and relationship is that the interpersonal, relational nature of the self is of primary importance, preceding self-awareness and being essential for our development. The next section will briefly explore some of the literature on authenticity as it relates to self-awareness.

Authenticity

Psychological Perspective

Moustakas (1966, 1995) and Gallagher et al. (2004) called for the ability to recognize 'otherness' and be self-aware simultaneously, to be assertive, and to follow internal cues as the requirement for authenticity and suggested that living our lives "in terms of the person we are is the only way to health and self-fulfillment" (p. 32). Moustakas (1966), like others (Jourard, 1964; Maslow, 1954; May, 1953; Pedler et al., 1978), connected trust and integrity with authenticity, suggesting that "when individuals are free to be themselves, they do not violate the trust that is conveyed to them. In such an atmosphere individual integrity is maintained and fostered and society is enriched" (p. 32). Clearly, this view includes micro relationships, which he held are healthier, happier, and more authentic as a result.

Deci and Flaste (1995) maintained that "as people become more authentic, as they develop greater capacity for autonomous self-regulation, they also become capable of a deeper relatedness to others" (p. 6). They defined choice as "the key to self-determination and authenticity" (p. 10). This psychological perspective is similar to biology's "embodied mind" (Varela et al., 1993), and autonomous self-regulation is autopoiesis as defined by Maturana and Varela (1980).

Further, Gibb (1978) suggested that trust and self-awareness are essential components of authenticity.

> Trust creates the flow and gentles the mindbodyspirit. When I trust myself I am able to enter fully into the process of discovering and creating who I am. When I trust my own inner process I am able to become what I am meant to become. When I trust you I am able to allow you in. And when I trust the process of living I am able to join others in the life journey. (p. 15)

Having defined trust, he suggested that trust grows from trust, whereas fear increases fear and both are the keys to understanding people and social systems. He discussed and indicated through empirical studies how trust supports the development of people and relationships, leadership and organizations.

Therefore the main themes identified as being necessary for authenticity to exist are self-awareness and the ability to see others, as well as trust, integrity, autonomous self-regulation, choice and an integration of mind and body. Having explored the psychological perspective, we now explore the philosophical perspective.

Philosophical Perspective

Taylor (1991) used the term *authenticity* to mean "the moral ideal behind self-fulfilment," which he, like Giddens (1991), also defined as "being true to oneself" (p. 15). A different view was held by McGraw, quoted in Guignon (2004), who posited that "the authentic self is the y*ou* that can be found at your absolute core"; it "is not defined by your job, or your function, or your role" (p. 2). He continued that it is the part of us which has not been programmed and which is an indicator of happiness and fulfillment. Irvine (2003) suggested that authenticity is "about opening to the experience of who you really are and courageously bringing that realness to the world" (p. xxiv), and he quoted e. e. cummings (1991) in his introduction:

> *To be nobody but yourself,*
> *In a world which is doing its best, night and day*
> *To make you just like everybody else,*
> *Means to fight the greatest battle there is to fight*
> *And never stop fighting.*

On the same theme, McCammon (1991) wrote, “We are born able to sing to birds and read the clouds and see our destiny in grains of sand. But then we get the magic educated right out of our souls. We get it churched out, spanked out, washed out and combed out” (p. 2). “The truth of life is that every year we get further away from the essence that is born within us” (p. 3).

Many authors—for example, Cashman (1998), Cloke and Goldsmith (2003), Irvine (2003), and Welwood (1983)—have suggested that authenticity is achieved through a deep sense of self and self-knowledge. For example, Anderson (1993) similarly described the authentic individual as “one who by pure reflection has a true and lucid awareness of herself as she is: unsubstantial, unnecessary, unjustified and free. Not only does the authentic person know this, she accepts and wills it, and takes responsibility for her existence” (p. 54).

Chen (2004), who based his work on a deep exploration of the traditional Chinese conception of authenticity, argued a similar case. He talked of the “authenticity of our being” and how it is related to the issues of “the purpose, focus, and value of life happiness, freedom, self, virtue and duty” (p. 1). He held that a desirable life is ideally a voyage of self-discovery and ultimately self-realization and hence awareness of our authentic being. He described the meaning of authenticity as “sincerity or genuineness” (p. 3), including “the unity of our feeling and action, intention and representation, and belief and being,” and “signifying the truthfulness, consistency and constancy of the self.” He posed the question of how an individual could be truly authentic and not lose himself or herself in the expectations and requirements of the world.

The main themes emanating from this review indicate that once again self-awareness is a distinct aspect of authenticity, along with truth, courage, and reflection. Moreover authenticity is related to issues of purpose and value and often at odds with the expectations of others. Once again, we turn to Giddens (1991) to start the review of authenticity through the sociological perspective.

Sociological Perspective

From the sociological perspective, Giddens (1991) represented authenticity as "being true to oneself" (p. 78) and being able to "reveal that knowledge to the other discursively and in the behavioural sphere" (p. 187), which is consistent with some of the previous perspectives. He also suggested that "self-mastery is a necessary condition of authenticity" (p. 96), demanding a high degree of self-reflexivity in collaboration with others in society, and again, the essence of relationships being founded on trust.

Both Jaques (2002) and Parsons (1978), towards the end of their prolific careers, finally concluded that understanding life as lived by human beings requires rather more than the mechanical or technical concepts of predictable patterns of maturation, theories of bureaucracy, and action theory. For Jaques (2002), awareness and communications were two of the most difficult concepts to understand, yet the most fundamental. For Parsons (1978), the fundamental question was that of human experience and how the authenticity of human experience "is for human security just as much in need of transcendental grounding as is the validity of empirical knowledge" (p. 412).

Writing about Parsons, Fox, Lidz, and Bershady (2005) described how his view changed towards the end of his career in the late 1960s, when he included *affect* as the core of a new model of social order upon which he was working and began to see trust

"as the groundwork of interchange, cooperation and social order" (p. 77), even though his approach was one of a mechanical process. Yet he only introduced affect. That said, he "began to see that in the modern, highly fluid and differentiated social world, the communication of trust at the very outset of relationships permits the normative order to function" (p. 18), or not, since "in initiating an act of cooperation by giving trust, ego at the same time initiates a common understanding of reality, an *agreed* definition of the situation" (p. 79; italics mine).

Archer (2000), while not using the term *authenticity*, certainly referred to our "rich inner life" and how we are "in continuous communion with ourselves and that we engage in a continual running commentary with the events going on around us. We are aware of how our inner lives monitor our responses to external situations . . . to which we willingly expose ourselves" (p. 193). She connected our emotions "as the main constituents of our inner lives" (p. 194), defining them as relational. Like many writers before her and previously mentioned, she pondered the question of why so little attention has been paid to this universal and continuous human experience by sociology. Moreover, she suggested that "it will only be the re-emergence of humanity, meaning that due acknowledgment is given to the properties and powers of real people forged in the real world, which overcomes the present poverty of social theory," and "the most important of these properties and powers is the 'inner conversation,' as the mode of articulation between people and reality" (p. 306).

In sum, authenticity from the sociological perspective includes such themes as truth, collaboration, trust, reflection, self-awareness, and emotions. Indeed it is clear that

authenticity is considered by many to be an essential in the re-emergence of humanity and just as essential as empirical knowledge.

Summary

It is clear that whether psychologist, biologist, philosopher or sociologist the same themes in relation to authenticity are presented as those identified in the review of self-awareness and the relational aspect of human behavior. In addition we have presented the notion from the existential sociologist perspective that anxiety and threats in childhood activate the need to begin to explore the sense of self.

Meg Wheatley (2006), whose thinking and writing span many disciplines encouraged a naturally holistic and integrated biological perspective through which to understand and improve relationships, communications, and organizations as self-organizing systems (Maturana & Varela, 1992; Capra, 1997). So it is to an exploration of self-awareness and relationships from the integrated perspective of the affective sciences that we now turn.

The Affective Sciences Perspective—
Related to Self-Awareness and Relationships

Introduction

The term *affective sciences* refers to a novel and multidisciplinary science that, unlike traditional sciences, which were determined to separate each lens from another, concluded that the only way to really understand ourselves, the complexity of our world, and our lived experience of being in the world was to use a combination of integrated

lenses. So while psychology is still a part of the affective sciences, it is not the whole picture.

In the introduction to the *Handbook of Affective Sciences,* Davidson et al. (2003) described the affective sciences as being a broad "concept that subsumes emotion, but is not restricted to it" (p. xiii). They reported that the affective sciences are of necessity "more inclusive . . . bringing different, but partially overlapping and complementary perspectives" and that "affective processes pervade much of cognition" (p. xiii). The notion that the compartmentalization of the different sciences has done a grave disservice to our understanding of human behavior is now widespread, and the affective sciences bring together a cohesive, multi- and interdisciplinary yet not exhaustive body of knowledge.

While much of the focus is on human emotion, the affective sciences bring together psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, neuroscience, and cognition. Davidson et al. (2003) also suggested that the affective sciences "could revolutionize our approach to studying affective phenomenon" (p. xiv) by encouraging collaboration and reciprocity between and among researchers. They continued to explain that "one of the most important roles of affective phenomena is their regulatory function in relationships, social interaction and group organization" (p. xiv) and the central nature of affect linked to cognition that allows us to understand human emotion.

This is especially valuable since "affect does not occur in a vacuum in the human mind and/or body" (p. xv); rather, it is an integral part of our functioning process and illuminates the complex nature of our affective functioning. Indeed, empirical research

conducted by Forgas (2000) indicated that affect and cognition directly impact each other in a co-evolving manner.

Yet others have similarly stressed the need for this multi- and interdisciplinary approach to understanding human emotions (Varela et al., 1993; Depraz et al., 2002; Varela & Depraz, 2003; Thompson, 2007; Gallagher, 2005).

Definitions

Perhaps one of the reasons why the nature of self-awareness and indeed becoming self-aware, in spite of the fact that much has been written on the subject, has remained stubbornly out of our experience for so long, despite its essential nature to our effective and productive existence is due to the differences that exist in the definitions of these affective constructs.

For example, Varela and Depraz (2003) suggested that the main elements of affect are mood, attitude, motive, and emotion. Forgas (2000) referred to affect, feelings, emotion, and mood as areas for exploration in the affective sciences and used different definitions for these compared with Davidson et al. (2003), who also included temperament, attitude, and affective style as three of the six "most frequently studied of the affective phenomena" (p. xiii).

Self, Self-Awareness, and Imagination

In offering an historical perspective on the emergence of self-awareness, Leary (2003) suggests a direct link with self-reflection and refers to "the capacity to think about oneself in the complex, abstract and symbolic ways" (p. 773), as the relatively new phenomenon known as symbolic self-awareness. Such thinking requires imagination in

order to envisage the future and to view oneself from another's perspective. This clearly links with Varela and Depraz's (2003) description of imagination as a central tenet in the process of becoming self-aware, noting also the need for self-reflection, memory, thought, and emotion.

Leary (2003) continued: "the evolution of self-awareness had important implications for the emotional experiences of human being" (p. 773) and as Douglas (1984) also mentioned "having a sense of self has important implications for the stimuli that trigger affective states, the kinds of emotions one experiences and whether one can consciously regulate one's feelings" (p. 773). Leary (2003) defined the essence of self as being able to view oneself "as the object of one's own attention and thought" describing the self as a "cognitive mechanism that permits self-reflexive thought" (p. 774). He described two aspects of symbolic self-awareness. The first enabling us to imagine and make future plans, considering and imagining the outcomes of alternative options, studying possible actions, and even deliberating on our own humanity. The second enabling us to reflect upon ourselves through the creation and measurement of our own mental representations. However he also made the point that human beings are not always operating in a state of self-awareness, suggesting that many individuals are able to function well in routine or habitual patterns without being self-aware.

Leary (2003) points to the ability of human beings to limit the impact of negative "emotional states" (p. 782) associated with their self-reflected awareness by distracting themselves through engagement with other activities. Gestaltists refer to this as deflection or desensitization. In this way Leary (2003) notes that self-reflection and self-awareness do enable the regulation of emotions.

Gallagher et al. (2004) like so many of the quoted authors, acknowledged the impact of and used Husserl's foundational phenomenological thinking to explore the issues of self and self-awareness. He discussed the need for caretakers to be sensitive and mirror affect in "order to shape social emotional development and awareness of self" (p. 10) and how caregivers who are "overbearing or unresponsive" can "hinder the development of a concept of self" (p. 10). He stressed relationships, respect, embodiment, and intersubjectivity, while reminding us that there is still no complete agreement in the complexity of how we come to know ourselves and ourselves in relationship to others.

LeDoux (1996) suggested that emotions occur when the biological systems operate in an animal, such as a human being, with the capability of conscious awareness, which he defined as "the awareness of what is in working memory" (p. 278). Additionally, he suggested that exploring how emotional data are represented in working memory and how these then are experienced consciously will contribute to our understanding of awareness, even though it is unlikely to increase our understanding of the mind-body aspect of awareness.

Varela and Depraz (2003) suggested "that imagination is, most strongly and directly, a lived experience" and belongs to the very core of human awareness, in close "relation with memory and remembrance, fantasy, dreams and perception itself" (p. 204). They continued to express imagination as "radical freedom," which surely equates *to being who you are or want to be.* This fits comfortably with the Buddhist tradition of mindfulness, which they supported and described as the notion of directing our attention inwards and to our breathing, constantly returning to our breathing should fantasies, thoughts, and/or daydreams interrupt the experience. This allows "an intelligent, active

examination and monitoring of the awareness of breathing, not only as object of attention, but as an assessment of our mental state. . . . It is this reciprocal engagement of mindfulness and introspection that provides the efficacy of the learning" (p. 218).

Varela and Depraz (2003) held that in spite of self-awareness being a transient state (Freeman, 1999), self-organizing and self-regulation are in operation constantly in order to maintain and regulate the complex and nonlinear organism. Moreover they suggested that cognition is "enactively embodied" and "enactively emergent," which some would call self-organizing or enaction, and that relationships are self-organizing phenomena. This final section has provided the bridge to move from self and self-awareness to emotions and relationship.

Emotions and Relationships

Clark and Brissette (2003) explored the effect of relationships on "people's emotional lives" (p. 824). Their proposition, based on a number of studies, was that close, interdependent relationships, and relationships that have a high degree of what they described as "communal strength" (p. 825) or valence (Varela & Depraz, 2004), have a greater impact on people's emotional lives than do relationships that are less close and have less communal strength. While much of the research reflects studies of intimate romantic relationships, relationships with family members and close friends or associates equally apply. They referred to "interdependence" as "the degree to which two people in a relationship influence each other's thoughts, feelings and/or behavior" and suggested that "it is greater the stronger and more long-lasting the impact of one person's thoughts, feelings and behavior are on the other person" (p. 825). From the perspective of the relationship-based "communal strength," they described a relationship in which two

people "feel a responsibility for one another's welfare and therefore, benefit the other in order to promote the other's welfare" (p. 825). In discussing these propositions, they also included some of the biological aspects of human emotion, such as autonomic—involuntary functioning—reactions; self protection or survival, giving truth to the notion that affective science is a multi- and interdisciplinary science.

Ryff and Singer (2003) write of the health benefits—including reduced incidence of disease, morbidity and mortality—associated with close and warm relationships with parents, and close personal relationships and "good social support" (p. 1097). They also describe how positive "social and emotional experiences" (p. 1097) such as laughter and humor may be beneficial in promoting health and well being, while our passions "are the very source of our interests, meaning and purposes" (p. 1098) and therefore of benefit to human health. Moreover, they note that greater social integration with and emotional support from significant others, in which group they include parents, children, friends and co-workers, is also indicative of better health. They conclude that the reverse is true. Lack of warmth, support, cohesion together with anger, conflict and violent, abusive or unresponsive parents have a negative impact on the health of children, often leading to depression and that clearly emotion is a key ingredient in this aspect of relationships.

Cacioppo and Patrick, (2008) in a similar way describe the results of ground breaking research into loneliness and how our inability to relate not only causes psychological problems of increased aggression, fear and self-consciousness, but also results in major physiological effects on our autonomic system and therefore has negative consequences for our health.

Summary

In summary, then, affective science provides a novel 21st-century perspective for exploring and understanding human behavior and the human self in an inclusive way from the perspective of the essential nature of affect, including feelings, emotions, mood, temperament, disposition, and affective style along with our need to belong and be in relationships with others.

In reviewing the literature, it becomes clear that the role of affect on human life is being and needs to be explored in a much more integrated way, whereas in the past cognition, affect, and connation—or thinking, emotion, and will—were dealt with by psychologists quite separately. Proper thinking was considered to be free of affect. However once again, the lack of agreement on terms and definitions had a negative effect on research in this area. In spite of this, it is evident that self-awareness, self-reflection, and relationships are co-evolving integrated processes, influencing and influenced by our emotions. This closed, embodied self-organizing system itself can regulate emotions provided there is sufficient self-awareness and self-reflection.

Concluding this section on the affective sciences with the embodied, self-organizing system allows us to flow into an exploration of self-awareness and relationships from the biological perspective.

The Biological Perspective—

Related to Self-Awareness and Relationships

There is a vast amount of literature on biology per se, however the literature explored in relation to this study in this next section is taken from the biology of mind, and there are few authors currently contributing to this domain. The focus is therefore

quite narrow in keeping with the current state of this relatively young and still developing domain within the biological literature. While the issues are complex and interconnected, this section has been divided into an introductory section, followed by a section on self and living systems, then one on self-reflection and self-awareness, followed by a section on language and a section on relationships. In spite of this division, there may still be overlaps.

Introduction: The Need for a Multidisciplinary Approach

Varela et al. (1993) wrote of their concern that our everyday life's experiences have been and continue to be disregarded in relation to science and warned that this will only serve to deepen the differences between the disciplines. They explained the current strain between science and experience: "World science is so dominant that we give it authority to explain even when it denies what is more immediate and direct—our everyday, immediate experience" (p. 12). They indicated that one possible alternative way of seeking the truth resulting from our deflection from reason would be "*un*reason" borrowed from psychoanalytic theory, which . . . has probably come to have more influence . . . than any other single cultural factor" (p. 20).

Maturana (Maturana and Poerksen, 2004) also clarified:

> All that we human beings do occurs in our daily living, and if we do not see and accept that it is so, we cannot appreciate how our biological existence as languaging living systems results in something that could not have arisen through technology without the creative participation of human beings, if for no other reason because technology is a product of our humanness as biological entities. (p. 22)

He stressed that "all observers are part of their observations" (p. 26) and that "there is no way of approaching . . . discourse about reality, truth and the essence of being . . . from

outside ourselves" (p. 27). Equally clear was his statement that we are "dependent on the availability of language" (p. 29) for whatever conversations we have about reality and truth, are dependent upon and emerge only through language. As with much of the literature reviewed earlier, Maturana (Maturana and Poerksen, 2004) was particularly opposed to the notion that we are separate entities and stressed our interconnectedness (structural coupling) and the importance of our experiences. The definition of experiences here are the events we have lived through and how we have interpreted, memorized and understood their meaning and impact upon us and our environment. He was not alone in using this particular biological perspective to encourage the understanding of human experiences, behavior, and emotions. Depraz et al. (2002), Varela et al. (1993), and Thompson (2007) all made similar observations. All made reference to the phenomenological tradition as the better foundation of understanding human beings. The phenomenological and biological perspectives are also very much a part of the Gestalt theory and approach to understanding human emotions and behavior.

In purposefully considering the biological conditions that allow the development of a sense of self, Damasio (1999) also brought together a multi-disciplinary approach—the affective sciences and the biological perspective. He suggested that awareness of self and surroundings is the critical biological function that allows us to know our sense of self and make interpretations and inferences. He stated categorically, as others noted above have mentioned, that the mind and emotion cannot be separated, and both are intimately linked to our physical being or bodies. Moreover, emotion "is integral to the processes of reasoning and decision making" (p. 41). While emotions "use the body as

their theatre" (p. 51), they also affect the operation of our brain circuitry, and their biological purpose in enabling our survival is clear.

Following the development of previous work, Thompson (2007) brought additional insights into the understanding of human behavior. He stated clearly that cognitive science, having focused on cognition "while neglecting emotion, affect and motivation," is incomplete and that "a complete science of the mind needs to account for subjectivity" (p. 3). Referring to the enactive approach, he suggested that "living beings are autonomous agents that actively generate and maintain themselves *[self-organizing],* . . . that the nervous system is an autonomous dynamic system, . . . that cognition is the exercise of skillful know-how in situated and embodied action" (p. 13). Moreover, he holds that experience is central "to any understanding of the mind" (p. 13).

The pattern that is emerging is one of the necessity of exploring the self and awareness through multidisciplinary perspectives (Varela & Depraz, 2004).

Self and Living Systems—Autonomous; Phenomenological; and Intentional

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) described all living systems as "structured-determined systems" (p. 69), which he defined as everything that happens to us as being determined by our structure rather than the structure of an external agent. He also held that any living system is autonomous, which he defined as self-governing and something that "cannot be separated from its medium" (p. 75). So the uniqueness of an individual is preserved through biological autonomy. Moreover, he suggested that "only those who recognize themselves as free can claim responsibility for their actions" (p. 76). It was indeed during his experience of his own dependence on his environment and possible death that he developed the theory of *autopoiesis,* derived from the "Greek

words *autos* (self) and *poiein* (produce, create)" (p. 97), meaning self-creation and therefore in and of the system of which we are a part.

As previously mentioned, Thompson (2007) employed phenomenology to understand the lived experience of human beings from the perspective of biology and mind science. He too talked of epoché in the same manner as Depraz et al. (2002) and suggested that autonomy is fundamental to our understanding of human behavior. He described the "autonomous system as a self-determining system . . . interacting with its environment" to create meaning rather than simply "process information" (p. 13) and referred to his term "dynamic co-emergence . . . that a whole not only arises from its parts, but the parts also arise from the whole. Part and whole co-emerge and mutually specify each other" (p. 38). Thompson, (2007) also discussed intentionality from the phenomenological perspective and enactive approach as an important aspect of self-awareness. Intentionality is thus defined not simply as the notion of purpose in our actions; rather it can be viewed in a narrow or broad way. The narrow view is of "object-directed experiences" (p. 23), where we are the subject and we see, remember, fear or imagine some object outside ourselves. These "intentional experiences are described as mental acts—acts of perceiving, remembering, imagining, empathizing . . . the performances of a person, a living bodily subject . . . whose cognitive and affective life is constituted by communal norms, conventions and historical traditions" (p. 24). The broad view is considered as having an "openness to the world" (p. 22) yet not necessarily being directed to an external object, rather including "bodily feelings of pain, moods such as undirected anxiety, depression and elation and absorbed skillful activity in everyday life" (p. 23). Although these experiences could be seen as being self-enclosed, our moods and

feelings affect how we perceive the world, our awareness of self and other and therefore how we respond or enact with our environment.

Self-Reflection, Self-Awareness, and Intuition

Maturana (Maturana and Poerksen, 2004) clearly stated that self-reflection is observation and that "observers act in self-awareness" and suggested "that most of the time in our lives we do not operate as observers; we just carry on without bothering to examine what we are doing" (p. 35). He distinguished between continual self-examination (Stapp [2007] referred to this as the participating observer), which he suggested is unwise, and

> the capability of reflection, in the willingness to give up those beliefs which stand in the way of an accurate perception of specific circumstances. The wise do not constantly observe themselves, they do not cling to things and they do not allow themselves to be guided by ultimate truths that prescribe how they themselves and other people have to act. (p. 35)

On becoming aware, he noted:

> One is doing the observing, and then being aware of being aware that it is oneself who makes the distinctions, one attains a new domain of experience. Only becoming aware of one's awareness and understanding one's understanding can give rise to the feeling of responsibility for what one is doing, for what one is creating through one's own operations of distinction. (p. 37)

Moreover, he suggested that when we make the choice to attend to, and make decisions based on, our own experience rather than someone else's "or an external reality," we experience "a profoundly liberating and comforting effect" (p. 38). He described two different positions with regard to the observer: the first being "*objectivity without parentheses*" (p. 41), which essentially holds to an external reality, thus negating our individual experience; and the second as "*objectivity in parentheses,*" which holds

that experiences "constitute the foundation of all explanation" (p. 42). He continued: "The parentheses are meant to signal a certain state of awareness" (p. 43), and only those who operate from the second position can engage in self-reflection, which allows us to "meet other people's worldviews . . . listen to them . . . acknowledge their realities and accept them as fundamentally legitimate" (p. 47).

Varela et al. (1993) clarified the outcomes of reflection on ourselves and the world in which we live as the "fundamental circularity" and concluded, like Maturana, that we are both in and of the world. They proposed the "term *enaction* to emphasize the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind, but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs" (p. 9). Moreover, they explained that "the act of reflection . . . does not come from nowhere; we find ourselves performing that act of reflection out of a given background . . . of biological, social and cultural beliefs and practices" (p. 11).

Depraz et al. (2002) referred to the *act of becoming aware* as "a human act that is so basic that it is quite independent of the contexts in which one becomes aware of one's own conscious activity" (p. 15). They used several different terms interchangeably to represent what they meant: "reflecting act . . . reduction . . . mindfulness" in the psychological, phenomenological, and Buddhist forms, respectively. They suggested that there are many approaches "to the reflecting act" (p. 22) and that learning from experience is a key element, such that in order to learn how to become aware, one needs to experience awareness, thus producing a circular movement. They outlined a 5-stage process of becoming aware, although stressed the first two as being of greater

importance. The process begins with *epoche* (from Husserl), which they described as a three-part function of (1) suspending "realist prejudice that what appears . . . is truly the state of the world"; (2) redirecting attention from the "exterior to the interior"; and (3) "letting go or acceptance" (p. 25) of experience. Epoche, the first stage in itself, is also required of each subsequent stage. They described the first step of epoche—suspending—as the only way one can change the way one pays attention to lived experience, and explained that the 'natural attitude' of believing that one is in and can control situations has to be abandoned if one is to pay real attention to one's lived experience.

The second stage in becoming aware is that of "recognizing intuitive evidence as the criterion of truth" (p. 6) intuition being described as "a unique mental capacity that comes between the new awareness allowed by suspension and an inscription of results in traces others can read or see." Intuition is an interruption of the flow of experience and therefore "discontinuous and novel" (p. 48) and includes perception on the one hand and imagination/memory on the other. They suggested that perception is the guiding principle of knowledge and is primordial. The remaining 3 stages are secondary and require (3) expression, (4) "intersubjective validation" and (5) being aware "of the multi-layered temporality of each act." Several different examples were selected to assess the efficacy of, and clarify the process. The results indicated that the process does indeed assist in understanding human behavior. In addition they recommended "guided introspection," which encourages awareness of mental actions through allowing access to personal experience. However, they made the point that "turning your attention to the interior" could mean "running the risk of becoming aware of things we'd rather not know about ourselves" (p. 35), yet it is important to be confident enough to "pay more attention to the

interior world" (p. 36). By "paying attention to your body, to kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensations . . . and the position of the breath . . . you are led to center yourself on your bodily interior, then on your psychic or even spiritual interior" (p. 36).

This has remarkable similarities with Gestalt psychotherapy theory, and indeed the "practice of psychotherapy" (p. 39) was one of their examples. In the reflecting act, they suggested that "you have to accept and listen, you have to be filled with something about to come forth, you have to contemplate rather than go looking for something in a pre-determined manner" (p. 40).

Varela et al. (1993) defined awareness as an embodied process of becoming present, or a coming together of the mind and body, and suggested three different states of experience: conscious visual awareness, auditory awareness, and tactile awareness. Moreover Varela and Depraz (2004) suggest it is through awareness that our ability to respond intelligently to our environment exists.

Language

Maturana & Varela (1998) make the point clearly that every aspect of our humanness "takes place in language, which is our distinctive way of being human and being humanly active" (p. 26). Thus self-reflection and self-awareness, indeed all knowledge can only exist in language. Whether in observing ourselves or others, making meaning of our experiences or understanding of human nature, it is language that allows and enables us to function as social systems. It is language that enables us to be in relationship with ourselves and others. "All this is what it is to be human" (p. 211), indeed "we human beings are human beings only in language . . . there is no limit to what we can describe, imagine and relate" (p. 212). Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004)

also suggested that "whatever we are able to say about the truth or reality is dependent on the availability of language" (p. 29). Moreover he made the point that self-reflection is observation, which requires "language together with the awareness that one is engaged in observing something" (p. 35).

Language and languaging then serve to enable and support our biological ontology and epistemology.

Relationships: Structural Coupling

Maturana (Maturana and Poerksen, 2004) clearly stated the vital nature of being in relationship, which is referred to as *structural coupling:*

> Structural coupling arises if the structures of two structurally plastic systems change through continual interaction without destroying the identity of the interacting systems. In the flow of such coupling, a consensual domain is formed: a behavioral domain within which we act together and in reciprocal correspondence; the changes of state of the coupled systems—more generally—are reciprocally conditioned through interlocking sequences. (p. 85)

While this seems to refer to relationships in general, it also describes the therapeutic relationship perfectly.

Thompson (2007) also argued that "self and other enact each other reciprocally through empathy and that human subjectivity emerges from developmental processes of enculturation (p. 36). He continued, "We human beings constitute and reconstitute ourselves through cultural traditions, which we experience as our own development in a historical time that spans the generations" (p. 36). Additionally, such a dynamic system evolves over time, and that the cognitive being's world is relationally oriented through interaction with its environment. Following from the previous discussion of intentionality, Thompson (2007) described it as primarily one of relationship in terms of

"correlational" comprising "two inseparable poles" (p. 24) of introspection and that which has contributed to the introspection. He pointed out the importance of the "dynamic coupling between one's lived body and the surrounding world . . . to both perspectives" (p. 33). "In this coupling, the motivating undercurrent is the habitual and associative linkage of affective, sensorimotor and imaginative bodily experiences" (p. 33). This includes our ancestors and culture.

We have discussed earlier the importance of intentionality with regard to developing self-awareness. What is also clear is that it also plays an important role in the development of relationships through the childhood development of a theory of mind. Along with imagination "which originally develops out of first-person information of self and third-person information of others" (Barresi, J. 2004, p. 93) and a seeming biological ability for sharing and integration of such first and third person information, an infant is able to understand his or her relationship with his or her environment. Barresi (2004) made the point clearly ". . . humans come to know their own and another individual's intentional relations through the development of a system of uniform representations of intentional relations that can be applied to one's self as well as to others" (p. 90). He reported the results of research that a child's understanding of his own and another's mental activities grow at the same pace. He confirmed that "an infant has some sort of notion of sharing with the other person an attitude toward some other person or object, and can regulate her behavior toward the external object based on this shared attitude" (p. 95). Such sharing is considered to be "the habitual and original source of all social understanding" (p. 111).

In summary, then, the biological lens explores and aids understanding of human behavior and the human self through lived experience, and language including all our senses, feelings, and actions as potentially aware, relational, imaginative, sharing, complex, continuously emerging, and self-organizing entities. These properties create the freedom, autonomy and adaptive capacity that allows the self to function in a way that suits our survival, purpose, and growth, beyond the limitations of psychology, sociology, and anthropology alone.

Summary

From the literature reviewed in the previous sections, certain conclusions can be drawn. First, there are many varied and often confusing descriptions and definitions of self-awareness. Second, irrespective of the differing views, self-awareness is considered by many to be fundamental as it relates among other notions to self, survival, authenticity and relationships. Third, the concepts of self-awareness and authenticity have been written about extensively for a great many years, and yet the level of self-awareness that exists among individuals generally is ill understood and pitifully low, as is the level of personally observable authenticity, whether in individual relationships, work organizations or society generally. Fourth, more and more of the modern treaties on the topic of self-awareness have a cross- and multidisciplinary perspective. Fifth, it has become apparent that the literature on self-awareness from both the affective sciences and biological perspectives is increasing. Sixth, language is pivotal in understanding human beings, including human nature, self-reflection and self-awareness, while at the same time being the instrument of confusion and misunderstanding in communication. Finally imagination, sharing, autonomy, and intentionality are part of our biological make-up.

There is, therefore, no doubt that self-awareness in authentic relationships and organization requires further exploration leading to a deeper understanding, and using the affective science and biological approaches may well restore the reputation and therefore efficacy of self-awareness. The next chapter sets forth the methodology and rigorous design of the study.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN

To look at any thing, if you would know that thing, you must look at it long:
To look at this green and say "I have spring in these woods," will not do—
You must be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in to the small silences between the leaves,
You must take your time, and touch the very place they issue from.
—Moffitt (1962)

This chapter explains how the methodology for this research study was chosen. The chapter begins with a brief overview of qualitative methods in general, focusing on the ideologies and methodologies espoused by Reason and Rowan (1981). This is followed by a brief discussion of the phenomenological approach and more specifically the heuristic method. The chapter then details the research design, including the selection of co-researchers, data collection and analysis techniques, ethical issues, and assumptions.

Overview of Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methodologies are based on the assumption of a socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; A. Schutz, 1967). The purpose is understanding, the approach is experimental, and the role of the researcher is one of immersion in the environment. Unfortunately, even after some 20 years, the social sciences in general and qualitative research in particular still suffer from the epistemological positivist view of the traditional, natural scientists, i.e., science can be considered true only if it can be observed, measured, and is value and affect-free.

As part of the debate, Reason and Rowan (1981) were openly critical of the old paradigm, which they described as trivializing human beings, reducing them to a set of

variables, and turning them into things or objects. For these reasons, Reason and Rowan (1981) considered positivism neither philosophically nor morally defensible.

In their search for a new approach that would include the messiness, humanness, and intuitiveness of human experience, they supported humanistic psychology, applied behavioral sciences, phenomenology, existentialism, and much of the work derived from group work and organizational development. Moreover, Reason and Rowan (1981) clarified the importance of the "authenticity of the researcher, and the need for the researcher to be involved as a whole person, not hiding behind a role" (p. xvii). This new approach is "collaborative, experiential, heuristic, endogenous and participatory" (p. xx).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), like Reason and Rowan (1981), illuminated this alternative worldview, which they referred to as naturalistic inquiry. Like Reason and Rowan (1981), they also criticized determinism and positivism for the lack of humanness, which they considered to be unethical as well as compromising of validity. The inability of this static, positivist method to "deal with emergent conceptual/empirical formulations" (p. 27) is problematic.

Qualitative research is continually developing and emerging such that a variety of materials, for example journal entries, poetry, emails, scrapbooks, and other forms of data, are also no longer excluded (Creswell, 2003, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, there is increasing involvement of and sensitivity to participants, who are considered to be co-researchers rather than subjects.

Barsade et al. (2003), made clear the need to develop, embrace, and advance innovative research techniques and science that will enable emotions to be understood,

detected, and measured. These novel methods will they suggested need to be "paradigmatic, multimodel hybrids" (p. 6).

Having explored briefly the emerging fortunes of qualitative research, it is necessary to determine the most appropriate approach for this particular study, and it is to a short discussion on phenomenology that we now turn.

Phenomenology

Research associated with understanding human nature and lived experience demands a phenomenological approach, and there are now a wide variety of phenomenological research methodologies available.

The research question dictates the methodology (Newman & Benz, 1998; Patton, 2002), and regardless of the differences among qualitative researchers, almost all "reflect some sort of individual phenomenological perspective" (p. 2). The reasons for selecting a phenomenological approach for this study were twofold. First, as suggested by Patton (2002), the phenomenological approach has as its focus "exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness" (p. 104). Second, a phenomenological study requires the careful and thorough capture and description of how people experience some phenomenon—"how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p. 104).

Clearly the phenomenological approach is appropriate for this research topic, yet the notion of self-inquiry and self-learning considered by Moustakas (1994) to be the main outcome of his heuristic method is also desirable from a personal perspective. Thus began an exploration of the heuristic method.

Heuristic Method

Moustakas (1990, 1994) is the best-known advocate for the heuristic research approach. He talked of the root of the term *heuristic* coming from the Greek word to discover or find and suggested that it refers to "a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (p. 17). Moustakas's (1990) definition of heuristics follows:

> Heuristics is a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs and judgments. This requires a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered. (p. 15)

Interestingly, Weick and Putnam (2006) made the very same point when showing how a combination of Eastern and Western thinking on mindfulness, or awareness, increased organizational effectiveness.

This study is about not only the experience of self-awareness, but also the process of becoming aware (Depraz et al., 2003). Thompson (2007) maintained that "phenomenology . . . is a philosophy of the lived body" and will provide a "framework for assessing the meaning and significance . . . for our human self-understanding" (p. 22).

Patton (2002) referred to heuristics as a form of phenomenology that "brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher" and "focuses on intense human experiences" (p. 107); these two aspects enable the deep understanding of the essence of the phenomenon in question. Heuristic research differs from other phenomenological techniques in a number of ways and emphasizes (1) being connected

and in relationship, (2) portraying the essential meaning and the sharing of the "intrigue and personal significance" in the quest for understanding, (3) integrating acquired knowledge and creating a synthesis, which may include tacit understanding and intuition, and (4) keeping the research participant visible throughout the exploration of the data by "retaining the essence of the person in experience" (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 38-39).

Using the heuristic method certainly accesses qualitative data of the participants' experiences of becoming and being self-awareness because "it seeks to reveal more fully the essence or meaning" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 42). Heuristic methodology additionally allows the primary researcher to be actively involved in and be part of the study and continue her path of growth and development, using a topic that "is strongly connected to" her own "identity and selfhood" (p. 40). Moreover there would be the opportunity to be engaged with a number of co-researchers who were equally interested in the phenomenon and their own development. Moustakas (1990) described the long-term relationship with the co-researchers as sharing with them the meanings and essences of the phenomenon resulting from the reflection and analysis. While the interview is the usual method of collecting data, often taking the form of an extended dialogue between the researcher and the co-researcher, in the heuristic approach, other data, such as poems, stories, artwork, journals, dialogues, and narrative descriptions, can also be included in the process. Moustakas (1990) initially suggested that a heuristic study could be undertaken by one co-researcher, but he later suggested that as many as 10 to 15 co-researchers could provide better, wider, and more extensive meanings.

While on this journey of exploration into the most appropriate research method for this study, the work of Braud and Anderson (1998) became increasingly influential,

particularly their *intuitive inquiry,* which, like Reason and Rowan (1981), they suggest is a development of the heuristic method. Interestingly, both Reason and Rowan (1981) and Patton (2002) suggested that intuition needs to be a part of qualitative inquiry.

"Transpersonal psychology—the foundation of intuitive inquiry as defined by Anderson (1998) seeks to delve deeply into the most profound and inexplicable aspects of human experiences" (p. 69) and this seems particularly appropriate for the exploration of a phenomenon which has defied years of research in not becoming common practice. Anderson (1998) suggests "bringing the compassionate heart to scientific inquiry", which she further offers will produce "qualitatively different" (p. 71) research from that which is emotionally detached. Likening the intuitive method to heuristic method, she emphasizes "the unique and personal voice of the individual researcher and depends on the experience and insights of the researcher at every phase of the…process" (p. 75). She continues: "the depth of the researcher's intuitive understanding gives a universal voice and character to the research findings" (p. 75).

Following this brief exploration of research methods, the most appropriate method for this particular study was determined to be a heuristic approach (Moustakas, 1990, 1994) incorporating the philosophical underpinnings of intuitive and human inquiry (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Reason & Rowan, 1981).

The reasons for selecting the heuristic methodology are: (1) the need to incorporate compassion and greater emotion into the study of a phenomenon which has defied explication for so long; (2) to meet the objective of the primary researcher of continued deep level personal development while incorporating the primary researcher's subjective experience and insights; (3) to have the freedom to select the most suitable

format for data analysis. Further details will be made clear in the research design section to which we now turn.

Research Design

This section on the research design includes a detailed description of the elements of the design methodology. Four steps were undertaken: participant selection, data collection, data incubation, and data analysis.

Co-researcher Selection

The participants for this study are known as co-researchers, as noted from both heuristics (Moustakas, 1990) and human inquiry (Reason & Rowan, 1981). The criteria used for purposive selection—intensity sampling—of co-researchers were as follows (see also Appendix A):

1. Ability and willingness to devote the time needed for the interviews, maintain a journal, take part in regular and lengthy member checks, and be comfortable with the recording of the interview(s)
2. First-hand intense experience of and interest in the phenomenon being studied: self-awareness, its emergence, impediment and impact
3. First-hand and current experience of being involved in relationships with individuals within a work organization

Eight co-researchers were used for this study. Due to the high level of commitment required to participate in the study, potential co-researchers were informed of the participation requirements during a telephone interview to assess their suitability for the study and to allow a self-selection process.

Possible co-researchers were recommended by personal and business acquaintances, who were well-known to the primary researcher. In addition they had an understanding of, and were interested in and/or personally experienced in the phenomenon in question. Through extended discussions over several months these acquaintances had became aware of the criteria for co-researcher selection. These criteria can be found in Appendix A. A template for invitation to participate in the study can be seen in Appendix B. A number of colleagues offered to participate themselves. While these offers were appreciated, it was clear that self-selection of the co-researchers was not part of the methodology. All understood the logic for having to be sponsored by an intermediary for the selection to remain clean and uncontaminated by prior knowledge. Moreover it was considered important that the co-researchers be recommended by a third party who could attest to their level of self-awareness. Clearly as is the nature of a heuristic research study, the primary co-researcher was self-selected as part of the study and considered herself as having met the selection criteria.

Data Collection

Data were collected through three semi-structured interviews, conducted over a period of 3 weeks (Seidman, 1998). Of Patton's (2002) three approaches of collecting qualitative research data, Moustakas (1990) suggested that the "informal conversational interview that relies on a spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the co-researcher participates in a natural unfolding dialogue with the primary investigator" (p. 47) is the most consistent with the heuristic method.

Each interview conducted was in-depth, semi-structured, and open-ended and had a unique focus, following Seidman's (1998) recommendation. The first interview focused

on the experiences and relationships which resulted in the co-researcher becoming or being prevented from becoming self-aware in his or her childhood. The focus of the second interview was on contemporary adult experiences and relationships that resulted in the co-researcher becoming or being prevented from becoming self-aware. The focus of the third interview was on making sense and meaning of the experiences and relationships explored in the first two interviews. While the interview questions presented in Appendix D formed the framework for the data collection, the interviews of necessity were more fluid and dialogic, such that the process of making sense was apparent throughout all the interviews. Seidman (1998) also suggested that the questions most relevant in such interviews would follow "from what the participant has said" (p. 76). Patton (2002) suggested that the "researcher becomes a facilitator, collaborator and teacher in support of those engaging in their own inquiry" (p. 269). This is indeed what happened.

Each interview lasted between 1½ and 2½ hours. As the interview progressed, in-depth probing, clarification, summarizing, testing understanding, and appropriate self-disclosure were used by the primary researcher. Self-disclosure is a vital aspect of relationship building, which enables increased intimacy in communication, authenticity, and a healthy personality (Luft, 1969; Jourard, 1964) and positive intersubjectivity (A. Schutz, 1967). The level of self-disclosure by the primary researcher included sharing common threads, feelings, experiences, situations and relationships in order to encourage greater disclosure by the co-researchers and to serve the building of a trusting and open relationship. Precise description, measurement or calculation are not possible due to the subjective nature of the relationship. However co-researcher comments such as "I've

never told anyone this before" and "you know more about me than my family members with the exception of my wife" were taken as a subjective measure of the appropriateness and usefulness of the primary researcher's self-disclosure.

The interviews were held wherever the co-researchers felt most comfortable or was most convenient—in homes (3), work offices (4), and an independent office at the University (1). The interviews took place over a period of 10 weeks, with an average of 3 per week, although five were held in one week, and with no more than 3 interviews taking place on the same day. The gap between interviews for each co-researcher was usually one week, although the third interview for 1 researcher had to be postponed twice—once due to ill health, and once for business scheduling difficulties. This alteration from the 1 week Seidman proposed was to allow sufficient time for recording journal entries. Immediately after the interviews the recordings were listened to as they were transferred onto the computer. Transcription began immediately, being undertaken in any available time. No data analysis was undertaken until all the transcripts had been completed, checked for accuracy and returned from the co-researchers. The protocol for the interviews is provided in Appendix C.

The primary researcher transcribed all the interviews—benefiting from the total immersion in the data during the process—which took over 250 hours and resulted in over 700 pages of single-spaced narrative. The transcripts were sent to the co-researchers for their comments, amendments, and clarifications. Seven responded to the transcripts from the first and second interviews and 6 from the third. The number and type of comments ranged from relatively insignificant to slight. Examples include English translations of Spanish words and phrases; additional comments to add emphasis;

spelling of foreign names; rephrasing to improve sense and meaning; changing a word or phrase—even though it had been used originally in the interview—to enhance a phrase or sound less critical, correcting misinterpretations due to inaudible recording or responding to requests for more details. One co-researcher wanted "to take out all the imperfections of speech and remove disjointed thoughts. Since that is not the idea, I will contain my urges for perfection and just ensure they are accurate reflections of me, my beliefs, and our conversations."

While the primary researcher was not formally interviewed, she conducted a 'self-interview' answering the same interview questions. She kept a journal and undertook significant self-exploration, such that her contribution could be included in the findings—in an individual depiction, as part of the collective essence and in the creative synthesis. Each co-researcher was also asked to keep a journal to record any dreams, thoughts, feelings, insights and behavior connected with self-awareness and authentic relationships and to collect any other artifact or document that they considered appropriate. Three co-researchers provided details of significant dreams, or copies of poetry they had written. The same three co-researchers—in addition to the primary co-researcher—provided lengthy and detailed journal entries, and two provided shorter, less detailed entries. In spite of being reminded and cajoled, the remaining co-researchers were unable or unwilling to engage with this part of the study. Apologies were offered, and of lack of time was the reason given for not being able to engage with this aspect of the study.

Data Incubation

Both Anderson (1998) from the intuitive approach and Moustakas (1994) from the heuristic approach encouraged the notion of incubation to allow adequate time for the

creative processes to work, and it is suggested that the primary co-researcher "removes her focus from the research inquiry," allowing "the intuitive process to unfold naturally and spontaneously." This is very much in line with the paradoxical theory of social change (Beisser, 1970), which encourages a 'being with' the process of change rather than trying to make it happen. Moustakas (1994) also suggested that the data be "set aside for a while" (p. 51), which would allow fresh eyes to examine the data after the interval.

Several months were spent in this phase, which at times felt quite unproductive and it was during this time that the primary researcher engaged in coaching to great benefit.

Data Analysis

Data analysis—or "illumination" the term used by Moustakas (1990, p. 29), to become aware of and cluster qualities and themes—involves accommodation of the data to allow meaning, understanding, discovery, and intuitive awareness to emerge into patterns and themes of the experiences, thoughts, and feelings within the data. To take account of the heuristic approach of this study, both thematic and phenomenological analysis was undertaken.

Once the transcripts were returned, they along with the recordings were used to create individual depictions. These were created without the use of software. As with the transcripts they were again sent to the co-researchers for their amendment and/or approval. All but 1 of the co-researchers responded with comments of a similar nature as those received on the transcripts.

Data analysis software was used to help manage the data from the individual depictions. MAXqda software was selected for this study for several reasons. First, it is

user-friendly, in that it provides a seamless integration into other Microsoft software. Second, technical support is available, and it also represented good value. Moreover, it has extensive and differentiated functions that combine with a unique and highly advanced visualization, enabling the processes of color-coding, browsing, and memo-writing, which can be especially useful in data management. Each individual depiction was coded independently of the others to ensure codes were not assumed. In most cases as many as 160 codes were identified—many spanning different aspects of the co-researcher's story—which were collapsed into approximately 25 clusters. Some, not all were common across all co-researchers. Despite some helpful features of the MAXqda working from a small screen with so much data presented challenges, so mind maps on white boards were used to classify the data for use in distilling the individual depiction to its essence. The list of collapsed codes, together with the corrected individual depiction were used to create a mind map filling the entire white board—approximately 24ft x 4ft. This information was then transferred to a second white board divided into the 2 x 2 chart of self/other; child/adult. The contents of each chart were typed into the computer and photographs of both white boards were taken before proceeding into the next co-researcher.

The next step in Moustakas' (1990) methodology is to "select two or three" co-researchers "who clearly exemplify the group as a whole. The researcher then develops individual portraits of these persons . . . presented in such a way that both the phenomenon investigated and the individual persons emerge in a vital and unified manner" (p. 52). This step was not undertaken for reasons of perceived redundancy and questionable benefit to the overall research in that it would add no additional value.

Both Moustakas (1990) and Anderson (1998) required synthesis of the data, as in an inductive approach. Moustakas' term is *creative synthesis*, which he described as "an original integration of the material that reflects the researcher's intuition, imagination and personal knowledge of meanings and essences of the experience" (p. 50) being investigated. This final step encourages "freedom in characterizing the phenomenon" and includes the tacit-intuitive awareness of the primary researcher (p. 52). A collage was created on a 30" x 40" white pin board including important aspects of the whole study and a photograph of this can be seen at the end of Chapter 6.

Patton (2002) explained: "The rigor of heuristic inquiry comes from systematic observation of and dialogues with self and others, as well as depth interviews of co-researchers" (p. 108), and Craig (1978) suggested that this method of inquiry "affirms the possibility that one can live deeply and passionately in the moment, be fully immersed in mysteries and miracles, and still be engaged in meaningful research experience" (p. 20).

As with the transcripts and the individual depictions, so too the whole of Chapter 4 was provided to the co-researchers as the third and final opportunity to check for accuracy, confirm the dependability and reliability of findings, and make any amendments or additions they considered necessary. 4 co-researchers responded to this final check. For some there were additional comments on the abridged version of the individual depiction at the start of the chapter and one requested the removal of an example which she felt might identify her. Another simply said "Good job! There is nothing I felt needed changing." Yet another thanked me for "capturing everything accurately."

Additionally throughout the process additional information was usually provided when requested. These requests included for example definitions, clarification and thoughts and reactions to their own learning throughout the process. Four co-researchers and the primary researcher provided details on their learnings from the process and/or poems or other data that could be included in the creative synthesis. The primary researcher kept all the co-researchers informed of progress and emailed them periodically, receiving encouragement in return.

Verification and Trustworthiness

Creswell (1998) listed eight methods to ensure that evidence and findings are verifiable. These include negative case analysis; member checks; external audits; triangulation; prolonged engagement; peer review; rich, thick description; and clarification of researcher bias. All except the last method (clarifying researcher bias) were also suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and the first four were additionally suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). Creswell (1998) suggested that at least two need to be included in any given qualitative study.

As mentioned, member checks were used throughout the process. The overall process has lasted for 20 months, providing evidence of prolonged engagement. Given the requirement in a heuristic, or intuitive inquiry for the study to include individual and collective depictions of the co-researchers and the final creative synthesis, rich, thick descriptions have also emerged from this study.

Neither Creswell (1998) nor Wolcott (1992) nor Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that the term *validity* is appropriate for naturalistic paradigm research. Until a more suitable term is available, Wolcott (1992) preferred the term *understanding,* and

Creswell suggested that the term *verification* is more suitable than validity for the purposes of qualitative research. On the other hand, Lincoln and Guba (1985) preferred the term *trustworthiness*, or the ability to convince the reader that any findings and conclusions are worthy of attention.

Such trustworthiness is built on four criteria. The first is credibility, which is indicative of a fit between the findings and the way the researcher has represented them. The second is transferability, such that sufficient detail is provided to allow a similar study to be undertaken. The third is the notion of dependability, which relates to the process of the inquiry as being thorough, with supporting evidence and good documentation. The fourth is confirmability, which establishes that the data and its interpretation are literal and not figurative. In this study, credibility can be evidenced by the limited number of changes required by the co-researchers in the transcripts the individual depictions and Chapter 4. Full details have been included in the descriptions of the methodological process to ensure transferability. The coding process has been described in full and outcomes of the coding have been securely retained. Photographs were taken of the white board maps, together with soft and hard copy notes of the codes and clusters from the whiteboards. These have been kept and could be made available if required thus ensuring dependability. Confirmability is represented by the quantity of the co-researchers' quotes throughout Chapters 4 and 5.

Ethical Issues

It was considered unlikely that co-researchers would experience any risk in this study, with the exception of the unlikely possibility of loss of confidentiality. However, every effort was made to keep information safe, and anonymity was maintained, with

code names used throughout the study. Further, if unresolved issues had surfaced in an emotional way during the interviews, the primary researcher would have been supportive, and consideration would have been given to suspending and rescheduling the interview if needed. In the event, this was not an issue. Each participant signed an informed consent form (see Appendix E) and was allowed to terminate his or her participation in the study at any time.

Researcher Bias

There may be some concern regarding "researcher bias" based on the study design; however, in intuitive inquiry (Braud & Anderson, 1998), the primary researcher's subjectivity is viewed as a legitimate and necessary part of the data.

Bracketing is the Gestalt term for "putting aside preconceptions about what is relevant" (Yontef, 1993, p. 186) and enabling a dialogic I-Thou (Buber, 1937), respectful and nonjudgmental relationship to develop. The terms *bracketing* and *epoché* are seemingly used interchangeably by some qualitative researchers (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002) and psychologists to describe how understanding, knowledge, and judgments are set aside by first looking inside to become aware of, and then suspending, personal bias and preconceptions. From the psychologist perspective, Moustakas (1995) described the challenge of bracketing in a different way as to "move the issue or concern out of its everyday associations, biases, preconceptions, habits and routines, out of the usual way of viewing it, by placing it in brackets for focused investigation" (p. 194). This is in some ways similar to the view of Sheets-Johnstone (1999), although when she used the term "natural attitude," she was describing our learned cognitive attitude, which needs to be suspended for us to really attend to our experience of the phenomenon (p. 267). In other

words, bracketing in her terms allows us to observe and see clearly what is within the brackets, without pre-existing attitudes, conceptualizations (theories and models), and values that might contaminate what is being observed. Throughout the writing up of the findings, regular meetings with the Committee Chair provided the necessary clarification of and challenges to the data to ensure that primary researcher bias was not at work.

Assumptions Inherent in the Study

There are three main assumptions inherent in this study:

1. Self-awareness denotes a way of being in relationship with self and other—as defined previously—in interaction (Gallagher, 2005). Being self-aware leads to greater authenticity, which leads to improved relationships.
2. Being "in relationship" is one of the most fundamental aspects of growth and development. Were individuals more able to be who they were intended to be—that is, more self-aware and authentic—their lives, and particularly their relationships, would be more satisfying and fulfilled.
3. Self-awareness (or lack thereof) impacts the authenticity and intimacy of relationships with self and other.

CHAPTER 4:

"IN THEIR OWN WORDS"—FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

. . . .But don't be satisfied with poems and stories
of how things have gone with others.
Unfold your own myth, without complicated explanations,
so everyone will understand the passage . . .
—*Rumi,* (Barks & Green, 1991)

Since this study seeks to answer the question 'How do individuals experience being and becoming self-aware?' this chapter discusses the co-researchers' responses to the overarching question and subquestions. These subquestions sought to elicit examples of general and specific life experiences which contributed to (1) the emergence of self-awareness, (2) the barriers to self-awareness (3) the role of self-awareness in the individual's experience of authentic relationships both with themselves and other. Thus, the lived experience of being and becoming self-aware and the barriers to being and becoming self aware in the context of authentic relationships with themselves and others of all the co-researchers, including the primary researcher are explored.

While the heuristic methodology calls for individual depictions, using as much of the co-researchers' own words as possible, these depictions were necessarily detailed and lengthy. Therefore the complete depictions are presented in full in Appendices F–N. However in the first section there is a summary of characteristics in Table 4-1 and a shortened version of the essence of each individual co-researcher using some examples of their data. The second section presents the collective essence of the lived experience of becoming self-aware, and more data are included.

Table 4-1
Characteristics of Co-researchers

	1 Candelita	**2 Anne**	**3 Sparky**	**4 Abby**	**5 Christine**	**6 Mercedes**	**7 Lee**	**8 John**	**9 Jenny**
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	F	M	M	F
Age	58	49	46	53	46	53	35	51	57
Ethnic origin	European/ Caucasian	European/ Caucasian	American/ Caucasian	Russian/ Caucasian	American/ Caucasian	American/ Caucasian	American/ Caucasian	European/ Caucasian	European/ Caucasian
Birthplace	Spain	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.K.	Far East
Parents	F died; M still alive	M died at 41 (A was 11); F died in 2000 (A was 40)	F (alcoholic) died in 1996; M died in 2001	F died; M still alive	F died in 2005; M still alive	Both still alive	Both still alive	M died (J was 7); F died in 2002	Both died in 1993 (aged 73; J was 42)
Siblings	Third of four, first of two girls	Third of four, second of three girls	Youngest of three girls	Second, only girl	First of three girls	Eldest with younger brother	Second of eight, first boy	Youngest, two older sisters	Second with older sister
Mother's highest education; career	High School; homemaker	Master's; homemaker	High school; clerical	High school; dance teacher, p/t secretary	Homemaker	4 years of College; Teacher, accountant	High school; homemaker	High school	Secondary school; clerical, social worker
Father's highest education; career	Advanced level Military, Engineer	High school; chemical engineer	High school; military	High school; government engineer	Bachelor's; military	Bachelor's; military	Bachelor's; marketing, carpenter, reservist	High school; corporate salesman	Secondary school; col., gov. service
Religion	Catholic*	Unitarian	Catholic	Jewish	Lutheran	Protestant	Catholic**	Catholic*	Protestant*
Highest education	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	High school	Doctorate	Bachelor's	Doctorate	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Master's
Where educated	Spain, U.K.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A., Spain	U.S.A.	U.K. India, Germany	Malaysia, U.K.

	1 Candelita	2 Anne	3 Sparky	4 Abby	5 Christine	6 Mercedes	7 Lee	8 John	9 Jenny
Home as child	Spain	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A., Japan, Europe	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.K.	Malaysia, U.K.
Marital history	First 28 yrs: husband died at 54 (C was 48); second life partner of 8 yrs	Married same man twice after 6 yrs apart: 6 + 15 yrs	First ended in divorce, second very recent	Married 31 yrs	Married 7 yrs to man 8 yrs her junior	First ended in divorce; he was abusive, alcoholic, unfaithful	Married	Unmarried	First ended in divorce after 3 yrs; second, 6 yrs
Marital relationship	Provide safety and challenge to aid develop-ment	Best friend he is stay-at-home dad	Comfortable	Deep commitment	Very Deep	Equal supportive	Best Friend	NA	Equal respectful supportive nourishing
Children	4	3	0	3	0	1 stepson	0	0	1 step-daughter
Home as adult	U.S.A.	U.S.A., Middle East	U.S.A., Canada	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.K., France, Germany, India, Africa	U.K., U.S.A.
Career	University professor and writer	Director, financial services	Director, financial services	Special education	Massage therapist	Self-employed corporate consultant	Active duty military Officer	Monk, fund raising coordi-nator	Self-employed corporate consultant

* Rejected organized religion of childhood and replaced with own relationship with God or own form of spirituality.
** Rejected organized religion of childhood, which has not been replaced.

The Individual Essence of Becoming Self-Aware

Candelita

Candelita is a 58-year-old European Caucasian widow with a degree in philology. She has lived in the United States since emigrating from Spain with her now-deceased husband over 20 years ago. She has four children and is now in a long-term relationship with her second partner. She works at a university. She was the third of four children, the first female of two.

Childhood. As a child, Candelita "listened a lot . . . and was not a very talkative." She described herself as aggressive and "talked . . . with a lack of respect" to her "very busy" mother, with whom her relationship was "not a very close or loving" one. As the eldest daughter, she "was always helping . . . with household chores . . .because my Mum was not . . . could not do all the stuff." Religion was important to her, and she regarded herself as experiencing mystical events and having a "connection" directly to God. Her mother was distant, and consequently they did not have a good relationship. While her father was angry and always shouting, she felt "much closer" and "more connected" to him and felt very loved by him. She also "felt a connection" with her grandparents even those who had died before she was born.

She remembered affectionately one "favorite" aunt who was loving and warm and who provided "the attention that my Mum couldn't." Another aunt, her father's eldest sister, was mean and would leave her sitting at the breakfast table for hours until she finished her food, although she was only 2 or 3 years old during "month long visits away from home" with her two brothers. Candelita remembered having a "sense of discomfort,

of being there, left by myself and not understanding what was going on." Apart from this particular aunt, Candelita described "a good extended family."

She recalled one positive and one negative teacher and two best or very good friends during her school days. A Jesuit priest who became her spiritual director played a very significant part in her life, as did a family with whom she lived away from home during a year's scholarship to a university. She felt this mother adopted her and treated her as a real daughter.

Adulthood. As an adult, Candelita continued to maintain her connection with God, describing herself to be in conversation and dancing with God. However, as a result of a succession of priests and one in particular by whom she felt "small, crushed physically and emotionally," she turned away from religion and towards a spirituality "that does not use religion." She described herself as "having given my soul to God" and "does not separate her work from her life," still maintaining a "mystical" quality. Nor did she separate her mind from her body. Indeed, her self-awareness was deeply rooted in her bodily awareness, which she was able to describe fully. She believed herself to be undertaking "deep soul work" embracing her "vulnerability with humility" and believing that "peace equals love." Yet she was frustrated by the fact that our current language is insufficient to express this healing work she was engaged in.

Meditation, yoga, and prayer were of immense importance to her daily life, as was the poetry that enabled her to find her voice when she was 30 or 35, when she began to be in "conversation . . . in dialogue with poets" and create dialogues between them in the service of healing and learning. She was aware that her mood could easily descend towards depression, although she was able to catch and reverse that downward trend.

The death of her husband at the very young age of 54 had a considerable impact on Candelita, although writing, reading poetry and being in dialogue with poets not only helped her to cope with her husband's illness and subsequent death, but also had an impact on her sense of self. Her children encouraged her to be herself and continue with her writing, and through them she learned to "give thanks." Her relationships were based on trust and intuition, and she felt blessed that within her second life partnership she was able to continue to learn and experience a deep sense of spirituality, connection, and healing.

Her experience of organizations was that they suppressed creativity and were often negative.

Anne

Anne is a 48-year-old, twice-married American Caucasian woman of American/European descent with three children. During her first marriage she lived abroad for 2 years. She has a bachelor's degree and has worked for the same organization for 21 years. After her divorce, she remained single for 6 years and then remarried her first husband.

Childhood. Anne was the third born of four children and the second of three females. She had a "very troubled" childhood: when she was around 11 or 12, her mother died following two bouts with cancer. An elder sister, aunt, and grandmother also died during the same time period. Prior to this, she had had a "difficult relationship" with her mother. She had also disliked and fought with the sister who died, such that they could not share a room. For many years, even into adulthood, Anne believed herself to be responsible for the deaths of her mother and sister. She described herself as being angry,

and this anger was directed towards her father, who following the death of his wife, daughter, mother, and sister was unable to hold himself and his family together from an emotional perspective. During this time Anne "disappeared" and described the "many, many times crying alone in my room and nobody talked, nobody." During this period she also struggled with her schoolwork.

Anne chose not to talk to anyone about her troubles, not even her six close childhood friends, because she felt "embarrassed at not having a normal two-parent family." She did recognize within herself a "powerful need for attention." This need for attention was met in part by an uncle she adored who was always aware of Anne as an individual and a female next-door neighbor, who was a teacher, gave her time and attention. She also spent many hours with her father when he was trying to teach her science. "Religion did not play a large role" in her childhood experience, although books and learning did. "We went to the library every week and we got as many books as we wanted."

Adulthood. As an adult, Anne found organized religion unimportant and "too restricting" so she referred to herself as "spiritual" and as believing in a "guiding force . . . that is bigger and that defies conscious definition." Books remained important to her, as were self-exploration and self-reflection, which she did either when she ran or was in conversation with her journal. She described herself as an introvert in Myers-Briggs terms who consciously kept her personal, business, and family lives quite separate.

The constant and persistent belief that she had been "responsible for the deaths of her mother and sister" coupled with a particularly horrible relationship she had during the

period after her divorce, led her to seek the help of a therapist, and this was "the beginning of her self-exploration" self-reflection, and resulting self-awareness.

The erstwhile development culture in the company in which she worked was significant in Anne's emergence and continued development as a self-aware person. Development was encouraged: "we have done a whole lot of assessments" and these opportunities to learn about herself through a variety of mediums positively impacted her self-awareness. "It's just been tremendously enlightening over the years." She had for many years found good mentors to support her and also engaged an organizational development consultant to help with this process. While her career had progressed, she had her share of difficult roles and suggested that the culture in the company was "changing negatively, where people, relationships, and development are no longer considered important, creating a low level of trust."

In spite of her self-awareness, Anne was not open to people in the organization generally and would not display her vulnerability. She was relatively happy "playing the corporate game" through appropriate appearance, language, behavior, and positioning using learned techniques. Thus, as in childhood, she continued to "hide her true self" and acknowledged that this caused "internal conflicts." She described herself as "goal driven" with a deep knowledge of her talents often covered by a "lack of self-confidence and feelings of being an imposter" in a number of roles she took on. She referred to herself as being "an enabling, empowering team-oriented communicator."

Anne had an excellent and close relationship with her husband: "he's just even keel. And he's just all the things I didn't have growing up" and children, from whom she continued to learn about herself; she also had close relationships with her brother, sister,

and their respective families. “I’m very close with family.” She maintained contact with friends from school and described her father’s second wife—“a warm and loving woman”—as having a significant impact on her.

Anne did not talk much about her emotions, although during the interviews her sadness was evident in her facial expression and tone when talking about the loss of a favorite uncle and she displayed joy again through her facial expression and tone when describing her re-marriage and current life: “it’s the biggest love story you’ve ever heard” and “. . . you couldn’t find a better marriage. You couldn’t! I couldn’t be happier. I couldn’t be more thankful.” Throughout all three interviews she laughed consistently, whether she was describing pleasant or horrible situations. She also expressed and displayed feelings of desperation when talking about the “lack of corporate interest” in organizational development. Moreover, she displayed feelings of discomfort by tapping loudly on the table and sighing deeply during the interviews. Additionally, feelings of excitement were evident in her voice as she spoke about a new challenging opportunity at work.

Sparky

Sparky is a 46-year-old, twice-married, American Caucasian woman of American/European descent without children. She graduated from high school and currently works at the director level in financial services. During her relatively short-lived first marriage, she lived abroad for a few years and following her divorce remained single for some years. She lived with her partner for 4 years before marrying him in 2007.

Childhood. Sparky was the youngest of three females and as a child was told she had been an accident, unplanned and unwanted. Moreover, she felt she “should have been

a boy" since her father dressed her as a boy, took her to the bar, called her by a boy's name, and spent much time with her in the garage. While her father was an alcoholic, he was her greatest supporter and champion and was immensely proud of her academic success.

It was clear in her family that "children should be seen and not heard" and she felt she needed "to hide myself . . . and keep my mouth shut" in order to survive her mother's wrath, physical violence, and abuse. She spent little time expressing her needs, wants, or desires because they were usually denied, and she felt unnourished by her mother's style of caring. She had no recollection of ever holding hands with her mother. Physical discipline was a feature of her childhood and even 'legitimate' anger towards her middle sister, with whom she had an equally difficult relationship, was punished. There was an "underlying competition and suspicion" and no trust between the two. Even now she felt she had "nothing in common" with her and did "not want a relationship with her." Sparky had a "close relationship" with her elder sister, who was "probably my biggest supporter" but she was much older and moved away after her marriage.

Sparky, however, had several local friends in whose families she found the love and affection that her own family could not provide. She remained in touch with many of these friends today, "seeing them a couple of times a year." There was also a childless couple who were neighbors, who virtually adopted her, buying "me presents for my birthday." She would "spend time with them up north . . . in their cabin" and felt "very loved" by them because of the time they spent with her.

Throughout her school days Sparky was academically bright and successful. "Having better grades than my sister" allowed her to gain "much of my self-respect." Her

father acknowledged her to be "the smartest of my three children." Equally, tough, blunt and encouraging teachers saw her potential, and were of great significance in the development of her sense of self, being "disappointed if I did not measure up to those high expectations." While she was academically gifted and won a scholarship to college, she only attended one semester, much to her father's disappointment. She felt accountable for her mother's misery and hoped to free her father from an unhappy marriage so left college, believing it would allow her parents to divorce, which in the end never happened. She believed this gap in her education would hold her back from making further progress in her career, and she hid the fact that she was not degreed from her peers.

Sparky was brought up as a Catholic; attending church every Sunday was a family social event. Sparky and her sister were the only two girls among the local children who regularly rode bikes with a particular priest, "who was arrested and jailed for molesting little boys." This incident had an enormous impact on the family, who stopped attending church for a while, and although Sparky referred to herself as religious she no longer attended church.

Sparky started to "become aware" of her physical self when she was in her early teens and talked about her development with school friends. She also began to be self-reflective around the same time.

Adulthood. Sparky considered herself to be a "late bloomer," as someone who continued to learn and grow. She went into therapy following the death of her father and believed this to be the key to becoming self-aware, although she still had issues with intimacy and anger. In fact, she disliked herself intensely when she became angry, since

being angry reminded her of her mother. Her anger could still be triggered easily, and she became sarcastic and was unable to stay in a conversation once her anger was aroused. Her passion and sadness were often experienced by others as anger also. She described herself as "having a high need for inclusion and affection" (in terms of the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior assessment, FIRO-B), acceptance, recognition, trust, and confidence. She also suggested that integrity was "a big part of her DNA." Her failed first marriage had a negative impact on her sense of self and confidence.

Being able to be herself was important, yet this could only happen when she felt sufficient comfort—which her old school friends provided, but which was absent in her working life. "So if I'm comfortable I'm totally comfortable and I feel like I can say anything and be accepted, but I feel like there aren't a lot . . . there aren't as many of those opportunities as I would like." She described the culture of the organization in which she worked as having changed for the worse, being much less accepting, and being one of "unhealthy compromise." Her development had been supported by an organizational development consultant and supervisors who were tough in the same way as her teachers.

She spent time regularly on self-reflection and was aware of physical reactions such as insomnia, headaches, stomachaches, and "not being able to be fully present when I experience struggles with relationships or feel hurt or frustrated." During the interviews, Sparky disclosed her emotions often in the form of laughter and sighs and believed that she emitted emotional vibrations through her physical self when displeased or unhappy, which were very visible for all to see. Yet she said that she was unable to cry.

Abby

Abby is a 53-year-old Caucasian woman, the youngest of two children born to a first-generation Russian Jewish couple. She is a married mother of three working in the nonprofit world of special education. She has three advanced degrees and has lived in the United States all her life.

Childhood. Abby was the much-wanted daughter and dearly loved. That said, it was a troubled household, caused by the unsocial behavior of her sibling, whom her parents did not know how to handle. From an early age, therefore, Abby "tried to please and not be a bother." Indeed, many of her actions were intended to keep her parents happy. She also had to be quite independent and take care of herself because her mother did not have the necessary parenting skills. In fact she parented her parents, something about which she felt much anger. She described herself as being "pretty self-directed . . . having to figure things out for myself." She was protective and respectful of others,

> I got into a physical fight with another little girl because she was picking on my friend and I had this sense of protecting . . . I needed to protect someone who was weaker and shy and so I just remember I had a habit of looking our for other little kids that didn't seem to be as strong and at that time I hit somebody in the face and the mother came by and said your little girl's hit my little girl and I remember saying, well she was hurting this other child.

she felt that she became invisible. Abby did not feel "seen at home" because "my parents saw me as they wanted to see me."

From an early age she followed in her mother's footsteps and began dancing and so was physically fit. She described herself as curious and her childhood as generally happy, particularly attending Jewish summer camp, which was pivotal to her development. It was a place she could be herself and learn what it meant to be Jewish.

Although her parents were Jewish, they were not engaged in the community and did not practice their faith in the home. Abby did, however, have one aunt who provided insight into the Jewish rituals.

While in elementary school, Abby was pretty bored and on a middle track, calling herself "a nobody" until she became aware that she could and indeed wanted to take control of her life. She wanted to "join her friends in the high group" so worked hard and became an honor roll student, without her parents' encouragement. Her straight A's brought her the recognition she desired, and her self-esteem came from her academic success. "I gained a lot of self-esteem and encouragement through my academics . . ." She was good at languages and writing, and her teachers, who she described in general as being positive and encouraging, recognized this ability in her. One English teacher in particular became a mentor during her first year in high school, and at last Abby felt "seen."

Abby did not believe her parents took good care of her, and she was quite clear that they did not share the same fundamental values. While she acknowledged that they behaved dishonestly from time to time, the time she was caught shoplifting and was interviewed by the store detective was a turning point for her. She disliked dishonesty intensely.

Adulthood. As an adult, Abby acknowledged she has a strong need for recognition, to be taken seriously, and to make a contribution where none had previously been made, particularly making a difference on a humane level. She was self-directing, self-reflecting, and had a strong sense of self, believing that much of her self-awareness came in early adulthood as she struggled to make sense of existence.

Abby referred to herself as curious, serious, and intense and offered those qualities as part of the reason she had few friends. When she did connect with others, these connections were based on strong intuition, which she described as 'soul.' However, she "bonded with several like-minded women" during her doctoral program, and while they no longer keep in touch, she described the relationships as "really special and fun." In addition, she had one friendship of 19 years, which functioned at a very deep level, connecting both cognitively and emotionally; and two confidantes, all of whom provided feedback. Abby also had a mentor whom she described as "a very bright woman" and the relationship with her was "personal, professional, and religious."

Abby believed that her work helped her to understand herself—"working with challenging kids and adults—had a huge impact on my sense of self and self-awareness."

Abby met her husband-to-be when they were teenagers, and they continued to raise each other ". . . so on some level we raised each other for the remainder of the time." They have remained married for 34 years. She described him as her "closest friend" and their relationship as "intense and committed; they both put each other first." This relationship, together with "the deep emotional, intense, and sometimes spiritual relationships" she had with her children, also had an important impact on her self-awareness. She referred to herself as being "very family oriented" with clear boundaries between her home and work life and strove for balance. She could hold herself back when necessary but "did not have the energy or desire to not be who she was—extremely transparent . . . a need to be genuine . . . passionate . . . self-directed . . . with a persuasive nature . . . private, and resilient. Having integrity . . . being caring and loving, intellectual, and cherished" were how she believed others would describe her. She "is aware of that

whole physical nature . . .” and also had a strong intuition, yet struggled to describe this, concluding that the language in current use was insufficient to describe this.

Abby was able to step back and “deal methodically” with difficult emotional situations before attending to her own needs, but she often became physically sick (usually with headaches) in the process. Abby understood the connection between her physical self and her emotional and cognitive well-being: “I’m very keenly aware of where I’m putting the stress in my body and what I need to do about it.” She was very keen to introduce a sense of balance into her life: “. . . plus my new word’s balance” to reduce the amount of stress she experienced. She worked out regularly and was in good physical shape. During the interviews, she expressed her emotions with more laughter than sighs—even though the laughter arose occasionally when she was talking about unpleasant events—and with the odd, excited scream.

Christine

Christine is a 46-year-old married Caucasian woman. She spent several years of her childhood living abroad. She is the firstborn of three girls to an American couple, whose families have been farmers for generations. She and her husband have decided to be child free, and she works as a massage therapist, having completely changed careers a few years ago.

Childhood. Christine’s memory was of always moving, since her father was in the military. She remembered him as a very angry man, verbally abusive and much more emotionally disengaged after his return from Vietnam. She was never allowed to say no to her father, which resulted in her feeling powerless with men and being unable to set limits. On the other hand, she felt much closer to her mother, who stayed at home and

enjoyed raising, playing with, taking care of, and helping her three girls with homework. Yet, she still recalled some "conflicting messages" she received from her mother, such as "you have to have a man" and "you can't be too smart; otherwise you won't get a man."

There was a time in her young life when she felt that her questions were not being answered and she was constantly told not to feel, and certainly not display what she felt. As a result, she chose to "disconnect and began shutting down and coasting." This led her parents to the engage a child psychologist, one of whose questions about how Christine felt about something elicited the response, "Why would I feel anything?"

The one constant aspect of Christine's life was her Lutheran faith. She believed that it allowed her to enter the spiritual and religious journey into self-awareness through God and her church. This journey requires unconditional love, which is what she believed must be permitted to grow in the heart of anyone who calls themselves a Christian. She found that the church's lessons were a perfect fit for her. She saw her higher being as a part of God, and making God her highest priority enabled her to see herself as someone of worth and value. Through an "extremely influential" relationship with the pastor at her college campus ministry, she was able to convert her childhood faith into her adult faith by asking questions and having them answered, such that attending church, continuously being in conversation with God, and praying from her core self were aspects of her self and life, about which she was passionate. Her adult faith led her to believe that God cares about the condition of our hearts in which love can and needs to reside and grow.

From puberty, Christine was self-conscious of her body, with a "vague sense of unease and discomfort" to the extent that she tried to "check out" and not think about her

body. She described: “The whole introduction to my own body and my own sexuality was like a train crash from beginning to end.”

For Christine, leaving home to attend college was very momentous, in that at last she felt she belonged, was seen, and was accepted for being the smart person she was. Interestingly, at college she could also be invisible if she wanted to, and that brought with it a sense of freedom.

Adulthood. Relationships with men generally were difficult for Christine. Following a number of pregnancies and terminations, which “destroyed her sense of self,” and the realization that the process of dating was a source of great dissatisfaction, she “retired from dating for several years . . . and adopted herself.” However, she had been married to her husband for 8 years, having known him for 11. This relationship, in which she could be herself, was instrumental in her “journey towards self-awareness” in spite of the fact that her husband was not a man of faith. Very interestingly, the way Christine and her husband-to-be came to be in relationship involved her conscious and unconscious mind/body in tandem. Although her conscious mind rejected the idea, some deep part of her unconscious mind connected to him and “went for it” anyway. They shared their home with a friend and, indeed, Christine had certain friendships that have lasted from childhood.

Another very important part of Christine’s journey of self-discovery was the therapeutic relationships she was engaged in on and off for 20 years.

Books were important all her life, and together with feminism they played a part in her development towards being a self-aware individual, although she suggested that

such a “state” cannot be reached without a certain level of “physical, psychological, and emotional maturity.”

Changing her career from information technology, and undertaking the training to become a massage therapist were also instrumental in her journey towards self-awareness. Her new career focused on the mind/body connection in herself and others.

Generally, Christine was a confident person. She described herself as positive, optimistic, curious, and adventurous with organizational ability, although she still experienced emotions as somewhat difficult to handle. She had vivid, memorable dreams, which she used to” learn about the deeper parts of my emotional psyche.”

Christine “suffered from depression” from time to time. Left untreated, this depression could interfere with her sense of self, as could “being sick, being too busy, being exhausted, eating poorly, and being away from the church” which she did once for a considerable period of time to test her faith. She continues to “develop and hone her skills and knowledge . . . continuing to integrate the brain, the intuition and the physical body” and expressed her emotions easily and forcefully using her body and voice for emphasis, throughout the interviews. She describes herself as “well-bounded . . . which has a specific feeling in my body. I feel I am inside my body, inside the boundary of my skin.”

Mercedes

Mercedes is a 53-year-old Caucasian American, who until recently worked in corporate America. She is twice married with a stepson. She is the firstborn and has a brother. When she was a child, her family moved regularly as a function of her father’s

career progression, and during her college days she also travelled and lived abroad. She has three advanced degrees.

Childhood. Mercedes remembered a happy childhood as a tomboy, although she experienced moving every 2 years as traumatic. It meant that she was constantly changing schools and that she and her brother often only had each other as companions. They became both partners in crime and allies, and there was a competitive tension between them that continued into early adulthood. She recalled her father having a temper and not tolerating challenge or dissention well, so Mercedes learned to keep her mouth shut. She did not have a close relationship with her father, who appeared not to care, held her back through his lack of support in terms of her education, "for fear of losing me" and was emotionally aloof. Moreover, she had a misconception about marriage from viewing her parents' relationship. Their marriage was bumpy; her father had an illicit affair and, as a result, her mother was miserable, sick, and employed the "silent treatment." As a child she wished "I'd been raised in a happy home." During her teen years, she often felt not good enough in her mother's eyes, particularly "around household chores and curfews" and she "felt untrusted by her mother" who "projected some awful things which I do think influenced me . . ." The habit of expecting and anticipating criticism from her parents has led in part to Mercedes being "very self-critical" and to "hold really high expectations of other people" which has "been costly." In addition, she and her brother were subjected to corporal punishment which stung, both physically and more importantly emotionally. Her maternal grandmother, however, was interested in and proud of Mercedes, who always felt special to her.

In addition, the regular changes of school taught Mercedes to sit back and watch and not to show off or show up too smart. She often played "dumb" rather than stand out because "belonging was important" to her. However, she remembered her teachers as "having high standards and being positive and reinforcing." She excelled academically, although her parents did not pressure her, and she won two scholarships to study abroad. Her parents did not allow her to go to the first country, in spite of pleading from teachers. She won the second scholarship two years later, and by then she had decided to go with or without her parents' consent. Having helped Mercedes through college financially, at some sacrifice, they made additional sacrifices in order for her to take up her scholarship to study in Spain, although for only two semesters. During this time living in Spain, Mercedes was "totally immersed in a different culture with a different language" and she found this experience very meaningful in terms of her developing self-awareness.

Religion was an important part of Mercedes' childhood, and she read the Bible, which she believed provided a moral compass, guidance, and a sense of morality. Her family attended a Protestant church regularly and sang in the choir. However, Mercedes did not continue attending church as an adult and found that being in nature—sailing and big hikes—provided more of a spiritual church for her.

Adulthood. Mercedes' first marriage was a disaster. She and her husband both taught at the same school, and her husband was psychologically abusive, an adulterer, and an alcoholic. With her self-esteem on the ground, she moved across the country by herself and totally without support. She then spent several years dating men who cheated on her and eventually went into therapy (including dream, art, and Jungian) to find out why. During this period she described her developing awareness as "awakening from a

long sleep pattern that was no longer serving her," and when she realized her part in the process she decided to learn how to fall in love with herself and be more self-appreciative. Additionally, she gave up on dating for some time until she felt ready.

Mercedes could be expressive emotionally, although she experienced some discomfort when asked about herself, often deflecting to a different topic. She described "sleepless nights and bad dreams" when experiencing difficult times. She also described how her experience of self-reflection also caused insomnia and realized "there's this just huge level of how it affected my body." She experienced "anxiety attacks on Sunday nights before going back to work on Mondays." Physical activity was of enormous importance to Mercedes, and she excelled at many different sports, so turning to a brutal regime—running, exercise, and bike riding—as a way of coping with such situations was to be expected. She also described sobbing and eating obsessively as other methods of coping with stress. When she spoke about being a mother, her expressions of love, joy, and reward on the one hand and sadness, disappointment, and grief on the other were visible and palpable. However, during the interviews some very painful, frustrating, and negative experiences which she described were accompanied by laughter. Mercedes discussed books, solitude, self-reflection, and journaling as pivotal and transformative in her life and emerging self-awareness. She described her ability of going "pretty deep inside and to listen . . . to get to the essence of yourself" as an indication of her mind and body being connected rather than separated.

Mercedes had more than her fair share of jealous, dictatorial, psychologically abusive, unprofessional, and demeaning bosses, and her decision to leave corporate America was driven in part to find a better work/life balance for the benefit of herself,

family, and friends. However, she had the support of many work colleagues and in particular two women mentors.

For 12 years, she was part of a group of women engaged in self-discovery through poetry, and this group was also very important to her developing self-awareness, as was meeting and marrying her second husband, with whom she had a happy, equal, solid relationship, which provided growth for both. However, she recently experienced difficulties with her stepson, and Mercedes and her husband had to reexamine their behavior toward him in the light of his anxiety, depression, deceit, and shame.

While acknowledging that being self-aware provided a level of self-esteem, Mercedes occasionally lacked self-confidence and self-belief and still had a need for inclusion. She believed that she was no longer as accommodating as she used to be and described herself as an idealist—enthusiastic, creative, goal oriented, determined, hardworking, and a connector of people.

She had traveled widely and survived a brutal physical attack. Before the interviews, she had undergone surgery to rectify the consequences of arthritis, and following the interviews she resolved to create a better work/life balance to address her own fatigue and exhaustion, so she had left her job in order to regain her energy and zest for life.

Lee

Lee is a 35-year-old Caucasian man, born the first son of eight children to a poor American Catholic family from the south. He worked as a group facilitator in a branch of the military and was about to be sent overseas in his job. He is married with no children.

Childhood. As a child, Lee was emotional yet unable to relate emotionally; he was also very bright academically, which he concluded came from attending a Catholic school. With so many siblings at home, attention was scarce and he contended that "unacceptable, animalistic physical behavior was commonplace", leading to "violent and aggressive tendencies." This lack of attention led to a sense of not being seen, and as a child he withdrew and became invisible. However because he felt nobody cared or noticed him as a child and he had to motivate and encourage himself he maintained that he was able to be uniquely himself. Moreover, he was brought up to be an independent thinker. From the age of 7 he was responsible for the night-time parenting of his younger siblings. "So [he] grew up with me in my room, nighttime feedings, diaper changes, the whole shebang was on me" and this continued with each successive infant sharing his room for that very purpose until he was 16.

Lee recalled being "probably the biggest kid anybody had ever seen in the fifth grade," and this together with a sense of not being "good-looking" and being poor had a negative impact on his self-image. "I had very little self esteem about how attractive I was . . . I just didn't feel good looking at the time." However, "the day that I got my 501 buttoned fly jeans . . . was the day I was no longer unpopular." He was particularly aware of his sexuality as a teenager at school and making a connection between his physical, emotional, and cognitive selves, when he talked of "being unhappy and feeling unattractive because of my size" and the attraction he felt to certain of his teachers, one of whom knowing "that I was bored in class . . . got me onto the science team."

He disliked his father and fought him with constantly, unless they were building or making something together, which they did frequently. However, it appeared that no

matter how well he did something—even if he did it at a much younger age than would be expected—it was never good enough. "He would look at the results of my behavior and then criticize: *well if you thought harder, you could have avoided that . . .if you practiced harder . . . if you thought more about . . . if you set up your materials right.*" His father "is fanatical about efficiency" and constantly chided Lee to plan and consider possibilities better. He described his father as "very defensive, angry, directive, and critical." His college and career decisions were made with the sole purpose of achieving more than his father. On the other hand, Lee was "very close" to his mother, who, while sometimes betraying his trust, at least supported his learning and spent time with him teaching him to read. "She's the only one I actually talk to . . ."

Lee was raised as a Catholic, and religion was very important to the family when he was a child. However, he soon realized it was not for him. He never enjoyed it and stopped attending church when he was 15 or 16 and never returned, although he acknowledged that he loved his priest.

Lee recalled that most if not all his teachers were good, especially those in math, science, and English. Moreover, he credited his basketball coach as being "the single most influential male figure in my life, teaching the importance of honor."

He had few close friends, although one from his school days remained close. They first met when Lee was 7 or 8 and both played baseball badly; they then became runners and eventually highly successful basketball players. Playing basketball daily was something Lee did in high school and continued to do throughout his adult life. He also ran several marathons and described his particular delight in succeeding when others told him it couldn't be done. He proved them wrong every time.

A particular girlfriend was influential during high school and helped with his poor social interaction, and to cultivate his sense of self. Once he left to attend college, without her support however, he reverted to his former social awkwardness. It was at college that he made and still retained another friend, while he gained self-confidence from a sponsor family who provided both positive and negative feedback on Lee's behavior. The male in this sponsor family had a greater impact on Lee than his own father.

Adulthood. Lee's important adult relationships were with his wife and a friend from work, who helped him explore himself and his self-awareness. He and his wife decided to be childless due to unhealthy genes, which both families carried. In fact, at age 20, Lee was fortuitously diagnosed with "cancer and was successfully treated with open heart surgery." He also suffered from particularly high cholesterol, whereas dementia was present in his wife's family.

He had little contact with his siblings, many of whom remained in the two states where the family lived when he was a child. He held that he was unable to have open and honest conversations with members of his family. Indeed, he maintained that there were "very few people with whom he had an authentic relationship."

Lee was late in arriving at the conclusion that "an unexamined life is not worth living" and thereafter explored himself and his behavior, so he knew himself well even if he didn't like himself much. He described himself as "mean . . . manipulative . . . considerate but not nice . . . fanatical about efficiency . . . honorable yet judgmental, and iconoclastic." He was also fanatical about caring for the environment and about being in 'flow,' which he described as being "so aware of what was happening around him and his intentions that he could operate without causing any disruption to the other as long as he

was invisible." He also suggested that he was very comfortable being alone, introspective, reflective—journaling regularly—frugal yet generous with his time and an intellectual. He held that "being self-aware was essential to avoid being manipulated and was constantly on his guard against being manipulated" yet he would use "emotional blackmail" to achieve his goals. He was aware that he "played the system at work" where he was unable to be uniquely himself.

Lee described spirituality as "his shriveled leg" and considered himself more of a naturalist than religious; he meditated "successfully only once," and acknowledged that the harder he tried intellectually to reach "that place," the further away he became.

John

John is a 51-year-old European Caucasian unmarried man, the third born with two elder sisters. Born in the U.K., he traveled extensively and has lived in the United States for several years. He holds a bachelor's degree and plans to work towards a master's and even a PhD. He is a monk and teaches meditation and yoga in addition to working as a fundraising coordinator.

Childhood. John's childhood was marred by the death of his mother when he was 7 years old. After her death he and his sisters were raised by his "functional, dutiful, modest, colorless maternal grandmother." While he recalled attending Catholic church with his mother every Sunday before her death, he had very few personal memories of her apart from "her writhing in agony" shortly before her death. He recalled a troubled household, with his father being "very angry and verbally abusive to both sisters." He did not feel understood by his father and rejected his father's attempts at affection. However, he remembered two uncles: one was his father's younger brother from whom he learned

decency and the other told exotic stories of travel while in the Navy, which John found fascinating. John felt it was a family that provided no emotional outlet and no encouragement to share or learn.

John was dropped immediately after his birth, which caused in-grown ribs and required surgery. He also was born with a painful congenital kidney problem, which necessitated surgery on one kidney when he was 9 and the other when he was 29.

He did not miss any school because of these conditions, but he did not have good experiences at school. He had no positive recollections of teachers, although two certainly had a negative impact on him—one for physical punishment and the other for treating the children as though they were machines. Moreover, he felt he could not express his spirituality, which he defined as "the endeavor to open the heart and the mind to the fullest extent possible" at school, although being a rebel made him aware that he could be responsible and different. He had one positive experience when he took part in a social outreach project and became aware of how a "person's eyes could light up in the presence of another." He always felt there "had to be more to life than the mechanistic and banal experiences of his childhood." He had one special friend, with whom he remained in touch, and his most positive memories were of being in nature, where he went to find himself.

Adulthood. In spite of his difficult childhood relationship with his father, John appreciated his father encouragement of freedom, independence and his first trip to India, where he studied meditation with the Dalai Lama although found it not to his liking. He returned to attend university in the United Kingdom but left disillusioned after completing the first year. However it was at this university he came upon the

organization for whom he worked and about which he felt "he had returned home" when he first discovered it. Working with this organization enabled him to train as a yoga and meditation teacher in Germany, work in France as an English-as-a-second-language teacher, and travel to and work in India, Africa, Nepal, and Bengal. "Seeing the sparkle in the eyes of the monks in India" had a huge impact on him and made him realize that he wanted to experience the same sense of love.

While living and working in France and in a deep and committed relationship, he realized he had to become a monk. His father disowned him after this decision, although there was "rapprochement and reconciliation later" and his father's death was a momentous spiritual experience for John. He was able to learn more about his father's life, disposition, and positive qualities at his funeral while talking to an uncle and did not disassociate his own qualities from either parent. He continued to have internal dialogue with his father. He maintained pride in his mother's reputation as a kind, compassionate, considerate, dutiful if passive, artistic homemaker.

In the past, John experimented with drugs in order to "raise awareness and experience altered states of consciousness." All these experiments took place in nature, were linked to his spiritual life, and were "undoubtedly transformative." He believed that consciousness touches "other entities and other people's consciousness" and he could only speculate as to his essence "because it's probably beyond words. . . . It may even be beyond the relative nature of the universe." John wrote poetry, had significant dreams, and believed in relationships. He believed that meditation was of great importance in his life, helping him to become "more aware of humanity and our place in the universe." He described meditation not as a withdrawing but rather "the deeper one goes inside, then

the more one finds connections with others outside." He believed in the power of *love* and suggested that if we come from a place of *love*, then nothing else matters. [The italicization of the word love is indicative of John's emphasis.] He disliked confrontation, believed he was "wired to survive," had several name changes, and was concerned about health issues as he aged.

Jenny

Jenny is a 57-year-old Caucasian woman, the second-born daughter to English parents living in the Far East at the time of her birth. Twice married with no biological children, she has one 27-year-old stepdaughter. Jenny had her own business as an organizational consultant, facilitator, and coach since 1983. She moved to the United States in 2003.

Childhood. Jenny was brought up to be independent from an early age and was traveling the world with and without her parents from the age of 2. She was sent back to the U.K. to boarding school when she was 8 and until she was almost 14 only saw her parents for a month or two every 2 years. She was so upset during the first 3 weeks at boarding school that she was given a pet rabbit, and thereafter animals were an important part of her life, and provided comfort and companionship. "School holidays were spent either with my sister, at the home of our maternal grandmother or other members of our extended family in the north of England, or on my own with school friends' families." During her early years it was the Chinese, Malay, and Indian 'amahs' who were of greater importance to Jenny.

Jenny had some physical and psychological issues as a child, which have continued for much of her life, and "being sent away to boarding school taught her that

she was unlovable and bad. This together with a domineering and aggressive father led to unrealistic expectations about relationships with men and a lack of self-esteem and confidence." In spite of this, Jenny was usually considered to be a confident child. It was not, however, until Jenny was in her mid-30s with her first therapist that she began to be aware of the impact this weak sense of self was having.

Jenny's education was not academic; rather, its aim was to produce a 'marriageable young lady' with homemaking qualities, and so it was not until her early 20s that she began to take an interest in learning. She continued with some form of academic program continuously since then, culminating in a doctoral program. However, "two master's programs had the greatest impact in terms of self-awareness: an experiential master's program in management learning and a Gestalt psychotherapy program, which necessitated being in therapy for the duration of the program." Indeed, Jenny would say it was "being in therapy that had such a great influence on my emergent self-awareness." She first started seeing a therapist in her 20s and was enabled to unlock the childhood traumas. Her therapists associated with her Gestalt program ultimately helped her overcome her childhood lack of confidence and self-esteem and create a strong sense of self.

Religion was not an important feature in the family, although Jenny had to attend church every Sunday, and sometimes twice a week, during the 6 years she was at boarding school. In more recent years, she began to think of herself more as an existential spiritualist with Buddhist leanings, eschewing organized religion.

Adulthood. Jenny's first marriage was short-lived and ended in divorce following her husband's affair and move to Canada. Jenny then had a "couple of relationships,

including one that lasted 23 years with a man who became her business partner" during which time Jenny would describe herself as "having lost her soul and direction" before meeting and marrying her second husband and moving to the States.

There were significant relationships during her working career. The first was when she was recognized as having potential of which even she was unaware; later, many colleagues, consultants, and trainers helped her learn the tools of her trade as a therapist, coach, consultant, and facilitator.

Jenny considered herself as an enthusiastic "half full" type of person, with energy, passion, a positive outlook on life, and a general comfort with ambiguity. She was confident and yet from time to time was troubled by self-doubts. She saw herself as a connector and had many, many friends worldwide, some from her childhood, with whom she maintained contact.

Jenny described herself as "very self-reflective, having kept a journal for many years." She also described herself as a participant-observer, watching herself as she went about her daily tasks, "examining her feelings and how they were connected to and related to her physical process." While she desensitized herself during the traumas of her childhood and dissociated parts of herself, Jenny worked to reintegrate herself as a holistic being and was consciously aware of the need for wholeness of mind, body, spirit, and emotion. "I would attend workshops and programs which helped me to explore and work towards becoming more integrated." She also became aware of the value of vulnerability and became "relatively comfortable disclosing her weaknesses and fallibility in an effort to remain open to new developmental opportunities." Her self-

development has enabled her to understand the importance of relationships and love. She was in touch with her physical process and used it to understand herself more fully.

The Collective Essence of Becoming Self-Aware

Moustakas (1990) recommended that following the individual depictions, a composite depiction be constructed from the "totality" of the individual depictions (p. 50). Therefore, this section explores the collective lived experiences of all the co-researchers in an attempt to identify the collective essence of becoming aware. Here, the child/adult—self/other format illustrated in Figure 4-1 is the basis for this construction.

Threads, patterns, and themes common across the co-researchers' experiences and relationships are reported using their own words, thus maintaining the presence of the individual co-researcher in the discussion, as required by heuristic methodology.

The framework developed for the collective essence was a chart separating relationships with self and other and separating experiences in childhood and adulthood (see Figure 4-1).

	Self	**Other**
Child Birth to age 18	Significant experiences, thoughts, emotions, values, beliefs, and physical embodied processes in relation to the self	Significant experiences, relationships with others
Adult 18+	Significant experiences, thoughts, emotions, values, beliefs, and physical embodied processes in relation to the self	Significant experiences, relationships with others

Figure 4-1. Framework for examination of the collective essence of the lived experience of being self-aware.

In general, greater attention is paid to the experiences that were apparent in the lives of the greatest number of co-researchers and at least three to provide verification. Such experiences will be presented in the order of greatest commonality.

The discussion starts with child/self and follows with child/other, adult/self, and adult/other. However, some of the experiences that began in childhood necessarily continued into adulthood, and therefore some of the descriptions do not fit entirely or cleanly under a particular heading. The cut-off age of 18 is somewhat arbitrary, and of course many individuals have moved from childhood to adulthood by this time.

Child/Self

In this section, the patterns and themes that have commonality across the co-researchers are described and illustrated using their own words. These include childhood traumas; being invisible or not seen; the necessity of redirecting their attention; self-esteem and self-respect associated with academic success; religion; being independent; corporal punishment; reading; and the sense of feeling responsible for their parents' feelings.

Childhood Trauma

Comparing and contrasting the lived experience of becoming self-aware from the child/self perspective, identified many common threads. The most common was of some experience of trauma in childhood and the emerging negative emotions attached to those traumatic experiences. All co-researchers experienced some level of trauma.

Two co-researchers (Anne and John) lost their mothers at age 11 and 7, respectively, and thereafter their households became "troubled" at least for a while. John recalled "a troubled family atmosphere; . . . that's when everything started to fall apart . . . I think she was the glue that kept the family together . . . protecting her daughters from her husband." Anne stated: "Early life was fairly painful. . . . It was a horrible time for my father and my mother. . . . She was only 41. . . . The family was in total turmoil and just years of sadness." She also believed she was responsible in part for the death of her mother and sister:

> in my house . . . the people I couldn't get along with – they died . . . I mean I'm thinking I'm killing these people off one by one because I don't like them, because I don't get along . . . I mean it's horrible stuff . . . but that's the basis for self-exploration.

The other co-researchers also experienced some level of trauma leading to negative emotions and/or behavior. Jenny was "sad, angry and felt unloved, unlovable and bad because I was sent away to school . . . I didn't see my parents for two years at a time." Sparky felt unnourished and angry. "I always felt left out . . . I always felt like I wasn't good enough . . . all my life that I was kind of an accident." Abby had to parent not only herself but her mother too, because she did not have the parenting skills. "I still remain somewhat angry about the fact that I needed to be care-taker on some level because of her coping skills . . . she would get upset, cry and threaten to leave . . ." As the eldest daughter, Candelita took care of the household from a very young age because her mother appeared not to have the time or inclination. "I was the one who did a lot of the work, you know because my Mum was not . . . could not do all that stuff . . . "

Christine felt "disconnected . . . angst . . . confused, and powerless having to change home, school, and church every 2½ years" due to her father's military career.

Mercedes also moved home and school every 2 years for her father's career in corporate America, which she described as "traumatic." Moreover, she did not feel good enough: "it seemed no matter what I said or did, it was not good enough . . . I never measured up." Lee was parenting his younger siblings through the night from the age of 7: "night-time feedings, diaper changes—the whole shebang was on me."

Childhood illnesses are included in this section on trauma, since they could easily be categorized as traumatic. Candelita "suffered from sties" and while relatively insignificant in themselves, they continued regularly until she was 14. John was dropped at birth; "my arrival was to an extent somewhat unexpected and almost immediately I had been delivered, I slipped out of the hands of the person holding me onto the floor. This necessitated surgical procedures as a teenager to correct in-growing ribs."Jenny was paralyzed for several weeks "I picked up the virus poliomyelitis after a day at the races when I was 5 or 6 and was unable to walk. Following a lumber puncture I remained in the hospital, without my parents, unable to walk for several weeks."

Not Being Seen or Heard /Being Invisible

Eight of the nine co-researchers felt that they were not seen, not seen for themselves or that they needed to be or make themselves invisible. Not being heard is also a part of being invisible and three of the co-researchers also described this experience.

Sparky and Jenny felt strongly they should have been boys. Sparky said:

> [My father] would take me out to the garage and teach me how to change spark plugs . . . like all the things he would have done with a boy, had he had a boy. . . . [He] used to dress me up in overalls and a T-shirt and take me to the bar with him and tell everybody that my name was Bob, and I didn't have any hair until I was 18 months or 2 years.

Jenny did not have any hair and was told that she should have been "Bill" and "with a pipe in my mouth I would look just like Dad."

Christine felt she was "not seen" because she was not allowed to feel what she felt. "I was always being told to calm down and not get too excited about things." She was also aware of not having her questions answered. Interestingly, Christine also "learned the pleasure of being invisible in a crowd" during her college days.

Abby also felt unseen, "invisible" (just like both her parents in their childhoods), and Sparky felt she "had to hide and keep my mouth shut in order to survive." Lee had "no expectation of being seen as a child . . . certainly growing up as one of 5 or even 8 . . . being heard is also problematic in such a large family." He felt invisible also when "nobody noticed or cared" and "withdrew and became invisible" during his college days because he had no self-support and "was like a fish out of water." It was another case of survival because he was being constantly "tormented by students in my class." Like Christine, he too acknowledged the pleasure of being invisible. He is constantly trying to be "invisible . . . I want to be completely nondescript, which allows me to be the scientist I enjoy so much . . . as long as people can't see me coming, I can maintain my position of control and flow."

Being invisible could also mean keeping quiet, learning to keep their thoughts, needs, wishes, and desires to themselves, or simply disappearing. "Little girls should be seen and not heard" or some variation on that theme was strong for Sparky and Jenny. For Mercedes the family rule stressed "listening and not speaking." Anne "disappeared at school during the troubled times" and John "did not feel understood by" his father.

Redirected Attention

A pattern of redirected attention served seven of the co-researchers following difficult experiences or relationships. Anne, Sparky, and Christine turned inwards—Anne because she felt "abnormal having only one parent" and Sparky and Christine because they felt unseen and unheard as noted in the previous section.

John turned towards nature to find himself and could always be found "either in the fields at the back of our house or else in the local forest." Being in nature "was a fundamental part of life," and he didn't separate himself from nature, "a place where I would go in order to find myself." Lee was also drawn to nature and happily spent time observing nature. Moreover he turned his attention to achieving what was considered by others to be undoable. Mercedes spent much time hiking, biking, and generally being in the outdoors. Christine also spent much of her childhood on her grandparents' farms. "There was just all this space . . . lots of outside activities, . . . a river and mountains." Jenny's efforts were turned towards "trying to become popular" and devoting time and energy to looking after animals."

Academic Success

Six co-researchers considered themselves bright at school and while some co-researchers experienced self-esteem/self-respect as a result of academic success in childhood, this also continued into adulthood, and greater definition is presented in the adult/self section. Self-esteem/self-respect often follows an awareness of one's strengths and expertise as in these cases. Candelita, Sparky, Abby, Christine, Mercedes and Lee all felt this sense of achievement. Candelita was "a good student" and being mentioned "in front of the whole class" as having beaten her brothers in a test ". . . you were the best"

and achieved the highest score provided much "needed reassurance." Sparky was a bright student and "held onto the fact that I was good academically. . . From early childhood I remember always having better grades than my sister and feeling that that was my niche." She became "an honor roll student" and "did win a scholarship to college." "Without encouragement from my parents" Abby motivated herself to be successful in school: "I had a talent with language. I won some awards in Junior High" and received "a really big Girl of the Month award, with a big trophy, dinner out . . ." Christine and Mercedes did well or excelled at school. Christine described herself as "somebody who's academically comfortable" and "in spite of the regular moves . . . and being the new girl on the block, school work was easy for me." "I was being validated for being smart . . . and was being rewarded for it." For Mercedes, while her father "never cared, pushed or encouraged or was even on my side in terms of education" she "excelled academically and artistically" and "was elected to and held leadership offices in school." Lee felt particularly good when it was reported that "he was smarter than his sister . . . because she is the smart one, there's no doubt about it." With the testing required by so many school moves Lee was in the advanced program:

> . . . so they just placed me in advanced everything. And I stayed there until I was done all the way through High School . . . so the initial curve is what pushed me to the top and then I don't think I advanced any better or any faster . . . until graduation from high school, when I realized that I was without any effort whatsoever . . . still riding that wave. And without any effort on my part I came third ranking in the class (of 174).

Religion

Religion was considered important by six of the co-researchers: Candelita, Sparky, Christine, Mercedes, Lee, and John.

Sparky talked about her Catholic upbringing: "We went to church every Sunday as a family"; attending church was "a social occasion, a time to get dressed up."

Candelita spoke of "a very healthy religious practice . . . a connection to a God that will listen to a 14- or 15-year-old." She also felt a strong connection to God.

For Christine, when her parents moved around the world for her father's military career, "finding a church was the third only to finding a home and a school." Therefore, the Lutheran religion was of huge importance to her. It provided stability and "the lessons of church and the teachings of church made sense to me and they fit into my heart and soul well. . . . It is a core part of my identity." It was "campus ministry in college that helped me to be myself." Like Candelita, Christine felt a strong connection to God.

For Mercedes, finding a Protestant church whenever they moved was important, and attending church was something they did as a family. Mercedes also became a "counselor for Young Life camps"—a Christian group for teenagers—and found that reading the Bible and recording her favorite passages "provided a moral compass and a sense of morality and guidance . . . an opportunity to think about others more than yourself."

Both Lee and John found organized religion—it happened to be Catholicism for both of them—"never enjoyable" and "a disappointment," such that Lee stopped attending church when he was 15 or 16 and John found his own spiritual path as a young adult.

Independence

Candelita, Abby, Lee, John, and Jenny were either brought up consciously by their parents to be very independent, or their particular lifestyle and the parenting they

received meant that they had to be independent. Taking on responsibilities beyond their age was one feature here, and Candelita had to do many of the household chores because her mother was unable to do so.

> I am the eldest daughter and I did a lot of stuff in the house, I mean a lot of stuff so that, gave me also that sense of responsibility because you know my Mum could not handle really, could not handle everything that she had to do . . . We came back had lunch and had to go back to school, so if I wanted to arrive early, which . . . I wanted to arrive early, I had to run back and forth to my house helping Mum with the food and . . . by the time I went back to school . . . it was a real challenge.

Abby was parenting herself and her parents from a young age. "On some level I felt like I had to parent myself as well as parent my mother and I set my own limitations . . . I made my own curfew." Also "by the time I was a junior she'd stopped teaching and I think I pretty much ran the [dance] school."

Lee was specifically told that he was being developed to think for himself and be independent. "My parents were very, very adamant that we would be raised to be independent." He recalls

> my parents' plan for me was that I be a critical thinker, and independent . . . not to listen to other people . . .or believe everything people said . . . to know that text books were wrong or at least weren't always right. . . to listen politely to what somebody had to say and then take time to figure it out and put it back together.

John suggested that he "had all the freedom in the world . . . and because I had that freedom I was able to explore . . . you know I wasn't sort of cloistered." He became:

> very independent . . . maybe the family life caused me to become more independent. I mean I'd come home from school, there's just me in the house . . . you know I had to fix my own food . . . so I think early on I sort of realized that I do have a sense of responsibility for myself and I don't have to follow the structured society around me.

He also acknowledges “the freedom and independence allowed by my father was very important.”

Jenny had no choice but “to grow up at a very young age” due to her lifestyle. “Knowing that I would be attending school back in the UK my parents decided to withhold physical affection, so that I would not miss it.” Also “I was travelling the world on steamships, planes and trains from the age of 2, sometimes with my parents, other times alone or with my sister and I also had to grow up without much contact with my parents.”

Corporal Punishment

Four co-researchers recall experiences of corporal punishment. Sparky, Mercedes, and Jenny were punished using what would today be described as physical and emotional abuse. Sparky recalled being “whipped . . . with the belt” from the age of 4 or 5, and as she became older she had to “fetch the belt” with which she was to be beaten—thus becoming “part of the process” of punishment. Mercedes certainly felt the emotional “sting” more than the physical sting when she was physically punished. Jenny’s whipping with her “father’s army belt, which was 2″ wide and ¼″ thick” occurred only once when she was about 5 and included upward of 100 lashes before her mother intervened. This had huge psychological and physical repercussions until she was into her mid-30s. John recalled physical punishment meted out by a school teacher that “these days would be completely outlawed.”

Reading

Reading played a significant part in the lives of three co-researchers as children, namely Anne, Christine, and Mercedes. Anne spoke of her mother “taking the children to

the library each week . . . and we got as many books as we wanted." Christine described herself as "always being a 'bookworm' . . . and would read almost anything." She could not recall a time "when she wasn't interested in books," and reading Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys "started to tweak my notion of who I was." Mercedes "was passionate about books" as a child "and would stay up all night reading."

Child/Other

The patterns and themes that appear across the co-researchers' lived experiences of being or becoming self-aware, again illustrated with their own words, include separate sections on relationships with their fathers, extended family, mothers, siblings, teachers, religious leaders, and friends, as well as a discussion on living abroad.

Relationships with Their Fathers

All the co-researchers had relationship issues with their fathers. Six described them as angry, very angry, verbally abusive, very directive, and critical and arrogant, whereas three described either some degrees of difficulty, or the positive aspects of the relationship.

Candelita's angry father "shouted" a lot, not necessarily at her, but shouting was his way of communicating.

Christine's father was very angry and verbally abusive. While he was "very outgoing . . . more of an extrovert by nature and fun-loving" and therefore adored by other people, "it was miserable having him for a dad because he was yelling at us about something." As an absentee father, either away on solo military tours or attending night school to complete his degree when he returned home, his returns disrupted the family of

four females "and caused a certain amount of friction." She recalled him "being more emotionally disengaged between Korea and Vietnam and being much angrier on his return from Vietnam." "It was his career that defined our existence, and his needs and his anger." "Relating to Dad meant having to frequently readjust to his leaving and return," and Christine was not "easily able to build a relationship with him."

Mercedes recalled her father's temper and the fact that "he would not tolerate challenge or dissention." He was a Navy veteran and "emotionally aloof," and they did not have a close relationship during her childhood. "He didn't seem to care" and held Mercedes back especially in relation to her education "for fear of losing me." He never pressured her academically and generally withheld his support by not allowing Mercedes to study abroad the first time she won a scholarship. She was aware that her father had an "illicit affair" with dire consequences and was partly responsible for Mercedes having a misconception about marriage and relationships through watching her parents interact.

Lee described his father as angry, direct, directive, defensive, and very critical. Lee disliked him. "We fought constantly unless we were working on the house, building or making something." He was in marketing and was a reservist in a military organization, which necessitated his attendance at "drills" monthly for a weekend and a week twice a year. He was also "attending school at night to complete his degree," so was absent quite frequently. Lee remembered that his relationship with his father "was bad"; "he was critical of whatever I did . . . looking at the results of my behavior and then criticizing." While he "was never abusive, he was often angry and expressed his disappointment and displeasure very directly. . . . When he lost his temper he would scream and yell." Lee concluded that he was never going to be able to please his father.

John remembered his father as not being able to relate well to females and there being "very strong verbal arguments . . . screaming matches . . . and my father chasing her [John's younger sister] through the house." John felt he had "trouble with women" and never made "the effort to understand his daughters." Equally, John "didn't like the fact that he was so verbally abusive" and so "rejected him also, spurning any attempts he made at affection."

Jenny also remembered an "often fierce, angry, and arrogant father" with whom she could not have an equal conversation until much later in life. On two occasions Jenny remembered him "beating her to within inches of" her life because she had stolen something and almost strangling her because she had "been rude to her mother." Such corporal punishment was excessive compared to the "crime and would have been termed abuse by any standards." Moreover, she maintains the beating affected her until well into her adult life.

The remaining three co-researchers, while not experiencing anger in their father, nevertheless faced relationship issues that were significant in regard to becoming self-aware. Anne recalled spending a great deal of one-on-one time with her father when he was trying to help her with science, which she appreciated. However, she described "those troubled times, . . . that time of sickness and death. . . . My father wasn't able to sustain the environment of this fractured family." "He didn't focus a whole lot on our schooling any more . . . and he was in his own world and he didn't really know how to deal with it." That said, she "adored him . . . was always crazy about him . . . and couldn't wait for him to get home so he could solve the fight" she was having. She described him as a "kind and wonderful man, who would solve all the problems." Yet she did feel anger

towards him and in some ways "blamed him" for the lack of emotional support and lack of direction during those "troubled times."

While Sparky's father was an alcoholic, he was her "champion and biggest supporter." She remembered her father being very proud of her academic achievements and very disappointed if she ever did anything "not worthy of her talents." While her father had been in the military for 23 years, Sparky only recalled one time when he was away for any length of time. This was when he was in a plane crash and suffered severe burns, which required him to be hospitalized for 2 months. "He was a very sociable and spontaneous person . . . often suggesting a trip without warning or planning. . . . We'd pack our bags and we'd be on the road and, you know, we'd wake up the next morning in Maine." She also recalled that the first time he ever told her he loved her was on the day of her first wedding. While "there were very few displays of physical affection," Sparky did feel loved by him because "he spent time with me, because he talked to me, because he seemed interested in what I was doing."

Abby's father came from an orthodox Jewish family, which he did not like. He was born in the Depression and was "left to fend for himself." He was not a risk taker and, while she spoke about her parents, she made little mention of her father individually. She certainly felt loved by her parents who were very loving, and overjoyed to have had a girl, even though "there was a lack of togetherness as a family."

Extended Family

While eight of the co-researchers recalled relationships and experiences with members of their extended families in a variety of way, five felt fortunate in the face of difficult relationships with their immediate families to have had an aunt or uncle to turn

to for support, affection, and belonging. Nevertheless, not all experiences with extended families were positive. The positive experiences and relationships appear crucial in regard to emerging self-awareness and therefore self-esteem and confidence.

Candelita, for instance, recalled one warm and loving aunt who provided what her mother did not. She also had one "mean" aunt with whom she stayed for months at a time with her brothers when she was no more than 2 years old; this aunt would leave her sitting at the table for hours. While not having memorable experiences with grandparents, Candelita always "felt a strong connection" with her maternal grandfather, who died a few months before she was born.

Anne remembered an uncle with great fondness. He was special because during "the troubled times" when Anne was struggling with so many negative family issues, she felt special because "was always aware of me as an individual and gave me time . . . I would be the one sitting on his lap." She "adored him" although he remarried shortly after the death of his wife and moved away. Anne described him as a role model.

For Abby, there were aunts and uncles in the vicinity and she recalled one aunt seeing her "as an individual": she "took time to see me as a person and enjoyed talking to me . . . [and] was genuinely interested in my life." One particular aunt took the time to teach her the Jewish rituals, which were not the focus of attention in the home.

While tensions existed between her mother and her mother-in-law, Christine recalled fond memories of her grandparents. In particular, her paternal grandmother "was more of the round grandmotherly type . . . softer." She was "obviously happy when the grandkids came . . . [and] would sneak us treats." In addition, Christine "always felt special" because of the contact she had with this grandmother.

Mercedes had strong recollections of all her grandparents. Her paternal grandfather "was very handsome . . . [and] liked to write and recite poetry and was a great storyteller," while his wife "was not a people person but probably kept the family above the poverty line." Her maternal grandmother was remembered with particular fondness. She "remembered me on my birthday . . . was always being proud of and interested in me and caring about me."

Two uncles had a significant impact on John as a young man—from one he learned decency and the other provided excitement and "fascination with his stories of exotic travel while in the Navy." On the other hand, when his mother died, it was her mother who took over the childrearing, and he described her as "functional, responsible, dutiful, modest, and colorless."

"Oh, I loved my Grandma," Lee said, and described her "as the best ever." She "lived two blocks away" and, being independent, he was "allowed to go and see her." He recalled that "the whole clan would always be at her house." He loved spending time with her because it was mostly unsupervised. "It was fun because it was just unruly."

Jenny had plenty of opportunities to stay with members of her extended family during school holidays. She remembered with fondness her paternal grandmother, with whom she and her sister stayed during the Christmas holidays, remembering much laughter during those times. She also remembered a childless couple, related by marriage to her mother's younger brother. "The time spent with them was very enjoyable and important, since they cared so much and devoted much time to our happiness and comfort." She felt very much as though she and her sister were their substitute children,

and they were very welcoming, loving, affectionate, and generous with their time and attention.

A strong sense of being seen and feeling special as a result of these relationships pervades these examples—possibly an antidote to the lack of time, visibility and being heard in their own homes.

Relationships with Their Mothers

Seven of the co-researchers described difficult relationships and/or trauma relating to their mothers, including the two whose mothers died when they were young—Anne and John. Among the others, Candelita's mother "had difficulty in coping with and balancing household chores, child rearing and a male-centered culture." She "was a very nervous person . . . and very busy person." Anne regularly disagreed and fought with her mother prior to her death "we didn't get along so well . . . even at a young age we had a lot of friction." Sparky's mother was physically violent and abusive, and she could not "remember holding hands with Mother." "I learned to keep my mouth shut . . . to avoid the hostility . . . she would knock me off my chair at the kitchen table and be on top of me."

As noted earlier with Abby, although she felt loved, she believed that her mother did not have the necessary parenting skills, and so Abby not only had to parent herself but also took some responsibility for parenting her parents.

Mercedes' relationship with her mother was strange and included lack of trust, dishonesty, and negative projection about her behavior with boys. Moreover, her mother seemed to compete for the attention of Mercedes' boyfriends, and she also tried to curtail Mercedes' leadership activities while at school. In addition, the illicit affair of her

husband caused untold misery and unhappiness to Mercedes' mother, causing her to turn inside herself, which resulted in much stress, sickness, and disease necessitating surgical interventions. As a teenager, Mercedes "often did not feel good enough to her mother . . . no matter what" she did, particularly in relation to "household chores and curfews."

Jenny's relationship with her mother was not close. As a child her caregivers were the Indian, Chinese, and Malay 'amahs' who looked after her while her parents worked or partied or entertained prior to her going to boarding school when she was still only 8 years old. There were two periods of 2 years when Jenny and her sibling did not see their parents at all, "although we did receive letters every week from our mother." Jenny remembered punishing her mother for "sending me away by not allowing her to mother me when they returned to live in the U.K. from abroad." At the time Jenny was 13.

So only two co-researchers felt they had good relationships with their mothers. Christine remembered her relationship with her mother "as completely normal," with her mother taking care of her and her two sisters. "She made sure we got to school, and she fed us and helped us with our homework and if we were sick, she'd take care of us and she played with us." Christine felt "much more aligned with Mom because Mom was more consistent." However, she remembered "certain powerful" and debilitating "messages, such as *'you have to have a man'* and *'boys won't like you if you're too smart'* and '*boys won't like you if you talk back to them.'"*

Lee was "close to his mother," who was an artist and who helped him with his homework and reading. They used to "sit and watch TV soap operas . . . go grocery shopping" and he remembered her being a "horrible cook." His mother comforted him and tried to explain his father's behavior to him, although like his father she played her

part in ensuring that he would be independent when he grew up. However, she did betray his trust as a small boy when he suggested jumping "off the roof and she encouraged him, saying she would catch him." She turned away and Lee fell to the ground.

Sibling Relationships

Six of the co-researchers had some relationship issues with their siblings. These issues ranged from usual childhood rivalry and competition to downright dislike, mistrust, and destructive actions. While two thirds of the co-researchers mentioned siblings, there are fewer examples and the link between sibling relationships and emerging self-awareness is not clear.

Anne, for example, had a difficult relationship with her eldest sister, and they had been fighting the day before the sister died. They "fought so much" they could not share a room, and Anne remembered "wishing her dead" a few short hours before she indeed died. This had a traumatic effect on Anne, who carried the belief with her for many years that she was responsible for her sister's death. If she "didn't like people, they died" became part of her story for years. She had strong positive relationships with her older brother and younger sister.

Sparky too had a seemingly impossible relationship with her middle sister: she had nothing in common with her and felt deep underlying competition, lack of trust, and intense dislike toward her. Sparky maintained that her sister "would misrepresent" situations, and their mother would always believe her middle sister. She also maintained that her sister "would lie and cheat; was mean and deceitful" and "had no integrity." She did have a strong and warm relationship with her eldest sister, who was much older and

had married and moved away by the time Sparky was 3. “I would go and live . . . and stay all summer with them.”

Mercedes’ relationship with her only brother was very competitive, although since with the constant moving they often only had each other. “We were inseparable and I think for good and bad . . . we were partners in crime, we were allies, we were enemies and we did a lot together . . . we played competitively against one another on a million things.”

Jenny did not get along well with her only sister, and in truth they probably never had much of a chance to build a close, connected relationship because being 3 years apart, “we were always at a different stage in our lives and in different places, so we were hardly ever together.”

As the firstborn, Christine was aware of the birth of her youngest sister, but not the middle sister who was just 15 months her junior. She recalled that she and her middle sister played together and “were sometimes dressed up alike” and acknowledged that both sisters “were much better at meeting people and adapting to new people” than Christine herself. These very different personalities led to a “major rupture” during their teenage years, but she did not refer to this as important.

Candelita recalled “really loving” her eldest brother, and although she loved her younger brother, “there was not the closeness” that she had with the elder one. She was 7 when her youngest sister was born, and while she did not recall “playing much” with her, she was aware that her sister believed her to be “very jealous.” Once again siblings did not seem to feature significantly for her.

For Abby too, while her elder brother was causing difficulties for their parents, she was determined that she would not, so there was little interaction between them, although she recalled much screaming and yelling in the house. “I have an elder brother who is almost 6 years older than I am . . . he had a lot of issues even early on with social interactions . . . so we weren’t very close . . .”

John’s sisters were 6 and 12 years older than him, and while he recalled a sense that “they felt they had to protect me somehow,” he did not have “strong memories bonding” with either of them. However, he recalled one “rough and tumble fight” with his sister and “‘cutting his forehead on an open drawer.”

Lee had the most siblings and apart from parenting many of them, he had little contact and they were not close.

Teachers

Six of the co-researchers had positive experiences with teachers, with three also having negative experiences. One referred only to negative experiences and two made little mention of teachers in general. Once again as was seen with the extended family relationships, the experience of being seen and feeling special appears to be important in these relationships.

Candelita mentioned her English teacher as “being very old . . . and kind.” She also remembered her first Spanish teacher: “I loved her dearly and she loved me a lot. . . . I guess she picked me.” She also experienced a substitute teacher who “gave me horrible grades.” She also mentioned “my mother had a brother who was an extraordinary mathematician. I’m sure I had a mind for mathematics, but . . . he came and taught my brothers when I was supposed not to be taught mathematics.” This she was a barrier to

her becoming more of herself. Sparky viewed her relationships with her teachers as positive, because "they were tough, blunt, encouraging, and could see my great potential." Abby also experienced her teachers "in general as positive and encouraging." Particularly once she had realized she wanted to and could be a "high-level student," she "began to be noticed and then teachers definitely liked" her. She described her English teacher in the first year of high school as a mentor. She recalled: "He saw my writing and in my way of working with others as a potential leader so he really encouraged me; . . . he singled me out." Mercedes talked of her "HS and college Spanish teachers as being very encouraging" and her teachers generally having "high standards" and being "positive and reinforcing rather than punitive and critical." She also recalled one art teacher who always confused her with a disinterested student and graded her accordingly which she "was very upset about" and another "who invited me to join a special after-school art program for those with talent and interest."

Lee had a generally positive experience of teachers and school. He concluded that his math and English literature teachers "were very good to me . . . all top notch" and recalled his science teacher as "an awesome guy"; through him, Lee "realized he would be a scientist." He described his basketball coach as "the single most influential male figure, who taught him about honor.

Jenny remembered many of her teachers at boarding school as utterly committed—they had to live at school for months at a time, away from their families—and generally genuinely interested in the welfare, well-being, and development of the "young ladies" in their care. They were all women, apart from the dean who taught religion, thus leaving all the girls without any male role models at very impressionable

ages. She recounted the story told by her parents that when she was very young, of a math teacher who disliked her and whom she disliked and the negative impact this had on her ability in math.

Neither Anne nor Christine mentioned relationships with teachers as being significant, and John described his experiences at school as "unsatisfactory." However, he believed school made him "aware that I don't have to buy into the established way that everything is done in life." He recalled that "nothing happened that seemed to me to be enabling me as a human being. . . . It was very academic, and we weren't talking about life." He described his French and German teachers as having a negative impact on him because of inappropriate classroom management and fear, resulting in physical punishment that "these days would be completely outlawed."

Relationships with Religious Ministers

Four of the co-researchers had differing experiences with priests or ministers. Candelita requested a spiritual director when she was very young at the suggestion of an aunt she loved and because her brothers had one. This Jesuit priest "chose me as the secretary of the group . . . and when he realized what I was doing . . . he called me to sit right next to him. . . . He was taken aback that I had all this initiative." He taught Candelita to "just open the Gospel and ask God to become present for you," and she was "very grateful to have that religious experience that I have carried all my life."

Sparky and her middle sister were two girls among a large group of children who regularly went for bike rides with the local Catholic priest. However, she described her religious perspective on the world "being rocked" after he was "arrested and jailed for molesting little boys," the family stopped attending church for several years.

As already noted, Christine's involvement with the Lutheran church was significant, and the pastor from the college campus ministry was so "influential in my life." She felt "seen and accepted for who and what she was by him," and he encouraged her "to ask questions and explore my concerns and confusion." She at last found somewhere she could belong and became involved for the 4 years she was at college. She described this experience as "life changing." Particularly, it enabled her "to make the transition between the faith of my childhood, which was handed to me by my parents and the church, and the faith of my adulthood, which I developed for myself with the assistance of campus ministry."

While Lee "loved" his "Catholic priest", he did not experience attending church as enjoyable or the teachings as relevant. While asking probing questions was in keeping with the independence of thought that his parents were trying to instill into him "my father was furious" when I questioned whether "the body and blood of Christ was spiritual cannibalism."

None of the other co-researchers mentioned significant relationships or positive experiences with a priest, vicar, or rabbi during their childhoods. However, at her insistence, Abby spent increasing weeks in consecutive summers at Jewish summer camp, and this was pivotal to her development of self-awareness. She was able to be herself and be seen. Moreover, she learned "what it meant to be Jewish and the rituals that had not been celebrated at home." For Abby, summer camp also taught her "how to interact with people and groups."

Friendships

While all the co-researchers mentioned having friends in childhood, the number and quality of the relationships varied considerably. Christine did not recall having a "best friend" as a child, although she played "with two or three kids from the neighborhood." She declared that unlike her sisters, she was "socially awkward." However, as a teenager, Christine made friends with someone who had remained her best friend into adulthood. This friend was credited by Christine with "encouraging her to be herself" more than anyone else. Of the remaining eight co-researchers, Candelita and Lee recalled having two particularly close friends; Anne spoke of six close friends; Sparky and Jenny had numerous friends; Abby and Mercedes talked of having a few close friends; and John mentioned one. The data on friendships and dating relationships is included in the adult/other section.

These friendships involved a variety of different activities and experiences. For example, Mercedes recalled "playing . . . building tents in the backyard, attending camp together or writing what we thought would be the novel of the century for kids." She was also able to "work out a deal to live with one of my best friends at the time [and to whom she is still connected] for 8 months" while her parents moved. This was a major experience, since it was the first time she lived apart from her parents, and her friend's parents "were far more permissive. . . . I didn't have to ask permission to do things . . . I could make my own decisions."

Sparky has remained in touch with many of her childhood friends. In those childhood days they were engaged "in the usual activities, such as trips, camp, sleepovers, and pajama parties." In fact, Sparky spent "Christmas Eve with one particular

friend rather than her own family." Generally these friends and their families provided "something that neither my mother nor sister could provide: . . . a very loving, affectionate, and close family." They also provided much more information on "important girlie needs" than her mother, who provided scant information "in a very terse and even frightening manner."

Candelita had two very good friends. She met the first outside of school; this friend lived close by and the two spent every weekend together. Her other friend from school also lived close by, and they would "talk and walk a lot together."

Anne turned to her friends in "those troubled times" and gained support from them. With some, she "had very close relationships . . . and still does." Although she did not share the "embarrassment" of her family situation, they "helped her get away from the problems." She had one very good friend who had been sexually abused by her father, had an alcoholic mother, and had lost a sister in circumstances similar to her own sister's death. They had much in common and "did a lot together," although they "didn't talk about the fabric that makes us and what was torn in that fabric." With other friends, there would be the usual "fun stuff . . . fishing . . . bike riding." "The worst thing" they did "was to try marijuana just because people have it and so, well, why not?"

While not recalling "a best friend" in childhood, Abby made friends at summer camp and indeed met her husband-to-be at 17. It was wanting to join her friends in the "high group" at school that was instrumental in helping her realize she could with effort become more than average and join that group, which she did.

John recalled “one special friend with whom he has had an unspoken bond . . . with an unspoken loyalty to maintain the friendship cross time.” Other memories were of “two camps and a tree house.”

Lee’s best childhood friend was the eldest son of the Hispanic family who lived next door. They were 7 and 9, respectively, when they began to be friends and “hung out together” and played baseball “on the very worst team ever.” During the many school moves Lee had to make, they lost touch, reuniting at the end of the fifth grade, when they took up cross-country running and basketball. They were inseparable. Lee maintained that the friends he made playing basketball were “the friends I would keep for the rest of the days.” For Lee, friends were those who “allowed” or encouraged him to be himself and “who don’t get in my way.”

Jenny had friends in Malaysia, although she could not recall them. However, several of the friends she made at boarding school in the U.K. were still friends 50 years later.

Living Abroad

Up to and including the age of 18, four co-researchers lived or traveled away from the country of their birth.

Candelita traveled to the U.K. to attend university when she was 18, living with a family who virtually adopted her, and she remembered them fondly since the mother “treated me like a real daughter.”

Christine lived in Japan and the Netherlands when her whole family accompanied the father on military tours. In the Netherlands Christine met “a widowed school nurse,

single and probably 45 at the time. . . . She seemed really happy and was not sad and pathetic." She was the only person Christine described as a mentor.

After John completed school and worked to earn the money to travel, he visited India. He took a meditation course where the Dalai Lama was based but returned to the U.K. because he "didn't quite like it."

Jenny was born abroad, living in Malaysia for 8 years, and traveled at least twice back to the U.K. at the end of her father's work tours before returning to the U.K. permanently to attend boarding school. These journeys were on steamships and would take a month, "it was fun and exciting . . . there were pools and games tournaments . . . I felt special doing something not many of my friends had done."

Child Summary

The themes from childhood are summarized in Table 4-2. However some of the themes have been combined in the narrative to allow greater flow. Wherever possible examples of the experiences of each co-researcher in the relevant themes have been included.

Table 4-2
Themes and Patterns in Childhood

	Co-researcher								
Theme	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Parents and family life									
Had a troubled family life	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Had a negative relationship with father					X	X	X	X	X
Had an angry or verbally abusive father	X				X	X	X	X	X
Had a negative relationship with mother	X	X	X			X			X
Had a positive relationship with father	X	X	X						
Had a positive relationship with mother				X	X		X		
Had an angry or violent mother			X			X			
Had an unstable mother	X		X	X		X			

Theme	Co-researcher								
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Mother died early		X						X	
Sibling relationship non-existent or poor		X	X	X	X	X			X
Had a positive relationship with sibling	X	X	X			X			
Had positive extended family relationships	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Had negative extended family relationships	X								
Had a positive relationship with an unrelated adult	X		X			X		X	
Felt loved yet little demonstrable affection in the family	X		X			X			
Experienced trauma as a child, including surgery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Experienced corporal punishment			X			X		X	X
Was brought up to be independent	X			X			X	X	X
Traveled and lived abroad	X				X			X	X
Schooling									
Had positive and supportive teachers	X		X	X		X	X		X
Had negative teachers	X					X		X	X
Experienced success at school	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Had childhood friend(s)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading or books as important	X	X			X	X			
Religion									
Religious upbringing*	C	P*	C*	J	L	P	C	C	P*
Was positively influenced by religious minister	X				X		X		
Was negatively influenced by religious minister			X						
Physical									
Participated in sports/physical activity						X	X		
Was in tune with/comfortable in nature					X	X	X	X	
Emotions and temperament									
Felt invisible—not being seen or heard		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Felt responsible or accountable for parents			X	X					
Redirected attention (deflection, desensitization)		X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Felt a strong need for inclusion			X			X			X

*C indicates Catholic; P, Protestant; J, Jewish; L, Lutheran. For those marked with an asterisk, religion was insignificant during childhood.
Co-researcher 1 is Candelita; 2, Anne; 3, Sparky; 4, Abby; 5, Christine; 6, Mercedes; 7, Lee; 8, John; and 9, Jenny.

Adult/Self

This section reviews the adult self in the lives of the co-researchers, covering the period from their 19th birthday to the present. Remarkably, the amount of commonality

across all co-researchers was relatively small. Only two personal attributes were shared by all nine, with one being shared across eight, three being shared across seven, five across six and five across five co-researchers. The remaining features that are discussed were common across either four or three co-researchers, with a few other characteristics not forming patterns or themes simply because they were held by only one or two co-researchers.

Self-Reflection/Journaling

Given the nature of this study, it is hardly surprising that each co-researcher described some level of self-reflection being of importance to them in terms of coming to understand themselves and becoming self-aware, with four of the co-researchers regularly journaling to support this process.

Candelita described her personal self-taught style of meditation and "intuitive yoga" as her "prayer": "It was my way of understanding healing as a process of mental and body altogether." In addition, she described writing and sharing poetry as relevant in her approach to self-reflection. More of this aspect of Candelita blends with her spirituality and relationship with God and is explored further in a later section.

Anne kept a journal, the process of which encouraged her to be "reflective and thoughtful." In addition, she "set aside time for me every day" during which she might read, reflect, exercise (run), and spend time "exploring my mind, body, and soul."

Sparky spent time "on a daily basis" reflecting on "all manner of issues and situations," which she found helpful in "making sense."

Abby "figured things out for herself" and "has always been aware of my journeying from the conscious and outwardly understandable to emotional areas that are

maybe based on intuition." She described herself as "constantly self-reflecting"—a habit she had had for many years—yet admitted that she was "still trying to figure out" herself.

Christine was able to reflect on and journal her thoughts, feelings, and actions in her personal life and work situations in order to understand the relevance and learn from the situation. In this way, she continued her personal development through self-reflection. She described herself as constantly reflecting on her intentions, and this required that "you look inside and step back and look at your whole life and say what's out of balance, what's not working right, what's going wrong here?"

Mercedes journaled regularly over the past 20 years and described a week she "spent alone . . ., climbing mountains and journaling" which was particularly "pivotal and very transforming" in relation to her self-awareness.

Lee described himself as "introspective and reflective" and regularly maintained a journal.

From a very early age, John had been thoughtful about his life, seeking something "more than the banality of life I experienced" as a child, and this continued through his reflectiveness as an adult. It was bound up with his meditation and allowed him to go "deeper inside . . . and find more connections with others outside." John also described an internal dialogue he had with his deceased father as part of his self-reflective approach to life.

It was not until her late 20s that Jenny began her journey into being more self-reflective. She journaled regularly since then in "an attempt to understand myself and therefore increase my self-awareness." Also "to make sense of my part in creating the situations in which I found myself."

Self-Awareness

All the co-researchers exhibited self-awareness in a variety of ways. While Candelita did not mention awareness, it was clear that her whole life was based on her awareness of herself in relation to herself and others through prayer, meditation, poetry, and relationship. She was so aware of her being that she was able to "catch the trigger emotions" and respond in a more appropriate way. She held that she "found her voice through poetry" when she was in her early or mid 30s.

Anne became consciously aware of herself in her mid-20s: "I just had to grow," she stated, and "I believe that was my big time of self-growth, self-awareness, and it started a journey that continues. And it just hasn't stopped." She acknowledged that she had benefited from being self-aware both in her home and her work life.

For Sparky, a life situation triggered her need to make sense of her feelings, and thus started her journey into self-awareness. She acknowledged that being self-aware "makes me feel smarter" and enabled her to "pay attention and have greater insights" into other people's behavior. She was also aware that much of her behavior as an adult was formed "by experiences and relationships that occurred before she was 10."

Abby's awareness began early in her life, as noted in previous sections, and had continued all her life, bringing her the recognition she sought. She utilized awareness to help "crystallize who I am and why." Being self-aware also enabled Abby "to maintain a sense of humor, not to feel victimized." In addition, it continued to provide insights into "aspects of her style which may need development." Like Candelita, she was able to "catch a mood that seems not healthy" in order to be more productive or appropriate in her actions.

Like Abby, Christine's self-awareness began at an early age and continued throughout her life. While life issues relating to experiences or relationships needing greater understanding were the triggers for the development of self-awareness, Christine's journey to self-awareness was always intimately connected to her religion. She also questioned whether "the notion of self-awareness" was a "state that cannot be reached until a certain level of physical, psychological, and emotional maturity exists" or whether it emerged from "some kind of discomfort, dysfunction, or trauma." For Christine, "wisdom is a part of self-awareness." Moreover, she defined self-awareness "as a good knowledge of self, which is trustworthy . . . a self-acceptance and grounded self-esteem which can only come from knowing who you are."

The two semesters Mercedes spent studying abroad, she said, "had a huge impact on my self-awareness." Also the need to understand a life issue connected with relationships triggered her need to become more self-aware. She described this awareness as "such an awakening and it really jolted me. . . . It really woke me up from a long sleep and a pattern that wasn't serving me." She believed that being self-aware provided her with a level of self-esteem not previously experienced, and she no longer felt "intimidated by logical argument." Mercedes saw herself as "an idealist and enthusiast; determined and hard working, creative and keen to improve the human condition through service and the creation of beauty."

Lee was ambivalent, sometimes believing he was self-aware and at other times believing he wasn't. Yet he held that being self-aware allowed him "not to be emotionally impacted by things" and to have "greater control" over his own emotional

state. Additionally, being self-aware enabled Lee to "interact more smoothly with . . . to more fully understand the environment that we operate in."

John acknowledged that for him "meditation is definitely a method" for increasing self-awareness. He described meditation as "secrets, if you will, that would assist me in becoming more aware as a human being, more aware of my place in the universe." Through meditation, "there is a sense of bright, sharp illuminating light and a sense of compassion with oneself, with life." Likewise, John's experimentation with LSD "definitely transformed my consciousness" and provided "an awareness that there is a different way of looking at the world." That said, John suggested that his awareness remained superficial and had enabled him to understand that as a "sentient human being," he was endowed "with the faculties of cognition, intuition, a limited capability of understanding this universe and his place within it." In addition, he suggested that "unless we are able to answer the question—*What is all this about?*—we will not be able to understand who we are or what we are or why we are . . . except at a very superficial level."

For Jenny, the journey of becoming self-aware, which started in her mid-20s as part of her journey of self-development, was one of the most rewarding of her life. "It enabled me to make sense of childhood traumas" which can never be totally healed, because unlike the metaphor of peeling layers off the onion to get to know oneself, she suggested that "all life's experiences are etched into our psyches like the growth rings of a tree." She holds that self-awareness does, however, "help considerably in making sense of and being able to handle the associated emotions more appropriately."

Physical Process, Including Embodied Awareness

8 of the co-researchers expressed awareness of their physical or bodily process. Candelita, for example, was fully in touch with her bodily awareness and did not differentiate between her mind and her body.

In her work situation, Anne was very clear that she used her body as part of the game she played in line with the organization's rules of engagement. "Sitting tall and broad . . . with elbows on the table indicates personal space, and personal space indicates power." To negate her feelings of lack of self-confidence, she imagined a "gremlin" on her shoulder as a reminder of what behavior she needed to display in different situations. She has nevertheless spent a considerable amount of time "hiding her real self" at work. Her laughter throughout the interviews could be viewed as deflecting from the pain of discomfort she experienced. Anne exercised as regularly as her job allowed, and at least twice a week, noting that "my body can't take it anymore." She added that "the best thoughts come . . . when running."

Sparky expressed her emotions during the interviews with more sighing than laughter. Sparky became aware of her physical body when she was in her early teens and talked with friends about physical development. She expressed her anger as a child very physically by shouting and stamping her feet, while as an adult she masked herself and did not speak. However, she had learned not to speak her mind as a child and therefore later in life found it "difficult to reconnect with her emotions." In terms of intimacy, she likened relationships to a dance. For years as an adult, Sparky was obsessed with clothes. During times of stress and anger she "developed headaches, could not sleep, and was unable to be fully present in situations."

Abby was very much in touch with her physical self, having "enjoyed dancing" from an early age, andacknowledged that "not getting enough exercise plays into my mood." Throughout the interviews she displayed the physical manifestation of a variety of emotions.

Christine described herself as integrating the streams of her life including ". . . energy, emotions and bodywork" and had the ability to "figure out where emotions reside in my body and find them . . . and how they express themselves."

Mercedes recognized the connection between her mind and body and described how her emotions "affected my body" when she experienced anxiety. Equally how she would use physical activity and food instinctively and sometimes obsessively when she needed comfort.

When John experimented with drugs he was aware of the consequences on his consciousness and body: "this is definitely not for the long term; otherwise my brain cells are going to be fried" even though they provided "a different way of looking at the world." He also acknowledged the connection between his body and mind, where in spite of meditating and teaching yoga, neither his memory nor his joints were "not as sharp. . . or as healthy as they used to be."

Through self-development and increased self-awareness, Jenny had become aware of the interconnectedness and holistic nature of her being having "worked hard to reintegrate her mind, body, spirit and emotions." She was able to feel her emotions physically.

Spirituality/Religion

7 co-researchers expressed a lived sense of spirituality. While Anne, Lee, and Jenny did not consider themselves to be religious, Anne and Jenny thought of themselves as spiritual. Abby, while not mentioning her Jewish faith much, made it clear that it was significant to her. Christine's whole life was tied up in her religious beliefs, and while Sparky referred to herself as religious, she did not attend church. Lee however, was adamant that "spirituality is his shriveled leg."

Candelita was very clear that she had "given God my soul and asked him to guide me in wherever I need to be. . . . I love a spirituality that does not use religion." She no longer felt the need to be in church and believed that she was unable to always express herself genuinely, because there was no language that fully described the "deep soul work . . . and the healing process" in which she was engaged in. She described "what comes from God is the breath," and she viewed her relationship with God as "dancing with him. . . . It is not that you are a puppet"; constantly "giving thanks" and "not asking for anything" allowed her "perspective to transform." She defined this as being "able to fly":

> That's the experience of God that I have, . . . and no matter where you are and no matter what you have in your pocket or in your bag, no matter what problems, no matter what difficult circumstances, no matter what . . . there is always a sense that I'm taken care of.

Anne "did some exploration" of religion on her own and found "that it was not to my liking . . . and too restricting." She considered herself to be more spiritual, which she defined as "something that I believe to be true although there may not be concrete and direct evidence that it is true" and believing "there is a guiding force that's bigger . . .

although it defies conscious definition" and is more a feeling. She held the view that being open to all experiences is "some kind of providence" and spiritual.

Abby had the ability to connect with people at a very deep level, which she described as "based on pure connection. . . . It's a connection to the soul on some level." However, she described her "comfort with ambiguity" as providing greater strength than her faith. She defined spirituality in connection to her own thinking thus:

> I am referring to a force larger than myself that somehow connects all of us and reaches beyond the tangible here and now. In this definition, I see a different kind of self reflection that is viewed in the context of the whole, this united energy or force beyond myself. My concept of God is connected to this, which is why I almost always pray outside the restraints of religion and in my act of praying, I do not visualize what God might look like as I don't really see God as an entity, so to speak.

For Christine, her Lutheran faith "continues to influence my life and self-perception to this day." She added that while her "relationship to the church has changed over time, it is a core part of my identity." She had a born-again experience following a decision to reread the Bible, at which time she discovered that "God really doesn't care about actions nearly as much as God cares about the condition of our heart." Christine described how in order to "call yourself a Christian; you have to make your heart a place where God can move within you and where you permit love at a universal level to grow and thrive." She attended church every Sunday:

> I passionately want to be there every Sunday. I want to experience the worship, I want to hear the Gospel, I want to hear the sermon, I want to celebrate the Eucharist, I want to see the people I know, I want to hear the music, I want to be in that space and experience what that means for me.

She was very clear about her relationship with God, noting that her "higher being is part of God," and she believed that "who she is, is somebody in relationship with God."

Moreover, God was real to her the way "air is real" and God resided in that "sacred, deep place within me." Her personal work with God enabled her to see herself as "someone of worth and value."

While religion was "an important part" of her life, Mercedes no longer attended church, although she very clearly considered "either being on the boat . . . and sailing or hikes . . . big walks . . . and the beauty of nature" as her spiritual church.

John had been connected to his spirituality as far back as he could remember. During John's first visit to India, he "saw the eyes of these monks living in the monasteries perched on the mountains of this rather stark landscape" and thought, "I want to be like these people. . . . Their eyes were sparkling. . . . It was joy, it was life" and so different from the banal sense of life he had when sitting on top of a bus back in the U.K. On his return to the U.K., he "had the opportunity to take a yoga meditation training," which enabled him "to get more deeply immersed in the spiritual life." It was, however, during the time he was in France that he "had a very powerful experience that . . . pushed me into the path of the monk." He experienced a spiritual charge that "was too strong for my being to bear. And I just knew . . . I had to go and become a monk."

John's experiences of self-awareness, self-reflection, and spirituality were intertwined with his meditative practice. When he was in a "more meditative state of mind, which is a more loving state of mind," his "interactions with others are far more sacred . . . and an emotional balance takes place," putting things in a much larger perspective.

As Jenny matured, “my sense of disquiet about organized religion became stronger” and while she continued to explore and question the meaning of spirituality, she described herself as “an existential spiritualist, with leanings to the Buddhist faith.”

Vulnerability

A total of 6 co-researchers expressed their vulnerability in a variety of ways, some being comfortable with disclosure and others not. The term vulnerability was not used by all seven, however alternative terms, such as weaknesses, frailty, defenseless, helpless, human and sensitive, which could also be defined as vulnerable were used.

Candelita clearly believed that being aware of her vulnerability and being prepared to share that was a significant part of life, in that it was about her being real. There were times that she was “unable to disclose this vulnerability” and in those situations she felt less positive about herself than when she did.

Like Candelita, Jenny was also aware that there were times and experiences when “I could not share who I am” and yet in other circumstances had become confident enough in her self-awareness that she was able to “share aspects of my vulnerability.”

Anne, on the other hand, stressed that in her work setting “being vulnerable and particularly showing vulnerability was not appropriate.” Yet, she encouraged people with whom she worked to show their vulnerability. The same was true for Sparky who felt she needed to “hide the fact” that she “was not degreed” from her organization.

While not using the term vulnerability, Christine mentioned the need “to know something about your weaknesses” in order to work “in a trusting, ethical, respectful and intimate manner” with clients as a massage therapist. John was clearly aware of his frailty and fallibility: “I’m realizing my fallibility . . .getting more frail” and “having reflected

on my weaknesses" and his discomfort at this prospect. John's sensitivity towards others in his work with the less able and disadvantaged in Africa or India, and the perilous situations he found himself in were also indications of vulnerability, although likewise he did not use the term.

Travel or Living Abroad

While Candelita, Christine, John, and Jenny lived abroad up until the age of 18, all but Christine continued this trend in adulthood, with Candelita and Jenny leaving Europe to live in the States and John traveling the world extensively before settling in America. For Anne, Sparky, and Mercedes, the travel was from America to Turkey, Canada, and Europe, respectively, usually for a period of 2 years or less.

Candelita's experience in the UK "was reassuring as a member of a larger community" In moving to the USA with her husband some years later, she felt "the loss of the community" in Spain and sought to:

> find something where we could continue evolving and being part of a community. We found a fantastic church where we lived and there the priest was a human being . . . he was a loving person . . . not religious . . . he did not allow the Bishop's authority to interfere with the understanding of people. It was parish that was alive and that people were taking, making decisions and being part of . . . we were a very, very lively community. And then he was transferred.

As described in an earlier section, Mercedes" time abroad was "pivotal" to her self-development and emerging self-awareness: "I lived with a Spanish family and was totally immersed in a totally different culture." Moreover the time abroad "also increased my confidence, although this confidence "came under fire through interactions with peers, and also with the new and different culture." She came to be aware that she was very different from "my classmates" and yet ultimately became more comfortable in

being “uniquely myself.” In terms of moving to live in Spain, Mercedes did “one of the hardest things I’ve ever done, I said I am going to Spain without your help. I will find a way. I’m going.” Her father who had refused to speak to her Professor “hung up the phone.”

Anger

8 of the co-researchers experienced a sense of being angry or behaving angrily. Candelita, Anne, Sparky, Christine, Mercedes, Lee, Jenny, and Abby all described themselves as being angry or having a temper or perhaps being aggressive even if they tried to hide this feeling behind humor or some other facet of their character. Much of this anger was directed towards either fathers, mothers or both, but not in every case.

Because Candelita was so accustomed to her father and her spiritual director shouting, she considered it to be normal behavior. Not until it was pointed out to her by her current life partner, that “shouting was unacceptable” did she become aware that there was a different way of expressing anger.

Anne was very angry after the death of her mother and directed her anger towards her father.

Sparky had a very violent and hostile mother and described herself as “being very angry. . . . I just became angry and I stayed angry for years.” She felt that this anger prevented her “from being herself.” She dislikes herself “when I’m mad because I reminded myself of my mother” who was always angry with her. “I do behave in a very similar way to her when I’m angry,” Sparky stated. “I yell . . . but I hate it and then I’m so angry with myself for allowing the whole thing to unravel.” Sparky also linked her anger to the sense of not being heard: “I become angry when my direct reports haven’t

responded to me" which she takes to mean "they haven't heard me." She also is aware that "people generally interpret my passion as anger and are unable to stay in the conversation with me."

Abby's anger arose from the realization that she was her own caregiver due to the fact that her mother had such a low level of caregiving and parenting skills. At the time, she "did not feel resentful" but rather "just figured out" that she had to take care of herself. Her mother also had low coping skills, which resulted in her becoming upset, crying, and threatening to leave, so Abby "tried not to be much of a bother." She "remains somewhat angry" about her situation.

Christine's anger was related to her moods while being depressed and leaving it untreated.

Mercedes "was angry at both my parents for being over-protective, and at times being so careful about what I did or not . . ." However her anger "has dissipated" and she no longer regrets this, having learned more about self-reliance and autonomy that has served me well . . . helped me achieve more in life."

Lee described himself as "very critical" with a "sarcastic and caustic humor," causing people to experience his humor as anger. "I catch myself saying things that sound angry that I don't intend to be angry," and he admitted that this behavior was happening "more over the past few months." He was also "infuriated" if he was "unable to be efficient and effective" as a result of other people's behavior. It was, of course, Lee's father who was so very angry and critical of Lee's every action.

Jenny's father was also the angry parent in her family, and she found herself becoming angry, sometimes from an unknown place within her. She described herself as

having a "controlled" temper, which she turned towards inanimate objects and inwards to herself.

Books

Books were important in the lives of Candelita, Anne, Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny. For Anne, the books were mostly about her role as a leader and her continuing development as a person. She mentioned three books that were significant for increasing her awareness, self-belief and confidence: *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff, Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office,* and *The Imposter Phenomenon.*

Candelita mentioned The Bible and books on eastern spirituality as well as perennial philosophy, social justice, poetry and awareness as being important to her development generally and her self-awareness specifically. She quoted such authors as "Aldous Huxley, Helder Camara, Anthony de Mello, Henry Nouwen and Gary Zukav."

The books Christine mentioned were mostly about feminism, which was all around her when she was growing up in the 1960s and 1970s. She internalized the notion of feminism, and it provided her with the idea that "she was equal" even though she was not aware from where the notion came.

It was the books Mercedes read in adulthood that had a profound impact on her sense of self and self-awareness. She listed such books: Carl Rogers' *On Becoming a Person*, Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled,* Gary Zukav's *The Seat of the Soul,* Gerald Jampolsky's *Teach Only Love,* Robert Johnson's *He, She,* and *We* books, Harriet Lerner's *The Dance of Anger* and *The Dance of Intimacy,* Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child,* and extensive works by Carl Jung. She commented that these books "helped make sense of experiences, family issues, and relationships" and why she would "overfunction

and compensate for emotions and feelings that weren't there from others." "I also read many books on management, leadership and communications."

Jenny read many of the same books as Mercedes as well as books on Gestalt theory and practice, child development, adult development, feminism, training and development, Buddhism, management and leadership, and self-development. Jenny "had a habit of buying books, knowing that at some time in the future I would be ready for them. I have hundreds of unread books waiting for me."

Confidence

The confidence pattern was common across Anne, Christine, Lee, and Jenny, whereas the lack of self-confidence pattern was common across Anne, Sparky, Mercedes, Lee, and Jenny. It seemed that even for those who described themselves as confident or portrayed a confident self to the world, the shadow of a lack of confidence lurked behind the confidence. This was certainly true for Anne, Lee, and Jenny.

Anne had a strong sense of self and who she was at a deep level and had been successful in achieving promotions—if not in status, certainly financially—over the 21 years she had worked for her company, yet she described herself as "suffering huge issues of lack of self-confidence" and thinking of herself as "an imposter . . . who will be discovered not actually being able to do the job." This sensation made it difficult for her to be herself at work "because I'm racked with self-doubt about my competency."

Mercedes realized that she "needed to shine her light more," although from time to time she lacked confidence and a belief in herself. Significantly, much of her loss of confidence resulted from her divorce and difficult situations and relationships at work. These are discussed in the adult/other section.

Lee generally portrayed a "strong sense of personal confidence," yet he also suffered from "self-doubt."

Jenny also portrayed a strong sense of personal confidence for many years, although there were times when she questioned this and could feel quite inadequate.

Christine saw herself as a "very confident person" and did not describe any concerns with self-doubt.

Late Developer

Anne, Sparky, Mercedes, and Jenny described themselves as realizing the need for self-awareness "later in life"—somewhere in their mid-20s. All of them came to the realization following a life experience that served as a trigger, such as divorce, the death of a family member, or a failed relationship. For Anne, getting divorced "and being on my own for the first time ever" was a trigger to start her journey of self-awareness. Much later, in her mid-30s, Anne had another basis for further self-exploration: sharing the "burden" of somehow feeling responsible for the deaths of her sister and mother. "I mean I'm thinking I'm killing these people off one by one because I don't like them. . . . It's horrible stuff."

Sparky said that she "was a late bloomer in actually acknowledging and understanding what was happening" to her "physically and emotionally" relative to her childhood experiences and relationships. It was not "until after my father passed away" that she realized she would need to start exploring her behavior. For Mercedes and Jenny the need to explore themselves to understand why they had such difficult relationships with men was the start of the process of becoming self-aware.

Candelita also described herself as "finding her voice . . . through poetry" but not until she was in her 30s.

Physical Exercise

Anne, Abby, Mercedes and Lee engaged in physical activities, as a way of taking time to reflect and make sense of their circumstances, therefore increasing their self-awareness, or as a way of reducing stress. Anne was a regular runner, and Abby worked out regularly and was aware that "not getting enough exercise" negatively affected her moods. Mercedes was aware of how her life's experiences and relationships impacted her from a physical standpoint and learned to cope by engaging in strenuous physical activity, "sometimes as much as 3 hours in a day of tennis, running, and swimming."

Lee also engaged in physical activity, "playing basketball every day" and ran several marathons.

Love

Candelita, Christine, and John discussed and emphasized the power of love. Candelita referred to wanting "love to be her guide" and added, "I just could not go back to being a Catholic." She believed she related to people "by allowing the gifts of people who have died to be a part of us . . . and a combination of all the love that has poured in through the many different venues . . . with love being the key." Moreover, she had "learned to see love beyond the appearances." Christine, as previously noted, suggested that the Christian heart must be "a place where God can move within you and where you permit love at a universal level to grow and thrive." In addition, she concluded that the concept of self-awareness, which is always a journey, was for her a spiritual as well as

religious process requiring the "unconditional love" of God in order to go deep enough inside to access all aspects of the person.

For John, the power of love was evident in a number of ways, particularly in relation to his faith and love being the answer to everything. "If one is coming from a place of love nothing matters . . . so then there is no fear." He described his guru as a fellow with "no personal interest at all. . . . He just existed out of love in order to play his part in transforming the planet for the better." Further, he described his "meditative state of mind" as "a more loving state of mind," enabling his "interactions with others" to be "more sacred . . . and an emotional balance takes place."

At a certain period in their lives, Christine and Mercedes also consciously decided to "fall in love with themselves."

Dreams

Christine, Mercedes, and John talked about their dreams in connection with their development generally and self-awareness specifically. Christine, for example, dreamed vividly, remembered her dreams, and learned to listen to them, "review them, look for themes, draw some understanding about what was going on in the deeper parts of my emotional psyche." Mercedes also dreamed and would "explore and interpret dreams and how to benefit from them in my conscious life." John recalled one "particularly significant dream" where he believed "some sort of transmigration of soul" took place. The soul into which his soul migrated, who was known to him, also experienced the episode at the same time and wrote the darker poetry for which John had become known rather than her own style. He found it "fascinating and exciting and realized that

everything isn't as we see it" although the 'other soul' involved was scared and chose not to explore or discuss the experience.

Relationship with Food

Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny all from time to time ate excessively, which served "as comfort and consolation" for Mercedes and Jenny. Christine also held that "eating poorly is a condition which affects my ability to be self-aware." For Mercedes, excessive eating was "a way of mitigating stress and rewarding myself for hard work." Jenny described her relationship with food as "obsessive/compulsive." Eating food had the ability to evoke a "sense of belonging that was not apparent or readily available" in her childhood, and also had links to her self-confidence. "Exploring this behavior provided insights into my being, which increased my self-awareness."

Depression

While 3 co-researchers were each aware of a tendency towards depression, another had experienced depression from time to time. Candelita was aware of this tendency in her father "being depressed . . . having long quiet spells" and felt she too could "catch herself on a downward slope" to being very low and negative. Christine suffered with and had been treated for depression since their early 20s; Christine commented that when she was suffering from untreated depression, she was unable "to get out of my head . . . and go to that deep place within." Moreover, her energy levels were low and she was "unable to pray and is disconnected from her core self." Mercedes could tend towards depression, which she felt more recently because "I don't seem to have a very balanced life."

Anne, described herself "being deeply depressed at times" during her career,

particularly when she was in jobs without any challenge.

Adult/Other

This final section of the examination of commonality among the co-researchers explores their current experiences and relationships, which either support or hinder their self-awareness. These include family relationships; traumatic experiences; positive and negative experiences within organizations; support mechanisms; therapeutic relationships; friendships; and academic success. The areas are displayed in order of the greatest commonality and to be included, at least three co-researchers must have named the experience or relationship. As with previous sections, those experiences and relationships with the greatest commonality will be discussed first.

Family Relationships

All the co-researchers had noteworthy experiences with familial relationships as adults, which either enhanced their self-awareness or detracted from it. 8 co-researchers were married or with a life partner, 5 co-researchers had mothers who were still alive and 2 co-researchers had fathers who were still alive. 3 co-researchers—Candelita, Anne, and Abby—had biological children, and Mercedes and Jenny each had one stepchild.

Candelita's mother was still alive, and while their relationship was not good when Candelita was a child, it had improved. She believed that she inherited her creativity from her mother and also the "wisdom about how to relate to people and life." Candelita did not see eye-to-eye with her younger sister but was determined to improve that relationship. She felt particularly blessed to have been married to her husband, who was "a very wise person . . . with a lot of simplicity. . . . He was very relaxed and

uncomplicated." She felt even more blessed that in her second life partner she found a man with whom they could "reach this deep layer of the healing process." Candelita had four children and they taught her "to give thanks." They also encouraged her to be herself and "move on" with her creative writing.

Anne remarried her first husband after being divorced for 6 years. She expressed her delight and wonder at their marriage: "You couldn't find a better marriage. I couldn't be happier. I couldn't be more thankful . . . that he was there for me." She described him as "the perfect full-time stay-at-home dad." In addition, she described him as "more relaxed . . . and [on] a very even keel. . . . He's just all the things I didn't have growing up with the affection and the outward showing of that." Equally, she described having three children as "remarkable . . . and so special." This was especially poignant given that when she was her children's ages, her mother was already dead. She held that "being self-aware has allowed me to build and maintain more open and trusting relationships, particularly with my children." She described the family of five as being crazy about each other and not needing other people. That said she also had a very good and close relationship with her sister and brother and their families. Moreover, when her father married for the second time, he married "a wonderful woman," who changed Anne's life "with warmth and love. She encouraged openness, presents, and large family parties."

Sparky married for the first time when she was 21 and recalled it was the first time she remembered her father telling her he loved her. The marriage coincided with the relocation of her middle sister to a different part of the country. During this time, Sparky's relationship with her mother, which had always been one of anger, lack of trust, and often violence, improved. This positive change in the relationship was based on

Sparky being part of a couple, and when she divorced and coincidentally her middle sister moved back into the area, the relationship reverted to its norm. During this positive phase, Sparky's mother was also "receiving strokes in the form of a lot of positive feedback" about Sparky from her boss and her peers, while she was working in the same place as her mother. At this time Sparky "found a lot of avenues to work overtime . . . to build my wonderful professional reputation" for which her "mother got all the kudos." Sparky recalled this time as being "very positive." Although Sparky did not discuss her father much, she noted that he was "happier and happier with each promotion as he watched me advance in a career in which it was clear that I was making progress." The demise of her marriage is noted in the traumatic experiences section, and she recently married a man she had been in relationship with for over 4 years. They had a comfortable relationship, and he reminded her in some respects of her father. She described herself as being more assertive than him and having to hold "the emotion for both of them" as something with which she occasionally struggled and which had a negative impact on her ability to be herself.

Abby met her husband when they were both teenagers, and they married in their early 20s. She described how they met and how she knew relatively early on in their relationship that she wanted to marry him. However, she insisted that they wait for some time to see whether their feelings were sustainable. She described him as "probably the closest friend" and "someone who has had a tremendous impact on" her self-awareness, although while she brought "a certain comfort with emotions and reflective thinking" he struggled with these. Abby explained how she and her husband enjoyed each other's company and that of their children and "guard their time together," which she described

as “fun” even though it was not a term she used often. They had been married for 34 years and had three children. She described her relationships with all her children as being different and yet each having an impact on her relationships with herself and others and her self-awareness. She particularly described the relationship with her daughter in spiritual terms as “core unique beings traveling together as co-travelers.” Abby’s father died in 2001 and she was still very much in touch with her mother, whom she described as “still worshipping her.”

Christine had been married to a man 8 years her junior for 7 years, with a total of almost 12 years together. Although “he is not a person of faith,” she described God being very clear that “this is where I want you to be. I want you to be with this man.” He was supportive and able and willing to engage in conversation with Christine about her faith. That said, the fact that he was unable to “share the deepest, truest part of me” caused some sadness. They had a loving, deeply committed relationship and helped each other see through “the bullshit.” Being married, together with therapy, enabled Christine to develop into a very confident person, and she saw her husband as a “source of emotional stability.” They did not have children because Christine searched within herself for a “desire to have children and discovered that I didn’t have one.” In addition, having included God in the decision-making process, she was convinced that she should not have children. She had a well-bounded, honest, and authentic relationship with her mother.

For Mercedes, learning that she was conceived before her parents got married caused “her whole world to just turn upside down,” and she believed it had “an impact” on the way she was “raised, relationships, boyfriends, and dating.” While the truth was long suspected, it only surfaced when she was 50 and was on a “fun trip” with her

mother. She and her mother never really dealt with the circumstances of her birth, although Mercedes did some personal work so that it was no longer the issue it once was. After her divorce, and following a period of unsatisfactory dating, Mercedes was able, through deep reflection and journaling, to "create a whole picture of a man": where he might live, what interests he would have, "even what he might look like . . . and so I met him." While both were dating at the time, a year later they were both available. They had both done personal work, and their relationship was one of equality. He continued being supportive of her, her work, and her personal development. Moreover, he had a son who was 10 years old when they married, and "it was like a dream come true to have this kid in my life." She played a "big role in shaping his mind, morals, values, and aspirations," although the relationship was not without heartache, trauma, and tragedy. There was a rupture in the relationship, which provoked a re-examination of "everything we ever did and for a while we were in deep grief." They were recently successful in re-establishing a relationship. Lee described only two people in his life as a friend: his wife and one other person. His relationship with his wife taught him a great deal about his behavior in general and increased his awareness of himself and in particular the "blind spots" he acknowledged he had. For genetic health reasons, they decided not to have children. Lee felt unable to "have an open and honest conversation with his family members" and rarely saw them.

John's father disowned John when he decided to become a monk, although he "became very disillusioned" and his worldview changed dramatically after being "unceremoniously and insensitively sacked" from the company to which he gave his life. Afterwards, there was a "rapprochement" between John and his father, whose death was

viewed by John as a very significant moment. John and his two sisters were able to be by their father's bedside for the last 20 minutes of his life following a stroke, and John noticed a "softening in the eyes and then he just allowed himself to pass away." This experience "endorsed John's beliefs . . . not to identify with the material, but to identify with the spiritual . . . and just to heighten the awareness of that within oneself which is everlasting." All John and his sisters could do was meditate: "There was so much peace. . . . The atmosphere in the room was somehow sanctified . . . and it felt more like a birth than a death."

Jenny's parents died 18 days apart 15 years ago. Her relationship with her only sibling, a sister 3 years her senior, had not generally been close or trusting until the fall of 2006, when they met in person and were able to clarify some of the persistent misunderstandings and misperceptions that had been so harmful to their relationship. Since then, the relationship had improved enormously, with greatly increased levels of trust and regular communications in spite of living on different continents. During her training in Gestalt psychotherapy, Jenny came to believe that being in relationship with a significant other would provide the greatest learning potential and resolved to find such a person. Like Mercedes she imagined this person in his entirety, and having created the space for him to walk in, he did. She had been married to him for 6 years and, as a first for Jenny, "I was in an equal, loving relationship with an agreement and commitment to enable each of us to grow individually and as a couple." The one regret in Jenny's life was not having had biological children from and with whom "I could have learned and grown. She had one stepdaughter, who unfortunately lived across the country, at least a

5-hour plane flight away. “The opportunity to continue to increase my self-awareness by being in a close authentic relationship with her is less likely now since she moved.”

Organizational Life

Each of the nine co-researchers had notable experiences affecting their self-awareness within organizations. Anne, Sparky, Abby, Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny had positive experiences. Candelita, Anne, Sparky, Abby, Mercedes, Lee, John and Jenny also experienced the more negative side of organizational life. Given the amount of time these individual co-researchers spend in organizations, and to provide great clarity both positive and negative aspects of their notable experiences were divided into subthemes. The positive elements of organizational experiences included (1) having purposeful and interesting work; (2) opportunities for self-development; (3) the admiration and respect of customers and colleagues and (4) opportunities to integrate the self more fully. There were many more negative aspects, and these included (1) incompetent bosses defined as being rude, thoughtless, dishonest, destructive, and totally without self-awareness. Included in this element was poor or ineffective leadership, given the link between bosses and leadership; (2) a culture which was deemed to be uncaring, unhealthy, inconsiderate of people and suppressed creativity; (3) lack of opportunities for development; (4) feeling unable to be or to express oneself, which also included having to *play the game*; (5) not being seen or heard; (6) poor communications; (7) no team work and lastly (8) no balance.

In a heuristic study such as this one, it is still essential to illuminate the lived experiences of each co-researcher and therefore individual examples will be shared in the following section.

Candelita consciously tried not to separate her work and life; "I don't separate work and life . . . my work is my life and my life is my work. It's all intertwined." Yet she found the "organizational setting as one which suppresses creativity and is therefore frustrating." She believed that she was unable to always express herself genuinely "because there is no language that fully describes such deep soul work and the healing process" with which she was engaged. In one particular experience, she described being invited to explore "intimacy, need, longing, social justice, and *'I am'* through poetry over a 6-week period" and continued: "There are no words that can explain what was going through me. . . . I was just totally overpowered. . . . It was a physical letting go; . . . it was like a cleansing of our soul organs."

Anne had both positive and negative organizational experiences. In her first job, she realized she "could not work for an idiot boss." Thereafter, she worked for one company for 21 years and continued to move within the organization, "usually upwards, occasionally standing still or moving backwards, sometimes happily, at other times deeply depressed, unchallenged and unhappy" but always improving her financial security. She acknowledged that there were some very good aspects of this organization "in the early days" when she had the opportunity to "explore herself using all manner of assessment instruments," which allowed her to continue in her journey of self-awareness and self-development. This organization assigned Anne a mentor mentioned in another section, and she began her developmental relationship with the consultant, also mentioned elsewhere. However, she had her fair share of difficult bosses and believed that the organization was "on the edge of dropping into a non-caring company." The culture had changed from one "where years of service, relationships, and self-awareness"

were emphasized to one where "following the often unwritten corporate rules and playing the corporate game, appearance, accreditation, and numbers are considered more important."

Anne acknowledged that she "plays the organization game" using strategies and tactics that fit the particular corporate box. She also described senior management having been "dysfunctional and there is little trust. . . . Boundaries are not clear . . . just awful, awful dysfunctional corporate behaviors, and in the process people are treated very badly." However, she maintained that "being self-aware" enabled her to build and maintain more open and trusting relationships and that "she can be a better leader because I can be more supportive of my team. . . . Being self-aware helps me to go deep inside, and I don't have to prove things."

Sparky's organizational experience was also both positive and negative. She benefited from working with an organizational development specialist and from tough, plain-speaking bosses. However, she also experienced bosses who "have either taken an irrational dislike of me or lacked the integrity" she found so essential in relationships. She occasionally felt that when she had to "toe the company line," she had to compromise to the extent that she was unable to be herself. Indeed, she acknowledged that she had "to spend a lot of time hiding the fact that she is not degreed from her peers" and was aware that although she was now at the director level, without a degree she would move no higher in the organization. She described the culture of the organization in which she worked as "one of unhealthy compromise," which she defined as "being incapable of saying how you really feel." In her view, the organizational culture was no longer the people-oriented culture that used to exist; she defined it as more resistant to

acceptance. In spite of her self-awareness, she was keenly aware that she still felt unheard and unseen by some of her colleagues.

Abby also experienced both positive and negative situations in her working life. She was always interested in "helping others" and described her work with "challenging kids and adults" as having a positive impact on her sense of self and self-awareness. She built a career on "helping to build . . . cultures that allow kids to develop positively, and she was "driven to undertake very meaningful work that makes a difference on a very humane level for other people." To this extent she felt that her life and the work she did had purpose. She remained in nonprofit organizations and, following some recent turbulence in the form of a boss who lacked competence and was rude, thoughtless, dishonest, and manipulative, Abby began looking to change positions. While she was successful in being called to interview for one new position, she was "unable to break out of the mold of where I am right now." She was aware that she lacked a certain sense of corporate culture.

Christine's initial career was in information technology. However making the change to become a massage therapist, which she did "with the help of a coach" is "another experience of self-awareness" and was "pivotal in becoming self-aware." She describes:

> the whole experience of studying massage therapy and being a massage therapist is an exercise in self-awareness. An essential part of being a massage therapist is being able to work with clients in a trusting, ethical, honorable, respectful and intimate manner and this can only be achieved if you know who you are.

However, she continued to develop and hone not only her self-knowledge, but also her skills and knowledge as a massage therapist—continuing to integrate the brain, the

intuition, and the physical body by exploring aspects such as the Chakras, meditation, chanting, and the energetic system.

Mercedes' first work experience was marred not only by her first marriage—her husband worked at the same school—but also by bosses and colleagues who behaved inappropriately and without "ethical boundaries" in relation to other colleagues and/or students. When she left the school, Mercedes also experienced a manager who was "very dictatorial and authoritative . . . who was abusive and had favorites." Mercedes also referred to another manager as being "psychologically abusive" when she degraded her staff in front of others and made Mercedes "apply course by course" for a master's program, which Mercedes completed once she had moved to the East side of the country. She had "poisoned the water" so much that Mercedes felt she had no option but to leave, since she was never going to be seriously considered for promotion in spite of being very capable. She described many of her bosses—all women—who were difficult; in fact, she referred to one as "evil . . . certainly harmful and destructive" and had to learn to protect herself and her personal boundaries. She seemed to have had more than her share of mean, jealous, demeaning bosses yet was admired, appreciated, respected, and rewarded by customers and colleagues alike, who recognized and credited Mercedes' work. However, she worked in an organization for which it appeared her contribution, however great, was not enough, and having not yet completely recovered from the personal cost in achieving her doctoral degree while being very successful in a complex and demanding role, she finally left to try and regain a balance in her life.

Lee joined the organization for whom he works "for one reason and one reason only: . . . to outrank my father." He was dissatisfied by his work situation currently, due

to a lack of opportunity for growth or development. He acknowledged that he treated his current situation as a "big game" and felt as though he was "prostituting himself in order to play the system," which he decried. He was recently successful in securing a posting abroad.

For John, a monk, his life was his work and his work was his life. Many of the relationships and experiences associated with his work have already been explored. However, he remained with the same organization for 24 years "as part of the international relief and development work" and believed himself to be "blessed to have met people he wouldn't have normally come into contact with . . . from presidents to people dying with AIDS, to Mother Teresa and her sisters." He was currently a coordinator involved in raising money for two development projects in Africa. In addition, he taught yoga and meditation in a university setting and described his work as an international coordinator as "not without its frustrations, mostly due to dishonesty in communications by the decision-makers." John stated that he "has never regretted becoming a monk," although he had begun to rethink where he needed to be and what he needed to be doing. He was keen to be a part of a revolutionary change, "something really different" with "a different mentality" yet was concerned that "his identity could be linked to his current role" and "be an impediment in allowing him to hide behind the mask or define his relationships."

Jenny considered herself blessed with the organizations she worked for and roles she held. With one exception, all enabled and indeed encouraged her to grow and develop, and she had the opportunity of working with "giants" in her chosen field. "Working with such a wide variety of professionals, who valued honesty, connection,

awareness, communication, challenge, relationships, individual responsibility, growth, and development, enabled me to flourish to the point of founding and leading my own companies and others with heart and integrity."

She recalled one negative experience working for a woman running a small training consultancy:

> While this woman was an excellent networker and marketer, she was neither a competent transactional or transformational leader. She did not communicate and was unable to build a team. She was disingenuous in that her actions were at odds with her words; neither was she open to feedback, and she took any constructive criticism or disagreement very personally. Additionally, she appeared to be completely unaware of herself and the impact she had on the individuals working for her, and she appeared to have no inclination to continue her development as a leader. Indeed, she had expressed consternation and fear at the possibility of exploring emotions and self-awareness.

This was a disappointing and discouraging experience, which thankfully Jenny was able to leave some years ago.

Traumatic Experiences

All of the co-researchers experienced some trauma in their adult lives, which not only affected their lives generally, but were also described as affecting their sense of self and self-awareness. Some co-researchers—Mercedes, John and Jenny—used the term "trauma" to describe the situations or experiences, whereas others did not. However, all the experiences clearly fell within the definition noted previously: as either physical or violent injury associated with body-altering surgery, or psychological and emotional injury usually resulting from an extremely stressful or life-threatening situation.

As with the previous section, many elements make up this theme and these are outlined prior to the individual examples.

The elements of the traumatic experiences are: (1) death of a husband; (2) divorce; (3) pregnancy terminations; (4) health issues either requiring surgical interventions or not; (5) brutal threats to life and (6) physical attacks against ones children.

Candelita lost her husband through illness at an early age. It was her poetry that helped her through her husband's illness and death and "the difficult times after his death." Prior to his illness and death, her work had been the conversations and dialogues of other poets, which she presented at various universities. During his illness,

> It was the poetry, the writing, the prayer . . . everything came together at the service of that moment and I became just the scribe . . . so that year of vulnerability and death was transformed into a story of resurrection.

After his death she began to write poetry herself. She said that her husband's death gave her "the humility to embrace vulnerability and to trust in a bigger way," such that she could put her life together again and achieve "a sense of wholeness." She also experienced health issues related to her back and balance, which she suggested might have resulted from childhood and was nevertheless intertwined with "my own personal forgiveness . . . working with my own healing process . . . the unknotting . . . my elders, my helpers . . . my poetry . . . and bigger and bigger matters." Her yoga, meditation and prayer are all part of her own healing process.

Anne, Sparky, Mercedes, and Jenny all experienced the failure of a marriage. Anne and her husband returned from living abroad and "were just floundering about . . . not knowing what they were doing," so they separated and divorced. Sparky's marriage fell apart; the relationship "started to deteriorate" because Sparky was the only one earning money and her husband would invite all his unemployed buddies around for a

party every day in their apartment. Often "he would have passed out, but his drunken friends would be making themselves dinner." The relationship passed the point of no return when he did finally get a part-time job, resulting in them never seeing each other.

Mercedes married "a very handsome and charming man" she met in Europe where he was also studying. They married hardly knowing each other. They both taught at the same private school. He was "abusive on a psychological level, demeaning me in front of people. He was also an alcoholic and adulterer." Her self-esteem plummeted, and when she did not "feel loved in any corner" of her world, she realized she could not stay in the relationship. Their divorce "had a huge impact" and enabled Mercedes to make "some major life decisions." She left and moved to the other side of the country, where she was totally isolated and without any support. It was during this time that Mercedes also survived a potentially life-threatening brutal physical assault in her own home and has also experienced health issues.

Jenny married a much older man, who was also an adulterer and workaholic. That said, Jenny was very immature and had "no idea then how to build a relationship." When he left to take a job in another country, she decided not to join him.

Christine had several terminations, "I didn't know who I was for a very long time . . . this was the beginning in many ways of a long downhill slide for me. It totally destroyed my sense of self."Abby's daughter, with whom she has "a really, really close" relationship and with whom she "can talk about anything" was date-raped and her youngest son was assaulted at school.

Lee "had more stitches everywhere" as a result of playing basketball or rugby and luckily during an x-ray for "broken ribs" sustained "playing rugby" was diagnosed with

"teratoma—cancer of the thymus" at age 20 and "underwent successful open-heart surgery." He is also aware that cholesterol "runs really high in my family." This accounts for his being a vegetarian and partly for his and his wife's decision not to have children.

John had several traumatic experiences in his adult life. The first related to his health. Because of a congenital kidney problem, he underwent corrective surgery on one kidney as a child. The second operation was in his late 20s and was "performed free of charge in a Christian hospital" because as a monk he had no health insurance. However, the surgeon made a mistake and, having left for vacation immediately after the operation, had to return to rectify the problem. John had lived through other potentially life-threatening traumatic experiences, such as being arrested in West Bengal, thrown into jail, and escaping; being threatened with death in Africa when "a shady arms dealer held a gun to my head" after John had called him a liar; and almost being blown up when a bomb exploded in an airport in India. "If it hadn't been for the authentic inner voice telling me to move to a different location, I would certainly have been killed."

Friendships and Dating

All the co-researchers mentioned adult friendships and/or dating, included because it was often to friends that the co-researchers turned for support, which in turn enabled them to learn more about themselves. Candelita, Anne, Sparky, Christine, Lee, John, and Jenny continued to maintain friendships that began in their childhoods. They were in regular contact with some of these friends and contacted others perhaps once a year or just by card and/or email. Anne, and Mercedes spoke of their dating experiences, whereas Candelita, Abby, and Lee did not.

Candelita spoke of treasuring

> My friendships . . . a few adult friendships are from our youth days in Spain, they are very present and real still and each time I see them, once or twice a year now, they help me recollect what has happened and move on . . . although I do not see them very often, I am as close to them as if they were my siblings.

Anne gained support from her childhood friends, some of whom she continued to be in very close relationships with, even though they only saw each other maybe once a year. Yet, she described dating men as "horrible" during the time between her marriages, and that provided the trigger for her to help herself by seeing a therapist.

Sparky also remained in good and close, if irregular, contact with her childhood friends, seeing them "a couple of times a year." Her home was often the meeting place, as was her parents' home when she was a child.

Abby did not talk about her dating experiences before she met her husband and mentioned only ever having a few friends. She did, however, talk of one significant relationship that helped her "understand" herself. With this friend, deep questions were asked and answered and feedback was provided, causing the relationship to be engaged at a profound level. She maintained a few key friends in her adult life; she did not have a "need to see [them] a lot" but they were "on her wavelength, so that when we connect, we connect really, really well." Abby was aware that self-awareness could lead to connections too deep for some, and this may have been a reason why she had few friends. She held that she was "too serious" and perhaps "too intense for some people" so connected with a "a few people very closely and . . . on some level keep folks at a secondary, more superficial level."

Christine was still very much in contact with the person she considered her best friend, although they did not meet as often as they did before Christine was married. She holds that he affected her self-awareness because "in helping him deal with the stuff in

his life as a friend, I have an opportunity to reflect back on my stuff." Christine dated very little until college because of the confusion she experienced derived from "her own feelings of attraction and discomfort" and the "messages she received about 'women have to find men, you date, you find a man and you get married.'" The model she carried with her in regard to men was one of "powerlessness." She became pregnant a number of times because she "could not say no" to her boyfriends. However, she dated a "fundamentalist Baptist" in college and stated that he "was very important" in her life, even though he tried to control her. He "forced me to stand up for myself and define who I am." After several years of unsatisfactory dating, she "retired from dating" and described this as "the most peaceful period of my life." She was surprised to find herself interested in her husband when he came along.

She and her husband shared their house with a long-standing friend as a way of creating more of a community. The arrangement worked, although the level of intimacy Christine expected "did not develop." This led to a deeper level of "self-examination" and understanding of the things in other people "that are really a reflection of me" and recognizing "communication dynamics." Christine also had a friend with whom she went to church. He was one of the few people who understood "where she is coming from" and with whom she could "talk about her faith."

Mercedes' parents were very strict and forbade her to see a certain boyfriend because they felt his manners were unsuitable, that he was overly introverted and not very conversant or "socially proper." However, Mercedes saw him anyway. From time to time her mother would invite one of Mercedes' boyfriends to dinner because she liked

him and also went through a phase of buying and wearing "look-alike dresses" which Mercedes hated "and felt was weird."

After her divorce, and for a period of about 12 years, Mercedes entered into "a series of relationships that weren't going anywhere." She discovered that many of the guys she dated were cheating on her. These relationships "weren't right and certainly I was miserable over and over . . . and finally I decided to just take a break from dating." She chose to explore these patterns in her therapy, which were also indicative of her difficult relationships with her father and some authoritarian bosses. In this period of non-dating, Mercedes "actually decided to learn to fall in love with myself and appreciate who I was."

Lee also maintained a childhood friendship and numbered his adult friends as very few. He described a friend from his college days he stayed in touch with—a friend who shared his concern for the environment and from whom he learned more about his style—and a working colleague who played basketball with him regularly and helped him learn more about himself along with topics such as "flow, phenomenology, and spiritual introspection."

John maintained a relationship with friends he made during his childhood, even if there was little contact. He believed he made "friends fairly easily" and yet recalled only one special friend with whom he had maintained a relationship throughout his life. He described "meaningful relationships" as "a meeting of fellow travelers who share their stories with each other and in the process enable the traveler to travel in a more enjoyable way, a safer way, a more enriched way." In France, when he was teaching English as a second language to support himself while running a centre, John was "in a very deep,

loving relationship" and his teaching was going well. Then he experienced the "spiritual charge" that indicated to him that he needed to be a monk. His girlfriend of the time was horrified at his decision, and leaving her was indeed "very tough . . . it was difficult." John believed strongly in relationships and "sharing the beauty in the human spirit," suggesting that it is "through this sharing that we help each other grow." He said he was sometimes disappointed that he "finds so few people with whom I can connect and have this kind of relationship." He was aware that because he had chosen a different path, he would sometimes "isolate himself" from people and even "pulls back from certain relationships."

Jenny had only one serious boyfriend before she met her husband-to-be; being shy and lacking self-confidence played a large part. After she and her husband separated, she had two serious relationships. One lasted for 23 years, the other for 4. In the first relationship Jenny was still working out who she was and found herself being what her partner wanted her to be. Like Christine, she struggled to say no or stand up for herself as herself. However, it was during this relationship that she began to become aware and start her journey of self-development, and although it took far longer than she would have preferred to leave the relationship, she eventually managed to "get away." She became involved in the second relationship as a way of leaving the first relationship; a friend later described it as *"It could have anyone but X."* Throughout both relationships Jenny grew, probably as a result of the dissatisfaction and hurt, and in hindsight she would say that in both relationships she was "working out her childhood issues related to her father." In terms of friends in general, Jenny made friends easily and described herself as having

many. She was still in contact with friends from school days and was constantly expending effort willingly to maintain important relationships.

Mentors, Confidantes and Support Groups

All the co-researchers benefited in terms of their self-awareness, from some kind of support, be it a mentor or confidante or peer support group.

Candelita described "most of my friendships" worked as mentors and confidantes for each other."

Anne's support mechanisms were mostly mentors. She first "learned the power of a really good mentor" as part of a management development program she attended in the 1990s. Since then, she had gathered a group of mentors or "advocates, always women" around her and "checks her future plans and thinking with them from time to time." She benefited so much that she began to offer herself as a mentor to younger women in her organization, as well as to school children as part of a program with which she was involved.

Sparky had a boss who was significant during her divorce when she "appeared to be in self-destruct mode." This boss was "tough, blunt, and factual," and it was a conversation with her "that was the turning point" for Sparky in terms of getting her life together. She also credited an organizational development specialist who enabled her to "manage how I communicate" and helped her to develop skills of attention at both the verbal and nonverbal levels.

Abby had a few mentors and confidantes. She described one as a "relationship with a very, very bright woman." While they no longer lived near each other, they maintained "an interesting connection." It was a professional as well as personal and

religious relationship, which confirmed to Abby "a little more of who I was and what I was drawn to."

Christine's support came in the form of another massage therapist with whom she exchanged a massage every week. They "support each other in exploring their inner selves in order to continue improving." In addition, Christine was a member of a group of women who met at least once a year for a hike. She also invited a group of people to attend a retreat once a year, where they helped each other explore their objectives for the coming year.

Mercedes was part of a group of women that had been meeting five times a year for over 12 years. They were studying the Sumerian poem "The Descent of Inanna, Goddess of Heaven and Earth" and the poem "The Terribly Torn Woman," reflecting on and developing themselves in the process. "It's been a huge journey and we're so there for each other, and all of us together have been through some amazing personal challenges." She also had two mentors who helped her make sense of many of the negative situations she was experiencing at work.

Lee benefited from a relationship with his sponsor family while at a training institution. He described the "great moderating influence" of this couple, particularly the husband, who provided feedback on behaviors Lee had been proud of—such as his aggression—which were viewed as very disappointing. This confidante helped Lee see that he was the "common denominator" in all his failed relationships and that these failures were based on Lee's "inability to relate emotionally." Lee helped repair damage caused by some fallen trees in their yard following a hurricane and thereafter was invited to stay every weekend. He had his own room, the use of a car, and food, and it was with

this couple that Lee learned about "being independent while still maintaining relationships."

John's mentors came in the being of his Guru in India of whom he said:

> He just existed out of love in order to play his part in transforming the planet for the better. . . . seeing him 2 or 3 times a day and seeing how he functioned . . . I mean I really learned a lot . . . I mean I think he was the father I didn't have.

Jenny's support mechanisms ranged from study groups and examination groups to supervision groups and peer support groups. All provided a sense of belonging as well as support in learning a specific skill or support for her personal development. She described several consultants with whom she worked as mentors, helping her to learn the art and skill of individual and organizational learning while continuing to increase her self-awareness. More recently she had benefited from working with two coaches.

Living and/or Traveling Abroad

As adults, 7 co-researchers either traveled or lived abroad. Candelita left the land of her birth and moved to America; Anne lived abroad for 2 years during the early part of her first marriage. Sparky lived abroad during her first marriage. Mercedes traveled on vacation and John travelled extensively and lived in many countries for long periods of time. Jenny traveled extensively and lived in two countries different from the one in which she was born. Since the inception of this study Lee has also traveled away from his country of birth on vacations and has recently moved to live abroad.

Therapeutic Relationships

Anne, Sparky, Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny all experienced 'therapy' at some stage in their lives and described it as instrumental in starting their self-awareness journey or increasing their self-awareness. Anne began seeing a therapist following her

divorce when she was in a "horrible relationship, just horrible with this nasty, awful person." She realized that her life "just didn't make sense to me. . . . What am I doing and why?" Her experience "was good. . . . it was good self-exploration." Anne realized that she "just had to grow" and believed that "this was my big time of self-growth, self-awareness, and it started a journey that continues."

Sparky went into therapy following the death of her father. She described therapy as "key to me learning about this and becoming self-aware, and I've been trying to advance my self-knowledge since then."

Christine described herself in her 20s "as a mess. . . . I was not satisfied with the way I was living my life . . . [or] the choices I was making." She began therapy and talked of therapy as "the most productive part of self-examination." She learned "some real foundational stuff like who am I?" She discussed not knowing who she was, of having very "wishy-washy boundaries" and "adapting to whoever was around." Christine believed that "getting involved in a therapeutic relationship" had allowed her to continue her own "personal development through self-reflection." She found this type of work essential in exploring who she was in relation to her clients, such that she did not let her own work interfere with the work she did for her clients.

Mercedes started seeing a Jungian therapist to help "understand herself and the reasons why she continued to have bad relationships with men and her part in the process." This work enabled her to see the habitual patterns of behavior that were no longer serving her. She learned "how to reconcile some of that pain of childhood" and say, "I'm not going to let that rule who I am now and how I am with my family or how I

am going forward as an adult." She was also involved in art and dream therapy over the last 20 years and found that to be "phenomenally freeing and enlightening."

Jenny first went to see a therapist in her early 30s when she was involved in an unsatisfying relationship "going nowhere." However, she found herself "in touch with childhood pain and trauma that affected all aspects of her life and in particular her relationships." This was both "crushing and enlightening at the same time" and assisted her in her journey into self-awareness and self-development. She saw a second therapist some years later to help extricate herself from the same unsatisfying and now damaging relationship. A requirement of her training to become a Gestalt therapist was to be "in Gestalt therapy" throughout the duration of the 4-year program, and it was this extended therapeutic relationship, along with the training and regular supervision, that enabled Jenny to come to know, accept, be comfortable with, and even love herself.

> The process was extraordinarily and variously demanding, enlightening, frustrating, painful, and rewarding. My therapist was hugely instrumental in helping me to be aware of myself and the impact of my emotions and behavior on myself and my relationships. The therapeutic process helped me to become a more integrated, holistic human being.

Academic Development and Success

Abby, Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny were all involved with academic learning as adults. Christine changed careers from computers to massage therapy, and the training for her new career was lengthy. However, more than that, she credited this training as "being pivotal in becoming self-aware." She explained: "The whole experience of studying massage therapy and being a massage therapist is an exercise in self-awareness." Moreover, Christine described:

> The essential part of being a massage therapist is being able to work with clients in a trusting, ethical, honorable, respectful, and intimate manner, and this can only be achieved if you know who you are and you know something about your weaknesses. . . . You have to know what your stuff is . . . what you are afraid of, what you don't like. You've got to become much more self-aware. Even if you weren't before, you will be if you want to survive in the profession.

Abby had two master's degrees, and working towards a doctoral degree "was an interesting experience" for her. Achieving her doctoral degree was a turning point and "was really a wonderful culmination of my thinking . . . in terms of who I am, what I want to do, how I want to be seen, and where I might make a contribution and then what's necessary to do it." It enabled her to "come to terms with the awareness" of her personality. In addition, the whole process of studying intensively for comprehensive exams created a bond among several women and "was probably one of the best times I've ever had in my life with women . . . a group of women. It was a fun time and really special."

Mercedes like Abby and Christine, was very smart and academically gifted. She had three advanced degrees. As well as the two scholarships to study abroad mentioned in previous sections, she was also offered a teaching fellowship at a university in California, which paid for her tuition for a master's program. She completed her doctoral degree while working for "an extremely demanding customer and helping her husband raise his son and became utterly exhausted and fatigued." It took at least 3 years to begin to recover from this state of mind."

Jenny continued her learning ever since she left college. At 21 she began the equivalent of her first degree in personnel and training. Once this was achieved, she took a break for several years and then undertook a master's degree. Another few years elapsed and she began another master's degree, which was in fact never completed for a

variety of personal reasons. After another gap of 4 years, she began a doctoral degree. She described her first master's degree as being very significant in terms of her personal growth and her second master's degree as being the most influential development in terms of her self-awareness. "Being in therapy was a condition of therapeutic training, and this aspect of the training was of immense importance in my journey towards self-awareness."

Adult Summary

The themes from adulthood are summarized in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3
Themes and Patterns in Adulthood

	Co-researcher								
Theme	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Development, trauma, travel									
Experienced academic development and success				X	X	X			X
Enjoyed books and reading	X	X			X	X			X
Was a late developer	X	X	X			X		X	X
Was self-directed	X			X	X	X			X
Had traumatic experiences including medical issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Was resilient				X		X			X
Traveled and lived abroad	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Relationships, personal and organizational									
Had negative experiences with previous spouse			X			X			X
Had a positive relationship with life partner	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Had significant negative relationships with bosses		X	X	X		X	X		X
Had significant negative experiences in organizations—lack of trust, dysfunction, insecurity	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Unable to be or express self in organizations		X	X	X		X	X		X
Had significant positive relationships with bosses		X	X						X
Had significant positive experiences within organizations		X	X	X	X	X			X
Maintained boundaries between work and home		X		X					
Had mentors, confidantes or peer group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Engaged in therapy		X	X		X	X			X

Theme	Co-researcher								
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Friendships including Dating (except for John)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physical									
Participated in regular physical activity		X		X		X	X		
Obsessive behavior used for comfort (including eating or buying clothes)			X		X	X			X
Was aware of bodily process (embodied awareness)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Self-awareness, self-reflection, religion, and spirituality									
Was self-reflective	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Accessed various phases of self-awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Had and recalled dreams					X	X		X	
Rejected the religion of childhood	X						X	X	X
Was negatively influenced by religious minister	X								
Described self as spiritual	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Meditated regularly	X							X	
Believed in the power of love including self-love	X				X	X		X	X
Emotions and dispositions									
Suffered from low moods and/or depression	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Experienced and expressed anger	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Felt the need to hide or protect self from others		X	X				X		
Expressed some form of vulnerability	X	X	X		X			X	X
Was confident or lacked self-confidence		X	X		X	X	X		X
Had a mild, calm disposition;		X							
Was reserved, shy or quiet	X	X		X			X		
Had a very social temperament			X			X		X	X
Had a positive and upbeat mood		X	X	X	X*			X	X
Had a strong need for inclusion		X	X			X			X
Was in tune with and comfortable in nature	X					X	X	X	X
Was pessimistic							X		
Was logical				X	X		X		

*Provided the depression is treated.
Co-researcher 1 is Candelita; 2, Anne; 3, Sparky; 4, Abby; 5, Christine; 6, Mercedes; 7, Lee; 8, John; and 9, Jenny.

CHAPTER 5:

AWARENESS THROUGH THE LENSES OF

BIOLOGY AND THE AFFECTIVE SCIENCES

It compels us to realize that the world everyone sees is not
the world but a world which we bring forth with others.
It compels us to see that the world will be different only
if we live differently.
It compels us because when we know that we know,
we cannot deny (to ourselves or to others) that we know.
—Maturana and Varela (1987)

"If we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change."
—Max Planck, Nobel Prize (2004)–winning physicist

This naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was designed to view the human experience of being and becoming self-aware through the lenses of biology (Maturana & Varela, 1980) and affective science (Davidson et al., 2003). This chapter reports the findings of that examination.

It specifically employed the lenses of biology and the affective sciences to make sense of and interpret the individual lived experience and the composite essence of being and becoming self-aware. It explored self-awareness in ways that are different from previous explorations in the hope of revealing something qualitatively different that allows individuals to understand what thoughts, emotions, and bodily processes are vital for the development of self-awareness and how these can be encouraged and developed for the betterment of individuals, groups, and organizations. It explored the lived experience of becoming self-aware through the lenses of biology and emotional experience (affective science), in order that future functioning might be shaped more productively.

Generally in a heuristic study, this further exploration would not be included; rather, having revealed the voices and emphasized the individual co-researchers' lived experience throughout the study through an individual depiction and the composite essence, a creative synthesis and explanatory narrative would be all that was necessary to bring the study to a close. This chapter then brings to this particular study additional information from the perspective of affective science and biology that will allow the research to offer a more natural, living perspective on becoming self-aware.

Again, the overarching question that this study addressed was "How do individuals experience being and becoming self-aware?" There were three subquestions: (1) What general and specific life experiences contribute to the emergence of self-awareness? (2) What general and specific life experiences compromise an individual's being and becoming self-aware? (3) What is the role of self-awareness in an individual's experience of authentic relationships with self and other?

While the previous chapter explored the data in the 2 × 2 format of child/self, child/other, adult/self, and adult/other, that particular framework limited further exploration of the data and the resultant themes, patterns, categories, and clusters. The overlaps between the child and the adult phases of the lived experience, would have resulted in too much redundancy. After immersion in the data and exploration of several different approaches to formatting the findings that proved to be clumsy and unhelpful, a similar yet alternative format emerged.

The themes and patterns seen in Table 5-1 below indicate a ranked order based on the number of co-researchers having encountered the experiences.

Table 5-1
Essential Experiences by Co-Researchers in Childhood, Adulthood, or Both

Patterns of Experience	**Childhood, adulthood, or both**	**n**
Experienced trauma as a child, including surgical procedures	Childhood	9
Had a troubled family life	Childhood	9
Had childhood friends	Childhood	9
Was self-reflective	Adulthood	9
Accessed various aspects of self-awareness	Adulthood	9
Maintained friendships – dating experiences	Adulthood	9
Had traumatic experiences including medical issues	Adulthood	9
Had mentors, confidantes or peer group support	Adulthood	9
Had a positive relationship with life partner	Adulthood	8
Had positive extended family relationships	Childhood	8
Felt invisible, not seen or heard	Childhood	8
Was aware of bodily processes (embodied awareness)	Adulthood	8
Had significant negative experiences within an organization (lack of trust, dysfunction, insecurity)	Adulthood	8
Redirected attention (deflection or desensitization)	Childhood	7
Described oneself as spiritual	Adulthood	7
Experienced and expressed anger	Adulthood	7
Traveled and/or lived abroad	Both	7
Experienced confidence and/or lack of self-confidence	Adulthood	6
Had an angry and/or verbally abusive father	Childhood	6
Had positive and supportive teachers	Childhood	6
Experienced success at school	Childhood	6
Sibling relationship either non-existent or poor (including rivalry)	Childhood	6
Had a positive and upbeat mood	Adulthood	6
Suffered from low mood and/or depression	Adulthood	6
Had significant negative relationships with bosses	Adulthood	6
Unable to be or express self in organizations	Adulthood	6
Had significant positive experiences within organizations	Adulthood	6
Was a late developer	Adulthood	6
Had negative or unsatisfactory relationship with mother	Childhood	6
Felt and expressed vulnerability	Adulthood	6
Had a therapeutic relationship	Adulthood	5
Had negative relationship with father	Childhood	5
Was brought up to be independent	Childhood	5
Was self-directed	Adulthood	5
Was in tune with and comfortable in nature	Both	5
Believed in the power of love (including falling in love with self)	Adulthood	5
Engaged with books and reading	Both	5
Influenced by children (biological and non-biological)	Adulthood	4
Had significant positive relationship with unrelated adult	Childhood	4

Patterns of Experience	Childhood, adulthood, or both	n
Had an unstable mother	Childhood	4
Had a positive relationship with sibling	Childhood	4
Experienced corporal punishment	Childhood	4
Had negative teachers	Childhood	4
Experienced academic success and development	Adulthood	4
Had regular exercise/physical activity	Both	5
Obsessive behavior (food, clothing) used as a comforter	Adulthood	4
Rejected the religion of childhood	Adulthood	4
Had a very social temperament	Adulthood	4
Had a strong need for inclusion	Both	4
Was reserved, shy and quiet	Adulthood	4
Had negative experiences with previous spouse	Adulthood	3
Had significant positive relationships with bosses	Adulthood	3
Felt the need to hide and/or protect self from others	Adulthood	3
Felt loved in spite of little positive demonstrable affection in family	Childhood	3
Had and recalled dreams	Adulthood	3
Was logical	Adulthood	3
Positively influenced by religious minister	Childhood	3
Was resilient	Adulthood	3
Positive relationship with father	Childhood	3
Positive relationship with mother	Childhood	2
Negatively influenced by religious minister	Both	2
Maintained boundaries between work and home lives	Adulthood	2
Dealt with mother's early death	Childhood	2
Had an angry or violent mother	Childhood	2
Felt responsible or accountable for parents	Childhood	2
Meditate regularly	Adulthood	2
Had negative extended family relationships	Childhood	1
Was pessimistic	Adulthood	1
Had a mild, calm disposition; was shy and quiet	Adulthood	1

To create a more manageable analysis, these themes and patterns were re-clustered, ranked by the highest numbers of co-researchers having encountered them and can be seen in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2
Clusters Divided into the Relational Focus of Self and Other

Clusters in order of highest number of mentions by co-researchers	**Relat-ional Focus**
Awareness	Self
Relationships outside the family	Other
Traveled and/or lived abroad	Self/Other
Experiencing trauma as a child and adult	Self
Mood	Self
Organizational experiences and relationships	Other
Negative immediate and extended familial relationships	Other
Feelings as expressed by the co-researchers	Self
Relationships within the family of choice, including partners/spouses and children	Other
Teacher behavior	Other
Informal and formal development	Self
Spirituality	Self
Supportive behavior	Self
Positive immediate and extended familial relationships	Other
Negative parental behavior	Other
Learned behavior	Self
Religion	Self
Disposition and temperament	Self

Although it would have been possible to cluster the themes in a variety of ways—and, indeed, several were explored before finalizing the list—the cleanest way was to work with all the themes pertaining to self and all the themes pertaining to other. Even so 4 clusters could still be viewed as both self and other. Traveling or living abroad involved others, so did in some cases physical activity, reading and behavior within organizations. Additionally, weighting the themes and clusters was considered and rejected in order to maintain the co-researchers' subjective lived experience in the study, rather than objective numeric explanations. The complete cluster formulation can be seen in Appendix Q.

It can be seen, therefore, from the themes in Table 5-2 that relationships with other, included family members, teachers, therapists, friends, organizational bosses, and unrelated adults, together with the behavior of parents, teachers, and bosses have been combined to form one orientation. The remaining themes relating to the individual self, including feelings, experiences, mood, disposition, temperament, support systems, learned behavior, self-reflection and self-awareness, religious beliefs, spirituality, and travel and/or living abroad have been combined to form a second orientation. Therefore, these two orientations are examined through the lenses of the affective sciences and biology in the form of a 2 × 2 format (Figure 5-1).

	Orientations	**Affective science lens**	**Biological lens**
1	Relationships with other, including family members, teachers, therapists, friends, colleagues, organizational bosses, unrelated adults, priests, pastors, and/or God, and including the behavior of parents, teachers, and bosses		
2	Individual self, self-reflection and self-awareness, emotions and emotional development, feelings, experiences, mood, disposition, temperament, support systems, learned behavior, religious beliefs, spirituality, and travel and living abroad		

Figure 5-1. Orientations of self and other: viewed from the affective science lens and the biological lens.

Orientation 1: Relationships with Other

Relationships with other, including family members, teachers, therapists, friends, colleagues, organizational bosses, unrelated adults, priests, pastors, and/or God, and including the behavior of parents, teachers, and bosses

Relationships with Other were essential and emerged continuously throughout life as having a great influence on the behavior of the child; in many cases, these types of emerging influences continued into adulthood. They include all family members, unrelated adults, teachers, therapists, colleagues, and bosses. In addition, they include the behavior of parents, teachers, and bosses. It is important to note that from the biological perspective relationships are forms of organization (Maturana, 1978) and include the component parts and the structuring or organization of those component parts.

The Affective Science Lens

> Affective processes are responsible for mobilizing the individual's resources to cope with the unexpected, to avoid punishment and to secure nourishment and pleasure. They are the key to social interaction, reproductive success, personality development and vulnerability to psychopathology. —Davidson, Scherer, and Goldsmith (2003, p. xiv)

Davidson et al. (2003) stressed the importance of affect in regulating "relationships, social interaction and group organization" (xiv), and it is from this affective perspective and that of personality development that the data collected from the co-researchers was next explored. Starting initially with experiences and relationships from childhood, and the clusters mentioned above, since "affective processes are central to our understanding of both personality and social behavior" (p. xv). It is assumed that such affective processes do not operate in isolation; rather, they are influenced by genetics and culture, and this complex relationship becomes evident as the data are presented.

Childhood Relationships

The complex nature of emotional development in childhood (Dunn, 2003, p. 332) is both influenced by and influences the close caregiver and sibling relationships. Moreover it affects the development of a sense of self and the "growth of language" (p. 332). Dunn also posited that "emotion regulation is dependent on perceptual and cognitive development, influenced by and influential upon social relationships," and that "the capacity to act intentionally may develop initially in children's most significant and distressful situations with other people—notably parents" (p. 334).

Affectivity permeated the early lives of co-researchers who experienced positive relationships with one or both parents and/or a sibling, but particularly among those who experienced negative relationships. Anne experienced a difficult relationship with her mother and elder sister prior to their deaths: "So before my sister died, my sister and I fought all the time." Anne recalled that she and her mother "didn't get along so well. . . . Even at a young age we had a lot of friction." She recalled "being squashed between a very bright sister and even brighter brother and a baby. . . . I fought with my mother because I got attention fighting." She also said that she was "always crazy about her father" and looked to him to resolve the arguments. Candelita remembered "one aunt as loving and warm and who provided what my mother was unable to provide." She also recalled a "sense of sadness and discomfort" when she was sent away for months at a time at the age of 2 or 3 to stay with an "aunt who did not have children and did not know how to take care of children." This clearly related to memory development (Dunn, 2003), and the "distress and anxiety" which are felt when individuals are babies are "left by those people" they love (p. 334).

Sparky "learned to hide herself" from her mother "in order to survive" her mother's aggression and violence and was able to "spend time in the garage . . . and the kitchen" with her father. She also turned to neighbors, who were significant in allowing Sparky to feel "adopted . . . and very loved" because "they bought gifts for me and spent time with me." Although the most influential relationships were clearly with parents and siblings, many of the co-researchers naturally selected and created *(self-organized)* what appeared to be influential relationships, or structural coupling (Maturana, 1978), with members of their extended families, teachers, friends, and pastors or priests, when the necessary support or structure was not available within their immediate family.

Talking to children about their emotions is considered important to emotional development. It follows then that emotional taboos can become self-limiting. Moreover, "this family discourse about emotions is central to the growth of understanding others' inner states" (Dunn, 2003, p. 336). Yet most of the co-researchers did not recall this discourse taking place. The lack of such discussions had a negative impact on Anne, who disappeared and spent "many, many times crying alone in my room and nobody talked, nobody" after the death of her mother and sister. Christine was specifically prevented from disclosing her feelings, which resulted in her deciding to "shut down and go quiet . . . and became self-absorbed and serious." In a session with a child psychologist who asked her how she felt, Christine replied: "Why would I bother to feel anything?" She also described herself as "not being socially gifted and didn't adapt to new people." Within her family, she explained: "There were fights about it, there was yelling about it, but there was never a conversation—about who are we, what do we really need." Sparky and Jenny were regularly instructed "to be seen and not heard," and Jenny "was sent to

bed when she cried." She recalled "little or no discussion about emotions ever taking place." In Mercedes' family, there was a family rule that stressed "listening and not speaking," much like Sparky and Jenny faced.

Dunn and Brown (1994) discovered that "mothers were more than twice as likely to talk about feelings with their children when the children were upset or angry than when they were happy or expressing neutral emotions." (p. 128). This appeared to be partially true when Lee, who considered himself "fairly emotional as a kid," described two emotional incidents and "cried for absolutely hours" recalling how it was his mother who spoke to him to comfort and reframe his thinking, *rather than his emotion* (my emphasis). There is little evidence to suggest that the co-researchers' parents actually spoke about emotions and more evidence to suggest that many of the co-researchers only learned to explore their own emotions as adults with the help of therapy. In spite of all this research there is still no clarity on the issue of the development of emotions from emotional discourse within families.

Dunn (2003) also discussed children's responses to other people's emotional states and suggested that "witnessing such conflict has both an immediate and a longer-term impact on children's behavior and their interactions with others" (p. 337). Candelita recalled much shouting "and lack of respect" by her father within her immediate family and noticed her own replication of this behavior both with her first husband and current life partner, only "coming to the realization later in life that there was a different and better way." This was also true for Sparky, whose parents "didn't have a great relationship. . . . My father was an alcoholic. . . . He would stay in the kitchen at the kitchen table reading or watching a little black-and-white TV and my mother would go

into the living room and watch the TV." She acknowledged that she emulated her mother's anger when she was frustrated.

During the second and third years of development, Dunn (2003) suggested that children are able to recognize their parents' own distress and may make "an attempt to alleviate it" (p. 336). This is evidenced by Abby's awareness that her mother "had low coping skills. . . . She would get upset, cry, and threaten to leave . . . so I tried not to be much of a bother." She described her mother as having "many emotional challenges," and ultimately Abby had to undertake her own parenting as a child. Mercedes described her father as "emotionally aloof" and her mother "being miserable and very unhappy"; she was very aware of the "dark cloud in my family" despite the lack of public display of anger in her parents' relationship. For many years her birthday wish was "that I'd been raised in a happy home." Mercedes learned to replicate her mother's silent behavior, ultimately "noticing it wasn't getting me a very good result." For John, witnessing his father's "angry and verbally abusive behavior towards his sisters" affected his regard for his father.

Moreover, Dunn (2003) suggested that "no aspect of an individual's behavior in interaction with another person is independent of the shared history of their relationship. How a young child interacts with her parent is affected not only by both their personalities and emotional responsiveness but also their shared history and expectations of joint pleasures, conflict, humor or control" (p. 340). Christine provided evidence of this when describing the lack of shared history due to her father's significant time away on military service; she had angry "shouting matches" with her father when he was trying to control her behavior. While Abby felt loved and wanted by her parents, she also "felt

invisible" and was aware of "not admiring their values." For Mercedes and Lee, time was also limited with their fathers, who were completing their studies for many years during their childhoods. Clearly, for Jenny, who was sent to boarding school at the age of 8, there was little shared history with either parent for many years, and she was clear that "this affected my relationship with both my parents—with my father it was virtually nonexistent for years and as a teenager I rejected my mother's attempt to engage in a mother-daughter relationship." Also, Anne and John, whose mothers died when they were young, were clearly unable to experience a lengthy shared history with their mothers.

It is also noticed (Dunn, 2003) that "children who had experienced frequent positive cooperative experiences with their siblings . . . were more successful" in social understanding, and that "some child-child relationships, those that are affectively close, have real potential as influences on the development of children's ability to understand the emotions and thoughts of others" (p. 342).

Several of the co-researchers had positive affective relationships with their siblings. Candelita "really loved" her elder brother and "remembers sharing things with him." She talked of loving her younger brother, "but I don't remember having the closeness that I had with the older one." Anne, while having a negative relationship with her elder sister, had "a typical brother and sister" relationship with her brother and sister:

> He had his friends; I had mine. We got along. We fought at times. . . . Once my older sister and mother passed away . . . we became much closer. I really came to admire him and held him in very high regard.

Sparky "developed a wonderful relationship with her eldest sister: they "were very close" even though there was such a difference in age, and Sparky "would go and

live . . . and stay all summer" with her. On the other hand, she maintained that her middle sister "would misrepresent" situations and Sparky sensed "a lot of underlying competition between" herself and her middle sister "for their mother's attention," which Sparky never felt she received.

Mercedes' childhood relationship with her brother was highly competitive, although she did describe them "as inseparable . . . partners in crime. . . . We were allies, we were enemies, and we did a lot together." Abby, Lee, John, and Jenny, on the other hand, described either no relationship due to a considerable age difference or very little connection. Abby's brother was "almost 6 years older" and "had a lot of issues, even early on, with social interaction . . . antisocial behavior." She was aware that her parents "had no idea what to do with him" and "in terms of childrearing there was real differential treatment between them." In Lee's case, he had a little more connection when there were only three children in the family but less so as the family grew and he became responsible for the siblings who were born after him. Lee commented: "Nighttime feedings, diaper changes, the whole shebang was on me" from the age of 7 until he was 16 and left home.

Affective relationships with priests, pastors, and God are included in this orientation, yet the co-researcher experience was mixed. As a child, Candelita "felt supported by her Jesuit spiritual director" although in spite of being raised as a Catholic, religion was relatively unimportant in her childhood family. Sparky was also raised in a Catholic family, and both she and her middle sister would go "bike riding with the neighborhood kids and the priest on a regular basis." It was when he was arrested and jailed for "molesting little boys" that the family stopped attending church for a while.

Christine was raised as a Lutheran and attended church services regularly as a child; however, it was her relationship with the pastor from the campus ministry at college that she described as being "extremely influential" in her life. Lee was also raised in a Catholic family, yet while eschewing formally organized religion, he declared his love for his priest.

Adult Relationships

Clark and Brissette (2003) believed that the "relationship context does make a difference" (p. 824) in our understanding of emotions in individual lives, and they defined two distinct dimensions. Relationship is defined "as the interaction that takes place between two people" (p. 825), which is clearly analogous to Maturana's (1978) biological perspective of organizations as relationships or self-organizing systems. If two people are influenced by and influence each other's thoughts, feelings, and actions, a relationship or organization is said to exist, and exploring the diversity, strength, and duration of the impact that the one has on the other allows us to "understand people's emotional lives" (p. 825). This is referred to as *relationship interdependence.* The second dimension, *communal strength of the relationship,* is defined as "the degree to which two people in relationship feel a responsibility for one another's welfare and, therefore, benefit the other in order to promote the other's welfare" (p. 825). Similarly Thompson (2002) refers to this phenomenon as dynamic co-emergence or "mutually specifying" (p. 38). Clark and Brissette (2003) posited that there will be greater emotional expression [or valence (Varela & Depraz, 2003)] "the greater the communal strength" (p. 825). This definition and these dimensions are used to explore the adult relationships among the co-researchers, who were all in relationship with a variety of others—from members of their

immediate families and friends from childhood to significant relationships that have developed during adulthood, including life partners, children, therapists, bosses, and colleagues.

Parents

Only two co-researchers—Mercedes and Lee—had both parents still living. The mothers of Candelita, Abby, and Christine were still living, and Anne, Sparky, John, and Jenny no longer had either parent living. For Mercedes and Lee, their parents lived in a different part of the country and therefore physical contact was minimal.

For Mercedes, the relationship with her parents was much improved; in fact, she described it as "great," with conversations two or three times a week and joint vacations about three times a year. "They express a lot of pride in who I've become and in what I do. . . . My parents are interested in what I'm doing and are eager to share in my good fortune." They adored her husband and were also grandparents to her stepson. While her mother's health was a cause for concern, her father took "regular exercise" and was "healthy." He was "more tolerant and patient these days," and Mercedes had "gained more appreciation for that aspect of who he is."

Lee was openly dismissive of the number of children his parents had and expressed little interest in maintaining contact with any of his family members, although he would "see them" if he was in town. More recently, some family members lodged with him and his wife, and he was unable "to have an open and honest conversation with them," which he found frustrating.

Candelita's relationship with her mother was "not very close or loving" in the early days but began to improve when Candelita was "30 or even 35 . . . when she started

connecting more." Candelita was very invested in this relationship, and while she visited her mother as often as she could, she could only care from a distance. Her mother was currently unwell ("her mind is bad"), yet Candelita was keen to talk with her and make sense of the mystical happenings that she experienced "while my mother is still alive and awake."

Abby had a relatively unsatisfactory relationship with her parents as a child, yet it was not until "early adulthood that I began to realize I was actually doing some things that didn't make sense in the name of keeping my parents from having to deal with something they didn't want to deal with." She had also "taken over a motherly role as a young child and wasn't happy about that." However, Abby's relationship with her mother had improved somewhat. Her mother "depended a lot on" her father and "when he died, she did not know how to operate her appliances . . . [and] was also unable to drive" and so became dependent to a fairly large extent on Abby. More recently, following a dream in which Abby's mother's deceased husband appeared to her for the first time in the 6 years since his death, Abby noticed a change in her mother's behavior:

> He was angry and telling her [Abby's mother] that she was wasting her life waiting to die. I told her that he was probably also angry that she was driving me nuts. At any rate, she has completely transformed her disposition. She is cheerful and can laugh at herself. She is not leaning on me the same way. She is thinking more.

Christine learned "with the help of therapists . . . to have a healthy, bounded relationship . . . where I can set the rules for my life," particularly with her parents, and started to become much more assertive with her father in her late 20s: "When you start saying no in a family that expects you to say yes, there's going to be some friction." When her father "started giving me just a ration of crap about how I was spending more

money . . . , I turned to him and said, 'Dad, when you were my age, you were already married and had two kids, so I think I'm old enough to . . . spend my money the way I want to.'" Even in her 30s, "he was screaming and hollering . . . and we all stay very quiet and calm." However, Christine decided to "mirror his behavior back to him" because "it's not appropriate for him to scream at me. . . . I'm not going to be a doormat." While they never discussed the situation, "he did stop screaming at me." Christine "got to know my dad best in the last 4 of 5 years of his life" and she was "now going through that process with my mom, so I'm still learning who my mom really is." She spent "time with her one-on-one a lot more . . . in a relaxed way, and so we're getting a chance to talk more." Her mother was living "in an assisted living facility . . . relatively close by."

Siblings

Contact between the co-researchers and their siblings was also irregular and variable in nature. Candelita spoke of her difficult relationship with her sister: they didn't "see eye-to-eye," which she was "determined to improve." Anne remained close and in touch with her brother, as well as her sister, who—after "a tiff when I was in my late 20s . . . [which] kept us distant" was resolved—"is my best friend. I am hers." Sparky had no contact with her middle sister, nor did she seek any. "We're very different and we did not get along in childhood and have never grown past that." Abby made no mention of her brother. Christine acknowledged that she had a different temperament and affective style from her middle sister, and their relationship was totally ruptured for a while, although "we've negotiated our relationship in our late 30s." She also understood that her "sisters do not like change," that the relationships have been difficult from time to time, and there were several arguments on the occasions when Christine was asserting herself.

> I get a call from my sisters . . . and they're screaming and yelling at me, and they are arguing with me: . . . How dare you? This is not the way it's done in our household. . . . You are always trying to cause problems. . . . [However,] they're seeing some of the advantages of the way I do things . . . because I deal better with Mom, . . . because I am able to step away a little bit emotionally.

Mercedes' relationship with her brother had experienced "some strain," with there being "a sense of continued economic competition." After receiving some mean and venomous comments from him, she "stayed away from him for a while" and chose not to be engaged in his issues related to an unsuccessful marriage, divorce, and the pain in his life. Although she had said that they "have gotten closer now that [we] are more comfortable with ourselves and who we've become," following a recent family vacation "he was rude and obnoxious" and Mercedes no longer feels "safe enough to spend time with him." Since childhood, Jenny's relationship with her only sibling "had been fraught with mistrust and miscommunication." However, Jenny was keen "for the relationship to improve" which it has over the last 2 years "through talking about the past; agreeing to draw a line in the sand below historical difficulties; talking and sharing more openly than previously and being more supportive and sensitive to each other."

Friendships

Clark and Brissette (2003) described the situation where people who grew up as friends and then moved away and had little contact may still "consider themselves best friends, feel great affection for one another, . . . have great concerns and feelings of obligation for one another's welfare" (p. 825). This was indeed true for a number of co-researchers: Sparky had many "childhood friends . . . and actually is still in touch with them, . . . seeing them a couple of times a year." For many years she chose to "spend Christmas Eve with one particular friend rather than her own family." Abby had a small

circle of friends, although not many were from childhood. She "had some key adult friends" and did not have a "need to see [them] a lot," but they were "on my wavelength, so that when we connect, we connect really, really well." She had one friend in particular of 19 years, with whom there was irregular contact, yet "it's almost as if we're connected mentally, . . . very cognitively and emotionally." John recalled only one special friend, with whom he "maintained a relationship throughout my life." In spite of having quite different lifestyles, they remained in touch "with an unspoken bond, . . . a sort of loyalty to maintaining the friendship across time." Jenny was still in touch with friends she had met when she was 8. While she maintained irregular contact with them since moving to the U.S. she felt "a very strong connection and concern for their welfare and that of their children and grandchildren."

Therapist

For Anne, talking about herself to her therapist was "very significant in terms of my self-awareness": "It didn't really occur to me that you could talk about yourself and explore that." This related directly to the fact that she did not talk to anyone as a child, nor was there anyone to listen. However, Anne spoke of her stepmother "as a wonderful woman, who changed my life . . . with her warmth, hugs, and kisses." Mercedes, Sparky, Christine, and Jenny all held their relationships with various therapists as hugely influential in their lives. For example, Christine was in therapy on and off since she was in her early 20s and considered this "the smartest thing I've ever done. . . . I connected with counselors at different times, working with them for shorter or longer periods of time depending on what led me there in the first place." Jenny "sought the help of two therapists prior to having to be in therapy and supervision" while training to be a

therapist. While accepting that some of these relationships were better than others, she believed "they were all beneficial and I wouldn't be the person I am today without having been in therapy."

Intimate Partners

Apart from John, who as a monk took a vow of chastity, all the co-researchers were married at least once, and five were married twice. This latter group included Anne, who married the same man twice, and Candelita, who did not remarry after her husband's death but was in a long-term relationship. Clark and Brissette (2003) defined five factors that "significantly predicted relationship stability—satisfaction, length of the relationship, sexual nature of the relationship, exclusivity of the relationship, and sexual orientation restricted to the relationship" (p. 827).

Anne referred to her husband—the man she married twice—as "her best friend . . . very even keel . . . and he's just all the things I didn't have growing up—. . . the affection . . . those things that he is so giving of." He was the "stay-at-home dad and much better at it than I would have been."

Candelita's first marriage lasted 28 years until her husband died at the age of 54. She described him as "a very wise, uncomplicated, relaxed person . . . who helped me to untie a lot of knots." Candelita always felt "a peace that was a very . . . very strong sense of peace and I always equated love with peace." She had been with her current life partner for 8 years and described their relationship as one of being in a "healing process" as they learn to be with one another.

Abby talked of knowing very early on that she wanted to marry the man who became her husband. Married for over 34 years, they shared "a set of fundamental

values." She described their relationship "as one of deep commitment and love" and said they "guard their time" jealously; while she did not use the term 'fun' often, she described their time together as fun. Abby said her husband "is my best friend. . . . We have such an intense relationship," and he had an impact on her "relationships and her self-awareness."

Christine's relationship with her husband was "very deep":

> It really was something that was supposed to happen. . . . I felt like the ground got more solid under my feet, because he clearly adored me. He loved me actively and he trusted me and he respected me. And receiving that gave me emotional strength.

Lee described his wife as one of only two best friends and held that their relationship "taught him a great deal about my behavior in general and increased my awareness of self, particularly any blind spots I have."

Having married at 21, Sparky's first marriage ended in divorce after a few years. The relationship deteriorated due to her husband's inability to hold a job and his drinking. Her second marriage was less than a year old, although she and her husband lived together for a number of years prior to getting married. Sparky described the relationship as "comfortable. . . . I care a lot about him, I love him. . . . In some ways he reminds me of my father."

Following a disastrous first marriage, in which her husband was clearly not looking out for Mercedes' needs (Clark & Brissette, 2003), "a series of relationships that weren't going anywhere," and therapeutic work to understand the reasons for this, Mercedes met and married her second husband. Their relationship was based on equality, and "he'd done similar [therapeutic] work, and that mattered a lot." She added that he was supportive of her "work and personal development."

Jenny was also married twice. The first marriage was "a big mistake" and had "a negative impact on my self-confidence," while the second was "hugely supportive and nourishing and based on equality and respect."

It appeared that the successful marriage relationships that existed for the co-researchers fit the factors noted by Clark and Brissette (2003) and also fit a further point they made regarding the expression of more emotion when "we believe others are concerned with our welfare and will attempt to meet our needs (and not harm us)" (p. 828). Candelita, Anne, Abby, Christine, Mercedes, and Jenny all acknowledged the support they received from their husbands, particularly when dealing with loss or hurt, and the amount of responsibility they felt for each other.

Children

Only three of the co-researchers had biological children, and two had one stepchild. Candelita had four children who "encourage me to be myself and *move on*" with her creative writing. While Anne had not considered children during her first marriage, once she and her husband had both grown up she was delighted to have three. Abby maintained that her three children—all with very different personalities—had "a huge impact on my self-awareness." Even though she had a different relationship with all of them, "I am close with all three. . . and they are all wonderful." Having a stepson was very important for Mercedes—"It was like a dream come true to have this kid in my life"—and yet the relationship was not without its difficulties, causing Mercedes and her husband to re-examine "everything we ever did and for a while we were in deep grief." The rupture in the relationship was being repaired. She commented that now "he has a job and seems to have turned a corner. It's going slow, but he comes to see us regularly,

and we talk, and that's a big improvement from where we were." For Jenny, the "positive anticipation of having a daughter to support and be in relationship with was relatively short-lived and turned to disappointment when my stepdaughter married and moved away."

Christine and Lee both made conscious decisions not to have children for different reasons. Christine spent time "poking and prodding around in myself . . . and I did it for years . . . looking for a desire to have children and discovering I didn't have one." She believed that motherhood "is a calling. . . . It's not a vanity project. . . . It's something you do because the universe or God says *I want you* [her emphasis] to have children." Lee, on the other hand, decided with his wife not to have children because both carried genes of cancer and dementia, respectively.

Work Organizational Relationships

Organizational relationships, with bosses particularly, negatively affected self-confidence, sense of self, and their ability to be themselves for a number of the co-researchers. Others described the frustration caused by negative bosses or difficult relationships.

On feeling good about being selected for a senior position in her organization, Anne remarked: "I was picked. Happy." Yet she described the culture within the organization as one in which "I don't feel like I can trust. I don't feel I can really be myself." Candelita also talked about "distrust" and "limiting creativity" when describing the relationships and culture of the organizations in which she worked. Sparky experienced both positive and negative relationships within organizations. When she was struggling with the breakdown of her first marriage, a significant boss "provided the

tough love and boundaries" that enabled Sparky to be responsible for her behavior and move on with her life. Abby had to file a grievance when her work situation became so difficult "due to bully—a thoughtless, rude, dishonest and manipulative executive director"—for whom she worked. Mercedes' experience was mostly negative with bosses, from whom she had to "withstand negativity, vindictiveness, and destructiveness," although she experienced some support from colleagues and customers. Lee was frustrated with and dismissive of his bosses because they were "generally ineffective leaders and communicators; uncaring and manipulative." He felt he "could not be himself" and "had to play the system." John also experienced "frustrations, mostly due to dishonesty in communications from the decision-makers" within the organization in which he worked. Jenny's negative experiences with some bosses related to their being "dishonest, manipulative, unsupportive, uncaring, small-minded and unwilling or unable to see the impact of their negative behavior." Quite clearly there were times when she lost her "confidence and could not be myself."

Role Models, Mentors and Confidantes

There were also additional important relationships in the lives of several co-researchers. These included role models, mentors or confidantes, either individually or collectively, for Anne, Sparky, Abby, Christine, Mercedes, Lee, John and Jenny. For Anne, these women served as "advisors and advocates . . . usually senior people who know how to treat people . . . in public forums." Sparky benefited from a long standing relationship with an OD consultant. Abby had a relationship with a mentor she described as "personal, professional and religious" and two confidantes who "provided feedback." Christine came to know a "widowed school nurse, single . . . 45 at the time. . . . She

seemed really happy and was not sad and pathetic." She also belonged to a group of women friends who went on an annual hike together. Mercedes explained how a group of friends who studied two poems about women's relationships and "a girl finding herself" developed together over 12 years as they discussed their own relationships with parents, husbands, children, and bosses. Lee described two individuals who had been influential in his life: a captain who taught him about being independent "while still maintaining relationships" and a work colleague with whom he discussed a variety of deep, philosophical topics. For John, a significant relationship was with Mother Teresa, "whom he heard speak in Japan," and her nuns, for whom he later worked for a while and from which he concluded that "the answer to all this is love." Jenny was part of at least three "peer support and supervision groups" who "provided support and safe opportunities for development." She also worked with a coach.

Priests, Pastors and God

The notion of a personal relationship with God was expressed as being very significant by both Candelita and Christine. Candelita was encouraged by her spiritual director to engage in what she described "as a very healthy religious practice . . . by being open to the Gospel and asking God to become present." She believed she had "this connection to a God that will listen" and was "always grateful for this experience . . . I have carried all my life."

With the help of her campus ministry pastor, "who encouraged me to ask questions and explore my concerns and confusions" and her own desire to know, Christine was able "to make the transition between the faith of my childhood, which was handed to me by my parents, and the church and the faith of my adulthood, which I

developed for myself." Christine was very clear that she was in relationship with God: "my higher being is part of God." While the church was still very important to her and was "a core part of my identity," she focused on her discovery that "God really doesn't care about actions nearly as much as God cares about the condition of our heart . . . a place where God can move within you and where you permit love at a universal level to grow and thrive."

One of John's significant relationships was with his guru in India, whose influence he described "as huge. . . . I mean that influence upon me was major." "Seeing the guru two or three times a day" meant that John "really learned a lot about *love*" (his emphasis) and ultimately "fell in love. . . . I mean, I think he was the father I didn't have, he was the family I didn't have."

In concluding their exploration of the influence of relationship closeness on people's emotional lives, Clark and Brissette (2003) suggested that "the degree of interdependence in a relationship and the communal strength of a relationship . . . cannot be understood independently." They stressed that "the fact that both have clear implications for emotional life is the reason we believe that understanding relationships is central to understanding emotion" (p. 833).

We move next to focus the exploration of self-awareness in relationships using the biological perspective.

The Biological Lens

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) described relationships as "structural coupling," generated through and by "recurrent and recursive interactions" (p. 85). He noted that for "a consensual domain to emerge, a behavioral domain of interlocking and

reciprocal interactions between two structurally plastic organisms" (p. 85) needs to be in place. He continued that such a relationship emerged "if the structures of two structurally plastic systems change through continual interaction without destroying the identity of the interacting systems" (p. 85). This describes the ideal relationships that exist between parents and children; siblings; therapists and clients; friends; employees, leaders, followers, and colleagues; and any support systems that have been arranged. However, in this study it was clear that ideal relationships did not always exist between the co-researchers and either one or both of their parents, siblings or between the co-researchers as employees and their bosses, and therefore these relationships could be said no longer to exist. In other words the organizational relationship or the composite unity (Maturana 1978) was transformed, and as such *the interacting system was destroyed.* Thompson (2007) also suggested from the dynamicist's perspective that without the appropriate environment, the system will not survive.

Candelita talked of her relationship with her mother as "not very close or loving." She used the same description for the aunt with whom she stayed for months at a time as a very young child, while about another aunt she said: "She was beautiful, and I loved her dearly."

Mercedes "did not feel trusted by" her mother as a teenager and felt "not good enough" for her father, with whom she "did not have a close relationship." Lee described his relationship with his father as "bad. . . . It was never a very good one" and said that his father was always "critical of whatever I did." In fact, Lee was "acutely aware that I did not like my father much" and "he was often angry." Christine said: "It was miserable having him for a dad" because "the man was perpetually angry . . . and verbally very

abusive." John rejected his father "because he was so verbally abusive," although "there was a rapprochement . . . over time," and Jenny admitted to "being frightened of his anger and temper" and therefore not having a relationship with her father.

Maturana and Varela (1987) suggested:

> We work out our lives in a mutual linguistic coupling, not because language permits us to reveal ourselves but because we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others. We find ourselves in this co-ontogenic coupling, not as a preexisting reference, not in reference to an origin, but as an ongoing transformation in the becoming of the linguistic world that we build with other human beings. (p. 235)

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) clearly stated that "children who are confronted by disrespect and cruelty definitely need a space in which they can respect both themselves and others." He described an unnamed Peruvian psychologist who showed in a study that "just one fully trusting adult is enough to help children regain their self-respect" (p. 131). This is evidenced by the fact that many of the co-researchers who experienced aggressive or violent and disrespectful relationships with their primary caregivers turned away from relationships with the primary caregiver towards another for succor and support.

Sparky "always felt very left out . . . like I wasn't good enough" and learned "to hide myself from my mother . . . by keeping my mouth shut" in order to survive. She turned towards her elder sister, friends, and their parents and neighbors who "virtually adopted me, . . . buying presents for my birthday."

While Abby did not experience disrespect from her parents, who were overjoyed at having a girl, she felt she "had to parent myself" and pleaded with her parents to allow her to attend summer camp from age 8 for increasing amounts of time because it was

"really pivotal in my development . . . so I learned how to interact with people and groups."

Lee found his support through a particular friend—"we were inseparable"—and teachers "who were very good to me." As a child, Jenny had a felt sense of "belonging rather more with the family 'servants'" than her own parents.

While Jaques (2002) is not a biologist, towards the end of his career and life—as mentioned in chapter 2—he explored the biological nature of the lived experience in order to understand the "human condition" and defined value as "whatever an organism chooses to be attracted by or locomote towards" (p. 245). Drawing upon Jaques' definition of value, Croswell and Holliday (2004) described this process of moving toward or away from something as one of valuing, where value is seen as "an expression of relationship [or not] between self and object [or another person, idea, thing, relationship, organization]" (Makiguchi, 1989). Maturana and Varela (1987), on similar lines, represented love as acceptance or creating space for the other to come and sit beside you in your daily routine.

Being seen and heard and given time and space, as described by Maturana (Maturana and Poerksen, 2004), results in healing and self-respect, and this is what uncles, aunts, and grandparents provided when it was not available from parents. Indeed, almost any adult, (or child) would do. Love is evidenced by Anne's comment about her uncle:

> So he was always aware of me as an individual. . . . He'd give me time when there wasn't time. . . . So in that competitive environment of four children, it would be me who was sitting on his lap. . . . That was a prize place to be.

Sparky felt "very loved" by the couple who virtually adopted her "because they spent time with me."

Education and Development

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) described education as "the process of transformation resulting from the co-existence with adults. We become the adults we have been living with" (p. 127). In order to produce "freedom and self-determined thinking" in the education process, then, "we have to live together in a way that is supported by the mutual respect for the autonomy of the other" (p. 127). In addition, Maturana & Varela (1987) refer to "seeing the other as legitimate" (p. 247) as ethical. Moreover, Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) suggested that using force would not achieve this; rather, "open space for communal reflection and action" must be created, and "if a teacher behaves respectfully, if he does not intimidate his pupils, if he listens, encourages cooperation and reflection, then a special form of interaction will emerge" (p. 128).

For Candelita, such a relationship existed with her favorite teacher, "who I loved dearly and she loved me a lot . . . because she picked me. . . . I was younger than the rest of the students, but those 2 months made a difference; they allowed me to go ahead." She had a similar relationship with her spiritual director, who "saw me and chose me as the secretary of the group . . . and was taken aback that I had all this initiative." Sparky "had great relationships with" her teachers and described them as "just being really tough . . . or fun loving and easy going. . . . It was just the way he taught was very different and it was fun." Lee acknowledged that most of his teachers "were very good to me" and that his science teacher in high school was "an awesome guy." Another science teacher "even

invented a class" for Lee, "where I was doing the physics labs and setting everything up for the courses . . . as the lab manager." He rated his basketball coach as "the single most influential male figure who taught me about honor." It is evident that in recalling the positive experiences and relationships with teachers, the co-researchers talked of being seen, being heard, given time, space, and encouragement in a 'tough love' approach, which fits Maturana's (2004) view: "It is profoundly healing to be actually seen to regain self-respect and to participate in interactions supported by love" (p. 129). Mercedes recalled her teachers as "positive and reinforcing" or as those who "taught me some very high standards."

On the other hand, John described a number of his teachers as either "disconnected"—"He treated us as if we were just machines that would swallow the information he was giving us"—or abusive: "We daren't do anything against him. . . . He would have punished us physically in a way these days that would be completely outlawed." John stated:

> Nothing happened that seemed to me to be enabling me as a human being. . . . It was very academic. . . . We weren't talking about life. . . . School was not a place I could express my spirituality.

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) also described one of his most influential teachers who "always expected a serious and responsible debate, not the blind and thoughtless acceptance of some widespread opinion or mere academic doctrine" (p. 143). Clearly, Lee's parents, in raising him to be independent, encouraged him to "be a critical thinker and independent, . . . not to listen to other people, . . . to know that textbooks were wrong." John, who was also raised to be independent, "loved the deep, meaningful

conversational tutorials" with his professors but "was disappointed with the students, who just wanted to get the grades rather than enter into the conversation."

Relationships with Therapists

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) wrote at length about the therapeutic relationship, the establishment of which is of "crucial importance": "The behavior of the therapist will, if it is grounded in love, not be an expression of arrogance or of prejudice but a manifestation of profound and unbiased understanding" (p. 118). He discussed clients who were "shocked" out of their blindness—an approach that, if done with love, is legitimate. He also described the notion of being seen as a function of the therapeutic relationship.

Almost two thirds of the co-researchers described supportive and fruitful relationships with therapists and named this process as being instrumental in their becoming self-aware, more whole, or healed. Anne, for example, began seeing a therapist, which "was good self-exploration," and Christine started seeing therapists during her 20s, when "I was a mess. . . . I was not satisfied with the way I was living my life . . . [or] the choices I was making." Working with them, "I was able to explore the biggest challenge for a lot of us: . . . what need am I trying to fulfill here?" Sparky held that therapy "was kind of key to me learning about this and becoming self-aware." When Mercedes started seeing a therapist, she experienced "such an awakening and it really jolted me. . . . It really woke me up from a long sleep and a pattern that wasn't serving me." For Jenny, "the experience of being in therapy enabled me to see myself clearly and deal with all the issues I was holding onto about my father."

Depraz et al. (2002) wrote about therapists giving

> their clients all their attention, but all the while they are careful not to interfere with the open and patient acceptance of what the client brings to light by making interior commentaries or counter-transferential movements. The therapist is only able to simultaneously register the verbal, non-verbal . . . the epi-verbal . . . and the para-verbal by an open listening and observation. (p. 39)

Loving Relationships

In describing the influence his mother had on him, Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) described her upbringing in an Indian community in the Andes. There, men and women lived "a balanced life in reciprocal supportive harmony, borne by mutual respect" (p. 142). For the co-researchers who had experienced 'failed' marriages, it is clear that the relationships were not places of safety or equality or places to be seen, heard, and accepted without judgment. Neither were they places of "reciprocal supportive harmony, borne by mutual respect."

Sparky's first marriage "started to deteriorate because I was the only one earning money" and her husband "would have passed out but his friends who were drunk would be making themselves dinner in my kitchen." Mercedes' first husband was "abusive on a psychological level." She referred to him as "an adulterer, alcoholic and abusive," and Jenny felt she was fourth in line for her husband's attention after "work, booze, and sports."

For those in relationships that could be defined as successful and working, there was a sense of equality, commitment, and respect, and each partner felt seen and therefore accepted. This falls clearly into the previous and following descriptions of ethics and positive relationships. Mercedes said of her second marriage: "It is an equal relationship, and he has been and is supportive of my work and personal development." Jenny talked of "having to pinch myself daily at my good fortune" and described her

second marriage "as the single most important relationship and one which continues to provide opportunities for nourishment, support, development and growth, both individually and as a couple."

Organizational Colleagues and Bosses

All these previously mentioned relational theories could and do just as easily pertain to the relationships within work organizations, and indeed many co-researchers experienced negative, destructive, and dysfunctional relationships with bosses and colleagues in the work setting. Although Candelita did not distinguish between her "life and work," she described the organization in which she worked "as frustrating" and one "which suppresses creativity." Abby experienced at least one difficult boss, who was "a bully, thoughtless, rude, dishonest, and manipulative," and where the situation became so bad she simply wanted to "get away." Mercedes experienced several negative and destructive bosses such that she had to create a "protective shell" so she could withstand the "negativity, vindictiveness, and destructiveness" of difficult bosses, whom she described as "jealous, dictatorial, psychologically abusive, unprofessional, demeaning, and just plain evil." Lee was dissatisfied with his work experience; it did "not provide any opportunity for growth or development," and he felt as though he was "prostituting himself in order to play the [dysfunctional] system." While most of Jenny's working relationships with colleagues and bosses were constructive and positive, she experienced a few bosses who "have not known how to or even been interested in communicating" or who "seem to need to try to destroy others' ideas in order to feel good about themselves."

Traumatic Experiences

Many of the co-researchers who experienced trauma in childhood also experienced trauma in adulthood, mostly at the hands of adults with whom they were in relationship. Additionally, the corporal punishment received by the co-researchers as children was described as physically and emotionally traumatic, and hence its inclusion in this section on relationship with other. Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) suggested that "parents who permanently correct their children, reprimand them for their mistakes and threaten them with punishment" are negating love, resulting in the destruction of a relationship since it is not based on "mutual trust and reciprocal respect" (p. 199).

Sparky was 4 or 5 when she first remembered corporal punishment being meted out to her: "They whipped us with the belt, they spanked us. . . . She [Mother] would knock me off my chair at the kitchen table and be on top of me." Mercedes said the result of corporal punishment "stung . . . deeply, both physically and more so emotionally." As we have seen in previous sections, the corporal punishment experienced by Jenny had a significant and negative impact on her life for at least half of her adult life.

Having explored the relationships with other, we now turn to the relationship with self.

Orientation 2: Relationship with Self

Relationships with self, self-reflection and self-awareness, emotions and emotional development, feelings, experiences, mood, disposition, temperament, support systems, learned behavior, religious beliefs, spirituality, and travel to and living abroad

Relationship with self, both in childhood and adulthood, appeared to incorporate trying to create meaning from one's experiences, behavior, feelings, and consciousness and as such also included self-reflection; self-awareness; a variety of personal feelings; a sense of spirituality; religion; development and academic success; support systems; dreams; and the power of love, including loving oneself.

The Affective Science Lens

Self-Reflection

The discussion on this orientation begins with the ability to self-reflect—think back about oneself—or to observe oneself in action for several reasons. First, all the co-researchers spent time on self-reflection. Second, the ability to self-reflect has an impact on and is interconnected with self-awareness. Third, being able to self-reflect and therefore being self-aware enables us to understand and manage our emotions. Self-reflection is the ability and capacity to think about ourselves—as an object—in "complex, abstract and symbolic ways" (Leary, 2003, p. 773). The ability to self-reflect demands not only thinking about and envisioning ourselves in the future, but also conceptualizing how other people view us. Leary (2003) posited that "the evolution of self-awareness had important implications for the emotional experiences of human beings" (p. 773).

Over the years the notion of *self* has been unpopular since it cannot be measured. However, as was seen in chapter 2, the humanistic movement (Rogers, 1980; Maslow, 1954, 1968; Jourard, 1964, 1968) paid significant attention to the 'self,' although many different definitions were provided. Leary (2003) defined the essence of self as "the ability to take oneself as the object of one's own attention and thought" (p. 774) and

stated that the self is the "cognitive mechanism that permits self-reflexive thought" (p. 774).

All the co-researchers were engaged in self-reflection, not only as a function of being engaged in the interviews for this study, but also as a way of helping them to interpret their behavior and understand themselves. Some kept journals intermittently. For example, Anne kept a journal at the behest of an organizational consultant who encouraged this but also "ran regularly to explore her mind, body, and soul." Candelita, Mercedes, Lee, and Jenny also journaled regularly. For Mercedes, journaling was part of a particularly "pivotal and very transforming" week she spent "climbing mountains." Lee "usually keeps pretty good journals," and Jenny kept a journal throughout her therapy training and also intermittently when she "was struggling to make sense of my poor relationships and unhappiness." John's self-reflection process involved more thinking than writing. While not necessarily journaling, Christine recorded her dreams which she then used to make meaning of and understanding herself.

Leary (2003) maintained that there are two "aspects of symbolic self-awareness" that are vital to "understanding the role of the self in emotional experience" (p. 774). The first is the ability "to create a cognitive *analogue-I* (Jaynes, 1976) through the self," which allows and enables individuals to "imagine themselves in other situations, intentionally plan for the future, consider behavioral options, mentally rehearse future actions and retrospectively imagine how events might have turned out differently." The second is the ability to think about "its own characteristics and behaviors" (p. 774) and assess such images. In line with other theories, notably Gestalt (Perls, 1947; Perls et al., 1951; Stevens, 1971; Yontef, 1993), Duval and Wicklund (1972) admitted that human

beings are unable to remain in a constant state of self-awareness. Rather, they attend to stimuli beyond themselves or often nothing at all while being preoccupied in habitual patterns of behavior such as watching TV, walking, eating, or driving. Lee, for example, was so 'out of awareness' or desensitized while "cross-country running that he failed to notice" the scratches or bumps he received from low-hanging branches or fallen trees. This fact was one of the motivating factors in this study, since the evidence of individuals operating out of awareness and the resulting consequences for themselves, their relationships, and the organizations in which they work is so vital.

Emotions and Self-Reflection

Leary (2003) continued to explore five ways in which an individual's emotional experience is affected by the existence of a self and the ability to self-reflect. The first is our ability to evoke emotions by imagining situations that are relevant to us. Sparky, for example, imagined and worried what her situation would be like at work were people to discover that she "was undegreed" and therefore spent "a lot of time hiding this fact." Anne's emotional reaction to her thoughts that she "was responsible for the death of" her mother and sister is a fine example of how our ability to self-reflect allows us to react emotionally to stimuli and events that exist only inside our own mind: "In my house, . . . the people I couldn't get along with, they died. . . . I'm thinking I'm killing these people off one by one because I don't like them, because I don't get along." Moreover, it was this emotional reaction that led Anne into therapy and was the "basis for self-exploration." Leary (2003) suggested that "people spend much of their time planning, thinking about and working towards future goals" (p. 776), and John's desire to begin a master's degree program and later a doctoral degree program are evidence of this. Lee

also spoke of furthering his career by the successful completion of a doctoral degree.

Second, Leary (2003) suggested that we "react emotionally to abstract and symbolic images" of ourselves in our own minds. Anne imagined that she was "an imposter" in her organization, where she believed herself to be "unqualified" for many of the positions she held in spite of her success. She described herself as "suffering huge issues of lack of self-confidence" and "being racked with self-doubt about my competency."

Our capacity for self-reflection is evident as soon as we are able to differentiate ourselves from others, at or around the age of 2, and armed with this ability to distinguish ourselves from others we are able to respond emotionally to information, events, or people who either threaten or validate our perspective. Hence, our self-esteem or self-confidence can be enhanced or diminished. Sparky concluded that she "attached my self-respect to my academic ability." Abby, Christine, and Mercedes also gained much self-esteem and confidence through their academic prowess. However, Mercedes' first husband's behavior diminished both her self-esteem and self-confidence: "In social occasions he would tell people I was stupid or he would call me stupid in front of them." Leary (2003) stated: "Events that affirm one's ego then create positive emotions, whereas ego-threatening events cause negative emotions. By virtue of having a self, people become emotionally invested in whether reality conforms to their view of themselves" (p. 777). Moreover, Leary invoked the idea that "a person's self-identity involves not only beliefs regarding who one is and what one is like, but also the goals that reflect how the person would like to be" (Emmons, 1986; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Palys & Little, 1983).

This idea is clearly evidenced by Lee, who "recently started an objective analysis of my behaviors and natural inclinations and their impact on planning activities and goals. I discovered that I am using an overly romanticized version of myself for planning purposes, and I keep falling short." He experienced shame as a result of not being able to live up to his view of himself. When an individual's ideal perception of himself or herself is at odds with the actual self, negative emotions such as disappointment, depression, and sadness can result. Christine clearly experienced all these emotions following her terminations. "I was a woman who had gotten pregnant and had an abortion. I was never going to be who I was before. I could never be a *good girl* again."

Interestingly, Leary (2003) quoted Tesser, Millar, and Moore (1998), suggesting that persons with whom we are linked may be viewed as a threat and therefore "generate negative emotions" when they are successful in an area important to us and our identity. This may be indicative of the "negativity, vindictiveness, and destructiveness" Mercedes felt in relation to several of her bosses.

Leary (2003) also suggested that we evaluate ourselves by comparing our "physical attractiveness, intelligence, or popularity" to that of others (p. 779). If we find such a comparison favorable, we are likely to experience "positive affect," and if the comparison is less or unfavorable, the opposite. For example, Lee contrasted his academic ability with that of "his very smart elder sister" when he started receiving feedback that he was smarter. Additionally, when he was placed in "advanced everything" in "an independent school" and graduated third out of a class of 174 with a GPA of 4.0 having "put no effort into it," he felt very good about himself. On the other

hand, he compared his large physical stature and his sense of not being "good-looking" to that of his good-looking friend, which had a negative impact on his self-image.

Third, Leary (2003) suggested individuals consciously contemplate the cause of their emotions. When Christine was told by her parents not to feel, she became "more intense inside" and spent "a lot of time in my head trying to understand." When Mercedes was trying to "reconcile some of that pain in my childhood," she would do some "journaling . . . to amplify my feelings and at one time and during this very poignant work . . . I was pretty emotional, and I might just cry for an evening and then just write about it." Jenny would often reflect and "self-supervise" when "experiencing any strong, negative emotions to try to understand them and the cause." Sparky began to self-reflect at age 13, "when it started to become clear to me that there were different expectations . . . and I needed to figure out where my niche was." Abby also "has constantly self-reflected . . . for years . . . to try to figure myself out."

Fourth, Leary (2003) posited that individuals "experience emotions by thinking about how they are perceived by other people" (p. 775). For Mercedes, her mother's lack of trust in her caused Mercedes to "consider running away from home." Mercedes, Lee, and Jenny never felt good enough in the eyes of their fathers. Such negative emotions led Mercedes to lack confidence, Lee to constantly have to prove his worth to himself and his father, and Jenny to achieve "her master's degree in order to prove to her father and herself that she had value." It is suggested (Lempers, Flavell, & Flavell, 1977) that "the capacity to think consciously about oneself goes hand in hand with the ability to think about what other people are thinking," and indeed this facility and the capacity to empathize "emerges at about the same time as self-awareness in children." For Anne, it

was essential for her confidence that she was viewed by senior management within her organization as being successful, fitting the corporate culture, and making the right impression. To that extent, even though the culture had changed and was "now horrible . . . more cutthroat and less enjoyable, less human," she was willing to "do what is acceptable and to play the corporate game. . . . It's like how you dress . . . and how you sit at the table."

Finally, Leary (2003) emphasized the individual's ability to "modify (regulate) their own emotional experiences" (p. 781) to events, which they could do in three ways: (1) by predicting the expected outcome and thus alleviating or lessening the negative reaction, (2) by selectively choosing those with whom they wished to compare themselves, and (3) by deflecting or desensitizing so as to reduce the impact or consequences of their self-awareness. Regarding the first method of lowering anxiety by expecting the worst, Abby, Christine, and Lee never felt "seen or visible" at home; therefore, they did not expect to be seen and no longer experienced this event as painful when it did indeed occur. Jenny often felt she "would not be disappointed or hurt if she did not expect anything from certain individuals or relationships." Many authors have suggested that "self-reflection prolongs and intensifies negative emotional states" (Broderick, 1998; Duval & Wicklund, 1972), yet it appears that individuals stubbornly continue to ponder such negative emotions. The paradoxical theory of change (Beisser, 1970) suggests that the harder one tries to change, the more likely one is to stay exactly the same, and this is perhaps the reason why individuals choose to deflect from the self-awareness that promoted the negative emotions or desensitize themselves in order to lessen the effects of the disagreeable experience.

Mindless activity such as watching TV, reading, and engaging in hobbies—or anything that takes one's mind away from one's self—is also said to "reduce negative feelings" (Tice & Baumeister, 1993; Zillman, 1988). Abby took part in "working out with her husband"; Mercedes was obsessively active for several years, "playing tennis for hours at a time." In addition, Mercedes, Christine, and Jenny all engaged in a compulsive relationship with food, which came to light as a 'support process.' While none of the co-researchers used alcohol to excess, such behavior has been known to block or obstruct an individual's ability to be self-aware and hence feel. Nicotine and other drugs may also produce a similar reaction, although John's use of drugs could be seen as partly trying to explore a different "consciousness and way of being" while rescuing him from his disappointment with life as he knew it.

There is, therefore, plenty of evidence to indicate the impact on our emotions of self-reflection and also the interconnection between self-reflection and self-awareness. Indeed, Leary (2003) also concluded that "self-reflection is needed to experience emotions," which in turn "affect people's self-perceptions, sense of self-efficacy and ability to self-regulate and . . . make decisions" (p. 783). While all the co-researchers were self-aware, this awareness manifested itself quite differently, and even though self-awareness is thought to emerge early in childhood, Lee was 28 when he came to the conclusion "that the unexamined life may not be worth living" and described "self-awareness as allowing me to have greater control over my emotional state and to interact more smoothly and understand more fully the environment." Christine also suggested that "self-awareness is a state that cannot be reached until a certain level of physical, psychological, and emotional maturity exists." For Jenny, the process of becoming self-

aware began with therapy, when she was in her mid-30s, and with increased self-awareness she was "able to learn about myself, the decisions I was making, the impact of my thoughts and feelings on myself and others, and also begin to make greater sense of my actions."

Having explored self-reflection and self-awareness in some detail, our discussion must turn to emotional development, together with certain feelings, moods, attitudes, affective styles, and temperaments as expressed or displayed by the co-researchers.

Emotional Development and Heritable Aspects of Affect

Carstensen, Charles, Isaacowitz, and Kennedy (2003) suggested that "emotional experience, expression and regulation" (p. 726) are primarily related to personality development. Like Bandura (1997), they posited that "temperamental inheritance, exposure to different types of environment, acquired beliefs and expectations" together with the interconnection of these elements are significant in "characteristic styles of behaving" and that affect or "emotions are the essence of personality" (p. 276). Indeed emotions are an adaptive or biological function needed to balance psychological, sociological or anthropological experience. Moreover, the development of personality occurs as the individual adapts to the environmental conditions she or he experiences. John believed that "the most important part of my life's objective is to touch the truthful core of personality."

For this study, it is necessary to ascertain the naturally, autonomous heritable aspects of affect, and indeed there is much empirical research to suggest that "temperament, mood and emotional intensity" are inherited.

The significant emotion expressed by the co-researchers was anger. The emotions of anger and fear are thought to arise and become evident relatively early in childhood (Carstensen et al., 2003), and research indicates that children are able to recall the events that led to "emotional responses of happiness, fear, anger and sadness" (p. 732). This was clearly evident among the co-researchers. For example, Candelita said, "I was aggressive and disrespectful towards my mother." Anne also disclosed her anger towards her father: "I certainly had a lot of anger when we did all these one-on-one sessions." Sparky recalled: "I just became angry and I stayed angry for years. . . . It prevents me from being myself" and "I do behave very similar to her [mother] when I'm angry." It was equally easy to imagine Sparky's anger about not finishing college: she made the sacrifice to afford her father the happiness his divorce from her mother would bring, but the divorce did not take place. Yet she also experienced "sadness, which she believes others interpret as anger." A link between sadness and anger has been made: anger appears to arise when a goal considered to be achievable is blocked, whereas sadness emerges when the goal is not felt to be achievable (Levine, 1995; Stein & Levine, 1999), although "intentions become increasingly important in causing anger among older children" (p. 732). It was certainly Sparky's understanding as a child that her sister together with their mother intentionally thwarted her plans.

Abby too expressed her anger at "having not only to parent myself, but parent my parents too." Mercedes and Christine expressed sadness and anger at constantly moving and therefore changing schools, as necessitated by their fathers' careers. Jenny was also aware of experiencing "powerful angry emotions very similar to those of my father." Leary (2003) suggested that anger arises when a failure is attributed to another.

Additionally, there is some consideration of the characteristics of self-esteem, self-confidence, humor, and empathy also being influenced by genetics. Whereas Dunn (2003) suggested that further research is needed in this area, many of the co-researchers (i.e., Sparky, Abby, Christine, and Mercedes) experienced self-confidence emanating from academic prowess or success, although such self-confidence was relatively easily undermined by negative experiences, both in the family or work organizations.

We move now to explore these natural, heritable aspects of affective personality, such as disposition, temperament, and mood, as described by the co-researchers. Depression as a temperament could also be an inherited disposition. Candelita remarked: "I can become very low and negative and could have inherited this from my father, who could have been depressed and had quiet spells." Mercedes' mother also suffered from depression, and Mercedes was aware that she could be on the "below average" end of the depression scale. Christine suffered from depression on and off for many years and was medicated to lessen or remove the consequences of being depressed.

However, Leary (2003) suggested that "behavioral self-blame" (p. 780) following failure or trauma can lead to depression. It may be possible to account for Christine's depression through her felt failure "in social activity" or in the "powerless" relationships she experienced with boys as a teenager. Interestingly, Christine described "depression—something she has experienced over 20 years—as an excellent opportunity for self-awareness." She also concluded that dealing with "emotions is still tough," not having been allowed (or allowing herself) to experience them. This relates to the notion that talking about emotions as a child has great value to emotional development (Dunn, 2003), and this was clearly not encouraged in her childhood.

Anne described herself as having a "shy, quiet, reserved temperament" and "a mild and calm disposition." She described her parents, particularly her father with whom she had a longer relationship, in the same way. "He was kind of the traditional father, . . . a kind man, very cerebral, very intellectual, . . . and when my mother died, he was unable to sustain the environment" that both parents had built around the notion that education and learning were so powerful.

Sparky, Mercedes, John, and Jenny described themselves as having a very social temperament, which could have been inherited from their fathers for Sparky, John, and Jenny and from both parents in the case of Mercedes, who described them as "very social and sociable." Sparky described her father as "a very sociable and spontaneous person" with a "naturally open and trusting" disposition, who often without warning or planning would take the family on trips "to Maine for a lobster dinner" or "to see Grandma." John's father was "wise and astute about life, . . . very gregarious and sociable, . . . always entertaining," and John chose not to "disassociate" himself "from the imprint" of his father. Jenny described her father as "the life and soul of a party, . . . often acting as a big kid (when he'd had a drink or two), . . . gregarious and generous."

Spirituality

Finally, in this orientation toward self, it is necessary to include the notion of spirituality expressed by many of the co-researchers. There is little literature exploring spirituality, as opposed to religion, from the affective science perspective. As we have seen, as children, most of the co-researchers were afforded some formal, organized religious focus. Three of the four who were raised Catholic left that particular faith: Candelita and John developed their own form of spiritual practice, and Lee denied the

faith altogether. Moreover while he offered himself as having a "shriveled leg" in terms of spirituality, he nevertheless defined it as: "based in connectedness and interaction between people and their environments . . ." While the fourth Catholic, Sparky, referred to herself as religious, she no longer attended church on a regular basis. Of the four co-researchers raised Protestant, all considered themselves spiritual, but their association with organized religion differed.

Christine was raised as a Lutheran; belonging to this religion was significant as a child and continued to be very significant in her adult life. She concluded that the concept of self-awareness, which is always a journey, was for her a spiritual as well as religious process, requiring the "unconditional love" of God in order to go "deep enough inside to access all aspects of the person." Mercedes felt religion was a significant factor in her life, but she no longer attended church. She defined spirituality as "Belief in or connection to a higher power and purpose . . . and connection to the soul." For Anne and Jenny, religion was not particularly significant in childhood, nor was it in adulthood. Abby, who was raised in a Jewish "nonreligious" family, learned the rituals of the Jewish faith from an aunt and uncle and attendance at school camp. While she still defined herself as Jewish, she also considered herself as more spiritual, which she defined as "to a force larger than myself that somehow connects all of us and reaches beyond the tangible here and now. "In terms of her spirituality, Abby explained:

> I have always been aware of . . . journeying from the conscious and outwardly understandable to emotional areas that are maybe based on intuition and other areas that are based on a pure connection. . . . It's a connection to the soul on some level.

She also described her mother as having "this ability to go beyond the reality . . . in a spiritual way."

Candelita felt her "connection to God" from being a teenager. She lived "a spirituality that does not use religion, . . . having given God my soul and asked him to guide me in wherever I need to be." She believed she was a channel for something bigger that "is difficult to explain to others; . . . there is no language to describe the process of deep soul work" she was engaged in without others believing she was "too mystical, too magical, or too spiritual."

John expressed his disappointment that "people need to dress up and just put on a show when they go to church. . . . What happens after church, between Sundays?" While he was in awe and appreciative of the mysticism of the church, he "quickly gave up on adopting Catholicism" as his personal faith. In becoming a monk, he was able to continue his spiritual journey and "to get more deeply immersed in the spiritual life," and he wanted to focus his attention on identifying with the spiritual rather than the material and heightening "the awareness of that within oneself which is everlasting." He defined spirituality as "the endeavor to open the heart and the mind to the fullest extent possible."

Having examined the self orientation through the lens of affective science, we now turn to the biological lens.

The Biological Lens

Embodiment

From a biological perspective, as embodied living systems, the Cartesian split of mind and body encouraged the dismissal of experience as legitimate and clearly does not serve us in understanding human behavior. On reflecting on the transcripts for all the co-researchers, awareness of their bodily selves was apparent, as was the display of

emotions through their physical being, or embodied mind (Varela et al., 1993) during the interviews.

Finlay (2006) talked of the body's disclosure in phenomenological research and argued "for the importance of researchers attending reflexively to the bodies of both participant and researcher . . . through at least three distinct though connected layers: *bodily empathy, embodied self-awareness* and *embodied intersubjectivity"* (p. 19). As a researcher, I believe that this can only take place within an unstructured or semistructured, dialogic conversational interview that provides the space and freedom for this type of connection. I am also happy to recall that this is indeed what happened in all of the interviews, enabling the awareness, exploration, and understanding of senses, emotions, and physical movements of the co-researchers during the interviews. Such events were recorded in the transcripts and became the focus for exploring the bodily awareness process.

Candelita recalled "a sense of discomfort" in a bodily way from a very young age and was "keenly aware of my bodily process," having learned to be aware of, listen to, and understand her body and its deep connection with her mind as a combined process. She did not "know how to really separate body and emotions." She held that her self-awareness was deeply rooted in her bodily process. Throughout the interviews, she was very aware of and in touch with her emotions, sharing laughter and tears as she recalled previous experiences.

While Anne "sets aside time . . . every day" to exercise in the form of "running and spend[ing] time exploring my mind, body, and soul," the split between bodily awareness and the mind seemed more apparent. Anne expressed her emotions often

during the interviews, although there was some incongruency between her laughter and the disturbing recollections she described.

Sparky became aware of her physical self as a teenager and understood the connection between her emotions, intellect, and physical self. Like several other co-researchers, she displayed certain emotions during the interviews and held that generally her emotions were observable through her physical self.

Christine described becoming more aware of the physical/mental connection following the second interview, discovering the strength of the bodily connection:

> Because growing up I was like a lot of people, separated from my body, . . . and part of it is coming to middle age, you can't ignore your body any more. It [the body] doesn't permit that any more . . . because *we are body as well as spirit* [her emphasis].

Moreover, she referenced "bodily checkpoints," checking for the physical experience of whatever she was doing, thus concluding that her mind and body were one and the same and not separate. Gestaltists would describe separating the two as *disassociating*—cutting off or ignoring the parts with which we are not comfortable. Again, Christine explained this well in terms of the messages from childhood, with people telling her that they "don't care what you feel as long as you don't show it. . . . We don't care what's going on inside."

While Mercedes used food and physical activity as methods of coping with stress caused by difficult situations and relationships, she described clearly that there was no separation between her mind and body: "I know it was intentional and my body told me it was intentional. My head and body know."

While Lee was not overly expressive of his emotions during the interviews, even though he became more expressive as the interviews progressed, the way he described his

experiences indicated that he was very aware of not only his emotions but those of parents and other adults. As with other co-researchers, Lee laughed when he was describing something painful or hurtful, but less often than others. However, his thinking and emotions were very much connected to his physical size. His preoccupation with 'flow' may also be an indication that there was no split between his mind and body. That said, there was a time when he was running cross-country that he appeared to disassociate his body from his feelings when he failed to notice "scratches, bruises, running into trees."

John laughed through the interviews at all manner of comments and recollections, including sad ones, and he also became tearful when remembering and recounting moving moments from his past. He was also very clear that there was no separation not only within himself, but also within himself and his environment, which he described thus:

> There was this feeling of oneness that the barriers that normally separate us just dissolved and I was the clouds, . . . I was the tree. . . . One time I just died: . . . I was lying on the ground as if my body just merged with the earth, and I was one again, if you like, with mother earth.

Jenny had experienced the split of mind and body, which she maintained resulted from childhood traumas, and through work with Gestalt therapists and coaches and continuous self-development consciously reintegrated the parts of her that were once separate and disintegrated. She regarded this reintegration "as a long-term, deeply emotional process, and progress is often slowly made . . .with still much to do."

Individual Feelings

While many feelings were described during the interviews, signifying the uniqueness of the individual co-researchers, those felt by the greatest number of co-researchers were (1) anger often directed towards self and others; (2) confidence or lack of self-confidence; (3) depression; (4) feeling invisible or not seen; and (5) feeling that they were or had to be independent.

While a number of the co-researchers acknowledged that many of their values, behaviors, and often mood, temperament, and disposition were a function of their parents, one in particular preferred not to accept this theory and indeed fought against it in such a way that indicated exactly the influence that parents indeed have. Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) indicated that in all things "we are not alone; . . . our families, our culture, our countries of origin, and our mother tongues are present" (p. 121).

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) acknowledged that all emotions "guide us," noting that "love is the prime emotion that makes ethical behavior possible" (p. 205) and that anger, as one of many negative emotions, including aggression and arrogance, is indicative of a lack of respect and therefore love, which therefore shapes our actions and relationships negatively.

Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) talked of the disrespect and cruelty often experienced by children at the hands of their parents and how without support from alternative sources such children are unlikely to develop a sense of self-confidence. This is borne out by several of the co-researchers, who although generally self-confident and considered by many as successful, had bouts of lack of self-confidence.

Invisibility

The notion of invisibility was very strong among several of the co-researchers. Varela (1999) considered seeing the other as legitimate and therefore ethical, while Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) made the point clearly that the act of seeing another individual is an act of love. This is interesting, since it was in relation to their parents that the co-researchers felt unseen or invisible. He maintained that "people who are not heard and seen by their partners or at work *[or even parents?],* who have no presence where they live, experience this hidden rejection most painfully" (p. 122).

Sparky was clear that "she should have been a boy," and her father treated her as if she were a boy for the first few years of her life. In relation to her mother, as we have seen previously, she learned "to hide herself . . . in order to survive" and she felt "like the other one," never praised or noticed and only briefly seen by her mother, when her mother received "praise and strokes about me from my boss and her peers" while the two worked at the same place for a short time. Even in her current work, Sparky had "to spend a lot of time hiding the fact that I am not degreed," therefore maintaining her invisibility.

Abby recalled that both her parents were as children invisible to their parents, and that she "too felt invisible to her parents."

Lee had "no expectation of being seen as a child growing up as one of five or eight children" and indeed "never felt noticed by either of his parents." Being heard is also problematic in such a large family "since the only way to be heard is to make the loudest noise, which draws the most attention—good and bad." At college he purposely "became basically invisible for 2 years" and as an adult he constantly tried "to be

invisible . . . completely nondescript." He added: "So long as people don't see me coming, I can maintain a position of control and flow."

Jenny carried a familiar saying of her father: "Little girls should be seen and not heard." Yet she also felt strongly that she "was not seen for who I was, but who they wanted me to be."

Between the late 1940s and early 1960s, Maturana, developed the term *autopoiesis* to describe the circular, self-generating living system that is the human being. He referred to autopoiesis as the way living systems achieve autonomy. Varela et al. (1991) also described the autopoietic, closed living system as one of autonomy, and Thompson (2007) referred to the autonomy of an autonomous system as autopoiesis and as such a "relational, system-level property" (p. 44), "always structurally coupled to its environment" (p. 45). Thompson (2007) used the description by Ruiz-Mirazo and Moreno (2004, p. 240) of basic autonomy as "the capacity of a system to manage the flow of matter and energy through it so that it can at the same time, regulate, modify and control (i) internal self-constructive processes and (ii) processes of exchange with the environment" (p. 46). It would seem that in trying to create autonomous or independent children, several of the co-researchers' parents unwittingly created a living system without reference to the environment, a function the co-researchers had to learn much later on in their adulthood. This is self-organizing and the co-researchers were self-organizing systems.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection was defined by Varela, et al. (1993) as "one of the most fundamental cognitive activities that all organisms perform" (p. 176), notably

categorization and making meaning. By this means, (self-reflection), "the uniqueness of each experience is transformed into the more limited set of learned, meaningful categories to which humans and other organisms respond" (p. 176). In other words, self-reflection is a habit or behavior, more or less that the co-researchers engaged in from time to time to create meaning for themselves of themselves, their world, relationships, and experiences. Self-reflection is an enactive approach, whereby "perception is not simply embedded within and constrained by the surrounding world" (p. 174) but, as described previously, both transformed by and transforming of the environment, thus mutually specifying.

Mercedes, for example, when struggling to make sense of the part she played in unsatisfactory relationships, spent a week in solitude, reflecting on the current state of her life. She journaled these reflections and even imagined every aspect and detail of the man she hoped to meet and be in relationship with. Jenny too spent many hours reflecting on unsatisfactory relationships and the type of person she would prefer to meet and journaled her reflections regularly for years. As Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) said: "In this moment of reflection of their own choice, there arises the experience of freedom, although they nevertheless operate as structure-determined systems" (p. 78).

Maturana and Varela (1987) suggested that "tradition consists of all those behaviors that in the history of a social system have become obvious, regular and acceptable. Since they do not require reflection to be generated, they are invisible unless they fail. That is when reflection steps in" (p. 242).

Depraz et al. (2002) stated:

> It is really quite rare that we turn away from the world and disinterestedly consider our thoughts or pick up on the emotional tonality of our actions (as

> opposed to having emotions or moods), since there are not really all that many opportunities for us to do it on our own accord, or in response to a school or training session. (p. 34)

However, we have seen that several of the co-researchers did indeed do this as children. Whether or not they had an understanding of why or how they did it, they in fact redirected their attention inwards. This behavior could be seen as deflection, which can certainly serve as a survival function or as a way of self-reflection and is indicative of humans as self-organizing systems. Christine turned her attention inwards, learning "to kind of disconnect and coast," becoming "more intense, . . . spending a lot more time in my head trying to understand and construct an internal world because the external wasn't working" for her. John turned to nature and hallucinatory drugs "to find another way of living. . . . [LSD] definitely transformed my consciousness" and provided "an awareness that there is a different way of looking at the world." As adults, all the co-researchers revealed participating in self-reflective activities, Mercedes and Jenny being two examples previously mentioned.

As we have seen clearly from this section, and as Maturana and Varela (1987) hold,

> Only when our structural coupling goes awry in some dimension of our existence do we realize (if we reflect on it) the extent to which our behavioral coordinations in the manipulation of our world and communication are inseparable from our experience. (p. 233)

It appears that whether the co-researchers were children or adults, they were able, either themselves or enabled by others, to reflect on the importance of being in relationship to assist in making sense of the world, their experience of the world, and their co-emergence within it.

Religion/Spirituality

While religion and spirituality are synonymous for some, for others they are not. More and more across the world, people are moving away from organized religion but having more spiritual experiences (Hay, 2006). As all of the co-researchers fell along a spectrum—from fully committed to a chosen doctrine at one end to agnostic at the other—more described themselves as spiritual rather than religious. Candelita was raised as a Catholic: "Church was important, . . . but it was not a very important thing either." Having joined a spiritual director's group, she became aware of

> this connection to a God that will listen to a 14- or 15-year-old, to just be open with a good heart, and ask to be, to understand or to be part of that, and I always am very grateful to that and the experience that I have carried all my life. A religious experience of connecting with another . . . —I don't give a shape or face to God—but of connecting with the spirit that is in a free way, not with a lot of religiosity.

She left the church she and her husband joined in the United States as a result of the repressive behavior of a priest and referred to herself as "spiritual rather than religious."

Lee was also raised a Catholic, and religion played a "huge part" in his early life. However, "it was never an enjoyable experience," and he rejected Catholicism "because I didn't want any part of it, . . . because it was mumbo-jumbo." Abby was raised in the Jewish faith, and while her parents "were not religious and didn't identify with the traditions," Abby "learned what it meant to be Jewish" from her uncles and aunts and referred to herself as "having a spiritual connection" rather than being religious. Christine was raised as a Lutheran and remained a Lutheran, her chosen faith and religion being of "huge importance to me." Anne and Jenny both described themselves in spiritual terms, and although neither Mercedes nor Sparky attended church, both did as children.

Mercedes was inclined to "consider sailing on her boat, hikes, and the beauty in nature" as her spiritual church.

Hay (2006) described an empirical study he conducted with young children to ascertain whether spiritual awareness was biologically in built, because he maintained that their "endless curiosity suggests that they are often more likely than adults to be in touch with the spiritual dimension" (p. 132). He too discovered a continuum of spirituality among his study's participants, ranging from "almost entirely conventional in tone and unself-consciously religious in content, to others for whom religion was already remote" (p. 145). Ultimately, his study was able to define *relational consciousness,* which describes the awareness of a sacred presence in the natural world.

> It is because of this awareness that we can be spiritual in the first place. It allows the possibility of relationship with God, or, if we are non-theists, the sense of a seamless 'holistic' relation to the Other, whether conceived of in secular or religious terms. (p. 140)

Hay (2006) referred to relational consciousness as "the primordial basis of spirituality" (p. 141) and "the underpinning of ethics" (p. 142). He held that "spiritual awareness is commonly the context out of which religion grows, but spirituality is not religion" (p. 48). In addition he believed that spirituality "is prior to religion and is a built-in biologically structured dimension of the lives of all members of the human species." While providing the ground for much debate and disagreement, Hay argued that the current "individualistic ideology . . . hostile to relational consciousness has led to a repression of spiritual awareness" and consequentially a "repression of spirituality" which has severely damaged "the social coherence of Western society" (p. 142). His theory certainly fits with the findings of this study: most co-researchers were socialized

into a religious tradition and then moved away from organized religion and returned to their in-built biological spirituality.

Candelita clearly fit this model, as did Christine, who described it exactly: "I think spirituality is a universal experience. It's a human experience; religion is what humans do with their spiritual experience to kind of give it form and shape . . . and to try and control things." Christine also suggested very clearly that for her the journey of self-awareness, which she viewed as a process, was "a spiritual as well as a religious process." Moreover, she described the process of becoming self-aware as one of "going deep inside" and as a result seeing "the commonality among all people . . . not just the world, but the universe. . . . My experience is that there is a place in all of us that is tied to the universe, that we are part of that whole." John was aware from an early age that there "was just something innate within me that was seeking a more spiritual lifestyle."

Wallace, (2003); Ricard, (2003) and Hut (2003) all explored the possibility of a greater understanding between the different religions and also compared science with Buddhism, whereas Hay (2006) argued that spiritual awareness is a fundamental part of our biology, whatever religious beliefs, and suggested that it is part of our biological makeup because it has adaptive and survival value.

Reading and Books

The connection between books and reading and the development of self-awareness among the co-researchers had to be language. Maturana (1988) claims "the phenomenon of self-awareness takes place, and can only take place, in language . . ." and "Indeed, the whole domain of self-consciousness arises as a domain of recursion in self-awareness" (p. 57). Maturana (1998) also states: "It is that the appearance of language in

humans and of the whole social context in which it appears that generates this (as far as we know) new phenomenon of mind and self-consciousness as mankind's most intimate experience" (p. 233). Most books quoted by the co-researchers that were so influential in their lives were of the genre associated with self-help, self-development, and understanding human behavior. Candelita talked of books being "very important" to her. Mercedes "was passionate about books" as a child and would "stay up all night reading." She recalled a number of books she read in adulthood, which had "a profound impact on my sense of self and self-awareness." Christine "can never remember a time when I was not interested in books." It is also interesting that at least three co-researchers—Candelita, Abby and John—talked of our current language being insufficient to describe some of their experiences. Among other authors (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004, p. 71), Isaacs, (1999) also suggests that our current language is insufficient to describe and define the current thinking about understanding the human condition. While not differentiating between adequate or inadequate language, he suggests that "many people . . . simply do not have words to describe" (p. 283) emerging experiences. He continues "we discover that words we have to express ourselves are ill equipped to capture what we feel. . . Our language reflects the 'machine age'. . . our language has become fragmented. We lack a language of wholeness" (p. 396).

Dreams

Varela and Depraz (2003) described dreaming as part of the "cluster of human abilities" (p. 195) associated with imagining. Imagination is considered by many (Ricard, 2003; LaBerge, 2003) to be a significant aspect of our consciousness and therefore a large part of how we make sense of our situations. "Lucid dreaming arises very naturally

in Buddhism, providing both a metaphor for enlightenment and a method for attaining the goal of awakening" (p. 234). There is a difference between the Western and Eastern views of the benefit of dreams; many Westerners believe that dreams are ultimately unreal and relatively unimportant, while in the East dreaming is viewed as having "greater potential for understanding and spiritual progress than the so-called waking state" (p. 234), and the Eastern tradition is thought to be thousands of years old.

> Know dreams as dreams, and constantly
> Meditate on their profound significance.
> Visualize the seek syllables of the five natures
> With the drop, the nada and so forth.
> One perceives buddhas and Buddha fields.
> The time of sleep is the time for the method
> That brings realization of great bliss.
> This is the instruction of Lawapa. —Tilopa (1997, p. 28)

At least three co-researchers used their dreams to try and make meaning of their experiences. Mercedes used "dream therapy" to help her "explore and interpret dreams and how to benefit from them in my conscious life." In fact, a particular dream helped to confirm her decision to leave corporate America. Christine dreamed vividly, was able to remember dreams, and learned to listen to them, "review them, look for themes, draw some understanding about what was going on in the deeper parts of my emotional psyche." John also had and was able to recall his dreams, mentioning one, which "was particularly significant. . . . There was some sort of transmigration of soul or something." John found this "fascinating, exciting, and realized that everything isn't as we see it."

Summary

In this chapter the lenses of biology and affective science have been utilized to explore the lived experience of becoming self-aware of nine co-researchers, including the

primary co-researcher. The data collected through three separate interviews have been expressed in a variety of different ways, exploring childhood and adulthood experiences and orientations toward relationships both with many central others and the individual self.

Human behavior is complex. Human behavior is clearly not determined by mechanical and objective powers or forces. Rather, it is self-determined, self-organizing, subjective, and relational. This is fully in line with the quantum realm (Stapp, 2007) and relational consciousness (Hay, 2006). We are all structurally coupled (Maturana & Varela, 1980, 1987) in one way or another.

While children have a relatively powerless position in the familial system, it seems that they co-emerge, develop and mature as a result of the interconnectedness of their genes, initial and immediate caregiving relationships, the culture into which they are born, the environment generally and their environment specifically, and their reactions to the challenges the environments present. These challenges may be material, physical, or emotional. However, as they mature and, as a result of self-reflection, gain greater insights into and awareness of their own *becoming* and the nature of their own being, they become more powerful. Maturana & Varela (1987) described survival as "a natural drift, a product of the conservation or autopoiesis and adaptation" (p. 117). We are self-organizing, living systems. Thompson (2007) too suggests that complexity—defined as behavior that is between random and predictable, thus "exhibiting changing and unstable patterns" —and instability is a necessary precursor "for self-organization and adaptive behavior" (p. 40).

In this exploration, we have identified the self as a core element of personality; emotions generally as essential to the development of personality; self-reflection as vital to the development of self-awareness; and autonomy, imagining, relationships, love, and spirituality as interconnected elements of human awareness.

The conclusions drawn from this wealth of data from the lived experience of being and/or becoming self-aware, which will enable us to understand more fully human being as self-awareness, are presented in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter draws conclusions, answers the research question(s), and addresses the four problems associated with self-awareness in the context of authentic relationships as identified in the summary of Chapter 1. Additionally, this chapter synthesizes the findings, data, and the co-researcher learnings resulting from involvement in the research process, drawing inferences from the additional literature texts and conceptualizations that have been identified during the process of analysis and interpretation. Given the heuristic nature (Moustakas, 1990) of the study, detailed learnings of the primary co-researcher were also recorded in a diary for the duration of the process. All of the co-researchers were invited to provide detailed thoughts and learnings resulting from their involvement in the study, and five of them did so. The full details of the learnings are to be found in Appendix O.

After the conclusions are discussed, recommendations are made with regard to practical applications, theoretical implications, and opportunities and implications for future empirical research into the subject of self-awareness. Specific emerging topics for potential research and practice that have resulted from the study are identified. Finally, this chapter concludes with a picture and a short narrative description of the creative synthesis.

Conclusions

Precise conclusions about the nature of self-awareness became evident through this study.

1. Self-Awareness Is a Continuously Emerging Process with Many Aspects

During this study, it became apparent that there are many different definitions and several different aspects of awareness. For example, Varela et al. (1993) described the purpose of Eastern mindfulness meditation as understanding the mind, or "to experience what one's mind is doing as it does it, to be present with one's mind" (p. 23). On the other hand, there is a distinctly different interpretation of meditation generally in the West as more static, which includes "altered states of consciousness" achieved by focusing on one object; reaching a state of relaxation that is "psychologically and medically beneficial"; reaching a "dissociated state in which trance phenomena can occur"; and/or reaching "a mystical state in which higher realities or religious" (p. 23) experiences occur.

It also became clear that self-awareness is a natural, continuously emerging, developing process. It is intransitive in nature. We experience two states, which are atemporal and temporal, often observed as transitory. Self-awareness is a process in becoming, rather than an end in itself! Self-awareness occurs, evolves, co-emerges, and re-emerges, moment-by-moment, as we engage authentically with, and are engaged in authentic relationships with others, including organizations and the environment. For the successful development of the process of becoming aware (Depraz et al., 2002), the coalition of relationships, authenticity, emotions (Davidson et al., 2003), self-reflection, and embodied action (Varela et al., 1993; Thompson, 2007) are vital. Ultimately being and becoming self-aware are life-conserving.

This is evident in the many diverse ways the co-researchers experienced themselves and their self-awareness. Christine went "to that deep place within" to know,

whereas John, through his daily meditative practice, came to realize that "the more I know, the more I am aware that I don't know." Candelita made no distinction between her "mind and body," whereas Anne and Sparky did not mention such integration. Abby, Mercedes, and Jenny were aware of the integration of mind and body, even though they were not always able to incorporate such awareness into their relationship with self, other and/or their environment. Lee's awareness was at a more cognitive level, and he could attenuate his self-awareness. Yet, all were self aware—aware of themselves, their feelings, moods, and actions (Davidson et al., 2003). Moreover, they were aware of their relationships—authentic or otherwise—their environment, their world, and their impact on these elements; thus, they were conscious (Damasio, 1999) and therefore aware.

The arrival of the co-researchers at certain, and often diverse aspects of self-awareness, was quite discernable. Therefore, I conclude that there are a variety of aspects of self-awareness, including the bodily or physical being, patterns of both verbal and active behavior, which may or may not be habitual, languaging, emotions, moods and feelings, disposition, temperament, and values, cognition, spirituality and values, the integrated mind-body dimension, and ultimately core mindfulness that can be defined as the mind observing the mind as it minds itself. It seems likely that each aspect of awareness can be used in isolation or in conjunction with other aspects. Paradoxically, the deeper one mines (minds) oneself, the higher one's aspect of awareness. Like the rings of a living tree, these differing aspects of self-awareness are likely to remain once they have been formed (see Figure 6-1, p. 253). The transient and intransitive nature of the aspects of awareness indicates that while they exist, they may not always be fully and

intentionally functioning, and observation of them is not always possible. Some aspects are autonomic, in other words, biological.

In addition, it is clear that there are two domains of awareness, the aspects of self-awareness as described above and the aspect of awareness of the other, the environment or relational awareness.

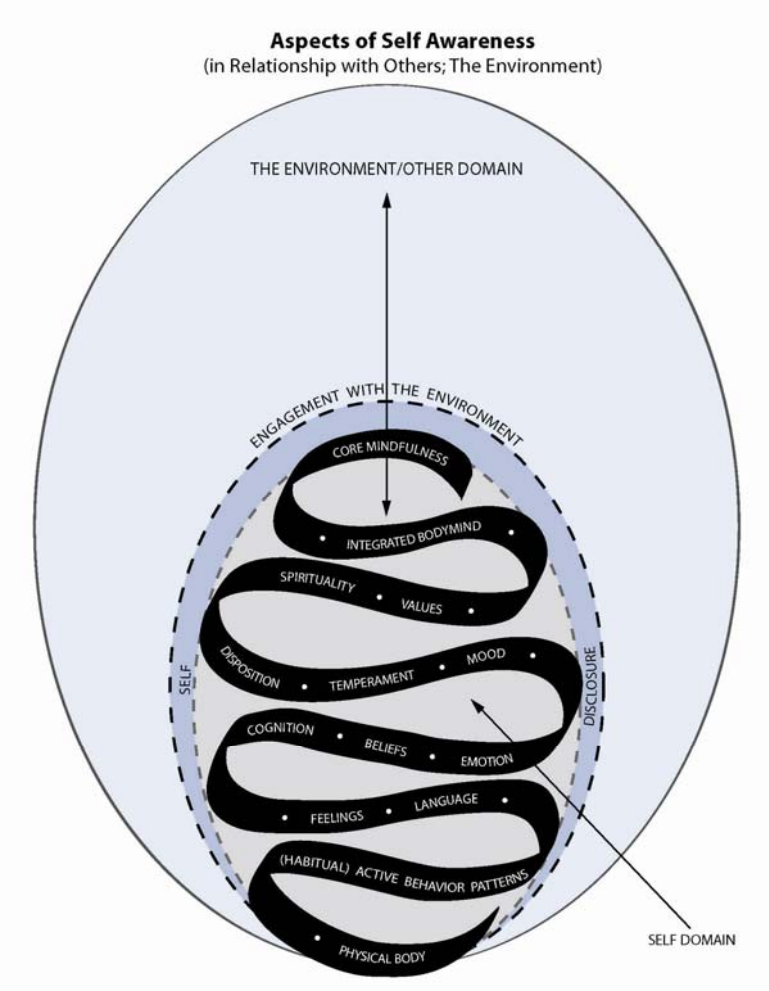

Figure 6-1. Domains and aspects of self-awareness.

2. Trauma as the Impetus to Becoming Self-Aware

All the co-researchers experienced trauma, as a child or an adult or both. Trauma as we have seen can be physical or psychological, although the term was originally related to physical trauma, said to include any serious and body-altering injury or surgical intervention. Psychological trauma is described as emotional or psychological injury, usually resulting from extremely stressful or life-threatening situations (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The term *trauma* gradually became common parlance in the psychological sense linked to the psychoanalytic treatment of arrested development as it manifested in dysfunctional neurosis, hysteria, and mental instability leading to the inability to cope with life generally (Freud, 1940; Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Davis & Wallbridge, 1981; Winnicott, 1990).

Lee, John, Christine and Jenny experienced physical trauma which necessitated surgical treatment in hospital. For others the trauma was more psychological. Anne's and John's mothers died when they were very young; hence they lost their primary caregiver. Sparky's mother behaved in ways that could be described as physically and emotionally violent. Many of the co-researchers—Candelita, Christine, Mercedes, Lee, John and Jenny—had fathers who were angry, dismissive, sometimes destructive, abusive and violent. For others—Candelita, Abby and Jenny—their mothers were inattentive, inadequate or simply not present as primary caregivers. Bowlby (1969) suggested that "the young child's hunger for his mother's love and presence is as great as his hunger for food" (p. xiii). Moreover Anne, Sparky, Christine, Mercedes and Jenny suffered mightily at the hands of intimate partners who were variously abusive, aggressive, inattentive or

dismissive. Candelita lost her husband through death, two of Abby's children were abused, and Mercedes was herself brutally attacked.

The current thinking does indeed suggest that the "DSM-IV [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth edition] definition is now antiquated and does not address the broad spectrum of symptoms that trauma victims may experience" (Scaer, 2005, p. 2). Thus trauma need not just be the result of an horrific event, whether physical or psychological, but also a "continuum of variably negative life events occurring over the lifespan" (Scaer, 2005). Levine (1997) refers to this as "developmental trauma" (p. 10). Levine (1997) includes "loss of a parent or close family member; illness, high fevers, physical injuries, sexual, physical or emotional abuse, including severe abandonment, beatings, witnessing violence, certain medical and dental procedures and surgery" as examples of some "common traumatic antecedents" (p. 53).

While in the past, the experience of trauma was considered purely negative and the cause of untold damage to the human psyche, behavior and adaptability, it is clear from this study that trauma can also be the impetus to begin exploring one's sense of self, thus increasing one's self-awareness and deepening one's understanding of healthy relationships between self and other. Indeed current thinking also suggests that "not only can trauma be healed, but with appropriate guidance and support, it can be transformative (Levine, 1997, p. 2). Levine (1997) also suggests that our "living body . . . informs us of our innate capacity to heal from the effects of trauma" (p. 3).

3. The Mind and Body Working Together

Beyond the fallacy of the Cartesian split, the data indicate that the mind and body are not separate entities; rather, they can and do work together naturally with the spirit

and the emotions as an integrated whole, whenever socialization, education, science, culturation, and normalization have not created this unnatural split. This can mean that self-awareness has been and is most often concealed, de-humanized, de-naturalized, and de-valued in the post-modern 21st Century. Therefore, the greater embodiment an individual can sustain, and conserve, the happier and more natural will be his or her authentic relationship with self, other, and the world.

4. The Importance of Relationships

The data evidenced that relationships—particularly authentic relationships with other—were more important than almost any other aspect of the co-researchers' lived experiences associated with being and/or becoming self-aware. Indeed they are essential and vital. Clearly we are self-organizing systems (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004). Productive relationships allow, enable, and support the development of the self, the development of emotional awareness, emotional regulation (Dunn, 2003; Leary, 2003), and emotional expression, which in turn enable a positive, productive relationship to continuously co-emerge and co-re-emerge. This occurs in spite of unsatisfactory and negative relationships with primary caregivers, provided other, more fruitful relationships can be developed and sustained. It is unequivocal that such relationships need to include respect for and acceptance of the other so that each may be seen clearly both by themselves and others. This is the ground of ethics (Maturana & Varela, 1998; Varela, 1999a; Lee, 2004; Maturana & Poerksen, 2004). Thus, each individual comes to know who he or she is through and in relationship (organization) with the other. Springsted (2004) states: "the deepest questions about the self may indeed involve the distance at which we find ourselves from the other, our lack of personal engagement" (p. 231).

Again, we see that we are self-organizing systems, self-creating (*autopoiesis*) our life with others as a function of understanding ourselves. It is evident, then, that self-awareness is also constituted in relationships with other as well as self, and therefore through such self-awareness human beings co-create the world and themselves. The natural selections revealed in the co-researchers data confirm that autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela 1980)—a biological construct—is a relational, organizational, social phenomenon.

5. Spirituality as Biologically Structured

The study has also shown empirically that spirituality as defined by several of the co-researchers is biologically structured within us from birth in the form of vitalism (Maturana, 1978), and in the process of maturing we are able to sustain and even regain this sense of spirituality. This was true even when spirituality was concealed under the weight of formally organized religion and under the conceptualized conditioning of the socialization process. Human beings are spiritual beings (Hay, 2006).

6. Emotions as Predating Cognitive Ability

The evidence and findings further indicate that emotions and emotional expression predate cognitive ability in children (Dunn, 2003) and also that cognition can best be explained through the combination of the physical expression of life experiences, including emotions and the embodied self (Maturana and Varela 1980; Varela et al., 1993; Maturana & Poerksen, 2004; Gallagher, 2005; Thompson, 2007).

7. Work Organizations as Limiting Development

Work organizations, particularly as represented by leaders, at times appear to provide few if any opportunities for human beings to function and survive in their most effective way—that is, they frequently discourage embodied and emotional human development. They seldom encourage individuals to bring their holistic selves to work, thereby limiting their capacity to grow and develop into the people they have the potential to become. Moreover, both the power of organization (relationship) and environmental (cultural) influence are strong and can often be destructive to the fully integrated human being. When senior managers within organizations are unable to regulate their own emotions and are equally unable to grow and develop to their full capabilities, their insecurity leads them to create difficult situations for others within the organization, whether intentionally, subconsciously or not. The experiences of Sparky, Abby, Mercedes, Lee and Jenny are testament to this phenomenon and provide ample data and findings to draw this conclusion.

8. The Need for Enaction

Self-awareness in and of itself may indeed support the aware individual. However, in order for self-awareness to be of benefit to others with whom one endeavors to be in authentic relationship, enaction (Varela et al., 1993; Depraz et al., 2002; Thompson, 2007) is also required, calling for a certain level of comfort in revealing the self. It is often impossible to tell whether someone is self-aware by simple observation, and therefore in order to be effective in relationships, being self-aware needs to go hand-in-hand with self-revelation, or enacting—the biological term—meaning some measure of *'living the embodiment of awareness.'* This phenomenon appears closely related to the

enaction property in sense-making (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). There will be times when such enaction may either be expressed in language, as in 'talking about' the nature of the awareness, or 'being and living' the awareness, depending on the circumstances and freedom of choice the individual experiences. Self-awareness is, after all, "unbearable" (D. Siminovitch, personal communication, October 6, 2008).

9. Language for the New Conversation

The data has indicated that the language currently used to discuss the experiences of living beings is woefully inadequate (Maturana, 1978; Isaacs, 1999; Depraz et al., 2002; Wheatley, 2002). Our thinking has been founded on the Cartesian split of mind and body; on objective reality rather than subjective experience; on the irrelevance, and therefore dismissal, of emotions to the general functioning and adaptability of human beings; and on our understanding of systems from the psycho-socio-anthropological, rather than inclusive of the affective science and biological perspectives. Therefore our language relates to those concepts and phenomena which are now being questioned. Without the language to define and describe the new order, honoring experience, emotions, embodiment, enactment, and a world where relationships are equally important as objective reality, there can be no conversation and without the conversation, there will be no growth.

Addressing the Issues of Self-Awareness

Having identified the 9 conclusions resulting from the findings, it is now appropriate to answer the problems associated with self-awareness as identified previously. Four problems associated with self-awareness in the context of authentic

relationships were identified in Chapter 1 and have been addressed through this study.

First, while it is still apparent that there is little clarity or agreement on definitions of self-awareness and its relation to authentic relationships, the study has contributed to a conversation related to increasing the understanding of the phenomena. The link between self-awareness and authenticity has been clearly established through this study. Moreover, from this study can be seen greater clarity of the various aspects of self-awareness. Second, this study is an empirical study of the emergence of self-awareness using the biological and affective science perspectives, and the implications for future research will encourage further research of this nature. Third, this study has identified some of the positive aspect of self-awareness. For example, many of the co-researchers indicated how becoming and being self-aware has increased their personal understanding, improved a wide variety of their relationships, and improved their leadership abilities. The study has therefore contributed to the rehabilitation of self-awareness (Silvia & O'Brien, 2004). Finally, this study has provided some clues to the lack of observable self-awareness by individuals in relationships in work organizations. As will be seen in the recommendations, further research will also be recommended on this subject. In addition the study has also indicated the likely positive results of incorporating self-awareness into other fields of research.

Answering the Research Question

The main research question was "How do individuals experience being and becoming self-aware?" The three subquestions were as follows: (1) What general and specific life experiences contribute to the emergence of self-awareness? (2) What general and specific life experiences undermine an individual's self-awareness? (3) What is the

role of self-awareness in an individual's experience of authentic relationships with self and others?

Becoming self-aware is a complex process. It follows, therefore, that the general and specific life experiences that contributed to the emergence of self-awareness would be complex and distinctive among the co-researchers, although there were indeed some similar themes. Supportive relationships both inside and external to the immediate family of origin enabled the co-researchers to develop a positive sense of self. Such relationships included supportive, encouraging, and positive teachers and academic success as well as friends, therapists and mentors. However, even negative relationships with parents, siblings, husbands, and bosses could be said to have caused the co-researchers to begin or continue the process of self-reflection in order to interpret these negative experiences.

It is evident that a child instinctively turns to another person—adult or child—to access the support he or she is unable to gain from primary caregivers. All the co-researchers had traumatic experiences as children and adults, indicating that the need to understand and make meaning of such experiences can provide the necessary impulse to begin self-reflection (Douglas, 1984; Levine, 1997; Thompson, 2007). All the co-researchers were cognizant of their emotional selves, and the majority were aware of their embodied selves.

It is also evident, and therefore is to be expected, that each co-researcher had a uniquely different lived experience of becoming and being self-aware. Moreover, becoming or being self-aware also enabled each co-researcher to interpret his or her world in a variety of ways. For example, being self-aware enables some to be in a more constructive conversation with their environment, be that other people or situations,

including being more confident and assertive. For some, being self-aware enables more satisfactory and authentic relationships with self and other. That self-awareness facilitates better leaders and parents was also evident and most experienced becoming and being self-aware as a positive personal process. Self-awareness included being more trusting and trusted, more open and willing to explore unusually deep aspects of self, with self and other. Being self-aware does not necessarily automatically lead to greater and better choices or increased autonomy, but without it, these two dimensions are less possible. Without exception, those interviewed were aware of the benefits of being self-aware for themselves, their families, and their colleagues.

The general and specific life experiences that undermined an individual's self-awareness were initially negative, or potentially self-destructive, such as the anger and violence of a primary caregiver, or certain family rules. Such rules included demanding that children were neither heard nor seen; or that the expression of feelings and emotion was not acceptable. Such feelings were also dismissed. Feeling or being invisible in actuality—"not being seen" in Maturana's terms (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004)—which many co-researchers experienced indicates lack of respect, which can be destructive, whether for a child or an adult. Lack of autonomy—the ability to self-govern and the freedom to act—can also produce detrimental consequences.

Being a member of a work organization also appeared to have negative rather than positive consequences at times on an individual's ability to be or become self-aware. Such organizations, described in biological terms as self-organizing systems (Capra, 1997; Wheatley, 2006), and therefore living systems made up of individuals (components) and their relationships—organization as described by Maturana (1978)—

often can contribute to the perceived and observed loss of individual autonomy and the inability of individuals to be themselves (Whyte, 1994; 2004). Work organization cultures and more specifically the unethical behavior of leaders/managers, when a good fit between the individual's values and those of the organization is not apparent were experienced as destructive. If an individual is comfortable with certain aspects of self-awareness and operates regularly from such aspects, then the impact on an individual's self-awareness per se is not necessarily drastic. However, the power of the organizational culture and the manager's behavior can and does impact the individual's lived experience. This can lead to two possible outcomes: (1) Either the individual becomes aware of an internal conflict born of the disconnect between opposing values and becomes less authentic 'in public' in order to survive, or (2) the individual decides to leave the organization—devalue the relationship—in order to be able to be more personally authentic. If an individual chooses the former option, anxiety, stress, illness, and/or dis-ease may result. Either option considerably limits the individual's contribution to the organization. For an individual who lacks self-awareness or who operates mindlessly or regularly 'out of awareness' and has less personal power and confidence, the impact of organizational culture and boss behavior may affect his or her self-confidence, well-being and contribution. This can limit, discourage, or stifle individual development, including becoming and/or being self-aware. Interestingly, in this particular study, some of the co-researchers left work, professional and personal organizations—relationships—in order to retain or regain their confidence and self-esteem, while others chose to remain in spite of the culture and bosses, and yet others were actively seeking alternative positions and relationships. Given the continuous, yet momentary nature of

the development of self-awareness, the culture of an organization and the behavior of leaders/managers could indeed inhibit, or conversely enable, the development from one aspect of self-awareness to another. Paradoxically, in work organizations cultural inhibiting and enabling may operate with complementarity.

Self-awareness plays a large and central role in an individual's experience of authentic relationships—organization—with self and other. Self-awareness demands an ability to express and manage emotions (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Goleman, 1998; Fineman, 2000; Casper, 2001), and therefore being self-aware affords the individual greater stability, adaptability, and confidence in dealing with emotions. This increased survivability and the natural selection of behavioral—both verbal and physical—patterns suitable for alternative situations and experiences are vital and life conserving. Indeed this is described by Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) as "intelligence" (p. 136).

Implications and Recommendations

Implications and recommendations for theory, practical application, and future research opportunities are addressed in this section.

Theoretical Implications

While much of the current thinking about self-awareness is written in terms of 'mindfulness' being the pinnacle of achievement, this study has revealed that there are many different aspects of self-awareness, all of which might be of some benefit to individuals, their relationships, and by definition the organizations in which they work and live.

The first implication therefore identifies aspects of self-awareness (Fig. 6-1, p. 253) and represents individual essence or core self, as shown in the smaller egg-shaped oval, emanating from the same position within the large egg-shaped oval. The larger oval represents everything outside an individual—the environment, the other, and the Universe. Thus, the aspects of self-awareness represented by the flow of the ribbon inside the small oval are (1) bodily or physical awareness, (2) active behavior patterns, which may or may not be habitual, (3) language, feelings, emotion, and beliefs, (4) cognition, (5) mood, temperament and disposition, (6) spirituality and values, (7) the integrated bodymind dimension or integrity, culminating at the core of mindfulness (Varela et al., 1993; Depraz et al., 2003; Varela & Depraz, 2003; Thompson, 2007). It seems likely that the various aspects of awareness are all interconnected, and can also be accessed appropriately in different circumstances, times and stages in the life of the self-aware individual.

Some of these different aspects of self-awareness noted above are identified in several theories and disciplines previously mentioned, such as interaction theory (Gallagher, 2005), embodied cognition and embodied awareness (Varela et al., 1993), the affective sciences (Davidson et al., 2003), the biology of the human spirit (Hay, 2006), phenomenology (Husserl, 1973; Varela et al., 1993; Depraz et al., 2002), and the science of mind (Gallagher, 2005; Thompson, 2007).

As the conclusions have been drawn from the findings of this study, a second theoretical implication presented itself in the idea of *authentic relatedness*. This can be seen in Figure 6-2, where the self is made up of the components of (1) reflection, (2) the resulting awareness and (3) revelation or *enacting* (Varela et al., 1993; Thompson,

2007)—the biological term replacing the psychological term self-disclosure—within an environment of visibility and value created by self and other. Maturana's (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) definition of visibility and value would be respect, or even love (Maturana & Varela, 1998). This mutual reciprocity or relatedness is a continuous process and therefore is housed within the model of infinity. The point where self and other connect is identified as the Nexus or contact boundary (Perls, 1947), where change occurs. The model of *authentic relatedness* might add to the understanding of the role of self-awareness in relationships and how such relationships—organizations—may be improved.

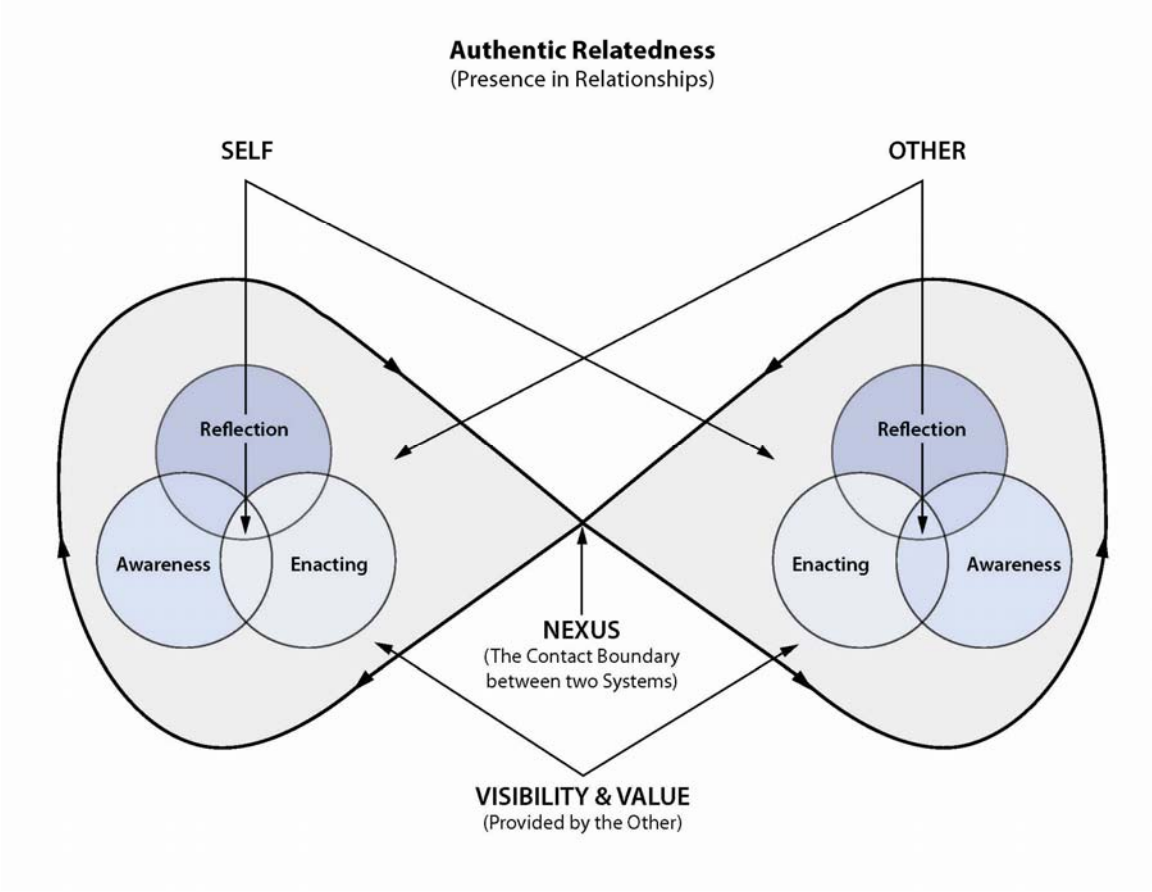

Figure 6-2. Authentic relatedness.

This model might also be developed further and alternative models might very usefully be formulated incorporating the multi-disciplinary approach of biological and affective relationships with self and other in relationship, as an example in the case of leaders and followers.

A third implication resulting from this study is the benefit to a number of theories associated with understanding human experience, the human condition (Parsons, 1978) and human development of using the combined biological and affective science perspective to further explore, expand and develop such theories. The findings could contribute to the theory of auto-poiesis (Maturana, 1998) since the empirical evidence has clearly shown human beings to be self-determining, self-organizing and structurally-coupled systems. In addition, the "aim of neurophenomenology" (Varela, 1996)—an offshoot of the enactive approach—is to bridge the gap between subjective experience and biology. This study has certainly explored individual lived experience from the biological perspective. However there are three theories to which this study has made a greater contribution:

The most notable theory is that of the Enactive Approach within the science of mind (Thompson, 2007). When describing embodied dynamicism, Thompson (2007) suggests that "the scope and limits of awareness of one's own psychological and somatic processes have yet to be clearly mapped . . ." (p. 12). The findings from this study will go some way to supporting this requirement. Additionally the findings may also assist in exploring the "mind science and phenomenological investigations of human experience in complementary and mutually informing ways" (p. 12). He suggests ". . . it is not enough for phenomenology simply to describe the philosophically analyze lived

experience; phenomenology needs to be able to understand and interpret its investigations in relation to those of biology and mind science" (p. 14).

The second theory is Gallagher's (2005) interaction theory, which indeed provided the conceptual framework for this study. Gallagher (2005) has criticized the previous theories of mind—theory theory and simulation theory—in understanding how one person understands and interrelates with another and proposed interaction theory—an embodied practice—as more suitable. These embodied practices are emotional, sensory-motor, perceptual and non-conceptual, and constitute our primary access for understanding others. Interaction theory suggests the exploration of actions, experiences and feelings and how these play out with others through first and second-hand interactions will enable our understanding of self and other. This study has not sought to explain or predict from a third person observation, rather the embodied practices have been described in the first-person by the co-researchers who have remained visible throughout the study. Legerstee, Pasic, Barillas and Fahy (2004) define theory of mind as "a belief that one possesses about one's own and another's mental states" (p. 33) and "is constructed through interaction with other people" (p. 34). They make clear the importance of the quality of such interactions to the development of the infant, and this was clearly evidenced in the study.

Finally we suggest that the findings of this study greatly complement and enlighten Parsons' (1978) Action Theory by providing a biological living system explanation of how human beings adapt and precisely how human action occurs. This element of understanding the human condition was marginalized in his sociological

theory, although towards the end of his illustrious career he realized this omission and would likely have rectified it had time allowed.

The vital nature of biology and affect in individual development and the essential nature of understanding self-awareness, relationships and emotions contributes to all three of these theories.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of the results of this study are profound, subtle and yet no less valuable.

First the role of self-awareness in work organizations has been identified as important. Co-researchers noted that becoming self-aware had enabled them to be variously more assertive and better leaders. As a result of being and becoming self-aware, they had indicated that they were able to build and maintain more trusting and effective relationships. Given the relational nature of leadership within organizations, including the development of self-awareness in leadership and organizational development activities and trainings would be of great value.

Second there is a clear overlap between the concepts of the affective sciences and biology and the elements of Gestalt practice, including awareness itself; sensation; suspending; working with polarities; and the paradoxical theory of change—meaning simply letting change occur as opposed to striving for it—(McTaggart, 1922; Perls, 1947; Beisser, 1970; Polster & Polster, 1974; Zinker, 1978; Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). Gestalt practice is utilized in individual and organizational development through coaching, facilitation and consultation. Combining and incorporating Gestalt elements with the concepts of biology and the affective sciences, into appropriate learning

experiences relating to individual development, including leadership skills, could be very beneficial.

Third is the necessity to incorporate the lessons of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman et al., 2002) and resonance (Lipton, 2008) into leadership and organizational development. Self-awareness and the ability to understand and express emotions are clearly linked to authentic relationships and the concept of Emotional Intelligence. It is clear from the findings that many of the relationships within work organizations mentioned in the study were devoid of these. It is essential that these skills will be developed in the leaders of organizations (Fineman, 2000) in order for the organizations to sustain success. Not only does self-awareness support the continued success of leaders and therefore the organizations in which they work, understanding the power of mind through positive and negative thought processes (Lipton, 2008) will also benefit leaders and work organizations as we move into the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty of the 21st Century. Lipton, (2008) has explored how we process information from the biological and quantum perspectives and suggests this will change the way we understand life. This understanding will also be essential to leaders in work organizations.

Fourth, language is the medium by and through which we are able to identify, regulate (Leary, 2003) and express our emotions. Not only this, but "Every reflection, including one on the foundation of human knowledge, invariably takes place in language, which is our distinctive way of being human and being humanly active" (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p. 26). Yet the study indicated clearly that the language in current use is inadequate for our purposes. Does this then limit our capacity to be human? Isaacs (1999) has suggested that many people "simply do not have words to describe the experiences

that emerge. To genuinely move into uncharted territory is at times to be struck dumb" (p. 283). If we are to enable change, safe space needs to be created where the unknown can be explored, where to be human—an enacting, embodied living system—is acceptable. His research identifies four dialogic practices for achieving such safe spaces: listening, respecting, suspending and voicing, which demonstrates *embodied attentiveness*. This process needs to be incorporated into leadership development.

Corporate consultant and poet David Whyte (1994, 2004) has frequently encouraged the need for safety in organizations, such that employees can be themselves. However, he also acknowledged that "being oneself" is an enormously difficult and risky thing to try in the current state of organizations and society generally. Nevertheless, to aim for such safety and authenticity can only serve both individuals and the institutions or organizations simultaneously by reducing the fears that limit us.

Fifth, the results of this study have indicated that self-awareness viewed from the biological and affective science perspectives is a positive and constructive phenomenon. Self-awareness (internal moment-by-moment awareness) has immense and positive benefits to individual development, naturally authentic relationships, and therefore the success and effectiveness of relationships and work organizations. Therefore in daily practice greater attention needs to be paid to this domain of human behavior and development, which would also lead to increased self-awareness in families, educational establishments, and organizations and society generally. Enabling enaction—living the embodiment of awareness—is also necessary. In line with Isaacs' (1999) view, Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) also calls for respect and acceptance. These will need to be encouraged within our institutions.

Future Research Opportunities and Implications

A number of opportunities and implications for future research have presented themselves during this study.

Opportunities

First, further exploration of the different aspects of self-awareness (Figure 6-1) and particularly those viewed as beneficial to authentic relationships would be useful to advance the understanding, clarity and agreement of definition.

Second, further exploration of the *authentic relatedness* model would be of great benefit to those involved in individual, team, leader and organizational development.

Third, further exploration of the essential nature of authentic relationships in leadership could benefit leadership and leadership development in work organizations.

Fourth, historically the notion of trauma has been explored from the psychological perspective and considered destructive, debilitating and deleterious. However, the findings of this study have indicated that traumatic events in the life of a child or an adult can act as the impetus for self-reflection and ultimately individual growth. Therefore trauma can be seen paradoxically to be both constructive and destructive. Not unlike affect (Varela & Depraz, 2004), trauma has a valence. Future research into this phenomenon would be beneficial and lead to greater understanding.

Fifth, future research into the human condition (Parsons, 1978) needs to address its biological and affective foundations, since the mind/body split has been exposed as a myth by the data in this study. To continue to think and operate as if such a split exists no longer aids our understanding of the fully embodied selves and the operation of the embodied mind of human beings. A useful development would include greater self-

awareness, subjective intimacy, authentic relatedness and knowledge, therefore increasing our understanding of human adaptability and ability to act.

Sixth, the data calls for more research at both the organization level and multi-levels of analysis into the role of self-awareness in work organizations and the structuring (Schwandt, 2008) of organizations so as to value the role of self-awareness in relationships and leadership.

Seven, future research into the difference between work organizations and organizations—defined as relationships (Maturana, 1978) from the biological perspective—would clarify and specify the future language needed.

Implications

From a research interviewing (Seidman, 1998) standpoint, conducting two longer, unstructured, conversational or dialogic interviews, rather than 3 would have allowed greater meaning to be made of situations and experiences as expressed by the co-researchers. The week-long gap between interviews, which in a few instances needed to be even longer, seemed rather arbitrary, unnatural, and served little purpose. Dialogic (Strasser, 1969) and conversational interviews would have allowed greater flexibility and flow, enabling meaning to emerge and be made more clear in the moment. This would also have enabled greater attention to be paid to the embodied phenomenology of the co-researcher and the dyad (Findlay, 2006). Moreover, it would have saved the need for repetition and clarification in the subsequent interview. However, it is acknowledged that such dialogic and conversational interviews would take longer to complete, and this would be a consideration when selecting co-researchers for a similar study.

Adapting the design to include only two interviews would have reduced the possible number of journal entries. However, including monthly journal entries throughout the study would have provided much more detailed information, which could have encouraged greater participation of the co-researchers throughout the study and provided greater insights and learning for the co-researchers. Indeed, the rejection of an initial design idea to incorporate pre- and post-research briefings for co-researchers in the study is considered a loss. These briefings could have provided greater detailed awareness of the study and might have provided increased motivation leading to more regular and consistent recording of journal entries. Since journal entries are considered (Moustakas, 1994) a useful and important aspect of heuristic research studies, it would be interesting to explore why the keeping of journals was so difficult for some co-researchers and not others. A future study would benefit from this understanding and how such involvement could be activated.

Summary

This study has explored the emergence of self-awareness in the context of authentic relationships with self and other from the biological and affective science perspectives. It has examined the lived experience of self-aware co-researchers to reveal both individual and collective patterns associated with becoming or being self-aware.

Several themes have been identified.

The results of exploring emergent self-awareness through the lenses of biology and affective science have indicated that contrary to monothetic, conventional disciplines, understanding oneself is not only beneficial, it is essential to continued development.

Being self-aware enables us to be in authentic relationships with one's self and other in a variety of settings.

The results have exposed the Cartesian mind/body split as the myth it is, indicating the need for full integration of the biological, automonic, affective, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of human beings, including psychological, sociological and cultural conceptualizations in order for authentic relationships (organizations) to exist and fully human potential to be realized. Indeed, the results indicate that emotional expression, affectivity, understanding, and regulation are the vanguard of effective cognitive development.

The results have indicated that relationships with other are truly vital (Maturana, 1978) to our development as biological, living human beings. Authentically wired for survival and adaptation even at an early age, human beings are able to sense the lack of appropriate environmental and relational support and access or generate alternative sources of support to meet their developmental needs. This natural survival ability to motivate towards or away from others (valuing relationships) has vital implications for life and work in 21st Century work organizations and all relationships.

Finally, the results indicate that self-awareness is inextricably connected to self-observation, self-reflection, and self-organizing. Together these form a continual, whole iterative process, which leads to the development of aspects of self-awareness vital for the development of self, authentic relationship with others, and the environment in which we live together.

Creative Synthesis

The creative synthesis is a heuristic collage representing the tacit knowledge and intuitive insights of the primary researcher resulting from this research study. Important aspects of each co-researcher's lived experience of being and becoming self-aware have been symbolically depicted using images which serve to indicate the experiences and relationships in their lives (Figure 6-3).

The background is made of texts taken from pages of interview transcripts, the individual depictions, and the analysis. Words in the colored left-hand portion of the collage are also indicative of major events, experiences, and relationships in the lives of the co-researchers.

The symbolic representations of each co-researcher are connected to one another by similar experiences. Ribbons further link the co-researchers who have shared similar events in their lives. These figural connections represent only a few essentials, since a literal depiction would have rendered the images invisible. The portion in the upper-right-hand side of the collage represents the future. It is as yet unformed, unknown, and unclear, although certain words thought to be relevant are indicated in shadow and visible. While in the collage the intention was for these words to be unclear, they are at least visible. They include the following: authentic relatedness, awake, being, breath, enacting essence, feelings, integrated, intention, interconnected, language, meditation, mindbodyspirit, mindfulness, relationships, self-awareness, self-reflection, spirituality, visibility and value, vitality, wholeness, wisdom.

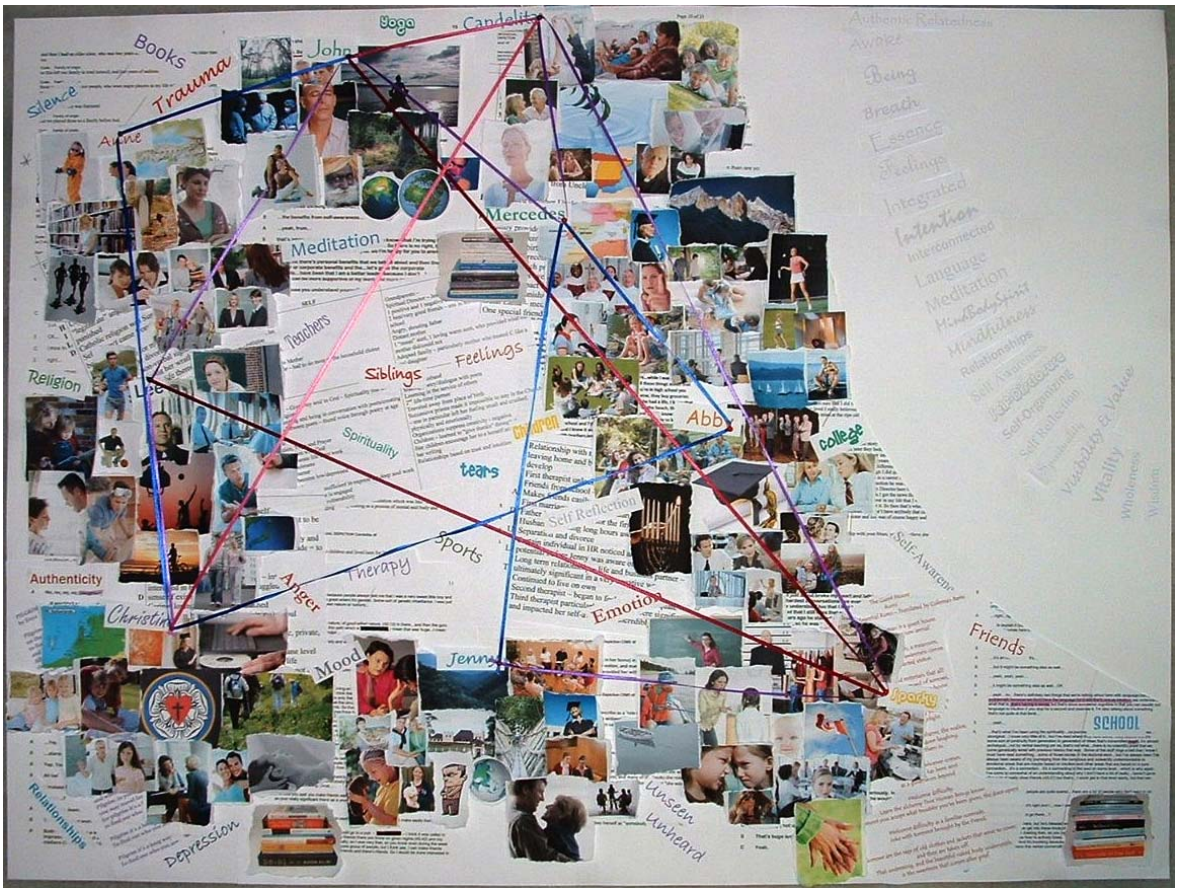

Figure 6-3. Creative synthesis.

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APPENDIX A:

CRITERIA FOR AND SELECTION OF CO-RESEARCHERS

Each co-researcher must have experience of the phenomenon being studied—self-awareness—which is defined by the following criteria formulated particularly from the affective science, psychological, philosophical, and embodied enactive literature:

Visible and evident physical, emotional, intentional, spiritual, and cognitive characteristics, including

- Being comfortable in his/her own skin
- Having a clear knowledge of many aspects of the self, including strengths, weaknesses, hot buttons, values, likes and dislikes, needs, wants, and desires
- Acknowledging and accepting the shadow side as a significant part of a person
- Having a strong sense of impermanent self, derived from self-definition of identity and resistance to definition by others
- Respecting self and others
- Realizing that constant growth, change, and development are natural
- Being transparent and able to show her/his vulnerability
- Having first-hand experience of being in relationship with others in organizations

Professional colleagues were provided given the above criteria and asked to identify individuals who met as many of the criteria as possible. Permission to contact them was sought, and then a telephone interview was conducted to explain the research requirements (i.e., three in-depth face-to-face interviews, journal keeping, tape recording, and transcriptions with accuracy and content checks at each stage of the process and the outcome in terms of publication).

APPENDIX B:

TEMPLATE FOR INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

The information contained in this template was shared with professional colleagues to aid in identification of potential co-researchers and then shared with potential co-researchers to give them sufficient information about the study so that they could make an informed decision about whether to participate.

Background

I am undertaking my dissertation at George Washington University and need your help in the selection of co-researchers who might be suitable, able, and willing to participate in my study. My study is an inquiry into self-awareness as it forms the relationship with self and others. My lenses are the affective sciences—basically emotions, mood, feelings, temperament, attitude, and affective style—and the biological, which is how and what part our bodies play in our self-awareness and consciousness.

Research

I need eight co-researchers who have experienced self-awareness and would be prepared to describe how it was formed, how it could be compromised, and its impact on the individual and his/her relationships. Suitable co-researchers must display a strong sense of self (not rigid), built out of awareness of their psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical selves.

This is a modified heuristic study, and therefore my subjective contribution will be acceptable within the study.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known physical risks involved in participating in the study, although it is possible that some questions may give rise to some emotional discomfort. Co-researchers can withdraw from the study at any time. While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to minimize this risk.

The benefits are seen as an increase in personal understanding and insight.

Payment

There is no payment for participation in this study. Co-researchers will be expected to sign an informed consent form before the study starts.

Participation

Potential co-researchers will be provided with sufficient information for them to select to be involved in the study, and of course they can change their mind at any time and withdraw from the study without consequence.

They will be expected to keep a journal between the three interviews and be willing to share the contents during the subsequent interviews. Each interview will last at least 90 minutes, and the format will be semistructured, dialogic, and open-ended. Each interview will have a different focus and emphasis. Additionally, participants will be provided with the interview transcripts to check for accuracy and may amend as they see fit. They will also be afforded an opportunity to examine the findings and contribute to additional conclusions.

So, if you know of anyone who might be a fit with the co-researcher role in this study, I would be grateful if you could ask about their willingness to receive a telephone call from me in order to discuss the possibility of their participation.

APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Creating the right environment and atmosphere is essential if the co-researchers are to feel comfortable enough to disclose their innermost thoughts, feelings, dreams, and experiences of being self-aware. It is important, therefore, that the interviews take place at a time and place that is suitable for the co-researchers.

- Each co-researcher will be contacted either personally or by telephone initially so that he/she can agree to participate in the study.
- Each co-researcher will be provided with an outline of the study, its purpose, and the requirements of the co-researchers.
- Confidentiality of names will be guaranteed by the primary researcher, so that experiences and events cannot be traced to the individual, even though such experiences and events will be recorded in chapters 4 and 5 (findings and conclusions). Therefore, pseudonyms will be used.
- Transcriptions will be undertaken by persons who have no knowledge of the individuals involved in the study.
- Transcriptions of the interview(s) will be provided to co-researchers so that they may amend, correct, and make additional comments before any analysis is undertaken.
- Each co-researcher will be asked to keep a journal and include in it any feelings, thoughts, dreams, experiences, or reactions during the time of the study.
- The co-researchers will be interviewed three times following Seidman's (1998) guidelines. The interviews will be in-depth (at least 90 minutes in length) and

semistructured, dialogic conversations (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2002). The first interview will focus on the life history of the co-researcher. The second will focus on current experiences, and the third will focus on making sense and meaning of the experiences, thoughts, feelings, and journal entries that have been shared during the interviews.

APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

First Interview

1. Tell me about experiences and relationships in your early life that made an impact on your sense of self.
2. Tell me about experiences and relationships in your early life that had an impact on how you interact with others.
3. What were the conditions or things that people said that kept you from being yourself or self-aware?
4. What were the conditions or things that people said that encouraged you to be uniquely yourself or self-aware?

Second Interview

1. Tell me about two or three current and contemporary work experiences that you consider impactful in relation to your self-awareness and relationships with others.
2. Tell me about two or three current and contemporary relationships at work that you consider impactful in relation to your self-awareness and relationships with others.
3. What are the conditions or things that people say that keep you from being yourself or self-aware?
4. What are the conditions or things that people say that encourage you to be uniquely yourself or self-aware?

Third Interview

1. Thinking back over the last two interviews and looking at your journal entries and any other artifacts you have provided, what sense and meaning do you make of these experiences and relationships in terms of your ability to be aware of yourself and others?
2. How does being self-aware impact your current life and work relationships?
3. When you are interacting in relationships with others, describe how the interactions either keep you from being yourself or enhance your sense of self.
4. In the relationships or organizations in which you participate, describe when you feel like you are not able to be yourself.

APPENDIX E:

CO-RESEARCHER CONSENT FORM

GW IRB number: 080655

Principal Investigator: Dr. Clyde Croswell Telephone No.: 703 726 3786

Sub-Investigator: Susan J O'Rourke Telephone No.: 703 503 2813

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1. Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study as a co-researcher under the direction of Dr. Clyde Croswell of the Department of Human and Organizational Learning, George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. The term *co-researcher* means that research will be conducted *with* you rather than on you. It means greater respect for the individuals involved in the study, who will voluntarily enter into a process of personal development.

2. Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to take part in this study because you display visible signs of physical, emotional, intentional, spiritual, and cognitive self-awareness.

The purpose of this study is to understand awareness of self and others from the biological and affective sciences perspectives. The biological perspective stresses that we are self-organizing, living organisms with an instinct for survival and that our bodies play an essential role in shaping our perception and behavior. Equally, it stresses that our minds and bodies cannot be separated, and therefore both are needed to understand awareness. The affective sciences perspective uses the six major affective phenomena of emotion, feelings, mood, attitude, affective style or disposition, and temperament as the focus for interpreting the collected data.

The total number of co-researchers involved in the study will be eight, and locations for the interviews will be determined by, and based on the comfort and convenience of, the co-researchers.

3. What is involved in this study?

If you choose to take part in the study, you will be interviewed three times, a week apart. Each interview will last approximately 1½ hours. You will also be asked to keep a journal of your experiences between interviews and share the contents with the

researcher. The estimated time for this will be 2½ hours. You will be asked to check the interview transcripts for accuracy and may make changes as you see fit. It is estimated that this will take no more than 4 hours. You will be asked to review the findings and conclusions and provide your comments. This is also likely to take no more than 4 hours.

Therefore, while all the times are approximate, and the total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study cannot be exactly specified, it is considered unlikely that you would spend more than 15 hours over a period of several months.

4. How was I selected to be a part of this study?

Your name was provided by a professional colleague who knows you as someone who meets the criteria set for this study. This person is known to you and has already asked for your permission to be approached by me. The selection criteria are listed in Appendix A and you have access to this document.

5. What are the risks of participating in this study?

There are no physical risks associated with this study. There is, however, the possible risk of loss of confidentiality. In terms of confidentiality, every effort will be made to keep your information safe and secure in a filing cabinet or computer; however, this cannot be guaranteed. Some of the questions you will be asked as part of this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may take a break at any time during the study. You may also end your participation in this study at any time.

6. Are there benefits to taking part in this study?

The benefits to science and humankind that might result from this study are

(a) an increased understanding of self-awareness and awareness of others in authentic relationships
(b) clarity of definition of self-awareness
(c) improvements in the development of education and development

You may also benefit personally from increased self-awareness and improved relationships.

7. What are my options?

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. Should you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can leave the study at any time without any consequences.

8. Will I receive payment for being in this study?

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

9. Can I be taken off the study?

The investigator can decide to withdraw you from the study at any time. You could be taken off the study for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the investigator) or because the entire study is stopped.

10. How will my privacy be protected?

If the results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who take part in this study will not be named or identified. Pseudonyms will be used in the body of the report. GWU will not release any information about your research involvement without your written permission.

11. Problems or Questions

The Office of Human Research of GWU, at telephone number (202) 994 2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant. If you think you have been harmed in this study, report this to the principal investigator of this study.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below:

12. Documentation of Informed Consent

I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks and potential benefits, and my other choices with _____. My questions so far have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

_____ _____
Co-researcher's Name (printed) and Signature Date

_____ _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____ _____
Principal Investigator's Signature Date

APPENDIX F:

CR#1 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME CANDELITA

Demographic Details

Candelita, age 58, was born in Madrid to Spanish parents. She was the third-born child, with two elder brothers and a younger sister. Her first husband died when she was 47, and she has been in a long-term intimate relationship for 8 years. She is a writer and educator working at a university and has four children.

Family History

Candelita's maternal grandparents lived in the same house with her parents, and her maternal grandfather died of an illness at the age of 52, "a few months" before Candelita was born. Although she never met him, she always felt a "strong connection with him" and also felt that even in her mother's womb she experienced the grieving process of each parent having "lost one parent." Her maternal grandmother had died "a horrible death . . . just a few hours after an explosion in Cadiz."

Candelita's paternal grandmother had died 8 or 9 months before her paternal grandfather, who had been a very aggressive man, "abusive of" his wife and always shouting, a trait that his son appeared to inherit.

Immediate Family—Parents

Candelita's father "belonged to a family from the southern part of Spain" and had an elder, rather domineering sister, who had no children of her own. Candelita and her brothers would stay with this aunt, who would leave Candelita at the table for hours because she wouldn't eat her breakfast. These times, while not remembered in detail,

provided a "sense of . . . maybe discomfort of being there, left by myself and not understanding what was going on." Candelita "always felt that I was much closer to my father," who was "a very serious and very thoughtful person." However, he "had a strong temperament and shouted a lot"—a trait he learned or inherited from his father—and so "that's how he spoke to my mum," although his shouting "didn't bother me too much. . . . I understood the effort he had made to come from where he came. So I excused him or understood or forgave." He was a "very kind and very loving person, so [the fact] that he shouted once in a while didn't bother me." Candelita, however, learned to "talk to my mum also with a lack of respect" and remembered that "that bothered me." She felt "very loved" by her father. She also had a sense of his "being depressed . . . having long quiet spells," although "depression was not treated back when we were young."

Candelita's mother was still alive and was a very intuitive and artistic person, although she was remembered as being very nervous. Candelita recalled that she "did not have a very close or loving relationship" with her mother in the early days, because "she was a very busy person" and therefore did not have the time for her as a child. When she was in her 30s, Candelita "was able to reconnect with" her mother. Candelita held that she inherited her creativity from her mother, as well as a wisdom about how to relate to people and life as "unknotting what needs to be unknotted." Her mother had been with her grandmother in the explosion in Cadiz with two of her children and "miraculously survived . . . yet went on to have a horrible miscarriage of a girl in the seventh or eighth month." Candelita's relationship with her mother currently was one of caring from a distance, since "her mind is bad." Candelita was keen to share the mystical happenings that had occurred in her life with her mother "while she is still alive and awake."

Immediate Family—Siblings

Candelita remembered "really loving" her eldest brother. Although she loved her younger brother too, "there was not the closeness that I had with the older one." She recalled being referred to by her nickname—the name given to all little girls in Spain at that time—and "did not like it. . . . I felt that I didn't have a name." When she was 7 her little sister was born, and while she didn't remember being jealous, she recalled her sister believing that she was "very jealous." Neither did Candelita recall "playing much with" her sister, "so we were apart enough years that I don't remember a lot of interaction." She currently did "not see eye-to-eye" with her but was determined to improve that relationship.

Extended Family—Aunts and Uncles

Candelita loved and spent a great deal of time with one particular aunt who married much later in life, but who loved children and looked after a cousin prior to her marriage. She recalled this aunt providing what her mother could not, even though following the return of the cousin to his parents, which broke her heart, she became an alcoholic and died of a brain tumor a few years after marrying her also alcoholic brother-in-law.

There were many other uncles, aunts, and cousins with whom Candelita "also spent time." Her mother's cousin was also "loved . . . because she gave us the attention that my mum couldn't," although this was before she became a nun.

Religion

Although Candelita remembered attending Catholic church with her father, "it was not a very important thing either." Prayers were said in the mornings at the Institute, although it was not a religious school. However, when Candelita was 14, her beloved aunt asked her: "Do you have a spiritual director?" At the time, Candelita was not aware of what a spiritual director was but "started to say I want to have a spiritual director" because she loved her aunt and her brothers were already in a group with a spiritual director. The Jesuit priest eventually invited her to join "as the secretary of the girl's group" even though she was younger than the rest. During this time, Candelita started to show her initiative and organizational ability. While her spiritual director "had a strong temper . . . and shouted a lot . . . he was extremely loving" and he taught her "a very healthy religious practice . . . a connection to a God that will listen to a 14- or 15-year-old, to just open with a good heart . . . and just ask to be, to understand or to be part of that." Candelita was always "very grateful for that religious experience that I have carried all my life."

She attended church until 1988 "and then I stopped." By that time she was married and living in the States, and she and her husband had successfully found a church that enabled them to "continue evolving and be part of a community." However, the priest was transferred and after a number of successors, "it became very uncomfortable to stay in the Church." Candelita had wanted "love to be her guide, and I just could not go back into a Catholic . . . I felt like I was caught in a very small . . . I was crushed physically, mentally . . . in every possible way." As Candelita spoke of this sense of being crushed, it was clearly visible in her hands.

Candelita felt she had "outgrown" religion and having "given God my soul and asked him to guide me in wherever I need to be . . . I live a spirituality that does not use religion." She no longer felt that she needed to be in church, since "I feel like I'm in a church all the time."

Childhood

Candelita had no memories of her early childhood, although she felt that she "listened a lot and was not a very talkative young girl." From as early as 2 or 3, Candelita and her two brothers spent months away from their parents, staying with their aunt in another city in Spain.

Candelita also remembered summers when "houses in the outskirts of Madrid were rented for not very much" by a number of families. So there "were lots of children . . . learning to swim in the river . . . playing all day. . . . The summers were very good. It was a very good sense of health." As the eldest daughter, Candelita was always helping her mother with household chores, "so I was the one who did a lot of the work, you know, because my mum was not . . . could not do all the stuff."

Health

Candelita suffered with sties until she was 14. Also, ever since she was a very young child, she experienced problems with balance in her body, a discomfort, and she discovered what she described as "a twist somewhere on the back" when she was in her 30s. She had not received any treatment for this complaint; rather, while listening to her body, she "laid for hours on the floor and just kind of let it readjust by itself."

Education/Development

Candelita attended a British school until she was 16 and then attended university in Spain. During her third year she won a scholarship as a teaching assistant in a high school in Cambridge and, while living in the U.K. for the year, attended a few classes at Cambridge University. She believed that not being encouraged to learn mathematics, while her brothers were being taught mathematics by their mother's only brother, had an impact on her sense of self, as did having to "study . . . philosophy and English." She held also that always being the youngest in the class and being too responsible as a child and having her children very young meant that she "did not find the creative part of me until much, much later"—when she was 30 or 35 years old and "started connecting more" with her mother and "finding her voice through poetry." Her degree was in English philology, although "spirituality and mysticism, the perennial philosophy" have always attracted her, "resulting in extensive reading, meditation, and courses in this field of self- and group awareness." She even created an opportunity to place herself in a similar situation to her students so she could learn more about the process from the learner's perspective.

Teachers

Although Candelita did not recall many teachers, she had a favorite who taught Spanish, and "I loved her dearly . . . because she picked me . . . and she loved me a lot." She also recalled an older English teacher who was very kind. For a time she had a substitute teacher "who gave us horrible grades," which for a good student such as Candelita "was horrible." That said, Candelita really felt special and much reassured when it was announced in front of the whole class that she achieved 100%, clearly being

"the best and beat[ing] her brothers." She described her feelings at the time as "so blushed and I thought I was going to just kind of burn there."

Friends

Candelita recalled not having "too many childhood friendships," although she did have one "very, very good" one "out of school" who lived close by and with whom she spent every weekend. There was also "a best friend from school" who also lived close by, and they "talked a lot and walked together" to and from school.

During her year in Cambridge, Candelita lived with a family and became "good friends with the daughter and mother," who "adopted me like a real daughter and she was a beautiful woman."

As a teenager, young adult, and adult, Candelita described her friendships as being "really profound, staying so regardless of physical separation or distance. I treasure friendships and stay in touch, and we reconnect periodically at a soul level."

Marriage

Candelita was married at almost 20, while she was still at university, to a man 6 years her senior. They had met in a Catholic group to which they belonged. She married "in a hurry." When her father asked her, "Why don't you wait?" she responded, "Because I think an angel has told me to do this." Candelita realized much later that the angel was indeed her husband's grandmother who died shortly after the wedding and would not have been able to attend had the wedding not been brought forward. She described her husband as "a very wise person . . . with a lot of simplicity. . . . He was very relaxed and uncomplicated . . . and helped me to untie a lot of knots . . . inside me." Although they dated before she spent her year in Cambridge, it was not until that time when he visited

her there that she knew and "really said yes. . . . I felt at peace—a very, very strong sense of peace, and I always equated love with peace." They moved to the States with two children and lived here for 20 years, and had two more children while living in the States.

In 1996, Candelita's husband died at age 54 from cancer of the larynx. Her poetry helped her through the difficult times after her husband's death. Prior to his illness and death, Candelita was invited to talk or present a variety of dialogues and conversations of other poets at several different universities; after his death, she wrote poetry herself. Her husband's death gave her "the humility to embrace vulnerability and to trust in a bigger way" that she could put her life together again and achieve "a sense of wholeness."

Motherhood

Having children taught Candelita to "give thanks as a way of being and staying positive . . . and realizing all the goodness that we're surrounded with" rather than being "enraged or focusing on the lack." It was definitely a way she could counterbalance her moods.

Her children encouraged Candelita to be herself and "move on" with her creative writing. They were also critical of her current relationship, seeing it as a way of holding herself back. She agreed that they learned this critical behavior from her.

Influential Experiences and/or Relationships

Candelita was in an intimate relationship for 8 years to a man who was "not used to this kind of nakedness" where together they "can reach this deep layer of the healing process." Through this relationship she learned that her previous style, which was a mirror of her father's aggressive behavior, was not appropriate. She learned there was another way to be "truthful . . . transparent" and yet express her dissatisfaction "in a way

that is constructive." She maintained that she was exceedingly fortunate to have found two life partners who understood the deep soul and healing work that was her life process.

Career

Candelita had some difficulty in differentiating between work and life relationships that might have impacted her sense of self and self-awareness because "I don't separate work and life, you know. . . . My work is my life, and my life is my work. It's all intertwined." She saw the "organizational setting as one which suppresses creativity and is therefore frustrating." However, she was "also patient," which helped her to deal with any "negativity" in her situation. She was committed to "learning in the service of others" and accepted that having patience allowed her to address and improve situations when both she and the circumstances were "ready."

Candelita believed that she was unable to always express herself genuinely because no language fully described such deep soul work and the healing process with which she was engaged. While she maintained that her life was beautiful, "it can be a little lonely and a little . . . misunderstood."

Bodily Awareness

Candelita felt the discomfort she experienced as a child in her body and believed that "a problem with my balance" could be attributed to her body. She "understands . . . and listens" to her body and related the problems she experienced "to the time" in Seville as a child. Indeed, Candelita was keenly aware of her bodily processes, having learned to be aware of, listen to, and understand her body and its deep connection with her mind as a combined process, and did not "know how to separate really body and emotions." She

was totally aware of the choices she made with regard to her life and described how she chose the two men in her life:

> I know there is a signal and I am . . . I need to embody that signal and just move on with it, so it keeps me on tiptoes constantly. . . . But on that level of the soul, I move on tiptoe, and that's how I've chosen the two men in my life.

Meditation, Prayer, and Yoga

Candelita was self-taught in terms of "intuitive yoga" and meditation, which was like "her prayer . . . and it was my way of understanding healing as a process of mental and body and altogether." During the illness of her first husband, Candelita learned, through meditation, prayer, and writing, "to share the vulnerability and to be nourished, not to be afraid of sharing . . . and allowing each day to provide the sense that we were not isolated." Constantly "giving thanks" and "not asking for anything" allowed her "perspective to transform." She defined this as being "able to fly":

> That's the experience of God that I have and how generous God is that no matter where you are and no matter what you have in your pocket or in your bag, no matter what problems, no matter what difficult circumstances, no matter what . . . there is always a sense of *I'm taken care of*.

She described "what comes from God is the *aliento*—this word in Spanish is beautiful and aliento is the breath." She viewed her relationship with God as "dancing with him. . . . It's not that you are a puppet. Rather . . . it's a movement . . . learning different steps in a cheek to cheek" dance, and as she described this relationship she laughed often.

Candelita believed that human beings were good and kind and "it is this realization that provides the most tender moments . . . because we get the superficial part . . . and very seldom we touch that place . . . that very, very, very intimate place." She was always asking one question of God: "So what do you want now?"

Poetry and Writing

Candelita wrote poetry much of her life, and it was a significant part of her. When she was a young mother and busy with household or motherly activities, she would sing her poems.

> I gave them melodies too. I would remember the words and so I was ironing or washing the dishes or cleaning . . . and singing with my children, driving to school, picking them up and just with my being full of melodies and full of lines, full of verses, and full of words.

One significant experience related to her being invited to explore "intimacy, need, longing, social justice and 'I am' through poetry" over a 6-week period in the church of an ex-student.

> It was one of the fullest moments. . . . It was an extraordinary example of life and work in a sense . . . and faith and the opportunity to share life, to share experience. . . . It has been a very enriching, very real and very wholesome experience. . . . [There were] no words that can explain what was going through me. . . . I was just totally overpowered. . . . It was a physical letting go. . . . It was like a cleansing of our soul organs.

Clearly, the process was a transformational one and she described it as "being transparent with each other . . . and then we lived through our own transformation and we cared about each other's transformation." As a result of this 'work,' significant opportunities opened up. Candelita used 22 years of experience coming from the voices of poets long since departed, not simply "sharing one verse, but allowing Neruda to talk to Lorca and Lorca to respond." In all these activities she was "creating pieces of theatrical possibilities" and "adapting all this wealth of humanity . . . of human soul to classes and how can it inspire" herself and her students and then create a community. She

was in "dialogue with and had conversations with hundreds of poets. . . . Poetry just grabbed me and put me on the stage."

Candelita said it so much better herself and what follows is her "I am" statement, which turned out to be her philosophy of education.

> POETICA21 🕯 The Art of Teaching and Learning
>
> Awakened by the poets 22 years ago, February 2nd, 1985, a handful of young Spanish poets, most of whom never made it through their civil darkest strife. Shaken to the bone to stand, go forth, the call is clear: "Embrace our words, our soul, our task! Continue striding on this very same road . . . " an invitation that, stunned, I cannot pass.
>
> Many more voices gathered through the springs and falls, uplifting my deeply-rooted Castilian gaze, etching in my veins the tightest grammar, most brilliant expressions and austere forms, Spanish starkest prose, transparent verse.
>
> Eight years in the classroom of a place I've come to love, due to the students' brightness echoing what we bring, urge me to give life to this expression now: a raw statement of a day-to-day, lived plain and simple, teaching plan, a guiding rule, life-long philosophy.
>
> I could be tempted to augment, enhance, the color of this span, but prefer to summarize it thus: **creativity, collaboration, excellence.** It seems to hold the core of what we all embody and pass on, however we each choose to do. I cannot say much more than what the students do, won't even try! But if I may, I'll add Walt Whitman's encouragement, support, to finish quickly, so we can continue plowing through our life-pursuits.
>
> **Poetica21:** I have named mine, a Life Experience hand-in-hand, walking unheld. Poética and service chant in tune, the poet's breath encourages, proclaims that we are lacking when the smallest one's in pain, and we've been given what it takes to dream anew. Come to the table and partake, my friend, put in your very best, allow for need to cling to you. Together we can beat the odds, disclaim that sharing is old and stale, disclaim that separated we can gain, that disconnected we can all keep breathing, charged, complete, renewed.
>
> During the illness of her husband,
>
> It was the poetry, the writing, the prayer . . . everything came together at the service of that moment, and I became just the scribe. . . . So that year of vulnerability and death was transformed into a story of resurrection.

Candelita described this writing and sharing as "an experiment in forgiveness and healing," with the poets, elders, and family members "accompanying me in this process." She believed that "all this poetry . . . was coming my way really more than my choosing it."

Candelita described "her throat as opening" when her fourth child was born, and since then she communicated the words of the poets. (Appendix P contains a piece in tongues, "A child of song and prayer," which captures the day her fourth child was born.) Likewise, she began to trust herself when she was married for the first time.

The Essence of Candelita

Candelita had "a sense of connecting with others deeply." She didn't "like to be in a large group and be social with a lot of people"; rather, she preferred "one on one and connect at a level . . . of touching each other's core." She believed she related to people "by allowing the gifts of people who have died to be a part of you . . . and a combination of all the love that was poured in through the many different venues . . . with love being the key." She "has learned to see love beyond the appearances." Given the death of her maternal grandmother and the miscarriage of the sibling expected immediately before Candelita, she always felt very wanted, particularly by her maternal grandfather, and very loved.

Candelita spoke of her life as being "a constant dialogue with God," and she considered her life as a response following her constant question to God: "Okay, and now what?" She asked:

> How do you shine through me? . . . I always ask how can I be totally hollow so God can move through. That has been my prayer all my life: . . . how to be

> transparent, . . . how not to interfere. . . . So when I receive all this poetry and all this vitality and all this creativity, it is as a gift and as a response to a prayer.

Trust was a crucial part of her life and work. For example, at the beginning of each semester, she used prayer and silent envisioning to create the "right tone." She would ask: "What is the right tone? . . . What do I need to share on this first class?"

Candelita did not consider herself a practical person, even though she "raised four kids." Rather, she likened "life to a huge puzzle." She contended that she did not interfere and responded positively to each and every opportunity that presented itself, whatever it may be and irrespective of the fact that she had no idea where it would lead or end. However, she approached life rather like her mother, with the wisdom to unknot the knots. "If there is something that needs to be unknotted, it's like I smell it, I sense it, and until it's ironed out or unknotted, I cannot stop searching for the answer."

Candelita defined herself as being in and of service, which she defined as "sharing your life, your dreams, and your vulnerabilities." She also described herself as a very instinctive person who followed her instinct.

Candelita could become very, very low and negative, so she watched for those dark episodes. Unclear whether this was something she inherited from her father, who could have been depressed and had "quiet spells," she too could "catch herself on a downward slope." She concluded that a combination of bodily sensations and emotions allowed her to catch herself in these situations.

She was a "trusting mother" but after the death of her husband became "much more worrisome about them [her children]." She described herself as a perfectionist, and it was this together with finding herself in a rage over cleaning her eldest son's bedroom week after week that she realized "giving thanks . . . is a good way of realizing all the

goodness that we're surrounded with and rather than focusing on the lack." That approach helped her survive the down times in her life. It was something that came from somewhere and was a defining moment, such that she now "gives thanks" intentionally.

Candelita had until fairly recently thought that she "had the right to correct other people . . . meaning my closest relatives" and that recognizing "and getting angry about . . . something that is not right, naming it and trying to correct it . . . was good." At difficult and/or creative times she had "conversations with herself or her deceased husband, God, or the poets with whom she is working."

Candelita did not consider herself to be a "revolutionary" and created change in a "way that is purposeful . . . truthful." Moreover, her preference was "to stay in a safe place."

Candelita described herself as a mystical person, being able to feel the presence of deceased or previously unknown family members. She was always aware that she was "not in control and I don't want to be." Yet, believing that she was a channel for something bigger "is difficult to explain to others." There was "no language to describe the process of 'deep soul work'" she engaged in without others believing she was "too mystical, too magical, or too spiritual." She admitted:

> It is not an easy thing to do in life, to be constantly listening. . . . When there is something that I need to clarify . . . I have a question . . . I hold it in silence until I sense which way is the right way.

Candelita did not usually "approach relationship or communication issues from a logical perspective, . . . rather with trust and intuition." Finding a way to communicate without damaging others or compromising herself was a constant battle. These situations called for "a moment of vulnerability." She described herself as being 100% herself when

she was “sharing poetry,” although she also described herself as “a mixture of lack of self-confidence . . . of shyness really . . . of not being very good at the language of the crowd. . . . I’m not good at superficial.”

Candelita was a very reflective and emotionally expressive person, often describing herself as “sobbing.” During the interviews several times she made contact with deep emotions linked to the stories she was sharing, and her eyes filled with tears or she laughed or sighed. She described:

> To me the tenderest moments and probably the moments that you have seen me with tears in my eyes are when we realize how kind we are . . . how good we are. . . . That’s what brings the most tears to my eyes, when you realize and probably we don’t even get to the . . . we get the superficial part of where we could go and very seldom we touch that place.

She held that she continued to carry the pain of the difficult lives of some of her relatives.

APPENDIX G:

CR#2 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME ANNE

Demographic Details

Anne is a 48-year-old, twice married—to the same man—Caucasian, working mother of three children. She was born the third of four children and the second daughter of fairly traditional yet very forward-thinking parents: a stay-at-home mother and a father who worked as a chemical engineer. Her parents were of English and German descent. She has worked for the same company for 21 years and is currently at senior director level.

Family History

Anne's paternal grandparents were from Germany. Her father was the third child born to her grandmother and born in the United States. His two half-sisters were born in Germany to a different father, who had died before they emigrated to the U.S. Anne never knew her paternal grandfather and knew her paternal grandmother, who was an "entrepreneurial train station coffee shop owner" very slightly, since she died when Anne was approximately 4 years old.

Anne's maternal grandparents were American of English descent and lived in Pennsylvania. Her grandfather died when Anne was 6 or 7 and so she had little recollection of him, although she recalled that there were the occasional "dutiful rather than pleasurable" visits to these grandparents. Her maternal grandmother moved following her husband's death into the neighborhood where her only daughter (Anne's mother) and family lived. She died in her late 60s, "a year to the day" following Anne's mother's death.

Immediate Family

Anne's mother "was a stay-at-home mom and was very educated, especially for the time, so she achieved her bachelor's and then at night she worked on her master's . . . in home economics . . . and had the highest grades." Her mother

> played a very strong role in my life because she was always home when I got home . . . caring for the kids, and she's a very smart woman and she's trying all these experiments to make her kids smarter.

In spite of this, she and Anne "didn't get along so well" and "even at a young age we had a lot of friction." Around the time Anne was 10 years old, her mother "was diagnosed with terminal cancer." She had already survived a bout of thyroid cancer 2 years previously. Shortly after her diagnosis, Anne's elder sister, who was 15 at the time, "very, very smart . . . and top of her class," and with whom she also "fought and couldn't get along with . . . fell over in class while taking a test and died." This was the "same time period that my mother's mother passed away . . . and my father's sister died." So Anne's "early life was fairly painful. . . . It was a horrible time for my father and my mother. . . . She was only 41." This left the "family in total turmoil and just years of sadness."

"During the time of sickness and death . . . my father wasn't able to sustain the environment" of this "fractured family." Anne recalled "many, many times crying alone in my room and nobody talked." Prior to this time, they had been a relatively close family, playing educational and "mind-bending strategic games" before going to bed. Education and "the power of learning" were stressed, and Anne grew up believing "that learning was really important and education was critical and growth was part of life . . .

just natural." The family "together time was a time of learning. . . . School was always emphasized and important."

Additionally, long before seatbelts were commonplace or even heard of, her parents "were demanding cars with seatbelts," causing Anne to feel "out of place . . . with my friends." Moreover, Anne's mother would take the children to the library each week, when other children did not seem to do this, and they "got as many books as we wanted and we read them and returned them and kept on going."

After Anne's father died, she discovered that he was never as smart as her mother, even though he had finished school. Anne adored him; she was "always crazy about him . . . and couldn't wait for him to get home so he could solve the fight" she was having with her mother, even though he "always took her side." He was a kind and wonderful man, who would "solve all problems," and she was able to spend quality time one-on-one with him during the time she was struggling with science. "My father spent a tremendous amount of time on science . . . and he ended up teaching me science." However, Anne felt a lot of anger towards her father during those one-on-one science sessions, which she suggested stemmed from the time when she was "blaming her father" for the lack of emotional support and lack of direction during the time of her mother's illness, after her death and the deaths of the other relatives. She even considered that he was not a good father for not providing the necessary support during "the painful years." He had not been able to "sustain the environment" that existed when both parents were alive and strong.

> He was always a traditional father. . . . He made the money, he came home, dinner was ready, breakfast was ready in the morning, and sandwiches were packed for him to take to work—and then suddenly he's on his own and he's supposed to fix dinner now for three children and provide any kind of emotional support. So he didn't know how to do that, and he didn't know how to do that and have some kind of social life, because as time went on he was ready to share his life with

> someone his age, and so anyway he didn't focus a whole lot on our schooling anymore. . . . He was in his own world and he didn't really know how to deal with it.

Much later he married a wonderful woman, who changed Anne's life with her warmth and love. She encouraged openness, presents, and large family parties, which had not been the case with her father's Germanic background. She is still alive. Anne's father died of emphysema in 2000, following several years of decline resulting from his illness and diminishing lung capacity.

Childhood Friends

Anne gained her support from her friends, some of whom she "had very close relationships [with] . . . and still does," even though they sometimes saw each other only once a year. She did not share the "embarrassment" of her family situation but they "helped her get away from the problems." The embarrassment came from having only one parent when virtually everybody else had two. She did have a very good friend who had also lost a sister and whose mother was an alcoholic. It also came to light much later that this friend had been sexually abused by her father. Anne referred to the two of them as

> two troubled young people with things in common so we did a lot together. . . . Although we were close, we didn't talk about real intimate things, and I don't know if that's just how it is in high school. . . . We talked about loves and disappointments . . . but we didn't talk about the fabric that makes us and what was torn in that fabric.

While they were close for many years, they did not remain in touch. With her friends she would do "fun stuff":

> We'd go fishing. . . . There was a lake there and we'd go on a rubber raft in the lake. . . . Just kid's stuff: bike riding; hanging out at the 7/11, and we didn't get in

> trouble. . . . Then in high school we did more hanging out, driving around, going places . . . parties and stuff like that.

The worst thing they did was to try marijuana just because "people have it and so, well, why not?"

Role Models

Teachers seemed not to figure in Anne's world as a child, although there was a distant relative of the family who "was excellent" and taught science—even though Anne "just didn't get it." There was, however, an uncle—the husband of the aunt who died around the same time as the deaths of her sister, mother, and grandmother—whom Anne described as a role model. He gave Anne his time

> when there wasn't time. So there's three or four children, everyone competing, so in that competitive environment of four children, it would be me who was sitting on his lap. I have these memories of sitting on Uncle N's lap, and that was a prize place to be.

Anne felt special with him because "he was always aware of me as an individual." She adored him and shortly after his wife died, without children and having depended on his wife completely, "he couldn't deal with it . . . [and] remarried very quickly and moved away."

The other role model was the immediate next-door neighbor, who had been designated to be the children's guardian should anything happen to their parents. "She spent a tremendous amount of time with me doing puzzles, just me hanging out, just me while she was cooking . . . just being there, she was very special."

Siblings

Anne had a younger sister and an extremely smart brother who was 2 years older. The eldest sister, who was 4 years her senior, died, leaving the family in sadness and sorrow. Anne did not mention either surviving sibling until much later, when she described her younger sister as her best friend (excluding her husband), with whom she was very close and whom she saw every weekend. Her brother, about whom she was also "crazy," married a woman with the same name as Anne and had two children. His family traveled around the world and then settled several hours north of where Anne currently lived, and although there was regular contact between him and Anne's children via the Internet, there was generally only one yearly visit. Anne wished it could be more. Her brother was a full-time stay-at-home dad.

She acknowledged that her relationship with her elder sister was difficult and that they fought constantly, such that they could no longer share a bedroom. In fact, the day before her sister died, they had been fighting about making cookies, and Anne remembered saying at least to herself, "I wish she would die." Anne carried this burden with her sometimes subconsciously, sometimes consciously for years. She stated:

> In my house . . . the people I couldn't get along with—they died. . . . I mean, I'm thinking I'm killing these people off one by one because I don't like them, because I don't get along. . . . It's horrible stuff, . . . but that's the basis for self-exploration.

Religion

Religion did not play a large role in Anne's family. Anne said she didn't "have a traditional religious background." Her mother had been interested in the Unitarian church, and they "did go to the Unitarian church for a period of time." Anne also "did

some exploration on her own" and found that religion "was not to her liking . . . and too restricting." Anne considered herself to be more spiritual, "although not in the traditional sense"; she described traditional spirituality as being defined by "a book that defines what was and what will be" and was too restricting. She believed in "a guiding force that's bigger," although it defied conscious definition and was more a "feeling," and she held the view that being open to all experiences was "some kind of providence" and spiritual.

Education

Before the "painful years," Anne was a bright and clever student. Afterwards, during what she referred to as the "recovery years," she "disappeared."

> High school . . . was open space. You could sit wherever you wanted, you could pick whatever classes, it was free form, unstructured, and you could be there and work or you could be there and just disappear. I just didn't do my work and fell behind and did all this stuff and nobody noticed.

Her father pointed out that she would not finish high school, and "it was pretty clear to my teachers that there was no way I was going to graduate. . . . I just hadn't done the work . . . and so everybody just gave up on me." For a while Anne seemed not to care, and then somehow she realized that "if I don't do this work then I'm going to be stuck in school for another year." Anne's sister referred to this as self-awareness; Anne herself felt it was expedient and merely survival. So she completed a year and a half of schoolwork in a few months and did indeed graduate.

After school Anne continued to "flounder around because I didn't know what I was doing or why I was doing it." She ultimately attended secretarial school and became

a secretary. After working for "an idiot boss," she decided she could not "work for people like that."

First Marriage and Divorce

Anne first saw her husband-to-be when she was a young teenager on a school skiing trip. She admired him secretly for a while "and then for some reason, I can't remember how . . . we became friends." She did not share any of herself in relation to the "troubled years." Then at 21, she married the "love of her life," and they went to live abroad for 2 years. On their return, both were still "floundering about . . . not knowing what they were doing," so they separated and divorced. "We divided the assets, went our separate ways, and that was it. We didn't talk for 6 years." Anne stated:

> The divorce was my doing. . . . During that time I was just really confused. . . . What am I doing? . . . Why did I divorce this guy? . . . It was during that time of being divorced and being on my own for the first time ever that I began to become self-aware.

There were many things she had never done, and she had to learn how to do them. "I just had to grow." She was 26 or 27 at this stage and said, "I believe that was my big time of self growth, self-awareness, and it started a journey that continues. And it just hasn't stopped."

After her divorce, Anne was involved in "this horrible relationship, just horrible, with this nasty, awful person, and it was just so horrible." She realized her life "just didn't make sense to me. . . . What am I doing and why?" She thought: "You leave this wonderful man, a wonderful relationship, and go and you live in this apartment, take your own trash out . . . and you interact with these people who are just horrid." So she began

seeing a therapist, which "was good self-exploration. It was really good." Anne began keeping a journal, and the process encouraged her to be "reflective and thoughtful."

She acknowledged that both she and her husband needed to do some major growing up, which they both did during the 6 years they were apart. He had also had a pretty traumatic childhood, with divorced parents and an alcoholic father who beat him, although neither of them shared their childhood pain with each other. In fact, Anne could not share the pain of those times with anyone until she was in her early to mid-30s. The time she first shared her thoughts about the deaths of her mother and sister as somehow being caused by her "was so powerful . . . impactful. . . . I think that might have actually been the point, . . . the turnaround of awareness." Finally she was able to see that she "hadn't killed them; that I had choices and could explore all those ideas I had been carrying around for 20 years."

Career

During that time, in addition to becoming "comfortable with herself," she "started focusing on a career." She completed her bachelor's degree at night school, and an internship launched her career. After a short spell "as a junior analyst/programmer," she joined the company where she remained 21 years later. She continued to move within the organization, usually upwards, occasionally standing still or moving backwards, sometimes happily, at other times deeply depressed, unchallenged and unhappy in her work, but always improving her financial security. Sometimes she had good bosses, at other times the opposite. During these interviews, she was successful in moving to an upgraded position full of hope and excitement, only to find yet another mean and cruel boss, without a shred of people skills and with unreasonable expectations.

One very good aspect of this organization in the early days was the opportunity Anne had to explore herself using a variety of assessment instruments. This allowed her to continue on her journey of self-awareness and self-development. Moreover, she attended a special management development program in the 1990s. As part of the program, she was assigned a mentor and learned "the power of a really good mentor." Ever since then, she has gathered a group of mentors or "advocates (always women)" around her and has checked her future plans and thinking with them from time to time.

Books

Books continued to play a large part in Anne's life, and she read books that were relevant to her leadership role and her continuing development as a person, such as *Don't sweat the small stuff* by Richard Carlson and *Nice girls don't get the corner office: 101 unconscious mistakes women make that sabotage their careers*, by Lois P Frankel. A consultant was also instrumental and therefore impactful in helping Anne explore and learn about herself in relation to others and her leadership role.

Remarriage

After the 6 years that she and her ex-husband were apart without any contact, they met again through mutual work colleagues, although they were each dating other people at the time. Anne made the first move to contact him, and within 6 months they married for the second time. Anne expressed her delight and wonder at their marriage: "You couldn't find a better marriage. I couldn't be happier. I couldn't be more thankful . . . that he was there for me." Anne was an accomplished cook and seamstress, yet her husband was the full-time stay-at-home dad "and he is perfect at it." Anne was convinced that had they not been divorced, she would have been the stay-at-home mom; as a "very driven"

person, she did not think she would have succeeded in that role. “I would have been more tensed up with the whole thing,” whereas “my husband is more relaxed”:

> Oh my goodness, . . . he’s [on] a very even keel . . . and he’s just all the things I didn’t have growing up, with the affection and the outward showing of that . . . and, oh my gosh, I almost lost this. Almost!

The Essence of Anne

Anne did not seek more money, status, power, or recognition; what she needed was to be challenged in her work. She began to think about what she wanted to do in the next phase of her life, because although working for her company was generally good for her, she could see that “we are on the edge of dropping into a noncaring company.” In the past, the culture emphasized “years of service, relationships, and self-awareness.” Now:

> Following the often unwritten corporate rules and playing the corporate game, appearance, accreditation, and numbers are considered more important. Senior management has been and is dysfunctional and there is little trust. . . . Boundaries are not clear, . . . just awful, awful dysfunctional corporate behaviors, and in the process people are treated very badly.

Anne, however, chose to fit into the corporate box:

> It doesn’t hurt; . . . it’s a box that fits. . . . I know how to move around in the box, and I’m pretty comfortable, and I can smooth my edges or sharpen them. So I have no problem.

Overall, Anne was a very constructive, positive, and ‘can-do’ person. Having experienced such trauma in her childhood and a failed first marriage, she began to experience “life as good.” Not necessarily wanting yet having three children was remarkable for Anne. “It’s so special . . . because she’s [her daughter] now living the years that were my horrible years and I’m there, I’m alive and I’m there.” She was very clear that she had benefited both personally and corporately from being self-aware.

> I am a better leader because I can be more supportive of my team and giving there. . . . Being self-aware helps me go deep inside—and I don't have to prove things. . . . I am so much more aware of my inner messages to myself and where they may have originated from.

As well as having benefited her career, Anne maintained that being self-aware had allowed her to build and maintain more open and trusting relationships, particularly with her children. "I want to open the world of possibilities and growth to them, so that they're not limiting themselves early on." Additionally, Anne was "spearheading a project" where successful women encouraged girls in middle school and high school to consider technical careers. She was "in a mentor protégés program" and was herself a mentor. And yet she described herself "suffering huge issues of lack of self-confidence" and thinking of herself as "an imposter . . . who will be discovered not actually being able to do the job." It was often hard for her to be herself "because I'm racked with self-doubt about my competency"—although she did have a strong sense of self, of who she was at a deep level.

Anne set aside time "every day" so she might read, reflect, exercise in the form of running, and spend time exploring her mind, body, and soul. In Myers-Briggs terms, her profile was an ISTJ (introversion, sensing, thinking, judging), and she scored more highly on affection and inclusion than control in the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B) assessment. Her mood was generally positive and upbeat unless she was "shopping with her daughter in dark, teeny tiny stores." When she was "buying clothes for her daughter's bear . . . when there are kids starving in countries," she felt the dissonance physically in her heart.

In terms of her attitude, she described herself as "can-do." She was understandably happier as an adult than as a child. Her disposition was mild and calm;

she put “things in perspective. . . . If it doesn’t matter, . . . it just doesn’t matter. You know, it is ‘don’t sweat the small stuff.’” In terms of temperament, Anne suggested “shyness, quietness, reserve” and also “isolated” in terms of family, which was a strong unit of five people “who are crazy about each other.” Other words and phrases that Anne said might be used by other people to describe her at home were “quiet, reserved, loving, caring, giving, comfortably introverted,” and they would notice very different behavior and appearance compared to her corporate box, since she quite consciously kept her personal, business, and family lives quite separate from each other. They would also add in the corporate world “giving” and “enabling.” The words Anne used to sum up “what it is all about” were “affiliation and people.”

APPENDIX H:

CR#3 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME SPARKY

Demographic Details

Sparky is a 46-year-old, twice married, childless Caucasian woman, the youngest of three girls born to a Catholic American couple of European/American descent, now deceased. She has worked in the same organization, progressing upwards for several years.

Family History

Sparky's paternal grandfather and grandmother were from Scotland and Germany, respectively, and while she never knew her paternal grandfather, the family visited her paternal grandmother "a few times a year." She never worked and remained a lonely widow, dying when Sparky was 18. Her maternal grandparents were both American. They were divorced for a while, remarried after Sparky was born, and again it was only her maternal grandmother with whom Sparky had a relationship, since her maternal grandfather died when she was 2 or 3.

Sparky was born on the same day as her maternal grandmother, which resulted in a "kind of shared bond" between them. Her grandmother married for a third time in the late 1970s and moved across the country. Sparky remembered spending a few weeks visiting this grandmother with her middle sister one summer, where she lived among 30 acres of a national forest.

With her father being an only child and her mother's only brother living far away, there were very few aunts, uncles, or cousins, and these were seen "very rarely in my childhood."

Immediate Family—Parents

Sparky's father had been in the military for 23 years and retired when she was 6 years old. Generally, he was not away for long periods of time, although in 1964, when Sparky was 4, he was in an airplane crash and suffered severe burns, causing him to be hospitalized for 2 months. This was the longest period of time Sparky remembered her father being away from home, although he spent much longer periods of time away from home when her eldest sister was still at home.

He was a very sociable and spontaneous person, and Sparky recalled many occasions when, without any warning or planning and at his suggestion, the family would "all take off in our little rooms and hurry up and pack our luggage and jump in the car, and now it would be 6:00 and we'd be on the road. And, you know, we'd wake up the next morning in Maine . . . for a lobster dinner." Or he would come home and say, "'Let's go and see Grandma.' We'd pack our bags and hit the road." For the most part, these journeys and trips were "good journeys . . . although they would tend to be more difficult as we [she and her middle sister] spent more and more time together in the car." Sparky remembered being told as they pulled up at Grandma's or a friend's house: *"Children are to be seen and not heard."*

Sparky's parents "didn't have a great relationship. . . . My father was an alcoholic." Only after "they retired and my dad quit drinking was there any harmony in their relationship." Moreover, it was a divided family, with Sparky, her eldest sister, and their father, who all share a "similar personality," getting along well together until the eldest sister moved out, leaving Sparky and her father as a pair and her mother and

middle sister, who also had similar personalities, as a pair. Sparky often had a strong sense that "she should have been a boy":

> Dad would take me out to the garage and teach me how to change spark plugs, . . . like all the things he would have done with a boy, had he had a boy. . . . He used to dress . . . me up in overalls and a T-shirt and take me to the bar with him and tell everybody that my name was Bob. And I didn't have any hair until I was 18 months or 2 years old, so I didn't look like a girl, I looked like a little boy. So he lived his fantasy out for a little bit of time with me.

Sparky remembered very few displays of physical affection in the house, and the first time her father "ever told me that he loved me" was on her first wedding day. However, Sparky did feel loved by her father "because he spent time with me, because he talked to me, because he seemed interested in what I was doing." Her father

> was very smart even though he never graduated from high school, . . . and he would spend evenings doing homework with me, especially as I got into the advanced math classes. . . . He was very willing to help me.

She remembered her father as being

> pretty much a loner in the house. . . . He and my mother established their places very early in our childhoods, so we would have dinner as a family. . . . My father would stay in the kitchen at the kitchen table reading and watching a little black-and-white TV, and my mother would go into the living room and watch the TV.

Sparky, therefore, "spent a lot of time in the kitchen."

Based on her mother's relationship with her middle sister, Sparky

> always felt very left out. . . . I always felt like I wasn't good enough. I always felt like I had a lot of traits of my father and assume now that those were the things she didn't like about me then and therefore she didn't like me.

Additionally, it seemed as though Sparky was not wanted:

> My mother had tried to conceive for 14 years before she was finally able to conceive. . . . When she did, she loved the middle sister so much before she was

> even born, . . . so she was like a gift from God. And she didn't plan me: she was clear to tell me that all my life that I was kind of an accident, I wasn't planned. . . . They weren't trying to get pregnant. . . . I just appeared. . . . I was this thing that happened.

Sparky learned fairly early on "how not to set her mother off," and this resulted in her spending "less time talking to my mom, . . . less time talking about or expressing what I wanted because when I did, I rarely got it." In fact, it felt to Sparky as a little girl that when she did mention what she wanted, "somebody would spend time trying to make sure I didn't get it." She learned "to hide herself" from her mother "in order to survive," and she learned to "keep her mouth shut," even though she had something to say, and to avoid hostility—behavior she believed exacted a high price.

There was a brief time, a "few precious years," when Sparky and her mother had a "great relationship." Her middle sister and her husband had moved away, and "Mom and Dad spent a lot of time with my husband and me, although it was short-lived." This ended when she separated from and then divorced her husband, since "the whole relationship with my mom was based on us being a couple." It was also around the same time that the middle sister moved back into the area.

Both parents "physically disciplined us. . . . They whipped us with the belt, . . . they spanked us." Sparky's earliest memories of this corporal punishment were when she was 4 or 5, and as she became older, fetching the belt with which she was to be beaten became "part of the process." She remembered that her father "stopped physically disciplining" her when she was 11 or so. Her mother, too, eventually "gave up the belt . . . but would come after me in an argument." Sparky had been raised "never to physically touch her mother, yet she [mother] would knock me off my chair at the kitchen table and be on top of me." In spite of all this, Sparky held that her mother truly believed

she cared about her daughter, albeit "in a way that wasn't nourishing or satisfying to me." Her mother would say: "I loved all of you and gave you what I thought you needed differently." Sparky had few if any memories of "holding her mother's hand as a little girl."

Immediate Family—Siblings

Sparky's "eldest sister is 16 years older . . . and my other sister is 18 months older than me, so a large gap—she was an only child for 14 years." Sparky developed "a wonderful relationship with" her eldest sister—"we were very close"—and she had early memories of visiting this sister who was married when Sparky was 3. She had a daughter when Sparky was 5, "so my niece is very much like my little sister," and she and Sparky spent "a lot of time together growing up." Sparky "would go and live . . . and stay all summer" with her eldest sister. Sparky's eldest sister never had a good relationship with their mother, and that "probably didn't help me in my relationship with my mom either."

Sparky never had "a lot in common" with her middle sister. "We're very different, and we did not get along in childhood and have never grown past that." Sparky maintained that her middle sister "would misrepresent" situations, and her mother would always believe the sister. From her perspective—and she "still holds it to be true today"—her middle sister "has no integrity." She remembered specific incidents when her middle sister lied, cheated, and was mean and spiteful, and yet when Sparky became angry as a result of this behavior, she was the one who was punished—"go to your room . . . you're grounded . . . don't talk back"—when she "started screaming" at her sister.

One of these incidents resulted in Sparky leaving home and "coming to know that I would never be heard." Sparky sensed "a lot of underlying competition" between

herself and her middle sister for their mother's attention and when it came to academic success in school. Sparky also always "felt like the other one," since her mother was constantly saying to anyone who would listen: "Doesn't she have beautiful hair? . . . Isn't she just a beautiful girl?" It was always the middle sister who had the new clothes, the "new Easter dress," whereas Sparky would wear her sister's outfit from the previous year.

She believed that not having "things" led to an obsession when she was older,

> for probably 5 years, with how I looked every minute of every day. . . . I never had any of these things and now I'm obsessed with having them and they made me feel good for a little while, but then I realized it wasn't about that. So I spent a lot of money on clothes. I dressed up to the nines every day for work and . . . outside work. . . . I gave that up only a few years ago, just because it was a lot of energy.

Even after the death of both parents—who, the eldest sister suggested, "got in the way of our relationships, and now's our chance" to be a family—Sparky refused to have any contact with the middle sister: "I don't speak to her, I don't have a relationship with her, I don't want a relationship with her, I don't see her, I don't want to see her." The middle sister was named executor of the mother's will, and "there were a lot of issues around the will. . . . There wasn't transparency." Additional monies were found 3 years after the estate was settled, but the middle sister "would not provide information" relating to it. Sparky did challenge her about this situation, even telling her that she "didn't trust . . . and hadn't trusted" her since they were children, and there was no further contact between them.

Childhood Friends

Sparky had many "childhood friends . . . and actually is still in touch with them . . . seeing them a couple of times a year." Generally they each provided something that neither her mother nor sister had or could provide. One in particular had a very loving, affectionate, and close family, and another provided much more information on significant "girlie needs" than her mother, who provided very scant information in a very terse manner. These friends were engaged in the usual school girlfriend activities, such as trips, camps, sleepovers, pajama parties, and so on. She was included in their family activities and for many years even spent Christmas Eve with one particular friend rather than with her own family.

Sparky and a friend did have one very scary experience when they hitched a ride and the driver wouldn't stop where they asked him to stop. Sparky never tried that again! Another of her friends was very different from Sparky, was "wild . . . very, very sexy . . . and had fabulous clothes, . . . the coolest clothes," so was intriguing to Sparky. This friend became pregnant at 14 and was sent away to have the baby. Sparky was the only one to visit, and so they bonded. Three of these especially close relationships were founded on trust and sharing, which continued into adulthood.

Role Models

While Sparky was very clear that neither her mother nor either sister were role models for her, her eldest sister was certainly her "champion and biggest supporter . . . after my father." Neighbors, teachers, and bosses all were excellent in supporting Sparky and encouraging her to be all she could be. One particular set of neighbors "were very active on the CB radio, and they gave me the handle of 'Sparky.'" They appeared to have

a lifestyle similar to that of Sparky's parents, although they had no children of their own. They virtually adopted Sparky, buying her "presents for my birthday—a minibike, a little fishing boat," and she would "spend time with them up north . . . in their cabin." She felt "very loved" by them because they spent time with her. Sparky held that she learned responsibility from the wife of this couple because she was "very professional . . . so she built up her career, she worked for the same company for a long time, and she was just very responsible about work and whatever she did."

During her divorce, when Sparky appeared to be in self-destruct mode, her boss at the time was "tough . . . very tough, not aggressive but she was blunt and factual," and a conversation with her "was the turning point" for Sparky. It seemed that the teachers who Sparky rated so highly were those who were also tough, blunt, and believed she was capable of great potential. They challenged her to be the best and were disappointed if she did not measure up to those high expectations.

Religion

Theirs was a Catholic family, and "we went to church every Sunday as a family and we made our first communion." Attending church was "a social occasion," a time to get dressed up, and as a family they would walk to church. She and her middle sister—the only girls in the neighborhood—would go "bike riding with the neighborhood kids and the priest on a regular basis." However, Sparky's religious perspective on the world "was rocked" following the arrest and jailing of their priest for "molesting little boys." Following that, the family stopped attending church for a while, although when her mother became secretary of the parish council,

> there was this big flurry of activity for all of us to go back to church again. It seemed like kind of an odd thing for me, not that I'm not religious, but I don't go to church every Sunday, . . . not that I don't believe in God, I just don't go.

Education

Sparky was a bright student and "held onto the fact" that she was "good academically." "From early childhood I remember always having better grades than my sister and feeling that that was my niche"—to the extent that much of her self-respect was attached to her academic ability.

When Sparky was in eighth grade, she "brought home a C on her report card" and was grounded. She challenged her parents: "We had this real heated conversation about my middle sister having gotten C's all her life." She was told: "We expect different from you." She received a similar comment from her father when she and friends—all of them national honor students at the time—had been caught smoking marijuana in high school. Much to Sparky's consternation, her mother insisted that Sparky should be the one to tell her father of this incident. His reaction was to say: "You are the smartest of my three children. How could you do something so stupid?"

Sparky did in fact win a scholarship to college although only attended for one semester. At the time, her parents "were not getting along," and her mother informed her: "As soon as you get out of college, I am divorcing your father. . . . Life is miserable here; this is not working. . . . I can't see him drinking anymore, but I can't leave him yet because you're still at college." "Rather than be accountable for" her mother's misery, Sparky packed her bags "and moved into her sister's house within a week." Her father was very disappointed that she did not complete college, yet she also believed at some level "that my father would be happier without her [my mother]. . . . I actually thought I

was freeing my dad." In the end, of course, the divorce never happened. "Six years later they both retired and then their whole life changed."

First Marriage and Divorce

Sparky married when she was 21 and moved to Canada. The wedding was postponed and rescheduled following "perceived pressure from her parents about how much they were going to lose with the deposit on my dress and the invitations and blah, blah, blah." Her ex-husband lost his job "3 weeks before the wedding" but found another job, which he "quit" because his boss would not allow him time off to take a planned trip. The relationship "started to deteriorate because I was the only one earning money." Her ex would invite all his unemployed buddies around for a party every day in their apartment. Often "he would have passed out but his friends, who were drunk, would be making themselves dinner." The relationship passed the point of no return when he did finally get a part-time job, which meant that they never saw each other.

Therapy

Following the death of her father, Sparky went into therapy. She felt this "huge loss and didn't know how to deal with it." Sparky said she "was a late bloomer in actually acknowledging and understanding what was happening" to her "physically and emotionally" relative to her childhood experiences and relationships. In particular, she had "an issue with intimacy . . . as it relates to men in my life," which she did not understand "until after my father passed away." She held that therapy "was kind of key to me learning about this and becoming self-aware, and I've been trying to advance my self-knowledge since then."

Years later, an organizational development specialist "picked up where my therapist had left off," and her work with this specialist enabled her to "manage how I communicate" and develop skills of attention at both the verbal and nonverbal levels.

Relationships

At the time of these interviews, Sparky had been in a relationship with a man for 4½ years who reminded her in some respects of her father. It was a comfortable relationship—"I care a lot about him, I love him, we live together"—and yet "there is a lot about him I don't know and there's a lot about me he doesn't know." They enjoyed "the same kind of things, but that close personal sharing isn't something that happens all the time." Like her father, she described him as a "quiet extrovert": both "loved to be around a lot of people, but not saying much in their company." She did in fact marry him some months later.

Career

Sparky began working "where my mother worked" at age 21, when she was in her first marriage. Her relationship with her mother improved, partly due to greater contact and the fact that her mother was receiving "strokes" in the form of "a lot of positive feedback about me from my boss and her peers . . . so it was a very positive atmosphere." During the demise of her marriage, Sparky "found a lot of avenues to work overtime . . . to build my wonderful professional reputation," for which her "mother got all the kudos." She was transferred to another area in 1985 and continued to live there, except for a few years when she returned home.

Sparky was supported by her company to become a computer programmer. To the great joy of her father, she continued to work her way up "into management and is now to

director level without a formal college education." She admitted that, while "it is a great company," she was unlikely to progress further without a degree. He father was happier and happier with each promotion as he watched her "advance in a career in which it was clear that I was making progress." However, she had "to spend a lot of time hiding the fact that I am not degreed from my peers."

Sparky's working life was not without its troubles. She had her fair share of difficult bosses and still struggled with certain individuals who either took an irrational dislike to her or lacked the integrity she found so essential in relationships. She was "torn" between what she saw as "upper management being incapable of letting people leave with any shred of dignity" and the need for change to "move forward" in a positive and constructive way. She occasionally felt that when she had "to toe the company line" she had to compromise to the extent that she was unable to be herself.

During her career, and with the help of the organizational development specialist mentioned earlier, she developed. She participated in a project to improve the functioning of her direct management team and encourage team members to be more real. Yet, she felt that efforts to develop a more accepting culture were generally resisted throughout the company. During her development work, attention was also drawn to the need for Sparky to balance her need for inclusion and affection with her expectation that "when she does exercise her control as their boss . . . they respond."

The Essence of Sparky

In trying to make sense of a lifetime of experiences and relationships, Sparky was aware of continuing "to learn and grow on the journey of self-awareness" and "put some pieces together about my relationship with my mom and how that still impacts me

today." For example, she was aware of being very angry—"I just became angry and I stayed angry for years"—and said that this anger "prevents me from being myself." She disliked herself "when I'm mad" because she reminded herself of her mother, who was always angry with her. "I do behave very similar to her when I'm angry—I yell . . . but I hate it and then I'm so angry with myself for allowing that whole thing to unravel." She saw the same behavior in relation to her current boyfriend, who recently became her second husband. When she behaved towards her husband the way her mother used to behave towards her, he reacted "exactly like my father did, and I end up . . . not feeling fulfilled at the end of that." "When I behave like my mother, nobody wants to talk to me . . . [her husband] doesn't want to talk to me . . . and the fact that he won't engage with me infuriates me even more."

By watching her mother when she wasn't talking, Sparky became aware of the nonverbal "signals that she was giving off," and from this Sparky learned "to pay attention to nonverbal cues from people." Moreover, she was aware "how strong integrity is and how my reaction towards dismissal is still a big part of my DNA, so to speak." Moreover, both the noticeable lack of integrity in and dismissal by others could also trigger the anger. This then could lead to her closing down if she experienced a lack of comfort and safety.

On the other hand, she could continue to be herself where she felt the level of safety was sufficient, although "there are not as many of those opportunities" as she would like. So Sparky sought out on a regular basis some of her close friends from school and close relationships with people who used to work at the company where she still worked and a "couple of girls that I met when I first moved here" in order to feed an

emotional need for acceptance. She also had a high need for inclusion and affection, as well as acceptance, recognition, trust, and confidence, and when these needs were not met turned to sarcasm in response. Being sarcastic "to the fullest degree" was another response Sparky used in situations that were not to her liking.

Not being heard was a theme that ran throughout Sparky's life, and she was aware of it in her current work situation. She became angry when her direct reports did not respond to her, perhaps indicating that they hadn't heard her, after several attempts of saying or asking the same thing, and was aware that she needed to continue working on finding a way to say what she wanted without "switching people off." She knew that when she was passionate—another personal quality—people generally interpreted it as anger and were unable "to stay in the conversation with me." She found "it very hard to express that emotion accurately or in a way in which the world can hear me." Likewise, when she perceived people—a boss, for instance—to be angry with her, she "doesn't stay in the conversation" and sometimes repeated the same behavior with her boss that her direct reports had with her. Even so, she was aware of trying to "stay in the conversation" or removing herself constructively and intentionally to a more suitable time and space. Sparky was clear that also at work there were times when she "is not fully present. . . . The conversation bores me. . . . I go off into my mind and find something else to think about."

The ability to compromise by "just letting go" appeared to be a learned behavior, and Sparky was aware that part of the culture of the company in which she worked was one of unhealthy compromise, by which she meant "being incapable of saying how you really feel." She saw similar behavior between her parents, who "instead of maintaining

your individuality and coming from a place where you can negotiate every time, you think you know the other person."

Sparky occasionally struggled with her relationship with her new husband because it seemed she was more the assertive partner—although sometimes getting to assertive behavior "takes a lot of energy"—and held the emotion for both of them. She sometimes failed to hold her boundary, and less often that she would have liked, tried to insist that he take responsibility for his own emotions. Her physical reaction to this struggle was usually associated with not being able to sleep and "not being fully present" in the moment or situation. When she was upset, Sparky cried, initially from being hurt and then with frustration, and this was often followed by headaches and an upset stomach.

Sparky was clear that being self-aware "makes me feel smarter" and enabled her to "pay attention" and have "insights" into people's behavior. Having worked with her direct reports and the organizational development specialist, the group dynamics have improved in that everyone was more comfortable "calling each other" on some inappropriate behavior. She was also aware that much of her behavior as an adult was formed by experiences and relationships that occurred before she was 10, even though "they might look a little different" today. Her instant reactions were the same. She spent time regularly on self-reflection, on all manner of issues and situations throughout her day, which she found helpful in making sense of her day and situations. She did not dream or, if she did, was not able to remember them.

In terms of mood, Sparky was aware that she had moods, such as "helpful, sarcastic, and happy," and was also aware of what triggered a change in her mood.

Moods of disengagement and dissatisfaction were also present, particularly in relation to her current work situation. Sadness was another mood, which Sparky believed other people saw as anger.

Sparky believed herself to be "trustworthy, kind, and to act with integrity" and suggested that people who knew her well would also include "passionate." She also had a belief that she would "add value to" other people's lives as they added value to hers. She described her disposition as "naturally open . . . and trusting," also suggesting that people who knew her well would agree. In terms of her temperament, she believed she inherited "a very social temperament from my father" and a love of entertaining and felt "like my house is the gathering place. . . . It is now and was when I lived at home and when I was married the first time." Sparky held that she inherited the ability and/or desire to build and maintain long relationships and to keep in touch with people from her mother, and she remembered as a child going with her mother "to visit people that my mother went to school with," and how her mother would "be sitting at her desk writing letters . . . and Christmas cards . . . and reading letters." Sparky was still in touch with school friends, and they continued to visit each other regularly.

During the interviews it became noticeable that Sparky would often cover her mouth with her hand when she was talking about herself, and she planned to explore this with the organizational development colleague and notice any reactions and feelings raised by and changes that occur as a result of this new knowledge.

APPENDIX I:

CR#4 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME ABBY

Demographic Details

Abby is a 53-year-old Caucasian woman, the younger of two children of a first-generation Russian Jewish couple. Married with three children, she had master's degrees in special education and school psychology and a doctoral degree in education.

Immediate Family—Parents

Abby's parents were a first-generation Russian Jewish couple married for over 50 years. Attending college had not been part of the family tradition, and "neither of them had been raised in a family where there was a lot of focus on togetherness." "They had a very close marriage. . . . He took care of her in many ways. She took care of him in other ways." Abby's father died in 2001.

Abby's mother was the unplanned youngest of three daughters with a history of "feeling not desirable, not wanted, with low self-esteem." Her mother had always wanted to dance or teach; she felt "it was the only thing she thought she did well." However, her parents threatened to disown her if she took an opportunity she was offered to "go on the road" and instead wanted her to be a nurse. This conflict resulted in her not attending college. She "was somewhat social, cared about her friends" and worked as a part-time secretary with very good skills for transcription . . . but not with the computer." In addition, she ran her own dance school, at one stage even earning more than her husband, although, he helped and supported her with the school and publicity.

She "depended a lot on" Abby's father, and when he died, she did not even know how to operate her appliances because "he worshipped her. . . . He did a lot for her . . .

eventually all the meal preparation." Abby was aware that her mother had "low coping skills": "She would get upset, cry, and threaten to leave . . . so I tried not to be much of a bother." Indeed, from a very young age, Abby felt that she not only "had to parent myself" but also to "parent my mother and I set my own limitations." Once she realized that this emotional weakness was a pattern, Abby "tried very carefully . . . to make sure I was not contributing to that."

Abby's father was the youngest of four children born during the Depression, and he was "left to fend for himself." He was a smart man who "wished he could have gone to college" but didn't because "there was no money." Instead, he took "the sure bet and worked 9 to 5": "Trained by the government as an engineer, he stayed a government employee for 30 years and had top security clearances for his work." He was not a risk taker.

Having had a son, Abby's parents were desperate to have a girl and "were overjoyed" when Abby was born. "That was a very big deal, so there was a lot of fuss made around the fact that they finally have their little girl." Abby felt deeply loved by her parents, "who were very loving," and she described her mother as still worshipping her.

However, Abby described some of her parents' behaviors—particularly the emotional "screaming and yelling and running round the house . . . and belt straps to my brother"—and how she chose to act differently in order to be "in control of myself."

Equally, her mother's inability to drive led Abby to decide to "drive all over this country if I need to." Abby would say, "yeah, sign me up—I'll get it done" to anything that looked too hard, including a doctoral degree. She concluded that she was still

proving herself, which was "directly related to watching someone else always feel that there were restraints on life and what they can do," i.e., her mother.

As a family, they moved from an older row-house area to a duplex development in the same city when Abby was about 8 years old. Her parents had been planning to move south for many years, and Abby had pleaded with them not to move until she had "graduated high school, and they listened."

It was during Abby's time at college, she realized "I was still mothering my mother, and by not being home . . . was able to do a whole lot less of that." This was Abby's way of "having independence." She wanted to "do my own thing, but not hurt them [her parents]." Indeed, it became clear to Abby when she was around 30 that she "had taken over a motherly role as a young child and wasn't very happy about that. I still remain somewhat angry about the fact that I need to be caretaker on some level because of her coping skills."

Immediate Family—Siblings

Abby's only brother was "almost 6 years older" than her. While he was considered to have a high IQ, he "had a lot of issues even early on with social interactions— . . . antisocial behavior . . . not aggressive, he was just really a loner. . . . He did strange things and my father would get angry." Abby believed that her parents, neither of whom had sufficiently well developed parenting skills, "had no idea what to do with him and they never took him [Abby's brother] to a therapist." Abby faulted them in "not getting some help. . . . In terms of child rearing, there was real differential treatment" between Abby and her elder brother.

Extended Family

There were aunts and uncles in the vicinity, although Abby's parents "weren't very close to them" emotionally. It was, however, from her aunts and uncles—one set, and one aunt in particular—that Abby learned what it meant to be Jewish. She felt it "was a nice way to belong" and provided an opportunity to "feel more about where I came from beyond just my nuclear family." The one aunt and an additional family member "saw me as an individual . . . took the time to see me as a person and enjoyed talking to me." They were "genuinely interested in my life." Abby was not close to any of her cousins, probably because her parents "didn't participate in a lot of family activities."

Religion

While Abby's parents were Jewish, they were not religious. "They didn't identify with the traditions . . . although they did join the synagogue when it was time for my brother to be Bar-Mitzvahed." Abby noted that "some immigrants . . . separated themselves from the faith, trying to become Americanized . . . which would have been the case in my mother's home." Her father came from an orthodox family, but he "didn't like that." Her parents "never made a holiday dinner" and yet these "traditions later on became important" to her.

For a while Abby attended "religious school on Sundays" although her parents removed her once she told them she was bored.

Childhood

Abby recalled being very protective of other children when she was young, particularly if those children were being unfairly treated. From a very early age Abby remembered "somehow bringing people together and having a sort of peaceful respect for each other." This theme continued throughout her life.

Abby used "to plead" with her parents to allow her to attend "summer camp," which she started at age 8 for 2 weeks, age 9 and 10 for 4 weeks, and thereafter for 8 weeks. "This allowed me to be myself, and I was very mischievous in summer camp." She was "never fearful of discipline," although she did get into trouble from time to time for playing pranks. She maintained that she was mischievous during her stays at the camp because she never felt she could be mischievous at home. Moreover, it was a place where Abby learned the Jewish rituals that were not the focus of attention in the home. Attendance at summer camp was "really very pivotal in my development. . . . I was able to be me all the way . . . so I learned everything about being Jewish through my summer camp . . . and I valued that." Summer camp "was also a very big socializer" for Abby, teaching "me how to interact with people and groups" although she did not stay in touch with those friends from camp.

As a child, during the time of much "screaming and yelling" in the house and anger towards my brother "I was the angel; I was the good one, because I wasn't going to put them [her parents] through what they were going through with him." She was a very independent child, "never afraid of getting the strap." However, Abby did not feel "seen at home" because "my parents saw me as they wanted to see me."

It was as a child Abby became involved in her mother's dance school. Because Abby had to wait an extra year before attending school, she became "part of the dancing classes" and indeed took over the running of the school later during high school "to please my mother. . . . I enjoyed dancing and that meant I had an income in high school."

Although Abby was not conscious of being invisible and pleasing her parents during her childhood, she started to become aware of "this inkling at college." She became aware that she was "spending an awful lot of effort trying to please" her parents and became curious about why she kept putting their happiness and satisfaction ahead of her own. She "began to be aware that I did a lot of things to keep them happy. They weren't asking me to do it . . . it was my own sense of trying to keep them happy." This sense became very clear when Abby started college. During the first year, she "felt an obligation to go home several times a semester" even though she became aware that she "didn't really want to do it."

Abby "always felt our family was just really different," in that on some level her "parents didn't connect with the community very well." However, she was happy as a child, playing in "the alleyways . . . 'til it was dark out, come in filthy dirty, and I'd be happy." Abby considered that taking advantage of "a lot of time to figure things out" on her own was significant.

Abby recalled one episode of "shoplifting . . . in high school." Getting caught "once" and being interviewed by the store detective "was the turning point" for Abby "not to take anything lightly." She never wanted to be seen in that way; she wanted to be "a person that wasn't associated with dishonesty."

Education/Development

Abby was "recognized by the teacher as being very responsible" because of her support and protection of others, although she described herself as a "nobody kind of kid in elementary school . . . in the middle-group track . . . and pretty bored." She did not feel the need "to work hard or achieve more" and was not particularly encouraged or challenged by her parents to do better. They "wouldn't go to bat for me or anything like that."

However, it was when she was around 9 that "some of my best friends were in the high group . . . and I wanted to be in the high group with them." She added: "In elementary school, the condition of being classified as average never left me. . . . It could have been a show stopper." In junior high Abby became aware that she "had some control over the fact that she was again in the same average class." Once she had this awareness, she "became a really high-level student, honor roll student, and . . . worked for it—it didn't come easy." She realized that her "efforts were what was necessary to get the kind of grades and attention" she wanted and set out to achieve them. She had a "talent for languages and won some writing awards," although her parents "were inclined to be pleased . . . because I was a good girl, and pretty, which was very important, versus smart." Once again, she was raising herself in terms of what she needed to do at school; "it wasn't from encouragement from my parents." Once she made this shift, she began to be noticed and "then teachers definitely liked" her. Abby won "a really big *Girl of the Month* award" in junior high, which shocked and surprised her mother, since "they were so engrossed in my brother's issues." Abby did not feel resentful at this time, she "just figured out I had to take care of myself."

Abby "gained a lot of self-esteem and encouragement through my academics, and that was all from my own hard work." She "became a straight-A student in high school," and this was a deliberate choice to gain recognition. It also provided "a sense of accomplishment in this idea that don't settle for whatever's just there and obvious and easy, but go beyond that."

Abby "majored in undergraduate school in mental retardation. . . . What I liked about it was it was unknown territory." It was also "highly creative because no one had figured out yet the best way to teach kids with learning challenges." Abby considered the subject "to be wide open," and that "worked for" her.

Abby selected her college because of the lower cost of in-state tuition; she "didn't want to put the burden on my parents to have to pay more." At this school, she completed 4 years in 3 "by staying at school . . . and by going through the summers"—partly because she was not keen to visit her parents and partly because she could take as many credits as possible for the same price. At the same time, she "worked 20 hours a week all the way through to have the money for things."

Although Abby has two master's degrees, working towards a doctoral degree "was an interesting experience, and achieving it was a life goal" and

> was really a wonderful culmination of my thinking . . . in terms of who I am, what I want to do, how I want to be seen, and where I might make a contribution and then what's necessary to do it.

It also confirmed "a need for recognition" and enabled her to "be taken seriously" in her chosen field. The recognition was not for itself but rather "being able to make a contribution where one has not been made" previously. Abby felt very "liberated" during her doctoral program, for the first time meeting women with the same Myers-Briggs

profile (ENTJ: extroversion, intuitive, thinking, judging). The whole process of studying intensively for comprehensive exams created a bond among several women and "was probably one of the best times I've ever had in my life with . . . a group of women. . . . It was a fun time and really special."

Teachers

While Abby recalled "a lot of teachers who were really positive" and with whom she had "positive interactions," she isolated one, her English teacher in the first year in high school, whom she described as a mentor: "He saw in my writing, and in my way of working with others, a potential leader, so he really encouraged me. . . . He singled me out." He was someone who saw, watched, and recognized her abilities.

Friends

Abby suggested a theme from early childhood of not having very many close friends, although she "had some key adult friends." She did not have a "need to see [them] a lot," but they were "on my wavelength, so that when we connect, we connect really, really well." She held that she was "too serious" and perhaps "too intense for some people" so connected with "a few people very closely and . . . on some level keeps folks at a secondary, more superficial level." There was one significant relationship that helped Abby "understand myself, and in which deep questions were asked and answered and feedback was provided, causing the relationship to be engaged at a surprisingly deep level." While Abby knew this friend for 19 years, they had irregular contact, although "it's almost as if we're connected mentally; . . . [we're] very cognitively and emotionally connected."

Marriage

Abby met her husband-to-be when she was 17 and he 18, and knew relatively early on that she wanted to marry him but insisted that they wait for some time to see whether their feelings were sustainable. She made her own wedding dress for the same reasons she attended an in-state school: "I decided rather than put them [her parents] through it . . . I'll just make my own." Abby attributed some of her values to her husband, since "he had a good sense of values from his upbringing on some level." They were

> both young and idealistic, and so we would actually verbalize and talk about these things and how important it was for us to be honest with each other. . . . So on some level we raised each other for the remainder of the time.

They married at age 20 and 21, respectively, and agreed on a fundamental set of values for their marriage, which they have kept that agreement for over 34 years. Theirs has always been a marriage where they put each other first, closely followed by their children. "He made it a point to go in [to work] very early, to be home in time for dinner every night . . . We always went on vacations with each other. At times just the two of us and many times with the kids."

Abby said that her "husband is probably the closest friend I have ever had" and "someone who had a tremendous impact on" her self-awareness. "He thinks I sparkle, . . . he likes my energy, . . . he finds me incredibly attractive, . . . and he's still every bit as excited as he was as a young guy." Looking through his eyes, Abby described herself as "someone who is extremely 'family' oriented; very caring and loving . . . but also highly intellectual." She also brought "a certain comfort with emotions and reflective thinking that he struggles with" to the relationship. Abby described their relationship as one of deep commitment and love and herself as someone "who is cherished." She and her

husband enjoyed each other's company and that of their children and "guard their time." While she doesn't often use the term she described their time together as "fun."

Children

Abby had three children, all in their 20s, all of whom, like her, attended summer camp as a way of "developing independence." All three of her children "had an impact on my relationships with myself and others and my self-awareness in different ways." Abby had a different relationship with each of them, because they were very different from one another. With the eldest (the first son), there was little communication at an emotional level. On the other hand, she and her youngest son, the middle child, were able to talk about feelings freely. With her youngest child, her only daughter, the relationship was "really, really close. . . . She is very good with emotions, in terms of caring and recognizing other peoples' . . . and we can talk about anything . . . deep and sometimes she is critical of me." This relationship in particular affected Abby's self-awareness, helping her to "crystallize who I am and why she is who she is." Abby described the relationship in spiritual terms of "core unique beings . . . travelling together . . . as co-travelers, that's it."

Career

From a very early age Abby was interested in helping others: initially helping individual students and moving to "influencing a group of young people, and then influencing the adults who could influence more kids." Abby began her career in special education, becoming a consulting teacher and then a school psychologist. Abby then began working as a consultant for a national nonprofit organization, "helping to build school cultures that allow kids to develop positively." She was driven to undertake "very

meaningful work that makes a difference on a very humane level for other people." Working with "challenging kids . . . and adults" has had an impact on Abby's sense of self and self-awareness.

One aspect of Abby's career that was a little troubling was that she saw herself "pegged within a domain"—that of education and the nonprofit sector—and was unable to break into a "corporate setting," in spite of her many "transferable skills." With the turbulent situation in her workplace recently, she had been looking "to change positions for a while" and move into a corporate setting. The situation was difficult due to a bully—a thoughtless, rude, dishonest, and manipulative executive director—and had become so bad that Abby simply wanted to "get away." After she filed a formal grievance, he was eventually let go.

All of the job interviews Abby obtained in her search were within the education domain. While all but one of the interviews appeared to go well, she was not successful in securing any of the jobs and had not "been able to break out of the mold of where I am right now." She was struggling with the question of staying where she was or trying for one more domain: "Is it really time to shut down the possibility of one more possible interesting career?" However, she was aware that she lacked a certain sense of corporate culture and acknowledged that she needed to trust herself. While she felt that moving beyond the educational setting would offer challenge and interest, she was concerned more recently about "snapping as a result of spreading myself too thinly."

Awareness

Gaining a doctoral degree enabled Abby "to come to terms with" the awareness of her personality: "liking to do things that are complicated . . . and going where others

haven't necessarily gone before. I like to make a contribution; I like to make a difference." It confirmed Abby's need to prove herself to herself.

Abby described a mentor she had for a while: "It is another one of those relationships with a very, very bright woman." While they no longer lived near each other, they maintained "an interesting connection." It was a professional as well as personal and religious relationship, which confirmed to Abby "a little more about who I was and what I was drawn to."

Abby commented:

> I have always been aware of . . . journeying from the conscious and outwardly understandable to emotional areas that are maybe based on intuition and other areas that are based on a pure connection. . . . It's a connection to the soul on some level.

This offered some possible indication as to why Abby had so few really close friends, since this level of deep connection can be scary, and many people do not want to connect on such a deep level. For Abby, the intensity of her relationships with her husband and children was so great she did not have the energy or interest to engage at this level of intensity with many others. She believed that this can be attributed to "biological temperament or emotional gifts."

Being self-aware enabled Abby "to maintain a sense of humor, not to feel victimized. It's allowed me to park some of those emotions and some of those demons . . . that drive people until they're completely broken into the ground." It also drew her attention to aspects of her style that may need development and on which she was still working.

Abby maintained a clear boundary between her work and home life, having experienced some difficulties by becoming too open and close with work colleagues,

which then disrupted the work. In Abby's mind, this related to the disparate distribution of power in relationships. She was "consciously aware of" being respectful and sensitive to others, and so from time to time chose "not to be completely" herself or to "hold myself back" in certain situations, although generally, Abby "does not have the energy or desire to not be who" she is.

The Essence of Abby

"It was in early adulthood that I began to realize that I was actually doing some things that didn't make sense in the name of keeping my parents from having to deal with something they didn't want to deal with." She was several years into her marriage before realizing, "this is nuts, this is crazy, they're big [grown] people."

Abby was clear she did not learn her values from her parents; indeed, she caught them being excited at "not paying for things." She maintained that she "didn't admire them," and so her values were different from theirs. She did, however, share a similar trait with both parents: that of being invisible. As children, her parents both were invisible, and Abby too felt invisible to her parents.

Abby described herself as a moderate "type A" person "who is goal oriented . . . work oriented . . . Maybe it's just a safe place to be." A theme throughout her life was of "pushing the limits and challenging" herself. The type of work she chose was also about "making a difference . . . and it is work that others find difficult." She needed to be and was taken seriously and described herself as a "risk taker."

Abby described herself as having huge respect for people; "watching how folks who are in trouble respond to me helps to understand more about myself" and she found she was able to "connect with others on a deeper level." She attributed this sensitivity and

"this ability to bond . . . or protect on some level" in part to her mother, who with "many emotional challenges" had this ability to "go beyond the reality . . . in a spiritual way." Moreover, Abby believed that attendance at summer camp and the difficulties with her brother also created an "overwhelming need to help people unite or work together." Yet she was aware that she had chosen not to become involved with some people at this unusually deep level, and this was evidenced by her ability to shift the conversation away from herself and onto another.

Abby had a strong intuition and also an understanding that there was no language to describe the sense of connection she felt with certain people.

Abby described herself as "extremely transparent" with a "need to be genuine. . . . You know, I just have to be who I am . . . yet respectful of other people . . . strategic but not manipulative." She also described herself as passionate, with a persuasive nature, although sometimes she felt "self-conscious of that ability." She had the ability to influence yet was conscious of needing to have integrity in her dealings with others. She was constantly self-reflecting—a habit she sustained for many years, although she admitted she was "still trying to figure out" herself. While a fairly private person, Abby had one or two "confidantes" who encouraged her and provided positive feedback. These included old friends, school colleagues, as well as her husband.

Abby saw herself as "pretty self-directed. . . . It's not in my nature to stand by and wait for someone else to help me make sense . . . of the conditions that exist." Having struggled "to make sense of existence . . . the difficulties that happen" along the way, Abby became very resilient and understanding of others' hardships. She was "comfortable with understanding" her "limitations and aspirations." She was always

looking for the next step in terms of how she could help or solve a complex problem. She needed to make a difference and felt that her life and the work she did had purpose, while still "striving for balance . . . balance between working too hard and not having enough fun." Moreover, Abby had a real sense of "recognition and almost enjoyment in living in the ambiguity . . . not having to resolve perplexing questions . . . knowing that at some times, things will present themselves when it is the right time" and felt comforted in this.

She could also be pretty methodical in times of crisis and had the ability to suspend her emotions in order to help those in crisis. This was the case when "my daughter was date-raped and when my youngest son was assaulted at school." However, suspending did create its own problems—"headaches and physical sickness"—within her physical being. She was aware of this and what she needed to do to alleviate such reactions, such as "setting boundaries, prioritizing and creating downtime."

With her strong sense of self, Abby faced sufficient self-doubt to act "against her values . . . or better judgment" on only a few occasions.

Abby described herself as "being resilient." While she inherited some "hardwired . . . genetic" tendencies from her parents, the "opportunities . . . along the way helped shape and modify" her temperament. She described herself as "not being a moody person" and attributed this to being self-aware and "catching . . . a mood that seems not healthy." If she was tired, or had not gotten enough exercise, then that contributed to moods not being the usual "above average." She "pulls her strength" from this notion rather than her faith. Her disposition was "the glass is half-full . . . the direct opposite of my mother," and she believed that her "innate intelligence" was genetically determined, as well as her body shape, ability to dance, and her analytical talents. She said that others

would describe her as “very caring, very loving, very affectionate, smart, creative . . . very close to family, and very interested in seeing family do well.”

Abby pondered on an interesting notion about life in general and hers in particular as she viewed herself “getting old” and how this would play out. She suggested that she would “continue to evolve rather than retire.” So to that extent, she displayed a future orientation, which she held since childhood.

Abby was very much in touch with her physical self, having been a dancer from an early age, and throughout the interviews displayed the physical manifestation of a variety of emotions. She and her husband “work out regularly” and she was aware that she needed and wanted to be able “to stay strong and healthy.”

Since the interviews, she was diagnosed with and successfully treated for cancer and other ailments seemingly the result of stress. In both situations, her physical self seemed to be bringing to her cognitive attention a need to do even more to create a healthy balance in her life and thus reduce her levels of stress.

APPENDIX J:

CR#5 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME CHRISTINE

Demographic Details

Christine is a married, childless, 46-year-old Caucasian woman, the firstborn of three girls in an American military family.

Family History

Both sets of grandparents were farmers. Christine's paternal grandparents had the bigger farm, which was approximately 160 acres and "had been in the family two or three generations, so there was stuff . . . every corner and every room . . . it was fascinating." The grandparents were self-sufficient; "they fed themselves." Christine also remembered the difference between where her immediate family lived and visiting the farms in another state, "where there was just all this space, . . . lots of outside activities, . . . a river and mountains."

Her paternal grandfather was an alcoholic, and there "was a tinge of sadness underneath" her childhood happiness and "always an edge of tension" because of that, and also because Christine's mother and her mother-in-law "didn't get along real well." Partly, this was due to the fact that the grandmother had lost one son and so was "very protective . . . and kind of possessive" of her remaining son—Christine's father, clashing with her alcoholic husband to ensure that their son went to school rather than leaving school to work on the farm. Christine's mother resented the intrusion by her mother-in-law, who kept secrets with her son and was always checking on how her grandchildren were being raised—particularly when her son was away.

Christine "loved both grandmothers for different reasons." Her paternal grandmother "was more of the round, grandmotherly type . . . softer." So Christine felt closer to her as a child and she remembered her grandmother's laugh and "beautiful, gorgeous, long . . . thick . . . wavy hair that came down to the middle of her back." She was "obviously happy when the grandkids came" and would "sneak us treats." Christine "always felt special" because of the contact she had with this grandmother, who worked as a "cook in the school kitchen" and "would always have special things for us when we came through the line for lunch." She died in 1983, when Christine was 22.

On the maternal side, the farm was smaller, and although her grandmother was more business-like, it was "a little more relaxed," although she didn't "sneak us treats . . . and was more parental." This side of the family was larger in number—"brothers, kids, . . . cousins, and great-nieces," with the resulting sense that "there were always people passing through and we were passing through." Additionally, her mother did not have a good relationship with her mother (Christine's maternal grandmother), so tensions existed there too.

Christine also remembered her great-grandparents, also farmers from the same area. Her great-grandfather was a "laid-back, mellow" kind of person married to a "holy terror!" Christine was "scared" of her great-grandmother, who "was pissed off all the time," had lost her mother as an infant, had been raised by a stepmother, had given birth to ten of her own children "all of whom survived to adulthood," and had lived "a very hard scrabble existence." They died when Christine was 12 and 25, respectively.

On the paternal side of the family, there appeared to have been several generations where many of the men were alcoholics, including her great-grandfather,

who was a “civil war vet” and committed suicide. “So there’s shit in my family back aways.”

Immediate Family—Parents

Christine’s father was in the military, which necessitated regular moves during her childhood. For example, when Christine was 6, “he went to Korea for a year unaccompanied.” When she was 7 or 8, he was “gone for 6 months” finishing up “his last semester of school,” and when she was 9, “he went to Vietnam for a year.” These tours of duty were in addition to the regular moving, “on average every 2½ years.” So relating to Dad meant having to frequently readjust to his leaving and return, and Christine was not easily able to build a relationship with him. While he was away on solo tours for months and years at a time, the family became used to operating as a family of females—taking turns to share their mother’s bed every night, with each person taking on certain additional “duties and responsibilities.” This way of being was disrupted on her father’s return, and his expectation that he would “just step back into what was there the day he left” caused a certain amount of “underlying friction” in the family.

Christine’s sense was that before her father went to Korea he was “more engaged with the family”; for example, he would be up in the middle of the night feeding her baby sister. “Somewhere between Korea and Vietnam, Dad got kind of disengaged emotionally from the family,” and it lasted for a couple of decades. “He came back from Vietnam a much angrier person, . . . and it was his career that defined our existence, and his needs and his anger.” Her father was not in combat—“He was a personnel officer. . . . In Vietnam, he ran a stockade”—although he never talked about Vietnam.

Christine didn't recall her father telling her he loved her very often. However, when he went into his rages, her mother would insist that "he did love you girls." From this behavior, Christine learned that "love means you can't hold somebody accountable for their behavior and if they say they love you, they can get away with almost anything."

Her father was very "outgoing, . . . more of an extrovert by nature and fun-loving," so other people "adore" him, yet Christine held that it was "miserable having him for a dad" because "he was yelling at us about something. The man was perpetually angry; . . . he would go off in rages about things that made no sense." Although he was "verbally very abusive, he was not physically violent." Her father died 1½ years ago.

Christine remembered her relationship with her mother as completely normal, in that her mother took care of her and her two sisters: "She made sure we got to school, and she fed us and she helped us with our homework and if we were sick, she'd take care of us and she played with us." Christine sensed that her mom "liked being a mom and she liked her girls and taking care of her girls." She "was involved in Girl Scouts and Brownies with us . . . and encouraged us in the things we liked to do," and Christine "felt more aligned with Mom" because "Mom was more consistent." However, Christine remembered certain powerful and ultimately debilitating messages from her mother, such as "You have to have a man," "Boys won't like you if you're too smart," and "Boys won't like you if you talk back to them."

Her mother now lived in an assisted living facility relatively close by, and her sisters acknowledged the advantages from the way Christine dealt with her: she was able to "step away emotionally" and had a "healthy, bounded relationship," which her sisters did not.

Of particular significance in Christine's life was the fact that her parents were Lutherans. "It was very important to my parents," and so when her parents were moving to different countries or parts of the country, finding a church was third only to finding a home and a school. That said, there was a year when as a family they were not involved in a church. The family belonged to the more liberal branch of the Lutheran church, and the only one available was the more conservative, so her parents chose not to be involved. Christine experienced not attending church as "weird." It was a bad year anyway in many ways: "school wasn't as good . . . no friends" and, with her parents "not getting along," her mother even planned to leave her father, although in the end she did not.

These two major aspects of her life—family of origin and the church—"continue to influence my life . . . and my self-perception to this day."

Immediate Family—Siblings

Christine's earliest memory of her siblings was the arrival of her youngest sister, who was almost 6 years her junior. She had no recollection of the arrival of her middle sister, who was just 15 months her junior. Another early memory was at age 4, when her father explained that her mother had had a miscarriage. She and her middle sister played together and were sometimes "dressed up alike."

Christine was aware that her sisters "were much better at meeting people and adapting to new people," whereas Christine herself "wasn't socially gifted . . . and didn't adapt to new people nearly as well." Her sisters, who were "not big into adventure . . . still live in the same town . . . within 10 miles of that house we were in since 1975." Her middle sister was popular as a teenager, and she and Christine had very different

personalities, such that there was a major rupture during those years, although they "renegotiated" their "relationship in their late 30s." Her youngest sister, also regarded as having a different personality, "got on with everybody . . . just happy-go-lucky . . . married her childhood sweetheart and has two perfect kids." Both sisters still "get frustrated when Christine does things outside the family norm," although they have "gotten used to it now, so it doesn't bother them as much."

Childhood

Christine remembered her childhood as happy, playing on the farms, where the grandmothers ruled, and in the midst of nature. She remembered watching some TV, eating together as a family, and playing in the yard, although "everyone else is sort of a peripheral player in my own stuff" and therefore of less significance. She didn't remember having a "best friend" as a young child, although she played with two or three other "kids from the neighborhood."

The constant moving necessitated by her father's military career has an impact on her as a child, and during a particularly bad year Christine learned to "kind of disconnect and coast." She was aware that she was not having her questions answered, that she was being told "to calm down and not get too excited about things" and "not to feel what I felt or be too emotional" so she came to the choice point and decided to "shut down" and go "quiet." As a result, she became more "intense inside," meaning she would "spend a lot of time in my head trying to understand and construct an internal world because the external world wasn't working" for her. She became more serious to the extent that her parents became worried and sent her to a child psychologist for a while. She remembered

being asked how she felt about having to move again, and her response was, “Why would I bother to feel anything? It’s not like I have a choice.”

Around this stage, Christine was “starting through puberty” and “starting to have a sense of my own sexuality, starting to notice boys” and “being kind of uncomfortable about that.” She was very self-conscious “about having to wear a bra at 10,” and “part of the checking out” meant she didn’t have to think about her body. She experienced a lot of angst and confusion about her body and the menstrual cycle at that time due in part to the lack of information provided by her mom. She explained: “The whole introduction to my own body and my sexuality was like a train crash from beginning to end.”

By the time she had her first boyfriend, when she was in junior high, she had no idea what ‘it’ was all about. She had no idea “how you sort of set limits with boys, and I had no idea how to say no to a boy, because we were not allowed to say no to Dad.” When she started dating, the model she carried with her in regard to men was one of “powerlessness,” and it felt like “huge chunks of my brain just stalled out.” This led to confusion resulting from her own feelings of attraction and discomfort and the messages she received about “women have to find men: you date, you find a man, and you get married.” As a result she “dated very, very little before college.”

Religion

Religion and the church were always significant to Christine, and she attributed much of her journey of self-awareness to the church, God, and religion, as she understood it from an adult perspective.

Christine indicated that the church “has always been there, and it was comfortable and it was a known quantity.” It provided an element of stability when the other aspects

of her life as a child were regularly changing. She always went to "Sunday school" and was involved in youth groups. She "liked the service" and "the singing"; at one point, she and her middle sister "were in the junior choir." Moreover, "the lessons of church and the teachings of church made sense to me, and they fit into my heart and soul well." Some of the lessons she learned were the importance of being "good and kind to people around you; . . . it is important to be an honest and honorable person." Not having "too big an ego" was equally important, as was being—at least for a child—part of the church community.

However, Christine indicated that "it was campus ministry in college that helped me to be myself." Christine attended a meeting, "liked the pastor and was involved in it all 4 years I was at college." She talked of the pastor as being "extremely influential" in her life. He encouraged her to ask questions and explore her concerns and confusions. "In Lutheran campus ministry . . . you are supposed to have questions. Of course it's not always clear; of course there are conflicts; of course there are contradictions." However, this "was life changing" for Christine, particularly since it enabled her "to make the transition between the faith of my childhood, which was handed to me by my parents and the church, and the faith of my adulthood, which I developed for myself with the assistance of campus ministry."

The church remained very important to her; in fact, "it is a core part of my identity," although her "relationship to the church has changed over time." In particular, she had a 'born again' experience following a decision to reread the Bible when she discovered:

> God really doesn't care about actions nearly as much as God cares about the condition of our heart. . . . It's your responsibility if you're going to call yourself a

> Christian to make your heart a place where God can move within you and where you permit love at a universal level to grow and thrive.

Christine once "gave up church for Lent" and did not return "until I start[ed] missing it," which took a year. That was a turning point for her:

> Something inside of me got rid of the oughta's and found the wanna's. Now I'm there every Sunday because I passionately want to be there every Sunday. I want to experience the worship, I want to hear the Gospel, I want to hear the sermon, I want to celebrate the Eucharist, I want to see the people I know, I want to hear the music, I want to be in that space and experience what that means for me.

Christine was very clear about her relationship with God—"my higher being is part of God"—and while she was also clear about the personal boundaries she set, she believed that "who she is" was somebody in relationship with God. God, defined as an energetic force, was real to her the way "air is real," and God resided in that "sacred, deep place within me" because she decided to make God "her highest priority." Her personal work with God enabled her to see herself as "someone of worth and value."

Books

Being a bookworm wasn't unusual. "I've always been a bookworm . . . and would read almost anything. . . . I can never remember a time when I wasn't interested in books." Reading Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys "started to tweak my notion of who I was."

Feminism

When Christine grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, she was surrounded by feminism (apart from her home). She internalized the notion, and many of the books she read

during college were from the feminist movement. It provided her with the idea that "she was equal," even though she wasn't sure exactly where that idea came from.

Role Model

Christine could not recall anyone she would describe as a role model apart from a friend she had when living overseas. "She was a widowed school nurse, single and probably 45 at the time. . . . She seemed really happy and was not sad and pathetic."

Education

While Christine was not gifted socially, she described herself as "somebody who's academically comfortable" and excelled academically. In spite of the regular moves, which meant that she was always the "new girl on the block," schoolwork was easy for her. She joined the debate team in high school and "loved it and was good at it." She also became "involved in the school newspaper" and was good at that and found it enjoyable. "So I started to find places, beyond just my report card, where I was validated for being smart . . . and was being rewarded for it." Christine recalled no one else who encouraged her to be herself up through high school apart from her best friend—not even the church, although it did encourage her academically.

Leaving home and going to college was a big turning point in Christine's life. She felt she started to become an adult, because finally she could determine her own life. At college and away from home, she began to flourish. She finally felt she belonged by being "in the majority by virtue of being smart and wanting an education." She no longer felt at odds with her surroundings: "In college, being smart didn't make me stand out." Not being 'social' (that is, not being interested in sororities and such) was not abnormal. She felt at last she was in charge of her life. Moreover, she "learned the pleasure of being

invisible in a crowd." She felt she could be and dress in ways that completely suited her, which was utterly liberating: "I didn't even have to try to fit in if I didn't want to. No one would care."

The opportunities for leadership came to Christine when she was relatively young, at college, and she relished the opportunity—not particularly because she wanted to lead but more that she "found it frustrating to follow someone who didn't know how to lead."

Friends

While Christine did not have many friends as a child, she met "the guy who is still my best friend" in high school, when they were both 15. Although neither of them understood why the friendship worked, it did and continued to work for over 30 years, even though their "social circles do not intersect at all." She described the friendship as a "linking up of our spirits so that we are more permeable to each other." Additionally, she believed that social and gender boundaries "tend to not be there for us. . . . I am just me . . . and I can talk to him about virtually anything. . . . I trust him and he trusts me." They never dated. He came out as a gay man in his 30s, and they continue to see each other "every 2 or 3 months," although less since she began dating and eventually married her husband. He also affected her self-awareness, because "in helping him deal with the stuff in his life, as a friend, I have an opportunity to reflect back on my stuff." Christine believed that this relationship was something God wanted, since she "can't explain it any other way."

While at college, Christine dated a "fundamentalist Baptist" who was also very important in her life, even though he tried to control her, because he "forced me to stand up for myself and define who I am."

Christine also had a group of women friends, and they went on an annual hike together. She was affectionately referred to as "alpha bitch" because when the time came for "giving orders," Christine was the one to give them and be listened to.

Christine also had a current friend with whom she "goes to church . . . and lunch afterwards." This was one of the few who understood where she was coming from and with whom she could "talk about her faith."

Christine and her husband also jointly owned and shared their home with another friend of "almost 20 years." The notion of sharing their home-space was to create more of a community, and the three of them have shared two homes. The arrangement works, and while the level of intimacy Christine expected "did not develop," this has led to a deeper level of "self-examination" and understanding of the things in other people "that are really a reflection of me" and recognizing "communication dynamics."

Pregnancies and Parenthood

Christine became pregnant a number of times because she could not say no to her boyfriends. The first of these events occurred between high school and college, and it was a significant event in her life:

> This is one of those points in which a life takes a path that it can never retrace. My life went in a new direction then. I was a woman who had gotten pregnant and had an abortion. I was never going to be who I was before. I could never be a "good girl" again. I didn't know who I was for a very long time. . . . This was the beginning in many ways of a long downhill slide for me. It totally destroyed my sense of myself.

She went on to have three more abortions in her 20s, which she described as "not a great decade."

Christine eventually decided not to have children. This came about by searching within herself for a "desire to have children and discovering I didn't have one." She believed that "raising kids is an extremely important job . . . one that you should not do unless you are actually called to it." She included God in this decision-making process, as "I'm not going to have kids unless I am convinced that that is what God wants me to do." She held that motherhood is a job that is not confined to the individual; rather, "it affects you, your family, your community, and the world."

Career

Having worked in computer software for many years, Christine completely changed careers and, following a lengthy period of training, began practicing as a massage therapist.

Christine made the decision to change careers with the help of a coach, and she described the process as "another experience of self-awareness in many ways."

She credited the training she undertook to change careers and become a massage therapist with being pivotal in becoming self-aware. Massage therapists must be able to work with clients in a trusting, ethical, honorable, respectful, and intimate manner.

> The whole experience of studying massage therapy and being a massage therapist is an exercise in self-awareness. . . . You have to know who you are, and you have to know something about your weaknesses. . . . You have to know what your stuff is. What are you afraid of, what don't you like, what are your hot buttons? You've got to become much more self-aware. Even if you weren't before, you will be if you want to survive in the profession.

She was very aware of when she overstepped the boundaries and was able to reflect on her thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to understand the significance and learn from the situation. She was constantly reflecting on her intentions, and this required

being able "to look inside and step back and look at your whole life and say what's out of balance, what's not working right, what's going wrong here? . . . My intention was always to come in, in an honorable, respectful, well-bounded way." She was very clear that not hurting people was important, and she believed she was at "far greater risk of hurting somebody emotionally that I am of hurting them physically. . . . That's the stuff that will do the lasting damage."

She exchanged a massage every week with another therapist she had known for 7 years, and they were able to support each other in exploring their inner selves in order to continue improving. Christine believed that "getting involved in a therapeutic relationship, a counseling relationship" allowed her to continue her own personal development through self-reflection. Through the work with her therapist, she was able to explore what she described as "the biggest challenge for a lot of us":

> This is the notion that if we're missing something in our life, somewhere else, it's a temptation to try to fulfill it through our relationship with the clients, because of the intimate nature of the work, so if I'm stepping over the line, it's my job to step back and go, "What need am I trying to fulfill here?"

She continued to develop and hone not only her self-knowledge, but also her skills and knowledge as a massage therapist, continuing to integrate the brain, the intuition, and the physical body by exploring aspects such as the Chakras, meditation, chanting, and the energetic system.

Therapy

Christine first started seeing therapists during her 20s, when she described herself "as a mess." "I was not satisfied with the way I was living my life . . . [or] the choices I was making." She held that this "was the most productive part of self-examination" and

indeed from knowing who she wanted to be, who she was supposed to be, and what she was expected to be, she learned "some real foundational stuff like who am I?" "I didn't know who I was, I had very wishy-washy boundaries, and I sort of adapted to whoever was around me to make them happy. That's crap!" She learned "to listen to that deep place in me that goes click when something is right."

With friends, this newfound clarity was fine, although with family it caused a certain amount of friction, particularly when she began to stand up to and challenge her father.

Dreams

Christine dreamed vividly, was able to remember her dreams, and learned to listen to them, "review them, look for themes, and draw some understanding about what was going on in the deeper parts of my emotional psyche."

Marriage

Christine married her husband (who was 8 years younger) 7 years ago, after dating him 4½ years. She knew him as a member of a larger circle of friends, and during her "not-dating period," "he slipped in under my radar!" Although "he is not a person of faith," God was very clear that "this is where I want you to be. I want you to be with this man." He was supportive of as well as able and willing to engage in a conversation with Christine about her faith. However, the fact that he was not a person of faith caused some sadness, "because it is the deepest, truest part of me, and he and I can't share that." However, she believed he taught her a lot. They had a loving, deeply committed relationship and helped each other to see through the "bullshit."

The Essence of Christine

Christine described herself as an introvert by nature in Myers-Briggs terms (INTJ: introversion, intuitive, thinking, judging) and so did "not go out and gather people." Yet, through therapy and marriage, she developed into a very confident person.

In making sense of the first two interviews, Christine concluded that the concept of self-awareness, which was always a journey, was for her a spiritual as well as religious process, requiring the "unconditional love" of God in order to go deep enough inside to access all aspects of the person. "My experience is that there is a place in all of us that is tied into the universe, that we are part of that whole." She also explored the notion of self-awareness as being a state that cannot be reached until a certain level of "physical, psychological, and emotional maturity" exists or as something that may emerge from "some kind of discomfort, dysfunction, or trauma."

For Christine, "wisdom is part of self-awareness." She described it as a good knowledge of self, which is trustworthy and can be trusted, a self-acceptance and grounded self-esteem, which can only come from knowing who you are.

Certain conditions impacted Christine's ability to be self-aware:

> Things that introduce instability into my system interfere with my ability to be self-aware. Being overtired, . . . being sick—although being physically sick is not as big an issue as being emotionally out of balance, . . . major change.

Another interfering condition was "being very busy" and the resulting "autopilot . . . and not taking the opportunity to really see what's happening around me and notice what I'm doing." "Being stoned" also kept her from being able to reach that deep place within and "keeps me from being self-aware"; having tried 'drugs' at college, she "doesn't do drugs." Being "physically apart" from her husband for too long kept her from being self-

aware, since he was a source of emotional stability; also eating poorly and being away from church were conditions that affected her ability to be self-aware.

On the other hand, Christine said that depression—something she suffered on and off since her early 20s—could be "an excellent opportunity for self-awareness," provided it was treated. If it was left untreated, she didn't have "the capacity to look inward and understand." When she was suffering from untreated depression, she was unable to "get out of my head . . . and go to that deep place within." Moreover, her energy levels were low, she was unable to pray, and she was disconnected from her core self.

Some of the conditions that encouraged Christine to be uniquely herself were the reverse of those mentioned in the previous section. These included her husband, her workshop, and her work, which allowed her to "be fully present" particularly when "she is creating a space where people [clients] can be vulnerable" and therefore had to remain conscious of who she was and her actions.

An adult experience that Christine described as significant was "retiring from dating." Prior to meeting, dating, and marrying her husband, she "had one of those moments of . . . pure sharp clarity" that dating had been a source of great dissatisfaction. So she did not date for several years—"not expending any energy on finding a man" and discovering she "wasn't interested in many and even fewer were interested in me," making this "the most peaceful period of my life." It was a time she spent repairing the relationships with her family, investing time with friends and her home. It also provided the space where she could be "who I am." It was a time when "she adopted" herself as her own partner and discovered that "she was enough."

A current experience for Christine at age 46 was that "coming into middle age, you can't ignore your body anymore," and she regularly checked herself for bodily and emotional reactions rather "like doing self-therapy." She described herself as "well bounded . . . which has a specific feeling in my body. I feel I am inside my body, inside the boundary of my skin."

Emotions were still an aspect of Christine's life, which she found "tough," not having allowed herself or been allowed to experience them, so not having the descriptive language particularly for the darker emotions. However, she was now able (with therapeutic support) to "figure out where emotions reside in my body and find them . . . and how they express themselves."

She described herself as being "in a very strong period of integration. . . . There are all these streams in my life that are coming together," including "the intersections of faith, religion, energy, emotions, and bodywork." Through this, she realized that she "is enough" and did not need others to make her feel complete and whole.

Christine described her moods while being depressed and untreated as "bad and angry." However, once her depression was treated, she was able to experience good moods and "feel pretty happy." Generally her attitude was positive and optimistic. She described her disposition as curious and adventurous; she was someone who had left the security of a known place and traveled across America alone and moved to different cities. She believed that she inherited her curiosity from her father and her organizational ability from her mother.

APPENDIX K:

CR#6 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME MERCEDES

Demographic Details

Mercedes is a bright, highly intelligent 53-year-old Caucasian woman, the eldest of two children born of Midwestern parents. Her first childless marriage ended in divorce. She has been married for the last 10 years and has a stepson. She is an extroverted 'people-person,' has three advanced degrees, and recently left a high-powered job to pursue a more balanced lifestyle.

Family History

Mercedes' parents were hardworking, as were her grandparents, and "really strict" and "pretty autocratic and traditional." Her paternal grandparents were of Pennsylvania Dutch (German) extraction and settled in the Midwest. Her father was the youngest of their five children. The paternal grandfather "worked in the oil fields as a manual laborer, . . . was very handsome, . . . liked to write and recite poetry, and was a great storyteller." The paternal grandmother had the business brains of the family and "probably kept the family above the poverty line," although she was not a "people person, . . . was a lousy cook," and was not the comforting, loving grandmotherly type. They encouraged their five children to "seek the highest positions of responsibility in whatever they did," and indeed all were successful in their chosen careers. However, "we lived out of town and they were just not very engaged in us as grandkids."

The maternal grandparents were from farming and ranching backgrounds in the Midwest, and while Mercedes and her family visited occasionally and enjoyed playing on the farm, it is the maternal grandmother who was remembered with fondness. She gave

birth to 9 or 10 children, including one set of triplets who all died, and always made Mercedes feel special by "remembering me on my birthday, . . . always being proud of and interested in me and caring about me," even though there was not too much interaction. She had a habit of changing the subject if she did not want to answer a question. "Both families were pretty autocratic in their parenting style."

Her parents—both extroverts—"met in high school and dated in college," and while not exactly poor came from a "pretty humble socioeconomic group," with scarce financial resources. They left the Midwest because Mercedes had been conceived prior to the marriage and "they felt they couldn't face their community." Afterwards, they moved within their state every 2 or 3 years, as her father was "moving up the corporate ladder." They were strict parents and "used a lot of corporal punishment": "Today if parents did that, the authorities would come after them." These punishments "stung . . . deeply both physically and more so emotionally." However, neither parent ever raised his or her voice or swore, and there was the definite sense of being a family unit. Both parents are still alive.

Mercedes' father, a Navy veteran, inherited his father's "head for numbers, . . . storytelling prowess, and charm," yet he and Mercedes, being total opposites in the Myers-Briggs sense, did not have a close relationship during her childhood. He spent the first 6 years of his marriage trying to complete his college degree, a process that was disrupted by the move across the country and the arrival of Mercedes. "As a young adult and into middle-age, Dad was more focused on community service, church, golf and his business than on his children." As a result, Mercedes' mother felt like a single parent due to his extended periods of time—"years and years and years"—working on his college

degree, and the two had a less-than-ideal relationship.

Mercedes never "felt like a special daughter. . . .he was hard to please. . . . and often critical of her." He was sociable but emotionally aloof and "his measurements of success were just different, . . . being quantitative" rather than qualitative. She felt he held her back in a number of ways, particularly in relation to his refusal to support and often to actively deny her choice of educational opportunities. She did not feel he cared, pushed, or encouraged her or was even on her side in terms of education, which "mattered more" to Mercedes, whereas her father was content with the cheapest colleges. He was "attached to being right, so there was no sense of being able to debate with him."

Additionally, a family rule stressed "listening and not speaking," so dissension, sarcasm, and criticism were not tolerated. This lack of freedom to "push back on" or challenge her parents significantly impeded Mercedes' ability to feel comfortable in challenging people and situations as an adult.

Mercedes felt she had little of her father's attention when she was young, although she had memories of playing softball with, being taught to play golf by, and helping with home improvements with, her father. He did play cards with Mercedes and her brother, but not much else. Although she and her father did attend a father-daughter bonding activity called Indian Maiden when she was about 5 or 6, in which her father was known as Moonshine and she was known as Starbright—a name that continued to pop up occasionally. Nevertheless, she was "sure they did tell me they loved me and still do," so she "did feel loved." She did, however, resent the strictness and rebelled "surreptitiously and covertly" when they forbade her to see a particular boyfriend by "seeing him anyway." She observed over time that "Dad has to be president of every

organization he's in. He's not just on the sidelines, he has to be in front," and indeed he concluded a successful career as a senior vice president for a global financial services firm.

While her father did eventually complete his degree, her mother never managed to accumulate the required credits due to constantly moving around the state for her father's career. While long suspected, the truth about Mercedes' conception only surfaced when she was 50 and on a "fun trip" with her mother following the successful completion of her doctoral degree. The ultimate confirmation of this truth "after years of telling me they didn't believe in premarital sex" caused Mercedes' "whole world to just turn upside down," and she believed it had "an impact on the way I was raised and relationships, boyfriends and dating." She and her mother never really dealt with the circumstances of her birth, although Mercedes did some personal work so that it was no longer the issue it once was.

Mercedes did not feel trusted by her mother, which she "felt very deeply," such that she considered running away. She experienced her mother as "projecting some awful things" about what was appropriate and proper behavior, being oppressive, and judgmental. "It seemed no matter what I said or did, it was not good enough. . . . I did not feel I measured up." In spite of excelling academically, neither of her parents seemed to "put pressure on me about academics because they said I was hard enough on myself." Anticipating and expecting criticism led Mercedes to be hypercritical of herself and to "hold really high expectations of other people. . . . it's been costly."

During high school, her mother also attempted to curtail her school leadership activities to give "somebody else a chance" to be elected to the various offices for which

Mercedes ran and was usually elected. However, this "sense of fairness . . . didn't resonate at that age," and Mercedes continued to run for various offices and be involved in school life. From time to time her mother would invite one of Mercedes' boyfriends over for dinner, and she went through a phase of buying and wearing "look-alike dresses," which Mercedes "hated . . . and felt was weird" and which much later became evidence of unconscious efforts on her mother's part "for her father's attention."

The secret about Mercedes' conception and an illicit affair in which her father had been engaged "created this dark cloud in my family." Her mother was "miserable and very unhappy . . . over an extended period of time." She "had to give up her career along the way many times over to sacrifice for my dad's career," causing what Mercedes concluded was considerable anger and resentment. She handled this anger "by going inward and silent," which not only "cost her . . . it cost the people around her." This "silent treatment" appeared to manifest itself in a number of "health problems . . .": "intestinal problems, an appendectomy and her gallbladder removed . . . and a colostomy."

Moreover, from the work perspective, her mother was an accountant and on a number of occasions discovered evidence of dishonesty and fraud in the companies for which she worked, which resulted in her being physically sick, "knowing that this is where her paycheck was coming from and we needed the income." It appeared that she "didn't have a group of friends . . . or a best friend with whom she could share her situation, and couldn't share it with her family, so she had no alternative but to suffer in silence."

Mercedes learned to replicate this silent behavior, ultimately "noticing it wasn't getting me a very good result. . . . I wasn't really very savvy about it, but I knew that keeping my mouth shut . . . and my refusal to talk wasn't working." There was no public display of anger in the relationship, which led Mercedes to have "a complete misconception about marriage and relationships." Mercedes' birthday wish each year was that she would "be raised in a happy home with both parents." However, her "adult experience of them is now very different. They are more tolerant, patient and encouraging. They tell me they are proud of me all the time. I feel very close to them now and we talk 2 or 3 times a week."

Sibling—Brother

Mercedes' relationship with her 16-month younger brother was highly competitive, although they were "inseparable":

> I think for good and bad . . . we were partners in crime, we were allies, we were enemies, and we did a lot together because when we moved to a new neighborhood all we had was each other for a good while. And we studied music so we both practiced the piano . . . and we played competitively against one another on a million things.

They also engaged in physical activities together, such as swimming, ping-pong, cards, hiking, and biking. She considered her brother to be her opposite, more like her father—although unlike her father her brother was the introvert of the family. He was also the rebellious sibling. While Mercedes was no trouble, he was regularly getting into trouble and being "spanked" by their parents.

As adults, they experienced "some strain in the relationship," with "a sense of continued economic competition" and some mean and venomous comments made by her brother towards Mercedes, such that she "stayed away from him for a while." Mercedes

further chose not to be engaged in his issues related to an unsuccessful marriage, divorce, bad choice of girlfriends, and the pain in his life by "learning to just keep my mouth shut and listen to his problems and say 'that's too bad.' And unless asked for advice, I don't say anything anymore." Her brother likes her spouse and step-son and she adds "we've gotten closer now that we're more comfortable with ourselves and who we've become."

Religion

The church played a part in her life as Mercedes was growing up, and indeed wherever the family moved, they always found a church and attended every Sunday. There was no specific denomination, although always Protestant. Her parents liked to sing in the church choir and participated in various Church activities. Mercedes enjoyed involvement in the church and also took part in a Christian group for teenagers known as Young Life, becoming "a counselor for Young Life camps when I was in my freshman year in college." Additionally, she read and recorded favorite passages from the Bible, which she kept close by. The Bible provided "a moral compass and a sense of morality and guidance, something beyond yourself . . . and an opportunity to think about others more than yourself."

While she stopped attending church regularly since marrying her second husband, she believed religion was an "important part of my life." In fact, she considered being on her boat and sailing or "hikes . . . big walks" and "the beauty in nature" as more her spiritual church. She had no recollection of priests or pastors who acted as role models or were significant in her childhood.

Childhood Friends

Mercedes was able to remember childhood friends from as far back as pre-school

and grade school, with whom she played, "building tents in the backyard, attending camp together, or writing what we thought would be the novel of the century." As a tomboy, she enjoyed climbing trees, riding her bike, and doing gymnastics more than playing with Barbie Dolls and games. She was "pretty happy, with no great traumas, except the moving was traumatic . . . especially as I got older and I began to form attachments and like my school or teachers." She would "get pretty upset . . . when I was very engaged in student activities and academic life, and I was in sports and student government and cheerleading and I had a boyfriend and I just did not want to go." On one occasion, she "worked out a deal to live with one of my best friends at the time"—to whom she was still connected—for 8 months when her parents moved, because "this was my glory year . . . my senior year." This was a significant experience for her, since it was the first time she had been on her own and her friend's parents were different from her own. They "were far more permissive. . . . I didn't have to ask permission to do things. . . . I could make my own decisions . . . and they didn't give me trouble about my boyfriend."

Boyfriends

Her parents were extremely strict and had forbidden her to see a certain boyfriend because they felt his manners were unsuitable, that he was overly introverted and not very conversant or "socially proper." Mercedes defended him "to the end and indeed rebelled surreptitiously and covertly by continuing to see him anyway." Her mother falsely accused her of "putting out" for this boy, which Mercedes felt was "hurtful" since nothing untoward had happened. On a different occasion when their parents were away and Mercedes and her brother were staying with friends, they were instructed not to "go

to the house," which of course they did. Her parents "were easier to deal with when they liked her boyfriend."

Education

With the constant moving, Mercedes attended many schools, where she was the "new kid in the middle of the school year." Nevertheless, she excelled academically and artistically and was not a trouble to her parents: "I didn't do drugs, didn't do alcohol . . . and I got really good grades and so I was really a good kid; they actually didn't have any trouble with me." Through this constant moving, Mercedes learned to "sit back and watch . . . to pick up on what was going on in the classroom," even though at times she was "more advanced academically." This behavior of getting "to know the lay of the land, the power dynamics, and the psychodynamics in a group" was one of the ways Mercedes continued to function as an adult, given her ongoing need for inclusion. "I think belonging was very important . . . inclusion was extremely important."

Additionally, she learned another message from these experiences: "Don't be a showoff when you show up" because "being really smart was not appreciated by my peers." She learned also that "you couldn't be pretty and smart" and so often played "dumb" and came in second. However, sometime during her high school years she realized that she needed to "shine her light more," although still from time to time she lacked confidence and a belief in herself.

However, problems arose for Mercedes when she won a scholarship to study Spanish at a university in a different country and her parents refused to let her go. Two years later she won another scholarship to study Spanish, this time in Spain, and once again her parents said: "You cannot go; we will not let you go," in spite of it being a

"really big honor." They wouldn't even speak to the professor. On this occasion, however, Mercedes confronted her father: "This is probably one of the hardest things I've ever done. I said, 'I am going to Spain without your help. I will find a way. I'm going,' . . . and he hung up the phone." She remembered the time as "so scary. . . . I can just feel it in my body, remembering that experience of calling my dad, the one thing I wanted to talk to him about . . . he was absolutely closed about." This represented the "first time I'd ever really asserted myself with him." Ultimately, they did relent and with some sacrificing on their part financially, she went.

The time she spent studying in Spain had a huge impact on her self-awareness. She lived with a Spanish family and was totally immersed in a different culture. Although she had studied for some years, she "didn't speak the language very well" and made her way and studied without any outside restrictions or support. Following her two semesters in Spain, she returned because her father had "cut off the funds." Mercedes was accepted into a master's program and offered a teaching fellowship and full-tuition scholarship. Her parents had "made it clear that graduate school was on my dime."

Mercedes gave another example of her father's lack of support.

> He said, "You can go anywhere you want with your grades." So I said, "I wanted to go to Stanford," and he said, "I'm not sending you to Stanford." And I go, "Okay, I want to go to UCLA." And he goes, "I will not pay for you at UCLA." So I had to pick the cheap local state school.

Mercedes learned that whether she declared her wishes or kept them secret, she would not get what she wanted—whether this was a desired Christmas gift or a request to explore acting in commercials.

Positive Teachers

Mercedes remembered with enthusiasm some of her teachers who were "positive and reinforcing" or who "taught me some very high standards" or were very encouraging and exposed her to many different experiences. Equally, she remembered when a particular teacher confused her with another student; in that very negative experience, she received inappropriately low grades for a subject at which she excelled.

She had a husband-and-wife team of Spanish teachers; she loved Spanish and the stories these teachers told and ultimately became a Spanish major. She was still in touch with the wife part of the team—now 95—"who was an inspiration," even though Mercedes "didn't always like her and at the time we thought she was really cranky." Nevertheless, she loved the absorption of the culture and "liked learning the language, and she really brought it to life."

Books

Mercedes read books as a child; in fact, she "was passionate about books at that age and would stay up all night reading." It was the books she read in adulthood that had a profound impact on her sense of self and self-awareness. Books such as Carl Roger's *On becoming a Person;* Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled;* the *He, She,* and *We* books by Robert Johnson; Harriet Lerner's books *The Dance of Anger* and *The Dance of Intimacy;* Gary Zukov's *The Seat of the Soul;* Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child* and extensive works by Carl Jung were transformative. These books helped her make sense of experiences, family issues and relationships, and why she would "overfunction and compensate for emotions and feelings that weren't there from others."

Therapy

Mercedes also started seeing a Jungian therapist to help her understand herself and the reasons why she continued to have bad relationships with men and her part in the process. This awareness "was such an awakening, and it really jolted me. . . . It really woke me up from a long sleep and a pattern that wasn't serving me." She learned "how to reconcile some of that pain in your childhood that you have . . . and say I'm not going to let that rule who I am and how I am with my family or how I am going forward as an adult." She participated in art therapy and dream therapy, which she described as "phenomenally freeing and enlightening," and journaled fairly regularly for the past 20 years. Additionally, she did some very strenuous and demanding "physical work, . . . camping . . . hiking in national parks and forests." A week spent climbing mountains on her own and journaling was particularly "pivotal . . . and very transforming."

First Marriage

Mercedes married a very handsome and charming man she met in Spain, where he was also studying. It was a "pure fantasy. . . . We'd spent very little time together . . . and hardly knew each other." He was "abusive on a psychological level," demeaning her in front of people. He was also an alcoholic and adulterer. Her self-esteem plummeted, and she did not "feel loved in any corner of my world," and she knew she could not stay in the relationship. She and her husband were teaching at the same school at the time and her divorce "had a huge impact" on her and enabled her to make "some major life decisions." She moved to the eastern side of the country when she left the marriage, where she was totally isolated and without any support.

Career

During her working life and career, although there were a few 'good' bosses, Mercedes experienced a succession of managers and bosses who were jealous, dictatorial, psychologically abusive, unprofessional, demeaning, and just plain evil, so she had many negative experiences. They were all women. However, she was able to find two mentors who helped her make sense of many of the negative situations she was experiencing, and these negative experiences enabled Mercedes to learn about setting boundaries, protecting her space, being sneaky, and simply surviving. Difficult bosses were a constant theme for Mercedes, although she was frequently recognized, admired, and appreciated by grateful customers for whom she worked and whom she supported developmentally over the last several years. She also had the support of colleagues engaged in the same work.

Relationships

After her divorce, for 12 years or so, she entered into "a series of relationships that weren't going anywhere." She "dated a lot of guys who I kept finding out were cheating on me." The relationships "weren't right and certainly I was miserable over and over. . . . They were not rich and rewarding and fulfilling, and finally I decided to just take a break from dating."

Second Husband

She chose to explore these patterns in therapy, and certainly her relationships with her father and some authoritarian bosses were significant in this. She "actually decided to learn to fall in love with myself and appreciate who I was." The week climbing

mountains was significant here in that through deep reflection and journaling she was able to

> create a whole picture of a man, of what I wanted, and I described what interests he would have or be willing to engage in with me, . . . where he'd live, . . . someone who didn't have any debt, . . . someone who was interested in spending time out West and climbing and hiking, . . . even what I thought he would look like, and . . . I met him.

They met at a party while they were both dating someone else, but a year later they met again.

> It was just so easy when we met. . . . There was no clutter . . . emotionally or relationship-wise . . . I don't think I could have appreciated him any earlier in life. I had to do this work, and it turns out he'd done similar work. And that mattered a lot.

It was an equal relationship, and he was supportive of her work and personal development.

Stepson

Her husband's son was 10 when they began dating and she, always dreaming of having children, said, "It was like a dream come true to have this kid in my life." She taught him to ride a bike, which was "most rewarding" and "a huge feeling in my heart." She played a "big role in shaping his mind, morals, values, and aspirations," although even that relationship has not been without heartache, trauma, and tragedy. Following a rupture, which included her step-son's shame, deceit, anxiety, and depression, Mercedes and her husband re-examined "everything we ever did and for a while we were in deep grief. It was like a death." They were "trying to re-establish a relationship with him," which resumed again after more than a year.

Support Group

Other significant positive and developmental experiences and relationships came from Mercedes' 12-year membership in a group of women who have been studying the Sumerian poem "The Descent of Inanna, Goddess of Heaven and Earth" reflecting on and developing themselves in the process; "It's a huge thing . . . it's been a huge journey, and we're so there for each other, and all of us together have been through some amazing personal challenges." They met five times a year "but then we socialize together and we've become each other's social circle with our spouses too. They all know each other."

Physical Being

Mercedes was very aware of how her life experiences and relationships impacted her from a bodily and physical standpoint and over time experienced panic attacks, insomnia, and depression. She learned to cope with these by engaging in strenuous physical activity—"sometimes as much as 3 hours in a day of tennis, running, and swimming" and created a "protective shell," which allowed her to withstand the "negativity, vindictiveness, and destructiveness" of difficult bosses, survive a brutal physical assault, and stand up to her father, although in other difficult times excessive eating also served as comfort and consolation.

The Essence of Mercedes

Her therapist described Mercedes as hypersensitive; she had a "radar about people that you can't always explain, but it's laser sharp in terms of my ability to read people." This ability brought with it a certain amount of anxiety, which she experienced in her body and her mind. She no longer put up with inappropriate behavior as she had in the

past and was able to confront people, even though this process was years in the making. When not fatigued or stressed, she was far more capable and no longer "the very accommodating person" she once was. She believed that being self-aware provided her with a level of self-esteem not previously experienced, and she no longer felt "intimidated by logical argument." Moreover, she believed her ability to perform in her role was also enabled by being self-aware. Nevertheless, if she felt disrespected, "it affects me, and I think I'm pretty perceptive about these things. . . . I have radar to pick that up pretty quickly. I don't let it hold me down or overtake me as much or as often," even though it still grabbed her attention and could cause stress.

More recently, when she was completing her doctoral studies, working for an extremely demanding customer, and helping to raise her stepson, she became utterly exhausted and fatigued. "I was so sleep deprived and just fatigued that I honestly could hardly keep my eyes open. . . . I was unbelievably exhausted. . . . It's been 3 years now . . . to the point of being just overwhelmed at work." Additionally, she experienced some minor physical health issues and decided to leave her job in order to take back her life, nourish herself, create some space and greater balance, have more time and energy for her family, and live more healthily. She also became aware that she needed the time and space to find out who she was now, given that her identity, value, and worth need not be completely tied to a job:

> My psychological makeup is one that is always curious about . . . what is the meaning of life and why am I here, . . . what is my purpose and how can I step into that in a way that is meaningful for me and for those around me.

In terms of mood, Mercedes described herself as "not hanging in the high notes a lot . . . but I have moments of it. I would probably say I'm a little below the happy to low

continuum." While she never contemplated suicide, she "certainly wanted to ditch my life and jump into somebody else's." She felt good "when in the mountains or on the sea, and the depression comes more from feeling overwhelmed and out of control." She saw herself as an idealist and enthusiast, although she learned to moderate that through disappointments. She was creative, goal oriented, keen to improve the human condition through service and the creation of beauty. Mercedes was a connector of people, determined and hard working.

APPENDIX L:

CR#7 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME LEE

Demographic Details

Lee is a 35-year-old married and childless Caucasian man, the second child of eight born to a poor, Catholic American couple.

Family History

Lee's maternal grandparents "lived two blocks away" and, being independent, he "was allowed to go and see" them. "Oh, I loved my Grandma. She was the best ever." She was frail and yet a "tough old bird and very, very strong woman" who had four children, Lee's mother being the youngest. She worked as a deputy sheriff and in fact was "one of the first women police officers ever." Her husband, who was Lee's step-grandfather, worked in the lumber yard and died when Lee was in high school. Every weekend, "the whole clan would always be at her house." Lee talked of the "backyard, color TV, air-conditioning, and barbecue pit" as being "all that is required" in his home state, and he loved spending time there, usually unsupervised—"from 6:00 pm you were pretty much on your own"—because she was an alcoholic. It was fun because it was just unruly and there were always adults present, drinking, talking, and smoking.

Lee also knew his paternal grandmother, who lived a little further away at the other end of town, and she was more "formal and proper." She had a daughter as well as Lee's father and was essentially "left on her own" so lived in a trailer. Her husband had been stationed in Italy during World War II and taken a mistress, and this information had come to light when they were involved in a car accident. On his return he was not welcome and went to live in Mexico, when Lee's father was 2 or 3 years old.

Immediate Family—Parents

Lee's parents planned for him to be "a critical thinker, and independent . . . not to listen to other people" or believe everything people said because they would not tell you the whole thing, and also "to know that textbooks were wrong or at least weren't always right." Moreover, he was to "listen politely to what somebody has to say" and then take his time "to figure it out and put it back together."

Lee's father was employed as "a marketing guy" in a local power company and was a reservist in a military organization, which necessitated "drill one weekend a month, 2 weeks a year." Additionally, he was attending "school at night to get his degree" while Lee was growing up. He was a carpenter, and he and Lee "were always working on the house. Always!" Lee remembered that his relationship with his father "was bad. . . . It was never a very good one, and unless we were building something, we were always fighting." He was critical of "whatever" Lee was doing, looking "at the results of my behavior and then criticizing." Lee received numerous messages from his father: "If you practiced harder . . . , if you thought more about . . . , if you set up your materials right . . . , then you would have been more effective, more efficient." Lee did not like the criticism very much and "was acutely aware" until he went to college "that I did not like my father much," even though they liked building things together.

Even when Lee was just 6 or 7, he would help his father "replace the living room floor" or build "a barbecue pit." While his father "was never abusive, he was often angry and expressed his disappointment and displeasure very directly." When he lost his temper, "he would scream and yell." Lee concluded that he was never going to be able to

please his father and yet he was driven to try and prove him wrong, whether it be in his choice of career or anything else.

On the other hand, Lee was very close to his mother, who was an artist and helped him with his homework and reading, although Lee did not think she ever "graduated high school." Lee and his mother watched TV soap operas and went grocery shopping when the game shows were on. He remembered her being a "horrible cook" and that she and his siblings would "walk to the mall . . . before the sun really came up . . . because it was air-conditioned." They would "shop all day, without buying anything, eat their lunch in the mall, and return home when the sun went down."

Immediate Family—Siblings

Lee was the "second of eight children." As the first son of four, from the age of 7 or 8 when the second son was born until the age of 16, Lee was responsible for "nighttime feedings, diaper changes—the whole shebang was on me because my parents were on the other end of the house." Lee was in effect the nighttime caregiver for three of his younger brothers. He rarely had contact with his siblings as an adult, and they were "not really all that close." Lee's siblings currently lived in states where the family had lived in the past and were in various stages of relationships, families, and children. If and when Lee was "in town," they did "get together."

Religion

Religion played a "huge part" in Lee's early life. He was "raised Catholic," and although the church they attended "was across the street from my grandmother's house," they "would never walk to church." So from age 5 Lee remembers Wednesday afternoon Mass when he was in kindergarten and Sunday 10:00 Mass with his parents. "There was

never getting out of that," and as far as Lee was concerned, "it was never an enjoyable experience." He realized fairly early on that "the only people who are allowed to get up in a Catholic Church during Mass are the ones who have screaming babies and those who are carrying the water and wine," so he "became an alter server as quickly as he could" to get away from his parents.

He no longer attended church. Indeed, by the time he was 15 or 16, he knew he would not "be following any kind of religion." So at 18 just before he left home, he was going reluctantly when a "religious crazy woman said that her son had brought a rap CD into her house and that an evil spirit had come out of the CD and beat her husband." Lee reported that "he knew he had to leave [and] . . . didn't want any part of it . . . because it was mumbo-jumbo." Given that his parents were developing him to be an "independent, critical thinker," it seemed strange to Lee that his father had "been furious" with him for suggesting that "the wafer and wine becoming the body and blood of Christ was spiritual cannibalism." He was clear that this was his father's defensiveness, "because when you were actually close to the mark people behave that defensively." Lee did, however, love his priest, with whom he had a great time. This priest thought and hoped that someday Lee would have "found his way back to the Church and become a priest."

Childhood

Quite apart from "raising" three brothers, Lee's parents "were very, very adamant that we would be raised to be independent." Lee "grew up next to a Hispanic family," and when both families had three children, his best friend was the eldest son, 2 years his senior. Being poor families, clothes "were recycled," and "the burden of watching the children was spread evenly across the board." The six children attended the same

Catholic school and "hung out together." Lee believed that his upbringing in a home "with so many kids" meant that "we were allowed to do things that other kids weren't allowed to do because . . . you couldn't keep tabs on us." This led to a kind of unacceptable, "physical, animalistic" social behavior: "We would throw each other out of windows, . . . off decks, . . . out of trees without thinking."

Lee considered himself "fairly emotional as a kid," recalling two emotional incidents that remained with him. One occurred when he was 7. Having been told to select a Christmas present, he was furious with his father, wouldn't play with the present, and cried all day when he opened it and it was not the one he selected. The second was when he was 8 or 9 and had been helping his father work on a friend's roof and heard his father say that "he was useless as usual." He was distraught and "cried for hours, absolutely hours." On both occasions his mother had spoken to him to see the error of his thinking. Not too many years after that, another incident—in which his mother said she would catch him if he jumped off the roof but ran the other way instead—made him realize that his parents wanted him "to be an independent thinker and emotionally independent," which by 13 or 14 he was. From an emotional perspective, he would check whether his emotions were valid, although that was "not allowed to affect the work." However, occasionally incidents still occurred in which Lee was "very disappointed in my own behavior," where his emotions drove him to behave unprofessionally.

Lee had no expectation of being seen as a child, particularly growing up as one of five or eight. Being heard was also problematic in such a large family, since the only way to be heard was to make the loudest noise, and that drew "the most attention, . . . good and bad."

Health

"Cholesterol runs really high in my family," and there was also a "high incidence of cancer," for which Lee carried the gene. He was diagnosed with teratoma (cancer of the thymus) when he was 20 and underwent open heart surgery at the time and he's "fine; everything's normal." He was lucky, however, since the cancer was only discovered when he was x-rayed after breaking some ribs playing rugby.

Education/Development

Being a Catholic, Lee attended a private Catholic school until the end of third grade, when with five children, his parents could no longer "afford to send all the kids to school." Lee was "bussed out of my part of town and sent to the primarily Latino part of town," where he was one of only eight "white kids in a very Hispanic school." He was "getting beat up all the time" and he and his siblings were "not allowed on recess." Instead, all eight of them would stay in class "doing things like long division and multiplication." It was around this time that Lee and his teachers became aware that he was "more advanced than I should be," and so he started taking special individual classes, so that by the time he was in the fourth grade, he was "put in an . . . advanced headstart program . . . with fifth and sixth graders."

At this stage, Lee was "beyond sixth grade . . . academically but not interpersonally," although he started receiving "feedback" about being smarter than his very smart elder sister. Lee felt very good about himself at this stage. Even when he changed to a different school system, yet again because the family moved to "an independent school district in redneck Texas," he was placed in "advanced everything" and graduated third out of a class of 174 with a GPA of 4.0 and had not "put any effort

into it." The regular moving from school to school certainly impacted Lee "and reinforced the whole independent thing."

Teachers

Lee remembered his English teacher when he was 8 and in his "last year of Catholic school" as someone of influence because she "pushed" him "in a sarcastic way," telling him he couldn't do this or was not allowed to do the other, and that simply goaded Lee into doing exactly what it was she had said he couldn't do. He acknowledged that most of his teachers "were very good to me" and that his science teacher in high school was "an awesome guy," and it was then he "realized he was going to be a scientist." Another science teacher even "invented a class" for Lee "called the lab manager, where I was doing the physics labs and setting everything up for the courses." Lee learned the importance of trust from this particular teacher as a result of all their conversations, and he also learned about "life in general." His math and English literature teachers were "all top notch," while history and civics were taught by "alpha male sports coaches" so "the courses were terrible." He was also aware that with at least a couple of English teachers, some sort of mutual sexual attraction was at work, and he "would do whatever it took to gain recognition in class." He recalled that his basketball coach was "the single most influential male figure; . . . even my father I don't think was as influential . . . teaching me about honor."

Sports

Having been a failure at baseball, Lee and his friend played football, although it was basketball that would become the mainstay of his life. Once Lee and his friend had come to the attention of the coaches, who were clearly interested in them, Lee's father

put up a basketball hoop at the front of the house and then spotlights "so we could play at night. . . . We played all the time. . . . I was just mean under the bucket." Playing basketball "was the best thing ever . . . for my relationship with everybody" and himself.

That said, while he intended to be a professional basketball player and while his "basketball career progressed, my violent streak got stronger because I was allowed to push, punch, and hit anything that came my way. . . . I was in a fight a day"—losing at first but "towards the end I couldn't be beaten. . . . I was king of the court." He described the game as "tough, but honorable." He continued to play every day and admitted that "he should have been a phenomenal player" given the amount of time and practice he put into the game. Lee was also a keen and happy runner, running several marathons and ultra-marathons.

Friends

Lee's oldest friend was a kid he knew since he was 7 or 8, and they "played baseball together," playing initially on the very "worst team ever," such that Lee stopped playing the sport. In the school moves, they lost contact with each other for a while, only to meet up again "at the end of the fifth grade . . . in a women's PE class because they screwed up my schedule." At this time they lived close to each other and took up cross-country running together. They both had independent groups of friends, although Lee's were "less influential" and his best friend was "cute": "He had a little dimple when he smiled and he combed his hair perfectly every day and he made sure he used acne cream so he always had blemish-free skin." The friends he made playing basketball were "the friends I would keep for the rest of the days." Lee and his one basketball friend "were inseparable" during their basketball days in high school.

Lee was 16 and in his junior year "and still socially awkward" when a girl found him and he was "stunned." They "dated a long time, mostly through college . . . so I had to stand up and become this socially confident guy." He began "doing my hair and wearing certain clothes . . . dressing up . . . [with] matching shoes and belts . . . because she told me . . . I looked good a certain way." This relationship had an "absolute impact on my sense of self . . . although I knew it wasn't behavior that I would continue for the long term." This girlfriend "taught me more about everything. . . . She brought me up to speed faster on things that I didn't care about but would need to know. . . . She taught me more about how to interact with others."

Lee's second best friend came from his days at the academy, although for the first year they did not communicate. He remained in touch with both of them, even though contact with his eldest friend was sometimes "once or maybe twice a year." He and his friend from the academy were in contact "all the time." The friends who "allow" or encourage Lee to be himself were those "who don't get in my way." As an adult Lee had only two people he would describe as friends, and one was his wife.

Marriage

Lee was married, and he and his wife had no plans to have children because of the high cholesterol and cancer gene that Lee carried. Additionally, his wife's "mother has frontal temporal dementia, which is like Alzheimer's but a little worse," and there was a "25% chance that it is genetic as well." He met his wife after he graduated. She was actually dating his best friend at the time and when they broke up, Lee and his wife-to-be "hung out together for about a year and then started dating."

While he was aware of the patterns and themes that existed between him and his wife, he was unable to stop or alter the unproductive behavior. He was often taken to task by his wife when he manipulated people and situations and learned to "curb that behavior fairly quickly" once she gave him feedback about her awareness and dislike of certain of his behavior. His relationship with his wife taught him a great deal about his behavior in general and increased his awareness of self, particularly any "blind spots" he acknowledged he had.

Nature

Lee was very drawn to nature and spent time in and observing nature: "I spend time in nature, I go hiking, I draw, I sit on rocks and watch trees."

Travel

Lee was a traveler and would like to consider himself a "world traveler."

Influential Experiences and/or Relationships

Two people who were a great moderating influence on Lee were a captain and his wife—a "sponsor family" from the academy—even though the wife made it clear he was not welcome, following "some bad experiences with male cadets." After Lee had helped repair their yard as a result of fallen trees caused by a hurricane, he was invited back every weekend. He kept some civilian clothes there, had his own room, had the use of a car, and was fed. They taught Lee more about being independent "while still maintaining relationships" and taught him that "performance is a methodical, systematic process," which, when combined with his father's lesson of preparation plus performance, made Lee "unstoppable."

The captain provided Lee a great deal of feedback on some behaviors, like aggression, that Lee was proud of but the captain was disappointed with. Lee also learned from the captain that he "was the common denominator" in all the failed relationships, and that "all these failures were based on" Lee's "inability to relate emotionally."

A work colleague also influenced Lee. The two of them played basketball together and discussed a wide range of topics, including "flow, phenomenology . . . spiritual introspection"; those conversations enabled Lee to learn more about himself. Another influential individual shared Lee's concern for the environment and taught him about his style when he was with other people and how it was "not going to win anybody to my side." There was one more influential friend in Lee's life—other than his wife—and from him Lee learned that "being too smart is its own punishment."

Career

Lee joined the same organization as his father and attended the organization's academy "for one reason and one reason only, to outrank my father." Likewise, he "stayed in the academy for one reason and one reason only: because my high school teacher . . . told me I wasn't cut out to be" there. He was told that "he wasn't smart enough to go" to the academy, so he proved that he was. In the beginning, Lee felt very much 'the fish out of water.' He "had no social support whatsoever . . . no idea what to expect, and I'm a lot homesick"—a feeling he did not care for, given he was a "kid who believed himself to be as independent as you can possibly be."

Lee described his first experiences at the academy. "I didn't know my head from a hole in the ground" and certainly "couldn't polish shoes and iron a shirt all on the same night." Physically, he was "one of the taller, bigger kids there" and was therefore a "very

large target" because the majority of cadets in the class were "minority and short." Moreover, being the target, he was goaded every day, all day "for the whole summer" and so "very slowly I started to withdraw again and find a place that was comfortable. I became basically invisible for 2 years." There came a time, however, when having learned "the system . . . the rules and regulations, . . . where I could iron my shirts, do my shoes, do my homework just as fast as" the others, he began to reconnect and "became absolutely mean. . . . I was the meanest person you ever met. . . . This was payback time for all the stuff I went through. . . . I was a little horrible, horrible person, motivated completely by vengeance." Additionally, he was a "rule enforcer," although nowadays he "wouldn't even care." Even now, 13 years later, "there are classmates who will still not speak to me."

Currently, Lee was dissatisfied by his work situation and was exploring a doctoral program and completing the application process. His work situation did not provide any opportunity for growth or development, and indeed he held that it was simply a "big game," especially when it came to completing self-evaluations. Indeed, he felt that he was "prostituting" himself in order to "play the system."However, as in other situations, Lee was in a job and at a rank that he was told could not be attained and was currently discussing the possibility of being promoted for a year and then being moved, because each position was for a 4-year period. He just recently secured an overseas posting, something he had wanted for years.

Lee's skills were those of an effective "group facilitator . . . manipulating a group to accomplish." He understood and was fascinated by group dynamics and acknowledged

that he used “emotional blackmail” to try and make people change their behavior from negative to positive.

Awareness

Lee came to the conclusion when he was 28 or so “that the unexamined life may not be worth living” and that being both self-aware and aware of what was taking place in the environment was essential to avoid being manipulated.

Lee meditated only once and “believes he touched nothing . . . for an instant.” Since then he had been trying to “recapture . . . the first high,” although this had evaded him, and he acknowledged that was probably because he “pushes intellectually . . . harder to get there and it’s further away. That’s so very frustrating, and the more frustrated you get the less you can.” Being aware that “who I can be is not a nice person,” he acknowledged that he chose not to look more deeply into that because “I don’t like what I see in there, and pulling it out and dealing with it is likely to lead to conflict.”

Lee held that being self-aware (and sometimes he felt he was and sometimes he felt he was not) allowed him “not to be emotionally impacted by things the same way other people are emotionally impacted by them. . . . Being self-aware allows me greater control over my own emotional state.” Moreover, being self-aware “allows me to interact more smoothly with . . . to more fully understand the environment . . . that we operate in.”

Lee journaled regularly; “I usually keep pretty good journals.”

The Essence of Lee

As a young man, Lee was tall and skinny—“I was probably the biggest kid anybody had ever seen in the fifth grade”—and this, together with a sense of not being

"good-looking" compared with his best friend, impacted his self-image, as did "being poor." However, "the day that I got my 501 buttoned fly jeans . . . was the day that I was no longer unpopular."

Lee knew "he is not a nice person . . . and thinks he's a considerate person . . . in as much as I consider what you need before I do what I do." Just as his father, he was "fanatical about efficiency," and this extended to other people. Equally, he described himself as honorable and yet judgmental and in the past would misjudge people. His "senior year was a very bad year," when his "on-court" [basketball] behavior "was starting to mimic or at least influence my off-court social behavior," and this led people to see him as being aggressive. He began to be more subtle, not only in his basketball game but also in his social life, whereby he would watch people and "trend behavior would tell me what your intentions were."

He came to believe that if people were playing or doing whatever they do well and with honor, then people should be able to move in sync with each other and he would not behave aggressively towards those individuals. After his senior year, the prospect of attending the academy without the help of his girlfriend led Lee to "revert to social awkwardness" for 2 years.

Lee never felt noticed by either of his parents. Long ago, he decided that as long as he was happy with what he was doing and achieving, that is all that mattered. It seemed he spent much of his life "proving to everybody else" that he could do what wasn't supposed to be able to be done, and therefore he considered himself to be "extremely iconoclastic." "If there is a prescribed way of doing something and there's a better way but that better way is culturally shunned, I'm doing it the better way. I don't

care about the cultural shunning part." "If you're not supposed to do it, then it's almost I really want to do it at that point." So Lee was quite definite that the fact that nobody cared or noticed what he did actually encouraged him to be uniquely himself. Lee also took a certain pride in acknowledging that he began not to notice how he felt or events that occurred when he was running or on the basketball field or in a fight.

He held the belief "that people will say whatever conventional wisdom they believe about any subject regardless of experience . . . and therefore [that] is open to interpretation and debate." This kind of behavior "drives me crazy . . . and instantly sends a negative charge in to me." In the same vein, Lee "hates TV and is distracted by it." He was also disdainful of people who allowed their lives to be ruled by or were completely taken in by what they saw and heard. He also hated the people he considered liars—advertisers and politicians—who "only tell you half the truth" because he "hates being lied to." And yet he was quite able to rationalize his lies *[little white lies]* to his wife—by believing he was answering the 'real' question and not the one she asked, or so that she would not start smoking again, or for the peace of the household.

Lee was nevertheless a considerate guy and was often helping people in need, whether by fixing their plumbing, helping someone raise money, or helping someone move.

Lee described himself as environmentally aware—concerned and even passionate about the environment, riding his bicycle to work and recycling whatever could be recycled—and as someone who was "very task/goal and performance driven." He was not a salesman, although definitely articulate, and also described himself as logical and rational, often needing to hide his true thoughts, comments, and beliefs, because they

"often turn people off." He referred to himself as "well trained from his Catholic education" rather than "bright" or "any smarter than any of my siblings." He came to the realization that he was "repulsing people" by his passionate and "preachy" stance towards the environment and was "no longer interested in having that conversation with somebody" so simply continued to do his part in recycling and collecting trash.

Lee believed that "influencing other people is very important" in order "to get what I want out of them, . . . from them, . . . or at least to mold their behavior, . . . manipulate them in a way that is more tolerable." Yet he was uncomfortable with that aspect of his behavior. He maintained that manipulating people was fun yet bad, although this could be mitigated by warning others of his intentions.

Lee was clear that when he was "not paying attention," his "behavior is shaped either by the environment . . . or by someone else," and he was determined that neither should happen. He was "constantly on my guard . . . against manipulation" and "doesn't want people interrupting." While he "punishes" people who interrupted him by making them feel "uncomfortable," he suggested his behavior was very serious, although he did acknowledge it could be viewed as "a psychological game." Whether this amounted to manipulation on his part and indeed whether such manipulation was right or wrong was a constant source of concern to him. Because his dislike of being manipulated was so strong, he "openly thwarts it" by being deliberately open and not hiding information or "creating intrigue."

Lee declared that he valued "principled behavior" in others rather than the "predictable behavior" he was aware of all around him. Yet he was constantly initiating "social experiments . . . in order to understand normative social behavior" with people

with whom he worked. He was clear that these were the adult version of the games he learned to play as a child. Moreover, he was clear that as a result of the full manipulation he experienced as a child by his parents in order to make him independent, his natural tendency was to manipulate. He did, however, question why this had not affected his siblings too.

Lee described himself as "a very pessimistic kind of person, . . . logical . . . and very critical" and also found pleasure and enjoyment in "watching other people" behave stupidly. He described his "core as efficient and effective, . . . systematic and repeatable, . . . predictable." If he was unable to be those things because of other people's behavior, he was unable to be himself, and it infuriated him since he was "task oriented and task driven." He had no understanding of or desire to simply be, "which would be the equivalent of zoning out" to Lee, and he considered himself to be an "intellectual" in the sense that he thought things through thoroughly and deeply. He described himself as being very comfortable being alone and not engaging with other people. In fact, he stated that he "cannot be myself with lots of people around," and he was referring to "the introverted me, the introspective, reserved, thoughtful, reflective person." He said this in one breath and in another described himself as "not a reflective person." However, many of his actions indicated that he was indeed self-reflective.

He found that his humor towards other people was often expressed in a manner that was taken as anger—"I catch myself saying things that sound angry that I don't intend to be angry"—and yet being angry was not his intention. As a result, he found that he was often apologizing. His humor was then somewhat sarcastic and caustic, and he admitted that this behavior had been happening "more over the past few months." In

order to minimize these situations, he recognized "the circumstances and situations that lead to those negative behaviors" and "consciously plan[ned] never to ever be in that situation again. If I'm never in a situation I can't respond poorly." He constantly tried to be "invisible": "I want to be actually completely nondescript, just sit in a bar, people walk by and no one knows that I'm there. . . . [That] would be a perfect world." This enabled him to be the scientist he enjoyed so much. So long as people don't "see him coming," he could maintain his position of control and flow, whereas if they did see him, everything he had planned could not be executed because "they will do something stupid." In the unlikely event that someone else was "playing the same game, . . . trying to occupy the same space" as Lee, "it's usually very uncomfortable."

Emotionally, Lee accepted some level of disconnect and did not believe that motivation necessitated an emotional involvement in the activity. This emotional detachment and being "a little more stand-offish" tended to hide a genuine interest in others and in not "negatively impacting your world." He was able to build and sustain very few long-term relationships and, unlike his wife, did not "take his friendships with" him when they moved around the country. Indeed, he had "no interest in maintaining long-distance relationships." Work was not a place where he could be himself.

Lee held that "it's almost against my nature to react to something . . . to react to environmental stimulus, . . . to change my behavior or attitude." As a result of this passionately held belief, he held himself quite apart from other people, particularly with reference to his self-awareness, and described it as being different from others.

Lee believed "he has a shriveled leg" when it came to spirituality and considered himself to be a naturalist rather than religious. He commented on the limits of his emotional side:

> It is the exclusive realm of me. . . . No one gets to see that. . . . I control that. . . . It's not something that gets to play. My emotional responses are . . . mine, and I have them and I deal with them.

Lee held that no one had the right to tell him "what they should and shouldn't be."

While generally portraying a strong sense of personal confidence, Lee also suffered from "self-doubt." Indeed, these interviews caused him to take stock of how much he was aware of himself, and he noted: "As I look at what I'm doing, I started to realize, well, maybe I don't *[have some self-analysis pieces]*." That said, he viewed this newfound knowledge as a "guilty pleasure":

> I don't see it as a negative thing at all. . . . It's just the more I look at it, . . . the more angles I see. I don't allow myself a lot of self-doubt and I don't get to explore it very often.

Lee considered himself to be "happier than other people," although he didn't "display my happiness . . . or my unhappiness" like other people often did.

Lee believed that he did not or could not express his real self when interacting with other people, and yet he stressed that he did not allow himself to react emotionally to this situation. However, to not be himself was "frustrating . . . and potentially lonely." He suggested that opening up his emotional side would be easier to a complete stranger, although it was more likely that were he to engage in that kind of exchange, the purpose would be "to engage in behavior I would not normally engage in and see their response."

In terms of mood, Lee described himself as "fairly level" and noted "that my mood is . . . dependent on my interaction with other people. . . . I'm in a more negative

mood the more time I spend with people. . . . It drains me." He can and did experience good or high moods, albeit rarely, and could "manipulate that in myself."

In terms of attitude, Lee held that people were "typically good," although "there are bad people out there; . . . people are sheep and they will do what the television tells them to do." He held that people "should be as efficient as they possibly can." In terms of attitude towards himself, "I believe that I'm not as smart as I think I am, that the world can't be this easy . . . to manipulate." He also was drawn to proving himself capable of achieving what other people said was impossible, and this was one of the things he didn't like about himself, since it would be possible to manipulate his behavior by telling him that "something couldn't be done . . . and it would go to the top of my to-do list." Additionally, he preferred to spend time with intellectual people. He preferred old things rather than new and disliked "broken things" around him, which he would "fix" if at all possible. Moreover, he had to be the "winner" and "dislikes Americans" for their "sense of entitlement." Lee would "rail against" anything that he considered "engineered by his parents," and yet he shared his "recycling behavior with my father": "Even if it is for different reason . . . the behavior is the same."

He was aware that his "frugality" came from his mother and his "generosity" came from both parents and was also aware that he shared with his parents an inability "to deal with family well." Lee was unable to "have an open and honest conversation with them [family members] about how I felt about having them here" and that was of concern to him. He did not need external validation, which he suggested was also true of his father. It appeared that setting and holding personal boundaries presented some

difficulties for Lee and his parents. There were very few people who would describe Lee as “having an authentic relationship with them.”

Lee indicated that his wife would describe him as “cocky . . . arrogant . . . and overprotective.” She would also describe him as “generous with my time.” A colleague and friend who knew him relatively well would describe Lee as “curious and quick to analyze and spiritually stunted.”

APPENDIX M:

CR#8 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME JOHN

Demographic Details

John is a 50-year-old Caucasian monk born in the U.K. of English parents. His mother died when he was 7, so he was raised by his maternal grandmother and father, who died 5 years ago. He has two sisters, both elder; one lives in the U.K. and the other in Canada. He now travels widely and lives in the United States.

Family History

John's maternal grandfather "was a very hands-off parent . . . never concerning himself with the academic side . . . or homework of his kids." He was very aloof from the day-to-day affairs of the family and would never go on vacation with them; homework and vacations were his wife's domain. Even though John was raised by his maternal grandmother after his mother died, John made no mention of her apart from the fact that his "relationship with her was purely function," and he did not "remember ever embracing her, or expressing love towards her in any way." He described her as "very dutiful":

> [She was someone] who did her best to look after the family when my mother died, although she didn't talk about life at all (which was perhaps not surprising for people in those days). She made an acceptable apple pie, was of slim figure, even in old age, wore modest clothing, and had a rather colorless personality.

John never met his paternal grandparents. All he knew was that his paternal grandmother was French and worked as a cook on an estate. She fell in love with and married the head gardener from the estate, who was English, and they returned to England.

Immediate Family—Parents

John recalled "a troubled family atmosphere" particularly after his mother died, since "that's when everything started to fall apart. . . . I think she was the glue that kept the family together, . . . protecting her daughters from her husband." He described his father as having "trouble with women." It seemed he never made "the effort to understand his daughters' needs" as they grew up and started having boyfriends, so "it became very tense in the household, with very strong verbal arguments," particularly between his father and younger sister—"screaming matches . . . and my father chasing her through the house." John "didn't like the fact that my father was so verbally abusive" towards his sister and so rejected him also, spurning any attempts his father made at affection.

Displays of affection were not common in the family and neither was conversation. "I wasn't able to sit down in those early days with my father and just discuss life." John never felt his father was trying to understand him, although he acknowledged now that the freedom and independence allowed by his father were very important. Without a good father/parenting role model himself, his father "was uncertain as to how to conduct himself" and of course was "thrown into the position when his wife died." He disowned John for a time, when he "completely changed his lifestyle to become a monk," although "there was a rapprochement . . . over time":

> [There was] a reconciliation between the two of us and some very touching moments, and he changed. . . . He changed his whole worldview . . . dramatically towards the end of his life . . . when having given his life to the company for whom he worked, he was unceremoniously and insensitively given the sack. . . . He became so disillusioned . . . that he completely shifted . . . [and realized that John] was on the right path and he was on the wrong path . . . which had led to such bitterness.

John recalled his father's death as a very significant moment. He and his two sisters were able to be by their father's bedside for the last 20 minutes of his life following a stroke, and John noticed a

> softening in the eyes and then he just allowed himself to pass away. There was so much peace, and all we could do was meditate. . . . The atmosphere in the room was somehow sanctified . . . and it felt more like a birth than a death.

Moreover, John felt his father's spirit come to "say goodbye" as he was back at home in the shower a short time after that experience. At his father's funeral (which John arranged and at which he spoke), he learned that there were in fact similarities between them, and while he was "dysfunctional in some respects . . . he was also wise and astute about life." John still "dialogues with him internally" and "has not nor will he disassociate" himself "from the imprint" of his father, whom he also described as "very gregarious and sociable . . . always entertaining."

John had no personal memories of his mother. His only knowledge came from his sisters, who described her as "a very beautiful woman. . . . Her temperament was very kindly, very loving . . . very compassionate, very considerate, and very dutiful," although she was "passive" and unable to "protect her children from and stand up to her authoritarian husband." She was a devout Catholic, attending church every Sunday, an artist and a homemaker. She died of cancer in her 40s, and John had "a vivid image of her lying on the sofa in the front room writhing in pain" and having to stay with neighbors "during her last pain-filled days," which he heard later were shortened with a lethal injection. However, he still had "pride . . . in what she was . . . because so many people spoke so highly about her. By all accounts she was a very noble person." John stated: "It's affirmative for me to know that I issued from a woman who had noble qualities." As

with his father, John would not disassociate himself from the imprint of his mother even though he was aware of some of her negative qualities within himself.

Immediate Family—Siblings

John's sisters were 6 years and 12 years older than him. He had this sense that "they felt they had to protect me somehow," although he did not have "strong memories bonding" with either of them. He recalled one "rough and tumble fight" with his younger sister and "cutting his forehead on an open drawer."

Extended Family

John remembered two uncles. One died when John was 12 or so. He was in the Navy, and John was "really fascinated by his stories" of traveling and found him to be exotic. Another uncle, his father's younger brother, provided insightful information concerning John's father at his funeral; he died recently. However, John enjoyed his company and learned "a sense of decency from him. . . . He was such a gentleman." John "would like to see mirrored" in himself some of these qualities. There were some resentment and tensions between John's father and his younger brother over educational and inheritance issues. This particular uncle had a "stereotypically sweet housewife. . . . I mean she wasn't the one with whom one had conversation. . . . She would bring the tea and biscuits; . . . that's the way it was."

John had no recollection of there being any cousins to play with on his maternal grandmother's side, although "there might have been some."

Childhood

He was "raised in a village . . . and was always out and about with my friends . . . either in the fields at the back of our house" or in a local forest. "Being in nature" was a fundamental part of life, and he "didn't separate himself from nature," which has always been "a very strong part of my life . . . and a place where I would go in order to find myself."

John remembered a number of incidents when he stole from friends or shops and believed these impacted him as a child and young man. While he was never caught or found out, he "realized that that's not good behavior" because he felt "terrible and bad." Even though having been raised a Catholic he knew that he shouldn't steal, it was his conscience that helped him understand "why I shouldn't do this." John believed that his inherited "good-willed nature" had an impact on him; he was always told that he "was a very sweet little boy and no trouble."

Much later, John remembered while he was in India "visiting certain families" and seeing "how they would interact together as a happy family unit." Although he accepted that he may have been idealizing these situations, he wondered what it would have been like had his family been a place with "emotional outlets" and where "daily sharing . . . and learning about life was encouraged."

Health

John experienced some major health issues in his life, the first of which happened almost at the moment of his birth. His arrival was "somewhat unexpected," and almost immediately he slipped out of the hands of the person holding him onto the floor. This necessitated surgical procedures as a teenager to correct "in-growing ribs."

He also had a congenital kidney problem, which became apparent from about 8 or 9 years of age, "which has really affected me, especially in my earlier days." He suffered "so much pain," and there was no appropriate medication. He never missed school but had to stop whatever he was doing, "lie still and rest." He underwent surgery to correct the problem with one kidney when he was 9 and the other when he was 29. However, even that was not without its trauma. The second operation was performed free of charge in a Christian hospital because John, as a monk, had no health insurance. The surgeon made a mistake and left on vacation immediately after the operation. He had to return to rectify the problem. John believed that while these traumas must have "impacted his life on a physiological level," he "let them go, and no longer feels traumatized by them . . . and neither is the memory of them traumatic."

Education/Development

John "didn't have good experiences at school." He believed it made him "aware that I don't have to buy into the established way that everything is done in life" and considered himself "a bit of a rebel at school." He realized early on that he "had responsibility" for himself and did not "have to follow the structured society around me." At one stage he was threatened with expulsion because he flouted school rules, but in the end he cut his hair, wore the right color socks, and stayed!

School was not a place John could express his spirituality. He recalled that "nothing happened that seemed to me to be enabling me as a human being. . . . It was very academic and we weren't talking about life." That said, John did become involved in a social outreach project, which necessitated visiting an old, wheelchair-bound lady on a weekly basis. He remembered that his father also encouraged this activity.

> I loved the impact I would have on her. . . . Her eyes would light up when I would walk in, so that is definitely a part of who I am. And I think it's fundamental to any human being, I mean to light up the others' eyes in whatever way possible.

John was clear that his school days did not contain much in the way of positives, certainly related to teachers. He remembered one French teacher who had a negative impact on him, because "he was so disconnected. . . . He treated us as if we were just machines that would swallow the information he was giving us." Moreover, he was not assertive, and his classroom management was poor. The students gave him a hard time. However, while they did not like the German teacher either, he was aggressive and they "daren't do anything against him." If they were caught, he would punish them physically in a way "these days that would be completely outlawed."

John remembered when he was 16 sitting

> on the top of a double-decker bus, looking out of the window . . . at this mechanistic life and thinking there's got to be something more than this. It seemed to be so unsatisfying, so banal. . . . I didn't come to this planet just be an automaton. . . . There was this longing.

So following school he worked for a brief spell in a factory, which was "tortuous," to earn money for his journey to India. He took a meditation course where the Dalai Lama was based, but "didn't quite like it and so returned to the U.K.," where he went to university.

While at university, John "found this group, and as soon as I walked into their place—they were doing chanting—I thought, 'I've come home.'" They also immediately saw John "'as one of their own." He became very involved in the group: "I started a yoga class on campus; we started a small vegetarian restaurant; . . . volunteered in a shelter we

had for homeless women" and felt his life was "blossoming" and he was "able to express myself in so many different ways."

Unfortunately, university was another place where John was not comfortable with the "status quo." Although he loved the deep, meaningful conversational tutorials with his professors, he was disappointed with the other students, who just wanted to get the grades, rather than enter into the conversation. He wasn't engaged and university was not engaging.

Then he had the opportunity to participate in "yoga meditation training" in Germany, enabling him "to get more deeply immersed in the spiritual life." John believed that there was something innate within him that was seeking a more spiritual lifestyle, and at last the "strong yearning, which was within me probably from birth . . . finally now was getting expressed." He completed the first year of university and then left.

John later completed his first degree and planned to begin a master's degree. He would ultimately "like to have a PhD, which would help teaching a lot."

Friends

John believed himself to "make friends fairly easily" and yet recalled only one special friend with whom he "maintained a relationship throughout my life." They remained in touch today with an unspoken bond, in spite of having "quite different lifestyles." The bond was "never really verbalized," although there was "this sort of loyalty to maintaining the friendship across time." His memories of childhood friends were a collection of "people around me . . . two camps and a treehouse." He also recalled a group of friends who "would go to a local pub"; however, John was clearly more interested in "a meaningful friendship" rather than "a convenient friendship."

Religion

John's memory of childhood religion was going to church every Sunday with his mother and being disappointed that "people need to dress up and just put on such a show when they go to church. What happens after church . . . between Sundays?" Although he was in awe of and appreciative of the mysticism of the church, he "quickly gave up on adopting Catholicism" as his personal faith.

Drugs

John's father had found

> hash in the house at one time and he basically said, "Well, if you're going to kill yourself on drugs, go ahead and do it," but there was no discussion, no "Why do you take drugs?"—I mean: "Why? . . . what's going on?"

John was happy that he had his hash and alcohol phase in his mid teens. He realized that "this is definitely not for the long term; otherwise, my brain cells are going to be fried," and he had a "built-in safety mechanism to stop." He was unsure whether his unfulfilling childhood, nonexistent family life, or lack of engagement at school influenced his thinking "that there must be something better" and therefore impacted this phase of his life.

However, he also experimented with LSD during his teens, which he took "to find another way of living . . . believing that the spiritual life was another plane of consciousness that translated into another way of living in society." Most of these experiments took place "in nature," and he was certain that LSD "definitely transformed my consciousness" and provided "an awareness that there is a different way of looking at the world."

Traveler

John's family was a family of travelers, and John described "meaningful friendship" as a meeting of fellow travelers who shared their stores with each other and in the process enabled "the traveler to travel in a more enjoyable way, a safer way, a more enriched way." John appreciated that his father encouraged his traveling to India. On his first visit there he "saw the eyes of these monks living in the monasteries perched on the mountains of this rather stark landscape" and thought, "I want to be like these people." "Their eyes were sparkling. . . . It was joy, it was life"—and so different from that scene when he was sitting on top of the bus back in the U.K.

John traveled extensively to 64 countries "as a part of the international relief and development work" he did and was "blessed to meet people I wouldn't normally come into contact with . . . from presidents to people dying with AIDS to Mother Teresa." He heard Mother Teresa speak in Japan and later worked for her to pay off a fine imposed when he was caught smuggling electronic goods into India to make money for the training center where he worked.

Influential Experiences and/or Relationships

Once alighted onto his current path, John talked of the influence of the "guru": "That was huge. . . . I mean that influence upon me was major." In fact, the influences upon him after he had completed his standard education "were far more influential upon me than those early days [at school]."

During his time in France, John was "in a very deep loving relationship," and his teaching was going well. However, his "girlfriend was horrified" at his decision to become a monk and leaving "was tough; . . . it was very difficult." He acknowledged that

his actions caused pain to another, which he would not consciously choose to do; however, he fully believed that his decision was in his and other people's best interests. He also acknowledged that "some unfinished business remains;" that he wanted and tried to check that "she's still okay" although he had been unable to trace her.

His month working with Mother Teresa was "another thing that defined me . . . because I was very, very touched by the sisters." He talked of hearing her speak in Japan about love when all the people in the audience had "tears rolling down their cheeks":

> I thought, my goodness, the power of love. . . . I felt that love was coursing through her blood vessels. . . . She was already very old by then and should have been dead by then . . . but love kept her alive. . . . I can feel it now. . . . It was like an explosion . . . coming in waves. . . . I was overwhelmed . . . and so I think the answer to all this is love. . . . If one is coming from a place of love, nothing matters . . . so then there is no fear.

John lived through many traumatic experiences—such as being thrown in jail and escaping, being threatened with death and having a gun held at his head, and being almost blown up when a bomb exploded in an airport in India—when he believed his life was saved because he was able to distinguish between the authentic inner voice and the deceptive inner voice and act on what he heard from the authentic inner voice telling him to move to a different place.

John was aware that because he chose a different path, he sometimes "isolates himself" from people and even "pulls back from certain relationships" even though he strongly believes in relationships and "sharing of the beauty in the human spirit." It is through this sharing "that we help each other grow," and he was sometimes disappointed that he found so few people with whom he could connect and have this kind of relationship.

Career

John's career pretty much started with his introduction to the international organization he joined. Following his training in Germany, he went to France and taught English as a second language "to support myself" while he ran a center for 4 years. At this stage he was not a monk. However, during this time in France, he had a "very powerful experience that . . . pushed me into the path of the monk." He experienced a spiritual charge that "was too strong for my being to bear. And I just knew . . . something clicked and I just knew I had to go and become a monk."

After returning to India and then spending a year in Nepal, John was "mortified with his first assignment," which was in India. However, "seeing the guru two or three times a day" meant John "really learned a lot" about *love*. He described the guru as a fellow with

> no personal interest at all. . . . He just existed out of love in order to play his part in transforming the planet for the better. . . . One doesn't come across people like that every day. So I fell in love. . . . I mean, I think he was the father I didn't have; he was the family I didn't have.

John accepted that nothing is perfect, yet he believed that it was during this time his "evolution as a human being started to accelerate."

John spent 4 years in India and was then assigned to run a project in rural West Bengal for farmers. It was during this assignment that John became embroiled in the political turbulence that existed in the country at the time. After that assignment, he began his current fundraising position. Although he was singularly unsuccessful at raising money in the U.K., he was successful in America, where he had become a permanent resident. In addition to the fundraising, he taught yoga and meditation. His work as an

international coordinator was not without its frustrations, mostly due to dishonesty in communications from decision-makers.

Having been in his current role for more than two decades, John was a little concerned that "his identity could be linked to that role," which would "be an impediment," allowing him to hide behind the mask and "define his relationships." That said, he never regretted becoming a monk, although he had begun to rethink where he needed to be and what he needed to be doing.

Name

John answered to a number of different names. The first was the name he was given at birth, which he changed by deed-poll in the U.K. in order to return to India following his "blacklisting" there. He hadn't liked his family name in any case and "was really thoughtful and reflective" about choosing two names that were meaningful and that married his Catholic tradition and the Eastern tradition he had chosen to follow, "because the name is very, very important." Moreover, he also had a spiritual name given to him by his guru, "which was kind of an honor," and a "clan" name also given by his guru.

Dreams

John mentioned one particularly significant dream, which he found fascinating. The dream was about a girlfriend when he was still in high school.

> She came through my window and basically took me away. So I was panicking because I wanted to get me back, . . . so that part of me that was still lingering chased after her in the dream, rather like a chase through the sky.

The following day they met.

> She said something really weird happened last night. I just woke bolt upright at 2:00 in the morning and started to write poetry. And she doesn't write poetry; I was the one who wrote.

When they looked at the poetry, "the images were a little darker" than John's images, "but it was just the way I would write . . . so there was some sort of transmigration of soul or something happened." While his girlfriend "couldn't handle it at all," John found it fascinating and exciting and realized "that everything isn't as we see it."

Meditation—Awareness

For John, the experience of meditation was very important because it set him "on the path" that he was still on. He described it "as being taught something . . . secrets, if you will, that would assist me in becoming more aware as a human being, more aware of my place in the universe." His expectations were fulfilled and his "sense of awe justified" since "it has been seminal in helping me come to . . . a better understanding of myself." However, he maintained that even after 30 years of meditative practice, "he doesn't have a clue what he is . . . at anything more than a superficial level of awareness." This superficial awareness gave him some understanding:

> As a sentient human being . . . I have been endowed with the faculty of cognition, intuition, a limited capability of understanding this universe and my place within it. I have a consciousness that touches other entities and other people's consciousness and is aware of the function of a human being in society, which gives me a certain identity.

However, he suggested that all that "is nothing compared to what I truly am, if I could go to my essence." John held that unless we are able to answer the question, *what is all this about?* "we will not be able to understand who we are or what we are or why we are . . . except at a very superficial level." For John, meditation was a process, which

by going “deeper inside . . . one finds more connections with others outside.” And when he was in a more “meditative state of mind, which is a more loving state of mind,” then his “interactions with others are far more sacred . . . and an emotional balance takes place,” putting things in a much larger perspective.

John believed that personal experience is so much more powerful than what might be contained “in a zillion books.” It can be a powerful learning and teaching gift, and a source of wisdom, such that “it is both enabling one’s self-awareness and the communications and interactions one has with others.”

Although John would like to meditate more than he does—which is far less than he did when in training to be a monk—he described “the state of mind achieved through constant regular practice of meditation as very sweet” and portrayed “good meditation” as “incredibly powerful” and as having “no craving; . . . one is simply content to be in that space. Then there is a sense of bright, sharp illuminating light and a sense of compassion with oneself, with life, and with others.” He also acknowledged that meditation “is definitely a method” for increasing self-awareness and that “not everyone can face being so close to him or herself.”

The Essence of John

John had a personal belief “that one should try to expand the periphery of the positive” rather than focus on one’s shadow side, although he reflected and analyzed himself to identify these weaknesses. While he acknowledged this type of exploration “is a necessary part of one’s development,” he chose not to dwell too much on it. He described himself as very independent and considered that his family life may have contributed to him becoming “even more independent.”

The experience of his father's death "endorsed a lot of my belief . . . not to identify with the material, but to identify with the spiritual . . . and just to heighten the awareness of that within oneself which is everlasting."

John recognized and acknowledged that he didn't always have the courage "to do what my heart is telling me to do" and wondered "how and where one finds that balance between duty and freedom . . . in trying to express one's full self." He also acknowledged that "awareness of what he has to offer, the positive feedback he receives from people, his own drive (will), and the ideology" of the organization he joined have all contributed to him feeling encouraged to be more himself. He accepted "that there are other things I should be doing in order to externalize" my "inner gifts."

John also acknowledged that he did "not like confrontation," even though his life had its fair share of conflict and confrontation, and accepted that "in order to be a part of systemic change in the world" he would have "to overcome" his "nature."

As he aged, John was aware that his memory was "not as sharp as it used to be," and in spite of doing and teaching yoga regularly, his "joints aren't as healthy as they used to be." Moreover, he was beginning to realize "his fallibility" and a part of him was "getting older, more frail, and becoming weaker." This posed an interesting dilemma for John, since "so much of his identity is around being healthy, able-bodied, able-minded, and being able to perform at a peak level" and yet he did not "like weakness . . . or anything that is indicative of his fallibility and weakness."

John held:

> We are wired to survive . . . so we should be thankful for that so that when life throws the challenge at us, we can use that will to survive in a very positive way . . . in order to surmount the challenge, gaining strength in the process and hopefully a bit more wisdom about ourselves.

While it was clear that John touched many lives, he was keen to be a part of a revolutionary change: "something really different, not something that's the same but in different clothing. Something that is really different, has a different mentality, and yet the spiritual socialism propounded by the guru has never really taken off." However, John "was never able to translate that into action." And he was hard on himself when he didn't achieve what he believed he should be achieving.

John also acknowledged the difficulties in being "an impartial observer of oneself":

> While one can have a certain self-awareness . . . there are some places that one doesn't go for whatever reason. . . . But those places become knots and then they become some sort of impediment in a way to one's overall evolution.

Being unable to disassociate himself from his current role was a case in point.

John described his mood as "positive, upbeat, and hopeful"—quite different from his "gloomy" mood when he was younger. He acknowledged that his "mood is somewhat affected by the depth" of his meditation. Moreover, the doctrine and beliefs he followed stressed "the positive" and "always to look on the bright side."

The preferences he chose to adopt in his life affected his attitude, and he clearly saw a distinction between the "instinctive and the spiritual" and that his attitude to life "can shift if the external circumstances aren't as I would like them." John believed he was different "from what he would have been" had he not chosen to follow a meditative path or been influenced by the beliefs of his calling. Indeed, he clearly wanted "to have been indoctrinated and influenced" by these beliefs.

His natural tendency or disposition "was to be a seeker of spiritual truth, which has driven me to this particular path of inner search," although he admitted it was

difficult to know where this originated. He stated: “The most important part of my life’s objective is to touch the truthful core of personality.” He believed in karma and reincarnation.

Finally, in terms of his temperament, John credited his father for his down-to-earth common sense, sociability, and “neatness” on the positive side and “being judgmental, angry when hurt” on the negative side. He credited his mother for “innate goodness and passivity.” He believed that others would describe him as “very kind, very generous, very thoughtful, very considerate, very sacrificing and creative.”

APPENDIX N:

CR#9 INDIVIDUAL DEPICTION—CODE NAME JENNY

Demographic Details

Jenny is a 57-year-old Caucasian woman, born in the Far East, the second daughter to English parents. Twice married with no biological children, she has one 27-year-old stepdaughter. She has been a self-employed organization consultant for 25 years.

Family History

Jenny's maternal grandparents died before she was born in fairly tragic circumstances. Jenny's mother was the third child and only daughter born to a Jewish mother and gentile father. Because they had chosen to marry outside their faiths, each, and particularly her grandfather, were ostracized by their families. The grandmother was diagnosed with uterine cancer when her only daughter (Jenny's mother) was 6 years old; she survived for another 10 years, during which time Jenny's mother effectively took over the mother role, looking after her invalid mother, her father, and three brothers. Her father died 4 months after her mother from cirrhosis of the liver.

Jenny's paternal grandfather died before she was born, so she only knew her paternal grandmother. Jenny and her sister stayed with this grandmother in northern England regularly for part of their school holidays, particularly at Christmas time, when their parents lived abroad. When Jenny's parents returned to live in the U.K., "Granny" came and stayed for weeks at a time. She had three boys, Jenny's father being the youngest, and apparently insisted on her husband selling the family building contractor business so that there would be no family feuding over ownership, as had been the case with her husband's family. She was a spry old lady, living independently for many years,

in fairly close proximity to her two elder sons and their families, until she died in 1971, when Jenny was 21. Jenny remembered her quite distinctly using two different voices when she spoke. There was the "posh" voice when she was speaking to people she considered important or who mattered and her natural voice which she used in her own home, with friends and family. "She was kind and generous but didn't have a lot of money. I also think that looking after two teenage girls became a bit much for her."

Family—Parents

Jenny's parents married in 1942 when they were 22 and 23, and her father immediately went to East Africa for the war effort. He stayed for 5 years and so essentially her mother continued in her own independent life. She worked in a local bank and was "very good with figures all her life." On his return at the end of the war, she applied for a job on his behalf in the Far East, working for the Colonial Service. She was successful in securing this post and with a young daughter they left England and started a new life in the tropics. Their second daughter—Jenny—was a breech birth in a very unsophisticated hospital, although fortunately capable and knowledgeable Australian doctors were in attendance.

They lived the good life: "partying and entertaining, playing and working for 2½ years and then having a 6-month holiday when they usually returned to England to visit family." They were supported by Chinese, Malayan, and Indian "servants" who cooked, cleaned, and ultimately took over the child care until both daughters were sent to boarding school in England, since the only education available—provided by the Masonic school—was very basic and only to a certain level.

Jenny had very fond memories of spending time in the evenings with her 'amah' and the families when her parents were out partying and her sister was back at school. Having a good ear, and spending so much time with her amahs, Jenny was able to speak a little Chinese and more Malay before she spoke much English.

Jenny remembered her father as a "very arrogant and angry man." Although he often held in his anger, in the belief that it would not be noticed, "he would take his anger out on me." He had wanted to go to university to study journalism and his parents refused, so he became a quasi-accountant and initially worked in a bank, "which is where he met my mother." Jenny believed that to be part of the reason for his often uncontrolled anger and remembered being physically punished. She also described two particular incidents; in one, "he beat me with his leather army belt so many times that my mother "thought he would kill me." The other occasion occurred when Jenny was much older: "He virtually strangled me because I was rude to my mother." Jenny believed that this type of physical violence, which today would be classified as abuse, was "highly significant and had a great impact on my psyche."

However, she also remembered him as "a clever and confident man":

> Good with words, good with his hands, often humorous and childlike, very sociable and a good singer, often insecure and rather chauvinistic, not highly ambitious, and yet honorable in his dealings with others and charitable to those less fortunate than himself.

Jenny remembered the first time he showed any emotion was when she was 16 and her mother had suffered a "mental breakdown or hysteria following a hysterectomy as the treatment for uterine cancer." However, he did mellow once he retired. He built his own house and spent his days tending his vegetables and flowers, reading, completing crossword puzzles, and attending to necessary DIY projects. Jenny recalled that she was

in her mid-30s before she was able to have a "grown-up discussion" with him—meaning being able to disagree with him—although even that consisted of more impatience with his unacceptable behavior than reasoned conversation.

In the 8 years before he died, Jenny's father suffered some major medical problems. During a routine surgical intervention for an enlarged prostate, a colostomy was necessary to repair damage caused by unattended diverticulitis. The operation was successfully reversed some 9 months later, although prostate cancer developed and once again, left unattended, resulted in bone metastases. He died 18 days after his wife in 1993, having been in and out of the hospital several times. Before they died, the couple had recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Jenny's mother, on the other hand, was "extremely bright, excellent with figures, an excellent organizer, cook, and entertainer. Yet she lacked self-confidence all her life and always interpreted disagreement as a negative personal attack and so often became defensive." She was very smart and had great intuition but never learned the most appropriate or sensitive way to communicate her thoughts. This resulted in people "experiencing her as outspoken and even blunt," and many would say she was less easy to get along with than her husband. Jenny concluded that she [her mother] felt her whole life was about "being a wife and mother and never really understood who she was in her own right."

Jenny did not have a particularly good relationship with her mother during her childhood. She did not recall spending much time with her and once she turned 8, Jenny was back in England and was looked after by teachers and matrons. When her parents returned to England, "she tried to be a mother to me, but by that time I was nearly 13 and

thought I was grown up, and did not want to be mothered . . . so I think I rather rejected her, looking back."

Her mother was a long-time smoker and had her fair share of illness: bronchitis, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and the relatively early onset of dementia. Jenny recalled thinking that her mother "was thinking herself into old age from her early 60s." She died the day before her 73rd birthday from a stroke. Fortunately, Jenny "was with her and had given her a foot massage the night before she died." Even that memory had a touch of sadness—since, as was her wont, "she [my mother] turned her head away from me when I went to kiss her goodnight." Moreover, she was never good at hugging, and Jenny recalled her mother stiffening whenever Jenny hugged her.

Immediate Family—Sibling

Jenny's relationship with her one and only sibling, a sister 3 years her senior, was never very close. By the time Jenny was 5, her sister was back in England at school, and when Jenny went back to England, they were at different schools. "I think we attended the same school for possibly 2 years at most, although we lived together for a few years when Mum and Dad returned to England."

Jenny remembered her and her sister as being very different, "even from an early age and not liking her very much" for reasons that were no longer clear. More recently her sister also expressed her childhood dislike for Jenny. Her sister married when Jenny was in her late teens and went to live abroad, during which time Jenny visited her twice for an extended holiday. She remembered these as brief times when their relationship was at its best. Her sister worked as a school secretary and had three children; two lived in South Africa and the other in America.

Jenny's sister lived with Jenny when she returned to England following her divorce after 23 years before purchasing her own home and marrying for the second time. The relationship was generally fraught—caused by different expectations, lack of contact that made each unknown to the other, lack of trust, and often a shared sense of rejection and judgment. Jenny's sister was in the process of returning to live abroad, although with a child and granddaughter in the United States, there may be more opportunities for contact. However, their relationship has improved considerably over the last 2 years and through more regular communication and sensitivity, both recognize each other's strengths and are now engaged in a very supportive relationship.

Extended Family

Although Jenny's mother had three married brothers and her father had two married brothers, these relatives and their children were relatively unknown to Jenny. She had seven cousins with whom she had very irregular contact as a child and had little if any contact now. She did, however, remember times of great fun, joy, and happiness while staying with an aunt's sister and her husband during long school holidays. "One holiday lasted three weeks longer than usual because the pipes had frozen up at school. We had such fun tobogganing and they even borrowed a donkey for me to ride." She continued that contact—visiting regularly when the aunt was alive and after her death spending time with the uncle until Jenny moved to live in the U.S.

Religion

Religion did not play a large part in Jenny's life. She was raised Protestant and had to attend church—sometimes twice on Sundays—while she was at boarding school. However, once she left and started attending a day school in the city where her parents

eventually moved, none of the family worshiped at church "apart from high days and holidays." Jenny came to see "organized religion as one of the biggest opportunities for evil in our modern society" and struggled to "see any good that has come from it, much preferring to define herself as a spiritual than anything else." She was more drawn to the beliefs of the Buddhist faith as far as she knew them.

Childhood

Jenny recalled her childhood in the Far East as idyllic. It was exciting, different, and she experienced different countries worldwide and air and sea travel many times from age 2. Equally, in spite of being apart from her parents for 2 years at a time on occasion, certainly her days at boarding school were not unpleasant. She enjoyed traveling without adults halfway across the world. To the extent that the place where she was born and spent her early childhood was relatively unknown, it provided a sense of the exotic and provided different experiences, which led to a feeling of being "special." However, in spite of the relatively pleasant and enjoyable times at boarding school,

> I learned to be independent, hide my feelings, hide my fears, and grow up pretty quickly. I learned that I was unlovable and "bad," and I learned that in order to be liked I had to be what people wanted me to be, to agree with people, and to avoid conflict by keeping my mouth shut.

She also recalled a very powerful parental message that she carried with her, that "little girls should be seen and not heard." She believed that this affected her all her life and still did, although to a lesser extent than in her 20s and 30s. There were times when "I remained quiet, in spite of having thoughts and feelings" about the situations in which she found herself. She continued to work to find her voice today. To that extent, she

remembered her childhood as being quite short, since she was forced to grow up and become independent at a very early age.

She remembered being sexually assaulted by the son of her parents' Chinese cook when she was 5 or 6, although was not aware of feeling traumatized by the experience. In fact, the beatings from her father had a much more significant impact on her life, so far as she was aware.

Health

As a child, Jenny suffered from poliomyelitis and had to spend several days in the hospital and several weeks recovering using treatment and medication available only from America. Until her early 20s, fatigue and cold caused discomfort; however, there was no lasting negative effect. Apart from usual childhood ailments, she was relatively healthy, apart from "inheriting her mother's problem feet" and being susceptible to weight gain all her life. She described herself as mildly 'obsessive/compulsive' when it came to food, and so she made "special efforts to maintain a healthy weight," even changing her lifestyle to one of veganism in the last year. Jenny maintained that her skeleton was not her best feature and suffered from time to time with trapped nerves and muscle spasms and used acupuncture and traction more than once to ease the pain and discomfort when this occurred.

Education/Development

Jenny did not have particularly negative or positive memories of her first school apart from being able to walk to and from school and having lots of friends to play with. However, she had vivid memories of both boarding schools she attended in the U.K. Both schools were headed by "elderly spinsters who always seemed old" to Jenny. Jenny

remembered being very homesick at the first preparatory school, at least for the first 3 weeks, because after a week or two (which might have been a day or two) the headmistress gave her a rabbit. Many children had pets, and Jenny was no different; she and her sister owned rabbits and guinea pigs. The education at both these schools was aimed at "turning out young ladies" rather than high academic achievers. "So we had to be well-rounded girls and good at sewing, cooking, writing, singing—all the subjects which would enable us to find nice [rich] young men."

The only science taught was biology, and indeed Jenny did not come across physics or chemistry until she was 14 at the final school she attended. So there was never any plan or hope that she would be a scientist. Indeed, she found both those subjects difficult and was far more in tune with the arts and languages, although German and French were the only options. This was the first day school she had attended since she was 8, and although again she had many friends, she was unaware of being totally happy there. She was clearly still dealing with the sense of "unlovableness" that resulted from being sent away to boarding school in the first place. It was here that her "eating for comfort" began, and she ballooned to over 170 pounds.

Jenny left school with six subjects at Ordinary Level, and since her career options were limited to nursing or secretarial, she attended a secretarial college for four semesters and then began working. After a break of about 2 or 3 years, she continued with her studies in personnel management and training and gained the equivalent of a first degree in the subject. Jenny then took a break from formal academic studying for 5 or 6 years, although during this time she continued to develop herself in a number of nonacademic and nonqualification topics, and then began a master's program in management learning

at one of the northern universities in the U.K. in 1983. On the successful completion of this program, she again undertook training and development of a nonacademic nature until 1997, when she began a 4-year master's degree program in Gestalt psychotherapy.

While it was her intention when she completed her first master's program to begin work on her doctorate, circumstances did not allow Jenny to follow this route. Rather, she busied herself with building a business and making money. In effect, she would say that "she lost her way and her soul at that point." It was with great surprise that an advertisement for a doctoral program in the U.S. "jumped out" at her. Jenny described herself as a lifelong learner, and has already decided to pursue additional learning opportunities after completing her doctoral program.

Teachers

Generally, the teachers in both boarding schools and her senior day school were remembered with fondness. Jenny did not recall specific experiences or relationships with a particular teacher that had a significant impact on her either positively or negatively. She was told that in kindergarten she was excellent at math, but the math teacher took a dislike to her and the feeling was apparently mutual, such that she never enjoyed or felt comfortable with figures since. The teachers who seemed to have the greatest impact on Jenny were those consultants with whom she began to work as a trainer in her late 20s and those involved in her Gestalt training, including her therapist.

Friends

Jenny always made friends easily and maintained relationships with them for the long term. Jenny recalled how she was still in regular communication with at least four of her preparatory school friends, almost 50 years later, and how for her 50th birthday she

"invited 200 people to an open-house party over the weekend." While not everyone showed up, well over 100 attended. Friends were always important to Jenny, and she maintained regular contact with many friends who live all over the world.

Marriage

Jenny married for the first time when she was 21 to a man 12 years her senior. She described herself at that time as being "21 going on 16" and not really knowing who she was and in truth not being intentional about the marriage, rather "just going along with the trend." Another parental message she remembered and acted upon had been "how important it is to get that ring on the fourth finger of your left hand . . . and make sure he's rich." The marriage lasted for 3 years, and she decided not to join her husband when he emigrated to Canada. The divorce was relatively painless and amicable and they were still in contact today. Jenny's second marriage came 31 years later, quite unexpectedly. Since her first divorce, she had two relationships, one lasting 23 years, the other 4. Interestingly, in both cases, as with her original marriage, it was apparent that Jenny had been "unconsciously trying to work out the difficulties I had in my relationship with my father" through these relationships.

Jenny finally managed to work out these issues with the help of therapy, by which time she "was ready for the right man to walk into my life," and that was exactly what happened. She said, "I finally realized that relationships are where and how we learn." Her current marriage was the single most important relationship Jenny maintained and one that continued to provide opportunities for development and growth, both individually and as part of a couple.

Drugs

Jenny's only episode with drugs was trying hash experimentally twice. This was not until she was in her 40s; she tried it only because her partner at the time also wanted to try it. She remembered giggling a lot and feeling drunk for a day or so. It did not live up to the expectations she had.

Influential Experiences and/or Relationships

The most significant and influential experience aside from her parents was undertaking a master's degree in Gestalt psychotherapy. This training necessitated her being in therapy for the duration of the program, and it was during this time she was able to exorcise the negative elements in her relationship with her father and move away from being attracted to men with a similar nature and disposition. She believed that without therapy she may indeed still be attracting and attracted to the wrong type of men. So her individual therapist of 4 years, her group therapist of 2 years, and the faculty who taught the program had a huge influence on her life. "Being in therapy had a huge impact on my whole life . . . I would not be the person I am today without that experience and those relationships."

Prior to participating in that program, Jenny was also greatly influenced by an internal organizational consultant in one of her early training positions and a number of external organizational consultants, some of whom she remained in contact with today.

Career

Jenny believed she fell into her career quite by accident because a senior member of management saw some potential in her. She started working for a forward-thinking

organization, where after a few initial disastrous months as an administrative assistant, “I was given a job in the ‘training’ department as trainee assistant training officer.” She was 21 and “finally found something that I could engage with, and about which I could be excited.” The company supported and encouraged her development as a training officer and her work towards the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree in personnel and development. She was with the company for 4 years.

After she and her first husband separated and he left for Canada, Jenny began a relationship that led to her moving to the northeast of England and a position as a training officer in local government, where she stayed for almost 8 years. Again she was fortunate to be supported and encouraged to develop and achieve her potential as an individual and to further her skills as a trainer. “I had the honor to stand on the shoulders of many wonderful, talented, and gifted academics and organization consultants and continued to learn the skills of my profession.” It was during this time that Jenny first came across the Gestalt.

Jenny started her own training consultancy in 1983 at the age of 33. By the mid-1990s she had joined forces with her then “life partner,” and they developed a second training company and a thoroughbred breeding stud based on two farms. These three companies were successful for 15 years and at their height employed 125 people. At this time in her search for herself and a need to contribute something of significance to the community, she became a magistrate, although ultimately her time commitments and the realization that this was not “her” meant she did this for 1 year. During this time she was also invited to become the part-time nonexecutive vice chair and ultimately the chair of a multisited general hospital with regional specialties. These 8 years she remembered with

great joy as an opportunity to "put the heart back into the organization" which had been sadly neglected through multiple CEOs and the local ineffectual and polarizing political situation. She also worked as a volunteer counselor at a well women's centre as a requirement of her therapy training and became the chair of that organization also. This need to "give back" was part of what Jenny referred to in being spiritual—"finding herself and ways to help others."

Dreams

Jenny was not aware of having many dreams, although she did have some and had used them in therapy sessions to make sense of her situation. Very rarely was she able to remember them and write them down, although more recently she was able to do this and found the impact quite relevant.

Awareness

Jenny's awareness began with her journey of self-development. She was 27 and referred to herself as "a late developer." She experienced experiential training for the first time and maintained that it was this type of training—and the people she came into contact with either running or participating in this type of training—that opened her eyes to the possibility of living life in a different way. She worked with many university professors and organizational consultants during a 5- or 6-year period, which completely changed her way of thinking and being in the world.

During this time, she was also introduced to Gestalt psychology and psychotherapy. She believed she never stopped learning and that her personal journey of development was of paramount importance, not only to her well-being but also to her ability to engage with others in a sensitive, respectful, and nonjudgmental way. The

development of her awareness of self and others continued as she undertook the experiential master's program and became even more figural in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when she participated in a 4-year program in Gestalt psychotherapy at the master's level. This also necessitated being in supervision during the second year, when she started seeing clients, which continued until she left the U.K. permanently.

The Essence of Jenny

Jenny would say that building and maintaining relationships was the key to a healthy, contented, and developmental life and essential in every successful leadership role. Also, full awareness of self was essential in helping others to develop, which she saw as her main role as a coach and development consultant. She regretted never having had children, since she believed that the relationship between a mother and child is the most growthful and developmental opportunity, provided the mother is open to that possibility. She described herself as spiritual more than religious and leaned towards Buddhism more than any other belief system. She described herself as an environmentalist, animal lover, and a seeker of the truth in all things. While she believed herself to be "enthusiastic, full of energy, positive in outlook, passionate, determined with an iron will, an extrovert in Myers-Briggs terms, she also capable of enjoying time alone." She pushed herself to her limits and was always looking to develop herself in new and challenging ways.

Jenny considered herself to be very self-reflective, having kept a journal for many years, but also ever the participant-observer, who watched herself as she went about her daily tasks, examining her feelings and how they were connected to and related to her physical process. While she desensitized herself during the traumas of her childhood and

dissociated parts of herself, Jenny worked to reintegrate herself as a holistic being and was consciously aware of the need for wholeness of mind, body, spirit, and emotion. She also became aware of the value of vulnerability and became relatively comfortable disclosing her weaknesses and fallibility in an effort to remain open to new developmental opportunities. Her self-development has enabled her to understand the importance of relationships and love.

APPENDIX O:

LEARNINGS OF THE PRIMARY RESEARCHER AND CO-RESEARCHERS

While it was not a formal part of the original methodology, I began to feel very strongly towards the end of the data analysis process that the learnings of the co-researchers should be included in addition to my learning as the primary co-researcher. While my chair "rightly would not give me permission," he offered a chapter by Kabat-Zinn (2005) that discussed the importance of being true to ourselves, which entails being aware of ourselves and our feelings about certain issues. In providing this text, my chair was encouraging me to acknowledge my feelings and needs and to assert myself to have these met. I did just that!

In deciding that co-researcher learnings were essential to the study, I was reminded how disappointed I felt that I had been 'knocked' off course by a member of the faculty who had no idea what the essence of my study was or is, and I learned that I needed to trust my intuition more and challenge that with which I disagree. Having read the article, I decided that it was indeed in order to request such information from the co-researchers. They were all asked to provide an updated view of any learnings they had become aware of as a result of being involved in the study.

Not all responded, however, but those who did shared some interesting thoughts that are disclosed in this section. Since the study is a hybrid heuristic/phenomenological study, the learnings of the primary co-researcher are of great importance and are reported first. As primary co-researcher, I started to make journal entries in February 2007, and that process continues today. While entries were not made every day, significant learnings were included throughout the 15-month period.

Learning of the Primary Co-researcher

The journal entries were read prior to recording the learnings here. The initial excitement of finding, conducting preinterviews, and selecting the co-researchers continued into the interview phase, which took much longer than originally planned. The interviews were generally enjoyable and constructive, and the analysis stage was planned to have been conducted in the summer of 2007. However, transcribing the interviews took at least 6 months and well over 250 hours. While preparing the transcripts was in some ways tedious, I felt pleased that I had completed them myself, since the process provided the opportunity for immersion in the data and additional material about myself in relation to the co-researchers.

I was truly immersed in the data. However, once I had completed all the transcripts, I felt as though I was in a tunnel; I had lost all energy and felt completely stuck. I now believe I was experiencing 'burnout.' I was also struggling with issues of counter-transference and experiencing myself as becoming as unclear and inarticulate as some of the transcripts. I notice that when my body does something at odds with my mind, it is best not to fight my body. So I accepted that this was where I needed to be and trusted that in time the appropriate answer or movement would present itself.

At this stage I was also coping with a sense of inadequacy and despondency. Interviewing and transcribing the co-researchers' data about their childhoods brought back certain painful awarenesses of my own childhood and put me in touch with feelings that had long been well buried. In addition, I was experiencing some difficulties in my work, which left me feeling angry and inadequate, and was moreover feeling unseen and unheard by close colleagues. Thankfully, I was supported by my friends in a Gestalt peer

supervision group and was able to work out some of those negative feelings, yet I felt unable to send the transcripts to the co-researchers because they were not perfect. Although I know that self-awareness is not the same as being perfect from a theoretical perspective, it was while in conversation with one co-researcher that I realized this fact practically, and that helped. I was nevertheless amazed at the similarities between the experiences of all the co-researchers. I became aware at that time that for me working in a rigid, structured way lessens my confidence in my abilities.

As is required for a heuristic study, I believe I was in the immersion phase for 5 months and then the incubation phase for a further 5 months, during which time I made little tangible progress but was nevertheless making intuitive, tacit connections within myself. A day did not pass without some thought process or a conversation linked to the data or the research process.

I believe I had a few false starts when it came to starting the analysis process, which added to my feelings of inadequacy and 'stuckness,' although I did enjoy using the software to a point. However, once I had started on the individual depictions, I realized I was also holding myself back again because I did not believe I could write them perfectly. There were times when I was bored with the stories I was writing. It was at this stage I began to think about levels of self-awareness and realized that among all the co-researchers there were indeed different levels of awareness and different levels of comfort with disclosure. I became aware at this stage that I was operating from a therapist point of view and that I needed to return to the "continual beginner" (Husserl, 1973), to be more open to the lived experiences of each co-researcher. Even at this stage tacit and

intuitive insights were forming, as were possibilities for the creative synthesis, as I reread previous journals dating back many years and poems written several years before.

The individual depictions were not completed until the middle of February 2008, and I clearly realized that my time schedule was not going to be reached. For the 5-month period running up to the completion of the individual depictions, I was still in my tunnel and still lacking in energy or true direction. Fortuitously as a participant in a coaching accreditation program, I was in discussion with a fellow participant about my concerns and issues, and she offered to be my coach. It was through being engaged in regular weekly coaching sessions with her and some very significant sessions with my program-assigned coach that I eventually emerged from my dark tunnel, learned so much about myself, and found a new lease of energy with which to continue this project. I made *'out of awareness'* connections about childhood traumas and current behavior and made the decision that certain behaviors no longer served me and I could choose not to engage in them.

Once the individual depictions had been written and sent to the co-researchers for an accuracy check, I was able to start looking for clusters, patterns, and themes in order to write the composite depiction. I did this not by utilizing the software, but rather by drawing mind-maps on white boards to see all the data before me. This was an energizing process. The formatting for the presentation of the findings in chapter 4 and interpretation in chapter 5 came with more incubation and immersion in the data and once formed was an immensely enjoyable process.

So the following is what I learned from this process, and it must be said that being a participant in the coaching certification program was also instrumental in becoming more aware of my interior processes:

1. I can still easily defer to someone in perceived authority and need to trust my instincts more.
2. I work very inefficiently at home by wanting and needing to be in contact with people via email.
3. My first reaction to a negative experience, reaction, or result is to feel disappointed in and become angry with myself. I feel strong sensations in my body, and my energy dissipates. I reflect constantly on the experience. As I become aware of my patterns, my mood lifts. I am able to arrive at a more peaceful state of body and mind, and I am able to re-engage with my environment.
4. I realize that my habitual immediate reaction to almost anything is one of defense based on a belief that what has been said in some way has a negative valance towards my actions or experience. This behavior is similar to that of my mother.
5. I am aware that to avoid experiencing burnout I need to pay attention to my feelings and bodily response and change my behavior.
6. Childhood trauma left me needing to be perfect, and my own disappointment is my criticism, which then protects me from others' criticism.
7. The same childhood trauma led to a need to be strong. Experiencing any sense of weakness associated with this need can be so powerful that I am overwhelmed by it to the point of disappearing. Hence, my preference not to stay with these

feelings. Rumi's poem "The Guest House" was very appropriate when with the help of one of my coaches I was enabled to become aware of this.

8. My emotional openness can be overwhelming for some people, and I need to stay aware of that to avoid the rejection of misunderstanding and fear.
9. Becoming self-aware is a long, complicated process and has allowed me to reintegrate parts of my sense of self that were disintegrated—much like placing parts in a jigsaw.
10. Self-awareness and comfort with disclosure are two different things.
11. My honesty does not cause another to disintegrate.
12. I am good at closure when I choose to be.
13. Reflection is a key part of transformational learning.
14. Food is a great source of instantly gratifying comfort when I feel low and also an avoidant behavior, yet in the longer term is completely unproductive and unhelpful.
15. I am both amazed and not surprised that during the writing of chapter 5 I became aware that I had not paid sufficient attention to the embodied aspect of this study and needed to back up and do that. My mind/body split has been evident throughout my life, and I am working on reintegrating that aspect of myself.
16. I am becoming more of a participating observer—reflecting on everything to make sense of it and try to understand myself better as it happens in the moment.

Learnings of the Co-Researchers

A few co-researchers did not respond to my request for learnings resulting from being involved in the study. Those who did respond provided fascinating insights into the learning process and the different levels of awareness.

Anne was clear that she started engaging in a deep, intimate conversation with her children as a result of the interviews for this study, which she had not previously done. She was also very aware that she did not like to visit her past for too long.

> I think of my past as a box, with a lid. The lid opens, I look inside, then I close it up. That awareness was simply heightened by being a partner in your study, as I had to keep the lid open for longer than I might otherwise do.

She had increased awareness of the number of people

> who pop into my life, make an impact, and then move on. I realize this is how life goes. It's both really neat and sort of sad. We can't possibly keep in touch with all the people that we appreciate and that enrich our lives.

During the third interview, **Sparky** described how the interview process had enabled her to continue growing:

> I feel like I put some pieces together about my relationship with my mom, how that still impacts me today, particularly how much I remind myself of my mother when I shout and scream when I become angry.

Abby was diagnosed with and successfully treated for a form of cancer since the interviews took place and seemed to be making good progress. However, she was currently suffering from another illness and so was "back in the medical loop again, and apparently, stress doesn't help."

> I'm getting a lot of signals, from the medical world and from self-reflection, which indicate it is time for me to change my pace. I have the same general thoughts about my next stage of life—I just can't get started working towards

that, as my job is too all encompassing and I can't afford to drop the salary at this time.

She experienced "no real 'aha' moments, just confirmation about my childhood and my development as being relatively self-directed." She was seeing an acupuncturist for her illness and learned of a split between 'fire' and 'wood.' "'Fire' represents a person driven by passion," which would certainly be a descriptor of Abby with her "strong family ties as clearly central in my life. . . . The 'wood,' in my case, represents a very logical, analytical, and planful disposition that seems to come from my professional self."

Abby also recounted an interesting and very vivid dream her mother had in which her deceased husband appeared, "the first she has had since his death 6 years ago":

> He was angry and telling her that she was wasting her life waiting to die. I told her that he was probably also angry that she was driving me nuts. . . . She has completely transformed her disposition. She is cheerful and can laugh at herself. She is not leaning on me the same way. She is thinking more. It's fascinating. Considering my stress level at this point, I am very grateful that I do not have to currently stress about her.

Since the interviews, **Mercedes** reflected more and more on her "low energy level, lack of balance (especially work-life balance), recent weight gain, lack of sleep, and general anxiety and unhappiness." She took action to make changes:

> 1. I left my job and as a result I have noticed I have regained more energy—I go to the gym regularly. I eat more healthy foods. I sleep great! I'm noticing how resilient I am when unexpected challenges or problems emerge. I've lost 25 pounds and I am continuing efforts to drop more. I've gotten to travel with my husband on extensive trips—to India, to Arizona, and to CA all in the fall alone. This year, I've also gone to the Caribbean and to CA, and will be going on other trips. I don't have the anxiety I did working in a highly demanding environment, where I was underappreciated and overworked. I've found time to be with family more. My relationship with my husband is stronger than ever.
>
> 2. This year I've begun my own consulting business. I've had to reset my financial targets as I exceeded them already by March. I am working on things I'm good at, and love to do, and getting positive feedback from my clients. I have

> good balance. I see lots of friends and am making new friends whose values and interests are in sync with my own.
>
> 3. I've learned to detach from the painful issues with my stepson's 'derailment.' He has a job and seems to have turned a corner. It's going slow, but he comes to see us regularly, and we talk, and that's a big improvement from where we were.
>
> 4. In my free time, I am reading a lot. I am reading lots of psychology—books on executive coaching and also spiritual things. Now that spring is here, I'll be out on our boat with my husband and can enjoy the season and our friends' company.

Lee wrote:

> I recently started an objective analysis of my behaviors and natural inclinations and their impact on planning activities and goals. I discovered that I am using an overly romanticized version of myself for planning purposes and I keep falling short.

This has resulted in Lee not completing courses and other required activities to his time schedule. He became "shamefully" aware that this type of behavior was typical. Moreover, he was not having success in "redesigning his planning process" to one that "matches his style."

He suggested that there is an art to balancing two phrases he learned from school: "the minimum force necessary to compel compliance" and "early and substantial action to stay well clear," which served as his guides for personal development. "The tension formed by these two concepts is at the core of who I am today."

During the interviews, **John** experienced feelings of both joy and elation that he had the opportunity to examine such great existential questions, which so many of us see as a luxury, when in fact "it shouldn't be a luxury. . . . Everybody should have the opportunity." He also expressed sadness that the "somewhat superficial role-playing in life, you know, the 'busy-ness' of the daily routines . . . freezes one. . . . I don't always have the time to reflect upon what it all means." He became aware of a third feeling, that

of mystery, “as one probes a little deeper and tries to understand . . . well, we’re talking about self-awareness, but to touch through self-awareness a deeper part of oneself . . . can be very challenging . . . and can freak some people out.”

APPENDIX P:
IN TONGUES—A CHILD OF SONG AND PRAYER—CANDELITA

Anamanea ~ Harash ~ Ana mana kanea

The voice was shining forth a bubbly burst.
The hour was late, evening vespers in a tiny mission church.
A young couple had been preparing for several weeks and maybe many lives as well
to be prayed upon and invite the Holy Spirit from within.
In her womb, their fourth child was getting ready for this world.

Alas, the prayer and the call!
And, as a flow of mirth that had been waiting since the dawn of time,
unexpectedly
she was transformed into a tongue of mirth.
This woman, in control no more, although serene and poised
was lifted up into the freshness of a prayer,
carefully shaped and chiseled just for her.

Anamanea ~ Harash ~ Ana mana kanea

In a few hours, her throat expanded to the wind in song
echoing the labor of a wrestling womb ready to give birth.
And so it was!
The child,
a son,
was born!
Entangled in the web of time, to pierce it and come through,
grouping the countless scattered energies into a solid beam.
Mother and father, merged into a shared tune,
had opened wide the gate for him.

That child is you, my son, our youngest one, José!
You are the son of prayer and of many moons thirsting for the word of God to be conceived,
You are a sacred promise in the chain of Life, watering lavishly this earth.

We bless you both today, Rebecca, dearest one.
Daughter and son coming together to be bathed and clothed anew
into a most blessed union to be forged
by Love,
by the desire to be open and to serve together, side-by-side,
fulfilling your birthright promises, created just for you.

Shine and go forth in Joy, Blessed to the bones,
With all your mighty longing, our dearest daughter, dearest son,
go forth in Love and Communion and Justice and Peace!

Hadesh ~ Nahatel kej kehuk ~ harim hatel

APPENDIX Q:

CLUSTER FORMULATION FOR TABLE 5-2

1. AWARENESS

Accessed various self-awareness phases	Adulthood	9
Was self-reflective	Adulthood	9
Was aware of bodily processes (embodied awareness)	Adulthood	8

2. RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY

Had childhood friends	Childhood	9
Maintained friendships – dating experiences	Adulthood	9
Had mentors, confidantes or peer group support	Adulthood	9
Had a therapeutic relationship	Adulthood	5
Had significant positive relationship with unrelated adult	Childhood	4

3. TRAVELED OR LIVED ABROAD

Traveled and/or lived abroad	Both	7

4. TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

Experienced trauma as a child, including surgical procedures	Childhood	9
Had traumatic experiences including medical issues	Adulthood	9
Dealt with mother's early death	Childhood	2

5. MOOD

Had a positive and upbeat mood	Adulthood	6
Suffered from low mood and/or depression	Adulthood	6

6. ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Had significant negative experiences within an organization (lack of trust, dysfunction, insecurity)	Adulthood	8
Had significant negative relationships with bosses	Adulthood	6
Unable to be or express self in organizations	Adulthood	6
Had significant positive experiences within organizations	Adulthood	6
Had significant positive relationships with bosses	Adulthood	3

7. NEGATIVE IMMEDIATE AND EXTENDED FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Had a troubled family life	Childhood	9
Sibling relationship either nonexistent or poor	Childhood	6
Had negative or unsatisfactory relationship with mother	Childhood	6
Had negative relationship with father	Childhood	5
Had negative extended family relationships	Childhood	1

8. FEELINGS

Experienced and expressed anger	Adulthood	7
Felt invisible, not seen or heard	Childhood	7
Experienced confidence and/or lack of self-confidence	Adulthood	6
Felt and expressed vulnerability	Adulthood	5
Felt loved in spite of little positive demonstrable affection in family	Childhood	3
Felt responsible or accountable for parents	Childhood	2

9. RELATIONSHIP WITHIN FAMILY OF CHOICE

Had a positive relationship with life partner	Adulthood	8
Influenced by children (biological or nonbiological)	Adulthood	4
Had negative experiences with previous spouse	Adulthood	3

10. TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Had positive and supportive teachers	Childhood	6
Had negative teachers	Childhood	4

11. DEVELOPMENT (INFORMAL AND INFORMAL)

Experienced success at school	Childhood	6
Was a late developer	Adulthood	6
Was self-directed	Adulthood	5
Experienced academic success and development	Adulthood	4
Engaged with books and reading	Both	5
Had and recalled dreams	Both	3

12. SPIRITUALITY

Described oneself as spiritual	Adulthood	7
Was in tune with and comfortable in nature	Both	5
Believed in the power of love (including falling in love with self)	Adulthood	5
Meditated regularly	Adulthood	2

13. SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOR

Redirected attention (deflection or desensitization)	Childhood	7
Had regular exercise/physical activity	Both	5
Obsessive behavior (food, clothing) used as a comforter	Adulthood	4
Maintained boundaries between work and home lives	Adulthood	2

14. POSITIVE IMMEDIATE AND EXTENDED FAMILIAL RELTIONSHIPS

Had positive extended family relationships	Childhood	8
Had a positive relationship with sibling	Childhood	4
Positive relationship with father	Childhood	3
Positive relationship with mother	Childhood	2

15. NEGATIVE PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

Had an angry and/or verbally abusive father	Childhood	6
Had an unstable mother	Childhood	4
Experienced corporal punishment	Childhood	4
Had an angry or violent mother	Childhood	2

16. LEARNED BEHAVIOR

Was brought up to be independent	Childhood	5
Had a strong need for inclusion	Both	4
Felt the need to hide and/or protect self from others	Adulthood	3
Was logical	Adulthood	3
Was resilient	Adulthood	3

17. RELIGION

Rejected the religion of childhood	Adulthood	4
Positively influenced by religious minister	Childhood	3
Negatively influenced by religious minister	Both	2

18. DISPOSITION AND TEMPERAMENT

Had a very social temperament	Adulthood	4
Was reserved, shy and quiet	Adulthood	4
Was pessimistic	Adulthood	1
Had a mild, calm disposition	Adulthood	1